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The Gentry of The King's and Queen's Counties: Protestant Landed Society, 1690-1760

Volume I

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The Gentry of The King's and Queen's Counties:
Protestant Landed Society, 1690-1760

(in two volumes)

Volume One

Daniel Matthew Beaumont

Submitted for the degree of PhD

Trinity College, The University of Dublin

1999

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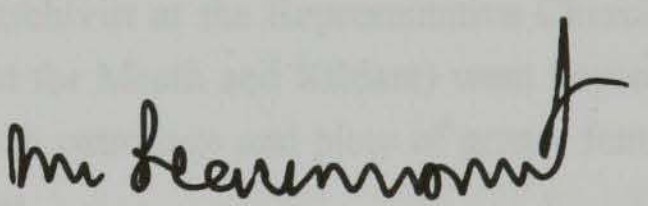

6th October 1999

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I would like to thank the staff at the archives and libraries that I have worked in. Particular credit is due to the `fetchers and carriers' of documents in the National Library of Ireland. Without front-line staff like Tom Desmond, James Harte and Patrick Sweeney (who are rarely mentioned) far less historical research on Irish estate papers would get done. Susan Hood (assistant librarian and archivist at the Representative Church Body Library) and Roy Byrne (Diocesan Archivist for Meath and Kildare) went beyond their call of duty to find information on the church patronage and piety of gentry families in the seven dioceses that cover the two counties.

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The writing of history- like the building of a country house- is a collaborative enterprise. Many historians have been very generous with their time and have shared ideas. Dr. James Kelly pointed me in the right direction when I first sought his advice in 1994 and has been helpful ever since. Prof. Rolf Loeber suggested ways in which I might tackle the architectural evidence and has very kindly sent advance copies of articles on Laois and Offaly. My conversations with The Knight of Glin, Dr. Edward McParland and Dr. Christine Casey have offered many illuminating insights into the material culture of the gentry. Prof. Louis Cullen suggested how I could improve the structure of this thesis, and has directed me to an number of fruitful sources. Dr. Anthony Malcomson arranged the inspection of the manuscripts at Stradbally Hall and has shared his encyclopaedic knowledge of the collections that he has catalogued for P.R.O.N.I. (especially the Downshire, Birr Castle and Abbey Leix papers). In addition he provided much needed hospitality in Belfast. I have benefited from discussing my work with Prof. Bruce Campbell, Dr. Neal Garnham and Ms. Rosemary Richey from The Queen's University of Belfast. I would also like to thank those who have given papers on Irish history at the seminar series run by Prof. Cullen at Trinity College, Dublin. The work of Dr. Toby Barnard on elite society and culture has been a constant source of inspiration and I am indebted to him for his kindness and constant encouragement. Last, but by no means least, I would like to thank Dr. David Dickson who has been a very patient and diligent supervisor over the past four years.

Summary

The aim of this research is to contribute towards the exact recovery of the social, cultural and physical milieux of members of the Irish Protestant elite in the period 1690-1760 by focussing on the landed gentry of The King's and Queen's counties (modern day Offaly and Laois). This research, while building on the existing local studies is the first systematic analysis of landownership in this region since c. 1905.

Unlike their forbears in the sixteenth century or their descendants in the later eighteenth century the Irish Protestant elite in this period enjoyed seven decades of uninterrupted peace. In the 1690s the final act of the `land settlement' took place, and from 1710 to 1760 the Protestant gentry of the two counties successfully consolidated their economic position. In those five crucial decades lands tended to remain in the same hands and, in contrast to the previous century, estates were only broken up as a result of biological failure or indebtedness, not sequestration or crown intervention.

The bulk of the surviving evidence from the two counties relates to the most substantial Protestant gentlemen in the two counties; as a result the analysis has been almost exclusively confined to the upper end of the gentry. There were only a handful of peers whose presence or absence had any demonstrable effect on the two counties in either an economic and political sense. The King's and Queen's counties remained in essence a gentry-run society. Though small in numerical terms the 230 or so gentry families were quite a heterogeneous group. Within this gentry group one can identify about 40 to 50 usually resident families in each county who could be said to have played the most conspicuous role in the affairs of the county, as M.P.s, J.P.s and other office holders).

The peculiar history of settlement and the opportunities for upward social mobility between 1690 and 1760 meant that the gulf between the upper gentry (knights, baronets and esquires) and the lesser gentry (simple `gents') was often very narrow. The long-established county gentry families could not prevent newcomers from making their fortunes and breaking into the esquirearchy. Indeed newcomers (who brought with them capital and entrepreneurship) played a disproportionately important role in the economic development of the two counties. Towards the end of the period there are some signs that the upper gentry were beginning to lose their monopoly over certain forms of hospitality and display.

The members of the peerage played a relatively small role in local politics during this period. County seats in parliament were held by 15 resident gentry families between 1690 and 1760 and these carried with them far more prestige than borough seats. The King's and Queen's counties, like elsewhere in Ireland, were embroiled in party politics in the first quarter of the century and the `Whig' interest prevailed. But in the following decades such labels seemed to have much less relevance.

In political terms this period was (in comparison to the later eighteenth century) uneventful but in an economic and social sense these years were crucial. By 1760 the face of town and country had changed dramatically. So many of the conspicuous features in the region's urban and rural landscape (such as improved fields, roads, bridges,

churches, landlord villages and plantations) which have traditionally been ascribed to the period c. 1770-1840 are in fact the products of the years c. 1690-1760.

Rent was the principal source of income for virtually all gentry families and in the 1710s, 1720s and 1730s rents rose dramatically on some estates. As a result, substantial landowners were able to invest more capital in their houses, demesnes, plantations, fields and towns. These were lean years for the great bulk of the population and when natural disaster struck (as it did in the years 1725-1727 and 1740-1741) the results could be cataclysmic. Thus Jonathan Swift's criticism of rapacious landowners in this period was not without some justification.

Some landowners placed too much faith in their ability to raise rents in the future and spent far beyond their means. Gentlemen often built houses, bought new furnishings and laid out gardens on borrowed capital. The years 1700-1760 were the most formative in the development of the country house and an elite culture in Ireland. This high expenditure can in part be explained by `social overstretch'; the gentry of The King's and Queen's counties were a provincial elite in the sense that they inhabited a territory that had only been recently planted by the English and which differed in many aspects from the more settled parts of England but they did not see themselves as being backward or impoverished. The surviving estate papers show that the upper gentry of the two counties sought to emulate their richer English equivalents.

Though The King's and Queen's counties did share certain physical characteristics (e.g. natural resources) and were planted at the same time they did not in the last analysis form a distinct sub-region of Ireland. Differences in the quality of the land meant that range of economic activities that were carried out in the two counties differed. Prior to 1690 there had been a pattern for land grants to Old and New Protestants to be in one county or the other. Similarly M.P.s and county office holders were also drawn from the county in which they served. This is all evidence of the increasingly unitary nature of the county over the region or other informal unit. By the early eighteenth century the Protestant landed gentry had developed a very strong social, cultural and mental association with their county.

The King's and Queen's counties were deeply divided on confessional lines during this period. The roll call of the M.P.s, sheriffs, J.P.s, the militia and corporation office holders shows just how far the county administration was dominated by a small junta of Old and New Protestants in this period. The Catholics in these two counties were notably weak in the ranks of the social, economic and political elite. It might in part have been the settled and anglophone nature of the two counties that first attracted the Quakers. Once established the Quaker, and to a lesser extent, the Huguenot communities, greatly strengthened the `Protestant interest'. Correspondence between Protestant landowners, as well as strong evidence from the corporations, highlights the considerable tension that existed between these two groups. The tensions in The King's and Queen's counties were distinctive, and were perhaps the result of its peculiar history of plantation and the particular group of Protestant landowning families that settled there in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries.

The Gentry of The King's and Queen's Counties: Protestant Landed Society, 1690-1760

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ABBREVIATIONS AND CONVENTIONS

In the first instance full titles of sources are given; thereafter the following abbreviations are used throught:

C.U.L.	Cambridge University Library
C.S.P.I.	*Calendar of State Papers: Ireland*
H.M.C.	Historical Manuscripts Commission
I.H.S.	*Irish Historical Studies*
Ire. Arch.	Irish Architectural Archive
I.G.S.	*Bulletin of the Irish Georgian Society*
J.H.C.	*Journal of the House of Commons* (Ireland)
J.H.L.	*Journal of the House of Lords* (Ireland)
J.K.A.S.	*Journal of the Kildare Archaeolgical Society*
I.E.S.H.	*Irish Economic and Social History*
P.R.O.N.I.	Public Record Office of Northern Ireland
P.R.I.A.	*Proceedings of the Royal Irish Academy*
Nat. Arch. Ire.	National Archives
N.L.I.	National Library of Ireland
Reg. Deeds	The Registry of Deeds, Dublin
R.C.B. Lib.	Representative Church Body Library
T.C.D.	Trinity College, University of Dublin
T.R.H.S.	*Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*
U.C.D.	University College, Dublin

1) Contemporary spelling and punctutation is used in all quotations

2) Dates are in the old style, as used by contemporaries.

3) When describing any part of the period c. 1550-1922 I shall refer to The King's and Queen's counties; and to Philipstown and Maryborough. When describing the topography and history of these places after 1922 I shall refer to Laois and Offaly and to Daingean and Portlaoise.

4) Throughout I have used the term `Protestant' to describe those individuals who were adherents to the established church and dissenters. In those chapters where I have wanted to distinguish between different components of the `Protestant Interest' I have used the terms Anglican (used here to refer to members of the Church of Ireland) and the names of particular denominations (e.g. Quaker and Presbyterian). The term `Catholic', is used throughout; although the contemporary

quotations may contain common variants such as `Papist', `Roman', `Roman Catholic' etc.

5) The names of living historians are not generally mentioned in the main text; except where important or controversial issues are discussed.

Introduction

> If rather bleakly, I stress what we need to know, it is partly to spur others into the empty tracts of provincial Ireland.[1]
> T.C. Barnard, 1993

> Any attempt to sum up the main features of elite culture in late seventeenth- and eighteenth century Ireland can hardly be more than speculative and superficial. Yet the attempt must be made.[2]
> S.J. Connolly, 1992

Three decades ago G.E. Mingay remarked on the need for detailed regional studies of the gentry of England in order to build up a more accurate picture of this ruling group.[3] His words did not go unheeded and there are now a number of important monographs on the landed elites of England and Wales covering the period c.1540-1940.[4] By contrast this new interest in early modern elites has only just begun to reach Ireland.[5] The aim of this research is to contribute towards the recovery of the social, cultural and physical worlds of the Protestant gentry in Ireland by focussing on the surviving evidence relating to The King's and Queen's counties in the period 1690-1760.

The pre-1914 topographical accounts of the two counties show that their present day lack-lustre image is a relatively recent phenomenon. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, travellers were struck by the conspicuous agricultural improvements and the large number of country houses that dotted the landscape. Though geographically small

---

[1]T.C. Barnard, `Historiographical Review: Farewell to Old Ireland', *The Historical Journal,* Vol. 36, (1993), p. 922; see also Barnard, `Review of *A New History of Ireland,* Vol. III, 3rd impression: Bibliographical Supplement, 1541-1691', *I.H.S.*, 1992, pp. 190-191.

[2]S.J. Connolly, *Religion, Law and Power: The Making of Protestant Ireland 1660-1760,* (Oxford, 1992), p. 66.

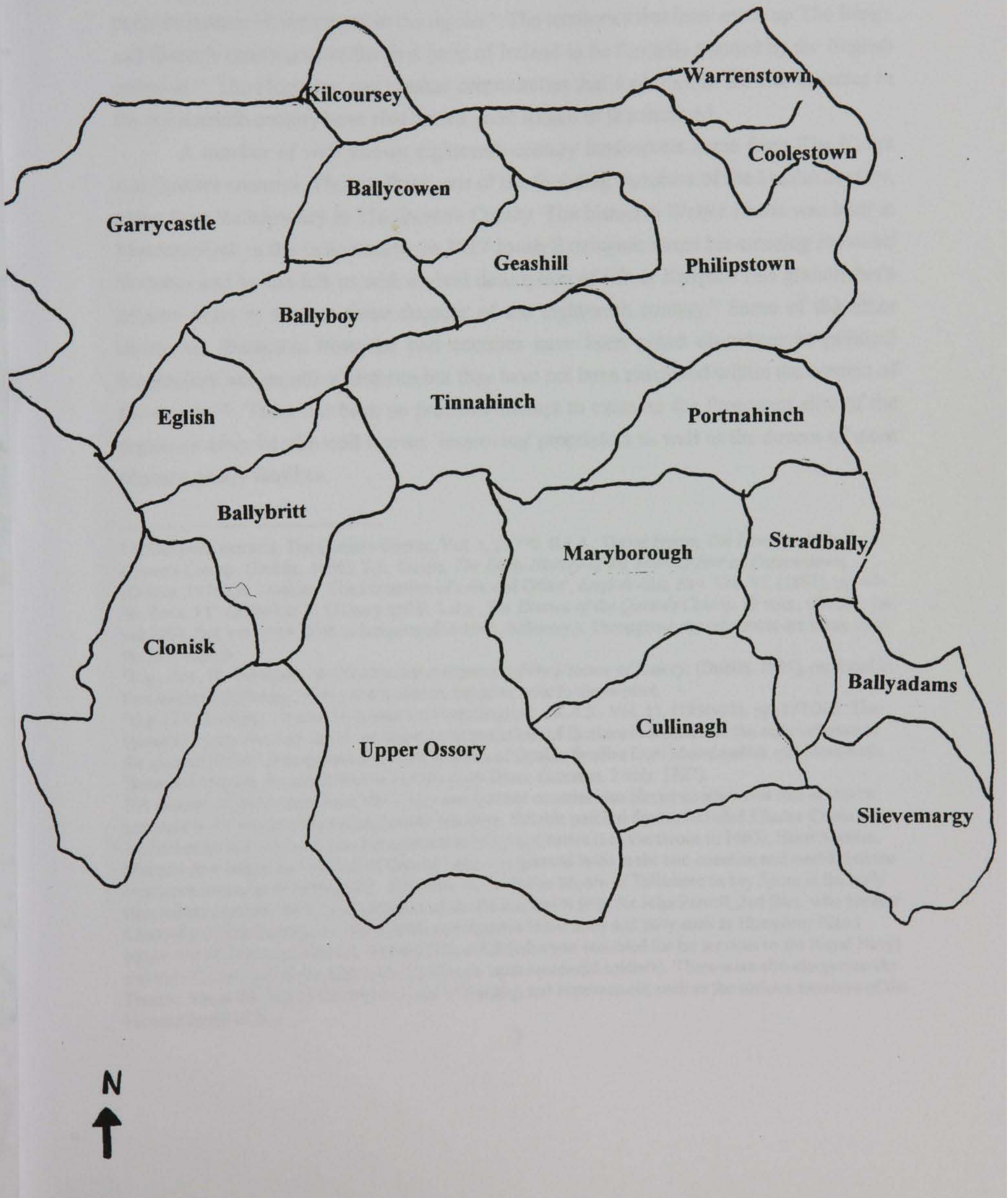
[3]G.E. Mingay, *English Landed Society in the Eighteenth Century,* (London, 1963) and *The Gentry: The Rise and Fall of a Ruling Class,* (London, 1976).

[4]The period 1540-1660 is particularly well covered, e.g., B.G. Blackwood, *The Lancashire Gentry and the Great Rebellion, 1640-60,* (Manchester, 1978); A. Lloyd Howell, *The Gentry of South West Wales 1540-1640,* (London, 1968).

[5]But there have been a number of ground breaking historians who have dealt with the gentry at a national level in this period such as Constantia Maxwell, *Country and Town in Ireland under the Georges,* (London, 1940); E. MacLysaght, *Irish life in the seventeenth century,* (London, 1950); L.M. Cullen, *The Emergence of Modern Ireland, 1600-1900,* (Dublin, 1981); S.J. Connolly, *Religion, Law and Power,* (Oxford, 1992) and the numerous articles by T.C. Barnard.

Map 1 The location of The King's and Queen's counties

Map 2 The location of the baronies in The King's and Queen's counties in the period 1690-1760



The King's and Queen's counties (see Map 1) had a dense network of well-maintained estates and were used as examples of how things could and should be done in other less settled parts of Ireland.

Apart from the houses and demesnes earlier historians were also fascinated by the peculiar pattern of settlement in the region.[6] The territories that later made up The King's and Queen's counties were the first parts of Ireland to be formally planted by the English colonists.[7] The Huguenot and Quaker communities that took root in the two counties in the seventeenth century have also been a great source of fascination.[8]

A number of well known eighteenth-century landowners came from The King's and Queen's counties. Thomas Prior, one of the founding members of the Dublin Society, came from Rathdowney in The Queen's County. The historian Walter Harris was born at Mountmellick in the same county. In 1827 Jonah Barrington wrote his amusing *Personal Sketches* and he has left us with a vivid description of life at Knapton (his grandfather's country seat) in the last three decades of the eighteenth century.[9] Some of the other illustrious characters from the two counties have been noted elsewhere in political biographies and narrative histories but they have not been examined within the context of the county.[10] There has been no previous attempt to examine the Protestant elite of the region *en bloc:* i.e. the well known `improving' proprietors as well as the dozens of more obscure gentry families.

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[6] O'Donovan extracts, The Queen's County, Vol. 1, p. 370, R.I.A.; Daniel Byrne, *The History of the Queen's County,* (Dublin, 1856); T.L. Cooke, *The Early History of the Town of Birr or Parsonstown,* (Dublin, 1875); R. Dunlop, `The Plantation of Leix and Offaly', *English Hist. Rev.* Vol. VI, (1891), pp. 61-96; Revs. J.C. O'Hanlon, E. O'Leary and E. Lalor, *The History of the Queen's County,* (2 vols., (Dublin, 1st vol,1907, 2nd vol. 1914: both vols reprinted in 1981, Kilkenny,). Throughout my references are taken from the new edition.

[7] E.g., Rev. W. Carrigan, *The History and Antiquities of the Diocese of Ossory,* (Dublin, 1905), reprinted in four volumes (Kilkenny, 1981) and footnotes hereafter refer to the re-print.

[8] E.g., T.P. Le Fanu, `French Huguenots at Portarlington', *J.K.A.S.,* Vol. 11, (1930-33), pp. 177-200. The Queen's County also had one of the highest concentrations of Quakers in Ireland and the early volumes of the *Quaker Record Society* contain potted histories of Quaker families from Mountmellick and Mountrath.

[9] Jonah Barrington, *Personal Sketches of His Own Times,* (London, 2 vols. 1827).

[10] A number of landowners from The King's and Queens' counties also played an important role in church and state in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Notable political figures included Charles Coote, the 1st Earl of Mountrath (who was instrumental in bringing Charles II to the throne in 1660); Henri Massue, Marquis de Ruvigny and 1st Earl of Galway (who was granted lands in the two counties and established the Huguenot colony at Portarlington); John Moore, 1st Baron Moore of Tullamore (a key figure in the early Hanoverian administration); and members of the Parnell family (e.g. Sir John Parnell, 2nd Bart. who became Chancellor of the Exchequer). There were commanders in the army and navy such as Humphrey Bland (Governor of Edinburgh Castle); Richard Fitzpatrick (who was ennobled for his services to the Royal Navy) and Eyre Coote (one of the East India Company's most successful soldiers). There were also clergymen like Thomas Vesey (Bishop of Ossory) and men of learning and improvement such as the various members of the Parsons family of Birr.

There has been much debate as to how the historian should approach the task of re-constructing communities. As early as 1749 Montesquieu made a distinction between internal (social and psychological) and external (physical and environmental) aspects of human life.[11] Some Annales-type studies of medieval and early modern societies have been based almost entirely on evidence relating to a particular town or village or upon one exceptional local source.[12] Such accounts are microscopic, because they focus on a very narrow geographical area or a discreet group of documents, yet they also provide a kind of `total history' since they encompass every aspect of the lives of a particular community.

The geographical entity that the historian selects is usually determined by the questions that he wishes to tackle (and not vice versa). A case study of a particular estate for example is probably the best means of understanding how the very wealthiest landowners were able to consolidate their estates, since their lands were often scattered over many parts of England, Scotland, Ireland, Wales and even the colonies.[13] But an examination of how the lesser landed gentlemen related to one another in a number of formal and informal communities is probably best studied within the context of the county.

County histories were a particularly popular form in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and the county still remains an important interpretative tool for the study of the gentry in England and Wales.[14] In England the county was the lynch-pin of local government and a constant source of reference for the landed gentry (in terms of institutions, customs, hospitality and sociability). But in Ireland the county structure was

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[11] Richard Brown, *Church and State in Modern Britain 1700-1850,* (London, 1991), p. 10.

[12]Le Roy Ladurie for instance was able to provide a rare insight into the human relationships that existed in fifteeenth century rural France by focussing on the cache of papers relating to Montâll ou; Emmanuel le Roy Ladurie, *Montaillou: Cathcars and Catholics in a French Village,* (London, 1978). In an English context David Underdown has examined the records relating to Dorchester in order to understand the religious and economic changes that occurred in urban communities in the early seventeenth century; *Fire from Heaven: The Life of an English Town in the Seventeenth Century,* (London, 1992). Richard Gough's (1635-1723) History of Myddle (which is a unique description of the families in a Shropshire village) has been used as a point of entry into English society in the early eighteenth century; *History of Myddle,* (first edition, 1834, London).

[13]L.J. Proudfoot, *Urban Patronage and Urban Authority: the management of the Duke of Devonshire's towns in Ireland 1764-1891*, (Washington, D.C., 1996); W.A. Maguire, *The Downshire Estates in Ireland 1801-45, (*Oxford, 1972).

[14]In his general survey of elites in England between 1540 and 1880 Lawrence Stone highlights the centrality of the `county elite' (he focussed on Hertfordshire, Northamptonshire and Northumberland); Lawrence Stone, *An Open Elite? England 1540-1880,* (Oxford, 1984). Irish studies include, T.P. Power, *Land, Politcs and Society in Eighteenth Century Tipperary,* (Oxford, 1993); Monica Brennan, The Making of Protestant Ascendancy in County Kilkenny, (PhD, State Univ. of New York, 1985, published by University Microfilms International in 1987).

a relatively recent creation. It was not until the early seventeenth century that the boundaries of The King's and Queen's took their final shape. One has to question the applicability of the English county model to an Irish context. Was the county in Ireland in the period 1690-1760 simply an empty shell: an imported territorial unit that had no real substance?

Though cliometricians like Lawrence Stone have approached the county with greater intellectual vigour than the antiquaries of previous centuries (who on the whole were content to regurgitate genealogies) there are limitations to the quantitative approach. The Irish gentry operated in different worlds simultaneously. Many were absentees and had lands in neighbouring counties and others were drawn into the orbit of towns and cities. Statistical analyses are useful but they do not always help us to build up the social and mental worlds of the gentry. For this reason some historians have looked to the region instead.[15] The King's and Queen's counties can be examined together since they were both planted at the same time, albeit in a piecemeal fashion from the mid-sixteenth century. Yet the two counties also had a number of obvious differences (in terms of geology, types of agricultural production, population and urban development) and they each had their own particular `county elite'. Within each county there were also a number of other individual gentry `communities' or `associations' (families linked by marriage, factions, clubs etc.). Each of these `associations' had its own set of rules- some implicit, some formalised- and it is the task of the historian to decode them.

The monographs on the gentry of England and Wales provide some useful paradigms, but one cannot simply treat the communities in Ireland in the same way as those in England. The historian of eighteenth century Ireland faces a number of special problems and there is a quantitative and qualitative difference between the evidence in the two countries. Much original material relating to Irish landowners was destroyed in 1922 and the gradual demise of the Protestant landowning families in Ireland has meant

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[15] David Howell focussed on the gentry of `south west Wales' rather than on the gentry of just one county in the region on the basis that Cardiganshire, Carmathenshire and Pembrokeshire have (in different periods) been brought together to form a political and administrative unit. The gentry of these three counties were also closely bound together by a series of more informal social and cultural ties. In an Irish context David Dickson examined the city of Cork and its hinterland, which was determined by distinct agricultural zones and markets rather than county boundaries, in order to understand the economy of south Munster in the eighteenth century (and the part that the landed elite played within it). Jean Agnew has looked at the merchant community of Belfast between 1660 and 1707 and its relationship with the landed gentry of Antrim, Down and further afield; David Dickson, `An Economic History of the Cork region in the eighteenth century', (PhD, T.C.D., 1977); Jean Agnew, `The Merchant Commnunity of Belfast 1660-1707', (PhD, Q.U.B., 1994); David Howell, *Patriarchs and Parasites: The Gentry of South-Wales in the Eighteenth Century,* (Cardiff, 1986).

that more information (in the form of houses, objects and manuscripts) have been scattered to the four winds.

One important and under-utilised historical source is the autobiographical account of Pole Cosby of Stradbally Hall, c.1700-35.[16] At first sight there is nothing very inspiring about this document; if it had not survived then the Cosbys would be just another obscure Irish county family.[17] Cosby's writing style is very naive and the account has a very poor internal structure. He confuses the reader by moving swiftly from one subject to another and from one decade to the next (he begins for example with his birth in 1703 and then immediately moves onto his mother's family background; it is not until towards the end of the account that he discusses his father's family). The descriptions of his childhood in Stradbally, his education on the continent, his sojourns in London and Bristol, his regular visits to Dublin and county events are interrupted by potted histories and anecdotes. Rather than having a grand scheme Cosby seems to have worked in a piece-meal fashion and jotted down memories as they came into his head. It seems likely that he used other documents (i.e. pocket account books and journals) for his memoirs since he makes copious references to the exact prices of various goods and services in different years (which can be corroborated with other evidence). The autobiography therefore may have acted as as a kind of common-place book.

Writing also seems to have had a cathartic effect for Cosby and one cannot help thinking that certain passages were written when he was in foul mood or else under the influence of alcohol. At times his language is quite extraordinary; he described Mr. Mitchell, his head tenant, as a `selfish creeping hearted fellow' who was `never worth sitting with' and Ephraim Dawson, an important newcomer to the county, as `a mean upstart'. The account ends abruptly and the last thirty years of his life are not covered at all. In the 1760s Cosby was accused by his only son and heir of mismanaging the estate and a protracted dispute ensued. It is quite possible that the autobiographical account was written at about the same time against a backdrop of family strife and legal disputes. Indeed, in 1760 Pole Cosby wrote a long letter to his son and daughter in which he

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[16]Printed as `Autobiography of Pole Cosby of Stradbally, Queen's County, 1703-1737(?)', in *J.K.A.S.*, Vol. 5, (1906-08), pp. 79-99, 165-184, 253-273, 311-324, 423-436. Among the historians who have used the account are S.J. Connolly, *Religion, Law and Power*, pp. 62, 65, 70, 128, 132-3, 135, 139, 180, 191, 192; T.C. Barnard has touched on it in a number of papers on material culture and L. Clarkson has used this account to gauge the amount of food and drink that was consumed in gentry households in the eighteenth century: papers given at the 23rd Irish Conference of Historians (at N.U.I. Maynooth) `Luxury and Austerity', 16-18 May, 1997.

[17] The original of the account is the property of the Cosby family and is kept in the library at Stradbally Hall, Co. Laois.

outlined his achievements. In both documents (the autobiography and the letter), Cosby sought to justify everything he had done in his life and to leave for posterity an account of his achievements in improving the Stradbally estate.[18]

Despite the rather idiosyncratic language and the seemingly uneventful career of the author Pole Cosby's autobiography is one of the most vivid accounts of Irish county society in the first half of the eighteenth century. The account raises many important questions. Did Cosby really carry out all the improvements on the estate that he boasted about? What were the backgrounds of the newcomers like Ephraim Dawson and John Bland? How did families of English Catholic stock like William Hartpole survive? What role did head tenants and entrepreneurs like William Dod and Israel Mitchell play in the improvement of town and countryside? How important were the Quaker families like the Coopers? And how far did the gentry constitute a `county society'? Would it be possible to use Cosby's autobiography, in conjunction with other written and material remains, and produce a study of Protestant landed society at a county or regional level between 1690 and 1760?

The bulk of the evidence for this thesis has been extracted from the handful of large estate archives that managed to escape destruction. The Flower archive (which is an exceptionally complete record of estate management and consumption in the period 1690-1760) was `thrown aside as useless waste' when Lord Ashbrook left Ireland in the aftemath of the Civil War in 1922. Fortunately these papers were rescued by a local clergyman and presented to the National Library of Ireland.[19] The De Vesci archive (which is also very strong for the early eighteenth century) remained at Abbey Leix House until they were sold to the National Library in 1996.[20] The Parsons family archive (which is most useful for the seventeenth century and the late eighteenth century onwards) is still *in situ* at Birr Castle. Family papers have also been preserved at Stradbally Hall and Blandsfort, and these (along with documents in the Registry of Deeds) can be used to place Cosby's autobiography into its proper context.[21] In addition to these large caches of estate papers there are smaller fragmentary collections that relate

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[18] Pole Cosby's letter to his son and daughter, Stradbally Hall Mss., 1 Jan. 1760, listed in P.R.O.N.I. report, T.3829/H3.

[19] Sir John Ainsworth, N.L.I., Reports on the Private Private Papers No. 209.

[20] In the 1960s a significant portion of the collection was seemingly disgarded and fell into the hands of a local historian. It was not until 1996 that that these papers were re-united with the main body, see revised foreword to the catalogue of the De Vesci Papers in the N.L.I. by A.P.W. Malcomson.

[21] See report on the surviving manuscripts at Stradbally Hall compiled by A.P.W. Malcomson and D.M. Beaumont in 1995, P.R.O.N.I., T.3829.

to the Blundell, Hartpole, Fitzpatrick, Rolleston, King, Walsh-Kemmis, Chetwood, Cooke and Vaughan families.

Though exceptionally rich, these estate archives do not enable us to build up a complete picture of the landed elite: all of the estate papers listed above relate to Protestant landed families who were in the upper echelons of the gentry. The peers (of a pre-1690 creation) are not well represented because the bulk of their lands were concentrated in other parts of Ireland or further afield. The handful of peers who did have a close connection with the two counties (e.g. the Earls of Mountrath) spent most of their time abroad and their archives have been scatterred. The lesser gentry, who tended to reside in farmhouses, were less likely to build up estate archives than their richer neighbours with larger country seats. Most of the lesser gentlemen and head tenants probably kept a cash book and sundry deeds in a chest at the bottom of their beds. The richest gentlemen by contrast employed stewards to deal with the piles of legal documents, rent rolls, correspondence and tradesmen's bills that accumulated in the household. It is also true that the De Vesci, Flower, Parsons, Bland and Cosby papers survived into the twentieth century because the owners had room to house them. Most of the smaller landowners, who did not have the luxury of a library, muniment room or estate office, dumped non-working documents on the bonfire.

The survival of a group of archives relating to similar gentlemen provides an excellent opportunity to examine the *relative* fortunes of a landed group who owned estates within a particular region. But the absence of similar evidence on the lesser gentry means that one is less able to make effective generalisations about Protestant landed society as a whole. Some of the most fruitful research in recent years has been on the relationships between the various sections of the landed elite. The upper gentry were not a rigid social category and the differences between families like the Cosbys and the Parsons (in terms of their income, office-holding and social standing in the county) can reveal much about social mobility, and the ways in which landowners exploited the economic possibilities that were open to them after the Williamite Settlement. The strong evidence that relates to the Quaker communities, the clergy and the pseudo-urban gentry in the two counties also offers clues as to how individuals propelled themselves into the lesser gentry. But one must acknowledge that there was a huge gulf between a prosperous Quaker with an urban landholding (with perhaps an income of £100 p.a) and a substantial gentlemen (with thousands of acres and a rental of more than £1000 p.a). Writers like Jonah Barrington and historians of eighteenth-century Ireland like Lecky spent a great deal of ink on the lesser gentry. They argued that it was these these `half mounted' or

small gentry that made the Irish landownership so distinctive. However many of their conclusions were based on anecdotal rather than solid archival evidence. Until more estate papers are quarried one cannot specify about the precise role of the Protestant middle-men and farmers in this period.[22]

The ability to produce an accurate picture of the Irish Protestant gentry is also constrained by the limited range of documentary materials that are available. The voluminous household accounts, estate correspondence, tradesmen's bills and maps provide a clear picture of household consumption, country house building and estate management. Corporation, demographic, church patronage and fiscal records also provide strong evidence of urban development in the region. By contrast few documents of a more personal nature (such as journals, common-place books and private correspondence) have survived. Without these one cannot make effective generalizations about the religious beliefs and mentality of the elite. The destruction of all of the Grand Jury records and the limited parliamentary material available also limits our understanding of gentry participation in politics and inter-familial relationships within the county.

The social and political power of the Irish Protestant gentry stemmed first and foremost from their ownership of land. Land was the bedrock of society and without an adequate knowledge of the distribution of landed wealth in this period one can not begin to examine the social and cultural dimensions of the gentry. For this reason it is appropriate that the first chapter should examine how the Irish Protestant elite emerged c.1710 with a virtual monopoly of the profitable lands. A statistical analysis is offered of the size and spatial distribution of the Protestant population, the social composition of the gentry and the religious and ethnic background of landowners. The gentry was not a static social group and I investigate how far newcomers were able to enter the elite in this region between 1710 and 1760.

The ownership of land alone, whether it be through purchase or grant, does not explain why some estates were more successful than others. What did landowners do with the land once they acquired it? In chapter two I outline the ways in which landowners actually managed their fortunes. This involves an examination of inheritance and the law, debt management and marriage settlements. Some landowners were more active than others and it is necessary to ascertain the incidence of absenteeism in the

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[22]T.C. Barnard, `Review Article: The Gentrification of Eighteenth-Century Ireland', *Eighteenth-Century Ireland,* Vol. 2, (1997), pp. 136-155; K. Whelan, *The Tree of Liberty: Radicalism, Catholicism and the Construction of Irish Identity 1760-1830,* (Cork, 1996).

region. The cult of `improvement' emerged in this period and in the final section of the chapter I examine the contributions that `improving landlords' made in developing their estates.

At the hub of each estate was the country house and in chapter three I focus on the family and household. This involves some analysis of the size and structure of landed families, a look at marital relations, children and adolescents (and their education inside and outside the household) and the role of servants. One reason for the traditional hostility towards the Irish Protestant elite was their conspicuous consumption and in the second half of this chapter I look at the level of consumption and the importance of hospitality and display in the household.

The most obvious `improved' features on the Irish landscape were the country houses and demesnes and in the fourth chapter I examine the relationship between architecture and social status. In Ireland there was not a neat transition between the tower house and the country house and I show the extent to which landowners re-used traditional sites and earlier architectural forms. A handful of gentlemen did build splendid classical houses in this period and I explore the motivations for new building, the transmission of architectural ideas and the costs and logistics of construction. The country seat was a machine for living in and a reflection of its owners. For this reason I focus in the last section of this chapter on the relationships between the house and its furnishings and gardens.

The family and household was not a hermetically sealed environment. The consumption and patronage of the gentry had a profound effect on local communities. In chapter five I examine the direct and indirect role that landowners had on the development of urban settlement. Landowners were only one of many agents that contributed to the survival of towns and at this juncture I examine the relationships between the gentry, the Quaker communties, the corporation officials, the clergy and other important urban dwellers.

Landowners also belonged to a wider county or regional communities and in chapter six I explore the formal and informal contexts in which groups of Protestant gentlemen worked and socialised together. The role of the High Sheriff, the county magistracy, the Grand Jury, the militia and the officers of the revenue are considered. In each case particular attention is paid to how gentlemen were selected for these positions, the social and economic backgrounds of the appointees and their contribution to the maintenance of law and order in the county. Protestant gentlemen also met together at funerals, hunts and numerous other county events and in the last section of this chapter I

examine the more informal mechanisms by which Protestant landed society was held together. Finally I touch on how gentlemen actually perceived the geographical space in which they inhabited and how they contributed to the development of antiquarianism.

The most exclusive club for the Irish Protestant elite was the Parliament, and in the final chapter I look specifically at how national issues affected the politics of the county gentry and question whether there was such a thing as constituency representation in this period. Politics often constituted one small part in the lives of M.P.s, and by way of a postscript I hint at the wider worlds that they inhabited.

CHAPTER 1

The Evolution of a Protestant Landed Elite

Ephraim Dawson, one of the most influential figures in The Queen's County in the early eighteenth century, died in 1746. On his death bed he might have looked back over his long life with some satisfaction. From the windows of his house, Dawson's Court, he could survey his extensive demesne complete with impressive garden buildings and his broad acres beyond.[1] He achieved considerable political success having been Member of Parliament for three successive terms (representing the borough of Portarlington between 1713-1714 and then the county between 1715-1727 and 1727-1746). He was also a county magistrate, High Sheriff, and a freeholder and patron of the town of Portarlington. As Ephraim reached mature years his son and heir, William Henry Dawson, carried on with his campaigns of improvement, and the important political and material patrimony that he inherited helped in turn to raise him into the ranks of the peerage in 1770.[2]

This resumé gives the impression that Dawson was a real `county man' who had successfully burrowed his way into landed society over many decades or even centuries. In fact the Dawsons were not Anglo-Normans, Old Protestants, nor even Cromwellians or Restoration grantees. Ephraim Dawson was an early eighteenth-century speculator who had made his money out of banking and had then used capital to acquire land that had been knocked down at a bargain price in the aftermath of the Williamite confiscations.[3]

The estate which he acquired had a long and tangled history and it is worth relating. In 1641 about 16,500 acres in the parishes of Ballykean, Clonykurk, Lea, Ballybrackan and Harristown were held by the Catholic landowner Lewis Dempsey, Viscount Clanmalier.[4] These were forfeited to the crown for his part in the Irish

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[1] As yet no description of Dawson's Court has come to light. This early eighteenth century house was demolished in c.1796 to make way for Emo Park designed by James Gandon. One impressive garden building known as `The Temple' still survives and is similar to other classical gazebos and summer houses designed by Edward Lovett Pearce. Perhaps the dwelling house was of an equal quality. The gazebo appears in the c.1765 Oliver Sloane map, N.L.I., Ms. 16.h.9. (2), and is described in, James Howley, *The Follies and Garden Buidings of Ireland,* (Yale, 1993). pp. 131-133.

[2] He was made Baron Dawson of Dawson's Court in 1770 and raised to Viscount Carlow in 1776.

[3] Accounts of the Dawson family and their estate; `a book of extracts and leases relating to the Dawson family' (modern type script), N.L.I., Ms. 5644; Lord Walter Fitzgerald, `History and Antiquities of the Queen's County Barony of Portnahinch', *J.K.A.S.*, Vol. 4, (1903-1905), pp.195 and 221-227; John Stocks Powell, *Portarlington: A Planted Town,* (Portarlington, 1990), pp. 70-74.

[4] Books of Survey and Distribution, N. Arch. Ire., Ms. 2a,2,13, Vol. XIII folios 80-152, (microfilm, MFS 2/6); book of maps of the 1st Earl of Galway, c.1700, Cambridge University Library, (Bradshaw Collection), Add. 4358.

Rebellion and were granted to Henry Bennet, Baron Arlington, who attempted without much success to establish two towns and to improve the estate. He sold the estate to Sir Patrick Trant, a prominent Catholic landowner (and a Sheriff for The Queen's County and an M.P. in the so-called Jacobite Parliament of 1689). Trant forfeited his estates for his part in the Jacobite cause and went into exile. In 1696, the military commander Henri Massue de Ruvigny (created 1st Earl of Galway and Baron Portarlington) was granted the estate for his military service to William III and he established a colony of Huguenot army veterans. Soon after the English Parliament, displeased by King William's rewards to his `alien creatures', forced the king to sell the Irish lands that he had given to favourites and to use the proceeds to pay for debts incurred during the war. Ruvigny's lands were re-acquired by the crown under the terms of the Act of Resumption and put up for public auction in 1702/03. The Commissioners for Forfeited Estates encountered some difficulty in obtaining any satisfactory bids for Irish lands and the Trant/Ruvigny estate was one of the many lots that remained unsold. As a last resort a consortium of London merchants, the Hollow Sword Blade Company, stepped in and bought the remnants (250,000 acres in 22 counties) for a knock-down price.[5] The investors soon found that owning land in Ireland was not as lucrative as they had imagined. It was difficult for a commercial body to administer such a vast and disparate group of estates from London. The Hollow Blades sold c.1708 and it is at this point the Dublin banker makes his entry into the county.[6]

The estate that Ephraim Dawson acquired had changed hands no fewer than six times in so many decades and it illustrates the effects of the three main phases of forfeiture and re-grant in Ireland during the second half of the seventeenth century: in its history can be seen the political instability, the fluidity of landownership and the potential for newcomers with capital, ambition and bright ideas to lay new foundations and transform towns and country in the two counties before 1760.

Each of the 300 or so estates that existed in the two counties have an individual history, some of which may have been equally eventful, but since evidence relates to only a tiny fraction of this number one is forced to use a representative sample of case studies. This can have the effect of de-humanising history; estates can all too easily become statistical abstractions rather than an extension of a landowner's personality. But for the purposes of understanding patterns of settlement and regional trends the broad brush has to be employed at the outset.

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[5] 30,000 acres in The King's and Queen's counties were sold (including the former Trant estate); *A List of the Estates in Ireland of the Hollow Blades Sword Company'*, (Dublin, 1709).

[6] Information on Dawson's banking activity to be found in; James Fleming, `Emo Park', *The Weekly Irish Times,* 20 Nov. 1937; transfer of lands from Trant to Hollow Blades, J.G. Simms, *The Williamite Confiscation in Ireland 1690-1703,* (London, 1956), pp. 151, 177.

An alternative to writing a strict sequential or chronological blow by blow account of the distribution of landed wealth in Ireland is to focus on a particular year or decade when estates were no longer in the melting pot and when political and economic conditions were sufficiently stable for a more permanent pattern of land ownership to emerge. One can then compare and contrast what occurred before and after this date. By looking backwards and forwards in this way one is less likely to lose sight of our quarry: the gentry families living in the first half of the eighteenth century.

No particular year `heralds the beginning of a new order' or the `birth of Protestant ascendancy'.[7] Indeed such text-book language suggests that the motley collection of families who arrived into Ireland in different waves and who had varying degrees of success were a discreet and unified group. Landed society was in fact rather more fluid than such labels imply (the term `ascendancy' was first known to have been used in the 1780s). Marriage, purchase and biological extinction meant that new families continually broke into the ranks of this elite.

Between 1641 and 1760 there were at least 760 distinct landowning surnames in circulation in The King's and Queen's counties alone.[8] The challenge is to ascertain how many of these families existed at a given point in time, and thereby to establish whether there was an expansion or contraction of the landed gentry. If one is to draw a line in the sand then the datum point should be a year/decade when a clearly defined network of families can be identified and when most of the changes in landownership resulted from internal modifications (marriage, purchase etc. within the core network) rather than external factors (royal grant/sequestration and purchases by outsiders).

Though the confiscations and re-grants that followed the Williamite Wars were far less dramatic than the two preceding land settlements they had a knock-on effect on the land market throughout the 1690s. It was not until after the Act of Resumption in 1700 and the sale of further estates that the formal process of re-settlement came to an end. The state did not interfere directly with landownership again on such a national scale until the late nineteenth century. However, the crown still technically owned a substantial amount of land which meant that most gentry families were tenants in fee and liable to pay quit rent.[9] Heavily encumbered estates and political crises meant that

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[7] Examination of the term `Ascendancy' can be found in J. Kelly, `The Rightboy Disturbances of the 1780s', in G O'Brien ed. , *Parliament, Politics and People; Essays in Eighteenth-Century Irish History*, (Dublin, 1989), pp. 93-127.

[8] Data is taken from the Books of Survey and Distribution, 1659 `Census', Common Pleas and Chancery Courts indexes, 1706 Quit Rent list, Trinity College matriculation books, lists of magistrates and M.P.s .

[9] Quit rents were charged on the profitable lands that were forfeited after the rebellion of 1641. From 1669-1683 the collection of the rent was farmed out to Alderman John French and the tax was collected throughout the period under question. It was not until 1943 that the Quit Rent Office was formally abolished. See Eilish Ellis, `Records of the Quit Rent Office', in M.D. Evans ed. *Aspects of Irish Genealogy II*, (Dublin, 1996), pp. 50-61.

the courts and parliament were periodically forced to meddle with the landed settlement after 1700. The demise of a substantial gentleman may have had limited local repurcussions but the fall of a magnate like the Duke of Ormonde had regional if not national consequences.[10] And through the working of the Penal Laws parliament also indirectly changed the pattern of land ownership.

The beginning of the eighteenth century was a turning point. Thenceforth inheritance, marriage and purchase rather than royal grant were the key means of creating and consolidating estates. However, the Protestant gentlemen who had experienced the dramatic transfer of power between 1685 and 1690 and who did not have the benefit of hindsight could not be certain that the wheel of fortune had revolved for the last time and that their estates were finally settled. It was not until the second decade of the eighteenth century that a large number of the gentry felt secure enough to build houses and lay out demesnes. Even after the 1710s the voluminous petitions and legal wranglings of `innocent Catholics' over land titles, and the perceived internal and external Jacobite threats had a de-stabilising effect on Protestant Ireland.

All things considered 1710 would be the most ideal benchmark year. The most complete list of names of landowning families living in The King's and Queen's counties is dated 1706, and by using a combination of other sources one can attempt to identify the landed elite as it existed c.1710. The origins and subsequent development of this 1710 group (as far back as c.1560 and as far forward as 1760) is surveyed below and the impact of the `new entrants' to landed society (those families who first entered the counties between c.1710 and 1760) is then assessed.

1.1 The counties and their Protestant population

The King's and Queen's are both medium sized counties (they consisted of 2.3 and 2.2 % of the surface area of the island respectively), and they display many common characteristics.[11] The differences in geology and climate are less noticeable than in many other parts of Ireland. Even taken together as an east midlands region the two counties are still far smaller than Donegal, Kerry, Tipperary, Galway and Mayo and half the size of Cork (see Map 1). They are bounded by 8 counties, overlapped by 7 dioceses and have less geographical integrity than coastal areas. Both counties were created at the

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[10] Between 1691 and 1701 parliament assisted Ormonde in converting leases for lives into fee farm leases as a means of paying off part of his £98,500 debt, and in 1715 his role as a Jacobite meant that he forfeited his estate to the crown, T.P. Power, *Land, Politics and Society in Eighteenth Century Tipperary,* (Oxford, 1993), p. 76; David Hayton, paper given on the 2nd Duke of Ormonde at T.C.D., 11 May 1998.

[11] The acreages (from which these percentages derive) are taken from Arthur Young, *A Tour in Ireland in the years 1776, 1777, 1778, and 1779,* (London, 1780 2nd. ed.), Volume 2, Part II, p. 2.

same time by English colonists and have a similar pattern of settlement. For the purposes of examining a landed elite it is convenient to take the two counties together.

Though a little larger in physical extent The King's County had less profitable land than Queen's. At the beginning of the nineteenth century 45% of the land was not charged with the county cess because it was bog, moor, or mountain (compared to 30% of the land in Queen's).[12] These figures are all the more striking when one considers that there had been intensive draining of the bogs in the previous three decades as well as piecemeal improvement earlier still.[13] Charles Coote observed in 1801 that there was a noticeable `material difference' between the two counties and was struck by the `extraordinary proportion of waste land' in King's, `which shows how much yet remains to be done'.[14] In 1690 the landscape would have seemed even more barren and inhospitable to the English settlers. They were faced with an over-abundance of bog land and a distinct lack of timber. Most of the indigenous woodland, which had been an important economic resource in the early seventeenth century, had been felled.[15] Map 3 shows the large tracts of bog that existed when Herman Moll made his road map of the region in 1728.

Topographical accounts suggest that there was little arable farming in King's before 1760 because in general the land was not very fertile. Arthur Young remarked that `the tillage of the whole country is very inconsiderable', with perhaps as little as 4% of the land ploughed in some baronies.[16] A significant transition from pasture to tillage seems to have occurred much later in the eighteenth century. Young computed that the quantity of land that was used for tillage in King's had `increased double in twenty years' (i.e. between c.1760 and 1780) and suggested that this was as a result of the parliamentary bounty paid for the inland carriage of grain.[17] Despite natural inadequacies Coote still felt that `the sources of wealth in The King's County' were

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[12] Charles Coote, *General View of the Agriculture and Manufactures of the Queen's County*, (Dublin, 1801), p. 2; *General View of the Agriculture and Manufactures of the King's County,* (Dublin, 1801), p. 2.
[13]For examples of earlier draining (which is discussed in chapter 2.6) in the two counties see Minute Books of the Dublin Society, 1731-1760; R.D.S. library.
[14] Coote, K.C., pp. 2, 41.
[15] Earlier maps give one a better idea of the amount of bogland, e.g. H. Moll's map of King's, Queen's and Kildare in his *A Set of Twenty Road Maps New and Correct of Ireland,* (London, 1727), plate 9; Oliver Sloane's printed map of The Queen's County, c. 1765, N.L.I., Map 16.h.19 (2). For a summary of the depletion of the indigenous forests see Eileen McCracken,`Woodlands of North Leinster', *J.K.A.S,* Vol. 14. (1964-70), pp. 431-442 and J. Feehan, *The Landscape of the Slieve Bloom: a study of its natural and human heritage,* (Dublin, 1979), p. 120.
[16] Young, Vol. 2, p. 220.
[17] Young felt that the barony of Garrycastle had much more pasture because there was a smaller number of large farms from 150-400 acres which were under leases renewable forever and `so highly improved by the tenants, that they abstain from tillage', Young, p.220-223. For an assessment of the importance of the grain bounty see D. Dickson, `Taxation and Disaffection in Late Eighteenth-Century Ireland', in S. Clark and J.S. Donnelly eds., *Irish Peasants: Violence and Political Unrest 1780-1914,* (Madison and Manchester, 1983), p. 37.

woefully neglected by the landowners. He was appalled by the number of absentees, `not so as in the Queen's County, do we find great tracts improved and ornamented, in consequence of the gentry residing at home, nor do we generally see these estates, which are not resided on by their proprietors'.[18]

By contrast The Queen's County soil varied from stiff clay to sandy loam and a larger proportion of the land was suitable for arable farming. Arthur Young missed out this part of the country on his first tour but `having heard much of the beauties of a part of the Queen's County, I had not before seen, I took that line of country in my way on a journey to Dublin'. Young was not disappointed and he ends his two volume gazeteer by declaring `what a country would Ireland be had the inhabitants of the rest of it improved the whole like this'.[19]

The relative poverty of The King's County can also be seen in the population figures from the mid seventeenth century to the end of the eighteenth century. In 1659 The Queen's County had a taxable population that was 34% greater than its neighbour. The eighteenth-century hearth tax returns suggest that King's had begun to catch up in the later seventeenth century.[20] In 1760 King's had 8,535 taxable houses compared to 11,144 in Queen's (see Table 1.1).

Table 1.1 Hearth Tax totals for The King's and Queen's counties, 1706-1760

Year	The King's County	The Queen's County
1706	6424	7258
1712	6645	7183
1718	6844	7551
1725	7725	9046
1726	7715	8885
1732	7914	8668
1744	7580	8914
1749	7776	9540
1752	8353	9775
1753	8574	10418
1760	8535	11144

Source: Dickson et al, `Hearth Tax, Household Size and the Irish Population'.

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[18] Coote, K.C., p. 19.

[19] Young, Vol. 2, p.287; for a description of the soil, O'Hanlon et al *History of the Queen's County,* Vol. 1, pp. 4-14.

[20] In 1706 Queen's had 13% more people and in 1712 the disrepancy between the two populations reached 8%. This is the point when the size of the populations of the two counties were most evenly matched in the period 1659-1760. For the rest of the century the returns show that the population of The Queen's County vis a vis King's grew significantly larger (in 1725 17%, 1749 23% and in 1760 31% more); D. Dickson et al, `Hearth Tax, Household Size and Irish Population Change 1672-1821', *P.R.I.A.*, Vol. 82, C, no. 6 (Dublin, 1982), p. 134.

Map 3 The extent of bogland in The King's and Queen's counties c. 1730

KINGS County
QUEENS County
and KILDARE County.
By H. Moll Geographer

A comparison of the annual growth rates for the two counties is more telling than just the relative size of the two populations. Throughout the period 1690-1760 the percentage change per annum of the county hearth tax revenue for Queen's was consistently higher than its neighbour.[21] There were however some interesting short term fluctuations.

Between 1685 and 1700 the rate of population growth for the whole of Ireland was low on account of the sluggish revenue administration and the dislocations caused by the Williamite War.[22] In the first three decades of the eighteenth century the two counties, like the rest of the midlands, experienced much healthier growth rates. In the period 1706-1732 the number of taxable hearths grew by 19% in King's and 23% in Queen's.[23] Most of this growth occurred between 1706 and 1725, for in the years 1726-1732 there was a noticeable drop in the population. This was probably due to the harvest failures of 1726, 1727 and 1728 (which were known to have caused famine conditions in the northern counties) coupled with outbreaks of dysentery, typhoid and small pox. This led to higher mortality levels, internal migration and a wave of emigration to the American colonies. The Queen's County seems to have been affected more seriously

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[21] It is possible that the divergence in population size is in part due to how the hearth tax was raised. A poorer county like King's probably had a larger proportion of houses that were exempt (paupers, widows etc.) that would would not have appeared on the returns. Similarly those houses in among the large tracts of bog, mountain and waste land were less likely to have been considered by the revenue collectors. In 1706 The King's County had 6424 taxable houses compared to 7258 in The Queen's County (13% more). William Molyneux, on the basis of the hearth tax returns, put the population of the two counties in the same year at 33,594 and 37,908 respectively (12.8% difference) using a multiplier of 5 heads per 1 hearth and 7 heads per 1+ hearths. The proportion of the houses in both counties with 1 hearth were virtually identical (in King's 88.5% of the houses contained one hearth compared to 88.8% in Queen's). But differing economic environments, familial customs and standards of housing may have meant that the number of persons in each household varied between the two counties. If for instance the average household in Queen's with 1 taxable hearth contained 5 people whereas the same average household in King's contained 6 then the size of the total county populations would be virtually the same; Molyneux's calculations taken from the Hearth Money Returns, 1706, T.C.D., Ms. 883/2. Coote mentioned at the beginning of the nineteenth century that the `houses of the peasants' in Queen's were `superior to any in the neighbouring counties'; Coote, Q.C., p. 24. This was probably because the houses he saw were more substantial than the hovels that he had seen elsewhere, but it might also have been because there were fewer people per household and less squalor as a result.

[22]Highest population growth rates between 1685 and 1700 were in south Munster, Connaught and south east Leinster. In a midlands context Queen's fared better than all its neighbouring counties (except Carlow which had a similar rate of growth of between -0.00- -0.49% per annum) whereas King's, like neighbouring Tipperary, north Leinster and Southern Ulster, had a much lower growth rate. (-1.00- -1.49% p.a).

[23]An average of 0.50-0.99% growth rate p.a. In the period 1706-1732 there were some interesting fluctuations: between 1706 and 1712 the number of taxable houses in King's increases by 3.44% (6424-6645) whereas in Queen's the number falls by 1.03% (7258-7183). This might add some credence to the suggestion that the population rate of King's was catching up with Queen's in the period c.1659-1710 and then slowed down afterwards. From 1712-1718 King's (6645-6844- increase of 2.99%) had a slower rate than Queen's (7183-7551- increase of 5.12%), which is also true of the period 1718-1725, Queen's higher (7551-9046- 19.80%) than King's (6844-7725- increase of 12.87%). Between 1725 and 1732 both counties appear to have experienced a fall in the taxable population, although Queen's seems to fare more badly.

than its neighbour (the number of taxable houses in 1732 was down 4.25% on the number returned in 1725, whereas in King's the number actually went up by 2.45% in the same period). This may offer clues as to the relative importance of the agricultural activities that were carried out in the two counties.[24]

The Queen's County was almost certainly growing more corn, bushel for bushel, than its neighbour in these years. But the sizeable population increase in the previous decade may have meant that the amount of corn the county was growing per capita was falling. The Queen's County might therefore have been more vulnerable at times of harvest failure. Alternatively an explanation might be found in the mechanisms through which grain was bought and sold in the early eighteenth century and the degree to which the two counties were part of a regional market for grain. A highly commercialised local economy could create adverse conditions for the poorest sections of society at times of crisis. The activities of urban corn merchants and millers often inflated grain prices and this might have had a bearing on the rate of population growth in the locale.[25] Coote, writing in the following century, commented on a number of towns in and around Queen's that bought corn to re-sell further afield as well as to feed the local population. Mountrath for instance had a `brisk demand for every kind of corn', and Carlow town, just across the county border, afforded a `great consumption'.[26] In King's there was a greater emphasis on the market for cattle and only a few towns had realised their full potential as commercial centres.[27] Shinrone was `aptly situate for trade, had it but the advantage of inland navigation, I know of no country, that would be so much benefited as for a want of competition amongst the corn buyers'.[28]

From the 1730s to the 1760s the population of The Queen's County resumed its former trajectory. It recovered rapidly from the crises of the 1720s, and had a growth rate that was once again significantly higher than its neighbour.[29] The period 1732-44 is noteworthy because it covers the years in which Ireland suffered its second and most serious series of natural disasters in the eighteenth century (a succession of harvest failures in 1739, 1740 and 1741 coupled with freak weather conditions and associated

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[24] Between 1726 and 1732 King's was one of the few counties (along with Kilkenny, Cork and Kerry) that showed continued growth. Elsewhere in Ireland there was no increase and in Ulster there was a perceptible fall in the annual growth rate.

[25] Corn hoarding seems to have been a particular problem in this region and in November 1725 Sir William Parsons, Ephraim Dawson, William Flower and William Wall were among those who put forward a bill to regulate measurement of corn and the price of bread, 19 Nov. 1725, *J.H.C.*, Vol. III, pp. 422,489; (see chapter 7.5).

[26] Coote, Q.C., pp. 74, 179.

[27] Cullen also made this point, *The Emergence of Modern Ireland*, p. 54.

[28] Coote, K.C., p.55.

[29] Between 1732 and 1749 the number of houses in King's actually decreases (from 7914-7776- down 1.74%) whereas the number in Queen's rises from 8668-9540- up 10.06%).

epidemics). This time it was The King's County that experienced a fall in growth rate during these crisis years.[30] In 1741 it was reported at Birr that `great numbers of people daily die of fluxes, which is owing to their wretched food'.[31]

Successive hearth tax returns show that the growth rate for The King's County had already begun to recover in the late 1740s, slipping again a little in the 1750s, and then sustaining continuous upward growth from the 1760s right up to the end of the century and beyond.[32] If in these years there was a neat correlation between production and population growth then the hearth tax returns seem to confirm Arthur Young's suggestion that the agricultural (as distinct from the industrial) potential of The King's County had only begun to be fully exploited in the latter part of the eighteenth century.

Calculating the growth rates of the Protestant population in the same period is much more problematic.[33] It is especially difficult to get a sense of the relative numbers of Protestants in different parts of the two counties because the surviving returns are not broken up into baronies (see Map 2).[34] The 1659 `census' and an isolated abstract of the number of Catholics and Protestant households in 1732 are the only available indexes.[35] By using the figures in the two documents one is not comparing like with like.[36]

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[30]The number of taxable houses in King's went down from 7914-7580 (a drop of 4.22%) whereas in Queen's the number went up comfortably from 8914-9540 (up 7.02%).

[31]D. Dickson, *Arctic Ireland: The Extraordinary Story of the Great Frost and Forgotten Famine of 1740-41,* (Belfast, 1997), p. 56.

[32] By 1752 The King's County had reached the house total that it had in 1732 (in the late 1740s it seems to make a rapid recovery, slows down in the 1750s and then takes off from 1760). From 1749-1752 the number of houses increases from 7776-8353 (up 7.42%) compared to an upward change in Queen's from 9540-9775 (up 2.46%). Between 1753-1760 the number of houses in King's dropped from 8574-8535 (down 0.45%) whereas in Queen's there was a healthy rise from 10418-11144 (up 6.97%). From 1760 the growth rate of King's catches up with Queen's (between 1753 and 1791 they both have an annual growth rate of between 1.00-1.49%.

[33]An examination of hearth tax evidence has shown that in the first half of the eighteenth century there were strong regional trends in the growth of taxable houses (positive autocorrelation). By comparing the relative growth rates of the English/Protestant population (vis a vis the Catholic population) in 16 of the 20 baronies between 1659and 1732 one might be able to find whether similar patterns can be found at a local level; D. Dickson et al, `Hearth Tax, Household Size and Irish Population Change, p. 134.

[34]Only a few fragments remain of the religious census material of 1766 and no independent surveys (such as the one commissioned by the Bishop of Elphin in 1749) have come to light.

[35] *A Census of Ireland c.1659,* Seamus Pender ed. (Dublin, 1939), pp. 435-448 and 491-504; `An Abstract of the number of Protestant and Popish familys as returned to the Hearth Money Office anno. 1732 Pursevant to the order of the Commissioners of the Revenue', Bishop Gibson Collection, Lambeth Palace, m/film copy in P.R.O.N.I., MIC. 310/1. Many of the figures in the 1732 religious abstract match the county house totals for the hearth tax which makes it likely that the hearth tax returns were cannibalised. However, there are many discrepancies: the Antrim, Down, Cavan, Monaghan, Armagh, Wicklow, Kildare, Carlow, and Queen's totals bear little relation to the official hearth tax totals. In Carlow for example the official hearth tax house total is 5079 whereas the number of households in the religious return is 8437.

[36]The 1659 data was probably commissioned for the purposes of raising a Poll tax and the totals probably represent the number of adult males. By contrast the 1732 figures were based on the actual number of houses charged with the hearth tax. The former was compiled at a time when the collection of the revenue was farmed out to private agents, the latter was calculated by paid government officials working within a newly overhauled revenue administration. The most crucial difference is that the `census' divides the population between `English' and `Irish' whereas the 1732 list is `an abstract of the number of Protestant

Nevertheless, by using a combination of tests specifically designed to highlight the changing proportions of ethnic/religious groups, rather than just numerical differences, one can begin to pin point where there was a relatively high concentration of Protestants.[37]

In 1659 2621 `English' households were recorded in the two counties (or 13.5% of the total population). There was on average 2.9 English households for every 1,000 acres. Appendix 1 shows that there were notable differences between the baronies. Tinehinch, Geashill and Ballycowen contained the highest percentage of `English' heads (19% in each). All three baronies are contiguous and form a band running from the top centre of King's across the Slieve Bloom mountains into Queen's. Stradbally (11%) and Slievemargy (11%) on the eastern edge of Queen's and Clonisk (10%) in the south western corner of King's, that juts out into Tipperary, had the lowest. In terms of numerical strength Upper Ossory, Maryborough and Philipstown contained the highest percentage of the total English stock. This was not surprising since Upper Ossory was the largest barony (and supposedly the richest part of the diocese of Ossory in the medieval period) and Maryborough and Philipstown included the two county towns.

Geashill had the highest density of English (as well as a high proportion vis a vis the total population). Most of the barony was held by the Digbys, Barons of Geashill, and it is likely that they encouraged English tenants to settle on their estate before the 1641 Rebellion. Ballyadams and Cullinagh, adjacent to each other in the southern portion of Queen's, also had relatively high numbers of English for their physical size. Eglish and Garrycastle to the west of King's and Coolestown on the eastern edge of the same county had a thin scattering of English. Thus a high percentage of `English' in the baronial population did not necessarily mean that there was also a high concentration, and vice versa (see Appendix 1a and 1b).

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and Popish familiys'. In the seventeenth century an Old English Catholic might have been listed as `Irish' (as demonstrated by such labelling in the Books of Survey and Distribution), and in the eighteenth century a Protestant convert of Gaelic Irish stock would almost certainly have been described in terms of his new religion rather than his ethnic background. In both instances there was a tendency to underestimate the number of `Irish' and Catholic households. In 1659 this was due mainly to the logistical difficulties of counting every Irish household. In 1732 the strength of the Protestant population in the more settled parts of Ireland was exaggerated. Nor can the baronial totals of `English' in 1659 and Protestant in 1732 be easily compared since the 1732 return is incomplete. There are no figures for 4 of the 11 baronies in The King's County and the baronies of Ossory and Upper Ossory in Queen's are considered as one barony in 1732.

[37]The first method (a) seeks to identify those baronies that were more anglicised (by simply comparing the number of English/Protestants vis a vis Irish/Catholics in each baronial population). The next method (b) uses the English/Protestant totals in isolation in order to ascertain which baronies had the greatest proportion of the overall settler stock. The last method, (c) takes into account the differences in the physical size of each barony so as to gauge where there was the greatest density of English/Protestants. This is probably the most accurate guide to the relative strength of the Protestant settlements. The results from each test can be placed into a crude league table to see whether there is a correlation between (a), (b) and (c) and how the baronies fare vis a vis each other depending on the method that is employed and the set of figures used (i.e. for 1659 or 1732); see Appendix 1e.

How far did this pattern of settlement change over the course of the period 1659-1732? The percentage of English/Protestants recorded in the two counties rose a little from 13.5 to 15.3% and the density rose from 2.9 to 3.9 per 1000 acres. At the top and bottom of the league table there were some signs of continuity. Tinehinch maintained its position as one of the most anglicised baronies (up from 19 to 21%). Ballybritt, which also showed signs of being a strong English centre, had a much higher percentage of Protestants. But this seems to have been the result of a decline in the Catholic population rather than a significant numerical rise.[38] Unfortunately, there are no comparative figures for Geashill and Ballycowen. One would suspect that the clusters of English in the seventeenth century were sufficiently large to have ensured that their strength was maintained if not strengthened in the early eighteenth century. It was not until the later half of the century that Geashill was said to have gone into a decline, as demonstrated by the low yields per acre and the lack of resident gentry.[39] Garrycastle at the other end of the spectrum, which was already thinly populated with `English' in 1659, had significantly fewer Protestants in 1732 (down from 14 to 8%).

In 1659, there was a middle band of 10 baronies that had below average percentages of English. In nearly all of these cases a higher number of Protestants were recorded in 1732 (particularly in Clonisk, Maryborough, Portnahinch, Kilcoursey and Coolestown). By contrast, Warrenstown, Philipstown and Ballyadams, which had been well represented with English householders in 1659, had noticeably fewer Protestants by 1732 (see Appendix 1c).[40]

Given the serious limitations of this evidence what generalisations can be made about the spatial distribution of Protestants in the early eighteenth century? The higher concentrations of English settlement were located in a wide band of contiguous baronies running from Ballycowen and Geashill in the north of King's into Tinehinch,

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[38]In Stradbally there were only 27 more Protestant households in 1732 yet the percentage of Protestants went from 15 to 24%.

[39] In 1801 the roads were said to be `shamefully bad, and at times almost impassable. Deprived of a resident gentry, this district is in a lamentable state of neglect'; Coote, K.C., pp. 133-135.

[40] The figures for the number of Protestants per 1000 acres show a very similar pattern and there seems to be a stronger relationship in 1732 between (a) a higher percentage vis a vis the rest of the population and (c) a higher density in a given acreage. There are only three exceptions to this simple equation. Upper Ossory and Cullinagh had a higher percentage of Protestants but more diluted concentrations. This was because the Catholic population had fallen by a greater amount than Protestants. The most notable change in density seems to have occurred in the barony of Stradbally. In 1659 there were 89 English households whereas in 1732 932 are recorded. The change in the size of the Irish/Catholic population was even more dramatic (from 709-5670) which meant that the percentage of Protestants was lower than the that of English 70 years earlier. These figures, when compared to the other baronial totals, seem anomalous. If they are to be believed then 30% of the Protestant population of the two counties resided in Stradbally even though the barony comprised of just 7% of the total acreage and had no significant urban settlements. In 1801 Coote mentioned that the barony of Stradbally was `populous' with a post, fair and market town, p.169. By 1841 Stradbally had 1682 adult males and was the fourth largest town in The Queen's County, *The Census of Ireland for the Year 1841.*

Maryborough, Portnehinch and Stradbally in Queen's (see Map 4). The baronies to the south and south western parts of Queen's (Ballyadams, Slievemargy, Cullinagh and Upper Ossory) had average concentrations. The King's County baronies were generally less settled, although Clonisk, Coolestown and Kilcoursey were notably more anglicised by the early eighteenth century. Garrycastle, Eglish, Philipstown and Warrenstown were relatively under-settled by Protestants. The population differences within the region can in part be explained by the uneven plantation of the area during the second half of the sixteenth century. Map 5 shows the position of the English settlements in the region between 1548 and 1600. Most of the early urban centres and garrisons were next to strategic sites (e.g. along the river Barrow and around Maryborough and Philipstown) in the eastern half of the region.[41]

For County Longford it has been argued that Protestants `tended to be concentrated in the more fertile districts of the region, were likely to be found in areas characterized by village or town settlements, and were represented where the local economy had (or once had) a significant industrial base'.[42] In the planted King's and Queen's counties, urban centres and industrial activity came about as a *result* of English Protestant settlement and not vice versa. Towns required an initial concentration of English planters if they were to have any chance of survival. Once established they acted as foci for the new Protestants settlers who transformed them in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. The origins of urban settlement, and in particular the role that proprietors played, will be discussed in chapter 5.1.

Topographical commentators were particularly impressed by the improvements in the most anglicised baronies. When Arthur Young made his tour of the area he chose a route that went through the centre of Queen's (a zone that had a high concentration of Protestants). He remarked `that from near Urlingford to Dawson's Court, near Monasterevin, which is completely across the Queen's County is a line of above thirty English miles, and is for that extent by much the most improved of any I have seen in Ireland'.[43] But `improvements', like towns, should be seen as a reflection rather than the cause of Protestant settlement.

The distribution of natural resources in the region was a primary determinant of Protestant settlement. Coote felt that the barony of Maryborough had `rich and luxuriant lands' and `tis like a continuation of one great demesne', and it is no coincidence that there was a relatively large number of Protestants in the barony. Likewise Ballyadams

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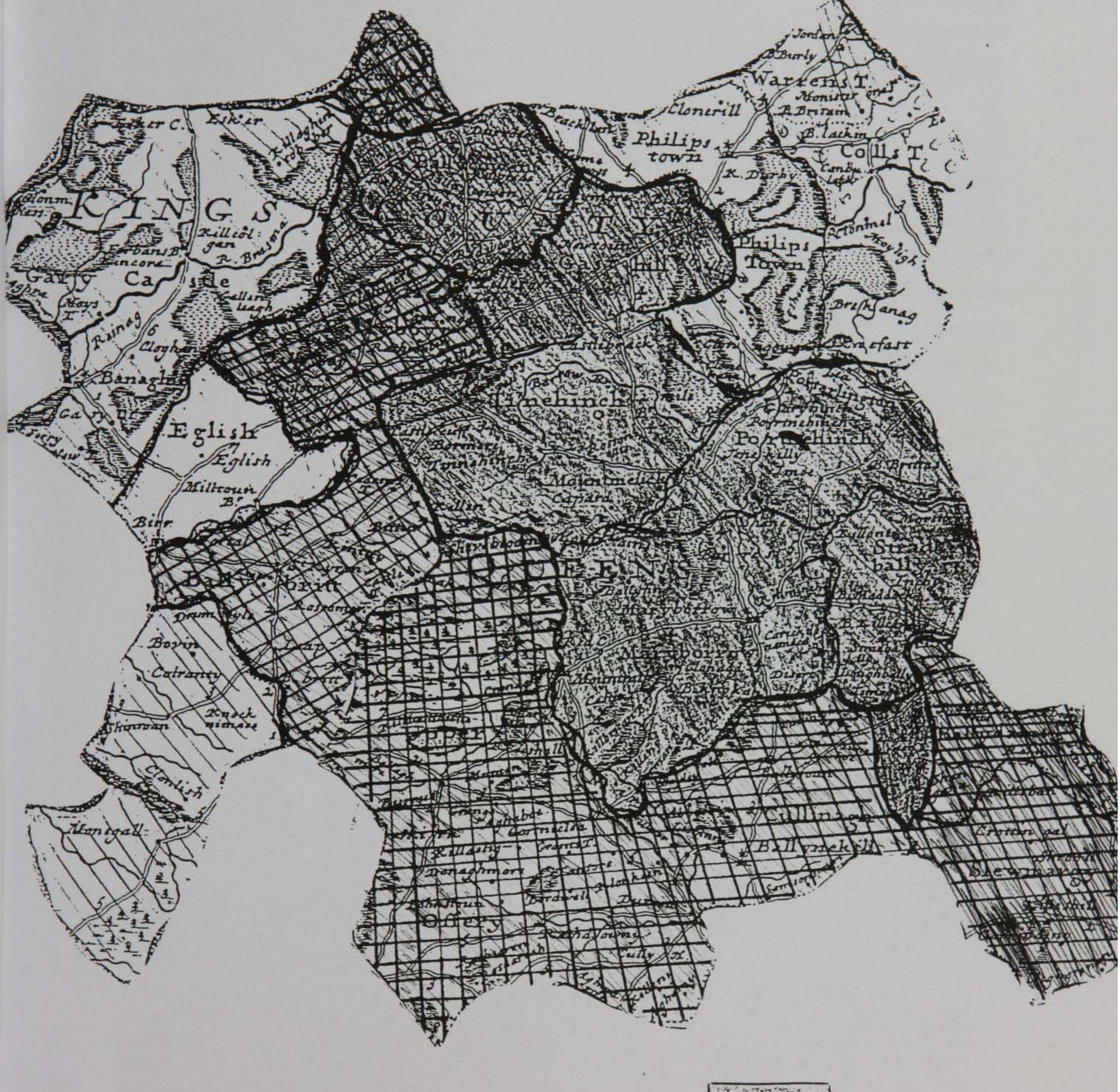
[41]Rolf Loeber, *The Geography and Practice of English Colonisation in Ireland from 1534 to 1609,* (Group for the Study of Irish Historic Settlement, 1991), pp. 27-29.
[42] Liam Kennedy et al, `The Long Retreat: Protestants, Economy and Society, 1660-1926', in Raymond Gillespie and Gerard Moran eds., *Longford: Essays in County History,* (Dublin, 1991), p.39.
[43] Young, Vol. 2, p. 287.

Map 4 The concentration of Protestants in The King's and Queen's counties c. 1732



high concentration

middle concentration

low concentration

`was very populous and poor', and had very few Protestant families in 1732. The amount of land and natural resources fluctuated over time. Between c.1560 and 1660, the supply of timber was steadily depleted, but from the mid-eighteenth century the population reaped the benefits of the replanting that had taken place after the early 1700s.[44] Even endogenous characteristics such as soil type could be modified. What was once deemed rocky barren land in the early seventeenth century had often become improvable land in the eighteenth. Coal, which was mined in the south-eastern corner of Queen's until at least the 1760s, was perhaps the only natural resource that was strictly finite.

But the mere existence of fertile land did not necessarily mean that more Protestants were likely to live there. In the 1770s Warrenstown had the most valuable lands in The King's County (an average value of £1.5 an acre) and there was `scarcely an acre of unprofitable ground'.[45] Yet there were no towns in the barony and only a light sprinkling of Protestants in 1732. Similarly the northern part of Upper Ossory (which includes part of the Slieve Bloom mountains) was endowed with large tracts of woodland and mountain streams that provided the fuel and the water power suitable for industry. Yet in numerical terms it was not an English enclave in the seventeenth century.[46] By the eighteenth century the narrower entrepreneurial possibilities that were open to Protestants and dissenters, such as milling and tree felling, were successfully tapped, but they required less manpower than the more usual farming activities that were carried out in other baronies.

Thus the way in which land was managed and improved, the size of the farms, and the extent to which landowners encouraged Protestant tenants (via favourable leases, the construction of estate villages and the promotion of industrial activity) was just as important as geological factors in determining the concentrations of English settlement. Warrenstown was a small barony and the changes in land use were inextricably linked to the activites of one well-established Protestant landowner. The Wakely family were granted a large part of the barony in 1588 and they made their seat at Ballyburley.[47] One can speculate that in this case the landowner's preference for a small number of tenants

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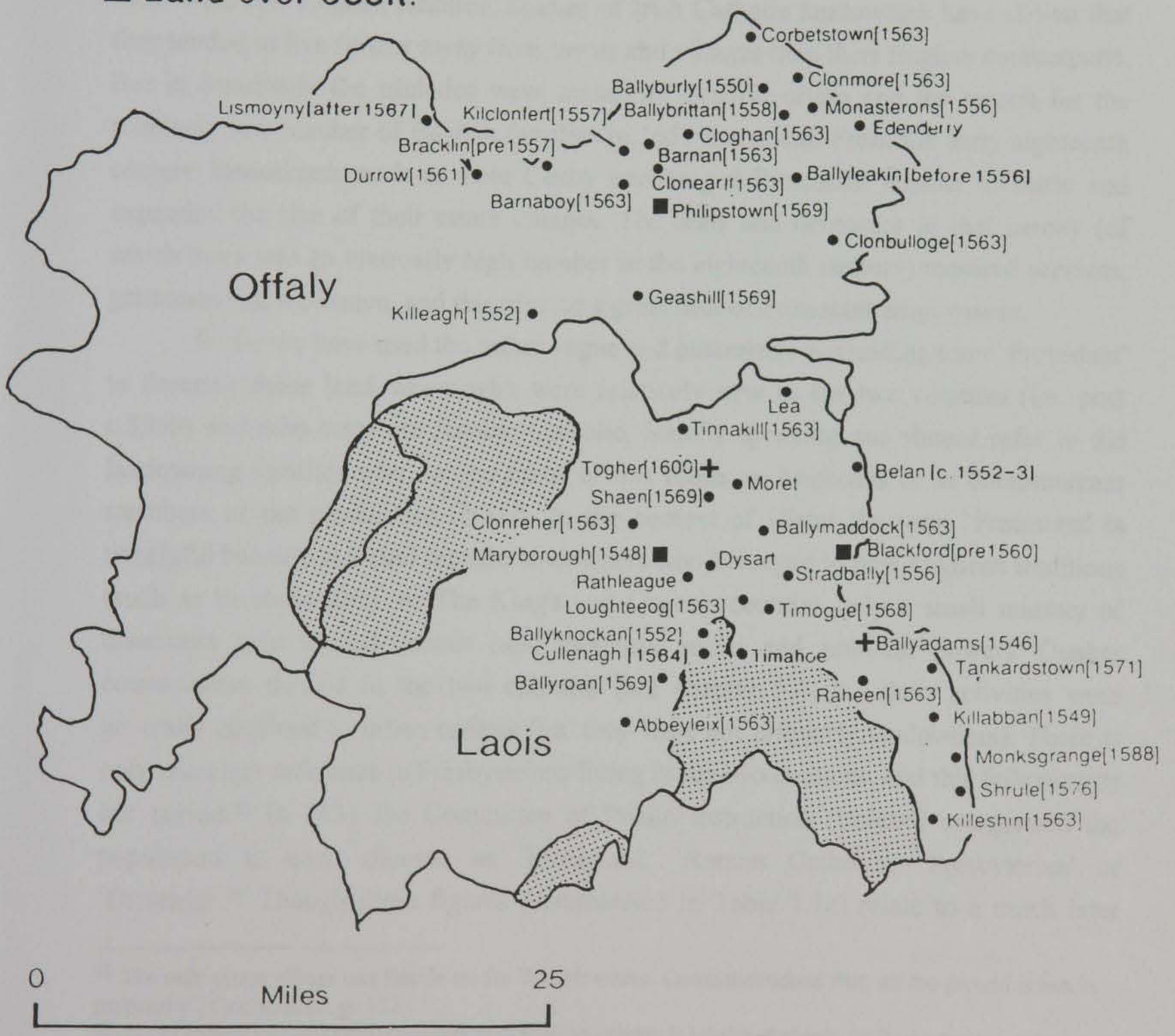
[44] Eileen McCracken, `A Registar of Trees, King's County 1793-1913', *J.K.A.S.* Vol. 15 no. 3 (1973-74), pp. 310-318; this provides a summary of the 17 Acts of Parliament between 1698 and 1791 that empowered the Grand Juries to finance the planting of trees. Most of the planting was carried out by landowners.

[45] Coote, K.C., pp. 127-130, Young, Vol.2, pp. 8-10.

[46] The modern barony of Upperwoods was the barony of Upper Ossory (distinct from the barony of Ossory) until the late seventeenth century, comprising of 48,927 statute acres. In 1659 there were only 4 titulados and 92 English heads of household in Upper Ossory. In 1732 there were 294 Protestants in `Upper Ossory'(which includes Ossory and Upper Ossory) the Ossory part of the barony in the south was much more populated than the northern part which was characterised by woodland farming and small industries such as flax, rape and corn mills For references to milling see J. Feehan, *The Landscape of the Slieve Bloom*, (Dublin, 1979), p. 125.

[47] According to one genealogical account the Wakely family arrived into Ireland in 1462 and grants of lands in King's were confirmed in 1588, *The Chronicle* newspaper, 5 Feb. 1902; cutting taken from Irish. Architectural Archive; Laois folder (ephemera).

Map 5 The location of the English settlements in the region between 1548 and 1600



Taken from: Rolf Loeber, *The Geography and Practice of English Colonisation in Ireland from 1534 to 1609,* (The Group for the Study of Irish Historic Settlement, Dublin, 1991).

with large holdings and long leases coupled with a lack of family interest in urban development explains why there were so few Protestant families in the 1732 return.[48]

The number of individual landowners had a direct bearing on the spatial distribution of Protestants. In some cases, as with the barony of Stradbally, a relatively large number of resident landowners meant that there was also a large number of Protestants. By contrast, in Geashill there were few resident landowners and the number of Protestants was correspondingly small. However, this link should not be pushed too far. The number of `titulados' listed in the 1659 census does not bear any relation to the numbers of English in total. The highest number of `titulados' were in Kilcoursey and Stradbally (26 and 16 respectively), yet these had a very low proportion of English settlers overall. In Kilcoursey most of the titulados were Irish and this may expain why there were few English families. Studies of Irish Catholic landowners have shown that they tended to live further away from towns and villages than their English counterparts. But in Stradbally the titulados were mainly of English origin and the reason for the relatively low number of English families in 1659 is unclear. From the early eighteenth century landowners such as Pole Cosby encouraged Protestant tenants to settle and expanded the size of their estate villages. The seats and demesnes in that barony (of which there was an unusually high number in the eighteenth century) required servants, gardeners and craftsmen, and this created a great deal of Protestant employment.

So far we have used the rather vague and potentially misleading term `Protestant' to describe those landowners who were relatively new to the two counties (i.e. post c.1550) and who were not Roman Catholic. Strictly speaking one should refer to the landowning families who are the focus of this thesis as Anglicans or as communicant members of the established church. In the context of Ulster the term `Protestant' is unhelpful because it would include landowners who belonged to non-Anglican traditions (such as Presbyterians). In The King's and Queen's counties only a small number of dissenters held landed estates (and therefore social and political power). Quaker communities thrived in the two counties (see chapter 5.4) but their activities were generally confined to urban centres (i.e. they were not primarily landowners). There is only one clear reference to Presbyterians living in the two counties, and this falls outside our period.[49] In 1831 the Committee of Public Instruction (Ireland) categorised the population in each diocese as `Protestant', `Roman Catholic', `Presbyterian' or `Dissenter'.[50] Though these figures (summarised in Table 1.1a) relate to a much later

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[48] The only estate village was Rhode on the Wakely estate. Coote mentioned that `all the ground is leet in perpetuity', Coote, K.C., p. 132.

[49] In 1777 the Vicar of Sierkiernan reported that `the parish is inhabited chiefly by Presbyterians, who have a kirk in it', Joseph Robinson, Vicar of Seirkieran, to the Bishop of Ossory, 11 Oct. 1777, R.C.B. Lib. D.11-1.7-8.

[50] *Report of the Committee of Public Instruction (Ireland), 1831,* Vol. XXXIII (1835).

period they are the first accurate guide to the relative numerical importance of each denominational grouping.

Table 1.1a The size of the religious denominations in The King's and Queen's counties in 1831 (as arranged by diocese)

	Meath	Kildare/ Dublin	Leighlin	Ossory	Killaloe	Clonfert	Totals
Prot.	5623	9585	7420	3964	7280	35	**33907 (10.5%)**
R.C.	74892	61589	65789	41696	39431	3385	**286782 (89.2%)**
Presby.	0	0	0	0	6	0	**6**
Dissent.	137	355	90	70	82	0	**734 (0.2%)**
Total pop.	80652	71529	73299	45730	46799	3420	**321429**

Prot.=members of the established church; R.C.=Roman Catholics; Presby.=Presbyterians; Dissent.= (Quakers, Methodists etc.).
Source: ***Report of the Committee of Public Instruction (Ireland), 1831,*** **Vol. XXXIII (1835).**

It is striking that only 6 Presbyterians (all in the parish of Birr) were recorded in the seven dioceses that cover the two counties (out of a total population of 321,429). Given the apparent numerical weakness of the Presbyterians in the two counties one can for the purposes of analysis (like the Committee for Public Instruction in 1831) use the blanket term `Protestant' to denote membership of the established church.

1.2 Size of the landed elite

On the basis of the highly problematic population data available, the inhabitants of the region c.1710 may have numbered 70,000. Of these perhaps 10,000 were Protestant.[51]

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[51] Molyneux estimated that there were 71,502 people in the two counties in 1706. If Protestants comprised 15-16% of the total population (as suggested by the 1659 and 1732 data) then there would be approximately 11,000 individuals. But the multiplier that he uses for the general population (5 heads for 1 hearth and 7 heads for 1+ hearth) is probably too high for the non-Irish population. In 1732 16,582 houses were counted by the hearth tax collectors. If 15% were known to be Protestant there would be 2551 Protestant houses. A multiplier of 2.5 would give a total of just 6378. In the religious break-down of 1732 Queen's had 2227 Protestant families and an incomplete total of 855 in King's. By looking at the strength of the 4 missing baronies in 1659 and calculating how much greater the Queen's County population was in other years one can estimate that King's had c.1700 Protestant families in 1732. This gives a total of 3920 families. If one uses a multiplier of 2.5 then there were 9818 Protestants in 1732. The largest town at this time, Birr, probably had a population that exceeded 1,000 people (there were c. 842 people in 1659). In the

The Protestants came from diverse backgrounds and had a great variety of occupations. They included the landed gentry, tenant farmers, clergymen, professionals, artisans, shop keepers, servants, and the landless. From this ethnic and religious minority one has to isolate the tiny number of families who owned most of the profitable land and thereby to identify a Protestant landed elite.

The lay members of the Protestant gentry (as opposed to the Protestant clergy) are the subject of this thesis, and it is primarily the gentry's social and economic development that concerns us. But the two groups cannot be neatly categorised because a large proportion of the Church of Ireland clergy were sons of landed gentlemen. The landed interests of the gentry and clergy were also tightly woven together: since the Reformation both groups obtained part of their incomes from church lands in the form of vicarial and rectorial tithes. Ideally one should make a distinction between those clergymen who were part of the Protestant landed elite in The King's and Queen's counties (because they came from landowning families in the region), and those who had a high social standing whilst they served in parishes (e.g. outwards signs of gentility) but who did not obtain a private landed income from lands in the two counties. In practice, this is an almost impossible task.

A number of bishops with large incomes ranked alongside some of the wealthiest landowners in Ireland, but it is often unclear what proportion of their total income came from episcopal (as opposed to private) estates. Approximately half of all the bishops that were appointed during this period came from England, and it is difficult to reconstruct the true extent of their landholdings in the three kingdoms and further afield.[52] The bishops were not (with one notable exception) technically *of* The King's and Queen's counties because they did not reside there: the episcopal palaces were all in neighbouring counties.[53] The only bishop with strong local landed connections (who served in any of the dioceses that covered the two counties) was Thomas Vesey, Bishop of Killaloe in 1713 and Bishop of Ossory between 1714 and 1731.[54] Vesey owned a country seat at Abbey Leix and an adjoining estate of c.5000 acres, in addition to an

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1720s Edenderry was estimated to have a population of 1,460, Ducasse to Blundell, 28 Jan. 1720, Downshire papers, P.R.O.N.I., D.608/A/12. Thus the figures are probably quite conservative. In 1792 Daniel Beauford calculated that there were 82,000 inhabitants in The Queen's County (of which 6833 were Protestants or 8% of the population), *Memoir of a Map of Ireland,* (London, 1792), pp. 58-60.

[52]D. Akenson's figures, *The Church of Ireland: Ecclesiastical Reform and Revolution 1800-1885,* (New Haven, 1971), p. 12.

[53]There was an ancient espiscopal place in Durrow but this fell out of use sometime in the seventeenth century.

[54]Vesey was the only local landowner who served as bishop in the dioceses that covered The King's and Queen's counties (i.e. Ossory, Ferns and Leighlin, Meath, Kildare, Killaloe, Clonfert and Dublin and Glendalough) between 1690 and 1760.

episcopal income of between £1500-£2000: he was therefore part of The Queen's County gentry as well as a spiritual peer of the realm.[55]

How many of the middle and lower ranking clergy in the two counties should be included as part of the Protestant landed elite? Counting the number of clergymen is problematic because a) some individuals held benefices in different dioceses; b) some benefices were vacant; c) one cannot be sure what proportion of the clergy were active and resident at any given time; and d) the number of curates fluctuated according to the ability of the incumbent or parish to support them. Table 1.2 shows the number of rectors, vicars and curates serving in the six dioceses that covered the two counties c.1731.[56] The names of these clergymen are listed in Appendix 7.2

Table 1.2 The number of rectors, vicars and assistant curates serving in the six dioceses that covered The King's and Queen's counties c. 1731.

	Ossory	Kildare	Meath	Leighlin	Clonfert	Killaloe	Totals
1) Rect.	5	6	0	11	1	3	**26**
2) Vicar.	5	4	6	5	0	1	**21**
3) Cura.	3	4	3	0	0	0	**10**
Totals	**13**	**14**	**9**	**16**	**1**	**4**	**57**

1) Rect.= clergymen who received the rectorial tithes in at least one parish.
2) Vicar.= who received vicarial (but not rectorial tithes) in one or more parish.
3) Cura.= who held the position of curate assistant or perpetual curate.
Source: Leslie Succession Lists, R.C.B. Lib.

An estimate of about 60 clergymen seems small when one considers that there was a total population of perhaps 70,000 in the two counties in the early eighteenth century. In theory the clergy of the established church had the cure of *all* the souls who resided in their parishes, but in practice the Anglican clergy looked after their own. In 1728, it was estimated that there were 600 incumbents and 200 curates in the whole of Ireland serving an Anglican population of 250,000: this would give a ratio of one clergyman for every 312 church members.[57] If one accepts that there were about 10,000 Protestants in the two counties c.1731 (i.e. a ratio of one clergyman for every 175 possible Anglican worshippers) then the congregations in The King's and Queen's counties were relatively

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[55]In 1734 the estate consisted of 4741 acres of pasture and arable, 152 of course pasture and 903 of bog, De Vesci Papers, N.L.I. P.6798. In 1776 the income from the diocese of income was reckoned to be £2000, see Akenson, *Church of Ireland*, pp. 35- 36.

[56]The years 1731 is chosen as an index because a) it is in the middle of the period under question, b) one can compare with data in the visitation for the Diocese of Ossory that was made in that year, c) in 1731 the House of Lords was presented with the `Report on the State of Popery' (which included a religious census).

[57]Boulter to the Archbishop of Canterbury on 13 Feb. 1728, cited by Connolly, *Religion, Law and Power*, p. 179.

well provided with clergy.[58] The figures for the numbers of communicants at selected churches in the diocese of Ossory in 1731 (shown in Appendix 7.4) certainly do not point to overcrowded churches: Killermogh church stands out with 120-130 communicants, but three churches had less than ten communicants at Easter.

The 57 churchmen listed in Appendix 7.4 can be divided up into roughly three groups: 1) those who had at least one parish where rectorial tithes were due; 2) those who only received vicarial tithes in one or more parishes and 3) those who held assistant curacies. Among the first group (of 26 individuals) there were a handful of clergymen who received the rectorial and vicarial tithes in a number of parishes and who held other offices (e.g. Prebend, Treasurer or Canon). Their incomes may have matched those of many smaller landed gentlemen. William Shervington for instance who was the Rector of Rosconnell, the Vicar of Durrow, the Curate Assistant of Killermogh and the Prebend of Tascoffin in 1731 was sufficiently wealthy to build a fine new vicarage in 1731/32. Much of Shervington's income would have come from church lands (in the form of tithes and glebe rents; see Appendix 7.4), but he may have also had a private income.[59] At the other end of the clerical hierarchy were the curates whose stipends only covered basic maintenance.

The disparity between the highest paid rectors (who might c.1731 earn well in excess of £100) and the lowly vicars and curates (who might be paid as little as £10 or just `book money') was a common source of complaint in the eighteenth century. Evidence from the 1690-1760 period is lacking, but in 1787 the clergy of Edenderry sent a letter to Thomas Orde (Chief Secretary) about `the wretched state of the poor curates of Ireland'. The petitioners maintained that country curates could not survive on the £40-50 that was paid to them in most parishes at this time: instead they needed at least £100 to pay for food, drink, a horse, a cow or two and a servant. The Edenderry clergymen compared their plight to that of the richer middle ranking clergy:

> Let us turn our eyes to the reverse of the picture and behold the fat rector lolling in his easy coach, wallowing in the filthy puddles of pride and luxury, perhaps never seeing his church or parishioners or caring about them, perhaps an absentee in another kingdom indulging himself in the luxuries and diversions.[60]

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[58] There is also evidence that the number of clergymen serving in the region increased in the period under question. In the diocese of Meath for example the number of clergymen rose from 55 in 1693 to 81 in 1733, information extracted from an unpublished paper `the clergy of Meath and Kildare', written by Roy Byrne (Diocesan archivist for Meath and Kildare).

[59] In 1724 Shervington was granted some glebe lands in Durrow and he received £10 from Killermogh, Leslie Succession List: Ossory (parishes of Durrow, Killermogh and Rosconnel), R.C.B. Lib.

[60] The clergy of Edenderry to Thomas Orde, 30 Jan. 1787, Bolton Mss, N.L.I., Ms. 15,811.

The contrast between the incomes of the richest and poorest clergymen prevents us from placing the Anglican clergy *en bloc* into the Protestant landed elite of the two counties. The clergy were also a very mobile group. The majority of those who served in the two counties c.1731 were brought up in other parts of Ireland.[61] Hugh Dawson for instance (Vicar of Skerike) was born in Wicklow, and during the course of his 48 year career he served in a number of parishes in the dioceses of Ossory, Meath and Cashel. Some clergymen from genteel backgrounds gravitated towards Dublin where there were more opportunites for sociability and learning than in distant country parishes. John Hunt is the only clergyman in 1731 who had close familial ties in the two counties: he was the son of Samuel Hunt of Ballykillcavan House near Stradbally. Though most of the clergy were absorbed into the social network of the county whilst they served in the two counties (e.g. visiting country houses; see chapter 3.7) very few of them can be considered as members *of* the county gentry.

In 1706 c.341 indivíual proprietors from 270 families were liable to pay quit Rent in the two counties: this included bishops, a corporation and a London company as well as peers, knights, esquires and gentlemen.[62] In order to ascertain whether this source is an accurate guide to the size of the landowning class I have cross referenced all the names on this list with those on a variety of documents covering the period 1622-1760.[63]

The 1706 quit rent book lists individuals and institutions who rented crown land in the district of Maryborough (which consisted of The King's and Queen's counties) but

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[61]Francis Schuldman b. Norfolk; Arthur Llewellyn, b. Co. Meath; Peter Alley, Co. Tipp; William Candler, Co. Kilkenny; Hugh Dawson, Co. Wicklow; Moore Booker, Co. Louth; James Moorecrft, Co. Meath; John Gibson, Wales; Richard Foxcroft, Yorkshire; Rober Jackson, Armagh; Daniel Jackson, Co. Dublin; Benjamin Hawkshaw, Co. Dublin; James Smith, Co. Donegal; John Pigott, Co. Cork; James Higgins, Co. Kildare; William Dawson, Co. Wicklow; Richard Grantham, Co. Tipp; Alexander Bradford, Co. Kildare; Thomas Mosse, Co. Cork; Michael Nelson, Co. Kildare; George Crump, Co. Tyrone; Dominic meade, Co. Cork and John Hunt, The Queen's County. Biographical information is not available for all of the clergy on the c. 1731 list.

[62] If this list of crown tenants is reduced to core surnames, there were c.177 families in King's, and 164 in Queen's, Maryborough District Crown rent roll c.1706, (which pertains to The King's and Queen's counties), Nat. Arch. Ire. (Quit Rent Office Mss.), 2A.3.24.

[63]Of the 270 families 202 (75%) of them appear in the Books of Survey and Distribution (B.S.D.) In addition 8 other names can be found in the `1659 census', 22 in the Common Pleas indexes and 3 more in other sources such as Trinity College matriculation books and lists of magistrates (none of which can be found in the B.S.D). Thus one can be reasonably certain that at least 235 or 87% of the families mentioned in 1706 had some tradition of owning land or participating in the affairs of the two counties before this date; Books of Survey and Distribution (quit rent version), Nat. Arch. Ire. Ms. 2a, 2,13, Vol. XIII folios 80-152, (microfilm, MFS. 2/6); I have also used a nineteenth century transcription of a slightly different version of the B.S.D., N.L.I., Ms. 972; Seamus Pender, *A Census of Ireland c, 1659 with supplementary Material from the Poll Money Ordinances, (1660-61),* (Dublin, 1939), pp. 435-448, 491-506; Common Pleas Index to Fines Entry Book, Nat. Arch. Ire., location no. 2/447/25; Trinity College list of students from the two counties taken from the matriculation books between 1685 and 1750 kindly suppiled by David Hannigan; lists of magistrates taken from O'Hanlon et al. *History of the Queen's County* Appendix IV, pp. 787-788; T.U. Sadleir, `High Sheriffs of the King's County', *J.K.A.S.*, Vol. 8, (1915-1917), pp. 30-49.

it is not a Domesday-type account of landownership in general like the Down or Civil Surveys.[64] Nevertheless the figure of 270 landed families is not far removed from the total number of surnames in the `1659 census' (288) and the 1665 Books of Survey and Distribution (318).[65]

Data taken from the Books of Survey and Distribution has provided the backbone for most economic studies of seventeenth and eighteenth century landownership but is less useful as a means of constructing a picture of county society. Of the 759 King's and Queen's surnames in the data base 318 can be found in the Books of Survey and Distribution (42%) a further 134 (18%) can be plucked from the 1659 `census', 193 (25%) from the Common Pleas indexes and 114 (15%) from other sources such as lists of magistrates.

Despite the imperfect nature of the evidence some general observations can be made as to how the size of the landowning group in the two counties may have changed between c.1560 and 1760 (see Table 1.2a)

Table 1.2a Estimates of the number of landowners in The King's and Queen's counties between 1560 and 1706

Year(s)	King's	Queen's	Both counties
1560-1620	46	48	93 (1 overlap)
1622	30	31	60 +
1641	82	82	152 (12 overlap)
1659	145	143	288
1665	180	138	318
1706	154	143	270 (27 overlap)

Sources: 1622 Inquisition, 1659 census, Books of Survey and Distribution (B.S.D.) and 1706 Quit Rent Book.

The earliest list of landowners is extracted from the royal fiants and reveals the different phases of the plantation from the 1560s. The bulk of the grants were made in the early years of Elizabeth's reign.[66] However, this does not give one an accurate idea of the actual number of landowners *in situ* at any one time. The King's and Queens's

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[64] The quit rent in Ireland was charged on all those lands which had been granted under the terms of the Acts of Settlement and Resumption.

[65] Though the raw totals are similar the names on each list do not match exactly. For instance only 34% of the King's and 48% of Queen's titulado surnames in the 1659 `census' can also be found in the B.S.D. even though both surveys were taken within 6 years of each other. This highlights the pitfalls of relying on any one list to recover the names and status of members of the landed elite.

[66] One document shows there were at least 98 separate grants between 1562 and 1577 (68 of them in 1562/3), only 6 grants between 1588 and 1601, and 15 between 1604 and 1620; transcription of 1622 Inquisition (Brit.Lib, Sloane MS. 4756,F.81) in R. Dunlop, `The Plantation of Leix and Offaly', *English Hist. Review,* Vol. VI., (1891), pp. 93-96; index to inquisitions from 1566 onwards, Nat. Arch. Ire. R.C. 5/31; O'Hanlon et al *History of the Queen's County,* Appendix II, pp. 758-778.

counties `were much easier won than kept'.[67] The highly unsettled conditions of the early plantation meant that many settlers were forced to leave the two counties, and the steady trickle of royal grants after 1563 was intended to replenish the loss of English manpower.[68]

An inquistion of 1622 lists 60 principal proprietors in the two counties. Though not a complete record of every landowner this sample does seem to show that lands had fallen into fewer and fewer hands as a result of forfeiture, re-grant and purchase.[69] After 1620 there was greater stability: the plantations `hath prosperously continued and is for the most part well built and peopled by the English' and virtually all those listed in 1622 appeared as proprietors in 1641. The Books of Survey and Distribution are more comprehensive than any of the previous surveys and include the names of many landowners and lessees (especially Irish Catholics) previously excluded. Nevertheless it is probable that the more favourable economic conditions and the injection of extra settlers had by then led to an expansion in the number of landowners/head tenants and the passing of lands into more rather than fewer hands in the two decades before 1641.

The confiscations and re-grants of the 1650s and 1660s led to an apparent doubling of the size of the landowning class, from 152 to 318 families (which shall be discussed in section 1e.). The quit rent list suggests that between c.1665 and 1710 the number of landowners was reduced by no more than 15% (and if one takes into account those families in 1706 who do not appear in the sample because they did not rent crown land, then there was probably an even more modest reduction in the number of families after 1665).

It can be argued that despite the demise of some families and the injection of new ones, there was probably little change in the overall size of the landowning class over the course of half a century. Perhaps until the number of profitable acres could be expanded (e.g. by the recla mation of bogland and improvements in farming) the optimum number of landowners for a small midlands county like King's or Queen's in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries was held somewhere between 140 and 150.[70]

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[67]R. Dunlop, ibid, p. 62.

[68]Ibid, p. 73.

[69] Sir William St Leger for instance held lands that had once been in the hands of four proprietors (Richard, Walter, John and Edmund Keating). Of the 60 proprietors at least 39 had inherited their estates directly from the original Elizabethan grantees while the others had acquired lands through purchase and later grants; ibid.

[70]In other parts of Ireland the injection of new landowners may have reached saturation point by the early eighteenth century. It has been argued that by c.1710 Ulster `had too many people for an undeveloped economy', and many settlers migrated to other parts of Ireland and to America; William Crawford, `The Social Structure of Ulster in the Eighteenth Century', in L.M.Cullen and F. Furet eds., *Irlande et France XVIIe-XXe Siecles,* (Paris, 1980), p. 116. In County Longford some of the immigrant tenants were

It is difficult to put a figure on the number of landowners at the end of the period and to establish how far the process of estate fragmentation had gone by 1760. We rely heavily on evidence from the last quarter of the eighteenth century such as Arthur Young's *A Tour in Ireland* (1780) and Charles Coote's *General View of the Agriculture and Manufactures* for the King's and Queen's counties (1801) which are invaluable first-hand accounts of the natural topography, land use, population density, industry, towns and agricultural innovations. However, both Young and Coote wrote their accounts at a time when the Penal Laws were slowly being repealed and when the effects of rapid population growth were keenly felt. The Ireland that they observed in 1780 and 1801 was very different from the one that existed in the first half of the century.

Between c.1710 and 1760 a trickle of newcomers entered the two counties and contributed to the gradual fragmentation of lands which meant that freeholders and tenants on long leases became far more numerous. This can be seen in the electoral poll-books. In 1760 there were 263 freeholders entitled to vote in the borough of Maryborough with lands in The Queen's County, and between 1758 and 1770 799 freeholders were registered to vote for the Knights of the Shire. Though the base of the landed class had widened considerably the size of the landed elite did not increase to the same extent. Of the 799 Queen's County freeholders only 25 were described as `gents', the rest were farmers, craftsmen and merchants. For every new esquire or gentleman there were countless more farmers whose small freehold enabled them to vote. Similarly a map of The Queen's County c.1765 shows that there were at least 177 farmhouses; many built by head tenants and middling farmers who had benefited from the piecemeal process of leasehold alienation. But the number of large houses with demesnes is far less striking. There were just 10 inhabited castles and 35 seats on the map.[71] The size of the social and political landed elite would also have been considerably smaller than the total number of freeholders since not every landowner was resident, and only a limited number of men were chosen to serve on the Grand Jury, join the magistracy, or play an active part in the affairs of the county (discussed in chapter 6.3). Thus before 1760 there does not seem to have been a noticeable expansion in the number of landowners.[72]

One surprising finding is that over the course of 150 years the relative number of landowners in each county hardly altered. It appears that from the moment the counties were created there was a tendency to grant lands in *either* King's or Queen's and not in both. This may have been a deliberate attempt on the part of the colonists to preserve the

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Presbyterians `possibly an overspill from the Scottish Presbyterian influx into Ulster in the 1690s and early 1700s', Liam Kennedy et al, `The Long Retreat: Protestants, Economy and Society, 1660-1926', p. 35.

[71] Oliver Sloane map, c. 1765, N.L.I., Ms. 16.h.9 (2).

[72] At the beginning of the nineteenth century, by which time there had been considerable demographic and economic change, Charles Coote named only 101 individuals in King's and 96 in Queen's as ` principal landed proprietors'; Coote, K.C., pp. 203-205; and Coote, Q.C., pp. 208-209.

political and social cohesiveness of each county and to prevent them merging into a less distinct and potentially ungovernable region as it had been before the plantation. This trend continues into the 1660s even though there was less strategic neccessity. Only about 12 (7%) of the 165 new grantees were allotted lands in both King's and Queen's. It is likely that marriage alliances and land purchases were beginning to make the two sets of landowners marginally less distinct (by c.1710 there were at least 27 families who straddle the county boundaries), but 90% of the families still held lands in one county *or* the other.

1.3 Social composition of the landed elite

So far the analysis has been concerned with counting `landowners' or `proprietors', a rather vague group which included anyone from a small freeholder to a magnate, not with defining a `landed elite'. An examination of the titles that contemporaries used to describe each other (e.g. gents or esquires) is one means of getting closer to identifying what constituted a county gentry. Table 1.3 summarises how the landownership was classified c.1710.

Table 1.3 Social classification of Landowners c. 1710

Title	King's	%	Queen's	%
Peers	14	8	8	5
Knights/Bart	20	11	16	10
Esquires	33	19	20	12
Gents	1	0.5	4	2
Gent/woman	3	2	1	0.5
Military Commission	14	8	13	8
Corporation title	2	1	1	0.5
Clergy (Anglican)	2	1	1	0.5
Sub-total	89	50.5	64	39
Unclassified	88	49.5	100	61
Total	177	100	164	100

Source: Quit Rent list, 1706.

In 1710, 22 temporal and 2 spiritual peers owned lands in the two counties.[73] The nobles were nearly always identified by their title and are the only group of landowners

[73]Ranging in rank from the Duke of Buckingham, the Earls of Arran, Cavan, Clanricard, Cork, Drogheda, Kildare, Londonderry, Mountrath, Ossory, Roscommon and Thomond, the Viscounts Grandison, Ranelagh,

that can be counted with any degree of accuracy. Numerically there were more nobles in King's than Queen's (as can be seen in Table 1.3), but at least six of them were cross boundary owners. It is only by looking at the relative size of their holdings, (ranging from a relatively small parcel owned by the Earl of Cork to the many thousands of acres owned by the Earl of Mountrath) and the degree of residence and participation in local politics that one can begin to make generalisations about the impact of the nobility in each county.

Below the peers were a collection of 30 mainly resident knights and baronets (six of them owned lands in both counties). The broader middle portion of this landed hierarchy was filled by about 80 men, including at least 50 `esquires', a handful of `gentlemen', some 25 individuals described by their former or current military rank (such as colonel, captain, ensign and cornet), and 3 men listed as `aldermen'.

There were also c.180 individuals who were not styled at all. They were lesser gentlemen who (along with an even larger number of petty freeholders) constituted the broad underbelly of this landed class. On the basis of this evidence one can state that in 1710 about 19% of the landowners had a formal title of some kind (ranging from a Dukedom to a baronetcy) with perhaps 26% described only by a courtesy title such as esquire, gent., or captain, and a further 55% without any kind of formal or informal title (see Table 1.3a).

Table 1.3a Social profile of The King's and Queen's counties in 1641, 1665, 1659 and 1706

% of individuals in each category

	1641	1665	1659	1706
formal title	17	16	2	19
courtesy title	5	6	92*	26
unclassified	78	78	6*	55

Source: Books of Survey and Distribution, 1659 `census' and 1706 Quit Rent list
*** nearly all of the titulados were described as `gent'.**

By comparing the 1706 list with data from the Books of Survey and Distribution and `1659 census' one can look for any changes in the social composition and see how the terminology used to describe the gentry changed over time (see Appendix 2).

Between 1641 and 1710 those at the top and at the bottom of the social hierarchy experienced the least amount of change, whereas the proportion of those in the middling group fluctuated greatly. There was little overall change in the number of peers between

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Tarragh and Ely, the Barons Digby, Herbert, Kingston and Wenman and the Bishops of Kildare and Killaloe.

1641 and 1665. Any reduction in the number of nobles as a result of complete forfeiture was offset by new creations. The largest potential political vacuum was created when the estate of Lewis Dempsey, Lord Clanmalier, (whose holding was larger than any of the other peers) was forfeit. His estate was granted almost in its entirety to the newly created Lord Arlington. Numerically there were more peers in 1710 since the more successful gentry families such as the Kings and the Dillons were elevated, but the average proportion of the total sample of landowners in this category between 1641 and 1710 remained at 7%. There was little change in the number of knights and baronets, an average 10% of the sample in the period.[74]

One could argue that there was a noticeable increase in the number of esquires between 1641 and 1706 if it were not for the fact that the 1659 and 1706 figures are surprisingly similar. In King's there were 28 esquires (19% of total) in 1659, and 33 (also 19%) in 1706. Similarly in Queen's there were 20 esquires listed in 1659 (14%) just as there were 20 (12%) in 1706.

The lists of freeholders in the borough of Maryborough is another indication of the number of esquires after 1710. Between 1728 and 1760 36 individuals from 24 Queen's County families were styled as esquire. By sifting out those freeholders who were able to vote in the election of 1760 one obtains a more precise estimate of the number in each social category at the end of the period. Of the 400 voters, 263 had Queen's County addresses. Of this number 25 individuals (from 20 families) were styled as esquire, 6 were clergymen and the rest were unclassified. A comparison of the figures from the `census', the `Quit Rent' and `list of freeholders' suggests that between 1660 and 1760 the number of esquires in The Queen's County remained fairly static: in 1659, 20 (14% of the sample), in 1706, 20 (12%), and in 1760, 25 (10%). Given that there were more landowners with formal and courtesy titles in The King's County one can deduce that there were between 50 and 60 esquires in the region at any one time.[75]

The group known as gentlemen are more difficult to interprete. Despite the common use of the terms `gent' and `Mr' in correspondence and corporation rolls, only 2-3% (with the exception of the `1659 census') of the landowners are listed as such in the 65-year period. Just 4 individuals are described as `Mr.' in the Books of Survey and Distribution and in the 1706 list there are just 5 `gents'. The 1659 figures are an exception to this: at least three quarters of the titulados are listed as `gents'. One explanation is that the clerks and assessors were unusually liberal in their use of the term

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[74] In the `1659 census' only a fraction of the titular group are listed.

[75] In 1660 75 Poll Tax Commissioners were appointed in the two counties. Of this number 61 were described as `esquire', Pender ed. see appendix, pp. 640-641; Maryborough freeholders: N.L.I., Ms. 1726 and Ms. 1727. These figures are not disimilar to those for Welsh counties in the same period. By way of comparison in Carmathenshire there were in 1710, 5 baronets, 59 esquires and 91 gents in (according to the Land Tax Commission list); D. Howell, *Patriarchs and Parasites,* p. 14.

`gent' to the extent that virtually everyone listed had a title of some kind (the number of unclassified individuals is negligible). It is likely that most of those who were described as `gents' in 1659 were unclassified in 1641, 1665 and 1706.

As one might expect, the proportion of men who were listed with a military rank increased noticeably between 1641 and 1665 (from 3.5% to 11.5 %) as a result of the Cromwellian settlement; by 1706 the average had fallen to 8%. The change in the number of soldier-gentlemen is not an accurate guide to the success rate of the Cromwellian settlers, since many gentlemen liked to style themselves as captain or colonel because they held that rank in the militia rather than because they were in the regular army and had settled in the 1650s. It is however a useful indicator of the number of landowners who preferred to be described by a martial rather than a civil title and the importance that was attached to the militia and the army in county society.

The use of civic titles such as `alderman' was rare; there were never more than one or two individuals in any given list throughout the period. The drop in the proportion of those landowners who were unclassified (see Table 1.3a) might indicate that over the course of the eighteenth century the number of landowners who were given a formal or courtesy title slowly increased.

Evidence from two counties shows that the `county gentleman' was a rather chameleon-like character whose social and political label changed according to his habitat. A professional, such as a land surveyor or apothecary was often styled as `gent' in the context of a parish or borough, as shown by the corporation accounts, whereas in the company of Grand Jurymen and magistrates he was much more likely to be labelled as plain `Mr.' By contrast the criteria for determining whether someone was an esquire was more rigid (e.g. bearing coats of arms, having a substantial acreage, holding office and owning a seat etc.) and this issue will be explored in the context of `county society' chapter 6).

If one includes every family who owned a scrap of land in the two counties then this summary reinforces the traditional view that the Irish landed class was shaped like a pyramid with the handful of nobles at the top and the hundreds of freeholders at the base. But if one concentrates on the 270 or so familes who owned the title deeds to practically every profitable acre, then the shape of the elite appears much less regular. There was a significant number of knights, baronets, esquires, and gentlemen who owned estates that were generally larger than those of the peers, (the Earls of Mountrath and Londonderry excepted). This middling group of about 100 predominantly resident landowners were at the hub of county society and their contributions in the areas of rural and urban improvement and local office holding make them the main focus of this thesis.

1.4 Religious and ethnic background of the landed elite

If one established the size and the social profile of a landed elite in an English county then one would already have an adequate framework for an analysis of the distribution of estates and differences in landed income. In an Irish context this data provides only a starting point. The religious and ethnic background of landowners was a fundamental determinant of economic performance and survival, and the most important characteristic of members of the county gentry in the period under question was their relationship with the established church.

The majority of the pre-1641 families that survived into the early eighteenth century were listed as `English Protestants' in the Books of Survey and Distribution. and at least 25% of the landowning families in 1710 could be classed as `Old Protestants'. [76] At first sight one might assume that up to three quarters of the original Protestants had fallen by the wayside in the intervening years. However, the proportion of Old Protestants had dropped as a result of the overall expansion of the landowning class, and not because of any dramatic decline. The Old Protestants had a high survival rate (see Table 1.4).

Table 1.4 The Proportion of Catholic and Protestant landowners in 1641 and 1710 in The King's and Queen's Counties

Religious/ethnic group	1641 (%)	1710 %
Old Irish/Eng Catholic	68 (45)	15 (7)
Old Protestants	84 (55)	68 (33)
New Protestants	-	127 (60)
Total size of sample	152	210*

Source: B.S.D. and 1706 Quit Rent list

*** The sample does not inlcude those landowners whose origins are uncertain and who do not appear in the B.S.D.**

A reading of the Books of Survey and Distribution would suggest that Protestantism was synonymous with English blood. Only one individual, Peirce Fitzgerald, was listed there as an `Irish Protestant' and therefore it is difficult to assess the relative fortunes of Old Irish families who conformed to the established church before 1641. Miles and Edward Bermingham were listed as Irish Catholics even though they were of Elizabethan planter stock. Studies of intermarriage have shown that the equation English=Protestant and Catholic=Irish is a gross simplification of society as it

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[76]If one does not include the 60 familes whose origins are uncertain and who do not appear on the B.S.D. then the proportion of Old Protestants is probably even higher, see Table 1.4.

existed by 1641. Nevertheless the fact that the compliers of the Books of Survey and Distribution used such labels is revealing in itself. It is indicative of a new Protestant mindset- one which equated Catholicism with disloyalty regardless of ethnic background- which had emerged in the early seventeenth century and crystallized after the rebellion.

In the Books of Survey and Distribution 84 Protestant surnames are listed in 1641 compared to 68 in 1710. Of the 16 names that do not appear on the 1706 list, 5 are known from other evidence to have survived.[77] Thus between 1641 and 1710 perhaps only 10 out of 93 families were extinguished (or ended at the bottom of the landed class).[78] It is noteworthy that despite the perils of warfare, land re-settlement and biological extinction a Protestant landed estate existing in 1641 had more than a 90% chance of being in place, or even enlarged in the first decade of the eighteenth century.

The outlook for a landed Catholic family was very different. Of the 270 families in 1710 there were only around 6% who had been described as Catholics in 1641. By contrast 45% of landowning surnames that were listed in the Books of Survey and Distribution were Catholic.[79] Such was the reduction of Catholic families that Ephraim Dawson and other office holders in 1707 (on being required to search Catholic dwellings in The Queen's County) declared `there being but few papists in the county of much note, wee dont expect to find many horses or arms'.[80]

There were in fact just 15 families on the 1706 list who were probably Catholic in 1641. Of these one can identify 5 who were `English Catholics' (Hovendon, Hartpole, Hussey, St. Leger and White).[81] A constant criticism of the Old English Catholic settlers

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[77] Old Protestants who do survive but do not appear on the 1706 list include: Graham, George, Brereton, Hibbotts and Rawson.

[78]Four of these families probably died out during or soon after the rebellion since women and/or executors are mentioned beside their surname in the B.S.D. Elizabeth Harding and Elizabeth Brophy might have held on to the last vestiges of an Old Protestant estate and then failed to produce a male heir, Mary Atkinson held estates on behalf of Nicholas Bath and William Soare's estate was broken up between two sisters (one of whom was `married to an English Protestant the other to an `Irish Papist'). One or two Old Protestants may have had little landed interest in the two counties; such as Thomas Rotherham who was from Dublin.

[79]On the basis of this evidence 47 Catholic families lost estates between 1641 and 1710. At least 17 of these are known to have survived through other evidence.

[80] O'Hanlon et al, *History of The Queen's County,* p.564.

[81] The St. Leger s for example were one of a handful of Anglo-Norman or `Old English Catholics' that survived into the eighteenth century (along with the Butlers and De Vescis), `William St. Leodegar' was recorded as paying half a knights fee at `Dunsalach in Leys' in the territory of Leix in the fourteenth century; J. Otway-Ruthven, `Knights Fees in Kildare, Leix and Offaly', *T.R.S.A.I.,* Vol. XCI, Part 2, (1961); His descendants such as John St. Leger were still involved with the affairs of The Queen's County in the 1760s; John St. Leger Esq. for example is listed as a freeman of the corporation of Maryborough (c..1730-1760), N.L.I., Ms. 1727. The Oxburghs are another surviving family (who not appear on the 1706 list). Captain Heward Oxburgh, who was described as an `Irish Catholic' despite his English origins, forfeited c.84% of his King's county estate. Hereward Oxburgh is recorded as being a gentleman tenant of the Parsons family of Birr. Though sustaining such heavy losses he retained some social standing in the county and assisted in managing part of the Parsons estate at Birr. He appears in the 1659 `Census' as an esquire and in 1690 a descendant Henry Oxburgh was recorded as having brought a case to the Common

who remained loyal to the crown in the seventeenth century was that both the English and the Irish families of that religion were tarred with the same brush by the Cromwellian administration. If one looks at a national level the Old English Catholics were dealt with more favourably than their Old Irish co-religionists. The Act of Settlement and the patronage of the Duke of Ormonde restored many Old English families to their estates, especially in Kilkenny and Tipperary. The distinctive social structure of The King's and Queen's counties, as a result of the recent history of plantation, and the more limited interest of the Ormonde family, seemed to compound rather than ease the problems faced by the relatively small number of Old English Catholics there. The coincidence of these factors may have made Catholics in this part of the Irish Midlands more likely to convert to the established church than elsewhere. Robert Hartpole's estate was carved up after the rebellion and the unforfeited lands passed to his son and heir (William Hartpole), who was either brought up as a Protestant or converted before the Restoration. [82]

The `Irish Catholic' families that survived included those of Coghlan, Mulloy, Mooney, Geoghegan, Carroll, Connor, McDonnell, Sankey, Doyne and Dillon.[83] If the sample used is representative, then about 40 Catholic families (or 59% of the total number in 1641) are pushed out of the landowning elite.[84]

While the majority of Catholics experienced a diminution of their landed status this did not necessarily mean that family lines were extinguished. Hubert and Brazil Ffox, descendants of Elizabethan grantees, were Irish Catholic proprietors in The King's County in 1641 and their profitable lands were forfeited. There is no mention of this family in either the `1659 census' or the 1706 list of crown tenants and one might assume that this family had disappeared. Yet the Common Pleas indexes show that

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Pleas. On the whole a high proportion of English Catholic families disappear from the record (and likely therefore to have dropped out of the landed elite) after 1641. Names such as Brabazon, Briscoe, Bermingham, Davills, Hammond, Langton, Paril, Rawlin, Reddish, Sheil, Skelton and Waddington. This contrasts with the very high success rate of the Old Protestants.

[82]William Hartpole's wife Martha converted to the established church in 1702, E. O'Byrne ed. *The Convert Rolls,* (Dublin, 1981). For an account of George and William Hartpole see, T.C.D. Ms. 1933 A-N, deed No.301; for Oxburgh, T.C. Barnard, `The World of Goods and County Offaly in the Early Eighteenth Century', in K. Nolan and T.P. O'Neil eds., *Offaly: History and Society,*(Dublin, 1998), pp. 371-392 .

[83]This is a very small fraction of the Catholic landowning group that existed before 1641, especially when one considers that each family had so many branches (some of whom were Protestant). While most members of an Irish family would have been Catholic in 1641 there was often at least one member who had converted to the established church. In 1641 Barnaby, Terence, Keadagh, Edward and Daniel Dunn were `Irish Papists' whereas Charles and another Barnaby Dunn were listed as `English Protestants' even though they all came from The Queen's County and are likely to have been closely related. Such labelling makes the untangling of `English' from `Irish' Catholics extremely difficult.

[84]The list of the Popish Inhabitants of the half barony of Ikerrin in Co. Tipperary in c. 1750' is an indication of the small size of Catholic holdings in relation to Protestant landonwners. Out of 420 names just 8 had more than 100 acres, N.L.I., Ms. 8913; printed in *Irish Genealogist,* Vol. 4, no. 6 (Nov. 1973), pp. 578-584.

Thomas, Patrick and Hubert Fox were involved in disputes over land in The King's County in 1705, 1720 and 1730 respectively.[85]

There can be no doubt that the 1650s were cataclysmic for the native Irish and Anglo-Norman families, but assessing the actual survival rates for Catholic families is very problematic. In order to gauge the relative longevity of families I have looked for the recurrence of surnames over two centuries. In studying an early modern gentry which favoured primogeniture, such an approach is legitimate. At any one time a family estate was concentrated in the hands of one man with perhaps one or two subsidiary branches (e.g. younger sons who stayed in the county); like massive oaks they sank their tap roots vertically into the earth and sometimes toppled when male issue was not forthcoming. Irish families by contrast favoured the sub-division of estates and uncovering the origins of an Irish surname is like tracing a complex root sytem that has spread out laterally over a whole field.[86] Though buffeted by war and the loss of land title and status, Irish families were less prone to complete hereditary failure. [87]

The third and by far the largest religious/ethnic group that existed in 1710 were the `New Protestants', those families who first settled in the two counties c.1650-1665. About 127 (or 47%) of the total number of 270 landowning families in 1710 can be found in the distribution side of the Books of Survey and Distribution (which is the best indicator of the number of new grantees).[88] There was a total of 165 new grantees in the Books of Survey and Distribution, (compared to 127 recorded in the c.1710 sample) so one might assume that 38 families had disappeared in the intervening years. A cross examination of these names with other sources reveals that many grantees did in fact survive but do not appear on the quit rent list, so that the number can be reduced to 28. Thus, at the very least 83% of the New Protestants decided to retain ownership of their newly granted lands for the next half century.[89]

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[85]Common Pleas, Index to Fines, Nat. Archives, location number, 2/447/25.

[86] Some Old English families who intermarried with the Old Irish did have the propensity to produce many cadet branches. In Tipperary for instance W.S. Smyth found that there were no fewer than 70 branches of the Butler family and `no map can do justice to the complex mesh of management-Kinship-marriage alliances', `Property, Patronage and Population: Reconstructing the human geography of mid-seventeenth century Tipperary', in W. Nolan ed. *Tipperary: History and Society, (*Dublin, 1985), p. 135.

[87]In the B.S.D. 17 members of the Coghlan family, 6 Carrolls and 8 Fitzpatricks owned land in 1641. It is difficult to distinguish between distinct branches of families and direct blood ties (e.g. the Coghlans were a distinct sept and they were all closely related).

[88]I have taken care not to include those families who had settled in the area before the rebelllion. For instance Colonel Richard Grace was granted lands in The King's and Queen's counties (and appears on the distribution side of the B.S.D.) but he was not strictly a `new entrant' since the Graces were known to have first settled in The Queen's County during the plantation.

[89]Some of the interregnum grantees were widows and relatives of the original owners, such as Elizabeth Harnell and Margaret Hogg, so it is not surprising that these families do not survive into the eighteenth century. Similarly the B.S.D. also included lessees and mortgagees (such as Thomas Aylmer) who had no permanent title over their holdings and may have been replaced by the proprietors in the intervening years. Some grantees sold off their lands not long after being granted them and others became absentee landlords.

There are one or two well documented cases of families making a complete exit from the two counties between 1665 and 1710. Henry Bennet, Lord Arlington, who was granted the forfeited lands of Lord Clanmalier in 1662, was disappointed by his lack of success in improving Portarlington and sold his entire estate to Sir Patrick Trant c.1685. However, the overall rate of attrition for the Cromwellian and Restoration settlers in The King's and Queen's counties was very low.[90] The distinctive social and economic conditions of the two planted counties seemed to encourage the new settlers to drop anchor rather than to sell up and move to other parts of Ireland or back to England. The arrival of new settlers to this part of the midlands (e.g Quakers from Ulster and grantees from other counties who sold their original parcels in order to buy lands in the highly settled King's and Queen's) indicates that there were more reasons to move in than to move out of the two counties. This contrasts with County Kilkenny where it has been suggested that the far larger number of Old English families under the protection of the Duke of Ormonde after 1660 meant that more new grantees (especially the smaller ones) felt inclined to sell up quickly.[91]

It is evident that in the years between the Act of Settlement and 1710 there was only a trickle of new landowners (as opposed to tenants) entering the two counties. But while small in number these new entrants were to have a disproportionate effect on the balance of power in landed society.

1.5 Distribution of landed wealth 1641-1710

For a large proportion of the landed families one can be reasonably certain as to their origins, social rank and religious and ethnic background. However, the key factor that makes them a distinct group has yet to be touched on, the *ownership of land*. How close was the relationship between the size of the estate, and social and political status? How much land passed from the hands of Catholics to Protestants and what was the relative

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[90]From the sample of landowners c.1710 about 60 (or 22%) families do not appear anywhere in the B.S.D. Clues about the origins of about 30 of these can be ascertained from other sources. Daniel Finn for instance owned lands in The Queen's County during the reign of James I. No mention is made of this family in the B.S.D. or the 1659 `census' but other sources show that Thomas Finn from Coolkerry (from the same county) matriculated at Trinity College in 1688, Daniel Finn appears on the 1706 Quit rent list and in the Common Pleas indexes for 1710 and 1720. The Finns have a record of office holding and their seat `Coolfinn' appears on a Grand Jury map of c. 1765. They are an interesting pre-1641 family (probably of Irish Catholic stock who later converted to Protestantantism) whose existance would not be known if one relied solely on the standard indexes. Out of these 60 families 7 appear on the 1659 `census', 14 crop up on miscellaneous lists between 1675 and 1710, 8 on lists between 1710 and 1765. Thus out of a sample of 270 landowning families in 1710 only 30 of them (or 11%) cannot be cross referenced, and their origins therefore remain obscure.

[91] M. Brennan, 'The Making of a Protestant Ascendancy', pp. 154-157.

importance of land to the other factors of production, namely labour, capital and entrepreneurship?

It has already been suggested that in 1710, about 270 families held the deeds to virtually all of the profitable land in the two counties. But within this group there was a great variety in the size and type of holdings. It is impossible to construct a league table of landowners that would rank the families according to acreage and rental, for calculating the size of estates is notoriously difficult. The mid-seventeenth surveys (principally the Down Survey, Civil survey, 1659 `census' and the Books of Survey and Distribution) are an accurate guide to the size of the landed class which remains fairly constant between 1665 and 1710. However if one relies on the statistical evidence (i.e. the acreages computed rather hastily by the surveyor's clerk) then one would underestimate the fluctuations in landownership (e.g. the buying and selling, the creation of profitable acres by draining and improving, and the inheritance transfers) that occurred in the intervening half century.

The confiscations and re-grants in the 1650s and 1660s led to the transfer of between 47 and 48% of the land in the two counties, and a doubling of the size of the landowning class. Of the c.152 families in 1641 84 (55%) were Protestant, who on the whole survived with their estates intact, while 68 (45%) were Catholic, who had all or most of their estates forfeited. The bulk of the lands owned by 68 Catholics families had to be shared out between around 165 Cromwellian newcomers.

These raw figures indicate the enormity of the Cromwellian confiscations. Even when compared to the sequestrations of estates that occurred elsewhere in Europe during the seventeenth century such as the forfeitures of Royalist and recusant lands in England during the Interregnum or the estates of the Huguenots in France, the transfer of lands in Ireland from one religious/ethnic group to another appears to have been exceedingly ambitious. The criteria for confiscation was very wide and open to interpretation. A wide section of the Catholic landowning class was targeted as it included those who fought against the English Parliament or colluded with the rebel army after 1641, and those who did not lay down their arms and `show constant affection' to Parliament. A typical example is that of Sir Pierce Crosbie from The Queen's County who lost his lands because he was a `Protestant in 1640 but since turned Papist and had a troope of horse with the Irish'.[92]

There can be no doubt that the effects of the Cromwellian settlement on Catholic Ireland in an economic, social and mental sense were profound, but the issue of population displacement is often confused with that of the diminution of landed status. For most Catholic gentlemen living in counties like The King's and Queen's, where the

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[92] Survey side of B.S.D., Q.C.

physical transplantation of rebels was very limited, the Cromwellian and Restoration settlement was a severe body blow rather than a fatal shot.[93] Rather like the Saxon chieftains in the wake of the Norman conquest of England most Catholics remained on the soil of their progenitors, though now as tenants rather than owners. It would be very convenient to see the 1650s and 1660s as a time when a native Catholic elite was replaced by an alien Protestant one if it were not for the case studies of individual English and Irish Catholic families that show the uneveness of the re-distribution of land and the practical problems encountered by the English in implementing the Cromwellian policies.

In the Books of Survey and Distribution there are very few cases of `Irish papists' forfeiting every acre that they owned to the crown.[94] The estate of the Catholic magnate Viscount Clanmalier was the largest that was sequestered. Approximately 10,000 profitable acres were transferred into the hands of Lord Arlington. Though the political and economic power of Clanmalier was neutralised, the Dempsey family was still left with at least 5000 unprofitable acres. While much of this land was `red bog' there was still a considerable amount that had the potential to be put to some agricultural use. A map of around 1700 shows that the Dempseys still held on to lands on the peripheries of the Earl of Galway's estate (which was all originally Lord Clanmalier's).[95] Nor must one ignore the instances where Catholics managed to retain all of their lands. Sir George Herbert, described as an `Irish Papist', (though from English stock) not only kept 1696 profitable and 970 unprofitable acres that he held in King's but also ended up with some additional lands (according to the distribution side of the Books of Survey and Distribution).[96] Only a prosopographical account of the roles that various families played

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[93]A comparison of the names on the transplanation certificates with those on the 1706 list would seem to confirm that few Catholics were actually transplanted. Lands in Cos. Roscommon and Clare were assigned to those who forfeited lands in The King's and Queen's counties, R.C. Simington ed. *The Transplantation to Connaught 1654-58,* (Dublin, 1970).

[94]The complex leasing and mortgage arrangements that existed before the rebellion also meant that many holdings could not be neatly transferred to new grantees. Much of the estate of the English Catholic Robert Hartpole was carved up (mainly between Periam Poole, Samuel Willen, James Tooke and Sir Hans Hamilton) but his son and heir, who appears to have been brought up as a Protestant, retained much of the land `in fee'. Some of the lands held by John Coghlan were `never seized or sequestered being sold by the said Coghland proprietor in 1638 to Hill a Protestant and by order of the commissioners left out of the stock of reprisals'. Where the title of lands was in dipute there was a tendency to allow the individual in possession (more often than not a Catholic) to remain as a tenant in fee until such times as the legal proprietor could be identified (and declared innocent or guilty of treason).

[95] Earl of Galway's book of maps, c. 1700, Cambridge University Library, Ms. Add. 4358.

[96]One observes the same pattern of forfeiture at the other end of the social spectrum. The smaller Catholic Queen's County landowner Morgan Cashin lost 104 profitable acres to the Protestant Overington Blundell and kept 125 unprofitable acres. Some Irish Catholics who had forfeited lands were granted scraps of land elsewhere. For instance Thomas Keating lost 415 acres of profitable land (and kept 243 profitable acres), most of which was granted over to Anthony Gale a New Protestant, but the remainder passed into the hands of an English Catholic, Thomas Hovenden, who himself had forfeited lands to other new settlers, B.S.D.

in the rebellion and their political and ideological outlook (e.g. Royalist or Parliamentarian tendencies) will enable us to unravel why it was that some Catholics escaped from the resettlement unscathed while others did not.

Since the Cromwellian surveyors carried out the mammoth task of measuring the size of estates for the Books of Survey and Distribution with some haste (often cannibalising the information that had been gathered for earlier surveys and using primitive equipment), it is no surprise that they underestimated the total amount of land in Ireland.[97] The boggier areas were more likely to have been measured in a more careless way than the fertile lands and such errors worked to the advantage of the dispossessed Catholics. Given the advances in agriculture from the early eighteenth century much of this marginal land could be improved and made into profitable land.[98]

For many Old Irish Catholic landowners the economic losses incurred before the 1650s as a result of the new forms of mortgage and leasehold that had become common at the beginning of the seventeenth century may have been more severe than the Cromwellian confiscations.[99] The fact that The King's and Queen's counties were already planted with a relatively large stock of Old Protestants before 1641 (i.e. 55% of the total number of landowning familes and perhaps 40-50% of the profitable land) meant that the scale of the land confiscations was not quite as pronounced as in other parts of Ireland. Kilkenny was one of the most fertile, prosperous and anglicised counties in Ireland (more so than The King's and Queens's counties), yet the high concentration of mainly Catholic Old English (they held about 65 % of the lands before 1641) meant that the 1650s were far more cataclysmic there.[100]

Some of the Old Irish proprietors who managed to cling onto fragments of their estates in the aftermath of the 1650s and 1660s faced a final onslaught with the Williamite confiscations in the 1690s. At least 13,400 profitable acres in Queen's and 19,300 in King's were forfeited and later sold in 1702/3.[101] Though not an inconsequential amount of land this third phase of forfeiture was, when compared to the

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[97] Simms, *The Williamite Confiscation,* pp. 17-22.

[98] Coote discussed the great improvements that were made to the soil during the eighteenth century, Coote, K.C, p. 7.

[99] Studies of the landownership in Ulster in the period 1600-1641 suggests there was a high incidence of indebtedness among Gaelic Catholic familes at the eve of the rebellion because this group were less able to take advantage of the more commercial farming practices that the English newcomers had introduced. McKenny found that in counties Donegal, Tyrone and Londonderry English Protestants held 54% of the total land area in 1641, compared to Scottish Protestants with 23% , Old English Catholics, 2%, Scottish Catholics, 6% and Gaelic Irish 11%, Kevin McKenny, ` The Seventeenth Century Land Settlement in Ireland: Towards a Statistical Interpretation', in Jane Ohlmeyer ed. *From Independence to Occupation, 1641-1660,* (Cambridge, 1995), pp. 181-200.

[100] Brennan concluded that `in terms of numbers and social and political influence, it was those families who traced their association with the county to the Cromwellian conquest who dominated Ascendancy society in eighteenth century Kilkenny'; M. Brennan, `The Making of a Protestant Ascendancy', p. 154.

[101] J.G. Simms, *The Williamite Confiscations in Ireland,* Appendix B, p. 177.

acreages granted in the earlier resettlement, of much less importance. It constituted a mere adjustment of the pattern of land ownership that existed after 1665 (i.e. a shifting of yet more land to the Protestant landowners) rather than a complete overhaul of the Acts of Settlement and Explanation. One estate, Sir Patrick Trant's, straddled both counties and contained over 22,000 acres. Thus 68% of all the land that was forfeited in the two counties came from just one very large estate and 27% from 4 large estates in The King's County.[102]

One might have expected that all those who assisted the Jacobite cause were Old Irish Catholics, since this group expected to make significant gains (i.e. a return to their former lands) from a Catholic victory and only minimal losses from a defeat (they had very little remaining land left to forfeit). It is surprising therefore that 3 of the 10 individuals who suffered forfeitures came from Old Protestant backgrounds (John Brereton, Richard Graham and Thomas Leicester). It is possible that the Leicesters for instance had strong Royalist leanings and Irish Catholic connections of a kind that one usually associates with the Old English.[103] It would appear that a small number of Old English Protestants felt that their loyalty to the hereditary monarch (rather than the Protestant succession and a *de facto* ruler), was of paramount importance and could even outweigh the desire to consolidate and expand their material wealth at the expense of their Catholic neighbours.

The long term significance of the sale of these forfeited estates lies more with the individuals who purchased them and who subsequently settled in the counties rather than

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[102] Only 10 individuals appear in the list of estates sold by the Commissioners for Forfeited Estates in the two counties: the losses of Robert Grace, Richard Graham and Edmund Morris were modest (216, 137 and 14 profitable acres in respectively), and probably amount to the peripheries of estates that were concentrated in neighbouring counties. There were two medium sized estates held by John Brereton and Walter Bryan (835 and 398 acres). Of the 5 larger estates that were sold 4 of them were in The King's County (those belonging to King James, 1001, Terence Coghlan, 3169, Charles Geoghegan, 2816 and Thomas Leicester, 1781 profitable acres); Registers of land made for the Commissioners for the Forfeited Estates, N.L.I., Ms. 12,092; `a return of forfeiting proprietors in Leix and Offaly with maps of townlands affected' c.1710, De Vesci papers, N.L.I., M/film P.697; Simms, *The Williamite Confiscation,* Appendix B, summary of trustees' sales 1702-03 (this auction list does not include all those who forfeited lands, but even if they were taken into account the amount of land involved in the Williamite confiscations was still relatively very low); and a comprehensive list of Jacobites (incl. Barnabas Fitzpatrick, Baron of Upper Ossory, Darby Fitzpatrick, Walter and John Bermingham, 50 members of the Dunne family) can be found in, O'Hanlon et al, *History of The Queen's County,* pp. 556-558.

103 Robert Leicester was described as an `English Protestant' in 1641, he was descended from an Elizabethan grantee, and was M.P. for the borough of Philipstown in 1634. A depostion states that during the rebellion, John Leicester, the burgomaster of Philipstown lost £3000 as a result of the conflict; T.C.D., Ms. 814, deposition 45b. On the basis of this evidence alone one might have categorised the Leicesters as an English Protestant family with an strong record of office-holding and likely beneficiaries of the Cromwellian settlement (like the Breretons and the Grahams). Yet Robert Leicester forfeited 371 acres (only a part of his total holding) during the interregnum. His kinsman John Leicester (High Sheriff of The King's County in 1678) was married to the daughter of an Old Irish family, Margaret Tyrell, and his mother, Mary Dunne, also came from an Irish background; T.U. Sadleir, `High Sheriffs of The King's County, p. 31.

the actual amount of land that was lost to established families. From 1691 Patrick Trant's connection with the two counties is completely severed but the other landowners seem to carry on living and farming in the area.[104]

Were the spoils of war distributed just as unequally (between the soldiers, adventurers and `innocent' gentlemen)? Was it the established Protestant gentlemen or the Cromwellian and Restoration settlers that gained the most from the main spate of re-grants in the two counties?

A fragment of a contemporary `Index to Adventurers and Souldiers' gives the impression that the division of land into so many small parcels was rather like a kind of lottery. Anonymous clerks in Dublin or London scribbled down the number of acres and geographical locations against an alphabetical list of beneficiaries and this list was probably then adjusted by more senior figures in the Cromwellian regime who wanted to make sure that a favoured few got extra pickings.[105] But in the early stages at least the forfeitable lands were divided up in a very methodical fashion so that members from a particular troop or regiment ended up with holdings not far from from each other. For instance Colonel Edward Stubbers was granted lands in the Liberties and County of Kilkenny and in the barony of Upper Ossory in The Queen's County, along with seven of his junior officers. The intention was that Stubber along with captains Burrell, Lynocks, Matthews, Helsham, Garret, Pennyfeather and Richards would live cheek by jowl and build upon their military camaraderie.[106]

The constant tinkering with the list of grantees (as more and more land was required), the vigorous market in the buying and selling of debentures and of course the effects of the Acts of Settlement and Explanation in the 1660s altered the original pattern of the Cromwellian settlement and diluted the strength of these military enclaves.[107] Most of the lowly footsoldiers made a hasty retreat from Ireland and sold up their parcels of land, which were generally under 100 acres. One only gets a glimpse of

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[104]Such as the Old Irish Geoghegans, Graces, Bryans and Coghlans. The three Protestant Jacobite families (listed above) have a record of office holding well into the eighteenth century; see Appendix 6.

[105] The King's and Queen's were two of the ten Irish counties that were initially set aside to repay the 1000 adventurers and the 22,000+ soldiers who brought about `the speedy and effectual reducing of the rebels in His Majesty's kingdom of Ireland'. The army surveyors put a value on every thousand acres in Leinster. A thousand acres in King's for instance was considered to be worth an average of £600 whereas in Queen's the same amount was worth £900. The lands were then distributed according to the amount of pay/debt that was owed to each individual (under the terms of The Adventurers Act of 1642 and the Doubling Act of 1643). An index to soldiers and Adventurers (fragment only), Nat. Arch. Ire., 2A.12.43; J.P. Prendergast, *The Cromwellian Settlement of Ireland,* (Dublin, 1875 2nd ed.), p. 213.

[106] B.S.D. and Prendergast, p. 216.

[107] The shortage of land is highlighted in a petition from the Mayor, Aldermen and Common Council of the Corporation of Gloucester to the Lord Protector in 1657, they argue that there was not enough land in the barony of Stradbally to satisfy their debts whereas `those adventurers whose lotts are fallen in the barony of Portnehinch...are fully satisfied and there is a remaine of land in that barony sufficient to supply what your petitioners want', H.M.C. *Corporation of Gloucester Manuscripts,* Rep. 12, App. 9. (1891), p. 514.

those who stayed from the records of dissenters. Many of the notable Quakers first arrived into Ireland as soldiers in the Cromwellian army and then settled down, often becoming tradesmen and craftsmen in towns, rather than small freeholders (see chapter 5.3).

The officers were much more likely to remain in Ireland because they tended to have parcels of land that were more economically viable as farms (usually 100+ acres) and those with capital could buy up the debentures of the rank and file and further increase the size of their holdings.[108] Once settled these military families would soon become absorbed into a much wider world that encompassed established landowners, the clergy, the professionals, tenants and townsfolk and would form new ties of kinship. Yet the former bonds of loyalty were still maintained and many of these new captains and colonels played a prominent part in the militia, and would often rub shoulders at county events and formalise their old friendships by intermarriage. The Cromwellian soldiers Purefoy, Baldwin and Sands for example were among the commanders of the militia to be raised at Killeigh and Philipstown in 1678/79.[109]

The Adventurers are a more disparate group.[110] One cannot assume that all those with non-military titles in the Books of Survey and Distribution. were either the men who lent money for the reconquest of Ireland or leading figures in the Cromwellian or Restoration political establishment. Thomas Burrell for instance, one of the officers in Colonel Stubber's regiment, is listed as an esquire whereas his comrade Arthur Helsham is `captain'. Thomas Hunt is the only individual out of c.165 grantees to be actually classified as an `adventurer'.[111] Irish lands were considered by many Adventurers as being just part of an off shore investment (along with their other mercantile/business affairs) and they more likely to be absent from their estates than the pre-1641 landowners.[112] But there were others who made their money in Dublin, obtained

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[108] Some of them, like Colonel Edward Stubbers, already held lands: in 1641 he was described as an `English Protestant' in The Queen's County and in 1665 was granted futher lands in The King's County. At least 6 of his 7 captains aforementioned remain in the county until at least c. 1710. The families Burrell, Helsham, Richards, Garret, Matthews and Pennyfeather appear in later records. No trace of a `Lynocks' can be found but it may be a variation of Lynham, a family that existed in King's before 1641 and carries on into the eighteenth century, see Common Pleas Indexes.

[109] Birr Castle Ms. A/19, see R. Loeber, `The Reorganisation of the Irish Militia in 1678-81: Documents from Birr Castle', *The Irish Sword,* Vol. XIX, no. 77, (Summer, 1995), pp. 197-224.

[110]For acreages held by `Adventurers' according to the Gross and Down Surveys see, Karl Bottigheimer, *English Money and Irish Land: The `Adventurer's in the Cromwellian Settlement of Ireland,* (Oxford, 1971), p. 148.

[111]He was granted 1014 profitable acres in King's. In the 1659 `census' he is the only titulado to be described as a `Shropshire Adventurer'.

[112]But there was was nothing novel about internal absenteeism, John Byse, Sir Thomas Rotheram and Sir William Parsons, all from The King's County, were each listed as `Dublin Protestants' in 1641. Certainly there were grantees who lived in England. Thomas Barnadiston for instance (from Barnadiston Hall in Suffolk) was granted 138 acres in Queen's in the 1660s and retained it until at least c.1710, though he played no part in county society.

important civic positions and then took on the extra role of landowner and county office holder. Alderman John Preston from Dublin was granted 5,616 acres in The Queen's County. Such a large holding required more than a passing interest and it is likely that he already had family connections there which might have made the task of managing an estate from afar less problematic.[113]

From a sample of the grants that were made to 61 individuals in The Queen's County in the reign of Charles II (taken from the Patent and Close Rolls of Chancery) one finds that the size of the holdings ranged from a miniscule 11 acres (a small lot in Killeshin granted to Nathaniel Hewett) to a sizeable 5,616 acres (Alderman Preston's estate scattered over 6 baronies).[114] The size of the land holdings that this new Protestant group held varied greatly and one must explore the correlation between the number of acres granted and the level of subsequent participation in the county.[115]

Those families of Cromwellian and Restoration origin who become conspicuous in the early eighteenth century for their service in the magistracy, in the corporations and in Parliament (such as the Rolls, Readings, Baldwins, Vaughans and Purefoys in King's, or the Despards, Shorts, Stubbers and Sands in Queen's) were originally granted holdings that were at the upper end of the medium-size estate and at the lower end of the larger one. Captain Peter Purefoy for instance was granted a respectable c.1350 acres in King's (and further amounts in Queen's) and became High Sheriff of the county in 1673.[116]

Until there is a complete picture of the estates that the new grantees in King's and Queen's held in the 8 neighbouring counties and elsewhere in Ireland, one cannot make comparisons between the average acreages of the New and the Old Protestants.[117] Despite the absence of this data it does seem that for all but a few of the New Protestants the estates granted to them were not especially large and certainly do not overshadow the estates of the top pre-1641 Protestants.

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[113]Margaret Preston, widow of Col. Preston' was listed in the B.S.D.

[114]B.S.D. and O'Hanlon, *History of The Queen's County,* Appendix III. Many of the grants listed in the later Restoration period appear to be confirmations of previous grants rather than new ones.

[115] Only 4 (7%) of the new grants in the sample amounted to less than a hundred acres, and at the other end of the spectrum there were 7 grantees (11%) with between 1001-2000 acres, 3 grantees (5%) with between 2001-3000 acres and just one individual with 3000+ acres. In the middling group 14 individuals (23%) were granted 501-1000 acres and 32 (52%) between 101-500 acres. So overall 75% of the New Protestants in this sample were granted medium sized estates of between 101-1000 acres. This seems to concur with the figures relating to neighbouring Kilkenny. The great majority (70%) of Kilkenny grantees received between 100-3000 acres. Of those within this range 53% had grants between 100-499 acres and 41% between 500-3000 acres, Brennan, `The Making of a Protestant Ascedancy', pp. 147-150, 153-154.

[116] T.U. Sadleir ed., `High Sheriffs of The King's County', *J.K.A.S.,* Vol. 8, (1915-17), p. 31.

[117] Only about 9 grantees appear to have been granted lands in both The King's and Queen's counties which suggests that New Protestants were given lands that were concentrated in one area and there was a minimal amount of county overlap.

One can place too much emphasis on the social and economic impact of the new grantees. The events that occurred in the following half century (i.e. the buying, selling, improving etc.) is as significant as the process of granting itself. Some of the most successful families in 1710 had indeed first established themselves in the two counties in the 1650s and 1660s, but this was not always as a result of a royal grant. During the interregnum Richard Warburton settled in Garryhinch in The King's County and established one of the most important landowning dynasties.[118]

The case of Warburton is very revealing because it shows that given large amounts of capital, opportunities to buy, and a certain amount of skill in estate management a non-grantee could make considerable gains. Warburton's estate was not only larger than those held by Cromwellian and Restoration grantees, but it placed him in the very top band of the landed elite in the county. Anthony Sharp, the Quaker, was another who gained a foothold without the assistance of a royal grant. He purchased the lands of Killinure in Queen's c.1688, using the capital that he had obtained from the wool trade in Dublin, and his grandson erected a splendid seat there c.1750.[119]

Such wholesale buying was not by any means unique in the Restoration period and confined not just to the *arriviste* element who brought capital from Dublin or England. Gilbert Rawson for instance (an Old Protestant) bought all the lands (1,048 acres) that had been granted or confirmed to Captain John Garret in the barony of Upper Ossory for £500 in 1668.[120] Prominent members of the pre-1641 Protestant class who had the necessary capital were likely to have been even better placed than men like Warburton and Sharp to pick up the sizeable scaps discarded by the new grantees because of their deeper roots in the counties, and it is to this group that one must now turn. Except for a few cases the Old Protestants retained the estates that they had

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118 There is no mention of this family in the B.S.D. for the two counties. It is possible that Warburton (or his two brothers who came to Ireland at the same time and resided in the City of Dublin) were granted plots elsewhere, but all the lands that his family are known to have held between c.1660 and 1710 were either purchased or leased. A nineteenth century history of the family states that Warbuton leased c.6000 acres in Connaught, acquired `considerable freeholds in King's, Queen's, Leitrim and Limerick' and took a leasehold of 4000 acres in 1675/76 from Sir Patrick Trant. After Trant's estates were forfeited and purchased by `The Hollow Sword Blades Company' Warburton carried on leasing these lands for £380 per annum. When the Hollow Sword Blades auctioned off their lands in 1708/9 Warburton acquired the freehold for £2371. At the same time he purchased another group of lands (that he had once leased in The King's County for £399 per annum) for £5700, Richard Warburton, *The Family of Warburton of Garryhinch*, (Dublin 1848), pp. 3-5. In a petition of 1690 Warburton reports that he had spent £2000+ in buildings and improvements on the lands that he leased from Trant, 30 Nov. 1690, H.M.C. *House of Lords Report* 13, App. 5, (1892), pp. 240-241.

119 B. De Breffny, `Roundwood and the Sharps', *Irish Ancestor*, Vol. 9, No.2 (1977), pp. 59-68l; Olive Goodbody, `Anthony Sharp, Wool Merchant, 1643-1707, and the Quaker Community in Dublin', *Journal of the Friends Hist. Soc.*, Vol. XLVIII, (1956-8), pp. 38-50.

120 In the previous year he also purchased 266 acres that had been granted to Francis Levillis. In one source Rawson is described as `of Dublin', and he was M.P. for The Queen's County between 1646 and 1661. O'Hanlon et al History *of The Queen's County* ,Appendix III (under the entries for Levillis and Garret).

acquired before 1641. These tended to be of a size that was far greater than that of the average New Protestant estate.[121] Though the soldiers and adventurers received the bulk of the lands that were disposed in the 1650s and 1660s (and this group have been more closely studied by scholars over the last century than the older Protestant families) one can all too easily overlook the fact that a number of pre-1641 Protestants also obtained grants for their services and emerged from the interregnum with estates that were even larger than they had been at the outset of the rebellion.[122] Sir Charles Coote, who was made the Earl of Mountrath, obtained more lands than any of the newcomers (in recognition of the role that he played in restoring Charles II to the throne). Coote already had a substantial estate before 1641 and he received a grant of 7,337 acres in the barony of Upper Ossory. By 1730 his estate in The Queen's County alone amounted to over 20,000 acres.[123] Coote's gains were exceptional, but there were other Old Protestant beneficiaries.[124]

A fiscal return of The King's County in 1680 used for the purposes of raising the militia named 124 of the principal landowners and their acreages in each barony (listed in alphabetical order in Appendix 3).[125] From this document one can get a sense of the size of estates and the relative importance of the Old and New English families two decades after the Cromwellian and Restoration settlement. Table 1.5 categorises the landowners by acreage.

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[121] A crude computation of the acreages in the B.S.D. shows that an established Protestant peer like the Earl of Londonderry, had at least 4839 acres, which put him in the very top bracket, then there were substantial gentlemen like Francis Cosby with 3433+, Sir George Herbert with 2666+ and other Knights, baronets and gentlemen such as, Sir John Wakely with 1370+ acres, Sir William Colley 1799+ and Thomas Piggott, 1667+. There were of course Old Protestants at the other end of the scale like John Graham, who held a middle sized estate of c.900 acres. Philip Bigoe was among the smaller proprietors with 273 acres.

[122] This concurs with Kevin McKenny's' remark that `in the final analysis, however, Old Protestants who had settled in Ireland prior to the rebellion's outbreak in 1641 benefited most from the upheavals because they found themselves ideally placed during the 1650s to purchase both land and debentures', `The Seventeenth Century Land Settlement', p. 198.

[123] Coote also held c. 2600 acres in The King's County, O'Hanlon et al, *History of The Queen's County,* p.547; Earl of Mountrath's book of maps, N.L.I., M/film, P.2618;

[124] In 1668 for instance a grant was confirmed to Alexander Piggot of 124 acres in the barony of Upper Ossory, enlarging an estate that had originally been granted to his forbears in the sixteenth century. And even the modestly endowed Philip Bigoe managed to secure a few extra scraps (c.40 acres that were carved from the estates of Owen and Fergus Maddin) to augment his holding, ibid.

[125] Birr Castle, Ms. A/19.

Table 1.5 Landownership in The King's County c. 1680

Acreage	Number of landowners in this band
10,000+	1
6-10,000	0
5-5999	2
4-4999	0
3-3999	6
2-2999	10
1-1999	34
500-999	30
100-499	34
under 100	7

Source: Militia return of 1680, Birr Castle Ms. A/19.

On the basis of this evidence one could argue that 9 landowners had large estates in The King's County (of 3000 acres or more), 44 had substantial estates (1000-2999), 30 had medium sized estates (500-1000) and 41 had relatively small holdings (under 500 acres). Table 1.5b lists the top 20 landowners, their acreages and their ethnic/religious background. Though the Old Protestant families comprised about a third of the landed elite after 1665 they were still very well represented among the top band of landowners in the county.[126]

Table 1.5a The top twenty landowners in The King's County c. 1680

Name of landowner	acreage	Background
1. Lord Arlington	10,231	New Prot.
2. Lord Digby	5980	Old Prot
3. Sir Lawrence Parsons	5164	Old Prot
4. Robert Molesworth Esq.	3671	New Prot (by inheritance)
5. John Eyre Esq.	3267	Old Prot
6. Archibald Adair Esq.	3173	New Prot
7. Lord Mountrath	3060	Old Prot
8. Alderman Smith	3052	New Prot
9. John Weaver Esq.	3045	Old Prot
10. John Baldwin	2953	New Prot
11. Thomas Coffye	2862	?
12. Sir William Petty	2857	New Prot
13. Sir William Herbert (heiresses of)	2539	Old Prot
14. Sir Francis Blundell	2506	Old Prot
15. Trevor Lloyd Esq.	2462	Old Prot
16. John Coghlan Esq.	2410	Old Cath-turned Prot
17. Lord Ely (Loftus)	2389	Old Prot
18. Hamilton (heiresses of)	2200	New Prot?
19. Terence Coghlan Esq.	1979	Old Cath- turned Prot.
20. Lord Cavan (Lambert)	1926	Old Prot.

Source: Militia return c. 1680, Birr Castle A/19

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[126]In the 1706 quit rent list there were c. 68 Old Protestant names compared to 127 New Protestants.

A list of the purchasers of the forfeited estates in 1702/3 shows that seven individuals and one organisation bagged the c.34,000 acres that were on offer in The King's and Queen's counties. A scrutiny of these names shows that one proprietor, Richard Fitzpatrick, was a pre-1641 Protestant. He was a distinguished naval officer and had inherited his famil y's estate upon the death of his eldest brother in 1696. He received the lands at Grantstown (forfeited by Edward Morris) for his services to the crown and purchased others from the Trustees of the Forfeited Estates.[127] Another purchaser, William Despard, was a New Protestant from The Queen's County. Peter Holmes came from Johnstown in neighbouring Tipperary and his sphere of interest overlapped into The King's County [128] The most important buyer on the list is The Hollow Sword Blades Company (30,382 acres). Ephraim Dawson was not tempted by the lots on offer in King's and Queen's and bought instead 1,333 acres in Westmeath.[129] It was only after the Hollow Blades sold up in 1708 that Dawson, as well as Warburton, acquired considerable holdings in the two counties.

The auctions of 1702/3 and 1708/9 are significant because they were the last wholesale disposal of lands and provided opportunites for new faces to appear in landed society. What is striking about the two sales is the small number of interested parties. Both the Government and the London merchants had difficulty in gaining satisfactory bids. In the light of the buying sprees in the Restoration period (when there was a glut of land on the market) this seems puzzling.

One explanation is that the purchasing power of the landed gentry was restricted at the beginning of the eighteenth century as a result of a) the national and indeed European economic depression which caused a scarcity of money, and b) having already exhausted their reserves by land purchase in the previous decades. Another explanation is that the level of monetary gain (distinct from the social and political prestige) from land ownership at the turn of the eighteenth century was far lower than it was to be in the 1710s, 1720s and 1730s, and that even those with liquidity may have shied away from laying out large sums on more land. The acquisitiveness of landowners can be exaggerated. While most gentlemen relished the opportunity of enlarging their estate (spending right up to and beyond their means in order to do), others were more

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[127] T.U. Sadleir, `Kildare Members of Parliament', *J.K.A.S.*, Vol. 6 (1909-11), pp. 397-99.

[128] He became the High Sheriff of King's in 1707 and married the daughter of William Sprigge from `Cloonivoe' in the same county; Sadleir, `High Sheriffs of The King's County', p. 33. Amyas Bushe had estates in Co. Kilkenny. John Asquill bought lands in other counties besides The King's and Queen's and is likely to have had a seat elsewhere. There is no mention of him in the 1706 quit rent list and he may have acquired these lands for speculative purposes. The previous abodes of Nathaniel Boyce and Thomas Tilson have yet to be identified (although they all appear on the 1706 list).

[129] Simms, *The Williamite Confiscation,* Appendix B.

concerned with getting their existing lands into shape, by first getting industrious head tenants to work the land and to encourage planting and building, before taking on a further burden.

1.6 New entrants to landed society: c. 1710-1760

By c.1710 a Protestant landed elite has come into clear focus. At no point however can one say that an elite crystallised, since marriage, inheritance and changes in estate management (discussed in chapter 2) continually altered the scheme of things. The Williamite victory did not result in a new wave of settlers; instead it consolidated the position of the settlers already established. But new landowners did enter the two counties after this date.[130] In numbers they constituted a small trickle over a long period: a few names added to the total stock of landowners compared to the doubling of the number of names in the 1650s and 1660s, and they are often overlooked. These new entrants had a disproportionate effect on the economy and society because many brought with them large capital and entrepreneurship.

It is difficult to make any generalisations about the numbers of new landowners and the chronology of settlement, although a reading of the Dublin newspapers, which carried advertisements for seats and estates, suggests that the arrival of a minor newcomer was a regular occurrence and at least 6 important new families appear in the two counties (Dawson, Bland, Chetwood, Molesworth, Kemmis and Parnell) in the period c.1708-1731. One could categorise these newcomers into three key groups: 1) those who acquired their lands indirectly through marriage and inheritance, 2) those who purchased and came from a landed background in England , 3) those who purchased and a) came from a landed background in Ireland or b) obtained their capital from a professional background in Ireland (principally the army, the law and business).

When Knightly Chetwood came to live at Woodbrook in The Queen's County c.1715 he would have experienced little of the anxiety and alienation felt by the Cromwellian newcomers. His grandfather, Valentine, who had first come to Ireland in the 1660s had already laid the foundations for the family and his father the Rev. John Chetwood was a rector in County Meath. It seems that his marriage to Hester Brooking in 1700 brought with it lands in The Queen's County and in the same year he inherited a considerable sum in cash from his uncle, who was an English Consul in Tunis. If Chetwood was to feel alienated it was because of his uncompromising Tory views and Jacobite tendencies. It may have been his exclusion from magistracy in 1714 and his unpopularity that led him in the following year to reside at Woodbrook (instead of his

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[130] Ibid., p. 155.

seat in Martry, Co. Meath). Once in residence in The Queen's County he built a house and laid out a demesne.[131] His heir Valentine Knightly went on to become the High Sheriff of the county in 1758/9. The Molesworths are another family who acquired an interest in the area as a result of marriage rather than deliberate choice, and they showed a keen interest in the development of Philipstown in the first quarter of the eighteenth century (even though their seat remained in County Dublin).

Thomas Kemmis provides an unusual case because he is a very late new English arrival. He moved to Ireland from Monmouthshire c.1731 having just achieved his majority and inherited his father's fortune. He did not start on a completely new sheet, for he already had relatives living in The Queen's County and it was probaby their favourable reports that persuaded him to come over. This would also explain why he decided to lease lands near Stradbally and Mountrath in 1735/6 from Colclough Fitzgerald (who was related to his cousin) soon after he arrived. Throughout his life he used his capital and family connections to good effect, obtaining long leaseholds and freeholds, and at his death in 1774 he was reputed to have left lands to the value of £10,000.[132]

The other new entrants who bought their way into the county already had holdings or a network of contacts in Ireland. John Lyons served in the colonies for much of his working life. After he retired from the army (having reached the rank of major) he sold off the bulk of his estate in the Indies and returned to Ireland. At first he resided in Mucklagh (K.C.), then Rahenrohan (Q.C.), and then Grangemellon (Co. Carlow border). In 1710 he purchased £4,500 of land and finally settled at Ladystown in Westmeath. According to a later biographer Lyons was `of a roving disposition' but `displayed much foresight in land jobbing speculations'. By virtue of having the necessary capital and business acumen Lyons was said to have made £1,647 and in 1713 that was of a sufficient rank to be elected as M.P. for the borough of Athy.[133]

Though Ephraim Dawson came from a business background he had previously acquired lands in Westmeath and he married to Anne Preston who brought with her the estate of Samuel Preston in The Queen's County.[134] In 1708 he was able to strengthen

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[131]Chetwood went into exile between c.1715 and 1718, then settled more permanently in Queen's. He had tried unsuccessfully to find another property in Meath, he wrote to Swift in 1733 `for God's sake and mine try to get me New Hall' otherwise `he must go and live in a bog in a far country' [a possible allusion to Woodbrook], W.G. Strickland, `The Chetwoods of Woodbrook in the Queen's County', *J.K.A.S.*, Vol. 9 (1918-1920, pp. 205-226.

[132]Details of Thomas Kemmis's Will outlined in, L.G.N. Kemmis, `A Short Account of the Family of Kemmis in Ireland', *J.K.A.S.*, Vol. 12, (1935-45), pp. 144-169.

[133]`Kildare M.P.'s', *J.K.A.S.*, Vol. 6 (1909-11), p. 159-160.

[134] Ann Preston's father was Samuel Preston, who one must pressume was the heir of Alderman John Preston. He was granted at least 5616 acres, making him the largest known Restoration grantee in Queen's. Thus Dawson has the advantage of 1) an existing estate, 2) lands acquired cheaply c.1708 and 3) additional capital from his Dublin enterprises.

this power base by purchasing the Hollow Blades lands, and his dividends from his Dublin bank meant that he had additional capital to carry out improvements on his estate.[135] It was the coincidence of these factors that brought Dawson the considerable material and political success that Pole Cosby, an Old Protestant, grew to despise.[136]

Judge John Parnell was another newcomer whom Cosby lampooned, `he was but mushroom, a man of no family at all at all'.[137] He bought the estate at Rathleague c.1720 and `built the house now there, and made improvements which cost him a great deal of money'.[138] Parnell had evidently made his fortune in Dublin in the law, though he is likely to have originally held lands elsewhere in Ireland. By contrast John Bland, who was a native of Ulster and arrived into The Queen's County in 1714, was seen in a more favourable light because he was a distinguished army officer and a friend of Pole Cosby's father (Dudley Cosby also served in Spain and might conceivably have persuaded Bland to settle near Stradbally in the first place). He is said to have used the £10,000 that `he got for his regiment' to purchase the estate of Blandsford. Bland must have had substantial liquid assets for he was able to lend Pole Cosby at least £2000.[139] The slow re-payment of this sum led to an erosion of the friendhsip that had existed between the two families. In 1756 Humphrey Bland (who inherited the estate from his brother John Bland) was moved to write to his steward to recommend that a suit be served on Cosby `for he has acted towards me with so much ingratitude that I can't forgive him or hold any correspondence with him for the future'.[140]

One might have thought that by the mid-eighteenth century a man like Cosby, an Old Protestant with a large estate and deep roots in the county going back to the sixteenth century, would have fared better than a newcomer from a military background who had bought a more modest holding. Yet by the 1750s it was `Mr. Cosby's affairs' that were `in a Desparate way', whereas Bland was in the process of buying a second house in England and was urging his agents to keep a look out for lands so as to `add considerably now to my present Landed Estate in Ireland'.[141]

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[135] Dawson was said to have been a partner in the Dublin bank Hugh Henry and Co. (along with Hugh Henry and William Lennox) which was established c.1710 and issued its own bank notes in the 1730s. The partnership seems to have been dissolved in 1737; information taken from James Fleming's article on Emo Park, *The Weekly Irish Times*, 20 Nov. 1937, (cutting from Laois file, Irish Architectural Archive, Dublin).
[136] Cosby wrote `he got a very great interest into this county though he was quite a newcomer into this county and a very mean upstart, for his father kept an ale house the sign of the cock in Belfast' (he was in fact a revenue collector for Down, Antrim and the port of Carrickfergus)', Cosby Autobiog., p. 174
[137] Cosby Autobiog., p. 254.
[138] Cosby gives the date as 1720, a deed of 1717 records a `John Parnell of Dublin esq.', Nat. Arch. Ire. M. 7021 (deed 4), a twentieth century genealogical account suggests that the Parnells arrived into Ireland in the 1650s and most of the branches settled in Dublin, P.R.O.N.I. D.289/1.
[139] Humphrey Bland to Capt. Desbrisay, 23 Sept. 1755; Private Mss. Collection, (Blandsfort, Ireland).
[140] Ibid, same to same, 2 Dec. 1756; Cosby Autobiog., p. 253.
[141] Ibid, same to same, 23 Sept. 1759.

All of the new entrants that I have described brought with them *capital*, a factor of production that was so often lacking among some of the more established landowners. For each spendthrift Cosby there were many more prudent landowners who struggled to balance the income received from their rentals with the necessary daily household disbursements and the extraordinary sums needed for marriages, funerals etc. that was commensurate with their social status. Success in landed society in the eighteenth century was closely bound up with estate management, the availability of ready cash and a number of other factors and not just the actual number of acres that one inherited. It is to these issues that one must now turn.

CHAPTER 2

The Consolidation and Improvement of Estates

In the spring of 1753 Humphrey Bland was so annoyed with Pole Cosby for not paying off his debt that he was moved to jot down his impressions of other Irish gentlemen:

> Spending idly what is not their own, and thereby Run so deeply in debt, that they don't know where to turn themselves. This is the case with most of the country Gentlemen in Ireland, whose estates are so overloaded with Debts, that they have scarcely a maintenance out of them, and yet never think of paying any of their creditors off, but go on in the old extravagant way till the whole is gone and their families Ruin'd, whereas, by a proper frugality and occonomy, they might have retrieved their Affairs, and saved their estates, but that foolish Irish pride, in appearing Richer than they are in the eye of the world, won't let them Act the Honest, just part to their creditors and family....My lending to him,[Cosby] was purely to serve him, and not with a view of Advantage to my self, of which he has proved unworthy, and taught me this piece of wisdom, never to trust any of the country squires for the future.[1]

This is a damning indictment of the way Irish county gentlemen ran their estates in the mid-eighteenth century and the arguments expressed in this account require careful consideration.[2] How successful were the Protestant landowning families in exploiting the considerable political and material gains that they had acquired in the period c.1650-1700?

After the Williamite War the Protestant landed elite seemed to have every reason to survive and prosper. They owned about 88% of the land and as members of the political and religious elite they were, through the `Popery Acts', able to restrict

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[1] Humprey Bland to Capt. Desbrisay, London, 17 April 1753, Bland Mss. Private Collection.

[2] Bland's view is echoed by Edward Wakefield 60 years later: `There are owners in Ireland of very large estates who have not a shilling of income, the whole of their fortune being absorbed ...by debts contracted by themselves or left them by their predecessors',*An Account of Ireland:Statistical and Political* (London, 1812); see also D. Large, `The Wealth of the Greater Irish Landowners', 1750-1815', *I.H.S,* Vol. XV, no. 57 (March, 1966), p. 37.

the political representation, religious freedom and economic development of their Catholic co-habitants. Indeed until recently the performance of the Protestant gentry was considered to be largely bound up with the introduction of the Penal Laws.[3] Though the effects of these acts were less far reaching than was once thought one should not underestimate the importance that contemporaries (and not just nineteenth century chroniclers) attached to them. At times of distress pamphleteers blamed the Penal Laws for a plethora of ills, including the underdevelopment of Protestant and Catholic estates.

Absenteeism, the other economic bug bear of the eighteenth century, was also believed by contemporaries to have had a detrimental effect on estate development. Thomas Prior, whose seat was at Rathdowney in The Queen's County, compiled a list of absentees in 1730 and bemoaned the fact that considerable amounts of money, which might otherwise have been spent in Ireland, left the kingdom each year.[4] Non-residence meant that intermediaries, such as land agents, were largely responsible for the day-to-day running of affairs. According to many contemporaries this could lead to a gradual erosion of property rights and a weakening of the Protestant interest.

The divisive effects of government patronage was another issue that was avidly debated throughout the century. It was thought that a number of Protestant estates were propped up by the income that they received from government pensions and sinecures. In the revised list of absentees published in 1769 it was the size of the `pensions civil and military' rather than the `value spent abroad' that is calculated.[5] How far was the success of the Protestant landed elite determined by their own individual efforts and how far did the development of their estates depend upon a governmental cradle?

The behaviour of a small minority of mainly titled absentees and office holders (who were often attacked in the pamphlets of the period) can obscure the greater part of the Protestant landed elite who were anchored on their estates in Ireland and derived virtually all of their income from the rental. For most of the two hundred or so esquires and gentlemen in The King's and Queen's counties the daily grind of running an estate featured prominently in their lives. Even those who were

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[3] O'Hanlon et al believed that `the history of the Queen's County in the eighteenth century (in so far as it can be said to have any history) is the history of the Penal Laws', *History of the Queen's County*, p. 558

[4] Thomas Prior, *A View of the Present State of Affairs in the Kingdom of Ireland*, (Dublin, 1730): sometimes catalogued as `Prior's Absentee Landlords'. It went through many re-prints and editions. The key ones are 1769 and 1783.

[5] Prior, `Absentee Landlords', (Dublin, 1769). The landowners are divided up into first, second and third class as before; but this time `pensions civil and military' rather than `the yearly value abroad is calculated.

burdened with the affairs of church and state, like Bishop Edward Synge or Bishop Thomas Vesey, took an active interest in the development of their estate.[6]

The best documented Irish families tend to be the nobles and substantial gentlemen who were either noted for their `improving zeal' by contemporaries (and have left correspondence and material remains for posterity) or else they are those whose estates were heavily encumbered with debt, causing them to become embroiled in long and expensive legal battles (which generated a voluminous quantity of paper and parchment). But how far do the less conspicuous and less studied gentry families fit into these two categories? The `improving landlord' and the `extravagant squireen' were not always at opposite ends of the spectrum. In Pole Cosby's case they best describe two sides of one personality. It was his intensive campaign of improvement that led to large debts.

On the basis of the reports about Pole Cosby's incompetent management and his financial position in the 1750s and 1760s it might be thought that the Stradbally estate was in poor shape. Fortunately in this instance other evidence survives which corroborates Cosby's view that Stradbally had become one of `the best improved seats of this kingdom'. *Success* in estate management evidently meant different things to different people in the eighteenth century and one has to cast aside late twentieth century conventions of accounting. The estate was not just an economic enterprise and success cannot be judged solely on the basis of the amount of debt or by the raw figures recorded in account books. A healthy balance in a given year did not always mean that a family was flush with money (i.e. the figures can conceal the fact that a landowner was budgeting to provide portions, jointures, funeral expenses and other extraordinary costs). Similarly a large debt may not have been a great source of anxiety if a good relationship existed with creditors or if a lump sum (in the form of a portion or fines to be received from the large-scale renewal of a batch of leases) was anticipated.

Thus one needs to use a variety of sources, such as maps and topographical accounts as well as the estate papers, to determine how far the Protestant landed elite had consolidated their economic position by 1760 and the methods that they employed to `improve' the *land* (this chapter will focus principally on the fields, bogs, woodland and mineral resources). The terms `consolidation' and `improvement' may be interchangable and one needs to question whether the level of improvement on an estate was an accurate reflection of economic success or whether it was the improvements that led to the consolidation in the long run.

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[6] M-L. Legg ed., *The Synge Letters: Bishop Edward Synge to His Daughter Alicia, Roscommon to Dublin 1746-1752,* (Dublin, 1996), p.179.

Case studies of individual noble estates (e.g. the Ormonde, Cork or Downshire estates) and gentry estates (e.g. French of Monivae, Murray of Boughton, or Brownlow of Lurgan), based on exceptionally rich caches of surviving account-books and rentals, have increased our understanding of the mechanics of Irish estate management.[7] But it is difficult to produce a case study of one family without over shadowing the roles of numerous other families in the region. A complete run of account books can give the impression that the `proper frugality and occonomy' or the `old extravagant way' of an individual largely determined the success or otherwise of a particular family. When a larger sample of evidence is put together the task of running an estate in the eighteenth century appears more like a game of snakes and ladders involving hundreds of players. At a local level all the landowning families were to a greater or lesser degree interdependent and the rise of one family could be at the expense of another (e.g. if one family ended up the better half of a marriage settlement). Studies of Cork and Tipperary have employed a multi-biographical approach in order to understand the dispersals of the Ormonde and Clancarty estates and the effect that these had on county landownership.[8] It is a real balancing act to give an account of the handful of well documented families while at the same time to assess the collective performance of a local Protestant landed elite as a county group.

2.1 Inheritance and the law

In 1731 George Hartpole reached his majority and inherited the manor of Shrule in The Queen's County. His patrimony was said to comprise `3 castles, 200 messuages, 500 tofts, 500 cartilages, 500 gardens, 10 orchards, 5 pigeon houses, 5 chills, 3000 acres of land, 2000 acres of meadow, 3000 acres of pasture, 500 acres of wood and underwood, 1000 acres of faize and heath, 5000 acres of moor' and the

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[7]W.A. Maguire, *The Downshire Estates in Ireland 1801-45,* (Oxford, 1972); L. Proudfoot, *Urban Patronage and Social Authority: The Management of the Duke of Devonshire's Towns in Ireland 1764-1891,* (Washington, D.C., 1995); Denis A. Cronin, *A Galway Gentlemen in the Age of Improvement: Robert French of Monivae, 1716-1779,* (Dublin, 1995); Raymond Gillespie, *Settlement and Survival on an Ulster Estate: The Brownlow Leasebook, 1667-1711,* (P.R.O.N.I., 1988); Graeme Kirkham, "No More to be Gott off the Cat But the Skin": Management, Landowning and Economic Change on the Murray of Broughton Estate, 1670-1755'; in W. Nolan et al. ed. *Donegal: History and Society,* (Dublin, 1995), pp. 357-380.

[8] In the years 1702-1703 £94,000 of property belonging to the Earl of Clancarty was sold. Between 1728 and 1728 part of the estate belonging to the Earl of Cork and Burlington were sold, see D. Dickson, An Economic History of the Cork Region in the Eighteenth Century, (PhD. T.C.D., 1977), pp. 130-138; for the effects of the break up of the Ormonde estate see T.P. Power, *Land, Liberty and Society in Eighteenth Century Tipperary,* (Oxford, 1993), p. 76.

right to hold a court leet and court baron.[9] This was a relatively large estate and the Hartpoles were among about 40 pre-1641 families who were at the centre of county affairs. But along with this impressive list of assets Hartpole also inherited an array of encumbrances and legal problems that hung like a mill stone around his neck for the rest of his life. Few heirs could start on a clean sheet with a secure title over all the properties and free of debts or mortgages.

The 21-year old George Hartpole was forced to face up to the legal and financial difficulties that had accumulated over three generations. The bulk of the estate was forfeited by Robert Hartpole Esq. (an English Catholic of planter stock who died whilst serving in the Royalist army).[10] At the Restoration his son, Robert Hartpole II, was able to witness a complete reversal of his family's fortune. The former lands were restored, his prestige was increased by virtue of the knighthood and his marriage brought a lump sum that was a welcome injection into his estate account. He was therefore very anxious that these exceptional gains should not be frittered away by future generations. Sir Robert's son and heir, William, was said to have had a weak character and this might have made his father all the more determined to settle the estate before he inherited. In this instance Sir Robert had granted himself and his heir a `life estate' (which meant that they could not convey or sell the fee simple) and made provision for other dependants after his death (i.e. jointures, portions etc.). The rest of the estate rested in the hands of trustees for a specified period. The rationale was that once William's son and heir had come of age (and providing his father, William, and grandfather, Robert were no longer alive) he could begin to take full reponsibility over the estate and break the entail. If the estate emerged in good shape after two generations then the grandson (George Hartpole) might be persuaded, for a suitable annuity, to relinquish his fee tail for a life estate and set in motion the whole process again.

This vignette high lights some of the advantages and disadvantages of the strict settlement; a legal mechanism which seems to have been commonplace in eighteenth century Ireland. Such a settlement could prevent the disintegration of an estate as a result of poor management or extravagance in one fell swoop. The principal difficulties with such an arrangement were that those who lived off the life estate had their hands tied by the trustees and that the annuity may not have always been enough to satisfy living expenses. William Hartpole ended up in a debtor's prison

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[9] This is taken from a transcript of a fine in 1708 involving the Hartpole and Domville families on the one part and Tilson on the other. It is possible that acreages in this document refers to the manor as it was before 1641, Hartpole Mss. T.C.D. Ms. 1933, no. 4a.

[10] *C.S.P.I. 1663-65*, 4 July 1663, p. 160; `The Case of Robert Hartpole', 1713, Nat. Arch. Ire. M.7040; Hartpole Mss. T.C.D. Ms. 1933 nos. 193, 301; copy of a grant of lands to Hartpole, 14. March 1684, N.L.I., D.10,264.

(by 1712 debts on the estate amounted to £8000). Pole Cosby recalled that in 1724 that his father Dudley `was for tyeing me up to a certain joynture...which would have been very bad for me, so would not give my consent'.[11] Much also depended on the ability and probity of the trustees. Though usually selected from among relatives and family friends they could turn out to be rather less scrupulous than was expected.[12] Trustees were generally landowners themselves and had their own affairs to attend to.

The relative success or failure of an individual landowner was thus to some extent pre-determined. No matter how talented or ambitous an heir was, his actions were constrained by the assets and liabilities that he inherited. Before a new landowner could get on with improving his estate he needed to be sure that his legal position was secure. The time and resources invested in pursuing a long-drawn-out legal suit could seriously retard the development of an estate.

Though the formal redistribution of land (as a result of forfeiture and royal grant) had come to an end by c.1700 the legal wranglings that it generated were to rumble on throughout the eighteenth century. For many Protestants the end of the Williamite War marked the beginning and not the end of their legal disputes. This was compounded by the `Popery Acts' enacted in the reign of Queen Anne which restricted the opportunity for Catholics to inherit, purchase or hold long leases. The rewards on offer for those who `discovered' that a Catholic held lands unlawfully also had the potential to increase the level of litigation.[13] Catholic landowners and tenants could be represented by solicitors and there is evidence of sectarian tension in the courts throughout the eighteenth century. In 1732 Edmund Warren boasted to William Flower in letter `I assure you your success in this cause has made most of the papists aboat [sic] the courts very down in the mouth'.[14]

The bulk of cases brought to the Courts of Common Pleas and Chancery in the eighteenth century seeme to have been disputes between members of the Protestant landowning group over title and leasehold. In England the lower branch of the legal

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[11]Cosby Autobiog. p. 170.

[12] It is ironic that Sir Richard Segar, the trustee of Sarah Cosby (Pole Cosby's mother), invested £400 of her money with William Hartpole in c.1704. The money was to `lye dead for two years' and then Hartpole was to pay £60 per annum during her life (with the clause that if she died within two years the full sum would be returned). This gamble put Hartpole further into debt since Sarah Cosby lived on for another three decades and the trustee was likely to have been disappointed by Hartpole's less than punctual payment of this yearly sum; Hartpole Mss. 1933 deed 354 and Cosby Autobiog. p. 85. (both the memorial of the deed and Cosby's account match each other; this indicates that the Cosby autobiography is reliable).

[13] The most relevant of the `Ferocious Acts' were the 1704 and 1709 Acts which dealt with Catholic landowners: a) Catholics were prevented from buying land or receiving lands as a gift, b) estates had to be divided up between sons, c) leases could not be taken for more than 31 years. The enforcement of these acts depended upon the support of landowners so incentives were given to those who `discovered' that a Catholic had breached these laws.

[14]Edward Warren to William Flower, 5 Dec. 1732, Flower Papers, N.L.I., Ms. 11,481 (8).

profession, the so-called pettyfogers and vipers, had developed as a result of the huge increase in the volume of civil actions in the seventeenth century. In Ireland the most spectacular growth in the law occurred in the following century. Outbreaks of rebellion and breakdowns of law had meant that title deeds were often destroyed, stolen and forged in the seventeenth century. Before 1641 there was a buoyant market for deeds. Unscrupulous escheators, such as the Earls of Cork, Strafford and Ormonde, employed agents to search for deeds that would give them the opportunity to claim back lands for the crown.[15] The instability of the interregnum provided further instances of illegal seizures. The reliance on written descriptions of plots of land rather than on maps, the crudity of measuring instruments, the large tracts of waste land, and the lack of obvious landscape boundaries (i.e. hedgerows, ditches and walls) meant that estates were far from precisely defined before 1700.

A survey of the petitions to the crown listed in the calendars of State Papers from the Restoration period suggest that favouritism and patronage rather than hard evidence often determined which party triumphed in disputes over land.[16] From the first quarter of the eighteenth century the crown was in no position to settle disputes by simply granting and re-granting the lands that it had at its disposal. There was no more escheated land to grant and the discretionary powers of the monarch were more limited. Landowners seeking to consolidate their position turn increasingly to the judiciary and to the English and Irish Houses of Parliament.

In 1708 a unique institution was set up by the Irish parliament to overcome some of the problems caused by the venality and loss of documentation in the previous century.[17] After 1708 a copy of any instrument of law (conveyances, leases, mortgages, marriage settlements etc.) had to be lodged with the Registry of Deeds in Dublin. Thenceforth written evidence from this repository took precedence over sworn deposition and affidavit in the courts. By the later eighteenth century the job of the legal clerk must have been less irksome. Instead of having to pore over heaps of sometimes sodden and fragmentary deeds that had been kept in the basements of country houses he could extract the necessary memorial of the particular deed required from bound volumes in the registry. But of course many unexpired

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[15]David Edwards, `The young First Duke of Ormonde', paper given at Kilkenny Castle, 22 March, 1997; forthcoming publication on the 1st and 2nd Dukes of Ormonde.

[16]Sir Edward Massey for instance achieved some success because of his connections in royal circles. In 1661 Charles II ordered the Lords Justice to grant Massey a 99 lease of the manor of Abbeyleix and to put him into possession of the lands of Watercastle `which, before the rebellion, was in dispute between the Duke of Ormonde and the Earl of Upper Ossory'; *C.S.P.I., 1660-62,* 28 August 1661, p. 412.

[17] For background to the act of parliament (`An Act for the public Registering of Deeds, Conveyances and wills', 6 Anne, chap. 2) see P. B. Eustace ed., *Registry of Deeds: Abstract of Wills,* Vol. 1, 1708-1745, (Dublin, 1956), p. vii.

leaseholds were signed and perfected long before 1708.[18] A lease involving Dudley Cosby of Stradbally that was lodged in the registry in 1719 refers back to a 99 year lease made in 1648.[19] Moreover one can not be sure that all eighteenth-century deeds were deposited. When leasing small scraps of land or making deals with family and friends, landowners might have been tempted to ignore legal requirements. Several of Pole Cosby's deeds were registered a long time after they were signed; for instance a lease of lands (for lives) to his kinsman William Cosby in Garrymaddock in 1728 was not registered until 1765, the year that Pole Cosby died.

The 1707 Act may have curtailed some of the fraudulent activities that existed earlier but there are no indications that it led to a drop in property litigation. In fact the greater proliferation of written instruments and the availability of books on law probably encouraged landowners to resort to the courts. The possession of a document and the knowledge that an exact copy was held in Dublin might have made a potential plaintiff more confident about both issuing and fighting a suit. Even some of the most carefully drafted deeds contained ambiguities that could cause disagreement and keep the burgeoning number of lawyers in work. When Pole Cosby fought a case in 1735 the location of the *original* deed (not the copy in the registry) was important because one of the key witnessess, `one Cullen who swore to his Brothers Handwriting', was later found to be illiterate.[20] The full impact of the the registry on the law and practices of landownership in the eighteenth century has yet to be explored.

Landowners turned to the courts with greater frequency after the Restoration, but the most notable increase occurs after 1700. Pole Cosby's father in law, Henry Dowdall, who died in 1706 `had a vast number of lawsuits in his time and was deffendant in every one but one, and never lost but two suits in his life'.[21] The indexes of the Common Pleas fine books show that between 1660 and 1689 there were 158 cases involving lands in the two counties. In the years 1690 and 1719 the number rose to 255 a 61% increase, and between 1720 and 1750 there were about 366 cases.[22] Virtually all of the gentry families (esquires and gentlemen) brought a case to the Common Pleas at some point in this period and a very large proportion of the litigants appear to have been freeholders.[23]

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[18] Reg. Deeds. Book 27. Page 165.No.16304, 1719.
[19] Reg. Deeds, 234. 539. no.154903, 17 July 1728.
[20] Cosby Autobiog., p. 315.
[21] Ibid, p.261.
[22] Common Pleas Index to the Fines Entry Books (transcripts of the actual cases were destroyed in 1922), Nat. Arch. Ire. location no. 2/447/25.
[23]Robert, William and George Hartpole resorted to the Common Pleas and Dudley Cosby (Pole Cosby's father), had four cases pending between 1695 and 1725. Legal fees feature very prominently in

Perhaps the most serious legal situation a landowner might face was a challenge to his title over part or all of an estate. The contest over the ownership of the manor of Abbeyleix in The Queen's County reveals much about the complexities of fighting such a case in this period.[24] One archivist has written that `in sheer bulk, the seventeenth and early eighteenth century papers, and indeed the whole archive, are dominated by the voluminous legal case papers generated by the hundred years war over the manor of Abbeyleix'.[25] The estate was acquired by the crown c.1637 from the Earl of Ormonde and in 1661 was leased for 99 years to Sir Edward Massey. After his death in 1674 the lands were held by trustees and the residue of the lease was sold without the consent of Massey's heir apparent to Denny Muschamp.[26]

The case went to both the Irish and the English courts and to the Irish and English Houses of Lords. It was eventually settled in the Irish House of Commons in 1698. Massey's counsel argued that `by reason of Sir Edward's being a stranger in this kingdom, and several other causes, and indirect ways and means...He was kept out of the said manor and premises'. Muschamp argued that `Edward, deceased, did in his life-time, often declare an aversion to the said now Sir Edwards Extravagancies, in consuming and wasting a good paternal estate he had in England...It is denied that the complainant was ever in possession of the said manor'.[27] This reveals something about how Anglo-Irish and Irish landowners viewed each other in regard to landowning and stewardship. Massey was considered by Muschamp's counsel as an English interloper who attempted to use his political connections to circumvent the legal process in Ireland. By contrast Massey's lawyers in the 1690s put across an argument that is reminiscent of Humphrey Bland's summary in the 1750s: that Irish county gentlemen were dishonest in their dealings with English absentees and tried where ever possible to use their superior local knowledge and influence to deprive the Anglo-Irish of their title, fines, rents and profits. The Declaratory Act of 1720- which gave the British Parliament the final say in legal disputes- might in part have been a reaction to this perception of Irish gentlemen. Though Massey was a stranger to Ireland in 1674 (when he claimed he was deprived of his inheritance) he soon

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eighteenth-century estate papers and in some cases they created a very serious dent in the household budget.

[24]I refer to the house and demesne as `Abbey Leix' and to the manor and town as `Abbeyleix'.

[25] A.P.W. Malcomson in his introduction to the catalogue of the `De Vesci Papers' now in the N.L.I.

[26] Litigation ensued between Muschamp and Massey and between Massey and Starkey (one of the trustees who profited from the sale of the lease). In 1675 the crown had granted the fee simple to Sir John Temple. He sold the title six years later to Robert Ridgeway, the Earl of Londonderry who wanted to consolidate his estate in the area of Ballinakill. He charged Mushamp an annual rent of £100 and this was a source of further litigation; De Vesci Papers, N.L.I., Ms. C/1-50 (settlements, mortgages and miscellaneous deeds).

[27] De Vesci Ms., N.L.I., E/4 9 (litigation between Massey and Starkey). See also appendix to the catalogue of the De Vesci Papers.

achieved a power base and was elected as M.P. for the borough of Ballinakill in 1695.[28]

The second phase of the `hundred years war' was over the title (the fee simple). Sir Thomas Vesey had inherited the residue of the 99 year lease and in the short term profited from the estate since he paid a nominal rent of £100 a year. But he realised that in the next generation when the lease expired (in 1761) the position of his family would be far from secure. He was anxious to purchase the freehold at the earliest opportunity. This came in 1716 when the Earl of Donegall inherited the estate from the daughter and heiress of Lord Londonderry. Donegall was ready to sell because he did not expect to inherit (a condition of his marriage was that the estate was to be settled by the trustees on their children). Vesey purchased the freehold for £4000. This proved to be a shrewd move since by 1761 the estate was said to worth £33,000. Sometime before the fee simple passed to the Vesey family, Lord Donegall realised the true value of the estate that he had let slip through his fingers and he claimed that Vesey had acquired the title dishonestly.[29]

Thus for the whole period under question there were disputes over both the title and the leasehold of this estate, at times simultaneously, involving the Massey, Starkey, Muschamp, Vesey, Ridgeway and Chichester families. It is interesting that though the Veseys were among the principal landowning families in the county and key figures in the church and in local politics in the first half of the eighteenth century (Sir Thomas was Bishop of Ossory and his successor John Denny Vesey became first Lord Knapton), their title over the main estate was not secure until after 1769. It is no coincidence that the foundation stone of the very fine country house designed by Wyatt was laid down just four years after the litigation had finally ended. The experience of the Vesey family was not by any means unique.

The litigation between the Hartpole and the Fitzgerald families over the possession and profits of the coal mines at Doonane began c.1678 (when Sir Robert Hartpole died) and rumbled on intermittently for the next hundred years. The contest was more personal and bitter than that fought at Abbeyleix because both families were related by blood and lived in close proximity to each other. The origin of the Fitzgerald claim to certain lands rested on Gerald Fitzgerald's marriage to Mary Hartpole, the daughter of Sir Robert Hartpole c.1680. This marriage was illegal since it took place while Mary Hartpole was still a minor `without the consent or privity' of Sir William Hartpole (her brother who succeeded to the estate), and Fitzgerald `in her

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[28]His election as M.P. seems to have been an important factor in helping him to win his case (see chapter 7.5). Massey transferred his interest to Sir Thomas Vesey prior to his death.
[29]Donegall did not end up having any children; De Vesci Papers, N.L.I., E/11.

right claimed some fortune in a portion he pretended said she was entitled to'.[30] References to abduction, elopement and illegal marriage occur quite frequently in accounts of gentry familes and crime presentments in Ireland between 1690 and 1760.[31] Dudley Cosby's land agent William Lewis was said to have married the daughter of Colonel Maurice Keating of Narraghmore `agst the Col's consent, he ran away with her by night'.[32]

The sheer volume of paper work generated by the lawyers handling this one case gives a sense of the time, effort and expense involved in the law. In 1736 for instance 23 witnesses, including Pole Cosby, made depositions to the courts about the Hartpole estate.[33] Whilst George Hartpole was fighting Fitzgerald he was also involved in other disputes, including one with Hunt Walsh of Ballykillcavan. Hartpole lost this case in 1740 after it was presented to the Lord Chancellor and then to the Irish House of Lords. According to Pole Cosby `had Mr. Walsh lost he would have lost every foot of land he had in the world, and been a beggar'.[34]

By far the most common form of dispute was that involving leaseholds. In the 1730s Pole Cosby's lifestyle and reputation was compromised by a number of suits issued against him as a lessee. He had to leave his temporary home in Bristol in 1733 and return to Stradbally on `account of two lawsuits being commenced against me'. When he heard that his wife (whom he had left behind in England) was unwell he immediately travelled to Dublin but took the precaution of taking an unusual route in case he was stopped and prevented from leaving the kingdom whilst his legal cases were still pending.[35] As soon as he returned to Ireland he had to face Colonel Murray who `had served me and all my tenants of Timahoe with ejectments'. While the case was being considered Cosby removed `the marble chimney peices, and all the things I co'd out of the house of Esker and also in that time to try if by any mains [sic] co'd throw Col. Murray on his back'. The Grand Jury found that Murray was within his rights and this was confirmed by the King's Bench to England which Cosby had consulted as a last resort. Everything seemed to be settled in 1735 when Cosby gave Murray peaceful possession of the property. But Cosby was not one to be beaten so

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[30] This was according to George Hartpole's lawyers 70 years after the event; Hartpole Mss, 1933 deeds 193,198 and 301.

[31] For an indication of the number of abductions see the summary of 'presentments, affidavits and examinations', Nat. Arch. Ire. 1A. 52. 159.

[32] Cosby Autobiog. p. 92.

[33] Hartpole Mss. 1933, deed no.309 and 354.

[34] Cosby Autobiog. p. 435-436; a contemporary printed account of this case and other relevant deeds can be found at Ballykillcavan House, Co. Laois.

[35] He went `by Island Bridge, for fear of being taken by a pursevant for not obeying the decree of the Court of Exchequer in a thing that related to the suit with the kind Captain Mitchell and me',ibid. p. 269-270.

easily and his honour was at stake. He laid out the case to the `Top lawyers of England, viz the Attorney General and the Solicitor General and one Strange a very top man' and they found evidence of perjury. As a result, the previous decision was overturned.[36]

Evidently on occasions the subordination of the Irish judiciary to the British parliament could often work to the benefit of Irish county gentlemen, and not just Anglo-Irish grandees. In cases where all the parties involved were Irish Protestant gentlemen the English House of Lords might have been considered as a more impartial arena than the Irish courts. John Parnell who was created a Justice of the King's Bench in 1722 bought the estate at Rathleague in The Queen's County. Cosby described him as `an agreable man enough in company, good humoured and ready to oblige and full of complysance and fine speeches, but very insincere and full of derideings behind Backs, he was but a so so Judge he had neither the parts nor knowledge that his high post required'.[37] Knightly Chetwood wrote in 1726 that `Parnell, endeavours to play the knave with me in money matters by keeping me out of between two and three hundred pounds due to me from a tenant'.[38] Protestant Ireland was a relatively small world, and those landed gentlemen who came before the courts were often very familiar (or even related to) members of the judiciary.

The Cosby, Hartpole and Vesey evidence shows that legal cases were very disruptive and a constant drain on estate finances. Accounts from Abbey Leix, where the level of litigation was relatively high, show that between 1699 and 1708 at least £322 was spent on lawsuits alone.[39] This was enough money to buy three decent coaches or pay the wages of a household consisting of 19 servants for four years.[40] In some instances the legal costs of fighting a case seemed to outweigh the potential financial gains of winning. One should not underestimate the importance that was attached to honour and reputation and not just income (see chapter 7.4).

2.2 Debt management

The other chief means by which a landowner could lose part or all of his inheritance was through being unable to manage the debts that had accumulated over previous

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[36] Ibid. p. 311-315.
37 Ibid. p. 254; F.E.Ball, *The Judges of Ireland 1221-1921,* (London, 1926), Vol. 3, p.196.
[38]Knightley Chetwood to John Usher, 17 May 1726, `The Chetwood letters', *J.K.A.S.,* Vol. 9 (1918-22), p. 414.
[39] E.g. law suits with Lord Londonderry between Feb. 1699 and July 1701 came to £49.2.11, the cost of `drawing up a plea, coach hire and expenses of Sir Richard Leving' over 8-9 years came to at least £250; parcel of correspondence, 1699-1708, De Vesci Papers, N.L.I. Ms. J/2, J/3.
[40] This is based on the amount paid for coaches by the Vesey family and the wages paid to 19 servants at Castle Durrow; De Vesci Mss., J/3 tradesmen's accounts; Flower Papers N.L.I.; Ms. 11,461.

generations. A common method of securing a long term loan in this period was to mortgage land. The strict terms and conditions that applied to creditors and mortgagees can be gleaned from Cosby deeds for the period 1708-1765. In 1740 Pole Cosby granted the fee simple of the manor of Stradbally to three gentlemen with the proviso (by what was known as a `condition of redemption') that the lands could be returned if he paid back the £1000 borrowed or the interest on the this sum at a rate of 5% a year.[41] This could be best described as a `conveyance in parenthesis'. Cosby was in effect handing over some of his best lands at the very heart of the estate unless he could stop the clock. Usually there was little chance of actually losing lands that had been used as security if the interest was paid (although the loan could be for a specified period, e.g. in 1720 Cosby's mortgage had an upper limit of 500 years).[42] But if the interest repayments approached annual income then further short-term borrowing would have been required. This downward spiral would in theory only come to an end when the pool of available creditors dried up. Pole Cosby used the services of Dublin bankers, such as Benjamin Burton, for many financial transactions. But for long-term loans he had to turn to local gentlemen such as Lord Gowran, Arthur Brereton, Richard Warburton, Joshua Meredith and of course Humphrey Bland. They placed a great deal of faith in Cosby's honour as well as his ability to pay, and were more likely to offer lower interest rates than non-gentry lenders. If a mortgagee's probity was seriously questioned (as Pole Cosby's was in the 1750s) then local creditors would be deterred from providing any more money and legal suits could force the debtor to sell off his lands.

Table 2.2 shows how far the debts in the Cosby family changed over three generations. In 1690 Alexander Cosby had debts amounting to £9000 and his rental amounted to £900, `so that the interest [10%] was more than the income of the estate'.[43] This meant that he had to live quietly on a very small personal income that came out of the portions that had been set aside for his 5 brothers and 2 sisters. Within two decades the debt had been halved, rising again in 1720, being drastically cut c.1727 and then from the 1730s the debt gradually increases once more. What circumstances caused such dramatic fluctuations?[44]

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[41] Reg. Deeds, 31 Dec. 1740, 106.190. no.73334.
[42] Reg Deeds, 21 July 1720, 26.459.16303.
[43] Cosby Autobiog. p. 91.
[44] For the same question but in an English context, J. Habakkuk, *Marriage, Debt and the Estates System: English Landownership, 1650-1950,* (Oxford, 1994), p. 272.

Table 2.2 The levels of debt in the Cosby family, 1690-1775

Year	Gross income £	Estate debt £	Average interest rate paid by Cosby %	Average annual payments £
1690	900	9000	10	900
1694	900	7500	10	750
1699	900	5500	10	550
1700	1000	4500	10	450
1708	1000	3450	10	345
1710	1000	4450	10	445
1716	1100	3450	8	276
1720	1100	7450	7	522
1725	2000	7450	7	522
1729	2000	2078	7	145
1740	2500?	6000+	5	300+
1760	3000?	14000+	5	700+
1775	4000?	27,000+	5	1250+

Source: Registry of Deeds, Dublin; Pole Cosby Autobiog.;Bland Papers.

In the Cosby family the key determinant of the level of debt was marriage. In 1694 Dudley Cosby married the daughter of Sir Andrew Owens and `with her got £1500 which paid off so much'. Four years later he married the daughter of William Pole and received a portion of £2000. This meant that the debts that Alexander Cosby had accumulated before and during the wars were significantly reduced by 1700.[45] He also managed to secure a very favourable match for Pole Cosby (his heir apparent) to Mary, the heiress of Henry Dowdall in 1727. She brought with her large estates in Dublin, Roscommon, Mayo, Galway and elsewhere.[46] Her marriage settlement specified that these lands were to be sold and the proceeds divided between a number of beneficiaries. In the following decade Pole Cosby might have acquired as much as £5000 as a result.[47] When Dudley died in 1729 the accounts books looked dramatically more healthy than when he inherited them: the actual debt had been slashed by 73% and the annual interest repayments went down by 84%. Pole Cosby was able to clear most of his father's debt (just £2078) with the help of his mother. She gave up her dower house at Esker and was persuaded to live with her son at Stradbally.[48]

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[45] Cosby Autobiog,. pp. 91-92.
[46] Ibid. p. 175; Reg. Deeds, 8 Feb. 1727, 68.142.no. 47358,
[47] Reg. Deeds, 7 Oct. 1730, 68.143. no. 47362.
[48] Cosby Autobiog. p. 183.

Some of Cosby's language, such as `by her he got a very great fortune', gives the impression that marriage was used as a clever device to overcome financial ills. However, marriage settlements, as we shall see below, were not designed to aggrandise one party at the expense of another. In his account Pole dwells on the incoming portions and jointures as though they were prizes from a lottery, and glosses over the sums paid to dependants. His sister married Robert Meredith in 1730 and received a generous jointure; Cosby would almost certainly have paid in excess of £5000 for her portion (if it was not already provided for).[49] Between c.1694 and 1750 the wind happened to blow in the right financial direction for the Cosby family for there is no mention of any jointures having to be paid: Pole Cosby's wife died before him in 1741.[50]

For the Cosby family the favourable balance of trade in the marriage market was completely reversed in the latter part of the eighteenth century. Pole Cosby's daughter, Sarah, married Arthur Upton from County Antrim in 1758. This match required a massive portion of £9000. It is unclear why Cosby was prepared to pay such a sum, considering that a typical portion for a gentleman of his status in this period was in the range £3000-£5000. By contrast the lands that were to be provided by the Uptons for her jointure seem quite paltry (a rental of £300 p.a. in Templepatrick, Co. Antrim).[51] It is possible that Pole Cosby was particularly fond of his daughter and wanted to set as socially advantageous a match as possible. Alternatively the long term financial benefits of the marriage may have greater than the surviving deeds would suggest. Whatever the answer there is no doubt that this marriage led to acute financial difficulties in the short to medium term. By the time Pole Cosby died in 1765 only £1000 of this portion had been paid and his son Dudley Alexander Sydney was forced to take out a mortgage of £8000 in 1767 to pay off the rest.[52] The marriage of Dudley Alexander Sydney in 1773 ended in tragedy. Lord Sydney married a gentlewoman half his age and died after taking an over dose of poison. His widow, having been married just two months, went on to live on to live to a ripe old age. This meant that a jointure of c.£1000 had to be paid by the Cosby family for 62 years. She was perhaps `aristocratic Ireland's longest running widow'. The economic fortunes of the Cosby family began to decline from the last quarter of

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[49]Meredith agreed on a £350 jointure for Miss Cosby plus £6000 for any children and £500 for `present maintenance' and an additional sum after his father's death. It is very likely that the marriage portion (to be paid by Cosby) would have been comparable to the sum set aside for the future children, ibid, p. 316.
[50] But only half of Cosby's life is covered in the autobiography. Evidence from the missing period c.1735-1765 shows how quicky fortunes could change; ibid. p. 436.
[51] Reg. Deeds. 2 Dec. 1758, 196.404. no. 130550.
[52] Reg. Deeds. 20/21 October, 1767, 263.270. no. 167641.

the eighteenth century.[53] Thus although marriage acted a key determinant of the level of debt it could not be used as a reliable tool to manage debt. The Cosbys were forced to turn to other more reliable methods of reducing their debt.

The cost of running an estate while a gentlemen was in residence was usually much higher than when he was away. At home bountiful hospitality and shows of largesse that were commensurate with his local status were required, whereas the expenditure in Dublin or England could be trimmed. Between 1703 and 1733 Dudley and Pole left Stradbally on a number of occasions in the interests of economy. In 1709 Dudley and his young family `went to live in London for cheapness, they went with a resolution to save till they had paid off many debts as would make them easy'.[54] This method proved successful for by 1714 `by his long absence from his own home, and liveing in a manner as an exile in a parsimonious way, and by lands encreasing in value and leases falling and therby his estate riteing, he was in considerable circumstances'.[55] As a result of this sojourn in England (and his time fighting in Spain) he reduced his debt by £1050. In 1733 Pole decided that:

> I had paid a good deal of debts so that I had nothing to trouble me only to sit down quiet and live saveingly and Pay of debts, and it was the opinion of my mother and my wife and I that we co'd live pleasantly in some large town of England and live much cheaper than at Stradbally and so we resolved to go and live in England for some years.[56]

In the event they only stayed in Bristol for just over a year; and Pole seems to have less able than his father to resist spending money.[57]

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[53]He was created Lord Sydney for his diplomatic services at the court of Denmark and married when he was in his mid-forties to a lady who was half his age. According to one contemporary account `to render himself agreable to his lady upon their marriage, [he] stopped two issues he had in his thighs, but found no ill effects until... after a night of great exercise by dancing, his temper and reason, as appears since was in some sort affected ...He complained of indisposition, and sent for a physician ...After which, being disappointed in an attempt to shoot himself and one to poison himself, he took ...the dose [of Danish poison] which was sufficiently strong to carry him off in a few hours'. Since Cosby had no children he was the first and only Lord Sydney of Leix; Robert Waller to Sir George Macartney, 31 Jan. 1774, P.R.O.N.I., Macartney Papers, D.572/5/77. See also A.P.W. Malcomson, *Pursuit of the Heiress: Aristocratic Marriage in Ireland 1750-1820* (Belfast, 1982), p. 35; and remarks made by A.P.W. Malcomson in introduction to the report on the Cosby papers, P.R.O.N.I., T.3829.

[54] Cosby Autobiog. p. 85.

[55] Ibid. p. 88.

[56] Ibid. p. 264; D.M. Beaumont, `An Irish Gentleman in England: The Travels of Pole Cosby c. 1730-35', *Journal of the British Archaeological Association,* Vol. CXLIX (1996), pp. 37-54.

[57]As a student Pole received nothing but `grumbleing scolding letters' from his father `because he thought I did spend too much', a tendency that can be observed right the way through his adult life; Cosby Autobiog., p. 167.

The Cosby sojourns abroad were, after marriage and land sales, probably the most successful way of reducing debt. But non-residence was certainly not a panacea for all ills and there were some detrimental side effects. A gentleman could not simply put the estate to bed in the same way that the furnishings were wrapped in dust sheets. A skeletal household staff and the all important steward were still needed to maintain the fabric of the house and demesne; which if neglected for even short periods could take inordinate amounts of money to repair. When Dudley returned to his estate in 1714 `he was resolved to repair and refit his mansion House of Stradbally, in order to bring home his family'. Similarly when Pole returned to Ireland in 1734 having visited some of the finest houses in England he may have been a little embarrassed by the condition of his own demesne. He wrote `tho I was absent but one year', the house and gardens were `much out of order, so yet I had a lot of work to do'.[58] The physical presence of the landowner was also needed to ensure that things actually got done on the estate and to protect political interests. The Blundell estate papers of the 1720s and Humphrey Bland's correspondence of the 1750s highlight how long absences abroad made tenants more recalcitrant, as shown by their non-payment of rents and neglect of the `improvement' clauses in their leases.

Dudley (and to a much lesser extent Pole Cosby) tried every means of lowering annual expenditure whilst they were in residence in order to pay off their debts. The consumption of food and drink in the household was kept to a minimum. Dudley was described as a `sober' man' who `did not care at all for drinking above a pint or generally half a pint of wine' a day.[59] But there were certain expenses that could not be avoided despite their best intentions. A lump sum for the education of their children, for example, had to be set aside.[60]

There were also other extraordinary expenses that could not be eliminated from the account books such as charity, funeral, marriage and election expenses. Cosby's remark that his father `lived very sparingly comparatively speaking' does not square up with other evidence.[61] Pole Cosby's marriage in 1727 for instance `was deemed but a private wedding' yet it still cost him £500 (and he gave expensive jewellery as a gift to his wife which cost in excess of £200) and he bought `chairs,

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[58] Ibid. pp. 88, 273.

[59] Ibid. p.180.

[60] Pole recalled in a letter of 1760 that whilst abroad (between the age of 18-21) he received an allowance of £120 a year. This sum was only a little less than what his father had to live on when he first inherited in 1694. In 1694 he was said to have lived on £150, in 1699 £350 and in 1700 £450). The trustees of the Hartpole estate also took care to make provision for the education of the future heir (George): he went to Westminster School in the 1720s, Cosby Autobiog. p. 91-92; letter from Pole Cosby to his son Dudley Alexander Sidney Cosby, 1760, Cosby Papers, Stradbally Hall; Hartpole Mss. 1933 deed 354.

[61] Cosby Autobiog. p. 181.

tables beds and all sorts of household stuff' to make Stradbally Hall fit for the arrival of his new bride.[62] In 1729, Pole spent £300 in a vain attempt to re-take his father's seat in parliament and preserve the family's honour.[63]

The words `comparatively speaking' are perhaps the key to an understanding of the mind set of the gentry. Many disbursements which a modern reader might consider as extravagances were often thought of as social necessities by contemporaries. Gift giving and hospitality (see chapter 3.8) acted as a lubricant to keep the wheels of county society moving. The preservation of local prestige was more important than simply balancing the books. This attitude pervaded all levels of society. At the very top a noble like the Duke of Ormonde, before his downfall in 1715, spent far beyond his means in order to sustain a courtly lifestyle that was appropriate for his status and ran up a huge debt as a result. County gentlemen built country houses even though their economic foundations were less than stable. Members of the lower gentry, the professionals and even those of very humble stock were accused by contemporary commentators of spending money on frivolities rather than staple goods. Prominent town dwellers and the pseudo gentry purchased an array of goods- often of a kind usually only been associated with the top echelons of society- such as wigs, jewellery and fashionable clothing.[64]

As well as cutting costs landowners also sought ways of increasing non-landed income. The Cosby family had a long record of local office-holding (Dudley for instance was an M.P., sheriff and magistrate for The Queen's County). But members of the magistracy were unpaid and the expenses that were incurred whilst being sheriff and M.P. (e.g. hospitality, election expenses and the costs involved in travelling to Dublin) meant that such offices could be a financial burden in the short-term. Until the 1760s high office eluded the Cosbys despite the relative antiquity and respectable size of their estate.

In the first quarter of the eighteenth century there were only c.250 paid officials on the Civil Establishment and c.26 in the Military Establishment (excluding army officers); and some of these places were taken by Englishmen. This meant that only a small fraction of the Irish county gentry were able to secure potentially lucrative posts at any one time.[65] John Moore of Tullamore was one of a group

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[62] Ibid. pp. 175-176.

[63] After c.1716 Dudley Cosby `lived very handsomely, more so than anyone in this county except my Uncle Pole' and he had a passion for race horses `which my G-Fr. Pole did not like and he gave him £100 on condition he wo'd never keep any more which he never strictly observed', ibid. pp. 84, 90, 182-183.

[64] T.C. Barnard, `The World of Goods and County Offaly', in W. Nolan and T.P. O'Neil eds., *Offaly: History and Society,* (Dublin, 1988), pp. 371-392; and a paper given to the 23rd Irish Conference of Historians entitled, `Private and Public: the uses of wealth in Ireland, 1660-1760', 17 May, 1997.

[65] David Hayton, `Ireland and the English Ministers 1707-1716', (D.Phil., Oxford Univ., 1975), p. 85.

gentlemen with Whig sympathies who were created peers soon after the Hanoverian succession (he became Baron Tullamore in 1716). Moore moved in the right political circles for in 1718 he managed to secure the reversionary grant for himself and his son of the position of Muster Master General of the army (see chapter 7.3). In addition to an attractive salary and various perquisites he would have been susceptible to subtle forms of bribery (since he had a say in where garrisons were to be built).[66] Sir John Denny Vesey was another who secured patronage for himself and the ability to dish out patronage to others. In 1747 he was one of eight Revenue Commissioners and in 1750 was created Baron Knapton.[67]

For most gentlemen the army (and to a lesser extent the navy) offered the only means of earning a non-landed income. In 1703 Dudley Cosby's `circumstances were so bad that it was thought best he sho'd go into the Army'.[68] This did not provide an instant salary, in fact he had to borrow £300 in order to buy his commission as a captain. The income that Cosby saved during his seven years of campaigning abroad (by not living on his estate) was probably more beneficial than the wages he received from the army. At the end of his tenure he would have been able to sell his commission, perhaps at a profit. Humphrey Bland was said to have received £10,000 for his commission as Colonel when he retired c.1712. In the army, as with Dublin Castle, favouritism and politics often determined who was likely to succeed. Pole Cosby argued that if his father had been `of the other side [i.e. high church Tory]...the Duke of Ormonde wo'd have given him a captains Commission [i.e. for nothing]'.[69] Cosby's account of his uncle Thomas also shows how promotion in the army brought with it certain financial risks. Thomas Cosby rose from lieutenant to captain and then became `Paymaster to the Regiment' in Flanders but this `did prove his ruin, for he managed so ill that he was obliged to sell his Company for to pay the debts he had run himself into by the misapplication of the Regiments money'.[70]

Though landowners engaged in proactive policies in the short to medium term such as non-residence, household trimming and raising income from non-agrarian activities they also took a rather passive approach to debt. Many seemed to adopt a `wait and see' policy: the rationale being that before too long a marriage portion would arrive or a batch of leases would have to be renewed. Indeed Dudley Cosby carried out extensive alterations to his mansion in the knowledge that he would soon be able to renew a whole cluster of leases. In 1725 `there were some few more leases

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[66] Michael Byrne, `The Development of Tullamore, 1700-1921', (M.Litt, T.C.D., 1979), pp. 39-40.
[67] Mentioned in William Flower's Commission of the Peace, N.L.I., D.20,230.
[68] Cosby Autobiog. pp. 84-85.
[69] Ibid. p. 180.
[70] Ibid. pp. 322-323.

out, which in proportion rose considerably'.[71] As a result the rental increased from around £1100 to £2000 (45%) virtually overnight. Table 2.1 shows that the average interest rate fell from 10% at the beginning of the eighteenth century to 5% by the 1750s which reduced the annual repayments significantly and kept landowners afloat for longer.

There is also evidence that longer term strategies were adopted by some landowners, such as buying up shares and leaseholds and investment in estate improvement. Dudley Cosby obtained a mortgage of £4000 from Lord Gowran, whose seat was at Tentore in The Queen's County, in 1720 in order to buy out the remaining interest of one of his own leaseholds. The lands had been leased by Alexander Cosby (Pole's grandfather) for `a long term' to John Weaver for £80 per annum. Dudley was keen to acquire the lease because he felt that the rental on the land could be raised considerably.[72] Though Cosby was already in debt he was prepared to take out further mortgages in an act of faith, hoping that repossession and re-letting would prove to be a sound investment and help to ameliorate his indebtedness in the long run.[73] By buying back the lease Dudley (or his heir) would be able to make it seems, an additional £500 a year between 1738 and 1755 (the last 17 years of the lease, when he could make clear profit). But in practice there were some serious drawbacks to this scheme. Dudley underestimated the risks that were involved and seemed to have placed too much confidence in the ability of his heir, Pole Cosby, to pay off the interest (let alone to pay back the mortgage). What was seen as a shrewd move by Dudley in 1720 became a millstone around the neck of his son in subsequent decades. In 1733 Pole waited upon the dowager Countess of Gowran, while he was in London in order to persuade her to reduce the interest payable on this mortgage. The lady was obviously a hard bargainer for `she wo'd not lower the interest one doit'.[74]

Improvements to an estate were also considered long-term investments. Where possible, tenants were expected to carry out the necessary improvements to their own holdings (such as draining the fields and building stone dwellings and

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[71] Ibid. p. 171.

[72] Ibid. p. 91.

[73] In a sense he was correct because by 1737 the rental from these lands had risen from £80 to £630 per annum; although he borrowed at `the height of the South Sea [bubble]' when `money was very dear and Lord Gowran would not let it go under £7 per cent per annum, and obliged my father to keep in for 7 years'. The original deeds show that the interest was 10% a year so it is likely that the rate was re-negotiated afterwards. If one assumes that between 1720 and 1738 the rent obtained from this lease averaged £500 and the interest rate on £4000 remained at 7% then Cosby would have have been left with £220 a year from these lands. If this sum was set aside to pay off the mortgage then after 18 years Cosby could begin to make clear profit, Reg. Deeds, 1719- 27.165. no. 16304, 21 July 1720- 30.46. no. 16302 and 21 July 1720- 26.459.no 16303.

[74] Cosby Autobiog. p. 265.

walls) or else face the penalty of fine or ejectment. But many landowners, as will be shown below, funded their own improvement schemes on the demesne and in estate villages and towns. This required capital, and proprietors often had to turn to creditors. George Hartpole spent over a £1000 on a `fire engine' (a huge water pump) at his colliery, and a further £1500 on his house and demesne, soon after he inherited and later he mortgaged part of the estate to raise £5000.[75] When c.1750 the estate at Dunkerrin in The King's County passed from the Franck family to Francis Rolleston (as a result of his marriage to the heiress) the new proprietor borrowed £2600 and £4000 on mortgage. He needed a lump sum to sort out the finances of his new estate and he intended to `build several houses...for the encouragement of manufactures in the same town'.[76] The payback on such schemes, especially where plantations were concerned, could take a long time to materialise. Pole Cosby's gardener, Daniel Collins, was short listed for the Dublin Society's £10 premium in 1742 for `raising timber trees in Nurserys'. In 1741 alone 13,835 trees were planted at Stradbally.[77] This was a major achievement, requiring an initial outlay to purchase the saplings and to pay a team of gardeners, yet the economic fruits of this scheme would not have been tasted for at least half a century. Investment in industrial and mining activities carried even greater risks. Many landowners from outside Ulster who were spurred on by the financial incentives offered by the Linen Board after 1711 found that the capital investment (e.g. the purchase of looms) did not always bring dividends and sometimes led to serious losses.[78] The so-called `cult of improvement' in the eighteenth century should not be viewed in purely reductionist terms; as a drive to increase productivity and the wealth of the Protestant landed elite. It needs to be examined in an intellectual and political context as well as an economic one.

An analysis of a number of estate archives indicates that serious indebtedness was common throughout this period. In 1760 Pole Cosby was in debt to the tune of about £14,000 and his annual interest repayments were around £700 (see Table 2.2). The Parsons' of Birr also had a sizeable debt of £11,000 in the same year; out of an

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[75] Hartpole Mss. T.C.D., 1933 deed no. 354.

[76] `Part of the estate of Francis Rolleston Esq.' (the townlands of Coologe alias Frankford) to be mortgaged for £4000, description of the townlands at Dunkerrin `to be mortgaged for Councellor Darby' for £2600, both c. 1750, N.L.I. Rolleston Ms. 13,794 (2); Seamus O'Riain, *Dunkerrin: A Parish in Ely O'Carroll,* (Dunkerrin Historical Committee, 1988), p. 61.

[77] R.D.S. Library, Minute Book, Vol. 1741-1746, 17 June 1742, p. 33.

[78] For comparison see Cronin's account of French of Monivae's linen manufacturies. French found that there was little profit to be made in the early years. In 1755 he invested £1,147 in this scheme and only received £785 back and in 1773 there was a collapse in linen prices. Byrne noted that landowners in the southern provinces who invested in linen industry `tried to progress too quickly' and were less able to withstand temporary crises than those in Ulster; D. Cronin, *A Galway Gentleman in the Age of Improvement: Robert French of Monivae, 1716-1779,* (Dublin, 1995), pp. 28-32; M. Byrne, `The Development of Tullamore', pp. 47-51.

annual rental of c. £2096 they were paying £660 a year on interest re-payments.[79] By 1757, General Hunt Walsh of Ballykillcavan owed £7500.[80] But the level of debt (in proportion to the value of the land and capital assets) varied enormously, as did the means of tackling it. Did debt actually cause as much anxiety and economic difficulties as the Cosby evidence would suggest? Mortgages and other encumbrances were often simply carried over from one generation to another. At what point did the level of debt become so high that it necessitated the disposal of land?

The sale of land would normally occur only as a last resort and was usually a result of legal proceedings. On occasions the Cosbys would strip the fields bare of their natural assets rather than part with them. In 1700 Dudley `sold woods which were on the lands of Vicarstown for which he got £1000'.[81] In 1730 Pole's lawyer's affirmed that he had the right cut down trees on lands in Esker so he `cut every stick on the premisses [sic] and sold them'.[82] Pole Cosby even emptied the contents of his house rather than part with an acre of his estate. In 1760 there was an auction at Stradbally Hall; the advertisement in *Faulkner's Dublin Journal* read:

> To be sold on the 26 April, in payment of one's Debt, the greatest and most valuable part of the furniture of Stradbally Hall consisting fine Tapestrys, carpets, prints, Indian screen (8 feet high) and cabinate [sic] carpets, marble Tables and frames.[83]

Pole Cosby's emotional attachment to land is shown in his letter to his son Dudley Alexander Sydney in 1760. He recounted how his own father wanted to sell 700 acres at Garryglass in the manor of Timahoe in 1726 which was `part of our ancient estate which I wisht to descend to the latest posterity in the family'. Pole (who appears jointly with Dudley on deeds by this date) refused to agree with this sale and as a result his father:

> horsewhipt me heartily, afterwards struck me with a barr of a window (then I was 23) then confined me to my room for a fortnight and afterwards banished me as you call it to the fort (a most dismall unpleasant place) for six weeks so that at last after three months I was obliged to comply, but I have writ this

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[79]Rent Roll for Birr, 1760, Birr Castle, Ms. B/6/7.
[80]Hunt Walsh Cash Book, 1757-1764, N.L.I., M/film. P.3064.
[81] Cosby Autobiog., p. 91.
[82] Ibid. p. 258.
[83] *Faulkner's Dublin Journal,* 19 Feb.-23 Feb. 1760. I am grateful to the Knight of Glin for directing me to this source. Cosby did not part with his family portraits; they remained at Stradbally Hall until they were auctioned off in 1984/5.

affair (but not so harshly as here) on the back of the deed that posterity may not blame me but be convinced I was an unwilling accessary to such an evil deed.[84]

Such was the reluctance of landowners like Pole Cosby to part with their inheritance that the difficult decision to sell was often deferred for generations or until the estate passed to a lateral blood line. Land sales were often bunched up in the first few years that followed inheritance. Humphrey Bland wrote to Captain Desbrisay in 1755 that he was looking forward to the time when Pole Cosby's son reached his majority because he felt that he was more likely to get his money back.[85]

The task of paying off the increasing debt was undertaken not by Pole Cosby or his son Dudley Alexander Sydney but by his cousin Admiral Philips Cosby who inherited the estate in 1774. The existing debts were compounded by Lord Sydney as a result of his time at the Court of Denmark and the lavish lifestyle that was commensurate with his new title. After his death the total mortgage debt was at least £27,150 and if one includes all the other sundry debts then it reached around £36,000. Philips Cosby had no connection with the Stradbally estate, save a blood line, and he set about reducing the encumbrances in a manner that Dudley and Pole Cosby would have considered unthinkable:[86] he began to sell off a large part of his landed inheritance.[87]

So far we have examined families who encountered financial difficulties throughout their lives. But it is worth considering those gentlemen who were solvent for much of the period. Indeed the plight of the mortgagee is only one half of the story: for every debtor there were many individuals and banks who were in a position to lend money. Between c.1700 and 1768 the Cosbys borrowed large sums of money

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[84]Pole to Dudley Alexander Sydney, 1 Jan. 1760, Cosby Papers, Stradbally Hall. The original deed shows that 720 acres in Timahoe were sold to James Wills in 1725 (a lawyer in Dublin) for £400, Reg. Deeds, 14/15 May 1725- 44.248. no. 28926 and 5/6 Sept. 1724- 45.145. no. 28481.

[85] Bland to Desbrisay, 23 Sept. 1755, Bland Papers.

[86]He was brought up in North America and had a very distinguished naval career; see P.R.O.N.I. T. 3829 (introduction).

[87]In 1783 he sold off at least 1,160 acres alone. Most or all of this property was purchased by Henry Grattan with part of the £50,000 that was voted to him by the Irish Parliament in 1782. In the 1783 edition of `Absentee Landlords' it was estimated that £3000 of the Cosby annual income was spent abroad. This is indication of the apparent neglect of the Stradbally estate after Pole's death. Mss. copy of `An Act for vesting certain lands, tenements and hereditaments in the Queen's County, formerly the estate of ...Lord Sydney..., in trustees for raising a sum of money to discharge the encumbrances affecting the same, and other purposes ...' ; particulars of the `Debts due on the Stradbally estate at Lord Sydney's death...'; rental of `part of the estate of Philips Cosby Esq. ...to be sold to pay off the debts and encumbrances affecting the estates, as left by the late Lord Sydney; Cosby Papers, Stradbally Hall; report on the Cosby papers, P.R.O.N.I. T.3829, A/11, D/1-2 and J/1; *`A View of the Present State of the Affairs in the Kingdom of Ireland'*, (Dublin, 1783).

from at least 16 creditors. Who were they, and how did they manage to acquire an excess of capital?

Most of the loans were obtained from local gentlemen (some of whom were relations). Richard Fitzpatrick, probably the most important creditor, was granted the lands at Grantstown for his services in the Royal Navy. He also purchased neighbouring lands from the Trustees of the Forfeited Estates in 1703.[88] Evidently he was a gentleman with considerable capital, and his tantalising correspondence with his neighbour Gilbert Rawson suggest that much of his money was made through his involvement in the army and navy.[89] Humphrey Bland, writing in the 1750s felt that it was more prudent to put his money into `cloathing warrants, rather than on mortgages in Ireland, as there is difficulty of getting the money when wanted, or even getting the interest duly paid, without a lawsuit attending it'.[90] Both Fitzpatrick and Bland felt that their excess money should be `made to work' and they looked for all kinds of schemes that would earn them interest, including lending to local gentlemen.

The relative emphasis on private loans, government shares, regiments, and property constantly shifted, depending on the political and economic climate and on local conditions. In August 1755 Bland had £1,091 of spare cash and he advised his agent to either lend it out at a rate of 4.5% or to `try to purchase lands about Blandsfort'.[91] When abroad for long periods investment in property may have seemed a poor bet unless the proprietor could rely on a trustworthy agent. Private loans were not always an easier alternative, as Bland found to his peril in regard to Pole Cosby (he lent him £2,000 and went to great pains to get it paid back). In the final analysis Bland felt that his money was best invested by buying land in Scotland where he could keep a closer eye on it (he was Governor of Edinburgh Castle).[92]

Another group of creditors were the landed gentleman who had close connections with Dublin, in banking, business, government and the law, such as Richard Warburton and Alderman Page. Both were New Protestants with lands in The King's and Queen's counties.[93] Others were prominent Dublin citizens such as Sir

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[88] `Kildare Members of Parliament', *J.K.A.S.*., Vol. 6 (1909-1911), pp. 397-398; Reg. Deeds, for the year 1719/20- 27.165.16304 and 30.46.16302; the Fitzpatrick Papers suggest that Gilbert and Philip Rawson also took out mortgages with Fitzpatrick, Nat. Arch. Ire., M.3211.

[89] In 1712 for instance it was noted that there was an `arrears of subsistence due to our regiment' and `money was due to me from the government issues'; Rawson to Fitzpatrick, 19 Jan. 1713/14 and 26 July 1712, M.3196 and Nat. Arch. Ire. M.3197.

[90] Bland to Desbrisay, 4 Nov. 1755, Bland Papers, Private Coll.

[91] Bland to Desbrisay, 12 Aug. 1755.

[92] Ibid., same to same,10 Oct. 1756.

[93] Warburton lent at least £1000. He also appears as a trustee or a second or third party to various other deeds, Reg. Deeds, 31. Dec. 1740, 106.190.no. 73334. Francis Page is recorded in the 1659 Census as `gent' and in Cosby Autobiog (he lent £1150). p. 91.

Edward Crofton, John Sale and Duncan Cumming (the latter was a noted Presbyterian physician).[94]

The other names which appear in the Cosby deeds were local gentlemen who had little or no commercial interests in Dublin. Arthur Brereton, Joshua Meredith, Mr. Francis Leigh and Capt. John Walsh were of Old Protestant stock with a record of local office holding.[95] Capt. Robert Pinsent and Samuel Freeman were more recent arrivals and `Rev. Mr. Echlin's origins are obscure.[96] Pole Cosby felt that if his uncle William `had been so good a manager as only to have lived on half his income he would have dyed worth £20500 at the very least, but he was a true Cosby for it is remarked that there never was one remembered (of the men) to save'.[97] While most landowners seemed to spend right up to (and on occasions far beyond) their landed income in order to achieve a lifestyle deemed appropriate for their status, some gentlemen were able to save part of their incomes. The changes that might have led to this surplus income, in the agricultural sector of the economy and developments in land management, still need to be addressed.

The operation of the strict settlement, the litigation over title and leasehold and the management of debt or surplus income were all geared towards one overiding goal: the preservation of the estate. No amount of wealth, income and good husbandry could guarantee that the estate would pass on to subsequent generations. All the families that have been discussed so far lacked male heirs at some point in the eighteenth century. Sir Edward Massey transferred the interest of his estate to Sir Thomas Vesey c.1698. John Bland left his estate to his brother Humphrey in 1728, who in turn left the estate to his nephew c.1760. In 1774 Dudley Alexander Sydney died childless leaving the estate to a cousin Admiral Cosby (who also died without issue). The Pole family of Ballyfin lasted for four generations, William Pole dying without issue in 1781.[98] Jonah Barrington recalled that in 1791 `George Hartpole, had just come of age. He was the last survivng male of that name which belonged to a popular family, highly respectable and long established in the country'.[99] Though male issue was highly desirable, the lack of an heir did not always spell disaster.

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[94] Though prominent Dublin citizens some of then did have holdings elsewhere. Crofton held lands at Moate in Co. Westmeath. Sir Edward Crofton appears on the dame deed as Lord Gowran, Reg. Deeds, 21. 7. 1720, 26.459. 16303 (£4000); John Sale and Duncan Cumming, 23. July 1720, 30.49. no. 161321(for £1000).

[95] Brereton, Reg. Deeds, 31. Dec. 1740, 106. 190. no. 73334 (£1000); Meredith, Reg. Deeds, 21. Oct. 1767, 259.174. no. 165984 (£1000); Leigh (£400) and Walsh (£1000); Cosby Autobiog, p. 91.

[96] Freeman, Reg. Deeds, 23. July 1720, 30.49. no. 16321 (party to £1000); Pinsent (£300) and Echlin (£600); Cosby Autobiog, p. 91.

[97] Cosby Autobiog, p. 429.

[98] A note by Walter Fitzgerald in the Cosby Autobiog, p. 165.

[99] Jonah Barrington, *Personal Sketches of His Own Times,* (London, 1827), Volume II, p. 59.

Landed familes attempted to overcome the inescapable biological difficulties by carefully arranging the transfer of the estate using various legal devices. A central feature of this planning was the marriage settlement.

2.3 Marriage settlements

The marriage patterns of the nobility in Ireland after 1750 have come under close scrutiny, particularly in regard to the role of heiresses. More recently the tight network of familial ties among the late seventeenth/early eighteenth century merchant community in Belfast has also been examined.[100] However, the Irish county gentry in the first half of the eighteenth century have not been the subject of the same kind of systematic study.

Cosby's voluminous accounts of marriage, which have only been dealt with in the context of understanding indebtedness, obscure the true purpose behind marriage settlements in this period. The relationship between the portions and jointures was carefully calculated to safe guard the interests of all the parties concerned, including those unborn.

The portion that was given to the bridegroom's father was supposed to be set aside and invested for the future benefit of the younger children (their education, an allowance while they were minors, and in the case of the daughters, a lump sum which would be used for their own marriage portions). The will of John Denny Vesey, drawn up in 1762, specifies that £6,000 was to be used to provide portions for his daughters.[101] A common misapplication of this money was to use it to pay for the portions of other children in the present generation (i.e. the groom's sisters) rather than reserving it for the children in the next one.

The Cosbys, as has already been shown, went one step further and used the portions as a means to pay off debt. Perhaps it was this kind of behaviour that led to the development of separate portions for the future children (in addition to the marriage portion). When Pole Cosby's sister married Robert Meredith in 1730 his family agreed on a jointure of £300 to support her during widowhood. In addition they settled £6000 on the younger children (i.e. on the generation yet unborn) and £500 a year for the maintenance of the bride.[102] These `child portions' were usually subject to stricter conditions that were written into the settlement, which prevented the money being used for other purposes. Because there was no way of predicting

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[100] Malcomson, *The Pursuit of the Heiress;* Jean Agnew, `The Merchant Community of Belfast 1660-1707', (PhD. The Queen's Univ. Belfast, 1994).
[101] The Will of John Denny Vesey, 1st Lord Knapton, 1761, De Vesci Papers, N.L.I., B/11.
[102] Cosby Autobiog. p. 316.

how many children (if any) would be born, great care had to be taken whilst drawing up the deed to prepare for all eventualities: whether 16 live children would be born (as with the case of Alexander Cosby, Pole's grandfather), or none at all (as with Dudley Alexander Sydney). In the marriage settlement between the daughter of the Archbishop of Tuam and Rev. James Smyth in 1713 provision for the future daughters was agreed on a sliding scale; so that if only one is born then a portion of £1500 would be paid and if there were two then £2000 would be set aside and so on until a maximum figure was reached.[103] In an earlier and more complicated settlement between the son of Denny Muschamp and Elizabeth Boyle in 1673 the deed specified that £600 would be paid to each daughter, but if there was no daughters then the sum would pass to the issue of William, the only brother of Denny Muschamp. By c.1692 both marriages failed to produce children, so a new document was made `without the privity of the Archbishop...without regard to the former settlement' which bestowed all the grants made in the previous deed to the heirs of his estate. In 1698 Denny Muschamp's daughter married Sir Thomas Vesey and the interest of the estate was finally settled on the children of this marriage.[104] This example aptly demonstrates how marriage settlements often dealt with a number of issues, such as inheritance, and not just the level of the portion and jointure.

In theory the marriage settlements in this earlier period should have been less problematic for the parties concerned, since the rates of mortality and of inflation were relatively stable. If one supposes that in 1690 two parties agreed to a £1000 marriage portion and a £150 maintenance, then assuming the groom died sometime in the next few decades the widow could (if she survived him) draw on a portion of similar value. The same would not have been true if such an agreement was made in 1760. It has been suggested that `since the mid-eighteenth century (or 1761, perhaps, for a specific date), women have drawn well ahead of men' in terms of the life expectancy for those over 40 years old.[105] On the one hand this meant that jointures were more likely to have paid for longer and would therefore have been a greater drain on the groom's (or his heir's) estate. On the other hand the rising inflation rate and the increase in the level of landed income could erode the real value of the jointure to the detriment of the bride.[106]

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[103] Marriage settlement between Leonora, daughter of the Archbishop of Tuam and Archdeacon James Smyth, 1713, De Vesci Papers, N.L.I., B/9.

[104] De Vesci Papers, N.L.I., J/4.

[105] The average length of time that a jointure was paid (in an English context) was 21 years, T.H. Hollingsworth, `The Demography of the British Peerage', in *Population Studies:* Supplement to Volume XVIII, no. 2 (London, 1964), pp. 85 and 65; Malcomson, p.7.

[106]Cosby tried to take these general economic trends into account. He stipulated in 1730 for instance that Robert Meredith would pay `some what more [towards the present maintenance of the bride] after his Father's death' since it was a `rising estate by Leases expiring'; Cosby Autobiog, p. 316.

A comparison of the size of the portions and jointures in the first half of the eighteenth century is not, in itself, very revealing since so many other (and now hidden) factors determined marriage settlements. Nevertheless some general observations can be made about the evidence from the Hartpole, Cosby and Vesey families. The portions were almost all in the range £1000 to £3000. In 1653 `Doll Parsons porshion' was a hefty £1700, an indication of the already very high status of this family.[107] The settlement between Walter Weldon of Rahinderry (Queen's) and the daughter of Thomas Loftus of Meath in 1681 (both substantial gentlemen of pre-1641 stock) is perhaps typical of those in the late seventeenth/early eighteenth century. The portion was £1000 and the jointure was £150.[108] Half a century later George Hartpole also received a £1000 portion from Patrick Wemys from Danesfort (Co. Kilkenny). [109] There was a much greater variety in the size of the portions that were given to the daughters of nobles. In 1672, Charles Coote, the Earl of Mountrath paid the then very large portion of £3000 to take the hand of the daughter of Lord Blessington.[110] The portions given or received by members of the Cosby and Pole families in the years c.1700-1730 were between £2000 and £3000.[111] Given that the Hartpole, Cosby and Pole estate rentals were c.1730 about £1000, £2000 and £3000 respectively the portion of just one daughter was likely to have been higher than the income received in any one year. Evidently some gentlemen found difficulties finding such sums in a hurry. In 1714 Gilbert Rawson wrote to Richard Fitzpatrick of Tentore in the hope of obtaining a loan of £50, `I have att this time a very fair prospect of adavncing my fortune of marriage...for my good fortune in all probability very much depending on it [i.e.the loan]'.[112]

From the middle of the century the portion seems to have been even less standardised and the overall size of the fortunes was greater. The marriage between George Evans and Ann Napier in 1750 brought the groom's family £4500 and

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[107] Account book, 1652-57, Birr Castle, Ms. A/12.

[108] Marriage settlement between Thomas Loftus and his daughter Cecilia on the first part and Walter Weldon on the second part, 29 Oct. 1681, N.L.I., D.9078.

[109] This was a little on the low side for this date, especially given that Hartpole was a knight. Between George Hartpole and Mary Wemyss, 11 March 1731, Hartpole Mss. 1933, deed no. 13.

[110] Copy of a marriage settlement between Charles Coote (2nd Earl of Mountrath), Lady Anne Coote and Murrough Boyle, Lord Blessington, 12 Nov. 1672, N.L.I., De Vesci Papers, C/4.

[111] Pole Cosby's mother Sarah Pole had a portion of £2000 (which was given in lieu of a £2000 mortgage that was owed by Cosby), his sister had a fortune of £3000 set aside, uncle William Cosby received a portion of £2000 and two of Lord Cavan's daughters carried portions of £3000 a piece, Cosby Autobiog. pp. 84, 176, 181, 428 and 434.

[112] He wrote again in 1718 in order to marry off his sister `to an honest gent. of a very easy fortune' Rawson to Fitzpatrick, 25 Oct. 1714 and 13 Nov. 1718, Fitzpatrick Papers, Nat. Arch. Ire. M. 3199 and 3204.

Pole Cosby's daughter, as already mentioned, carried a portion of £9000.[113] Numerous daughters were a great burden on an estate and spinsterhood was often seen as a form of social derogation. There is evidence that from the mid-eighteenth century the number of children increased as a result of falling infant mortality and possible rise in fertility. Whereas younger sons could, for an initial investment, go into the army, the church, the law or into world of commerce, daughters relied almost exclusively upon their portions.

It has been argued that there was no female equivalent of primogeniture and that the daughters were treated more equally than the sons.[114] The evidence from the two counties shows that this was not always the case. If a daughter married without the consent of the father then the portion could be forfeit. The size of the portion also depended on the rank of the gentleman the daughter intended to marry. If more than one daughter was born (and the sum set aside for portions was fixed) then the father had to chose between splitting the money equally (e.g. like Denny Muschamp who agreed to allocate £600 for each daughter born) or giving more of the available money to the eldest (or the favourite) daughter. William Pole of Ballyfin (Pole Cosby's uncle) chose the latter option and settled different amounts on his children: `Mrs Sarah £2000, Mrs Mary £1200, Mrs. Betty £800, Mrs. Anne £800 and Master William £800'.[115] By splitting the sum in this way William Pole could ensure that at least one of his daughters married a husband of a similar social standing.

The jointures from the Cosby sample varied between £100 and £500. Cecelia Loftus was granted an annuity of £150 in 1681.[116] This sum might have been considered a little inadequate for widows of a similar social standing from the second quarter of the eighteenth century. The pecularities of each marriage prevents one from drawing general conclusions. For instance Cosby's Aunt, Anne Wall, was settled with a jointure of £100 c.1690.[117] The wife of George Evans, Sarah Dickson, was (according to the marriage settlement of 1719) to have a jointure of just £150 even though the groom's father was a gentleman of some status (Eyre Evans).[118] From c.1716 Susanna Segar, a Cosby relation, received a jointure of £200 which was said to

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[113] The marriage settlement between George Evans and Ann Napier (third daughter of William Napier who held lands in K.C.,Q.C.,and Cork), 14 Dec. 1750, D.26,816, N.L.I.; marriage settlement of Sarah Cosby and Arthur Upton, 2 Dec. 1758, Reg. Deeds, 196.404. no. 130550.

[114] Malcomson suggested that `it was the increasing practice for sisters to be treated equally as to the level of portion', *The Pursuit of the Heiress* p. 9.

[115] Cosby Autobiog, p. 176.

[116] N.L.I., D.9078.

[117] Cosby Autobiog. p. 318.

[118] The marriage settlement of the Rt. Hon. George Evans (second son of Eyre Evans) and Sarah Dickson (second daughter of Thomas Dickson), one of the witnesses was Col. John Barrington, 20 Feb. 1719, N.L.I., D.26,814.

have `maintained her but scurvely in Dublin for 20 years',and William Pole's widow `had a jointure but of £300'.[119] In 1728, Col John Bland made provision in his will for a jointure `of any sum not exceding three hundred pounds'.[120] Cosby mentions a number of jointures in the range £300-£500 and Lady Hartpole received a jointure of £400 in c.1712.[121]

The marriage settlement, as has already been stated, often dealt with rather more than just the maintenance of husband, bride and future children. This can be ascertained from looking at the memorials in the Registry of Deeds which became increasingly long and complicated as the eighteenth century progressed.[122] The marriage of an heir apparent provided the opportunity to consolidate the estate in the long term by making or breaking a fee entail, clearing debts, taking out mortgages or disposing of lands and other assets.

In the Cosby account there are a number of references to heiresses and the sale of estates that were acquired as part of marriage settlements. Pole Cosby himself married an heiress. In 1725 when the match with Mary Dodwell was first mooted Dudley Cosby was against it because `being an heiress and not of age co'd not sell her Estate to turn it into money to pay the debts on the estate, and my Father would not hearken to it, beside the Estate was so distant (he said) and dispersed and not devided [sic] that one co'd not be sure whether it wo'd turn out as it was given in'.[123] The original deed reinforces Dudley Cosby's assumption that the acquisition of these lands was a double edged sword. The Dodwell estate included a great variety of properties scattered all over Ireland ranging from `The Globe' tavern on Cork Hill in Dublin to c. 5,400 acres in Westmeath, Roscommon, Mayo and Galway. Because Henry Dodwell had to split the estate between three daughters and a grand daughter many other parties were involved (i.e. the husbands of each of them). All the debts on the estate had to be discharged before the four co-heirs could begin to sell the land.[124]

It has been argued in an English context that marriage was the main cause of large estates getting larger.[125] The Dodwell case highlights some of the processes that led to the disposal of newly acquired lands rather than the physical expansion of an

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[119] Cosby Autobiog., p. 80.
[120]Will of John Bland, 14 June 1728, Bland Papers.
[121]Pole Cosby's sister, £350, William Pole's widow £300, widow of Jeffrey Paul alias Vincent £500, Pole's mother Sarah £400, Cosby Autobiog pp. 81, 82, 85, 316 and 318; jointure of William Hartpole's widow, Hartpole Mss. 1933, deed no. 193.
[122] The settlements involving Pole Cosby in 1727 and his daughter Sarah in 1758, which list all the relevant lands and trustees, take up at least 8 large pages each, Reg. Deeds. 8 Feb- 68.142. no.47358; 2 Dec. 1758-196.404. no.130550.
[123] Cosby Autobiog. p. 173.
[124] Reg. Deeds, 8 Feb. 1727, 68.142.no. 47358.
[125] H. J. Habakkuk, `Marriage settlements in the 18th century', *T.R.H.S.* 4th series XXXII (1950), pp. 15-30.

existing estate. Landowners seemed to have less scruples about selling the estates that came with their marriage settlement than with their own lands. This was partly for practical reasons. The newly acquired lands could be some distance from the main estate and the groom may have inherited encumbrances. In 1731 Col. Henry Kenney, who Cosby described as `a most inconsiderate extravigant vain man' obtained `an Act of Parliament to sell his wife's estate for plausible reasons, and that was a means of his running through the greatest part of it'.[126] The mentality of the gentry must also help to explain this behaviour. Landowners like Cosby, whose estates were concentrated in The King's and Queen's counties, had less emotional attachment to the most recent additions to their patrimony.

The Cosbys (via Dodwell), the Veseys (via Massey), and Dawsons (via Preston) are among the many families in two counties who benefited from the break up of estates elsewhere in Ireland. But the reverse was also true. In the sixteenth century the Edenderry estate in The King's County belonged to the Colley family. This was however acquired through marriage by the Blundells c.1640 who held it for the next century. After the death of the first and only Viscount Blundell in 1756, the property passed to three heiresses.[127]

Since each of the 270 or so estates has a complicated story it is difficult to make generalisations about the ability of the gentry to consolidate their estates through the processes of marriage and inheritance. The striking differences between the quality and the size of the estates, the level of debt, and the attitude of landowners towards their inheritance means that it is almost impossible to argue that a particular landowner was typical of the local Protestant landed elite as a whole. The Cosby and Hartpole familes were both in the upper segment of the gentry (their estates consisted of about 12,000 and 10,000 profitable acres respectively). The paucity of evidence relating to the more numerous lesser or small gentry also distorts the general picture.

The proportion of land that remained in the hands of the same Protestant landowning families in the period c.1690-1760 is an indication of the success rate of the county gentry (see chapter 1.5). Another litmus test is the ability of landowners to preserve their original family name despite the transfer of land as a result of marriage and biological failure.

In 1744 Benjamin Fisher of Old Derrig in The Queen's County settled the inheritance of his estate. He had no natural children of his own but his wife Elizabeth

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126 Cosby Autobiog. p. 260.

127 One of the daughters married Sir William Trumbull of East Hampstead Park in England and a subsequent marriage in 1786 meant that the Dundrum and Edenderry estates passed into the hands of the Downshire family (who had large holdings in Ulster); introduction to the Downshire Papers, P.R.O.N.I., D.607/A.

had a son called James Galbraith by her first husband. James had by this date a wife called Mary Galbraith (nee Philips). Fisher decided that his step-son should inherit. In this instance the estate took the Galbraith family name when Fisher died.[128] The giving up of a family name in order to preserve the estate was only one option. The estate could pass to a cadet branch of the family with the proviso that it would return to the main branch after so many generations. Col. Robert Piggott of Disert had no children and shortly before he died he `sold the reversion of his estate of Disert to Emmanuel Pigot his relation for £6000, £4000 in hand and £2000 at his death as he should bequeath it'.[129] Another very common way of preserving a family name was to incorporate it as a christian name. Pole Cosby was so called because of his mother's family, the Poles (or Pooles of Ballyfin), and Hartpole Cosby was named after the Hartpoles of Shrule. This is perhaps a pecularity of certain parts of Ireland for in England the use of hyphenated surnames seems to have been far more common. In the core sample of c.300 gentry familes, there are many such examples. Among Pole Cosby's contemporaries were Hunt Walsh, Eyre Evans, Eyre Coote, Pigot Sands, Colley Lyons, Morley Sanders, St. Leger Gilbert, Warner Westenra and Warnford Armstrong. This gives a sense of how small Protestant Ireland was and the ingenious methods that were employed by landowners to ensure that they would survive as a group, if not as an individual family.

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[128] Settlement between Benjamin Fisher, Elizabeth Fisher, James Galbraith and Mary Galbraith, 1 Aug. 1744, Nat. Arch. Ire., D.20,187 (1).
[129] Cosby Autobiog., p. 256.

2.4 Absentee landowners

In order to examine how landowners organised and exploited their lands one must first ascertain how many nobles and gentlemen actually resided in the two counties and the degree to which residence affected the running of an estate. Some chroniclers have emphasised what might be called the parasitic nature of the gentry in the eighteenth century. If the stereotypical view of the absentee landlord is taken as the norm- a peer or substantial gentleman who owned estates in Ireland but rarely set foot in the country and spent most if not all of his Irish rental in England- then one would find only a handful of absentees at any one time among the c.270 landowning families in The King's and Queen's counties. The Dukes of Buckingham were perhaps the most absent of absentees during the seventeenth century. They owned c. 3000 acres in Borris in Ossory and it is unlikely that they ever visited: for the whole of the period under question the running of this estate was entrusted to local agents.[130]

There were many gradations within this minority group of absentees. Thomas Prior was one of the first commentators to try to list and categorise those landowners who did not reside on their Irish estates. `First Class' absentees, he argued, were those who `lived constantly abroad' and were `seldom or never seen in Ireland'. Among this category in 1730 were Lords Digby, Gowran, Grandison, Londonderry and Thomond, Ladies Drogheda and Ranelagh, and John Pigott, (all of whom owned lands in The King's and Queen's counties and elsewhere in Ireland). Those landowners who `generally lived abroad' but visited Ireland now and again were considered as `Second Class' absentees. Peers also dominated this group; these were Lords Anglesey, Kingston, Mountrath, Molesworth and Ranelagh. Finally there were `Third Class' absentees who `generally lived in Ireland' but were occasionally absent for `Health, Pleasure or Business...their number is commonly the same, for if some come home others go abroad, and supply their places'. In this group substantial gentlemen such as Periam Poole and Richard Warburton are more abundant.[131]

One could also add a fourth category to this list, `the internal absentee'. Many large landowners had estates scattered across Ireland and either resided at their favourite seat or else adopted a peripatetic lifestyle and visited them all periodically. A

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[130] In 1693 Owen Carroll took the lease from the Duke's representative, George Bridges Esq. for 31 years for £750. He was attainted as a Jacobite. By c. 1730 the lease was held by Richard Despard, William Carden and Walter Stephens. According to one report Bridges inherited the manor of Villiers (supposed to have comprised of 10,000 acres) in The Queen's County by right of his second wife in c. 1690, Edward Ledwich, `Aghaboe' in W.S. Mason, *A Statistical Account or Parochial Survey of Ireland,* (Dublin, 1814), Vol. 1 p. 22; Carrigan, *History and Antiquities of the Diocese of Ossory* ,p. 125; *Reports of Appeal Cases of the High Court,* 1795-98 Vol II, pp. 345, 352.

[131] Thomas Prior, *A View of the Present State of Affairs in the Kingdom of Ireland,* (Dublin, 1730 3rd ed.).

high proportion of landowners with holdings in The King's and Queen's resided in one of the eight contiguous counties.[132] An even broader section of the landed elite could be included as absentees if one considered those gentlemen who resided in Dublin for the winter and spring months each year.[133]

The reasons for non-residence were multifarious. Many pursued careers in England and further afield in government, diplomatic service and in the army (e.g. Humphrey Bland, Lord Sydney, Admiral Cosby and Lord Gowran), and others had significant estates, business interests and familial connections in England which needed to be maintained constantly (e.g. Lord Digby and John Piggot in the West Country). Some resided abroad in the interests of economy (e.g. Cosby) and others were attracted to England's health, leisure and educational facilites. At the bottom of the heap were those who stayed away from Ireland out of choice rather than practical necessity. Some of these landowners preferred to reside on a small convenient English estate rather than on a large Irish one. In some cases snobbery was a deciding factor. On the stage and in literature Irish gentlemen were caricatured as rather tatterdemallion country cousins with spurious pedigrees. Ireland was still seen by many as a rough and uncouth place that required several centuries of improvement before it could be properly inhabited by English sophisticates.[134]

The three main editions of `Absentee Landowners' (1730, 1769 and 1783) each list some of the individuals who were known to have spent long periods away from Ireland. Table 2.4 shows that absenteeism was episodic. Even though one family member might have spent long periods abroad this did not necessarily mean that successive generations would also become non-residents. There seems to have been a tendency for the wives and young children of nobles (particularly dowagers and heiresses) to live in England. The three editions of `Absentees' include Ladies Drogheda, Ranelagh, Charleville and the children of the Countess of Upper Ossory. The composition of each list is different and the changing pattern of absenteeism in the two counties requires some explanation.

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[132]Lord Castle Durrow for instance lived in an area which was part of the original Queen's County which was later absorbed by County Kilkenny and in more recent years returned back to Queen's.
[133] A.P.W. Malcomson, `Absenteeism in Eighteenth-Century Ireland', *I.E.S.H.* Vol. I (1974), pp. 15-36.
[134] David Hayton, `From Barbarism to Burlesque: English Images of the Irish c.1660-1750', *I.E.S.H.*, Vol. XV, (1988), pp. 5-32.

Table 2.4 An abstract of the principal `absentee' landowners with estates in The King's and Queen's counties in 1730, 1769 and 1783.

Family name	Title(s)	1730 class and amount (£) spent abroad p.a.	1769 class and civil and military pensions (£) p.a.	1783 amount spent abroad (£) p.a
Annesley	**Earl of Anglesey**	**2nd. 7000**	**2nd. 6000**	-
Boyle	Earl of Cork and Burlington	-	-	6500
Burgh	Earl of Clanricarde	-	2nd. 8000	1000
Cosby	Esquire	-	-	3000
Coote	**Earl of Mountrath**	**2nd. 4000**	**2nd. 7000**	**10,000**
Digby	**Baron of Geashill**	**1st. 2500**	**1st. 3000**	**4000**
Dillon	Earl of Roscommon	-	-	9000
Fitzpatrick	**Baron of Gowran, Earl of Upper Ossory (children of)***	**1st. 7000**	**1st. 4000** **1st. 600***	**8000**
Flower	Baron Castle Durrow, Viscount Ashbrook	-	1st. 3000	5000
Jones	**Earl of Ranelagh (daughters of) Countess of***	**2nd. 1800** **1st. 3000**		*** 2000**
King	**Earl of Kingston**	**2nd. 2000**		**7000**
Lumm	knight	-	-	2000
Magan	Esquire	-	-	4000
Malone	Esquire	-	-	1200
Molesworth	**Viscount Molesworth**	**2nd. 1000**	**2nd. ?**	**4000**
Moore	Countess of Drogheda	1st. 1100		-
Moore	Countess of Charleville	-	-	4000
Lyon (Q.C.)	Esquire	-	-	800
Lyon (K.C.)	Esquire	-	-	800
O'Brien	Earl of Thomond	1st. 6000	-	
Piggot	Esquire	1st. 400	-	
Poole **Widow Poole**	**Esquire**	**2nd. 1000**	-	**500**
Ridgeway	Earl of Londonderry	1st. 1200	-	
Villiers	**Earl of Grandison**	**1st. 6000**	-	**15,000**
Warburton	Esquire	3rd. 1000	-	-

Source: Thomas Prior, ***A View of the Present State of Affairs in the Kingdom of Ireland,*** **(Dublin, 1730, 1769 and 1783), there are many other different impressions.**
Note: The (£) means in 1730 the `yearly value of the estate spent abroad', in 1769, `pensions civil and military' and in 1783, `estate value spent abroad'.
Those in bold are recurrent absentees from 1730.

Though at least 35 peers held lands between 1641 and 1760 few of them owned large estates or had any tradition of residence or political participation in the two counties before 1690. The landowners in The King's and Queen's counties could be best described as a `gentry society'. The nobles who seemed to make the most impact in politics and estate development after this date were the handful of local gentlemen

who were ennobled in the reigns of George I and George II (see Appendix 6b and chapter 7.1). The influence of the Earls of Ormonde and to a lesser extent the Earls of Kildare can be discerned in the two counties prior to 1641 even though they resided elsewhere. The 12th Earl of Ormonde's holdings in the barony of Upper Ossory coupled with a powerful patronage network in the government and in the army meant that many of new landowers who arrived into the region in the 1630s and 40s owed their allegiance to him.[135]

The landed interest of the Ormondes was steadily eroded throughout the second half of the seventeenth century as more and more acres were alienated. The manor of Abbeyleix was acquired by the crown in 1637 and the Flower family who were head tenants for the Ormondes eventually obtained a release of the lands at Durrow and from 1708 paid a fee farm rent.[136] Financial difficulties forced the Ormondes to concentrate their efforts on preserving the main core of the estate (rather than on the more peripheral lands in The King's and Queen's counties). When the 2nd Duke of Ormonde fell from power in 1715 the shock waves were more keenly felt in neighbouring Kilkenny and Tipperary rather than in King's and Queen's, which is an indication of just how far the tenurial ties had loosened by the end of the seventeenth century.[137]

The Kildare estate was also denuded by this gradual process of alienation in the first half of the seventeenth century. The manor of Geashill was acquired by the Digby family and some of the original Fitzgerald holdings in The Queen's County (which had been forfeited at the time of the 10th Earl's rebellion) were leased by the crown during the Restoration period at a pepper corn rent to the descendants of the 11th Earl.[138] Pole Cosby recalled that c.1680 Sir Gregory Byrne a `great taylor in Dublin' purchased the Lordships of Timoge and Tully for £1000 from `one Capt. Fitzgerald father [uncle] of Robert present Earl of Killdare and the £1000 was for cloaths, when Daniel asked him [Fitzgerald] for money he told him he had none but he would give him that spot of ground he had in the Queens County for it'.[139] This example demonstrates how the residue of an aristocratic estate could slowly disappear

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135 William Flower was one of a number of newcomers who moved from the west of England. He was later an officer in Ormonde's army and recieved patronage at the Restoration. He was leased the lands at Castle Durrow c.1630. Captain George Flower was the first member of the family to settle in Ireland c.1603, he died in 1627. George's son William refers to his farm in Durrow in May 1629. In 1642 he became M.P. of The Queen's County borough of Ballinakill and at the Restoration he was knighted; E. O'Brien, *An Historical and Social Diary of Durrow,* (Kilkenny, 1992), pp. 1-10.

136 Carrigan, *History and Antiquities,* Vol. 1, p. 221.

137Power, *Land, Politics and Society in Eighteenth Century Tipperary*, p. 76.

138 O'Hanlon et al, *History of the Queen's County,* Appendix II, p. 767.

139 Ibid. p. 255.

in a piece-meal fashion as a result of a magnate's insatiable desire for ready cash to pay off debts.

The Barons of Geashill who acquired the manor formerly held by the Fitzgeralds were perhaps one of only three (the other being Lords Upper Ossory and Londonderry) noble families who spent any length of time in the two counties in the first half of the seventeenth century. By contrast in the following century the Digbys were notorious absentees and appear in all three editions of `Absentee Landowners'. The lands of Lewis O'Dempsey, the principal Catholic peer (Viscount Clanmalier), were rented to members of his family until his estate was forfeited after the rebellion. The Earl of Londonderry was probably the most active peer in The Queen's County before 1641. He owned the important iron works in the barony of Cullinagh and probably spent some of his time at his castle in Ballinakill. Sir Adam Loftus, later Viscount Ely, and Charles Coote were also heavily involved in the iron works at Mountrath and Mountmellick. Lord Londonderry was listed as a first class absentee in 1730 and the earldom became extinct in 1765.

At the Restoration a cluster of new peers was created by Charles II to reward the gentlemen who served the crown during the civil wars as well as those who served him during his period of exile on the continent. Charles Coote, the Earl of Mountrath was the most significant member of this new group of nobles. In addition to the town and iron works at Mountrath he owned c.20,000 acres in The Queen's County. As the family's rental and status increased they spent less and less time in Ireland. In 1730 the descendants of the 1st Earl was listed as a second class absentee and was estimated to have spent £4000 a year in England; in 1763 the 7th Earl was considered as a first class absentee with a pension of £7000 and by 1783 he was supposed to have spent £10,000 abroad. The Earl of Drogheda also wielded a great deal of political power even though he resided at Monasterevin just across the border in County Kildare (Lady Drogheda was a first class absentee in 1730). Henry Bennet, Baron Arlington, was granted Viscount Clanmalier's lands and established the town of Portarlington which he sold c.1680. The Earl of Galway who succeeded to this estate after 1689, had an equally fleeting career in the two counties.

After 1715 the nobility played a more active role in the two counties. Of the new creations, only Viscount Molesworth had a seat outside the county. When in Ireland (he was a second class absentee in 1730) he spent most of his time in Dublin or at his estate in Brackdenstown in County Dublin. Richard Fitzpatrick's seat was at Tentore in The Queen's County. While an M.P. for the borough of Harristown in Kildare between 1703 and 1713 he spent most of his time abroad on the high seas at

the helm of the 80 gun warship `The Ranelagh'.[140] After his retirement from the navy in 1715 he was made Baron Gowran and he is listed as a first class absentee in 1730. Cosby mentions that the dowager Countess of Gowran, kept a town house in London in the 1730s.[141] The Barons of Tullamore had a seat called Redwood (later Charleville) and were ordinarily resident in Ireland in the first half of the century.[142] William Flower, the first Baron Castle Durrow spent much of his time at his seat of the same name, whereas his successor Viscount Ashbrook was listed as a first class absentee in 1769. The first and second Lords Knapton spent a considerable proportion of their time at Abbey Leix.

Thus in the years after the Williamite War the incidence of absenteeism among those peers who owned large estates locally was still high but lower than it had been in the previous century. With the exception of Ormonde one can isolate just 9 peers whose presence or absence would have had some effect on local politics and landed society: from 1690-1714 the Earls of Mountrath, Cavan and Drogheda, in the following reign between 1714 and 1727 one can also include Viscount Molesworth, Baron Tullamore and Baron Gowran, and finally between 1727 and 1760 Viscount Jocelyn and Barons Castle Durrow and Knapton can be added to this list. But what impact did the periods of non-residence have on the development of their estates?

Most of the landowners in the first edition of `Absentee Landowners' were nobles and they were very much in the public eye. Thomas Prior's 1730 list should be taken in the context of the acrimonious debate in the Irish Parliament in the 1720s and 1730s over Ireland's economic and constitutional relationship with England. By exaggerating the amount of disposable income that peers spent abroad he could make a stronger case that absentees had caused a shortage of currency in the kingdom. At the same time he underestimated the amount of money that was spent by the countless un-titled gentlemen like Pole Cosby who visited England for short periods. They were less conspicuous and more difficult to quantify (he only included landowners with incomes over £400). Prior's analysis was based on a rather simplistic national framework. He sought to highlight the economic development of Ireland vis a vis England rather than the uneven development of estates within Ireland which was more often due to internal rather than external absenteeism.

Prior saw absentees as a volatile group who were more likely to treat their lands as overseas investments and would therefore be more tempted than resident

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[140] `Kildare Members of Parliament', *J.K.A.S.*, Vol. VI (1909-11), p. 397.
[141] His heir (who became the Earl of Upper Ossory) and the children of the Countess of Upper Ossory were also first class absentees in the 1769 edition.
[142] Lady Charleville was an absentee in 1783.

landowners to dispose of their inheritance.[143] In some Irish counties there were some spectacular sales of estates belonging to absentees. In Cork, three very large estates, those of the Earls of Clancarty, Cork and Anglesey, were broken up between c.1703 and 1769. By contrast after 1715 (i.e. once the sale of the forfeited estates was completed and after the fall of the Duke of Ormonde) no large aristocratic estates were sold off in The King's and Queen's counties. Lands tended to change hands as a result of marriage and biological failure. Indeed the estates of Lords Knapton, Molesworth and Jocelyn were acquired through marriage.[144]

Prior argued that the bulk of the revenue from absentee estates left Ireland each year causing a shortage of specie in circulation. It has already been suggested that the high costs incurred through marriage, inheritance and mortgages could mean that only a limited proportion (if any) of rentals could be described as disposable income. Periam Poole was supposed to have spent £1000 abroad each year. Even if this figure is correct it was still only approximately a third of his overall Irish rental.[145] Humphrey Bland wrote in 1755 that he did not `intend to draw any money from Ireland, but leave the whole proffits arising from my land to encrease my Estate there'.[146] The delegation of property rights (i.e to head tenants on long leases) meant that a large (if not the largest) part of the overall income earned from the estate remained in the hands of the lesser gentry and head tenantry whose consumption would have have limited to Ireland. Similarly the absence of a landowner did not always result in an empty country house. Long-term absentees tended to rent out their demesnes. If such tenants were of high social standing, then their expenditure on local goods and services might have been as high as if the proprietor lived there. Lord Gowran rented out a number of country houses including his own seat Tentore House (which was leased c.1740 to Robert Gregory Esq. who was appointed a J.P.in 1748), and Dunmore House (rented to Sir Robert Staples in 1742).[147]

Prior, like Bland in the 1750s, criticised the Irish nobles and gentlemen for their over-spending and `luxurious manner of living' which he saw as `an affectation of imitating the nobility and gentry of other countries'. He continued, `The Irish

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[143] We are to observe that a great many estates, and woods have, of late, been sold in Ireland, and all the purchase moneys at once carr'd into England. And which is farther remarkable, some estates have in the compass of a few years, been sold again; Prior, `Absentees', p. 15.

[144] Philipstown was acquired by Robert Molesworth's father married Judith, the daughter of John Bysse, M. Byrne, `The Development of Tullamore', p. 24.

[145] This figure is based on Cosby's estimate that Periam Poole's rental was £3000, Cosby Autobiog., pp. 85, 90.

[146] Bland to Desbrisay, 23 Sept. 1755, although he did draw at least £1000 from his Irish account to pay for his purchase of a retirement home in England, Bland Papers, Private Coll.

[147] The maps of the Earl of Upper Ossory, mentions the commencement of the lease of Staples in 1742, N.L.I., Ms. 1568; Miss Gregory is mentioned in N.L.I, Ms. 1571.

spendthrift, who commonly makes London or Paris the scene of his extravagance, not only deprives his family, but his country also, of the full value of all he consumes'.[148]

Unlike simple gentlemen it was difficult for nobles to live sparingly and to keep a low profile in England. Their high status required high living. Absentee peers had to maintain country seats and town houses in England (certainly Lords Molesworth, Knapton, Castle Durrow and Gowran had London addresses). The inventory of the Dowager Countess of Mountrath's residence at Grosvenor Square in the 1760s shows how lavish some of the London town houses were.[149] But it is difficult to ascertain how much of this consumption was fuelled by English rentals, offices and other interests. For many gentry families, like the Cosbys, residence abroad was seen as a means of cutting expenditure and not an excuse for reckless prodigality. Dublin was an expensive city to reside in, even by European standards, and many nobles found that they could savour the gaiety of London life for little more than they would pay for a comparable period in the Irish capital.

A recurrent argument was that absenteeism led to the undervelopment of estates and landowners neglected their Irish interests in preference for their English ones. Studies of the mentality of emigres in more recent times has shown that long periods of absence from the country of birth do not neccessarily lead to an emotional detachment from it. This was also true in the eighteenth century. The 1st Viscount Molesworth spent most of his time in England yet he passionately supported Irish interests and published pamphlets that crticised Ireland's constiutional and economic dependence on England.[150] The development of Philipstown, which he inherited, was much lower down on his list of priorities but Molesworth still invested more time and resources in improving the town than any other landowner (before or since).

The minutes of the Dublin Society also show that absentees had an interest in the improvement of their estates and the economic performance of Ireland as a whole. Among those on the Dublin Society roll call between 1731 and 1770 were Dudley Alexander Sydney Cosby, Baron Castle Durrow, Baron Tullamore (later Earl of Charleville), John Digby (related to Baron Digby), the Earl of Drogheda and Richard Warburton; all of whom spent long periods outside Ireland.[151] Membership alone of course is not necessarily an indication of active participation in estate improvement. In 1738 the minutes show that there were a number of complaints about the poor

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148 Prior, `absentees', p. 18.

149 The inventory of the Countess of Mountrath, Grosvenor Square, c. 1765; Staffordshire Record Office, D.1287/22/7-document number P/57.

150Robert Molesworth, *A Letter from a Member of the House of Commons,* (London, 1719).

151 Taken from the minute books 1731-1800, R.D.S. Library. I am grateful to Mary Kelleher (the librarian) for her assistance.

attendance at meetings and the failure of members to pay their subscriptions.[152] But there is sufficient evidence to show that some absentees were involved in improvement. Richard Warburton of Garryhinch (who was listed by his friend Thomas Prior as third class absentee in 1730) was one of the founding members of the society in 1731 and was noted for planting forest trees.[153] Lords Castle Durrow, Drogheda and Tullamore laid out considerable sums on the improvement of their seats, demesnes, towns and fields.[154]

Improving absentees often employed friends and members of the family as agents to look after their affairs while they were away. It is a little ironic that Thomas Prior, who so vociferously attacked absentees, was himself absent from his Queen's County estate for long periods and acted as a land agent for a number of Irish absentees. After his university education in England Prior was based in Dublin from 1716 and acted as a town agent for several landowners. He would probably have made a full time career out of land management if he had not inherited Rathdowney after the death of his elder brother in 1718. The family estate was heavily mortgaged and the income derived from his legal and managerial work would have helped him pay off debts and carry out improvements. From 1723 Prior managed the estate of Bishop Berkeley. The two had been pupils together at Kilkenny School and became life long friends. The origins of the professional land agent in eighteenth-century Ireland (e.g. Henry Hatch who worked for both Flower and Blundell in the 1750s) has been noted, but one should also consider the growing professionalisation of landed gentleman in the same period. Prior does not fit the traditional image of a professional agent. He was landowner of some social status (and not from the growing urban pseudo gentry or rural head tenantry) and his desire to assist gentlemen of a similar status was bound up with ties of kinship and friendship in addition to the prospect of earning extra income.[155]

Absenteeism affected the development of estates in more subtle ways than Prior's account would suggest. Despite the best intentions of a landowner such as an active interest and investment in improvement non-residence made the day-to-day running of an estate more difficult. Even in cases where landowners seem to have had conscientious and trustworthy agents the lack of a resident proprietor could cause a

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[152] 7 Dec. 1738, Minute Book, Vol. 1733-1741, p. 89.

[153] Warburton see 6 June 1731, Minute Book 1731-1733, p. 32; H.F. Berry, A *History of the Royal Dublin Society*, (London, 1915), p. 142; Desmond Clarke, *Thomas Prior 1681-1751: Founder of the Royal Dublin Society*, (Dublin, 1951), p. 26.

[154] Similarly a map from c. 1740 shows that Lord Gowran, who was not a member of the society, intended to lay out avenues and extensive plantations even though he would have spent little time on the estate. Map of the intended avenues and plantations for Tentore House, Fitzpatrick Papers, Nat. Arch. Ire. M.3230.

[155] Desmond Clarke, *Thomas Prior*, pp. 10-17.

break down in authority and administration. In 1716 Lord Digby sent an English agent, Edward Roche, over to Ireland to report on the condition of his estate at Geashill and to offer advice on how it could be improved.[156] In the later eighteenth century Geashill was held by a kinsman of the proprietor, Dean Digby, yet the area as a whole was `deprived of a resident gentry' and as a result was `in a lamentable state of neglect'.[157]

Humphrey Bland's principal agent in Ireland in the 1750s was Capt. Theophilus Desbrisay, a Huguenot and a member of the Dublin Society between 1746 and 1768.[158] Since Desbrisay was based in Dublin, Bland also employed a local gentleman, Richard Vicars, to keep an eye on his interests near Ballyroan. Bland also took care to employ lawyers who were familiar with the local gentry. He recommended Mr. Clark as a legal agent because `this gentleman was employed for Col. Dawson's estate in the Queen's County, by which means he has an opportunity of being thoroughly acquainted with my affairs there'.[159] However, the house and estate were rented to Mr. Evans who (according to Bland) was a poor tenant and refused to carry out any of the improvements that were agreed in his lease: `Mr. Evans pays no body, and leaves my domain untouched so that there is nothing to seize on the Ground, but I have desired Mr. Vicars to endeavour to get up his lease at any rate, that he may not hurt my plantations, as I would rather choose to lose the rent than have that done'.[160] Subsequent letters show that Bland took great pains to `look into the Groves and Trees about the House to see that they are safe'.[161] In this instance it would appear that it was the tenant and not the landowner who was responsible for neglect. The whole experience put Bland off expanding his estate in Ireland (he had planned to buy £3-4000 worth of land in 1755). In short, he argued, `an Estate in Ireland, is worth very little, unless a man lives there: and I am therefore glad that I did not make the purchase I proposed'.[162]

Internal absentees, who were more numerous than external absentees in the two counties, also experienced similar difficulties. The Blundells of Edenderry spent much of their time at their Dundrum estate in Co. Down. This meant that they had to delegate some of their authority to local agents. In a letter to Blundell in 1746 Henry Hatch, his agent based in Dublin, concluded that ` I am vastly surprised, that so many acres of land and convenient marl to it should not raise more rent, there must be some

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[156] Summary of the correspondence of the Wingfield-Digby Papers at the Dorset Record Office, P.R.O.N.I., T.3759/17.
[157] Coote, K.C., p. 134.
[158] Debrisay seems to have also been a leading light in Dublin's social circuit. He was also party to a deed concerning the Aungier Street Theatre in c. 1745, N.L.I., Ms. 8801 (5).
[159] Bland to Desbrisay, 3 April 1759.
[160] Bland to Desbrisay, 10 Oct. 1756.
[161] Ibid., same to same, 7 Feb. 1756.
[162] Ibid., same to same, 10 Oct. 1756.

misconduct, or some thing worse'.[163] Such problems were not by any means confined to the estates of absentee landowners: George Hartpole was unsatisfied with his agent in the 1730s because he was unable to collect the rent.[164] But in places where a proprietor was resident recalcitrant tenants could be dealt with more effectively. Blundell's absence was more likely to cause a break down in authority because there were no Justices of the Peace near Edenderry to help keep the `tenants in awe'. Manorial courts for instance were a cheap and efficient way of dealing with local disputes and they showed that the presence of the proprietor carried more authority than an agent. A landowner-tenant relationship that was based on personal contract and mutual trust was more successful than one that was based solely on detailed written contracts.

It is only by comparing those estates where a landowner resided for much of the period with those where a landowner was absent that one can begin to assess the importance of the physical presence of the gentry. The effect of household consumption on the towns and rural communities was considerable (see chapter 5.6). Writing at the beginning of the nineteenth century, Charles Coote argued that The Queen's County was more improved than King's `in consequence of the gentry residing at home'.[165]

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[163] Hatch to Blundell, 27 June 1746, P.R.O.N.I., D.607/A/23, p. 148.
[164] Hartpole Papers, T.C.D., Ms. 1933 deed 33.
[165] Coote, K.C, p. 19.

2.5 Management of estates

It has been argued that `the biggest single factor in landlord prosperity...was the rate at which old leases fell in'.[166] Pole Cosby noted c.1725 `by all those leases droping my Father's rent roll was £2000 per annum'.[167] A reading of some contemporary accounts can give the impression that landowners were passive agents in regard to the management of estates. So much depended on the technicalities of inheritance, the type and quality of the land, the length and type of the leaseholds, and on the ability of the tenants to pay their rents. It is a paradox that even though the Irish Protestant landed elite owned the bulk of the lands and monopolised political power they seemed, in the later part of the eighteenth century at least, to be increasingly at the mercy of external economic forces rather than being the dynamos of economic change. From 1793 for example landowners seemed powerless to prevent the soaring inflation and currency crises that accompanied the Napoleonic War. For most landowners the only course of action seemed to be `to follow the flow' and adjust their leases accordngly (i.e. increase the rent, expect further inflation and shorten the length of the leasehold, and when this expired increase it again). How far were landowners in control of the performance of their own estates when economic conditions were more stable in the first half of the eighteenth century? And what importance should be attached to the leasehold as an instrument of improvement?

A survey of the surviving maps and rentals shows how wide ranging estates were in this period; in terms of size and the variety of resources that they contained. In The King's and Queen's counties a very large estate could be said to be one which comprised more than 10,000 acres. The Earls of Mountrath were c.1740 in a league of their own with c.20,000 acres in The Queen's County, a substantial estate in Roscommon and lands elsewhere in Ireland and England.[168] The Cosbys, whose principal interests were in The Queen's County would have been in the top bracket: they held the Lordships of Stradbally and Timahoe, which was 12,000 acres in 1767.[169] The Veseys had a relatively large estate at Abbey Leix consisting of c.5000 acres in 1733.[170] The Parnells of Rathleague held a medium sized estates of c.1000 acres in the latter part of the century.[171]

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166 Malcomson, *The Pursuit of the Heiress,* p. 47.
167 Cosby Autobiog, p. 71.
168 Mountrath estate maps c. 1730, N.L.I. m/film. P.3618.
169 Cosby acreage taken from estate maps of the Lordships of Stradbally and Timahoe, 1767, listed in P.R.O.N.I. report, T. 3829/E/4.
170 Vesey acreage taken from `list of refference of the number of acres in the lordship of Abbey Leix by a survey taken by me [Mr. Phelan] in the year 1733', De Vesci Papers, N.L.I. m/film, P.6798.
171 Parnell acreage taken from a map of Rathleague in 1789, N.L.I., 21.F.18.

Despite the great differences between the size of estates all landowners had to make very similar decisions about how they would organise their lands; whether he was a magnate with vast estates scattered across Ireland or just an enterprising Quaker with allotments on the outskirts of a town. Firstly landowners had to acquire a detailed knowledge of the natural and human resources that that they inherited. Local information (such as the quality of soil, the genealogies of local tenant families and ancient customs) was, as far as possible, passed on before the eldest son inherited. Pole Cosby served a kind of apprenticeship from 1724 (when he returned from the continent) to 1729 (when his father died). During this time his name appears on many of the more important deeds and once he was married in 1727 the reins of the estate were effectively passed onto him. Cosby's autobiographical account shows that he had a very detailed knowledge of his neighbour's histories, the folklore and the types of leases that were drawn up during his father's and grandfather's lifetime. The account, coupled with his long letter to Dudley Alexander Sydney in 1760, seems to indicate a desire to pass on information to his recalcitrant son before his death (as well as to exhort his efforts in improving the estate).[172] An abstract of the letters of Blundell's agent Mr. Meredyth between 1707 and 1719 are arranged as a series of questions and answers so that a new agent or landowner could quicky understand how the Edenderry estate functioned.[173]

Other landowners were less *au fait* with their estate. This was often because the lands had been recently purchased or granted by the crown or acquired from a distant relation. The development of the estate map (distinct from the baronial maps produced by Petty and others in the Cromwellian period) in the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries revolutionised the way in which landowners actually viewed their patrimonies. Books of maps were often made soon after an estate changed hands. In about 1700 the Huguenot, Henri de Massue de Ruvigny, the 1st Earl of Galway, commissioned Peter Gueran to draw up maps of his estates in The King's and Queen's counties. They are among the most elaborate and attractive hand-tinted maps of the early eighteenth century.[174] As well as being a handsome addition to the library, and something that could be shown off to visitors, they would have been given a newcomer like Ruvigny a clear and concise picture of his Irish interests. Dudley Alexander Sydney Cosby also had an elaborate book of maps made soon after he inherited in

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[172] For summary of the letter and the context of the autobiographical account see P.R.O.N.I. report, T. 3829/H/ 1-3.

[173] The first question for instance is `who now rents these lands and how much are they sett? Whether any increase since to whom sett and at what term?', Downshire Papers, P.R.O.N.I., D. 607/A/11.

[174] Book of maps of the 1st Earl of Galway, Cambridge Univ. Lib. Add. Mss. 4358.

1765.[175] Landowners at the lower end of the social scale also began to use maps with increasing frequency after 1690. The naïve but informative sketch plan of Abraham Clibborn's holding (mainly bog) c.1721 is similar to the many maps that were attached to deeds.[176] The names of local land surveyors such as Russell and Phelan in the early eighteenth century, as well as the more well-known Dublin map makers such as Bernard Scale (from the 1760s) appear on a number of maps made for landowners in the two counties.[177]

The way in which landowners prioritised their various interests in diffrent periods, whether they operated at a local, national or even European level, had a significant impact on the development of estates. A paternalistic peer like Lord Molesworth gave assurances that he showed an equal concern for what went on in all parts of his patrimony but in reality finite time and resources meant that he gravitated to one part of the estate (i.e. Brackdenstown). William Flower of Castle Durrow owned lands in Brecon (south Wales), as well as in Queen's and Kilkenny.[178] After c.1708 Flower seemed to be primarily concerned with his Irish interests. Within estates there were certain types of agricultural and industrial activities that were especially favoured by different landowners at different times.

At the hub of the estate was the demesne, which contained the gardens, orchards, woodland, parkland and meadows that was usually reserved for the gentleman's own use and managed directly. Far from being just a small ornamental adjunct to the seat the demesne could, in terms of acreage, constitute a large proportion of the estate and an important source of revenue as Table 2.5 shows.

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[175] Both books of maps have fine bindings with elaborate frontispieces showing Hibernia and agricultural implements. Surveyed by Jonathan Barker (printed on the title page) and James moore (written in pen underneath), see P.R.O.N.I. report, T.3829/E/4.

[176] Map of Derrymore and Cullybeg in The King's County, 1720-21, Nat. Arch. Ire. M.546.

[177] Russell's maps include: Ballaghrahine and Errell in 1700 and the lands of Graigedrisley and Killgorticane in 1697, Nat. Arch. Ire. M.1034 and M. 6026 respectively; both the Bland and Cosby estate maps were drawn by Mr. Phelan, Private Collections; Scale's maps include: lands belonging to the Weldon's of Killmorony, Q.C. and Kildare, 1771 and the Marquis of Drogheda's estate, 1759, N.L.I., 16.m.9. and 16.h.19 respectively.

[178] His Welsh estate, Abercunrig, comprised a house and 1871 acres which raised a rental of c.£350 p.a. in the 1730's; rentals of the estates in Ireland and Wales and miscellaneous accounts, N.L.I., Ms. 11,451 (3).

Table 2.5 Comparison of the acreages of demesnes c. 1728-1781

Seat Location	Family name title(s)	Date of document	Acreage of demesne/deer park Irish A.R.P.	The acreage of the whole estate Estimated %=demesne
Blandsfort, Q.C. seat	Bland Gent.	1728	311.3.39	? c.1000
Abercunrig, Brecon, Wales subsidiary seat	Flower knight	c. 1730	127.0.15	1871 7%
Loughteague, Q.C. (rented out)	Fitzapatrick, Earl of Gowran	1731	431	c.10,000 4%
Abbey Leix House seat	Vesey knight	1733	105.3.20 (deer park)	5796 2%
Stradbally Hall, Q.C. seat	Cosby Esquire	1740	150.3.7.	c.14,000 1%
Monasterevin House Co. Kildare, Q.C. border seat	Moor(e) Marquis of Drogheda	1759	469.2.4.	?
Frankfort Castle, K.C. seat	Rolleston, Esquire seat	c. 17.60	329*	at least 852
Rathleague House, Q.C. seat	Parnell knight	1767	215.3.9	1116 19%
Dunmore House, Q.C. (rented from Fitz-patrick from 1742)	Staples, knight	1771	57	?
Tentore House, Q.C (rented from the 1740s to Gregory family)	Fitzpatrick Earl of Upper Ossory	1776	514*	14,850
Charlestown House, K.C. seat	Meredith, Esquire	1781	75.2.6.	

Sources: Monasterevin, N.L.I. 21.f.21 (1); Charlestown, N.L.I., 16.I.11 (4); Franckford, N.L.I., Ms. 13,794 (2); Prospect House, 16.h.19 (6); Tentore, the whole plot leased out to Miss Gregory is 512, but a large proportion of this would have been demese land; N.L.I., Ms. 1571; Dunmore, N.L.I., Ms. 1568, Ms. 1571, 16.h.19 (7); Abbey Leix, N.L.I. m/film, P.6798; Rathleague, N.L.I., 21.f.18; Abercunrig, N.L.I., Ms. 11,451, Ms. 11,454; Blandsfort, map of the demesne, Bland papers, Private Coll.; Stradbally map of the demesne, Cosby Papers.
Notes: * denotes that the figure is an estimate.

The fragmentary nature of the evidence relating to demesnes in the first half of the eighteenth century means that it is difficult to obtain accurate data on acreages.

Nevertheless some tentative observations can be made. Firstly there does not seem to be a close correlation between the overall size of the estate and the size of the demesne. Important magnates such as Lords Drogheda and Gowran did have very large and impressive demesnes. The demesne at Monasterevin for instance which was made up of 22 constituent parts (including various woods, paddocks, meadows, water courses, kennels and a `Danes Fort') had a circumference of 5 miles. The walls which enclosed these *cordon sanitaires* were often 6 feet or more in height.[179] But as a proportion of the total acreage of their landed estates they were relatively small. By contrast more modest landowners could have demesnes which were extremely large in comparison to the size of their estate as a whole. John Bland's estate in the 1720s was not very extensive (the rental in the 1750s was just £500 compared to Cosby's rental of c. £3000) yet the demesne was more than twice the size of those at Stradbally and Abbey Leix and might have constituted as much as a quarter or a fifth of the whole estate. Rathleague demesne was also very large given the acreage of the Parnell estate. Both the Parnells and the Blands were relative newcomers who brought with them capital and non-landed income. They could afford to make a big splash in the county without being as concerned as many of their neighbours about the rents (from the woodland and agricultural land) that they sacrificed in order to set aside so much land. There were also landowners who had very modest demesnes (such as Dunmore and Charlestown) where there was just enough land to grow enough fruit and vegetables for the household and to graze horses. One reason for the discrepancy between these figures is because landowners had differing definition of what a demesne was. Some lands may have been treated as part of the demesne even though they were not enclosed by a wall. Deer parks were treated as an integral part of the `demesne' at Abbey Leix but elsewhere it is likely that deer parks were situated in different parts of the estate.[180]

As well as the prestige connected with having a large and improved demesne these lands often had a high economic value. Often the best woodland groves were planted within the vicinity of the seat.[181] Recent aerial photographs of the now truncated demesnes at Stradbally and Dawson's Court (later called Emo Court) show

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[179] E.g. the walls around the kitchen garden in the Weldon estate in 1784 were 7 feet high, N.L.I., Ms. 2792.

[180] In 1774 a map was drawn up of a 10 acre deer park on the estate of Viscount Carlow (W.H. Dawson) which was probably separate from the demesne at Dawson's Court; Nat. Arch. Ire., M.3019.

[181] E.g., Allen Leech reported to Lady Vesey from Hollymount in Co. Mayo in 1721 that Mr. Vigors the gardener had `planted setts of alder to the quantity of 6000, managed as directed, and has the ridges planted in the land with Elder, whitethorn, Holly and Crab', Allen Leech to Lady Vesey, 20 ? 1721, De Vesci Papers, N.L.I., Ms. J/5.

the extent of the surviving woodland and are a tantalising reminder of the sheer scale of the timber plantations that must have existed in the eighteenth century.[182]

The extraction of mineral resources on the estate was also carefully managed by landowners themselves or else delegated to entrepreneurs under strict conditions. The start up costs of deep coal mining (as opposed to open cast) could be prohibitive so landowners tended to share the cost of sinking new pits. In 1720 Dudley Cosby gave permission for George Stringer (another local gentleman) to search for coal at his own expense. It was agreed that if seams of coal were discovered then Stinger would bear a third of the cost of sinking pits for seven years.[183] The interest that landowners had in mining was not always matched with the necessary level of expertise and in the early stages at least they needed to turn to private entrepreneurs.[184]

In 1710 the Hartpole colliery at Doonane was leased to Gerard Fitzgerald (a local gentlemen) for 15 years at a rent of £200 for the first year and £500 thereafter. It was stipulated that he was not not to raise more than 25,000 pit barrels of coal per annum without a licence and to give Hartpole 100 barrels each year for his own use.[185] In 1712 the income from the colliery was a third of the rental (£600).[186] Fitzgerald was said to have obtained a number of favourable leases (including that of Doonane) from the weak William Hartpole for `about two years without accounting or paying a farthing for the said colliery'.[187] The current as well as the potential value of agricultural land could be estimated with a reasonable degree of accuracy, but mineral resources were not so easily quantifiable and this made landowners very reluctant to give long leases or terms that gave opportunites to unscrupulous entrepreneurs to take the lion's share of all the profits. This explains why George Hartpole decided to take a more active role in running the colliery from the 1730s. Despite his debts he `did enlarge and add greatly to the value' of the collieries by constructing a `fire engine' reputedly at a cost of £1100-1200 and raised the income from £400 to £1000 per annum.[188] This fascinating contraption appears to have been a pump which served to

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[182] Stradbally: photo in the estate office at Stradbally Hall; Emo: Benedict Keily, *The Aerofilms Book of Ireland from the Air*, (London, 1994 edition), pp. 100-101. Woodland was also managed directly by the landowner in other parts of the estate. In a lease between Pole Cosby and John Anderson (farmer) in 1725 it was agreed the woods on the lands would be reserved for the proprietor; Reg. Deeds, 27 Aug. 1725- 61.28. no. 40513.

[183] Reg. Deeds, 6 Feb. 1720- 54. 140. no. 35177.

[184] As late as 1768 the Earl of Carrick put an advertisement in *Finn's Leinster Journal* offering a reward to anyone who located coal on his lands near Mount Juliet; *Finn's Leinster Journal* ,issue 57, 13 July 1768.

[185] Hartpole Papers, T.C.D. Ms. 1933, deeds 5 and 9.

[186] Ibid. deed 193.

[187] Ibid. deed 301.

[188] In 1712 the `coles therein were computed to be worth one thousand pounds clear profit' and Hartpole proposed ` to disengage his estate from all incumberences whatsoever by the wealth of the colliery'. It appears that the mismanagement of Sir William meant that the tenant obtained the greater part

`free or disincumber the works thereof under the ground from water'. It was a prominent landmark and the tall tower of the engine and was considered as noteworthy as the seats and churches that adorned the countryside.[189]

Landowners had to make crucial decisions about the amount of authority that they were prepared to delegate to agents and the proportion of the estate that would be farmed directly (or leased out). No matter how far the resident proprietor intended to exert direct control over his lands he usually had to turn to the services of an estate agent *or* steward. Pole Cosby recalled that:

> Mr. William Lewis was a most extraordinary agent, for he had my fathers well fare at heart as if he had been his son and did manage for him very well and with the greatest honesty, my F: [ather] allowed him £30 per annum but he never paid himself but let it go to pay debts...he had an elder son...named Mick who was agent to my Father after his Fathers death while he lived, he was also a very faithful honest man.[190]

By contrast in 1736 George Hartpole appointed Vere Ward as `receiver of rents' for a salary of £20 per annum and within a few years was less than satisfied with his new agent. Ward wrote defensively in 1740:

> I hope you will readily believe that it must give vast uneasyness and concern that you should think your affaires have grown worse, rather than better since you gave me your letter of attorny to receive your rents...the inference from thence, is that my neglect or mismanagement of them was the cause.[191]

It seems that the tenants on the Hartpole estate were either unable or unwilling to pay their rents and that the agent was held responsible. Elsewhere local representatives were hard pressed to collect the rent that was due in a given year. Indeed one advantage of delegating authority to agents and head tenants was that they could act as a cushion between landowner and small farmers. At times of economic

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of the profits whereas Sir George increased the income and had a more direct role in the running of the collieries, ibid, deeds 193 and 354.

[189] It was depicted on both the Grand Jury map c.1765 and Taylor and Skinner's road map of 1783. Charles Coote mentioned that the steam engine that was in place at Doonane in 1801 `discharged one hogshead per stroke, and is equal to 24 hogsheads per minute'; Oliver Sloane's map of The Queen's County c. 1765, N.L.I. 16h.19; Taylor and Skinner, *Maps of the Roads of Ireland* (Dublin 2nd ed. 1783), p. 136; Coote, Q.C., p. 188.

[190] Cosby Autobiog, p 92.

[191] Hartpole Mss., T.C.D, Mss. 1933 deeds 28 and 33.

distress landowners could attempt to distance themselves from the sources of hardship. The Blundell evidence shows how the grievances of the tenantry were often directed at the landowner's representatives rather than at the landowner himself.

When in 1720 Mr. Misset was appointed as the collector of rents on the Edenderry estate he was said to have had the `character of an honest man, judicicious and able'.[192] Misset was given a great deal of authority and in 1725 is recorded as having presided over the Court Leet which was attended by 400 townsmen.[193] By 1746 Misset had fallen out of favour and a serious dispute broke out over the level of rent that was collected and the extent of the local agent's privileges. Misset gathered together a number of supporters and staged what was described as `a rebellion'. On one occasion a relation of Misset threatened to murder Mr. Hatch unless he stopped interfering with local affairs.[194] In 1747 both sides employed four lawyers to fight the case in the Court of Common Pleas and after a bitter struggle Blundell won. Hatch wrote triumphantly `Misset designs notwithstanding his defeat to make another push against me this term but I shall watch all his designs so as in time to bring him to justice. I dont desire him in gaol, I would much rather get what he owes you'.[195] For his pains Hatch was given the authority to hold the courts at Edenderry and he felt sure to `discharge the trust you repose on me with due care'.[196] This unpleasant confrontation between the local representative, the tenants and the landowner led to a reappraisal of how the estate should be run in the future. Hatch advised his master that, `no agent ought to be tenant to any of his employer's lands, for who is to set it to them but themselves and who will venture to take lands over the agent's head, so this of course he will have it at what rate he pleases'.[197]

The hiring of professional agents who had no familial connection or economic interest in the locale was an attractive option where agents had previously been less than scrupulous or shown to be too closely identified with the interests of the tenantry. The bitterness that was caused by Gerald Fitzgerald's handling of the colliery at Doonane (tenant from c.1710-1725) meant that the Hartpoles were keen to hire and fire independent outsiders from the 1730s.[198]

For all but the smallest estates lands were broken up into large blocks and rented to tenants. The sheer volume of the surviving household accounts for Castle

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192 Meredyth to Blundell, 4 Dec. 1720, Downshire Papers, P.R.O.N.I., D.607/A/12.
193 Ducasse to Blundell, 13 Nov. 1725, ibid.
194 ? to Blundell, 8 Nov. 1746, ibid.
195 Hatch to Blundell, 18 June 1747, A/23.
196 Hatch to Blundell,. 1 June 1747, ibid.
197 Hatch to Blundell, 7 Feb. 1746, ibid.
198 In 1764 `Patrick Colclough City of Dublin gent.' replaced Mr. Thomas Russell as agent to the colliery for a salary of £70 plus the use of a house; T.C.D. Ms. 1933 deed 57.

Durrow show how much time and energy was needed for a gentleman or his wife to supervise servants and tradesmen and to ensure that the family was provided with food, clothing, furnishings and entertainment (see chapter 3.7). The direct leasing of lands on an estate the size of William Flower's (c. 4040 acres in 1730) to countless small farmers (and thus by-passing the middlemen) would, compared to the demands of running the household, have created a phenomenal administrative burden. Even if the landowner had employed enough stewards (to collect rents and ensure that each farmer maintained his holding to the appropriate standard) the payback would probably have been rather less than if he rented it out to head tenants who had the necessary skills and above all enterprise to extract the maximum revenue from the land.

The degree to which the estate was fragmented depended on the overall acreage, the endogenous quality of the land, its potential to be improved, its proximity to urban centres, the size and the quality of the pool of available tenants, the type of legal contracts employed, general economic conditions and the personal preferences of the landowner.

Within the confines of an estate there were stark differences in the quality of the soil (see chapter 1.1). The rent derived from various plots of land in the manor of Durrow in 1732 ranged from just 2 shillings per acre to 20 shillings per acre for a plot in Durrow town.[199] Most of the holdings outside the town tended to be in a range of between 2 and 9 shillings per acre. In a sample of the deeds from the Cosby estate between 1719 and 1760 the lands outside the immediate vicinity of Stradbally town were rented out for between 3 and 9 shillings per acre.[200]

In 1732 Flower had c.70 tenants on his lands in The Queen's County and Kilkenny and could therefore be considered as a relatively direct manager of an estate. This was mainly due to the fact that he owned such a large number of small properties in Durrow town itself (the majority of tenants held holdings of below 50 acres). Only three tenants were leased more than 500 acres and six other individuals held between 100-200 acres. Thus just nine head tenants held 3134 acres (or 78% of the whole estate). Virtually all of the Cosby leases in the period 1720-1750 were between 150-300 acres.

The delegation of property rights to a few head tenants had many advantages over direct management. They were necessary intermediaries between the small

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[199] Flower Papers, N.L.I., Ms. 11,451 (1).

[200] The leaseholds for plots in towns were set at a premium. In 1749 Samuel Partridge paid the exceptional sum of £40 for just 8 acres in Stradbally (generally rents were in the range 10-50 shillings per acre). The leases that were drawn up for town properties are distinctive (see chapter 5.2), sample of 45 leaseholds from between 1707 and 1760 in the Registry of Deeds. Reg. Deeds, 5 April 1749- 142. 322. no. 45692.

farmers who worked the soil and the landowner. The disadvantage of having tenants with large holdings was that they could become `over mighty'. This could manifest itself in a number of ways. Head tenants were more likely to have the resources to take legal action against landowners if they felt that their contractual agreements had been breached. They could accumulate wealth and begin to build up freeholds of their own adjacent to the landowner's estate. Tenants could invest in farm houses, display outward signs of gentility and participate in corporation or county politics. This could be seen as a threat to the landowner's interest in the locale.

The dangers of alienation could be minimised if the tenants were chosen carefully in the first place. Some recent accounts of the role of head tenants in the eighteenth century have used the terms `underground gentry' or `middlemen' which can give the impression that they were a particular class or a distinct ethnic/religious section of society.[201] Tenants cannot be so easily labelled since many were also Protestant landowners themselves. Sir William Flower was a head tenant of the Duke of Ormonde until c.1708, Richard Warburton rented lands in the 1680s until he was in a position to purchase them, and the Dawsons held lands near Ballyroan for lives-forever.[202]

Gentlemen of all ranks usually held a varied collection of lands that included freeholds, mortgaged lands, lands in trust and leases ranging from fee farm, lives renewable, lives or shorter periods. In 1640 c.2454 acres in the barony of Upper Ossory were set to three individuals, Col. Stubber, Capt. Thomas Richards and Charles Coote, who could all be described as Old Protestant gentlemen.[203] In a book of leases from the Fitzpatrick estate between 1709 and 1743 10 of the tenants (or 23%) were styled as gentlemen, 2 as clergymen and 32 as farmers.[204] In 1758 Humphrey Bland told his agent that `Mr. Piggott or any other Gentleman of character and fortune would be very agreeable to me as a tenant'.[205] Some of these gentlemen-tenants were relatives of the proprietors.[206]

Some landowners had difficulties attracting the right kind of tenant. This could be due to the paucity of the estate, a small population, or because of a general economic malaise. Since The King's and Queen's counties were highly settled and had

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201 K. Whelan, `An Underground Gentry?: Catholic Middlemen in Eighteenth Century Ireland', in *The Tree of Liberty: Radicalism, Catholicism and the contruction of Irish Identity,* (Cork, 1996), p. 6.
202 Dudley Cosby took out a lease from Col. Freeman of the lands at Esker for 0.9.4. an acre and then sub-let it to Pigot Sands for 5 years at 0.12.0 an acre; Cosby Autobiog, p. 170.
203 Rental of the barony of Upper Ossory in 1640, N.L.I., Ms. 8832.
204 Fitzpatrick book of leases, N.L.I., Ms. 1567.
205 Bland to Desbrisay, 7 Dec. 1758, Bland Papers.
206 Dudley Cosby leased properies to his kinsmen Sidney and Thomas Cosby and Pole Cosby rented out lands to his own mother; Reg. Deeds, 8 May 1719- 23.223. no. 13189, 13 April 1719- 27.80. no. 15331 and 23 April 1733- 72.426. no. 51379.

a reasonably well developed stratum of lesser Protestant gentry and Protestant tenant farmers long before 1690, landowners were in a better position than those in many other parts of Ireland to attract suitable Protestants. The proximity of the counties in southern Leinster to Dublin and the Pale meant that the potential pool of tenants was even larger. Dudley and Pole Cosby rented large rural holdings to a number of individuals who resided in Dublin and other tenants came from across the border in Kildare.[207] The growth of Dublin newspapers meant that landowners could cast their net wider still. In 1731 Sir John Denny Vesey put an advertisement in *Pue's Occurrences* for a tenant to farm 500 acres near Abbey Leix for 31 years or three lives.[208]

But there were particular pockets (especially in The King's County) where Protestants were scarce and landowners had to turn to Catholics. The relationship between Protestants and Catholics varied from landowner to landowner and from one place to another. In the aftermath of the Williamite War attitudes towards Catholics had hardened. At Castle Durrow in 1690 the estate steward had to report back to his master on the damage that was caused by rapparees and the arreas of rent; he remarked bitterly `as for the Protestants I shall not be hard on them yett [in terms of rent]...but as for the Papists I may save what I think fitt'.[209] Towards the end of the period one can still find particular landowners who attempted to follow the `Popery Acts' to the letter. Viscount Blundell repeatedly reprimanded his agents for setting `lands to Popish tenants contrary to a clause in my father's lease...I add that all who have offended by setting lands to papists should be punished in some degree'. [210] The three co-heiresses of the Blundell estate showed similar sentiments in 1758, `As to Garry and Mooney they are certainly good tenants, but by the law made in the kingdom against the further growth of Popery a papist cant take a lease for lives or for any longer term of years than 31'. In another letter they laboured on the same point, `it would be always agreeable to us, to have tenants if we could who were Protestants and should be glad [if] you would note in your next rent roll which of our tenants are Papists'.[211] In practice this was not such an easy task and there was a reluctance to part with good tenants, even if they happened to be Catholics. In writing about one tenant in 1747 Mr. Hatch, Blundell's agent, lamented,` it is a pity he is not a Protestant for he bears a good

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[207] Including Edmund Ryan in 1719, James Wills, a lawyer, in 1722 and Robert Tench in 1744.
[208]Interested parties had the opportunity of obtaining further particulars from either Mr. William Cullen at nearby Ballynakill or Alderman Dawson in Dublin; *Pue's Occurrences*,1731 no. 31.
[209] Edmond Doyne to Thomas Flower, 4 Oct. 1690, N.L.I., Ms. 11,473 (1).
[210] A note by Blundell on a letter from Ducasse, 29 Aug. 1720, P.R.O.N.I., D.607/A/12.
[211] Co-heiresses to Hatch, 11 Mar. and 11 May 1758, ibid, A/23.

character, and desirous to take a lease of the tythes and will give undeniable security'.[212]

An analysis of a number rent rolls shows that landowners seemed to rent lands to the best tenants regardless of their Gaelic Irish/Catholic background. John Brereton was attainted in 1688 for siding with James II and his estate was forfeited yet he remained on the manor of Loughteague as a head tenant of the new grantee Richard Fitzpatrick. A rent roll of `Mr. Brereton's concearns [sic]' in 1728 shows that he had a large holding of 1359 acres for a rent of £200. The same document shows that he was able to sub-let these lands to 6 tenants for £528 and make a profit of £300.[213] In 1731 Bowen Brereton wrote to Lady Gowran asking her to consider leasing his family's former seat back to him: `great improvements I have made there at the known mansion place and house of my ancestor that your ladyship will be pleased to give me a preference thereof and set me the house and two hundred acres'.[214] Continuity of residence was considered by many landowners as being more important than the religion of their tenants. William Flower's estate, which overlapped The Queen's County and County Kilkenny, had a long tradition of large Irish Catholic and Anglo-Norman freeholders and tenants who were who were connected by the bonds of clientage to the Ormondes. As a result at least six out of nine of Flower's head tenants c.1732 were of Old English or Irish Catholic stock.[215] The two estate agents who were employed on the Flower estate between c.1680 and 1740, Edmond Doyne and James Loughlin, also had Irish surnames.

Once a landowner had secured a small group of reliable tenants he then had to ensure that his authority was not diluted by their sub-letting activities. If certain clauses were not inserted into the lease then head tenants might be tempted to sell their interest to other farmers. If this occurred a landowner could be faced with an entirely different (and perhaps less satisfactory), set of tenants on his land. Therefore, landowners tried to restrict their tenants by imposing fines for the transfer or sale of interest. It was stipuated in a deed of 1730 that Thomas Houghton a joiner from Stradbally could not `dispose of the interest' of his holding without prior permission of Pole Cosby.[216] The stringency of some landowners is shown by Mr. Ducasse's (Blundell's agent) account of the renewal of leases in 1720: `some of your tenants came

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[212] Hatch to Blundell, 1 June, 1747, ibid, A/23.
[213] Brereton-Fitzpatrick Papers, Nat. Arch. Ire. M.3213.
[214] Brereton to Lady Gowran, 14 August 1731, Ibid. M.3214.
[215] Viz Nicholas Cormick, Patrick Fitzpatrick, John St. Leger and Messrs Brophy, Murphy and Fannin; rent roll 1732, N.L.I., Ms. 11,451 (1).
[216] Reg. Deeds, 19 Jan. 1730- 89. 433. no. 63943.

to Dublin last week in order to take out their new leases. But wee signed one only, the clauses do frighten them out of their wits, But for all that they will swallow them'.[217]

The different types of leaseholds that were offered by landowners could be seen as both a reflection and a determinant of estate fragmentation and economic change. Some analysts have placed great emphasis on how landowners merely reacted to rising land values by sub-dividing their lands into smaller parcels. But it could also be argued that landowners (particularly in the early eighteenth century when population levels were relatively stable) contributed to the increase in land prices by their careful use of various legal contracts. One needs to consider the full range of legal devices that were at the disposal of proprietors before any generalisations can be made.

An analysis of the Cosby, Flower and Fitzpatrick papers shows that the leaseholds can be broken up into four broad categories. The longest leases (of over 100 years) which included those for 999 years, lives renewable forever or fee farm grants effectively alienated properties from the landowner. Arthur Young argued that `tenants holding large tracts of land under a lease for ever and which have been relet to a variety of under-tenants, must in this enquiry be considered as landlords'.[218] Coote argued at the beginning of the nineteenth century that `the very respectable middle class of the gentry enjoy their fortunes from perpetuities in lands granted long since to their ancestors, many of whom have now a better interest than the original proprietor'.[219] Such lease settings seem to have been far less common after 1690 than before. Col. John Bland specified in his will of 1728 that his brother (who inherited) would have `full liberty to sett leases of the Estate any part thereof not exceeding forty one years'.[220]

Perpetuity leases seem to have been most attractive to landowners with long term financial difficulties who were not prepared to relinquish their title over their estate. A lump sum could be collected from the fines imposed upon the renewal of lease without actually selling the land. A series of Acts of Parliament enabled the tenants on the 2nd Duke of Ormonde's estate to convert their leases of lives to fee farm grants. This effectively gave the tenants full property rights in perpetuity. Yet from Ormonde's point of view these conversions had brought in a significant sum without the embarrassment of selling the freehold of part of his ancient patrimony.[221] Perpetuity grants could also be used as a means of rewarding close friends and family

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[217] Ducasse to Blundell, 7 Feb. 1720, P.R.O.N.I., D.607/A/12.
[218] Arthur Young, Vol. 2, p. 17.
[219] Coote, Q.C., p. 19.
[220] The will of John Bland, 14 June, 1728, Bland Papers, Private Coll.
[221] T.P. Power, *Land, Politics and Society in Eighteenth Century Tipperary*, pp. 76-86.

and reinforcing bonds of kinship. George Hartpole gave a 999 year lease c.1740 to a neighbouring gentlemen, John Bambrick.[222]

Long leases (between 41-100 years) which included those for a specified number of years or lives were more common than perpetuity leases; although there was often a very fine line between the long term delegation of certain property rights and alienation. Pole Cosby noted that his father had set the lands at `The Fort' at Vicarstown to Mr. Radley whose `father had lived there under my Grandfather and Great grandfather, sence [sic] before 1641'. Yet in 1720 this tenant was ejected `which he thought was a great piece of injustice for he and his father having lived there so long he lookt on it as his own right and inheritance'.[223] Of the 23 Cosby leases of large non-urban holdings between 1718 and 1760 17 of them were for lives, three were for over fifty years and three were for shorter periods (these are listed in Table 2.5a). This is revealing since it shows that although the Cosbys were keen to encourage landowners to improve their holdings by offering leases for long periods they could also be ruthless to Protestant and Catholic tenants alike in order to prevent the gradual erosion of their interest.[224]

Table 2.5a Leasing patterns on the Cosby estate, 1719-1760

Year	under 20 years	20-30 years	30-100 years	lives
1719	0	1	0	3
1722	0	0	1	0
1723	0	1	0	0
1724	0	0	0	1
1725	0	1	0	0
1727	0	0	0	1
1728	0	0	0	1
1730	0	0	0	1
1733	0	0	0	2
1740	0	0	1	0
1742	0	0	0	1
1744	0	0	0	2
1749	0	0	0	2
1756	0	0	1	1
1760	0	0	0	2
Total	**0**	**3**	**3**	**17**

Source: The Registry of Deeds.

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[222] Although he took care to reserve all mineral rights; T.C.D, Ms. 1933 deed 32a.

[223] Cosby Autobiog, pp. 168-169.

[224]There were many variations within the band of leases known as `lives'. The contract could concern the natural life of the tenant, his wife, son (s) or some other named person. Sometimes tenants were indented to hold lands for the life of the landowner and his heir apparent or even the life of the present monarch. The length of the leasehold was usually determined by the named individual who lived the longest. Given that each generation spanned an average of about 25 years most two or three life leases would have been for rather less than a century.

Medium term leases (between 21-41 years) were relatively common on the Flower estate but rarely used by the Cosbys . They gave the landowner a greater degree of flexibility. He did not have to wait too long to remove a unsatisfactory tenant and he would be able to adjust the level of rent more regularly. Yet shorter tenures meant that tenants had less of an incentive to carry out long term improvements such as planting trees and building walls. Mr. Hatch, Blundell's agent, warned against such leases in 1754:

> I believe that three lives would be much better than 31 years for this reason, that where tenants have leases for years when they are nigh expiring they let the improvements go to ruin, and rack the land by ploughing, but they cannot do so, when it is for lives, as their death is uncertain, besides it will give you great weight in the King's County.[225]

Short term leases (of under 21 years) were quite common for properties in or adjacent to urban centres but seldom used for larger rural holdings in the first half of the eighteenth century. The shortest lease among the Cosby deeds was for 21 years (to Edmund Ryan of Dublin for 300 acres in Derrykillon).[226] Generally short leases were seen as a stop gap or used for a trial period to test the suitability of a tenant.

From a modern economic perpective one could argue that it would have been logical for landowners to use shorter rather than longer leases towards the end of the period in order to ensure that their rentals could keep apace of land prices. But the present sample of leases and rentals shows that one cannot make such an assumption.

Firstly, the data that is used to calculate the level of rent and the value of land over time is highly problematic. The figures taken from rent books reveal only one part of the equation. To calculate the *real* economic value of the land also needs to ascertain the amounts that were paid to the head tenants by the more numerous sub-tenants. In order to understand how landowners consolidated their economic position over the course of the period one should ideally look at the landowner's share of this real economic rent as well as the size of his rental. Later topographical evidence such as Arthur Young's notes on a tour c.1780 suggest that even the poorest lands in King's County had a value of 10 shillings an acre. This noticeable increase in the value of

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[225] In Feb. 1729 Hatch wrote a similar letter to William Flower, `he is satisfied to take it for three lives rather than 31 years which I take to be the best way of keeping up the improvements for when it is in for a terme of years the tenants are apt to let things go', Hatch to Blundell, 1 August 1754, P.R.O.N.I., D.607/A/23; Flower Papers, N.L.I. Ms. 11,476 (1).

[226] Reg. Deeds, 14 Oct. 1719- 23.223. no. 13189.

land after 1760 (before the spiralling inflation of the Napoleonic era) was almost certainly a result of rising population, the rising value of tillage ground with the secular rise in grain prices and a greater fragmentation of the land. Thus at the end of the century it becomes increasingly difficult to be sure whether the figures given in printed literature are an accurate guide to the amount that a landowner could actually obtain for his land or whether they are estimates of the sums that small farmers paid to the increasing number of head tenants.[227]

Secondly, the level of rent that was due each year is not an accurate guide to the overall level of income that the landowner received since tenants were often contracted to make a number of other payments. The Tenures Abolition Act (Ireland) of 1662 swept aside many of the more archaic fines and quasi-feudal fees that were due to landowners.[228] But fines were still an important feature of estate finance in the eighteenth century and they need to be taken into account before one can calculate the real level of rent for a given piece of land. In 1740 Warner Westenra of Rathleague took a lease 332 acres of profitable land from Pole Cosby for a term of 74 years at a rent of £137.14.0. In addition he had to pay a lump sum of £600 at the beginning of his tenure. Another condition was that he could only surrender his lease after giving the landowner 12 months notice.[229] The transfer and renewal of leaseholds could also be subject to a fine.

Thirdly short leases were not the only means of ensuring that the real level of rent did not diminish over time. The rent agreed for medium or long term leases was often on a sliding scale. In 1725 John Anderson took a lease from Dudley Cosby for 0.6.6 an acre for the first 7 years and then 0.7.0. an acre for the following 25 years together with a fat hogg or 12 shillings each year (which shows that feudal fees had not completely disappeared in this period).[230] The rent roll of Capt. Richard Fitzpatrick c.1690 lists the total rental at `present' and in the `2nd 7 years' and the `3rd 7 years' of the leaseholds.[231]

And finally the amount of rent that was agreed between the landowner and the tenant does not always bear any relation to the proportion of that sum that was actually collected. In 1722 Blundell's agents audited the accounts and found that there was a shortfall of £98.14.9 (about 7% of the total due) and they argued whether or not this

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[227] His summary of the land values in the baronies of King's were: Clonisk 0.15, Ballybrit 0.15, Eglish 0.13, Ballyboy 0.10, Garrycastle 0.13, Geashill 0.12, Coolestown £1.0, Warrenstown £1.5.0 and Ballycowen £1.1.0., Arthur Young, Vol. 2, pp. 8-10.
[228] R.A. Pearce, *Land Law*, (London, 1980), p. 34.
[229] Reg. Deeds, 22 April 1740- 98.337. no. 68653.
[230] Ibid, 27 Aug. 1725- 61.28. no. 40513.
[231] Rent roll, N.L.I., Ms. 3316.

amount should be charged on Mr.Hunt (collector for the lands at Dundrum).[232] This was a paltry amount compared to the arreas on other estates in difficult years.[233] Landowners could take a charitable approach and give tenants a temporary respite (as many did during the famine of 1740/41) or they could take a firmer line. The Blundell leases stated that household goods would be seized if rent was not paid within 40 days.[234] In years when good tenants were in short supply it was not in the landowner's interest to carry out wholesale ejectments.

Thus a landowner's preference for certain types of leasehold was not just determined by a desire to maximise rent. Balancing the books in the eighteenth century meant juggling the long term interest of the estate (in terms of improvement) with the desire to have a modicum of control over the tenantry (to prevent both the alienation of lands and the alienation of good tenants) and the highest possible income (rents, fines and other dues). The surviving leasebooks are a direct reflection of these disparate and sometimes conflicting interests. The Cosbys preferred long leases in order to obtain improving tenants yet they probably sacrificed a certain amount of income by doing so. At the same time Pole Cosby may have undermined some of his authority by fragmenting his estate into smaller and smaller holdings in order to increase his rental. Viscount Blundell used complicated written instruments with strict conditions in order to secure his interests (since he was seldom able to supervise the estate in person) yet at the same time he ran the risk of alienating good potential tenants as his agent warned in 1720:

> Such leases have already been executed in Ireland and they seem well drawn up for the security of the landlord. But I do apprehend there are some clauses in this lease that creates doubts and jealousies in the minds of the plain men who do not understand the law and in the main may be of no great use to the L[an]d. Lord and may be the occasion of losing a good tenent in a country where there is no great choice of such. For my part I do not pretend to understand the neccessary forms...of leases never having hardly read one in my life.[235]

The landowner was not always in a position to lay down the terms of the leaseholds. There is abundant evidence in the advertisements placed in Dublin

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[232] ? to Blundell, 5 May 1722, P.R.O.N.I. D.607/A/12.
[233] A fragment of a rent roll from the Flower estate (which probably relates to that part of his estate in Wales) shows that 44% of the total rent due for 1734/35 was unpaid; Flower Papers, N.L.I., Ms. 11,451 (2).
[234] Meredyth to Blundell, 26 Dec. 1720, P.R.O.N.I., D.607/A/12.
[235] Meredith to Blundell, 26 Dec. 1720, Downshire Papers, P.R.O.N.I., D.607/A/12.

newspapers between 1704 and 1740 to show that tenants on large holdings negotiated the length of their leases. In 1736 for instance Sir John Byrne offered to set 2150 acres in The Queen's County for either three lives or 31 years.[236]

In England short term leases became much more common in in this period.[237] But Ireland had peculiar economic conditions and one should be wary of framing an argument that is based too closely on the English model. Charles Coote, writing in 1801, believed that lands in England `under old leases' were the least improved whereas in Ireland such lands `were in the highest state of improvement'.[238]

The types of leasehold that were employed reveal more about how landowners were able to control their tenants than the conditions which led to an increase in estate revenue and the fragmentation of land. It is usually assumed that the most dramatic increases in the level of rent occured after 1760. Similarly most of the topographical observers of the late eighteenth century note the reduction in the size of farms. In Coote's analysis of the agriculture and manufactures of the two counties he noted the size of the holdings in each barony. Mr. Lloyd of Gloster in The King's County `had rented, within living memory, 3000 acres of pasture to 4 farmers' yet by 1801 the same lands were divided into `above one hundred distinct plots'.[239] Coote came to the the conclusion that the proliferation of smaller farms led to economic underdevelopment and alienation. Was the increase in land prices caused by fragmentation or was it fragmentation which caused an increase in land prices? To understand this paradox one has to turn to the changes that occurred at the beginning of the eighteenth century.

Cosby's account suggests that in the first two decades of the eighteenth century there was a considerable increase in the level of rents. He cites the case of Ballymaddock where his grandfather (c.1680) set the lands at £80 per annum, which were then set by his father (c.1700) for £180 and later increased again to £630 in 1725.[240] The overall rental on the Stradbally estate was said to have increased from £1100 in 1716 to £2000 in 1725. This increase in landed income might well have been due to rack-renting rather than a change in the fortunes of the tenants or an improvement in the fertility of the soil. The first decades of the eighteenth century were by all accounts lean years for the Irish tenantry and contemporaries criticised those landowners who charged exorbitant rents and entry fees at a time of hardship.[241]

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[236] *Pue's Occurrences,* No. 73, 1736

[237] J. Habakkuk, *Marriage, Debts and the Estate System: English Landownership 1650-1950,* (Oxford, 1992).

[238] Coote, Q.C., p. 21.

[239] Coote, K.C., p. 52.

[240] Cosby Autobiog., pp. 170-171.

[241] L.M. Cullen, *The Emergence of Modern Ireland,* p. 43.

It was also in this early period that Dudley and Pole Cosby began to sub-divide their lands. When c.1721 the lease of Killrory, Ballyknowland and Kealspedoge expired the lands were split into three parts and let to three tenants. The rental was increased from £60 to £142 p.a.[242] Other rent rolls also show this process was taking place elsewhere at the begining of the century. In 1640 just three gentlemen farmed 2454 acres on the Fitzpatrick estate. A rent roll of the same estate c.1700 (which had grown to 9283 acres) lists 15 tenants and in a book of leases between 1709 and 1744 there are 44 names.[243] Most studies of other Irish estates have focussed on the sub-division that occurred towards the end of the period.[244] The low survival rate of rent books and leases for the earlier period might have led historians to underestimate the amount of fragmentation that occurred before 1760.

In contrast to Cosby's record of the rent increases of the 1720s the deeds from the third decade of the eighteenth century do not point to any dramatic changes in the level of land prices. The left hand side of Table 2.5b shows the level of rent in a selected sample of leases of non-urban properties in the period 1719-1740 and on the right hand side is the level of rent for similar holdings in the years 1742-1760. What becomes apparent from these crude figures is the great disparity between the level of rent at any one time. This is mainly due to differences in the quality of the land rather than general increases in land prices. If this small sample were representative then the average amount charged per acre on the Cosby estate changed from about 6 shillings in the early period to 8 shillings in the later one.

Table 2.5b The Value of agricultural land on the Cosby Estate, 1719-1760

Year of lease	Shilling per acre	Year of lease	Shilling per acre
1719	4	1742	7
1723	8	1744	6
1724	6	1744	4
1725	5	1749	8
1727	6	1756	9
1733	6	1756	8
1733	8	1760	10
1740	8	1760	10

Average per acre 1719-1740= 6 sh. **Average per acre 1742-1760= 8 sh.**
Source: Registry of Deeds, Dublin.

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[242] Another plot of land which had been held by a kinsman, Richard Cosby, for £40 for 31 years and £60 on a subsequent 21 year lease was also set `to several tenants for £220', Cosby Autobiog., pp. 169, 171.
[243] Fitzpatrick rentals, N.L.I., Ms. 8832, 3000 and 3316.
[244] In the 1750s and 1760's Robert French of Monivae divided his lands up into small farms of 50 acres and under. D. Cronin, *A Galway Gentleman in the age of improvement,* pp. 12, 19.

Table 2.5c shows the variations in the average level of rent on other estates in the period. The most striking increase in the level of rent over the course of the whole century was on the Fitzpatrick estate. In about 1700 the rent per acre was just 3 shillings yet by 1776 it had risen to 15 shillings.[245]

Table 2.5c Average rent per acre on different estates 1640-1776.

Estate	Date	Acreage (Irish) on document	Rental £	Average price per acre (shillings)
Fitzpatrick, Upper Ossory Q.C.	1640	2454	572.10.6	5
Fitzpatrick, Upper Ossory, Q.C.	c.1700	9282	1369 *	3
Brereton, Loughteague, Q.C.	1728	1359	528	8
Wakely, Ballyburley, K.C.	1735	403	240.17.0	12
Rolleston, Frankfort, K.C.	c.1760	832	669.15.0	16
Bowen, Courtwood, Q.C.	c.1770	1062	753.6.2	14
Fitzpatrick, Upper Ossory, Q.C.	c.1776	14,850	11,476	15

Sources: Fitzpatrick rent rolls, N.L.I., Ms. 8832, 3316, 1568; Rolleston, N.L.I., Ms. 13,794 (2); Bowen, N.L.I., Ms. 1448; Brereton, Nat. Arch. Ire. M.3213 and Wakely, *Pue's Occurrences*, May 3, 1735, no. 36.

It has been argued that the gentry middlemen were able to obtain a growing proportion of the profits from the land by the late eighteenth century.[246] But the relationship between landowner and tenant should not be seen in purely reductionist terms (i.e. as a kind of economic see-saw, where one group always benefited at the expense of the other). The assumption that landowners took more and more of a back-seat role in running estates would seem to conflict with what is known about the

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[245] Arthur Young believed that the rents rose by more than two thirds between 1750 and 1770. Arthur Young, Vol. 2, p. 10.

[246] K. Whelan, 'Underground Gentry', pp. 7-8.

`improvement' schemes of landowners in The King's and Queen's counties during this period.

2.6 Improvement

The term `improvement' cannot be easily defined since it was used in different ways in so many areas of Irish life- political, social, economic, religious, cultural and intellectual- in the eighteenth century. From the point of view of Whiggish statesmen improvement was part of a long standing English ambition to pacify and enrich Ireland. Protestant clergymen used improvement as a metaphor for their moral and practical programmes to reform manners, educate the young and relieve the poor. The effects of the Williamite reconquest and the Hanoverian succession, coupled with Ireland's peculiar conditions, meant that `improvement' was bound up with Protestantism. Indeed to many Catholics `improvement' (whether it be in the form of Charter Schools or poor relief) came to be seen as a insidious means of converting them to the established church (see chapter 5.5).

To others `improvement' was primarily about the promotion of agriculture, manufactures and the Irish economy. The Dublin Society which was founded in 1731 acted as new and important forum for gentlemen involved in a variety of areas ranging from farming and industry to the arts, sciences and humanities. The term `improved' was used so often by topographers in their descriptions of country houses, demesnes, towns and fields that some historians have spoken of a `cult of improvement' in the eighteenth century. What relevance were these new ideas to the gentry of The King's and Queen's counties? This section will focus on the practical effects of rural improvement schemes and how they enabled landowners to consolidate their economic position.

Landowners, as has already been shown, attempted to lease their lands to tenants while still maintaining a modicum of control over their property. But how far did they shift the responsibility of maintaining and improving the estate onto their tenants? A central component of the leasehold was the `improvement clause' and this has led some analysts to conclude that it was the middlemen rather than the landowners who were responsible for actually implementing the improvement schemes.

The first set of schemes that were implemented on any estate were, arguably, not even improvements at all but basic requirements for any working farm. Given an area of profitable land one had to provide adequate drainage (to dig ditches or scour old ones), put up suitable boundaries (build stone walls, fences or hedgerows), and

build wind and water tight dwellings (erect farmhouses made from stone, brick and slate). Tenants were usually required to carry out these improvements. A typical lease c.1700 to Thomas and Henry Ringwood specified that they were to `build two good English like dwelling houses'.[247] Dudley Cosby's tenant, the Rev. Doctor Patrick Delany, `obliged himself to lay out £200 in building a dry wall round the land, which he did, and at least £100 more on the premises'.

Landowners often carried out these basic tasks themselves because they farmed part of the estate (e.g. demesne land) directly and because good tenants (who were often in short supply) needed incentives to settle on the land. Cosby said that his `Father was for ever doing some improvement or another, for Stradbally, when he came to it in 1716 was but a rough uncouth place'. In 1718 Dudley Cosby cut down a `Hazel Scrub... close to the ground, then marked out the walls, stubbed and levelled them', and Pole Cosby built stone cottages for his tenants in the 1730s.[248] The building and household accounts of the Flowers of Castle Durrow show that the landowner invested considerable sums in putting up boundaries around parts of his estate. Between 1725 and 1735 William Flower laid out at least £662 on building more than 6,910 perches of stone wall adjacent to his demesne.[249]

A little lower down on the list of priorities were the natural additions to a holding in the form of orchards, plantations, parks and kitchen gardens. In the early seventeenth century the two counties had been greatly deforested but some progress had been made in the area of planting orchards before 1690. Landowners took an active interest in growing fruit and prided themselves on being au fait with the latest novelties. Fruit was also a popular gift among gentry families. Jonathan Swift told Knightley Chetwood of Woodbrook in 1722 that his `Bergamot pears are excellent, and the orange Bergamots much better than those about this town [Dublin]'.[250]

An elaborate late seventeenth-century ground plan shows the orchards on the Frankfort estate (the 703 trees- there were 91 different varieties of apple, peaches and pears etc.- are each carefully represented by a symbol).[251] The Rolleston family seem to have carried on this tradition of fruit growing and by 1760 the fruit trees were `computed to be worth £300 per annum'.[252] Pole Cosby recalled in 1760 that he

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[247] Another lease taken by Henry Ringwood in 1720 is more detailed. He was to build a `dwelling house of lime and stone walls 50 feet in length, 17 in breadth, and 12 in height in the walls and gable ends accordingly, a chimney at each end on a double stack'; Fitzpatrick rentals, N.L.I., Ms. 3316 and Ms. 1567.

[248] Cosby Autobiog, pp. 89, 91.

[249] Flower Papers, N.L.I, taken from entries throughout the Flower papers Ms. 11,451-11,469.

[250] Swift to Chetwood, Sept. 1724, Swift Letters, Vol. 3, p. 34.

[251] The orchard plan is used as a backing for another map, undated, Rolleston estate maps, N.L.I., 16.m.11 (1).

[252] Rolleston Papers, N.L.I, Ms. 13,794 (2).

`raised above 4000 apple trees, which were planted out in orchards on my estate, and have got planted some hundreds of trees in groves and hedge rows on my farm'.[253] Evidence from the minute books of the Dublin Society seem to verify Cosby's claims for in 1742 his gardner, Daniel Collins, was reported to have planted 1,540 fruit trees on the Stradbally estate.[254]

Orchards and timber trees were easily damaged at times of crisis. Edward Doyne, the agent on the Castle Durrow estate during the Williamite War, was very anxious that the fruit trees would not be flattened by the troops encamped nearby.[255] The infrastructural improvements that were initiated by landowners in the countryside such as the building of bridges and roads were only a little more permanent (see chapter 6.2). One cannot examine the development of improvement in the same way that one might look at the different phases of country house building. Many improvements were very transitory and the condition of an estate could vary from one decade to the next.

There were sporadic attempts by landowners to enlarge the area of profitable land by draining the large tracts of bog in the eighteenth century. When Swift stayed at Woodbrook in 1714 he noted that `here is great deal of wood and hedges hereabouts, so that in the Summer it would be a sort of England onely for the Bogs'. From c.1715 Knightley Chetwood started to improve his estate and in 1722 Swift asked `Do you find that your trees thrive and your drained bog gets a newe coat'.[256] Reclamation schemes tended to be on a very small scale since the process of draining was very slow and labour intensive. Mr. Jonah Clarke of Portarlington was runner up for the £10 premium from the Dublin Society in 1758 for `making the most perches of drain in bogs, not less than three feet wide': Clarke was able to lay down 701 perches of drain six feet wide and three to four feet wide.[257] Though a considerable achievement by the standards of the time he would have still only made a tiny inroad into the large tracts of bog in the barony of Portnehinch. Similarly fertilisers (marl and manure) were not used in sufficient quantities to make a great difference to large areas of agricultural land. Mr. John Dillon of Cappa Hill of The Queen's County was entered for the Dublin Society's premium for `liming the greatest quantity of land' (an area of just 32 acres).[258] Much of the reclamation simply involved felling the woods and clearing mountainous land. By the end of the eighteenth century the rise in population and land

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253 1 Jan. 1760, Cosby to Dudley Alexander Sydney, see P.R.O.N.I, T.3829/H/3.
254 17 June 1742, Minute Book 1741-1746, p. 33.
255Doyne to Flower, 25 July 1691, Flower Papers, N.L.I., Ms. 11,473 (2).
256Swift to Archdeacon Wells, 27 Nov. 1714, Swift Letters, Vol. 2, pp. 144-145; Swift to Chetwood, 12 Feb. 1722/23, Vol. 2, 449.
257 12 Dec. 1758, R.D.S. Minute Book, Vol. 5, 1758-1761, p. 11.
258 11 Nov. 1742, Minute Book 1742-46, p. 71.

prices gave impetus to landowners and tenants to carry out more ambitious schemes. Coote noted that William Curtis Esq. spent £1,500 and employed 100 men in the process of draining his land in Annamore in The King's County. As a result `this gentleman has, within the last seven years, changed the face of his part of the county [barony]'.[259]

And finally landowners also sought to improve the standards of husbandry and encouraged technical innovation. New types of crop were introduced into Ireland from the late seventeenth century such as clover and hops. The soil was enriched by the use of marl, lime and other forms of fertiliser and new types of machinery- including ploughs and harrows- were invented by gentlemen.

These examples show that landowners were directly involved in every area of land improvement before 1731. Indeed it could be argued that it was the vision and energy of a handful of Protestant gentlemen in The King's and Queen's counties that caused Thomas Prior and others `to form a society, by the Name of the Dublin Society for improving Husbandry, Manufactures, and other useful acts'.[260]

The entries in the first minute book reveal the importance of the King's and Queen's county contingent in this fledging society. Of the initial 14 co-founders only Thomas Prior and Richard Warburton came from the two counties. But the first batch of new members in September 1731 included William Sprigge Esq., Colley Lyons and Capt. Lum and they were joined in the following few months by Thomas Meredith, John Digby Esq., Warner Westenra and Eyre Evans. Between 1731 and 1740 approximately 22 gentlemen from The King's and Queen's counties appear in the minute books. This is all the more impressive when one considers that before 1740 the society did not exceed 100 members. The Dublin Society could, in its formative first decade at least, be said to have been controlled by a King's and Queen's county junta. Among this group are many familiar faces such as Ephraim Dawson, William Flower and John Parnell. Appendix 4 lists the landowners from the two counties who were members of the society between 1731 and 1770.

This long roll call of King's and Queen's county gentlemen can in part be explained by the prominent role of Thomas Prior. He came from Rathdowney in The Queen's County and probably encouraged his friends and neighbours to join this new body. One biographer argued that `for almost twenty years he had borne the greater part of the burden of the Dublin Society, watching with diligent care its infant growth'.[261] But there were other reasons for the high number of gentlemen from this part of Leinster. Landowners from the two counties were in a relatively close proximity

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[259] Coote, K.C., p. 84.
[260] Minute Book 1731-33, p. 1.
[261] Desmond Clarke, *Thomas Prior 1681-1751,* (Dublin, 1951), p. 50.

to the Pale and were in a better postion than many of their countrymen to travel to Dublin on a regular basis. The climate and soil of the region was also important. Many of the crops and improvements that the society encouraged were more suited to some counties than others. For instance Capt. William Cobb argued in 1731 that `the best countrys for propagating hops, are in my opinion, the county of Limerick, the King's, the Queen's county, Wicklow, and Kildare and most of the inland counties.'[262] Indeed landowners in King's and Queen's won the premiums for growing the best hops in 1743 and 1758 and runner up prizes in 1741, 1753 and 1756. Since so many of the agricultural foundations had already been laid in the two counties in the three decades before 1731 the `improving' landowners looked to the Dublin Society for new ideas in order to fine-tune what they had already achieved. Conversely in other less settled parts of Ireland landowners needed to implement more rudimentary improvements before they could begin to experiment with new implements and fertilisers.

The Dublin Society like its London counterpart, The Royal Society, was an intellectual arena. Some emphasis was placed on lectures and scientific experiments. In 1732 the society required `a room for our instruments' which prompted Sir Edward Lovett Pearce to make an application `to the Ld. Justices for a vault, or two under the Parliament House'.[263] But the society differed greatly in that nearly all of the ideas discussed had practical applications. In the very first meeting Prior read out an essay on a subject that was close to his heart: `A new method of Draining Marshy and Boggy lands'.[264] Also in 1731 essays were submitted on the subjects of improving marl, rye grass and clover. A plot of land was used by the society in Dublin to experiment with different crops, and by 1740 two gardeners were employed.[265]

The introduction of premiums in 1740 for innovations in a whole host of areas (ranging from tree planting through to ceramics, textiles and paintings) gave further incentives to landowners, tenants, artists and craftsmen to share their knowledge and carry out improvements. Once success had been achieved landowners strove to maintain their high reputations. In 1743 Ephraim Dawson won the second £10 premium for the best parcel of hops and his heir William Henry also won the first premium for hops in 1758.[266] There were 13 competitors for the £6 and £4 premiums for the `best parcel of cheese not less than a hundred weight'. Both the first and second prize went to farmers from The King's County.[267] Quakers in particular had a reputation for making excellent cheeses in the two counties.

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[262] 14.Oct. 1731, Minute Book, 1731-33, p. 7.
[263] Ibid., 6 Jan 1732, p. 62
[264] Ibid., 16. Sept. 1731, p. 4.
[265] Ibid., 15 Nov, 1739, p. 102.
[266] Ibid., Nov. 1743, p. 110, 25 Oct. 1758, Minute Book 1758-61, p. 12.
[267] Ibid., 18 April 1745, Minute Book 1745-1746, p. 110.

The society also had an impressive correspondence network and was able to draw on the knowledge of landowners who were not members. In 1734 Prior informed the society that he had received a letter from Sir William Parsons of Birr `giving a plan and account of his triangular harrow' and in the following year he was given an `instrument to pull up small trees by the roots for the use of the society' by the same landowner.[268] A `committee of correspondence' was set up in 1739 in order `to write to every Gentleman in Ireland ingaged in any considerable improvements, to know his method and success'.[269]

The ideas and language of improvement which had circulated among a certain clique in the 1730s began to be absorbed by a much wider section of society by the end of the period. This can be discerned in the private journals, correspondence, maps and newspapers. A map of the Courtwood estate in 1769 noted the different types of soil and left `instructions for improving'.[270] In 1767 an advertisement in *Finn's Leinster Journal* noted that `Mr. Varley's invented ploughs can be seen at work in York field near Portarlington'.[271]

Sir John Parnell from Rathleague kept a journal of a tour through England and Wales from 1769. So many of the records of Irish gentlemen in England contain nothing more than un-original descriptions of well known towns and buildings (which were often lifted from the pocket travel guides of the day). By contrast Parnell had an eye for detail and was fascinated by everyday objects in the countryside. He chose to ride (rather than sit in a coach) as it was `the way best calculated for making farming observations'. He and his father (Judge Parnell) had made many improvements at Rathleague yet he still believed that Ireland as well as Wales lagged behind England. At Conway he saw `the first attempt to husbandry I mett in Wales' and his innkeeper `was as adverse to improvements in agriculture as any Irish man could be'. He marvelled at the technical innovations in England and took the opportunity of sketching and measuring fences, barns, gates and wheel barrows. One of his drawings is of a device which was used to prop up a tree. All of these jottings would have been of great practical use when he returned to his own estate.[272]

The writers of the voluminous printed topographical accounts of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries tended to focus on what was novel in the countryside and they tended to eulogize the efforts of the gentlemen living at the time (who subscribed to the books). This can lead to an underestimation of the

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[268] Ibid., 30 Jan 1734, 22 May 1735, Minute Book 1733-41, p. 11.
[269] Ibid., 15 Nov. 1739, p. 93.
[270] N.L.I. Ms. 1448.
[271] Minute Book, 14 Feb. 1767, Vol. 1, no. 7.
[272] Journal of Sir John Parnell, London School of Economics Library (Univ. London), M.17, photocopy in P.R.O.N.I., T.3512 (or Mic. 425.).

consolidation and improvement that took place before 1760 (when the demographic and economic changes were less dynamic). The fields and plantations that were so widely praised in parts of the two counties at the end of the eighteenth century were put in place more than half a century earlier. One observer praised the plantations and `the elegant improvements of Capt. Cosby' at Stradbally. [273] But Philips Cosby spent most of is time at sea. It was Pole Cosby in the period c.1730-1765 who was responsible for planting the many thousands of trees. These only began to mature at the very end of the century.

Printed topographical works also give the impression that the network of classically inspired houses and demesnes were essentally a product of the late eighteenth century. In the early eighteenth century most houses were built on traditional sites and a large proportion of the gentry, by choice or neccessity, clung on to their castles. Others commenced more ambitious building work and the rural landscape had undergone a remarkable transformation by the middle of the century. More particularly the years between c.1715 and 1750 were the most formative years in the history of country house building in the two counties (see chapter 4).

Much `improvement' was carried out for purely practical and selfish reasons. Landowners knew that by planting trees and draining land they would improve the long term economic performance of the estate. But there were also very strong mental and social impulses for such schemes. By setting a good example on their own estates landowners like Cosby and Prior felt that they would inspire others to improve Ireland (at a county as well at a national level). The improvements on the estate were also a reflection of the changes that took place within gentry families. Improvement, like charity, began at home. The structure and workings of the family and household are central to our understanding of the Protestant elite.

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[273] Transcript of a travel commentary of 1782, N.L.I., Ms. 773 (6).

CHAPTER 3

The Family and Household

> From the time my Father came from England he lived very handsomely, more so than any one in this county except my Uncle Pole, he kept his chariot and six mares and four servants in Livery besides his Butler, and other outservants, as steward, gardiner, etc., he kept a very plentifull house and table, his allowance was, 12 beefs a year, 40 muttons, 26 barrels of wheat for bread, 60 barrels of Mault, 2 hogsheads of wine, pork, veal, lambs, Wilde and tame fouls, and all other things in proportion. He continued in this method and never encreased or decreased, when there was the least company, his table was never covered with less than 5 & 6 but very often with more, he used to have a variety of white wines, the Poor never went away empty from his door, for both F: [father] & M: [mother] were exceedingly charitable'.[1]

Pole Cosby's autobiographical account, from which this passage is taken, is one of the most important surviving records of life in an Irish gentleman's household in the first three decades of the eighteenth century. The above description of Dudley Cosby's household at Stradbally Hall between c.1714 and 1729 encapsulates many of the themes that have recently begun to interest historians of early modern Ireland: namely, the social status of the gentry, county society, the pattern of daily life in the household, food and drink, horses, the role of servants and other dependants, consumption, hospitality, display and charity. However, though valuable such accounts need to be used with care since they can give a rather static impression of life in an eighteenth-century Irish household. The account suggests that Dudley Cosby, his wife and children constituted what in the late twentieth century would be called, `a nuclear family unit' and they lived together at Stradbally Hall. But for most of the period between 1703 and 1733 the Cosby family was split up into several units at different locations.

Many gentry families resided periodically in town houses in Dublin, London, Bath and elsewhere and these temporary urban households differed markedly from those in the countryside. This chapter deals primarily with the size, structure and function of the family and household in the context of the country seat. Similarly the

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[1] Cosby Autobiog, p. 90.

job titles that were given to servants such as butler, footman and gardener, conceal the fact that many of them carried out multifarious tasks around the house and in the offices. The upstairs/downstairs model of an aristocratic household in Victorian England with scores of servants, each with a narrow set of tasks, cannot be applied to eighteenth-century England, let alone Ireland. In this period the terms `family' and `household' were at times interchangable and one needs to discover how contemporaries conceptualised `the family' before one can make any assumptions about the changing structure and relationships between the residents of a country house. Dudley's consumption was said to have `never encreased or decreased'. Compared to the episodic magnificence of important peers such as the Dukes of Ormonde at Kilkenny Castle, the expenditure and level of hospitality at Stradbally Hall may have seemed fairly constant. But when compared to the lifestyle of other county gentlemen with more modest incomes the consumption of Dudley and Pole Cosby oscillated greatly within a relatively short period. It is only by comparing the Cosby account with the other evidence, such as household account books, tradesmen's bills, inventories and correspondence relating to families of a similar social standing, that one can begin to test some of the generalisations that have been made about the mentality and behaviour of the Protestant gentry in the first half of the eighteenth century.[2]

Research on eighteenth-century Irish households has so far focussed almost exclusively on members of the aristocracy and the very top echelons of society. Dean Swift's and Mrs. Delany's letters have long been used as a touch-stone for our understanding of the lifestyle and attitudes of `the privileged' in Ireland during the eighteenth century. More recently the correspondence of Louisa Conolly at Castletown in the 1760s has been used to highlight the important role of women in running aristrocratic households.[3] The cache of letters that were written by Bishop Edward Synge to his daughter Alicia between 1746 and 1752 provide by far the most vivid picture of social and domestic life in the household of a substantial gentlemen and clergyman in the mid-eighteenth century.[4]

The relative abundance of non-contemporary accounts and anecdotal evidence on `life in the Irish country house' creates methodological problems for the historian. The image of the eighteenth-century Irish country gentleman, like the Macaulayan `boorish squire' with a dog at his heels and a gun on his shoulder, is not a recent creation. The Irish gentleman was a popular stock character on the English stage and in literature from at least the late seventeenth century and many of his

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[2]Most recently, Peter Somerville-Large, *The Irish Country House: A Social History,* (London, 1995).
[3]Stella Tillyard, *Aristocrats: Caroline, Emily, Louisa and Sarah Lennox, 1750-1832,* (London, 1995).
[4]Mary-Louise Legg ed., *The Synge Letters,* (Dublin, 1996).

distinguishing characteristics (such as hard drinking, gambling, duelling and hunting) can be discerned in accounts of the gentry up to the present day.[5] The amusing memoirs of Jonah Barrington (whose seat was near Ballinakill in The Queen's County) have been largely responsible for shaping the image of the eighteenth-century Irish country gentleman over the past two centuries. Barrington's caricatures of the `half-mounted gentlemen, `gentleman every inch of them' and `gentlemen to the backbone' have stuck in the popular imagination.[6] When for instance MacLysaght examined the gentry in the 1930s (in his pioneering social history of seventeenth century-Ireland) he merely repeated the traditional stereotype; `the generally accepted picture of the hospitable, feckless, hard-drinking, fearless, fox-hunting, fire-eating Irish landlord, which is probably no caricature, belongs properly to the eighteenth century'.[7] There is probably no such thing as a *typical* gentry household in this period and until one has made a close scrutiny of the scraps of hard evidence from account books, bills and other ephemera one cannot begin to compare the gentry of Ireland with those in England and elsewhere.

3.1 The structure of a landed family

What was meant by `the family'? Contemporaries, (and not just historians) found it difficult to disentangle idealised notions of the family from reality. The early modern family was said to exist as `the primary focus of reproduction, consumption and socialisation'.[8] The literature, as well as the sermons of the period, attempted to define the shape and purpose of the family and to highlight the religious and moral obligations of husbands, wives and children towards one another. These ideals were not by any means static. The religious and moral tone of the advice literature of the early seventeenth century, such as Goudge's *Of Domestical Duties* (1622), differed markedly from the works that were written in the aftermath of the dramatic political and religious upheavals and important social change (e.g. the increase in the number of households in an urban setting) in the second half of the seventeenth century. By the beginning of the period under question a much broader range of books could be found in the libraries of the Irish gentry and they offered differing, and sometimes conflicting, views of family life. Among the books at Abbey Leix that were sent to be bound in 1720 were *Ladies Calling* and *Advice to a Daughter.*[9] One can speculate

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[5] D. Hayton, `From Barbarism to Burlesque: English Images of the Irish c. 1660-1750', *I.E.S.H.*, Vol. XV, (1988), pp. 5-32.
[6] Jonah Barrington, *Personal Sketches of his Own Times,* (London, 1827, 2 vols).
[7] Edward MacLysaght, *Irish Life in the Seventeenth Century,* (Cork, 1950 edition), p. 90.
[8] Felicity Heal and Clive Holmes, *The Gentry in England and Wales,* (London, 1994), p. 50.
[9] Book binding accounts, 29 May 1720, De Vesci Papers, N.L.I. Ms. J/3.

whether the Bishop of Ossory pored over such works in order to find some inspiration for a sermon, or that his wife avidly read them in order to break up the monotony of life in the country. Bishop Edward Synge letters of advice to his daughter often read like sermons. In 1751 he hoped Alicia would excel in terms of `Religion and Virtue, in sense and prudence, in modesty and good nature, in an amiable behaviour equally removed from levity and starch'dness, in humility, innocence and truth'.[10] There was also new genres of literature that were less moralistic and formulaic than the earlier material. The `French' romantic novels of the eighteenth century for instance, which Alicia avidly read, provided the contemporary reader with contrasting and often more flexible views of familial relationships.

Though many of the views and subjects discussed in this literature changed during the course of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the twin pillars of family life- marriage and procreation- were never seriously questioned. Marriage provided continuity. It was the primary means of ensuring the survival of the name and property of a landed family. At the same time marriage was a source of fundamental change. It could mark the break-up of an existing family unit and and the creation of new households. The emotional re-orientation that accompanied married life cannot be retrieved since so few personal letters (written by gentlemen and women in the two counties) survive. But some of the immediate structural changes that were caused by marriage were often reflected in the physical surroundings. As soon as Dudley Cosby was married he `set up house-keeping at Stradbally' and built additions to the country house. When his only son, Pole Cosby, married he gave up the family seat and moved into a smaller house at Esker. This meant that two Cosby households co-existed within a few miles of each other. In the long term marriage facilitated the transmission of the family name and the property from one generation to the next, but in the short to medium term it could change the dynamics of `family' and `household' life in a variety of ways.

Though marriage was seen as the lynch pin of family life there were numerous Protestant nobles and gentlemen who did not fit into the mould that was expected of them by eighteenth-century society. Thomas Prior for instance, whose estate was in The Queen's County never married and died in 1751 (at the age of 70) leaving his property to a cousin. For the whole of his adult life his devoted friends, such as Bishop Berkeley, and the servants who were employed at his town house in Bolton Street and at his seat at Rathdowny, could be said to have been his only `family'. There were also a number of nobles, such as the 4th, 5th and 7th Earls of Mountrath,

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[10] *Synge Letters*, p. 312.

who did not marry.[11] How typical were these cases? In order to assess the effects of marriage one has to establish how many gentlemen opted for married life.

The demography of early modern England is now a well trodden field. A series of `Family re-constitution' studies have been made of members of the peerage, the gentry, the Quakers as well as the urban and rural classes in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. By contrast few attempts have been made to recover accurate information on the fertility, nuptiality and family size of different social groups at a local level in Ireland.[12]

Biographical data has been compiled on the marriage behaviour of the Sheriffs of The King's County between 1655 and 1765, and this provides a small discrete sample.[13]

Table 3.1 The incidence of marriage among the High Sheriffs of The King's County, 1655-1765.

Period	N	M.1.	M.2	M.2+	Total M	U/M.
1655-1689	22	19	3	0	22 (100)	0 (0)
1690-1734	40	33	5	0	38 (95)	2 (5)
1735-1765	28	22	3	2	27 (97)	1 (3)
1655-1765	**90**	**74**	**11**	**2**	**87 (97)**	**3 (3)**

Source: T.U. Sadleir, `High Sheriffs of The King's County', *J.K.A.S.*, Vol. 8 (1915-1917), pp. 30-49.

Note: N= number in sample, M.1.= number who married once, M.2.= number who married twice, M.2+= number who married more than twice, Total M= number who married at least once, U/M= number who did not marry.

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[11] 4th Earl, Charles, c. 1680-1715, d. un/m at Bordeaux in France aged 35, his brother the 5th Earl, Charles, 1689-1744 died un/m aged 55 and his nephew the 7th Earl, Charles, c.1725-1802 died u/m aged 77; V. Gibbs ed., *The Complete Peerage.*

[12]There is little accurate demographic information on the untitled Irish gentry families. To obtain figures for the mean age at first marriage for instance one requires at least three sets of data: dates of birth (e.g. from church registers), dates of marriage (e.g from lists of marriage certificates) and dates of death (e.g from church registers or abstracts of wills). Only a tiny proportion of individuals from gentry families appear on all three types of document. The basic factual information about individual families can sometimes be extracted from the surviving genealogies, but in order to make any generalisations one needs to take a multi-prosopographical approach.

[13]They were generally men who a) came from a particular region (from King's and neighbouring counties), b) were inheriting sons or heads of families, c) among the most significant landowners in the area and d) were of some social and political status. Though this data is likely to contain some factual errors (and is less satisfactory than the original documents from which these biographies were compiled early in the twentieth century) one can make some general observations; sample taken from the potted histories complied by T.U. Sadleir, `High Sheriffs of The King's County', *J.K.A.S.*, Vol. 8 (1915-1917), pp. 30-49.

A very high proportion of sheriffs married (as shown by Table 3.1). Of the 90 individuals (whose marital status is recorded) 87 married at least once during their lives. The contemporary obsession with the family blood line and property ownership meant that there was a particular pressure on the eldest (or inheriting) sons to marry. There were also important social and practical reasons why a county gentleman should take a bride. Women played an key role in the running of the household and their presence was keenly felt in county society. There is more reason to question why three of the sheriffs did not marry.[14] There seems to have been far less presssure on younger sons to marry, and a career in the army, the church or any of the other professions (which required a period of education and training) meant that for them marriage was often delayed or avoided altogether.

A demographic study of British and Irish Quaker families found that Irish bridegrooms showed a propensity to marry earlier than their English counterparts in the first half of the eighteenth century.[15] There is also evidence that before 1750 the sons of British peers married at about the same age as sons of British Quakers.[16] Was the same true of Irish gentlemen in this period? Table 3.1a lists the age at first marriage of a small but probably representative sample of gentlemen.[17]

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[14]Purefoy Lum was the eldest son of Elnathan Lumm and became sheriff in 1723: he seems to have died prematurely and his brother Thomas Lum took over as sheriff in the following year. Albert Nesbitt of Tubberdaly (sheriff in 1710) does not appear to have been a significant landowner (and the Trinity College matriculation books suggest that he did marry since 'Albert Nesbitt' from the King's County sent his son Gifford up to the college in 1720). There is no obvious reason why Peter Marsh (who was sheriff in 1754) did not marry (he died in 1777), although he was a second son.

[15] Richard T. Vann and David Eversley, *Friends in Life and Death: The British and Irish Quakers in the Demographic Transition,* (Cambridge, 1992), p. 95.

[16] Vann and Eversley, *Friends in Life and Death*, p. 107.

[17]The marriages are placed in chronological order so as to reveal any trends that might have taken place within the period 1656-1766. The marriage details for some of the more important peers (who were created after 1660) are also given (and highlighted in bold) in order to compare the age at first marriage for men in the two social groups.

Table 3.1a The age at first marriage for the peers and gentlemen of The King's and Queen's counties.

Name	Birth/Death	Date of 1st. marriage	Age at 1st. marriage	Age at Death
Warburton, Richard	1636-	1656	20	-
Bagot, Edward	1620-1711	1659	39	91
Herbert, Edward	1620-1677	1662	42	57
Molesworth, Robert, Viscount Molesworth	**1656-1725**	**1676**	**20**	**69**
Warburton, Richard II	1664-1715	1695	31	51
Vaughan, William Peisley	1666-1753	1697	31	87
Cosby, Dudley	1672-1729	1699	27	57
Blundell, Montague, Viscount Blundell	**1689-1756**	**1709**	**20**	**67**
Flower, William, Baron Castle Durrow	**1685-1746**	**c. 1717**	**32**	**61**
Fitzpatrick, John (Baron Gowran)	**1662-1727**	**1718**	**56**	**65**
Molesworth, John, Viscount Molesworth	**1679-1725/6**	**1718**	**39**	**46/47**
Armstrong, Warnford	1699-1767	1719	20	68
Cosby, Pole	1703-1765	1727	24	62
Bagot, John	1702-1760	1728	26	58
Wakely, Thomas	1688-1751	1733	45	63
Cosby, Dudley, Lord Sydney	**c.1730-1774**	**1773**	**43**	**44**
Baldwin, John	1704-1754	1734	30	50
Dawson, William, Viscount Carlow	**1712-1779**	**1737**	**25**	**67**
Lyons, Henry	1721-1782	1743	22	61
Eyre, John	1720-1781	1746	26	61
Armstrong, Andrew II	1730-1786	1752	22	56
Parsons, William	1731-1790	1754	23	59
Armstrong, Andrew	1727-1802	1756	29	75
Lumm, Francis	1733-1797	1757	24	64
Vaughan, William Peisley II	1739-1809	1764	25	70
Flower, William, Viscount Ashbrook	**1744-1780**	**1766**	**22**	**36**

Source: ***The Complete Peerage;*** **`High Sheriffs of The King's County'; Genealogical Office, Dublin.**

Age at first marriage varied greatly. The mean age at first marriage for the nobles and gentlemen in this admittedly tiny sample was 29.[18] The lower age limit was 20 since gentlemen were expected to marry when they had reached (or were about to reach) their majority and when their inheritance could be settled. More surprisingly there were a number of landowners who married for the first time relatively late in life (e.g. Molesworth and Bagot at 39, Herbert at 42, Cosby at 43, Wakely at 45 and Fitzpatrick at 56). High office and careers outside the county could delay marriage for long periods. John Fitzpatrick remained unmarried for much of his life because he was an officer in the Royal Navy, and Dudley Alexander Sydney Cosby was a diplomat at the Court of Denmark. There might also have been some pressing economic reasons why marriage was deferred. Complications over inheritance, litigation over an estate and indebtedness could all dissuade a landowner from taking a bride too early in life (see chapter 2.1).

The elder son of a magnate with a large patrimony clearly had more at stake than the average country squire when he entered the marriage market, but this did not necessarily mean that he had to delay his marriage. If a peer was particularly anxious to ensure that his estate, family name and title would be transferred safely, he may have preferred to marry off his sons at the earliest opportunity (while he was still alive) rather than allow the sons to `marry themselves' (to a bride they might have thought unsuitable) at a later date. Generally landowners tended to marry in their mid to late twenties. Dudley Cosby for instance married when he was 27 and his son Pole married when he was 24.

The sons of landowners were expected to marry, but they did at least have the option of chosing a non-married life. By contrast, marriage was almost obligatory for women. Unmarried women were a burden in an economic sense, and an embarrassment in a social sense. Spinsterhood amounted to social derogation and was commonly viewed with disdain.[19] In the last year of his life Dudley Cosby had `great fits of trouble and concern that she [his favourite daughter] was not marryed and settled before'.[20] This pressure is reflected by the younger age at which women from landed as well as non-landed backgrounds married. Sarah Pole was 17 when she married Dudley Cosby.[21]

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[18] This is not disimilar to the estimates for Quaker males in Ireland in the same period: the mean was 27.02 between 1650 and 1699 and 27.91 between 1700 and 1749. More than 80% of men in the same sample married before they were 30 in the latter half of the seventeenth century and 75% in the first half of the eighteenth century; Vann and Eversley, *Friends in Life and Death*, Table 3.2, p. 88.

[19] Among the Irish Quaker population 75% of the women who married did so before they were 25 (the mean age for Irish Quaker women was 23.09 between 1650 and 1699 and 23.95 between 1700 and 1749); ibid., p. 88.

[20] Cosby Autobiog, p. 181.

[21] Ibid, pp. 80-81.

A number of the gentlemen in the sample of The King's County sheriffs, (summarised in Table 3.1) re-married. Of the 90 men, 74 (or 82%) married once, 11 (12%) married twice and 2 (2%) married three times. Re-marriage is usually associated with women since they tended to marry younger and live longer than men. Contemporary literature tended to focus on the exploits of `merry widows' living off the proceeds of their jointures rather than on the `merry widowers' who were able to use the capital that had been tied up for jointures. If it can be shown that there was less of a discrepancy between the mortality rates of males and females in Ireland before 1750 (as has been suggested in an English context), then there may have been more men in the re-marriage market than is generally assumed. The introduction of a new wife into the household may have had far reaching implications on the size, structure and relationships of the family and household, yet this is an area that has been little explored.

There are a few documented cases of young and healthy married couples from certain religious and social groups in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries who made a conscious decision not to have *any* children.[22] The existence of childless couples among the nobility and gentry seems to be explained almost entirely by biological rather than social factors. One of the reasons why women married comparatively early was because their fertilty was known to decline with age and their reproductive careers ended in their early 40s. Pole Cosby made a point of commenting on those couples who were seemingly unable (as opposed to unwilling) to have children: William Westenra, ` a clergyman mar[rie]d one Col. Frenches daughter and has no issue', and George Browne, `Never Had any children'.[23]

Infertility among the upper echelons of society might be closely connected to genetic abnormalities.[24] In Ireland the small scale of Protestant landed society meant that the gene pool was very limited. Of the 67 sheriffs who were known to have resided in The King's County between 1655 and 1770, at least 25 of them married women who lived in the same county, and a further 3 sheriffs married women from The Queen's County. Many of the couples lived either within a few miles of each

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[22]The Quakers for instance tried to promote a faith in the inward and spiritual, as opposed to physical, expressions of love between married couples and there are cases of `friends' who led completely chaste lives. Couples from other backgrounds might also have adopted primitive contraceptive methods or abstained from sexual intercourse altogether for a number of personal and professional reasons, Vann and Eversley, *Friends in Life and Death*, p. 162.

[23] A demographic study of the British peerage has suggested that there were a surprisingly high number of infertile unions (around 20%) between 1675 and 1850, which was about three times the level that the Irish Quakers experienced in the same period); ibid, pp. 131-137; Cosby Autobiog, p. 83, 261.

[24]The relatively low fertility level in late seventeenth-century England (and possibly Ireland) could be connected to environmental factors such inadequate nutrition, disease (particularly small pox), the squalid conditions of the burgeoning urban population, as well as social factors (such as a the age at first marriage and the length of intergenisic periods).

other or in the same parish. Heward Oxburgh (sheriff in 1687/8) and his bride (the daughter of an O'Carroll) both came from Boveen in The King's County. It is likely that contemporaries suspected that marrying within a small familial group was `unhealthy' (even though they would not have understood the exact genetic implications). However, the above evidence suggests that even if familes made a deliberate effort to branch out into neighbouring counties it was still very difficult for them to avoid touching blood lines that had already been mixed with their own within two or three generations.[25]

In the Cosby account there are more than 20 references to the number of children born by various lineal and collateral members of his family. Table 3.1b lists, in chronological order, the total number of live births that had occurred in each family by the date given (which is an estimate of when the reproductive career of the mother ended). Of the 23 fathers listed 5 of them had between 10 and 16 births, 10 between 5 and 9 births and 8 between 1-4 births. Why was there such a disparity in family size given that all the fathers came from a similar social group (i.e. substantial un-titled gentlemen)? [26]

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[25]By cross referencing the family names of the sheriffs with the maiden names of the brides one can attempt to isolate some of the more extreme cases of endogamy. It would appear that c.1720 Henry Malone of Litter married the daughter of `L'Estrange' and c.1740 Henry L'Estrange of Moystown married the daughter of Henry Malone of Litter. If one follows these collateral lines back to the root one finds that William L'Estrange married c.1660 a `Malone', who was probably from the same stock as the other Malones in The King's County.

[26]What becomes first apparent from this list is the great gulf between the lowest number of live births (1) and the highest (16). One must be cautious of these figures since `total family size' often differs from the number of children who were living in a family at any one time. Many of the children who are listed died during infancy. An extreme example is that of the Meredith family where only 6 of the14 children survived into adulthood; Cosby Autobiog, p. 83.

Table 3.1b Total family sizes recorded in Pole Cosby's autobiography between c. 1660 and 1735.

Father	Approximate Date	Boys	Girls	Total
Vincent Alderman.	1660	0	7	7
Paul, Mr.	1680	2	4	6
Pole, Periam	1680	1	1	2
Prettyman, Col.	1680	0	1	1
Westenra, Henry	1680	0	1	1
Cosby, Alexander	1680	9	7	16
Pole, William	1700	3	4	7
Trench, William	1700	5	2	7
Barkeley, Digby	1700	3	2	5
Dowdall, Henry	1700	1	4	5
Cosby, Dudley	1700	1	2	3
Neale, Archdeacon	1705	1	2	3
Minchin, Humphrey	1720	4+	8+	14
Annesley, Francis	1720	4?	2?	6
Ormsby, Gilbert	1730	9	3	12
Pooley, Paul	1730	3	1	4
Weldon, Robert	1730	?	?	15
Stratford, John	1735	7	1	8
Meredith, Richard	1735	?	?	14
Browne, John	1735	5	4	9
Ushers, William	1735	2	2	4
Meredtih, Robert	1735	1	5	6
Cosby, Pole	1735	1	3	4*

Source: Cosby Autobiog.,
*** at the very end of the account there is a reference to `Sally' who may have been born after 1735, p. 435.**

It has been suggested that `the fertilty of rich women between 1570 and 1720 was often appallingly high' and that `because upper class women used wet nurses, their reproductive pattern was one of ever recurrent births'.[27] There is no positive evidence of wet-nursing in this sample although it does seem likely that the mothers who produced a very high number of babies would not have been physically able to breast feed them all.[28] If the small number of familes in the Cosby sample are in any way representative, then one could make the tentative argument that the gentry of The King's and Queen's counties (and possibly the gentry of Ireland as a whole) had familes that were larger than their English counterparts at the end of the seventeenth century and in the first three decades of the eighteenth century.[29] If this was the case then one has to question whether such familes had larger families by choice (i.e. a greater desire than the English to procreate) or by circumstance (i.e. they happened to have a higher fertilty level).

Irish Quakers seem to have made a conscious effort to reproduce in order to ensure their long term survival. In the 1650s and 1660s a critical mass of Quakers was required in order to give the communities any chance of taking root. Indeed some of the first Quaker settlers in Mountmellick were prodigious breeders. John Pimm and his wife for instance had 10 children between 1664 and 1686.[30] It is possible that some Irish gentry families had a similar desire to procreate after 1690 since Protestants constituted perhaps 10% of the population (see chapter 1.1). In the countryside the gentry would have felt particularly out numbered. By having large families Protestant landowners could replicate themselves into numerous cadet branches. By 1760 members of the Piggott family for instance could be found at

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[27] The present evidence would suggest that a significant minority of women gave birth to a very large number of babies (relative to the general population of the period and by modern standards). Alexander Cosby and his wife Elizabeth produced 16 live and 1 dead births in a 22 year period (1667-1689). For incidence of breast-feeding in England see Dorothy McLaren, ` Martital Fertility and Lactation, 1570-1720', in Mary Prior ed. *Women in English Society'*, (London, 1985), p. 22.

[28] The space between each birth in the Cosby example was between a year and eighteen months. Given that the amenorrhoea of lactation (the period of infertility than can occur during breast feeding) could last for 8 or 10 months it is very probable that Elizabeth Cosby used a wet nurse. Her births were spaced out as follows, 1) Ann, 1667; 2) Elizabeth, 1669; 3) Jane, 1670/71?; 4) Dudley, 1672; 5) Francis, 1673; 6) Henry, 1675; 7) Thomas 1676; 8) Loftus, 1677; 9) stillborn child, 1678; 10) Sidney, 1679; 11) Hartpole, 1682; 12) Alexander, 1682; 13) Dorcas, 1683; 14) William, 1685; 15) Isabella, 16) Cecelia, 1687; 17) Dorothy, 1689; Cosby Autobiog, pp. 317-434.

[29] The bulk of the couples (15 out of 23) had between 3-9 children and the mean number of live births in this cohort is 6.9. In these instances one can not be so sure abut the nursing habits of the mothers. This is larger than the averge number of children born in English noble familes (from a bigger and perhaps more reliable sample) in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. Between 1650 and 1674 the mean number of children ever born in English noble familes was 4.54 rising to 4.91 between 1750 and 1774. The Irish Quaker familes are thought to have had larger familes than both the English nobility and English Quakers yet the mean number of births in Irish Quaker familes was 5.4 between 1650 and 1699 and 5.6 between 1750 and 1799; Vann and Eversley, *Friends in Life and Death*, pp. 88, table 3.2.

[30] Quaker records, province of Leinster registers: Mountmellick meeting, N.L.I., M/film, P. 5530, f. 124.

Loughteague, Grangebegg, Cappard and Dysert. The younger sons who were unable to obtain estates often became clergymen or professionals and stayed in the locality.

However, this theory should not be taken too far since it does not explain why Col. Prettyman (in Table 3.1b) `had only one daughter' or why Periam Pole had one son and one daughter.[31] Alexander Cosby and his wife made a noteworthy contribution to the local Protestant population by having 16 offspring but the family size of the Cosbys in the following generations was much smaller: Dudley had 3 children, Pole had 4 children and Dudley Alexander Sydney had none. Evidently one needs to look for the social and cultural (and not just biological) mechanisms that determined the size of families.

The desire to produce a healthy male heir was an important factor. John Stratford and his wife needed eight attempts to produce their first son (they had 7 daughters between c.1727 and 1735).[32] The knowledge that some of the children were likely to die at birth or in their first few years of life also induced parents to produce more than one male child. Small pox was probably responsible for more infant deaths than any other single disease in this period and it did not discriminate in terms of class. The landed elite might have set themselves apart from the bulk of the population (in physical, economic and social terms) but they were just as vulnerable when it came to the dreaded pox. The spate of disastrous epidemics in the 1660s (such as the outbreak of pox in 1661 which took among others the life of the 1st Earl of Mountrath), are better known than those which regularly afflicted the whole of Europe (and further afield) in the first half of the eighteenth century.[33] In the two counties the elder brother of Philip Rawson died from the pox in 1709.[34] Pole Cosby `fell ill of the small pox' in June 1712 when he was 9 years old. He managed to recover, but his 12 year old sister Betty was less fortunate. Having lost her sight, she `had not the strength to go through' and died in 1714.[35] William Flower and his wife had two (or possibly three) sons and two daughters. Jeffrey died of the pox in 1730, as did his sister Molly in 1731 (when they were children). Henry, their other son, was lucky to have survived into adulthood since he caught `the meazles' while at school in Kilkenny in 1728 and contracted small pox in 1729.[36]

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31 Cosby Autobiog, p. 83.
32 Ibid, p. 85.
33 Agmondisham Vesey mentioned in a letter of 1720 that `the pox takes the south sea [West Indies] wherein many of our countrymen are ruined'; Vesey to the Bishop of Ossory, 18 Oct. 1720, De Vesci Papers, N.L.I, Ms. J7.
34 Philip Rawson to John Fitzpatrick, 19 August, 1708, Nat. Arch. Ire. M. 3190.
35 Cosby Autobiog., pp. 86-87.
36 There is also a mention of Mr. Thomas Flower in the accounts: either a son or a nephew. Henry seems to have been the only surviving son; Flower Papers, N.L.I., Ms. 11,470(6) and (7).

At the end of the period small pox was still prevalent in town and countryside. Numerous elder sons (such as William Vaughan who recovered from the virus in 1750 and went on to inherit the Golden Grove estate) continued to contract the disease.[37] But there were some attempts to prevent the virus being passed onto the children in gentry familes. The term `inoculation' was in currency long before Dr. Edward Jenner began experimenting with cow pox vaccinations.[38] From at least the 1720s physicians tried to inoculate patients with the human pox. In 1728 George Butler wrote to William Flower and mentioned that he `had heard of your design to have the children enoculated'.[39] At the very end of the eighteenth century the more widespread use of vaccinations began to reduce the mortality rate of children in the upper and middling classes, although there were of course other illnesses that took the lives of countless other babies and young children in gentry familes.[40]

The fear of disease might have increased total family size, but what factors reduced the overall number of live births? It is unclear whether gentry familes set out consciously to practice `family limitation'. The existence of families with just one or two children can sometimes be explained by the premature death of a partner (e.g. the death of the mother after the birth of her first child) or the inability of the mother to have any more children (e.g. as a result of surgery during a difficult childbirth). The physical separation of married couples (rather than sexual abstinence or crude contraceptive practices) was perhaps the most important non-biological determinant of family size. The mobility of the Irish county gentry (as opposed to the nobility) has been underestimated. Gentlemen could spend long periods away from their wives. Dudley Cosby spent five years abroad in the army and William Flower, Thomas Vesey and Pole Cosby all spent extended periods in London and Bath. Even when wives and children accompanied them (e.g. when Cosby went to Bristol in 1733) there were still periods when the husband had to leave the household (e.g in order to pursue a legal case or to visit a spa in the interests of health and pleasure). Anne Cooke made copious telegrammatic notes in her diary of her husband's constant

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[37]The accounts, payments and receipts of the executors of William Vaughan Esq., Nat. Arch. Ire., M. 4915.

[38]In 1775 Doctor Wakely (probably related to the Wakelys of Ballyburly) was paid £3.8.3 `for enoculating John'; account book, 1771-1794, King Papers, N.L.I., Ms. 4180. It is difficult to gauge just how successful these early inoculations were. In February 1770 Anne Cooke `sent for Doctor Sparrow' and `the three Children were Inoclead'. Within three days the `children sicken' and after three more days she observed `speck coming out on them'. After this the children began to recover rapidly. Given the potentially lethal side effects of these early vaccines it is interesting that a mother was prepared to have all her children inoculated at the same time; `The Diary of Anne Cooke 1761-1776', *J.K.A.S.*, Vol. 8 (1915-17), p. 123

[39]George Butler of London to William Flower (?), 4 May 1728, Flower Papers, N.L.I., Ms. 11,481 (4).

[40] Pole Cosby for example was struck down by a different ague in 1722 and `was extreamly ill for 6 weeks' and he lost one of his two daughters in 1733 as a result of `an inflammation of the lungs'; Cosby Autobiog., p. 269.

coming and goings in the period 1761-1776. On 8 May 1766 for instance `Mr. Weldon left Sportland for Dublin & I and the children stead at Sportland'.[41] Even the most parochial of squireens found occasion to visit Dublin, and during the spring and summer months many of the wives and children of substantial gentlemen might have stayed on in the capital after `the season' rather than accompany their husbands back to the estate. Within the two counties there were a number of other activities that would have reduced the amount of time that husbands could have spent with their wives (e.g. their work as magistrate or M.P.).

The total family size of the household at any given time also depended on the number of relatives and close friends who stayed for extended periods. It is sometimes difficult to disentangle overnight guests from permanent or semi-permanent residents. On June 3 1766 Anne Cooke the diarist `removed all the family from Sportland to Rahen as Sportland House was not large enough for us'.[42] In this instance it is likely that guests caused the family to change residence. But in other households it was the presence of other family members that led to changes in the size and layout of the country seat. When Dudley Cosby went abroad in 1704 his wife moved into her father's household at nearby Ballyfin. When her brother inherited the estate (after the death of her father c.1704) she was still allowed to remain in the household and spent the summers at Ballyfinn and the winters at his town house in Dublin. He was said to have been `very kind and affectionate during the whole five years that she lived with him'.[43] Dudley Cosby's widow spent a short time living at Esker before moving in with her son. From Pole Cosby's point of view it made practical sense to merge both households. The presence of an additional family member or a dependant is sometimes revealed by the expenditure in household accounts. William Flower made regular payments over a number of years to Col. Caulfield (e.g. in 1737 he was paid £40 for `diet and lodging'). Caulfield was a kinsman of Flower's wife, and it is possible that he spent some time living at Castle Durrow.[44]

In general the concept of the `extended family' does not seem to have been fully embraced by the gentry. The number of non-nuclear family members seems to have been determined by death, chronic illness and misfortune rather than any deliberate policy. For some social groups in early modern Europe it would have been almost *de rigueur* for `the family household unit' to contain husband, wife, children, grandparents and other dependants. The gentry of The King's and Queen's counties

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41 `Diary of Anne Cooke' *J.K.A.S.*, p. 117.
42 Ibid., p. 117.
43 Cosby Autobiog, p. 85.
44 Even if he did not live in the household at Castle Durrow he should still be considered as a dependant, Flower Papers, N.L.I., Ms. 11,463 (2).

seemed to have placed far more emphasis on creating new family units soon after marriage rather than extending existing ones. The proliferation of minor country houses and farmhouses between c.1690 and 1760 was in part due to the growing number of cadet branches in the two counties which are so clearly recorded on Oliver Sloane's map of The Queen's County c.1765.[45]

3.2 Marital relations

When Pole Cosby arrived at Parkgate in 1734 (returning to his temporary residence in Clifton) he was:

> resolved not to loose a moment in getting to Bristol for I did imagine my wife to be ill, not having in a long time heard from her, so in less than an hour after I landed I went off in a one horse chaise I hired for Chester, & there met with a letter from my mother giving me an account that my wife had miscarried. My grief and sorrow was great, & longed much to be with my mother & wife.

Such was Cosby's anxiety that he forsook the comforts of a coach and travelled on horseback all night in order to get the wherry that would take him down the River Severn. He recalled `I was not able to sit my horse & never rode in my life in such fatigue'. To his relief he found that his wife had `bravely recovered to what one could expect & greatly we were rejoiced at our meeting as ever we were in our lives'.[46] This touching description of a sad event in Cosby's life provides a rare insight into the private life of a landed family. Most of the evidence that has survived reveals only the public and more formal aspects of family life.

The familial relationships in gentry households have traditionally been depicted as rather distant on account of the political and economic considerations that helped to determine marriage, the need to produce an heir, the infrequent personal contact with children, the absence of the husband for long periods, and the formality of life in a country house with the many rituals that were designed to maintain due deference between servants and family and between senior and junior family members. But in fact the relationships that existed in landed households were often similar to those in non-landed households. Endogamy for instance was not was by any means confined to the highest echelons of society. Economic, social and religious considerations were upper- most in the minds of those who married from the middling

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[45]Sloane's map, N.L.I., 16.H.9 (2).
[46] Cosby Autobiog, p. 271.

and lower orders. Similarly it was not uncommon for children from a wide variety of social groups to be separated from their parents at an early age. A significant number of children from poorer backgrounds for instance were separated from their nuclear families when they became apprentices and servants in other households.[47]

Marriage was not only concerned with the consolidation of estates. The importance of the marriage settlement and the hard-bargaining between landowners (as discussed in chapter 2.3) sometimes overshadowed the more personal factors that were taken into consideration during the search for a suitable partner. In 1751 Gustavus Handcock wrote to Lord Knapton at Abbey Leix and suggested that his son might marry Miss Vesey. The letter clearly outlines the economic terms and conditions (in this case £3000 portion for a £300 jointure) but it is also discusses the emotional compatability of the couple and family honour. He wrote:

> Upon last leaving home, my son told me he was greatly enamoured with Miss Vesey your daughter, and that the obtaining of her would make him the happyest person in the world and hoped my wife and I would contribute all we could toward the accomplishing of it. As I have the highest respect for your Lord and Lady and family and the most amiable character of the young lady, I could not but approve of his inclinations...I have no other view and dispositions, than to make our son happy who is our only child. The character of the young lady stand in my view in the place of many thousands and the gratification of my sons warmth and passionate desires.[48]

An arranged marriage in this period was a collaborative enterprise involving input from the prospective partners, both sets of parents, relations, guardians, trustees, financiers, lawyers and other interested parties. The aim was to achieve a delicate balance between the personal needs of the couple and the long term interests of the families concerned. In most cases the prospective couple seem to have got their own way. Parents, from gentry backgrounds at least, were more likely to have adjusted their economic requirements for the sake of their children's happiness than vice versa. Dudley Cosby tried in vain for two years to find his only son and heir a suitable partner. Pole `wo'd not hearken to any one at all, and told others he employed to speak to me that I would never Marry one at all while he lived, unless it was Miss Dodwell'.[49] Similarly Robert Meredith `Had for along time it seems loved my sister,

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[47]See the 1749 Religious Census of Elphin, Nat. Arch. Ire., M.244, M/film, MFS.6.; for an English context, Ann Kussmaul, *Servants in Husbandry in Early Modern England,* (Cambridge, 1981).
[48]Handcock to Vesey, 18 May 1751, De Vesci Papers, N.L.I, Ms. K/4.
[49]Cosby Autobiog, p. 175.

& about 1730 he made proposals for her'. Pole Cosby was very much against the proposal on economic grounds and his `Mother looked for a higher fortune & was not fond of this match'. His sister did not share the same opinion and became `fonder and fonder'of the idea of marrying Meredith. Further negotiations ensued between both parties and after a suitable adjustment was made to the bride's jointure the marriage went ahead.[50]

Sometimes negotiations failed because either the prospective couple or the parents were not prepared to compromise. Cosby mentioned a number of marriages that were highly unsuitable on economic, social and religious grounds. In 1728 Dudley Cosby received news from America that his kinsman Philip Cosby had married:

> a young creature of 15 years old...originally of the county Kildare...which did concern him most heartily to think that at 46 years old he should marry for love for his whole letter giving an account of his marriage ...said a great deal about her beauty and charms, but that she had no great fortune but her very great merit.[51]

Henry Dodwell `took a fancy to the Butcher's daughter...& and when she was Grown up he did marry her'; Cosby had a distant cousin who `married one Plunket a Taylor and a Papist'.[52] Couples who were determined to marry might disobey parental injuntions or even abscond. William Weldon and Elizabeth Westenra were said to have `made the Match between themselves so that not a soul knew of it, and he and she went off togather [sic] from Rathleigh unknown to anyone...and were marryed that night beyond Mountrath at one Chanders a Quakers.'[53]

Marriages between gentlemen and women from lower social backgrounds were strongly discouraged on practical as well as economic grounds. Women played an important role in the running of households and they had to be chosen carefully. It was necessary for them to have acquired a number of skills: i.e. to be able to employ and discipline servants, to order goods, furnish the house and organise the shows of hospitality. It is interesting that before Dodwell married `a butcher's daughter' he ensured that she was educated `according to the way he thought all women should be educated'.[54] The domestic compatability of husband and wife was highlighted in the advice literature and terms like `house mate' were often used. Even if husband and

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[50] Ibid. pp. 315-316.
[51] Ibid. p. 426.
[52] Ibid. p. 259.
[53] Ibid. p. 430.
[54] Ibid. p. 259.

wife were not bound together by true love they were at least expected to be an efficient double-act who were able to run the elaborate machinery of the household.

Although gentry marriages were designed to satisfy a number of economic, social and practical requirements they did not necessarily turn out to be unhappy. In fact there is more evidence to suggest that husbands and wives had close emotional bonds than vice versa.[55] The unusual terms of endearment that couples used in their letters could be seen as an indication of the closeness of marital relationships. In 1691 a correspondent of Thomas Flower was anxious to hear whether `your good lady is safe with you, my little Welsh woman I thank god is as hearty as can be expected', and c.1720 Thomas Vesey addressed his wife as `My derest dere mouse'.[56]

One senses the affection or love most clearly in the correspondence between husbands and wives who spent long periods apart, or during times of mortal danger. The Williamite War split up many families. Some husbands had to leave their families in order to fight and others sent their wives and children away to safer locations. Nicholas Plunkett described to Thomas Flower in 1691 how his wife `hath run through such adventures to leave Ireland and fynd me in France that they are like Romances'.[57] When the Archbishop of Tuam left his palace in great haste in January 1688 he did not know whether he would ever return, he wrote in his journal how `I lift [sic] my house at Tuam leaving six small children, with severall of my poor friends and relatives who depended on me behind'.[58] Protestant landowners would not have forgotten the atrocities that took place during the Irish Rebellion, and some were especially keen to get their families out of Ireland in the first instance.

During more peaceful times gentlemen could still be absent from the country seat for months and one occasionally senses the frustration, anguish and loneliness that was felt by the wives who were left behind. On 31 July 1768 Anne Cooke wrote that she was `far from well, & very lowe speret to be left alown, for I had alass thought I might have had the happiness of Mr. W.[eldon] staying with me'.[59]

It is difficult to generalise about the reasons for martial success or failure since each human relationship is based on a web of bonds that are rarely understood

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[55]For a similar view see Sean Connolly, `Family, Love and Marriage: Some Evidence from the Early Eighteenth Century', in M. MacCurtain and M. O'Dowd, *Women in Early Modern Ireland,* (Edinburgh, 1991), pp. 276-290.

[56] Thomas Flower to ?, Dec. 1691, Flower Papers, N.L.I., Ms. 11,474; Thomas Vesey to his wife,c. 1720, De Vesci Papers, N.L.I., Ms. J/7.

[57]Nicholas Plunket to Thomas Flower, 1691, Flower Papers, N.L.I, Ms. 11,474.

[58] The journal and account book of the Archbishop of Tuam, 1688-1691, De Vesci Papers, N.L.I., Ms. G/5.

[59] Between August 31st and 28th November (in the same year) she was left alone once more. She recalled `From the day Mr. Weldon left poor me ...I have past my time as agreeable as I could in the way I was in, but alass not happy either in mind or Body...I unsertan weather Mr. Weldon would come over or not'. Mr. Weldon is Walter Weldon of Rahinderry in The Queen's County who the diarist subsequently married, `Diary of Anne Cooke', p. 119.

by the parties concerned, let alone the historians who rake over the scraps they have left behind. However, since gentry marriages in the eighteenth century were framed according to specific social and cultural norms one should look for the problems and potentialities that were peculiar to this particular social group in this period.

Marriages were concerned in large part with the acquisition and transfer of property and it is therefore likely that disputes between the families of the bride and groom over the terms of the marriage settlement generated marital discord. A wife who was well versed in the niceties of diplomacy might have steered well clear of a row between her husband and her own parents, but she was less likely to have been passive if her own personal allowance was at stake. When the marriage settlement was being drafted it was common for the husband to agree on what he would pay his wife each year (by way of personal maintenance) before hand. The parents of a bride were understandably anxious about their daughter's economic welfare and they expected the husband to maintain her in a manner that was appropriate for her status (i.e. in terms of lodgings, food, clothes etc.). Mr. Vigors of Clogh gave his wife an allowance of £80 in 1715.[60] She may have been unsatisified with her annual payment. A curious encounter was recorded on the back of one of the Vigors household accounts:

> I was at my nephew Vigors [Sept. 21 1735] when a discourse happened between him and his mother and it was then agreed between them that he should pay her sixty pounds ...and the one hundred and ten pounds ...in consideration of her quitting all demands and in consideration of her joy and for the maintenance cloathing her two yeares...I said [as] she was very jealous of him that he should demand any general release in writeing.[61]

In a modern context incompatibilty is often asociated with fundamental emotional and sexual differences between couples. In the eighteenth century husbands and wives would have been deemed incompatible if they did not live up to their respective roles in society. Sarah Cosby, the wife of Dudley, seems to have lived in manner which closely followed the unwritten rules of the time. Just after she was married she helped to `set up house-keeping at Stradbally'.[62] She produced an heir and two other children, and was by all accounts very patient, devoted, modest, obedient and pious. She lived without her husband for five years and then

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[60]Perhaps this constitutes only part of her whole annual allowance.
[61] It would appear that the mother was a widow; Vigors account book, Carlow Public Lib, copy N.L.I., M/film. P. 7629.
[62] Cosby Autobiog, p. 84.

accompanied him wherever he went in England. One event which occurred during one of her husband's many absences highlights some of these qualities:

> It must be observed that the day of that Battle [of Almanza in 1707] my mother happened by chance to fast, and on her fast day she never stirred out of her room, and in the afternoon which happened to be at the height of the Battle as she was reading, three drops of blood fell from her nose on the book. She imagined it ominous and so set down the hour and day, and by a letter soon after from my father she found at that time he was in the greatest danger.[63]

Other wives might have been less able to deal with long periods of separation or with the narrow role that was expected of them. Elizabeth Vesey scolded her husband (Lord Knapton) c.1750 for neglecting his family and not keeping in regular contact.[64] The surviving correspondence shows that women were often very direct in their criticism of men. In June 1729 Lady Portland expressed her anger in a letter to William Flower about the way in which she had been addressed by him, although she conceded that `I have not less affection for you'. A month later Lady Limerick was also close on Flower's tail and was annoyed that he had not written. She told him that `you owe me more respect than you did formerly'.[65] The high status of these two ladies (Flower had not been ennobled at this point) gave them more latitude than other gentlewomen in the way in which they interacted with gentlemen. Within married relationships, husbands would have had cause for concern if their wives behaved in such a superior manner. Some women eschewed the typical quiet and contemplative life of reading, letter-writing and house-keeping, and resorted to livelier forms of amusement in Dublin while their husbands were away. Life in a country seat could be very dull for gentlewomen, whereas the capital offered a more attractive and potentially freer lifestyle.

In 1726 the mischievous Knightley Chetwood wrote a list of names of the men and women that `society' had matched in Dublin:

> I enclose you a poor print, and also a list of marriages. I dare say Jenny Mahon will laugh at some of the rogueries in it. Some of the ladies

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63 Ibid. pp. 84-85.

64 In her correspondence she complains that her husband did not write regularly enough and neglected his duties (e.g. he missed a dinner appointment at Lord Castle Durrow's), De Vesci Papers, N.L.I., Ms. G/4.

65 Lady Portland to William Flower, 26 June 1729, and Lady Limerick to William Flower, 1 July 1729, Flower Papers, N.L.I, Ms. 11,481 (6).

already married, who are given to Gentlemen therein named, is not only truly scandalous, but has too, too much of scandalous truth in the thing . Oh! tempora o mores.[66]

Among the 36 names that he matched together were Pole Cosby with Lady Castiliana Lambert, `Hop on my Thumb Weldon' with Molly Molyneux', and `Councillor Lyndsay' with Dean Swift's Mrs. Johnson'.[67] Chetwood was more mysterious when it came to his own female preferences and he aligned himself to `the Kilkenny Beauty sent out of towne'. Knightley Chetwood's own marriage had not been a success (even by the standards of the time) and he lived apart from his wife.[68] When his wife died in 1729 he could pursue women more openly. He wrote to Swift in 1730 `I am now returning to Woodbroke from an amour which has proved little profitable to myself. Business here I have none but with women, those pleasures have not with me as yet [lost] their charms'.[69] The double standards of the time gave married men more opportunities to seek liaisons. By contrast Chetwood's gossip might have been very damaging to the reputations of the married women who had participated in the endless round of social events in Dublin during the season when their husbands might have been absent.

One should not place too much emphasis on the compatibilty of husbands and wives since it was not only conjugal relations that determined the stabilty of a gentry household. When Lady Portland sent her condolences to a widower in 1714 she underlined what she saw as being the primary function of a wife. His wife `was so usefull to you in the takeing care of your little family'.[70] The arrival of children had the potential to stabilise a marriage since it re-directed the energies of the couple away from the married relationship and onto paternal and maternal relationships instead. Conversely the disagreements that might have arisen between parents over how they should best prepare their children for adult life could create tensions in the marriage.

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[66] `The Chetwood Letters', *J.K.A.S.* Vol. 9 (1918-22), p. 276.

[67] Castiliana Lambert was the daughter of the 4th Earl of Cavan, she died unmarried. Pole Cosby married Miss Dodwell instead in 1727. Weldon, was presumably Arthur Weldon of Rahinderry who had married the daughter of Anthony Dopping in 1721. Mrs. Johnson was known as `Stella' in Dean Swift's writings.

[68] In 1725 for instance Chetwood tried to hive off his wife to some other country house. Birr Castle was considered an abode, Swift to Chetwood, 20 Jan. 1724/35, Swift Letters, Vol. III, p. 49.

[69] Chetwood to Swift, Feb. 1730/31, Swift Letters, Vol. II, p. 442.

[70] Lady Portland to ? (conceivably William Flower, but he was thought to have married Edith Caulfield c.1717), 3 Aug. 1714, Flower Papers, N.L.I., Ms. 11,481 (2).

3.3 Childhood

The relationships between parents and children in European landed families in the early modern period has, like marriage, come under intense scrutiny in recent years.[71] Rather than dwell on the instinctive emotional bonds that one would expect to find between natural parents and infants in most societies it is more instructive to look for the other ways in which the particular social and cultural mores of this period affected childhood. Many of the practices that were once common in gentry familes such as wet-nursing, and which are alien to post-industrial society, can no longer be seen as a clear sign of emotional detachment. It also seems unlikely that there was a corollary between the number of children born and the amount of care and affection that was invested in each child. More problematic are the role of guardians, the age at which children left the household, their education, the different parental attitudes towards boys and girls and the disputes between fathers and inheriting sons.

Reference to infants usually only appears in the household accounts and letters at times of ill health or death. The grief that was felt by parents after the loss of a child, as expressed in the surviving accounts, is unmistakeable. The most explicit expressions of love or sadness are more commonly found in the records left by women. Anne Cooke in her confessional diary noted in November 1768 that `My little jewel was ill for 10 days'. Pole and Sarah Cosby were both devastated by the loss of their two year old daughter in 1733. When Mary fell ill in Bristol, they fetched `the Best Doctor there', but `She dyed to our most extream greif... this loss was so grievous to us, & gave some of us a dislike to the place'.[72]

Even the most formal letters written by landowners, which on the whole discuss domestic politics, foreign affairs and estate business, can betray some paternal interest in the early development of children. In a letter to Lady Vesey in 1721 (about the planting of the demesne at Hollymount) Edward Leech could not resist mentioning that his child `Miss Margaret is in good health, has gott noe teeth ...no body can be fonder of walking than shee is'.[73] Men were not always adverse to using affectionate language. In 1691 Nicholas Plunket wrote to Thomas Flower and wanted to know the whereabouts of his `wild Irish children'; in 1728 Mr. Dawson of Dublin referred to William Flower's son as a `dear little boy'; and in 1753 the irascible Col.

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[71]For the English context; Lawrence Stone, *The Family, Love, Sex and Marriage*, (London, 1977); Alan McFarlane, *Marriage and Love in England: modes of reproduction 1300-1840*, (London, 1986).
[72] `Diary of Anne Cooke', p. 119; Cosby Autobiog, p. 269.
[73] Allen Leech to Lady Vesey, 20 ? 1721, De Vesci Papers, N.L.I., Ms. J/5.

Humphrey Bland hoped that his nephews would not end up like `awkward un-licked cubbs when they made their appearance in the world'.[74]

The Irish portrait paintings between 1690 and 1740 tend to depict children almost as miniature versions of their parents.[75] On looking at the serious faces and finely wrought costumes one might think that contemporaries had a very different view of childhood (or that perhaps `childhood' as we understand it did not exist at all). Around 1742 Pole Cosby engaged the fashionable Dublin-based artist James Latham to paint a double portrait of himself and his eldest daughter Sarah. If Sarah bedecked in a sumptous satin or silk dress had been a little taller then one might have thought that he was holding the hand of his wife. But Latham also painted other portraits of the family, including one showing Sarah with a pet parrot and another of Mrs Cosby with a young daughter.[76] The more sensitive and delicately painted Irish pictures of the 1740s and 1750s seem to capture a less formal side of childhood. Similarly the charming if slightly naive portraits by Arthur Devis in England in the same period capture the playful qualities of young children.[77] Are the changes in the depiction of children in portraiture the result of artistic development or do they reflect changes in parental attitudes?

The household accounts from Castle Durrow are an indication of the standard of living of William Flower's children. Children's clothes were a regular fixture in the accounts from the 1720s. In 1730 at least £1.16.0 was spent on shoes alone and the three children needed about 16 pairs a year (at an average of 0.2.4. a pair).[78] In 1723 £28.18.9 was spent `for the children's use' and £31.10.6 was spent on servants wages. In 1728 more than £120 was spent on `Mr. Harry, Mr. Jeffrey and Miss Molly' compared to £76 spent on the wages for around 20 servants, and £148 for all the labouring work about the house and demesne in the same year.[79]

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[74] Letter, c. 1691 from Nicholas Plunkett to Col. Thomas Flower, Flower Papers, N.L.I., Ms. 11,474; Mr. Dawson to Flower, 1727, N.L.I. Ms. 2,275; Col. Humphrey Bland to Capt. Theophilus Desbrisay, 23 June 1753, Bland Papers.

[75]For examples see Rosemary ffolliott, `Childrens Clothes 1679-1867', *The Irish Ancestor*, Vol. II, no. 1 (1970), pp. 19-23. She said that she could not find any portraits of children in the first forty years of the eighteenth century. Since then more paintings have come to light such as the Cosby group cited below.

[76]Ilustrated in Anne Crookshank, `James Latham, 1696-1747', *Irish Arts Review*, (1988), pp. 56-72. Latham painted at least seven portraits of the Cosby family (five of which include children). These portraits were sold by Sotheby's on behalf of Adrian Cosby Esq. between 1984-85: present whereabouts unknown.

[77]Hogarth's portraits of children in the same decade also offer an interesting comparison; Marcia Pointon, *Hanging the Head: Portraiture and Social Formation in Eighteenth-Century England*, (New Haven and London, 1993), pp. 176-226.

[78] Shoe bills for 1728 and 1730 (which all add up to £1 or more), Flower Papers, N.L.I., Ms. 11,467, 11,468 (1) and 11,469 (1).

[79] The massive jump in the expenditure after 1728 can be explained by the high medical costs incurred when the children contracted small pox. In 1731 for instance Mr. Levcall was paid 0.11.6. for attending to Miss Flower when she was sick, Doctor Grafton was paid a further £1.16.8 and the surgeon recieved £1.10.0 `for opening her'. In a memo of expenses for 1728 £120.1.3. was spent on the children,

In addition to the clothes and the books of grammar that can be found in household accounts which point to the formal side of childhood, there are also less expensive items in the form of small gifts and toys that reveal another, and more recognisably modern, feature of early childhood. When William Flower's eldest son Henry was ill in 1728 he was given an ivory comb, saffron cakes, sugar candy, cinnamon and a toy.[80] Among the goods that Pole Cosby purchased in Bath before he set off for Ireland in 1733 were `some toys'.[81]

One cannot assume that the experience of the children in the Cosby, Flower and Cooke households was typical of the upbringing of gentry children as a whole. In other accounts children were barely mentioned or remained completely invisible. Was this because children were simply not recorded? Did other gentry parents have less concern for the material and emotional welfare of their children or does this merely indicate that children spent little time (if any) in the parental household?

Not all children from gentry families were raised by their natural parents. The importance of inheritance and the consolidation of estates meant that guardians had a particularly important role to play in the upbringing of minors in the eighteenth century. The high mortality rate during and after the Irish Rebellion and Cromwellian re-conquest meant that a large number of children from landed backgrounds grew up without a father during the Restoration period.[82] By the late 1680s the nature of warfare had changed dramatically and the existence of large standing armies meant that a smaller proportion of the landed class was actively involved in fighting during the Williamite War (although the pestilence that accompanied war could still be severe).

But a combination of a delayed marriage and early death meant that it was not uncommon for minors to grow up without their natural fathers in the eighteenth century, as evidence from the Hartpole family shows.[83] Guardians were primarily responsible for the economic rather than emotional needs of children and they were more likely to

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£147.19.7 on labouring, £76.5.11 on servants, £30.0.0 for sundry expenses in Dublin and £10.0.0 at the Kilkenny Assizes, Flower Papers, N.L.I., Ms. 11,463 (2); Ibid, 11,469 (20).

[80] Flower Papers, N.L.I., Ms. 11,470 (6).

[81] Cosby Autobiog, p. 271. By the late eighteenth century toys are mentioned in the accounts more frequently (e.g. in the King household of Ballylin 0.7.7. is spent on `a Doll for Alisia'), although this does not mean that there was an absence of toys and novelties to amuse young children in the earlier period; King family account book, 1771-1794, N.L.I., Ms. 4180.

[82] By contrast Table 3.1a shows that most of the landowners in this small (but representative sample) who lived during the first half of the eighteenth century survived for more than 20 years after the date of their first marriage and were likely to have still been alive when their eldest sons reached 21.

[83] Robert Hartpole I fought and died as a royalist officer in the 1640s and left a minor, also called Robert. Robert Hartpole II, died in 1678 after just 7 years of marriage and left one son called William. His widow re-married and her second husband, Pierce Bryan, was likely to have been the guardian of William Hartpole. William also died before his sons reached their majority and his widow re-married. Her second husband, Maurice Cuffe, became the guardian of George Hartpole until he inherited; Hartpole Mss., T.C.D., Ms. 1933.

reside at their own family seat rather than in the household of their adopted children.[84]

Children could also be separated from their natural parents for long periods for a number of practical and social reasons. Pole Cosby spent the first six years of his life with his nurse, Elizabeth Holdbrook, at `Ire', whilst his father was abroad. It would have been possible for him to have stayed with his mother who was residing at nearby Ballyfinn, but the convention of wet-nursing kept them apart. Up to the age of 21 Cosby only resided at Stradbally during some of the school holidays and spent far more time with his parents when he was in his early twenties than when he was a child. Interestingly it is only after his father died that Cosby began to spend long periods with his mother (she moved into Stradbally and accompanied Cosby and his wife to Bristol in 1733).[85]

The increasing tendency for landowners to send their children away to school might also have led to the truncation of childhood in psychological terms. Pole Cosby was sent to Portlarlington when he was 6 in order to learn some French before he attended schools in York and Athy.[86] His education (which took place in England, Ireland and Holland over a 15-year period) was exceptional and could only have been matched locally by the top stratum of inheriting sons. Most younger gentry sons and virtually all the daughters were likely to have been educated by schoolmasters who resided in or lived near the household. Indeed it could be argued that children from landed backgrounds remained in the parental household for longer than children from the middling or lower orders because their parents were better able to support them. Children were not treated equally in the household. Elder sons, younger sons and daughters had different intellectual and social requirements and this helps to explain why some children spent longer than others in the household.

3.4 Education

Inheriting sons had as much practical need for a thorough intellectual training as their younger brothers who were more likely to go into one of the professions. A country squire might use his knowledge of the classics, theology and science to dazzle his friends in county society but a younger son might have to rely upon his knowledge of such subjects in order to carve out a career in the church, in the army or in medicine.

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[84] Maurice Cuffe lived in The Queen's County and only periodically resided at Shrule Castle, the ancestral home of the Hartpoles. Humphrey Bland was the guardian of his nephews at Blandsfort (the eldest of whom inherited the estate). He was very concerned with their welfare, but he lived in England and relied on regular correspondence; Hartpole Papers, T.C.D. Mss. 1933, deeds, 301 and 354; Bland Papers.

[85] Cosby Autobiog, pp. 85-88, 263-264.

[86] Ibid., p. 85.

Humphrey Bland recommended that his nephew must `by no means neglect his learning, as his being a good scholar, is the surest means of gaining preferment in the army'.[87] But inheriting sons needed a very broad education so that they could apply their knowledge (e.g. of languages, philosophy, science and law) to the practical problems that they would encounter on the estate and as office holders. Gentlemen were often embroiled in complicated legal battles and the ability to produce cogent arguments was a real advantage. A smattering of mathematics and science (especially Archimedes) would have been useful to improving landowners who set out to drain tracts of bog and introduce new crops. Above all landowners required the skills that would enable them to manage all the constituent parts of an estate. Humphrey Bland said that he `would willingly give them [his nephews] a suitable education, so as to know how to manage and improve a fortune [they were likely to inherit £5-6000]'.[88]

A formal school education was only one part of a gentleman's training. When Cosby chastised his son in 1760 he reminded him that when he `so young and only just from school, you could not understand the world and the punctillios of honour'.[89] Honour and deportment were special qualities that could not be picked up through bookish learning. A young gentlemen needed to aware of the practical problems that he would face during the course of his life and he needed to acquire certain skills by being placed in different enviroments (in various types of household, in towns and cities, and perhaps in England or further afield). Without this kind of experience the son of a country gentleman might make a poor impression at important social events. In 1753 Humphrey Bland was not amused by the

> Rakish behaviour of the young Irish Gentlemen who come here [Dublin Castle]. I dont mean by this, that they are all so, but only the majority of them: and are commonly known by a forward pertness and self sufficiency, without one grain of the Mauvais Honte. Modesty in a young man, is always pleasing, and will Gain them more friends than that Assurance inherent in my countrymen.[90]

The household accounts show that the amounts spent on dancing and riding could be considerable, and this did not always take place in schools. Dancing was an important social ritual and pastime long before the new and more elaborate forms of

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87 Bland to Desbrisay, 4 Feb. 1754, Bland Papers.
88 Same to same, 6 Aug. 1751, Bland Papers.
89 Pole Cosby to his son, 1 Jan. 1760, Stradbally Hall.
90 Bland to Desbrisay, 26 Sept. 1753.

entertainment became popular during the Dublin season.[91] From at least the age of 11 Pole Cosby learnt how to dance (between 1714 and 1716 he went to the ` Writing and Dancing School' in York).[92] Dancing was an important part of the mating ritual and Cosby would have brushed up on his dance movements before he went in search of a bride in London and Dublin between 1722 and 1727.

Riding was an another important skill that had to be continually improved. Apart from the obvious practical necessity of being able to ride, gentleman were expected to be able to ride well on the hunting field and during military exercises. The hunt and the militia were important events in the social calendar and gentlemen needed to impress one another with their general appearance and horsemanship. Henry Flower seems to have taken advanced riding lessons when he was a grown man, for in 1748 he paid `Edward Brady, Rideing master in Major Preston's troop', £4.9.0 for 2 months tuition.[93] Humphrey Bland encouraged his nephews to focus on learning how to dance and to fence rather than on horsemanship since `Riding they will be taught with their regiments'.[94]

Music was usually only associated with the education of daughters in richer families. The conventional view is that daughters spent their childhoods in front of a book or keyboard instrument while their brothers took up more masculine pursuits. The few scraps that are beginning to surface in the household accounts suggest that it might not have been so uncommon for sons to play musical instruments before 1760. Pole Cosby learnt the spinet whilst he was at Leyden in 1722 and was very sorry that he never had the chance to play the organ as well.[95] It might well have been Billy Vaughan (and not Miss Vaughan) that made use of the `musick books and stage' and the `fiddle and case' (which cost £1.15.9) that appear in his accounts in 1754.[96] If it can be shown that many other sons, from the upper and lower ranks of the county gentry, had an important artistic component to their education in this period then one can further question the applicability of the term `boorish' to the Irish squirearchy in the first half of the eighteenth century.

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[91] As early as 1653/4 the accounts at Birr show that a tutor was paid £3.0.3 to teach the children how to dance. On the same bill his writing master got just 0.10.0: an indication of the importance that was attached to social and not just intellectual pursuits. In February 1730 a bill shows that Henry Flower's dancing master received a payment of £13.4.10; account book, 1652-97, Birr Castle, A/12, p. 32; Flower Papers, N.L.I., Ms. 11,458 (1).

[92] Cosby Autobiog., p .87.

[93] Flower Papers, N.L.I., Ms. 11,469 (13).

[94] Bland to Desbrisay, 12 Feb. 1754, Bland Papers.

[95] Cosby Autobiog, p. 98.

[96] Vaughan account book, Nat. Arch. Ire. M.4915.

A classical education, that included grammar, arithmetic, latin and usually French was almost universal for sons before 1690.[97] In the first three decades of the eighteenth century the Trinity College records show that there were at least 8 local schools in the two counties (listed in Table 3.4). Birr is the only school in the sample that had more than a sprinking of students from two counties.[98] In addition there were roving schoolmasters who moved from town to town and sometimes resided in country seats.[99]

Table 3.4 Trinity College students who attended schools in the two counties between 1685 and 1750

Town of school	Earliest reference in T.C.D. matriculation records*	Number of students in sample who attended the school
Birr, KC.	1717	7
Edenderry, K.C.	1727	1
Maryborough, Q.C.	1729	1
Mountmellick, Q.C.	1718	1
Portarlington, Q.C.	1731	2
Rynn, Q.C.	1727	1
Shinrone, KC.	1697	4
Unknown, Q.C.	-	4
Unknown, K.C.	-	1
Educated `at home', K.C.	-	1
Educated `by father', KC.	-	1
Educated `by father',Q.C.	-	1

Source; T.C.D. registers
***the student would have attended this school shortly before he matriculated at Trinity.**

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[97] In the early seventeenth schools had been established at Birr (in 1626) and at Banagher (in 1628). The 1641 Depositions also show that schoolmasters operated in a number of other parishes. In addition to the material possessions that Robert Shepley (the Rector of Kinnity) lost during the Irish rebellion was his `schoole employment' estimated to be worth £20 per annum. In 1652 the Birr account book shows that the schooling of the elder son, Lawrence Parsons, cost £20 a year. Interestingly the `schooling' of his sister Margaret is also recorded and this cost considerably less (i.e. £7 p.a.); 1641 Depositions, Robert Shepley, dep. 816, T.C.D., Ms. 814; Birr account book, 1652-97, Birr Castle, A/12.

[98] In addition there were also a number of parish schools run by clergymen that are seldom recorded. Richard Despard, who went up to Trinity in 1736 was taught by Mr. Alley, who is probably the same Henry Alley mentioned in a parochial visitation in the diocese of Ossory in 1731 (he was the incumbent of Donoughmore Protestant parish and was said to have kept `an English school' for 25 children); visitation book of the diocese of Ossory, 21 July 1731, N.L.I, Ms. 2670, transcript (Canon Leslie collection).

[99] In the 1750s Walter Bourke, the schoolmaster at Maryborough also taught at `Loher' and `Lackabrack', and Jon Crow taught pupils at `Ballyhide' as well as Portarlington; list of freeholders in The Queen's County 1758-1775, (there are 3 schoolmasters out of about 800 names), P.R.O.N.I., Mic/353; Maryborough book of voters, N.L.I., Ms. 1726.

Table 3.4a The place of education for students from the two counties between 1685 and 1750

School or region	Number of students (%)
The King's and Queen's counties	29 (23.6)
Dublin	28 (22.8)
Kilkenny School	9 (7.3)
Athy	8 (6.5)
Elsewhere in Leinster	6 (4.9)
Ulster	3 (2.4)
Munster	2 (1.6)
Connaught	2 (1.6)
England	1 (1.0)
Unknown	35 (28.3)

Source: T.C.D. registers

The majority of gentry sons were educated further afield, as shown in Table 3.4a. However, only one student in this Trinity College sample was educated outside Ireland. This was James Forth, who went to Eton College before he came up to Trinity in 1697.[100] Some gentry sons were given an English school education for practical reasons. Pole Cosby went to a school in York because his parents happened to live in England at the time. Similarly it might have made sense for a son who was earmarked to go to an Oxford or Cambridge college to attend a school in England. But there could also be strong political, social and religious reasons for an English education. In some cases Irish Protestant gentlemen might have felt that a stint in England was the only way of ensuring that the shared values and cultural and religious identity of the Irish Protestant elite would continue. Col. Humphrey Bland was particularly anxious that his nephews would lose any trace of an Irish accent if they were to have any chance of preferment in the British army. In 1753 he wrote:

> I have no objection to Tom and Nevil's going to the country with their master and mistress for the holy days. My reason for their not going to Mr. Vicars, [near Ballyroan] was the fear of their not getting rid of the Irish pronounciation, which is very disagreeable to an English ear, and renders those who have it not well looked upon by the people here and held cheap in their opinion. This is what I would have them endeavour

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100 If one extracted all the `Irish' students (those born in Ireland or those born in England who owned estates in Ireland) from the matriculation books of the universities of Oxford and Cambridge then one would find more examples of sons of Irish gentlemen who went to schools in England. George Hartpole for instance went to Westminster School for a number of years in the 1720s; Hartpole Papers, T.C.D, Ms. 1933, deed 354.

by all means to avoid, since nothing appears so vulgar as the Irish twang.[101]

Overall, there seems to have been ample provision for the educational needs of gentry sons in Ireland by the early eighteenth century (as Table 3.4a shows) and in most cases there was little practical necessity for sons to be packed off to England. Within Ireland there were schools that even Humphrey Bland would have found acceptable. In 1751 he wrote ` I intend to place my two other nephews, Thomas and Nevil in some good schools in Dublin, that they may lose the Irish brogue which they contract at the country schools'.[102] Indeed at least 28 (or 23%) of the Trinity students in the sample went to schools in Dublin, which was about the same number as those who were known to have been educated within The King's and Queen's counties.[103] The more substantial gentlemen resided for long periods in town houses and it would have been convenient for their children to have been educated in Dublin at the same time. Jeffrey Flower was sent to `St. Patrick's' in 1726 (presumably the cathedral school in Dublin). The cost of maintaining a boy in the appropriate style at this school was relatively high. The amount spent each quarter varied between £8-13 (in the years 1726 to 1730) and included coach travel, shoes, stockings, buttons, black ribbon, gloves, hair powder, books and a weekly allowance for the master (0.7.0).[104] It is interesting that each of the Flower children went to a different school.

Henry Flower went to Kilkenny College and Thomas Flower went to Athy at the same time that Jeffrey attended `St. Patrick's'. Evidently gentlemen in this period could chose from a wide range of schools; it is not clear why some types of school were preferable to others. There was a tendency to send elder sons to a more prestigious school than the other children.[105] It seems to have also been common for sons to have attended a number of schools during their childhood. Pole Cosby went to schools in Portarlington, York, Athy and Stradbally, and the accounts of Henry and Jeffrey Flower suggest that they might have both gone to both Kilkenny and Dublin. Smaller schools tended to specialise in different areas. The school at Portarlington was run by `Capt. Frankforts, a frenchman's [sic] whose whole family talked french...and when we left Portarlington we spoak it as well as English'. Mr. Daubus's

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[101] Bland to Desbrisay, 4 Jan 1753, Bland Mss.
[102] Ibid. same to same, 17 Sept, 1751.
[103] An unknown number of gentlemen who owned lands in the two counties were born in Dublin (and therefore do not appear in this sample) and it is likely that many of these also went to schools in the capital.
[104] Flower Papers, N.L.I, Ms. 11,462 (2) and Ms. 11,470 (6) (7).
[105] Pen Baldwin (born 1704) went to Dublin whilst his younger brother Thomas (born 1699) went to Shinrone, although in the sample from Trinity College there are a number of cases where two or more sons went to the same school.

school in York also taught French as well as latin, whereas another school in the same city had a reputation for dancing and writing. Mr. Garnet's school in Athy was described as a `Latin School'.[106] By attending more than one of these schools a student would have a better chance of receiving a broad education. The best known and expensive schools were often used to polish the education of gentry sons rather than to provide the foundations.[107]

Kilkenny College was the single most popular school among those listed in the Trinity matriculation books from King's and Queen's (9 students or 7.3%). The school was in easy reach of the country seats of gentlemen in The Queen's County (and this might explain why 6 of the 9 students were from Queen's). Indeed the Flower family who lived in Durrow would have considered the city of Kilkenny as very much part of their own backyard.[108] Kilkenny College seems to have been far grander and more formal than almost any other school outside Dublin and this can be detected in the accounts of Henry Flower. Before term began sawyers and carpenters were paid £3.3.8 for work carried out in `the children's chamber in Kilkenny'. `Mr. Henry' had a suit of clothes made, which cost £1.18.5 (which comes close to the cost of a suit for a grown-up gentleman), and there were numerous sundry expenses for the chairman, oil and powder for hair as well as the more usual disbursements for books, paper and stockings. This indicates that the general appearance and deportment of pupils, and not just their education, was taken very seriously by parents and schoolmasters alike. While at Kilkenny, Henry Flower was given incentives to behave in a manner that was deemed appropriate for a young gentleman in the form of pocket money. In the month of February 1730 alone he was given £1.19.0 for books and other necessaries. His behaviour slipped occcasionally: in the same year it was noted that `Mr. Henry was not allowed there his full reward'.[109]

Athy might have lacked the patronage and prestige of Kilkenny but it was still one of the larger and more popular schools in south Leinster (8 students or 6.5% of the sample attended it).[110] In 1723 Thomas Flower went to Athy and at least £15.15.0

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[106] Cosby Autobiog., pp. 85-90.

[107] Walter Harris, the noted antiquary and biographer of William III, began his education at the school in his home town of Mountmellick and then spent two or three years at Kilkenny College before going who went up to Trinity in 1704; `Collectanea De Rebus Hibernicus', *Analecta Hibernica,* No. 6 (1934), p. 251.

[108] Other sons came from much further afield: in 1764 John Kennedy, a schoolmaster at Kilkenny informed Lord Brandon in Kerry that he taken his son into the college, which indicates that there were other social and intellectual reason for going to this school; John Kennedy to Lord Brandon, 28 Jan. 1764, Crosbie Papers, T.C.D., Ms. 3821, letter, 258.

[109] Flower Papers, N.L.I., Ms. 11,468 (2), 11,470 (6).

[110] In the period c.1676-1716 the school had been run by Mr. Issac Dalton and when Cosby was a pupil the school was taken over by Mr. John Garnet (and there were at least three other tutors); Cosby Autobiog., pp. 89-90.

was paid for his boarding during that year.[111] Pole Cosby listed 41 of his contemporaries at school (from 30 families) and this gives us an insight into the social backgrounds of the boys who went to school. None of the boys came from titled families, although at least 7 of the children were sons of substantial landowners in the two counties and they would have been styled as esquire when they inherited.[112] Some of Cosby's contemporaries at school later became leading figures in county society; Warner Westenra for example was M.P. for Maryborough between 1734 and 1760. Pole Cosby lived within 10 miles of the school and nearly all of the other boys came from gentry families in other parts of Leinster.[113]

It is more difficult to account for the minority of gentry sons who were sent to relatively minor provincial schools some distance away from their parental household. At least 7 students went to schools in the other three provinces (Table 3.4a). Why for instance did James Hamilton of Frankfort in The King's County go to a school in Lisburn, or Richard Clarke of The Queen's County to Londonderry? One can only speculate that the reputation of a school master or a preference for a certain flavour of Protestantism might have led some gentlemen to send their sons to such far-flung parts of Ireland.

A minority of gentlemen also continued their education at a university or at the Inns of Court. Why did inheriting sons go to university? One can find at least 16 cases where more than one son from a particular family in the two counties entered Trinity College within a few years of each other.[114] In view of the fact that each child had differing educational requirements why was it that some landowners were prepared to invest considerable sums in the higher education of more than one son? Those entering the church, the law or medicine seemed to have the most to gain from a specialist education and a university degree. Indeed 37% of the Trinity students in this sample came from professional rather than landed backgrounds (see Table 3.4c).[115]

The number of students from The King's and Queen's counties who went to Trinity each year between 1685 and 1750 varied between 0-6. Table 3.4b shows the number of students who entered the college in different years.

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[111] Flower Papers, N.L.I., 11,470 (6).

[112] I.e. Short, Vaughan, Weldon, Fitzgerald, Weaver, Stubber and Armstrong; Cosby Autobiog., pp. 89-90.

[113] Such as the 3 Bunbury children from Co.Carlow and Emerson Peirce from Co. Wicklow. Arthur Newburg is the only exception, he came from Co. Cavan; Cosby Autobiog, pp. 89-90.

[114] Euseby Stratford for instance sent his sons Benjamin and Francis to the college in 1717 and 1733 respectively; Trinity College registers.

[115] Until an analyis has been made of all the surviving college matriculation books in England one cannot put an estimate on the proportion of the landed in gentry in Ireland who went to university in this period.

Table 3.4b The Total number of Students at Trinity College who came from The King's and Queen's counties in different years between 1685 and 1750

Year (s)	Number of students who matriculated
1685-89	7
1690-94	5
1694-99	13
1700-04	7
1705-09	6
1710-14	4
1715-19	12
1720-24	12
1725-29	14
1730-34	16
1735-39	12
1740-44	4
1745-49	5

Source: T.C.D registers.

Little can be deduced from these figures other than that with the exception of larger than usual cluster in 1696, 1697 and 1698 there was a gradual increase in the number of students over the period 1685-1715. In the period between 1715 and 1739 the numbers remained steady while in the 1740s there was a noticeable decrease- which might be related to the economic and demographic crises that occurred of this decade. After 1750 the numbers started to pick up again.[116]

Given that after c.1710 there were up to 300 Protestant landed gentlemen in the two counties at any one time (of whom perhaps 100-120 would have held commissions in the magistracy) the proportion of gentlemen who went to Trinity College was very small. In 1720 for instance, just two students from the two counties are recorded entering. One was Hector Vaughan, who went to school with Pole Cosby at Athy, the other Gifford Nesbitt who was educated at Trim before going on to Trinity. Even if one takes into account those who received higher education outside Ireland it still seems likely that only a relatively small proportion of the gentry went to university during this period.

The lack of university education and bookish learning (as distinct from other forms of education) in county society was often a source of complaint among the

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[116]Between 1716 and 1742 at least one student matriculated every year, but in 1743,44,45,47 and 48 there are no references. In 1749 there are 4 entries and in 1750 there are 6. This compares well with the overall pattern of matriculations at Trinity in this period. It is only after 1760 that there was a noticeble increase in the number of students (i.e. numbers doubled between 1763 and 1774); R.B. McDowell and D.A. Webb, *Trinity College, Dublin: An Academic History,* (Cambridge, 1982), Appendix 2, Fig. 1, p. 500.

cognoscenti. Swift wrote to Flower in 1736 `I find you have not neglected your Book, like most of your sort, I suppose in your neighbourhood, of whom you are grown weary, as I should be in your case'. Swift said of the House of Commons in the same letter `there are but 35 among them who can read and write'.[117]

It is difficult to understand the motivations of the small minority of gentlemen who sent their sons to university. The Trinity undergraduates were an economic elite in the sense that they constituted a small number of young Protestant men who could afford to go to college, but they were not strictly an intellectual or social elite. The matriculation records show that there was no clear relationship between landed income, social status and university admissions. Table 3.4c shows the different backgrounds of the students who went to Trinity College. The great majority of the students were `pensioners' (they paid a fixed sum each year and had no special privileges). A handful were *socius comitates* (they paid double fees and could finish their degree course in three rather than four years). One might have thought that only the sons of landed elite would have bought these prestigious scholarships. One of the 10 scholars identified was the son of a barber, one was the son of a wig-maker and another came from a mercantile background.

Table 3.4c The social background of the students at Trinity College who came from The King's and Queen's Counties between 1685 and 1750

Profession/rank of father	Terms used to describe profession in registers	Number (%)
Noble	comte, baron	2 (1.6)
Esquire	armiger	26 (21.2)
Gentleman	generosus	42 (34.2)
Farmer	colonus, agricola	8 (6.5)
Clergymen	clericus, minister, theologus, DD	23 (18.7)
Soldier	centurio, dux, dux militum, miles	7 (5.7)
merchant	mercator	3 (2.4)
Physician	physicus	1 (0.8)
Apothecary	pharmacopola	1 (0.8)
Lawyer	attornatus	1 (0.8)
Surveyor	choriator	1 (0.8)
Barber	tonsor	1 (0.8)
Wig-maker (?)	capillarius	1 (0.8)
Tax collector (?)	collector	1 (0.8)
Artificer/craftsman	faber automatarii	1 (0.8)
Unclassified	-	4 (3.3)

Source: T.C.D. registers

[117]Swift to Flower, 24 Dec. 1736, Swift Letters, Vol. IV, p. 556.

Thus a university education was not the sole preserve of the top echelons of Irish society and it was not used merely as a means to bolster the prestige of a narrow group. One cannot generalise about the purpose of a university education since each family had its own reasons for sending a son to college, and the academic and social facilities on offer at universities in England, Ireland and elsewhere were tailored to meet these differing requirements

Some Irish landowners held important offices in church and state and it was often expected that their sons would tread the same path. Families such as the Veseys had a long tradition of sending sons into the church. Those who aspired to such positions needed to be educated in an environment that would encourage certain social and intellectual qualities, and they needed to be drawn into the powerful patronage network at an early age. For many Irish grandees Oxford University (and Christ Church in particular) was seen as a suitable first rung on the career ladder. Five members of the Vesey family are known to have matriculated at Oxford between 1678 and 1697.[118] Another family with Oxford links were the Flowers, substantial landowners in Kilkenny, The King's and Queen's counties, Co. Dublin and Wales, with strong connections with the Ormondes (the two Dukes of Ormonde were successive chancellors of the University of Oxford between 1669 and 1715).[119] Flower was taught by Dean Aldrich and he would have rubbed shoulders with other influential tutors, churchmen and sons of Irish grandees at Oxford. William Flower was an ambitious man and these early contacts in Tory circles might have helped him to ease his way into high office (see chapter 7.3).[120] During his retirement in The Queen's County he still pondered over his undergraduate days. In a letter to Swift in 1736 he wrote how `it is now little purpose to repine, though it grieves me to think that I was a favourite of Dean Aldrich, the greatest man that ever resided in that high

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[118]In June 1689 the Archbishop of Tuam fled from Ireland and sent his eldest son, Thomas Vesey, to Dr. Wake at Christ Church. The accounts show that disbursements were made for a `gown, cap and surplice' and to `furnish his chamber'. He subsequently became the Bishop of Killaloe and then Ossory. The next son to go to Christ Chucrh was Denny Vesey who went up in 1694. In 1697 two more sons went to Oxford (George to Christchurch and John to Trinity College). George Vesey also went into the church and became the Rector of Hollymount in Co. Mayo. The accounts of 1695/6 show that £30 was given to another son (or one of the above) upon `his going to Oriel [college]'. It is interesting that the Archbishop entered his own sons at Oxford but sent a nephew to Trinity College, Dublin in 1692: the `fees of admission, chamber and closett and gown and surplice' cost £17.1.4. William Flower also went up to Christ Church in 1701 the other member of the family was John Vesey who went to Trinity College, Dublin and received his degree from Oxford by incorporation; The Archbishop of Tuam's journal and account book, De Vesci Papers, N.L.I, Ms. G/5; *Alumni Oxoniensis 1500-1714,* (London, 1892), Vol. 2, p. 510.

[119]For an account of the chancellorship of the two dukes in Oxford see, L.G. Mitchell and L.S. Sutherland, *The History of the University of Oxford: The Eighteenth Century,* Vol. V, (Oxford, 1986), pp. 12, 15 and 18.

[120]He was M.P. for County Kilkenny between 1715 and 1727 and for Portarlington between 1727 and 1733 and was made Baron Castle Durrow in 1733.

post, that over Virgil and Horace and Gray and Phillips smaoked a pipe, and drank many a quart with me'.[121]

Recent scholarship has tended to focus on the social polish and political contacts that a gentry son derived from a university education rather than on the academic benefits. Indeed the matriculation records are only an indication of the number of students who actually started at a university and not of their academic success. Many students did not complete their course of study or take a degree. In the Trinity College sample there is no record of 44 (or 36%) of the 123 King's and Queen's students having obtained degrees. However, the choice of university was not always determined by strong material or political motives and one must allow for the genuine humanistic concern for bookish learning that can be detected in many gentry families.

In 1719 Dudley Cosby heard `of the great fame of the Unaversaty of Lyaden in Holland [sic]', and his son and heir was sent there two years later. The Dutch university was very popular in the early eighteenth century and Cosby noted that at meal times there was a separate sitting for `English Irish and Scotch studients'. In 1723 Warner Westenra, who went to school with Cosby at Athy, also studied at Leyden. While there was undoubtedly an important social dimension to his time spent abroad, Cosby was sent to university primarily to acquire a solid education within a Calvinistic environment and not merely to build up contacts with Irish or English gentlemen. In fact Cosby went so far as to avoid taking meals with his countrymen `for the sake of conversing with people of all nations'.[122] His lectures began at 9.00 a.m. and his course of study was very intensive and included `universall History', Logick', `Natural Phylosophy', `Ethicks', `classicks', Dutch, Italian and French. In 1722 he `read very hard & took all the pains I co'd to improve myself...I laid out all the money I could on books, I bought in those two years but one suite of cloaths, for I had not occasion for more, wearing my nightgown continually as the custom of the studients is there'.[123] This slightly Puritanical existence is a far cry from the lifestyle that one usually associates with students at Oxford and Cambridge in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. Perhaps some gentlemen sent theirs sons to Leyden as a deliberate reaction against the social distractions and slim academic content of some of the ancient colleges.[124]

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[121]Lord Castle Durrow to Jonathan Swift, 4 Dec. 1736, Swift Letters, Vol. IV, p. 548.

[122] Cosby Autobiog, pp. 92-96.

[123]The dressing gowns that were worn by the students could be quite elaborate and had an almost oriental appearance. For an early eighteenth century depiction of a student at Leiden wearing a `Japonse rok' ( dressing gown) and `galakostum' (formal attire) see *Athenae Batavae De Leidse Universiteit 1575-1975,* (Leiden, 1975), pp. 44-45; Cosby Autobiog., pp. 92-96.

[124]Even at Trinity College, Dublin the first documented evidence of a proper undrgraduate course is from 1736, see McDowell and Webb, *Trinity College, Dublin,* p. 45.

Another crude indicator of the level of bookish learning is simply the number of books that were bought by gentlemen while they were undergraduates. In 1685 Thomas Hales received a letter from his father urging him to `get some pretty books, that you may improve your selfe as you attend and fitt yourself for greater employments hereafter'.[125] Cosby recalled in his autobiography that he had spent £80 on books whilst at Leiden, and he also stated in 1760 that he had spent £70 of his £120 annual undergraduate allowance on books. [126] The accounts of William Vaughan between 1750 and 1760, while at school and at Trinity College, probably give a more realistic idea of the amount that gentry sons spent on books: in 1750 he spent £1.11.3 on books, and when he went to Trinity in 1756 his disbursements increased to £3.9.13 and in 1759 £10.6.10.[127]

There are also some signs between 1715 and 1750 that tutors and parents attempted to introduce some sobriety into undergraduate life. In the first half of the eighteenth century Jacobite intrigue and riotous behaviour, street brawls and vandalism, had served to undermine the reputation of Trinity College as a place of learning. During the long reign of provost Baldwin (1717-1758) there were periodic attempts to encourage a more sedate student lifestyle. After 1750 the sons of the gentry do not seem to have been prepared to put up with frugal comforts, as demonstrated by the expenditure of undergraduates as well as by the impressive assemblage of buildings that commenced shortly after this date. In 1756 William Vaughan paid Mr Andrews £31.16.0 for college fees and £8.16.0 on a gown. In the following year he paid Edward Loftus £60 for his chamber in the college, £11.3.6. for bedding and 0.8.1 for a surplice. In 1758 £44.10.7 was paid for `wine delivered him during his residence in the college'.[128] In Cosby's letter to his son in 1760 he reminded him `that it was my own mere notion that made you have a servant to attend you at colledge [in c. 1750] who I would have kept at £40 p.a. but that your tutor and Mr. Meredith desired that I might not'.[129] According to John South's survey of the population of Dublin in 1695/6 there were 28 servants and 230 residents at Trinity

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[125]To Thomas Hales from his father, 2 March, 1685, Pym and Hales Papers, Somerset Record Office (Taunton), DD/BR/ely- bundle B3/4/10. The Hales family had landed interests in Dublin, Kilkenny and The Queen's County.

[126]Leiden was famous for the number and quality of printers and book sellers in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. English and Irish students bought lots of books, but the process was not one way. The university library records show that a number of prominent Englishmen donated books to the university, J.H. Lunsingh Scheurleer and G.H.M. Posthumus Meyles, *The University of Leiden in the Seventeenth Century: An Exchange of Learning.* (Leiden, 1975), p. 413; Pole Cosby to his son, 1 Jan. 1760, Stradbally Hall.

[127]`The accounts and receipts of the executors of William Vaughan Esq.', 1748-1760, Nat. Arch. Ire. M.4915.

[128]Ibid., M.4915.

[129]There is no record of Dudley Alexander Sydney Cosby attending Trinity. Maybe he studied in England or futher afield, Pole Cosby to his son, 1 Jan. 1760, Stradbally Hall.

college. It would be interesting to know the ratio between servants and students/fellows c.1760 and whether gentlemen were able then to bring their own servants with them. [130]

During the long vacation of 1723 Pole Cosby and his friend Warner Westenra made a tour of Holland and Germany. Much scholarship has been devoted to the activities of English and Irish grand tourists but less attention has been given to the sons of relatively minor Irish gentlemen who travelled to Europe in the eighteenth century to complete their education. How common was it for gentlemen in The King's and Queen's counties to send their sons abroad? The few scraps of evidence that have so far been quarried suggest that many more gentlemen travelled to the continent than one might have expected during the first half of the eighteenth century.

William Flower seems to have made a grand tour after university: he referred to Corelli in a letter to Swift.[131] In 1728 Lady Portland wrote to Flower from the Hague and spoke of her English son `wandering about in the little towns of France where none of us know anything of him except his being ill of a fever and ague, and yet his life is heven [sic] compared to that he will have in coming home'.[132] Accounts of the experiences of English travellers filtered into Ireland, and Flower himself seems to have had connections in the Low Countries. In 1735/6 he attempted to put his financial affairs in order since `I have thoughts of going soon into Holland with my son [i.e., Henry Flower who would then have been about 18] which requires me to press for money'.[133] Sometimes tutors rather than parents accompanied students abroad. In 1753 Mr. Watson offered his services to Lord Knapton:

> when I had the honour of seeing your lordship at Mr. Clements you seemed to be under some distress at not speaking french this takes the liberty of informing your lordship that I speak it tolerably well and have been a little abroad...I am thought to have a little understanding in pictures in that I coud not only be of some service to your lordship but some friends here who on my going abroad woud send some money.[134]

There are a number of tantalising references to the journeys made by gentlemen in the interests of health, leisure and educational improvement, and

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[130]Enumeration of houses, hearths and people in Dublin, 1695-6, by John South, a commissioner of the revenue in Ireland, reprinted in J. Gilbert, *Calender of the Ancient Records of Dublin,* (Dublin, 1898), Appendix II.5, p. 579.
[131]Flower to Swift, 24 Dec. 1736, Swift Letters, Vol. IV, p. 1. Sir Lawrence Parsons made a tour to Hamburg, see C. Casey, `Miscellanea Structura Curicosa', *Irish Arts Review,* (1990-91), pp. 85-91.
[132]Lady Portland to William Flower, 19 Oct. 1728, Flower Papers, N.L.I., Ms. 11,481.
[133] Copy of a letter by Flower, 3 March 1735/36, Flower Papers, D.20,226.
[134] Watson to Lord Knapton, 14 Feb. 1753, De Vesci Papers, N.L.I., Ms. K/7.

sometimes travellers crossed the paths of other Irishmen on similar sojourns.[135] Mr. Payne wrote to Vesey from Calais in 1732:

> I landed here this afternoon at 4 a clock after 6 hours at sea and was much surprised to meet accidently in the ship Mr. Philemon Brownlow, who is going to Naples for his health, as fast as his illness will permit him, he does not seem to despair of recovery, tho I protest I never saw any body reduced to such a skeleton'.[136]

One tends to hear of Irishmen abroad when they were in severe need of ready cash. Patrick Awly Magawly, who came from Frankfort in The King's County, seems to have lived in Italy and was also keen to maintain a satisfactory lifestyle while he was abroad. In 1756 he wrote to his father to thank him for the money he had received in Milan although he pointed out that his family's income was `not enough to live according to our rank, yet with the addition of 4-5 thousand pounds it would be sufficient to make a decent not a splendid figure'.[137]

While studying abroad Pole Cosby said that his `Father indeed seldom wrote anything but grumbleing scolding letters because he thought I did spent too much'.[138] Wrangles over the allowances that were given to gentry sons, whilst they were at school or college or as young men, could seriously damage relations within a family. When sons approached adulthood they often felt the desire to express their grievances in a more vigorous way and this could lead to some potentially explosive situations.

3.5 Transition to adulthood

It is still unclear whether or not the term `adolescence' has any real meaning in an eighteenth-century context. At what point was a child in a gentry household treated like an adult? In certain societies the age of `biological adulthood' roughly coincided with the age of `social adulthood'; the point when children of one or both sexes were given all the privileges and responsiblities of adulthood. Other societies have, through a series of social, cultural and legal constructs, created a period of transition between puberty and adulthood. On occasions the state has drawn up artificial boundaries (i.e.

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135 There is a fleeting reference to `Mr. Domville' travelling through Italy in 1741, Hartpole Papers, T.C.D. Ms. 1933, deed 37a.
136 Payne to Vesey at Mr. Brownlow's house in Lurgan, 25 Aug. 1732, G/4.
137 Patrick Awly Magawly to his father Francis Magawly at Frankford, K.C., 17 Aug. 1756, P.R.O.N.I., (transcript), T.2354.
138 Cosby Autobiog., p. 165.

specifying the age at which one obtains political representation, the ability to hold property and the right to marry).

In eighteenth-century Ireland such boundaries were of great relevance to those families who owned land. Indeed the important role that guardians played in this society has already been shown. For some elder sons (particularly those whose fathers died when they were children) the age of 21 was the most important dividing line in their life. Having `reached their majority' they were in a position to inherit and take on all the legal responsibilites of holding an estate. For others the dividing line was less clear cut. There were different rungs to adulthood. Many of the yardsticks that modern sociologists use to identify `adult males' cannot be applied so readily to the eighteenth century.

Among the gentry it was common to find sons in their twenties who still depended on their fathers for an allowance and lived in the parental household. Even those who opted for professional careers needed capital to get a commission, a degree or an apprenticeship. Some elder sons might have viewed their extended stay in the parental household in positive terms; a useful apprenticeship perhaps in estate management. But others might have seen it as a demeaning experience. They were mature adults (in physical and mental terms) who still had to rely on their fathers for money, consent to marriage and career opportunities. Sons only begun to feel more independent once they had married and created a household of their own. Even after marriage an elder son had to show due deference to his father if he wanted to safeguard his long-term economic interests. Marriage was of even greater importance to women, and daughters usually depended on the financial and emotional apron-strings of the parental household until they were betrothed. How did gentry children in the two counties navigate their way through these various rites of passage?

It would be useful to have an index of the average level of allowances that sons and daughters received over the course of the eighteenth century in order to understand the disputes between fathers and sons. Before he was 18, Pole Cosby seems to have received no more than pocket money to pay for sundry expenses whilst at school. The accounts of the Flower and Vaughan families also show that children received modest disbursements at that age.[139] Between the age of 18 and 21, whilst he was at university (between 1721 and 1723), Cosby received an allowance of £120 p.a. to pay for food, accommodation and travel on the continent. In 1686 Thomas Hales, was also given £120 p.a and in 1747 Billy Vaughan received an allowance of £100 a year over and above the costs of his education, rooms, books and clothes.[140]

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[139]Flower Papers, N.L.I., Ms. 11,470 (6); Nat. Arch. Ire. M.4915.

[140] Pym and Hales Papers, Somerset Record Office (Taunton), DD/BR/ely- 3/10; Vaughan's allowance for the quarter beginning 14 Dec. 1757 was £25, Nat. Arch. Irel. M.4915.

When Pole Cosby returned to Stradbally his allowance was dramatically reduced to £38 for the next two years (1723-1725). In the two years before his marriage (1725-1727) he was given £65. From the point of view of Dudley Cosby this allowance was more than adequate since his son was provided with housing, food and entertainment at Stradbally Hall. On discussing this cut in disposable income Pole later remarked to his own son in 1760 that `still I never muttered or complained'.[141]

Sons were likely to start biting at the bridle in that transitional period between the age of 21 and the time when they married. Fathers and sons sometimes had different ideas about the level of income that was required for a young gentlemen in each generation. The terms and conditions of strict settlement could tie up income, leaving little to be disbursed among the siblings while they remained unmarried. Pole Cosby thought that he had been particularly generous to his own son by giving him an allowance of £200 p.a., yet it would appear that Dudley Alexander Sydney wanted even greater financial independence.[142] It is significant that Pole Cosby returned home to Stradbally just a few days before his 21st birthday, and soon after went with his father to Dublin and `levied fines and suffered recovery'.[143] Though Pole might have had a very limited disposable income while he lived at Stradbally he was given considerable powers of attorney. It made sense for a landowner to prepare his eldest son for his inheritance by allowing him to take hold of the reins of the estate. But such power-sharing could create some of the most spectacular family breakdowns (as shown in chapter 2.2).[144]

Although Pole Cosby might have had to endure the violent outbursts of his disciplinarian father when he was in his early twenties he did at least understand the motivations behind his father's actions. He recalled in his autobiography ` he was a very kind father which is testified by the great pains he took in retreving the estate, for he in a manner did banish himself from his house home and country for 12 years ...that he might leave a clear estate to his children'.[145] In the two years between Pole's betrothal in 1727 and his father's death in 1729 relations in the Stradbally household seem to have been more stable. Dudley Cosby moved out of his ancestral home to make room for his son and he ensured that Pole and his wife had an adequate maintenance. In other instances married sons might have had to live with their wives in the parental household for a number of years and live off a meagre allowance. The accounts at Castle Durrow show that Henry Flower, the eldest son of William Flower,

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[141]Pole Cosby to his son, 1 Jan 1760, Stradbally Hall.
[142]Ibid.
[143]Cosby Autobiog., p. 168.
[144] Pole to Dudley Alexander Sydney, 1 Jan. 1760, Cosby Papers, Stradbally Hall. The original deed shows that 720 acres in Timahoe were sold to James Wills in 1725 (a lawyer in Dublin) for £400, Reg. Deeds, 14/15 May 1725- 44.248. no. 28926 and 5/6 Sept. 1724- 45.145. no. 28481.
[145]Cosby Autobiog., p. 181.

was paid a quarterly allowance of £75 in 1742/43. At this stage Henry was already married and one might have expected a more lavish maintenance for the son of a noble.[146]

The relationship between Pole Cosby and his son was more turbulent. In 1760 Dudley Alexander Sydney proposed to take his father to court for whittling away his inheritance. Pole replied to his son:

> I desire you most earnestly and in the most friendly and cordial manner not to go to the law with me, if you do from that moment I will renounce you and all the earth shall never join us again.[147]

Pole Cosby was advised by his children to fly to Holland because his `life was not safe in the three kingdoms' and he was `quilty of crimes that would hang me'. One might even go so far as to speculate that both Pole and his son suffered from mental illness. When in January 1765 Dudley took up his office as Minister Plenipoteniary to the Court of Denmark he was described in the official correspondence as `insane' and he was recalled to England shortly afterwards on health grounds.[148]

Younger sons, who tended to pursue careers outside the country house, were also carefully monitored by their fathers and there were often disagreements over the choice of vocation. The important role that close family friends and god-parents played in the rearing of children has yet to be explored. The dynamics of family relations are further complicated when one takes into account the many other residents in a gentry household.

3.6 Servants

Servants were a highly visible part of the eighteeth-century social landscape and they provide a vital key to our understanding of the gentry. By the mid-to late eighteenth century domestic servants constituted (after agriculture) the second largest occupational group.[149] Despite their numerical, economic and social importance

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[146]He may of course have received other sums that have yet to be uncovered, Flower Papers, N.L.I., Ms. 11,468 (6).

[147] Letter to his son 1 Jan. 1760, Stradbally Hall.

[148]The private and official correspondence of the Minister Plenipotentiary to the Court of Denmark, volume labelled `State Papers', Cosby Papers, T.3829/H/4.

[149] The census of the diocese of Elphin in 1749 would suggest that 10% or more of the population were engaged as servants and apprentices in a great variety of households (employers ranged from husbandmen and craftsmen to the nobility and gentry), Nat. Arch. Ire. M.2466, M/film, MFS.6. The 1841 census returns indicates that 5.5% the population in The King's County and 6% in The Queen's County were engaged as servants: It seems likely that a many apprentices were included as `servants' in these tables. The census figures for 1841 are taken from the general category `servants' in the grand total for each barony. If one uses the figures for the total number of `servants (domestic) taken from the

servants have left very few records of their own and as a result their role has been largely unexplored.

Modern perceptions of eighteenth-century servants are still shaped by the accounts of aristocratic households in the 1760s and 1770s, such as Carton and Castletown, at a time when new standards of comfort and refinement were being adopted by the highest echelons of society in order (*inter alia*) to distance themselves from the gentry. Similarly the image of the eighteenth-century household is often conceptualised in terms of the striking nineteenth-century photographs that show rows of servants carefully posed in their liveries beside the steps of a county house. Before 1760 the size, structure and organisation of gentry households was very different from those that have been described in later periods.

One first needs to establish, as far as possible, what contemporaries meant by the term `servant'. There is a danger of classifying too rigidly the various elements that made up a gentry household. In the letters to his daughter Alicia between 1746 and 1752 Bishop Edward Synge used the term `family' to describe both his domestic servants as well as his own relations.[150] In a few cases servants were literally `family' in that they were related by blood to their employer. The small scale of Irish Protestant society and the shortage of suitably qualified individuals meant that gentry families were likely to give kinsmen (e.g. cousins, nephews etc.) important positions (such as land agent, butler, house keeper, nurse or tutor) within the household.

Not all of the household servants employed by a gentleman actually worked inside the house and it is often difficult to disentangle the differences between domestic servants, tradesmen and other dependants. More than half of the servants who received wages at Castle Durrow in the 1720s worked out of doors (including the land bailiff, park keeper, herdsmen, shepherds, dairymaids, poultry maids and wood rangers).[151] If these workers (along with all of the permanent and seasonal labourers who worked on the demesne and the home farm) are considered as `servants', then one would exaggerate the number of people that William Flower considered as his `family' or `household staff'.[152] Conversely if one excludes all those who worked outside the narrow confines of the house, offices and stables, then one would

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break down of the county population then one reaches a lower proportion- 3.9% for King's and 4.2% for Queen's, *Census for Ireland for the Year 1841.*

150 M.-L. Legg ed., *The Synge Letters*, pp. 69-70.

151 Flower Papers, N.L.I, Ms. 11,461.

152 The leaseholds for properties in Stradbally show that there was an array of craftsmen in the town who were likely to have served the Cosby family in the offices and stables on a casual basis. There was also a considerable overlap between the duties of apprentices and servants: as well as learning a trade it was common for apprentices to assist their masters around the house.

underestimate the importance that gentlemen attached to many of their outdoor servants such as huntsmen and gardeners.[153]

In each gentry household there was usually a core of resident servants (e.g. house keeper, butler, groom, footman and coachman), but the changing requirements of the family meant that new types of servant were employed at different times. In the 1720s and 1730s William Flower took on additional permanent servants (nurses and maids) and extra part-time servants (writing and riding teachers) to look after his children. While the children were still young, such servants would have been considered as important members of the household staff. Once the children had grown up they would have been given a new role in the house (e.g. the nurses becoming waiting maids), or else discharged from service (e.g. the tutors would move onto another household).[154]

Some contemporaries also made a distinction between liveried and un-liveried servants. The liveried men-servants were a great source of prestige and were so called because they were provided with (often expensive) uniforms. They performed some of the more public tasks around the house (e.g. footmen, coachmen and butlers) and were more likely to obtain gratuities or vails from over-night guests. Pole Coby mentioned that his father kept `four servants in livery' along with a number of other servants.[155]

Thus throughout this analysis one should draw a distinction between a) liveried and un-liveried essential servants who actually resided and worked in the house, offices and gardens; b) essential servants who resided nearby (e.g. those living in Stradbally within sight of the landowner's gates); c) occasional resident and non-resident staff (e.g. nurses and tutors); d) permanent and casual outdoor servants (e.g. who worked on the demesne and home farm); and e) tradesmen, apprentices and other dependants from nearby who offered their goods and services.

In the first half of the eighteenth century only a handful of the top magnates kept a large body of 50 or more servants. The impressive line up of servants and level of consumption at the castles of say Charleville in Co. Cork and Kilkenny in the late

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153 In the 1720s gardeners do not feature on the list of wages for full time servants at Castle Durrow yet by the 1740s the trademen's bills show that Flower was employing a gardener, Mr. Dowling, and assistant gardeners. At Stradbally the gardeners were considered an integral part of the household staff and a great source of prestige (e.g. his head gardener Daniel Collins won a premium from the Dublin Society in 1742). Some servants, such as the land agent or steward, were highly prized and were not strictly classified as `domestic servants' by their employers. Land agents and rent collectors were men of some social standing (or related by blood to their employer) and they generally lived in separate farmhouses adjacent to the estate, Flower Papers, N.L.I. Ms. 11,462 (2); 17 June, 1742, Minute Book of the Dublin Society, Vol. 1741-1746, R.D.S. Library, p. 33.

155. Mr. Douglas, a school master who lived in the town of Stradbally was employed by the Cosbys in a number of capacities between 1682 and 1734, Cosby Autobiog., p. 184, 431.

155Ibid.,pp. 184, 317.

seventeenth century contrasts with the more modest gentry households in The King's and Queen's counties.[156]

The upper gentry with sizeable incomes (rentals of over £1000 in the first three decades of the eighteenth century) tended to have somewhere between 10 and 20 servants. William Flower of Castle Durrow, who entered the ranks of the nobility in 1733 employed c.12 permanent indoor servants, 1 or 2 occasional staff and more than 15 on his demesne in the early 1720s. His rental was over £2000 in the early eighteenth century rising to more than £3000 in the the 1770s.[157] The clothes and furniture bills from Abbey Leix in 1734 and 1736 show that the Vesey family employed at least 12 permanent male domestic servants.[158] The rental at Abbey Leix in the 1730s was probably less than that that at Durrow but the monies received from the church (while Thomas Vesey was Bishop of Ossory) would have boosted the total income.[159] In the late 1720s the household at Stradbally had 4 servants in livery along with other staff (bringing the total to about 10). Pole Cosby's brother in law, Robert Meredith of Shrowland, had a similar number of servants; `4 servants in livery besides all other necessary servants as Gardener, Stuard etc.' In the early 1730s when Pole Cosby inherited the estate (which brought in a rental of £2000 p.a.) there were 5 or 6 additional servants at Stradbally bringing the total to about 15 (since Dudley Cosby's widow and daughter employed servants of their own).[160]

The size of the lower gentry households seems have ranged from anything between 5 and 10 servants. Inventories give tantalising clues as to the number of servants who actually slept in a country house. In 1707 an inventory of the contents at William Flower's subsidiary seat, Abercunrig in Wales, shows that there were `3 old lether beds, 4 bedsteds' and an `old square table' in the garrets.[161] An inventory of the neo-Palladian Barbavilla House in Co. Westmeath in 1742-3 indicates that there

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[156]As Lord Lieutenant the Duke of Ormonde employed more than 100 servants (at his vice-regal residence in Dublin and a his seat in Kilkenny) and Lords Orrery and Cork, also had large households comprising of perhaps 40 or 50 servants. Lord Kingborough, according to the 1749 census of Elphin, had 40 servants. Overall there was a decline in the number of retainers employed by the nobility in the first half of the eighteenth century. It is only after c.1770 that one begins to see signs of a revival of the `great household' in Ireland; 1749 census from the diocese of Elphin; I am grateful to Dr. T.C. Barnard for providing statistics from an unpublished paper, `Servants in Ireland, 1660-1750', Irish History Seminar, Hertford College, Oxford, Feb. 1995.

[157] Fragments of rentals for Ireland and Wales, N.L.I., Ms. 11,451(3); for an estimate of the income in 1775 see *Analecta Hibernica,* Vol. xii (1943), pp. 144-7.

[158] De Vesci Papers, N.L.I., M/film, P.6768.

[159]There is no acccurate estimate of the episcopal income in this period. Arthur Young estimated that it was £2000 in 1776. In the same year Lord Harcourt estimated that it was £2500. The bishopric of Ossory was a middle ranking office in the episcopal hierarchy, Donald H. Akenson, *The Church of Ireland: Ecclesiastical Reform and Revolution, 1800-1885,* (London and New Haven, 1971), pp. 22, 36.

[160]Cosby Autobiog., pp. 184 and 317.

[161] Flower Papers, N.L.I., Ms. 11,453.

were 6 beds in the stables and servant's quarters.[162] In 1763 `an inventory of the furniture, cattle and corn belonging to George Pigott Esq.' of Knapton near Abbey Leix gives a picture of a modest and perhaps more representative gentry household (compared to Castle Durrow or Abbey Leix). In the garrets there were `2 creadle beds', `1 sarvants bedsted', hops and beer vessels. While it is posssible that junior servants (even at this date) may have slept on make shift beds with rugs and blankets on the floor one could suggest that Pigott's household might have consisted of only about half a dozen resident servants and probably a number of other staff who lived nearby.[163]

At the lower end of the social scale there were `gentlemen' or `gentlemen-farmers' who employed between 1 and 5 servants. Studies of small households in early modern England have shown that a surprising number of non-gentry families kept servants (including the urban pseudo-gentry, clergymen, professionals, merchants and farmers).[164] In Ireland the more limited evidence points to the same trend. A broad section of rural and urban householders employed one or two servants in the first half of the eighteenth century.[165] The record of the Quaker losses during the Williamite War for instance shows that in the late seventeenth century a number of prominent Friends kept servants. In 1690 Joseph Neale, who was described as a servant to Anthony Sharp, was attacked by rapparees and had his horse and clothes stolen. Similarly Ann Lockington of Mountmellick was robbed and `her servant man's lining' was taken.[166]

The proliferation of servants among so many social groups might have spurred on members of the nobility and upper gentry to increase both the number and type of servant in their households by the late eighteenth century. Those substantial landowners who were in a position to adopt new kinds of servant (performing more specialised tasks with more elaborate rituals) could still distance themselves successfully from their social inferiors.[167] By contrast it is likely that some of the lesser landed gentry (and those who had some claim to gentility found it increasingly

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162 `The Furnishings of a Palladian House in 1742/3: Barbavilla, Co. Westmeath', *Irish Ancestor,* Vol. II no. 2 (1979), pp. 86-97.

163 Pigott inventory, De Vesci Papers, N.L.I., Ms. K/10.

164 Ann Kussmaul, *Servants in Husbandry in Early Modern England,* (Cambridge, 1981).

165 In the diocese of Elphin in 1749 most tradesmen and craftsmen in the countryside employed one or two servants in their households; Census of the Diocese of Elphin, 1749.

166 An Account of the Quaker Sufferings, Portfolio 18, Friends Historical Lib, Dublin.

167The number of servants employed in non-gentry households in Ireland seems to have been small, L. Clarkson, `The Anatomy of an Irish Town: The Economy of Armagh, 1770', *I.E.S.H.,* Vol. 5 (1979), pp. 32-40; `Armagh 1770: Portrait of an Urban Community', in D. Harkness, *The Town in Ireland* (Belfast, 1979), p.86.

difficult to keep one step ahead of the burgeoning urban `middle' and head tenant/farmer classes.[168]

It has been suggested that the need for greater privacy, the multiplication of specialized rooms and the expansion of domestic service during the eighteenth century created more work for women servants in England.[169] This so-called `feminisation' of the household cannot be discerned in rural Ireland during the first half of the century. In gentry households such as Stradbally, all the key jobs- steward, butler, coachman, postilion, groom, footman, gardener and in the 1750s cook- were taken by men. At Castle Durrow the accounts and tradesmen's bills also show the relative importance of men servants in terms of their number and status in the house and demesne. In 1721 for instance only 5 or 6 out of 19 servants were women (viz the house keeper, kitchen maid, waiting maid, washer-woman, dairy maid and possibly the brewer).[170]

What kind of social background did domestic servants come from? What skills and personal attributes did gentry families look for? And how did the peculiar religious and social conditions in Ireland affect the recruitment of domestic servants? The eighteenth-century domestic servant is sometimes seen as a single young man or woman who came from a poor labouring background and was forced into service out of desperation. This image contrasts with the extant evidence. At least 15 of the voters in the poll books of Mayborough c.1760 were described as servants of local gentlemen and townsmen. John Fullom for example was `coachman to Col. Pigott and after to Cosby', Henry Morgan and John Thompson were servants to Lord Drogheda. As freemen these men were Protestant (at least nominally so) and would have had some property of their own. Far from being paupers these servants were, in the context of Maryborough town at least, men of some social standing.[171] Estate accounts from The King's and Queen's show that rural labour could be relatively cheap and plentiful (as shown by the labour-intensive wall building and tree planting schemes on the Castle Durrow demesne) but only a small proportion of the population had a basic education and the background (social or religious) that was necessary for many positions in Protestant households.The newly founded Charter Schools, which sprung up all over Ireland from the 1730s, were in part designed to produce young people who would be better equipped to become apprentices and domestic servants (see chapter 5.5).

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[168]At least 15 servants are listed in the Maryborough Poll book: some were servants in gentry households and others worked for prominent townsmen and farmers, like Mr. Higgins, a tenant of Pole Cosby at Stradbally, N.L.I., Ms. 1726.

[169]B. Hill., *Servants: English Domestics in the Eighteenth Century*, (Oxford, 1996), p. 22.

[170] Flower Papers, NL.I. Ms. 11,461.

[171] Maryborough book of voters, N.L.I., Ms. 1726.

Another expedient for reducing the shortage of good servants in Ireland was to import labour from England. Dudley Cosby brought over a spurrier called Thomas Holy (along with his family) from York in 1714. He was appropriately named for he was said to be `a Pious Religious rational sensible man and he was much regarded by us'. The youngest daughter, Martha, was taken into service by Pole Cosby's wife when she was just ten years old. Cosby bound the eldest son, Thomas, as an apprentice to a spurrier in Carlow. The second son, William, was bound by Cosby's mother to a shoemaker in Mountmellick. The youngest son, Joseph, was Cosby's postillion in 1737 and Holy's widow, Mary, became a dairymaid in the Stradbally household before she retired. This shows how the introduction of just one family could make a real difference to the running of households and to industry on this estate.[172] It was not unusual for whole families to be involved in the running of a household. At Abbey Leix in the 1730s John, Richard and George Hughes and Richard and Nicholas Hoy were among those who were employed by the Vesey's.[173]

Thomas Vesey's position in the Church of Ireland meant that he was more likely to have placed some emphasis on the religious credentials of his servants. They were probably expected to take part in family prayers, bible readings and attend services in the Protestant church. In other gentry households it is difficult to be sure about the religious background of servants. Surnames can give a clue as to whether the servants were more likely to have come from Gaelic or English-settler stock. All 15 servants who were listed as freemen of Maryborough had decidedly English sounding names. The servants who are named in accounts tend to be those who held more senior positions in the household and they were much more likely to be Protestant (Pole Cosby for instance mentioned servants called Holdbrook, Lewis, Hoy and Pidgeon). But the lower servants, whose names are not usually recorded, were much more likely to come from Catholic backgrounds.[174] The comparatively small number of Protestants in the countryside meant that Protestant employers had little choice whatever their preferences but to take on Catholic servants.[175]

Evidence from The King's and Queen's counties suggests that upper servants were often highly esteemed by their employers. When the Cosbys left Ireland for a year the house and demesne were placed in the hands of his trusty steward, Will

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172 Cosby Autobiog., p. 253.
173 De Vesci Papers, N.L.I., M/film, P.6798.
174 The data from the diocese of Elphin indicates that the households contained a varied mixture of Catholic and Protestant servants and that no generalisations can be made about the proportion of Protestants that were employed by Protestant landowners, census of the diocese off Elphin, 1749.
175 If the denominational break-down of the 1732 Hearth Tax retuns are to be believed then there were 790 Protestant (i.e. 9.5% of the total) and 7485 Catholic familes in Co. Roscommon. In the King's and Queen's counties the proportion of Protestant families was higher: 15.7% and 15.2% respectively.

Holdbrook.[176] On occasions Pole Cosby selected servants to witness various deeds. In 1733 John Foster, `domestick servant to Ephraim Dawson', put his signature to a leasehold of property in Stradbally. Other leases were witnessed by John Pidgeon, who was employed as the cook at Stradbally in the 1750s.[177] Coachmen and head gardeners also seem to have had an elevated postion in the servant hierarchy. In the Maryborough book of voters (c.1760) there are a number of coachmen listed, and in the book of freeholders of The Queen's County between 1758 and 1775 seven gardeners were registered to vote (compared to just two school masters).[178]

Loyal and long-serving upper servants were sometimes granted a pension or a reduction in rent, if they held lands owned by their employer. Mr. Douglas, who served Alexander, Dudley and Pole Cosby in succession, was `not capable of being in the least serviceable in taking care of anyhthing' during his last years on account of his age and infirmities (he had a wooden leg). But Cosby left `the strictest Orders that he sho'd have all possible care taken of him and that he sho'd want for Nothing...We obliged the seneschal to give him £3. p. an. wh[ich] served him for pocket money and as for all Manner of Clothing, we allways bought it for him'.[179] John Burgess, the coachman at Abbey Leix, was granted an annuity in 1746 for his `long and faithfull services' and a substantial decrease in the rent that he paid for a house and 65 acres owned by Lord Knapton.[180] In the same year it is noted in the Castle Durrow accounts that William Flower paid for the funeral of his coachman Mr. Flannigan (which came to £1.3.6).[181]

The basic obligation of the employer was to provide his permanent staff with food and accommodation. The quality of the lodgings varied from household to household. The developments in architecture (as outlined in chapter 4.3) at the beginning of the eighteenth century mirrored the need for a greater division between private and public space in gentry households. In the larger houses servants were increasingly put into purpose-built structures rather than secreted into the roof space or other nooks and crannies. In around 1732 Pole Cosby built `a scullery and store roome, and over them, rooms for maidservants and I made 6 rooms below in the shed behind the big house for menservants, and I did floor them with boards, plaster and glaze them and they are mighty tite rooms'.[182] On the basis of this description

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[176]Cosby Autobiog., p. 266.
[177] The wealthier families tended to prefer male cooks, and they were sometimes the highest paid servants in the household, Reg. Deeds, 1 Jan. 1733- 90.303. no. 64546, 23 Jan. 1756- 179.251. no. 120196, 25. Oct. 1752- 198. 214. no. 131851.
[178] Poll book, N.L.I., Ms. 1726; `Miscellanea: freeholders in the Queen's County, from 1 Jan., 1758, to 1 Dec., with date of registration', *J.K.A.S,* Vol. 6 (1909-1911), pp.309-327.
[179] Cosby Autobiog., p. 431.
[180] De Vesci Papers, NL.I., Ms. K/1.
[181] Flower Papers, N.L.I. Ms. 1,463 (1).
[182] Cosby Autobiog., p. 184.

Cosby's servants seemed to have had a secure and dry place in which to sleep and a modicum of privacy (i.e. separate rooms). The stable blocks of this period, such as the very fine example built by the Walsh family at Ballykillcavan near Stradbally, show that it was common for grooms and stable lads to sleep in specially built rooms above the horse enclosures, coach house, tack room and smithy.[183] Compared to the squalid conditions that most of the population had to endure in this period the servants quarters would have seemed reasonably comfortable.[184]

The survivng accounts of the domestic servants at Castle Durrow show the relative importance of each member of staff over the period 1721-50.[185] The total amount spent on domestic servants fluctuated greatly, depending on the number of casual workers who were employed in the household in any given year. In 1721 just over £43 was paid to 19 individuals whereas in 1725 over £59 is spent (because of the additional nursery staff) and expenditure also depended on the mobility of the household.[186] Overall, the total sum spent on servant's wages formed only a small proportion of the annual domestic budget. Compared to the amounts paid for other goods and services (e.g. clothes, horses, coaches and legal expenses) the outlay on servants was relatively modest. In the list of household disbursements at Castle Durrow in 1735, 21% of the total was spent on servants wages compared to 39% on `house keeping', 23% on `labouring', 9% on purchasing bullocks for the home farm, 8% on `tradesmen' and 0.5% on the garden.[187]

Some servants would have received part of their income in the form of tips or vails. Gentlemen were more likely to record such sums in their own pocket books and journals rather than in the ordinary household accounts. William Muschamp Vesey left instructions in his will, dated 1761, for `the servants to be paid in full and over

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183 Ire. Architec. Archive, Photo. Box- Laois, 29/53.

184 Charles Coote remarked in 1801 that `the hogs in England have more comfortable dwellings than the majority of the peasantry in Ireland', Coote, Q.C., pp. 23-24.

185 Flower Papers, N.L.I. Ms. 11,458 (1) and Ms. 11,461.

186 The absence of the family from the estate could mean that less was spent on the resident servant staff, but the servants who travelled with the family might have been given additional sums to pay expenses on the road (i.e. for food, lodgings, clothes etc.). In July 1717 for instance Mr. Vigors paid £5.10.10 `to servants and children on a single journey to Carlow. Account book, 30 Dec. 1719, Vigors Papers, Carlow Public Library and Archive, N.L.I., M/film. P. 7629.

187 The highest paid member of the staff was the steward (£10 p.a.), followed by the bailiff (£6), house keeper (£6), butler (£5) and coachman (£3). The lowest paid servants were the kitchen, poultry, dairy and chamber maids (range of £1- 2). If the total expenditure of William Flower could be calculated (this would include the expenditure on travel, gifts and disbursements in Dublin etc. that was usually recorded in private pocket books) then the real proportion of his budget that was spent on labour in the household would be even smaller. The wages at Castle Durrow were similar to those that were paid to domestic servants in England for much of the eighteenth century, although there were great disparities between households. According to Hill the average wage for a housekeeper was £4, a steward £4, women servants £2, men servants £2-3; Flower Papers, N.L.I., Ms. 11,458 (1), 11,461; B. Hill, *Servants*, p. 164.

and above 10 sh. to each of them'.[188] One catches a rare glimpse of the way in which servants were given tips in a bill (in the Downshire Papers) for a celebratory dinner in Dublin in 1757. The `eating' cost £4.10.0, the wine £6.10.0, the beer for the quests 0.6.0, `the beer ordered for the bonfires', £2.0.0, `the french horn' 0.5.5 and the servants were given 0.9.7.[189] It was also customary for over-night guests to tip various servants when they departed.

Another important perquisite came in the form of clothes. The image of the household was very important and the liveries were often expensive. At Tentore House Col. Fitzpatrick spent £7.13.10 in 1719 on `liveries for the boys'.[190] His neighbour, William Flower, spent £31.10.0 in 1712/13 on `scarlet and blue cloth linings and trimming for servant's livery' and in 1749 £21.11.8 was laid out on 188 yards of material to make coats for the servants.[191] The more expensive cloth, as well as the silk, mohair, buttons and gold twist for the trimmings, were supplied by the same Dublin tailors who made up the clothes for the Flower family. These coats were designed to last and would be passed down from servant to servant until they were worn out. There are numerous references to servant's liveries being patched up. In 1740 for instance £3.9.10 was spent on `mending servant's old coats'.[192]

The accounts show that other garments (i.e. breeches, over coats and shoes) were also provided by the employer. In 1707 `12 dozen black coates and 20 vests' were made for the servants at Castle Durrow.[193] At Abbey Leix between 1734 and 1736 11 men servants were supplied with items of clothing costing more than £13.[194] The Vigors household bills from 1722 shows that some servants were also provided with wigs.[195] It was also a custom to supplement the servant's clothes with the cast off garments and wigs from members of the family (which would not be recorded in the usual accounts, if at all).

There were also a number of other ways in which a paternalistic employer could improve the quality of life for the servants. In 1746/47 William Flower laid out

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188 De Vesci Papers, N.L.I, Ms. B/11.

189 Miscellaneous interpolation in a ledger of 1752-60, Downshire Papers, P.R.O.N.I. D.671/A1/21b.

190 Fitzpatrick rental, N.L.I., Ms. 3000.

191 Flower Papers, N.L.I., Ms. 11,458 (1), 11,467.

192 Flower Papers, N.L.I, Ms. 11,469 (20). There are many further examples in the De Vesci Papers, e.g. in 1747 2 suits of `servant's furniture and lacd with embroiderd crest', £3.5.0 and in 1749 `3 suits of servants cloaths embroidered', £4.10.0, N.L.I., K/2.

193 Flower Papers, N.L.I, Ms. 11,463 (1).

194 In 1734 one servant, Dick Hughes, was given a suit of clothes, buckrum and canvas, breeches, `blue druggatt' and a `wrapper' (which came to 0.7.4). Two years later his clothes were replaced with another suit, buckram and canvas, breeches and cloth for other other garments (0.17.10); De Vesci Papers, N.L.I, M/film. P. 6798.

195 In 1722 0.10.0 was spent on wigs for the servants, Vigors Papers, Carlow Public Library, N.L.I., M/film, P.7629.

£1.1.6 on medicines for his servants.[196] Upper servants, such as the house keeper could also receive other perks such as an allowance of tea (or leaves which had already been used once by the family) and wine. William Flannigan, the coachman at Castle Durrow, received `tobacco, pipes, candles and nails' before he died in 1746.[197] A tantalising account from the King family of Ballylin in 1763 lists payments for `hankerchiffs', `cards' and `cards servants' (presumably playing cards or money for gambling with).[198]

How satisfactory was the relationship between family and household, and when did relations break down? The references to the performance of servants in correspondence tend to be rather negative. Servants are mentioned when they have been responsible for some misdemeanour rather than when they have carried out their routine tasks in a satisfactory manner. The correspondence of Synge and Swift is full of grumbles about the level of alcohol consumption, petty thefts, clumsiness, book fiddling and indolence among the servants in their households.[199] After a visit to the Deanery to see Swift in 1736, William Flower wrote that `I am angry with your servant, for not acquainting you I was at your door'.[200] In 1742 Daniel Robertson of Galway wrote to Mrs. Purefoy near Edenderry and asked `How came you to dismiss mother midnight? Did cats eat your Count Book as the saying is? [201] Such insolent and dishonest behaviour merely confirmed the suspicions and prejudices of Protestant gentlemen. It was further evidence that the Irish were not inclined to hard work and obedience.

In about 1730 a servant or tradesman in the household at Castle Durrow wrote at the bottom of a bill:

> I wish your honnour long life and health
> though this will not increase my wealth
> to seall this wish he may not live one hour
> that would not drink a health to noble Col. Flower.[202]

Servants felt obliged to display deference and devotion and this simple verse would have been very flattering to William Flower. But the principal grievances of those who laboured long and hard in the houses, offices and stables are rarely heard.

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196 Flower Papers, N.L.I, Ms. 11,463 (1).
197 Ibid., Ms. 11,470 (7).
198 King Papers, c. 1763, N.L.I, Ms. 3519.
199 Swift wrote a satirical guide to domestic servants; *Directions to Servants in General,* (London, 1745).
200 Lord Castle Durrow to Dr. Swift, 4 Dec. 1736, Swift Letters, Vol. IV, pp. 548.
201 Daniel Robertson of Eyre Court to Mrs. Purefoy, 22 May 1742, N.L.I., Ms. 8904 (1).
202 Undated bill, Flower Papers, N.L.I., Ms. 11,466.

For many servants the most unsatisfactory thing about their wages was not the amount of money that they received, but the often irregular manner in which it was paid. A sample of the accounts from the two counties show that servants generally received their wages every quarter or half year. But often the wages were in arrears and payments were carried over into the following year. In some cases servants might wait years (or until a different member of the family inherited) before they received all the emoluments that were owed to them.[203] The less than regular payment of wages could be seen as a cynical move on the part of the employers to keep their servants in check. By holding back wages, servants might be dissuaded from stealing or running away from service.

But a reading of the evidence suggests that the grievances of servants were less about pay and conditions and more closely bound up with the restrictions that were placed on their behaviour. The rather confined environment of a country house coupled with the inability to form open relationships with people inside or outside the household caused some servants to leave before their contracts expired. For many servants the larger and more fluid social scene in Dublin seemed the more attractive option. The Dublin newspapers contain many reports of servants who had absconded from country houses. In 1740 Crewe Chetwood of Woodbrook placed an advertisement in *Pue's Occurrences* concerning Ellen Owen, a cook maid who

> in the absence of her master, who left her the care of his family, house, furniture &c., eloped from his service the beginning of June last. This is to acquaint the public not to entertain or receive the said Ellen Owen into their service, she not being discharged from her said master, nor given up the charge committed to her care.[204]

In the same year Issac Coutier, a Huguenot from Portarlington, sought the return of a servant: `French lad, but speaks very good English, about seventeen years of age, left active service, if he returns by March 6 [he] will be pardoned'.[205] The relative anonymity of the capital must have made it difficult to track down absconders. Even as early as 1695 there were perhaps 7000 servants/apprentices in Dublin and by 1798

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203 At Birr Castle in 1652/3 for example £17.7.6 was paid to three servants: `Robert Sharpe, Kate and the cook maid', which included wages that had not been paid during the life of the previous owner; Birr Castle Mss. A/12, p. 71.

204 *Pue's Occurrences,* 2-5 August, 1740; W.G. Strickland, `The Chetwoods of Woodbrook', *J.K.A.S,* Vol. 9 (1918-22), pp. 222-223.

205Issac Philippe de Coutiers, 1701-1751 (son of Guy Coutiers who settled in Portarlington shortly after the Williamite War) an army officer from 1724, still serving as captain in `Wentworth's Regt. in 1740; T.P. Le Fanu, `French Veterans at Portarlington', *J.K.A.S.,* Vol. 11 (1930-33), pp. 183-184; *Pue's Occurrences,* 11-15 March 1740.

this number may have increased to more than 18,000.[206] The mobility and relative freedom of the city was not always such an attractive alternative to working in a country house. Many of the servants who ran away to search for a better life ended up as destitutes. In the Maryborough book of voters Mr. Brennan is recorded as a `servant to Col. Piggot' sometime before 1760. At the time of the election the town clerk had scribbled next to his name `now a scavenger in London'.[207]

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[206] John South's figures for the number of houses, hearths and people in Dublin 1695/96 suggest that servants (apprentices may also have been included) made up 17% of the urban population. By the end of the eighteenth century the number of servants in Dublin had risen markedly in numerical terms (although perhaps not to the same extent as the general population). The Rev. James Whitelaw's enumeration of 1798 indicates that they might have made up 11% of the total population. Enumeration of houses, hearths and people in Dublin, 1695-96, by John South, a commissioner of revenue in Ireland, reproduced in J. Gilbert, *Calendar of Ancient Records of Dublin,* (Dublin, 1898), Appendix II.5, p. 579; Rev. James Whitelaw, *An Essay on the Population of Dublin,* (Dublin, 1805), p. 14.

[207] In this context `scavenger' probably meant `pauper'; N.L.I., Ms. 1726.

3.7 Consumption: food and drink

So far we have looked systematically at the structure and size of the family, the various relationships, the transition from childhood to adulthood and the role of servants, but very little has been said about about how the household actually functioned. The contemporary accounts that have survived tend to relate to unique entertainments and rites of passage festivities rather than on more mundane activities. This has led some analysts to describe the workings of the household in terms of feasting and an endless round of social events. A country house was, first and foremost, `a machine for living in' and one needs to tune in to the daily, weekly and monthly rhythm of different types of household rather than just the more unusual shows of hospitality and display, such as weddings, funerals and royal birthdays.

The eating and drinking habits of the Irish have long been a source of interest, not least because of the cataclysmic effects of the Great Famine. The argument that the Irish Protestant gentry in the eighteenth century consumed extraordinary quantities of alcohol and meat has until recently been based on three main strands of evidence.

Firstly it is said that the Irish Protestants followed a long tradition of feasting and drinking.[209] This evidence, though convincing, should not be pushed too far since it had been shown that the medieval-type household was also slow to disappear in England, Wales and Scotland.[210] At the same time one should not ignore the new modes of dining and hospitality that were common to both Protestant and Catholic households by the late seventeenth century. The second strand of evidence consists of the contemporary descriptions of the behaviour of Irish gentlemen. One has to try and sift the first-hand accounts (the letters and diaries that record what gentlemen ate and drank on a particular occasions) from the anecdotal jottings. Jonah Barrington's memoirs do not fit neatly into either category. His prose style oscillates between that of a historian and a humorist: he gives a convincing account of his own childhood in a gentry household in The Queen's County while at the same time he makes wild generalisations about the Irish in order to entertain the reader. The third type of data comes from the fragmentary customs records

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[209]T.C. Barnard, `Integration or Separation? Hospitality and Display in Protestant Ireland, 1660-1800', in Laurence Brockliss and David Eastwood, *A Union of Multiple Identities: The British Isles, c. 1750- c.1850,* (Manchester, 1997), p. 128.

[210]Felicity Heal, *Hospitality in Early Modern England,* (Oxford, 1990); M. Girouard, *Life in the English Country House,* (New Haven, 1979).

relating to Irish ports. On the basis of the legal imports of wine and brandy some analysts have argued that the per capita intake of alcohol in Ireland was very high.[211]

Perhaps a more realistic guide to gentry consumption are the household accounts. Among the numerous ledgers and tradesmen's bills in the Flower, Vesey, Parsons and Fitzpatrick collections are hundreds of tiny clues as to the *real* and not the imagined level of expenditure on food and drink.[212]

What is striking about the accounts at Castle Durrow between 1710 and 1745 is not so much the quantity of any staple food but the rich diversity of foods that were consumed by the family and household. Among the many isolated receipts are the `flesh bills' which give one a sense of the annual consumption of meat.[213] It is difficult to calculate what proportion of this meat came from the home farm and how much came from further afield. Certainly quantities of chicken, duck, beef and salmon were bought in Kilkenny. Sea food was an important variant to the diet and casks of herrings, lobsters, crabs and oysters were bought regularly from Mr. Warren of York Street in Dublin. Occasionally more unusual delicacies (such as the 14 brace of carp fish that cost £1.5.9 in 1747) were added to the menu. The seeds bought from Cut Purse Row in Dublin also point to a wide variety of fruit and vegetables being grown in the kitchen garden.[214]

The Olive Tree in Fishamble Street in Dublin provided the Flower family with more expensive luxuries such as oranges and lemons, pepper, currants, nutmeg, capers, anchovies, mushrooms, walnuts, almonds, treacle and aniseed. Oranges and lemons could be used as a index of the penetration of new goods into Ireland.[215] Jonah Barrington described the novelty value of such goods in the first half of the eighteenth century. He said that from the time of `the very first importation of oranges and lemons to the Irish

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[211]But what comparable figures are there for England, Scotland and Wales? Without an accurate index based on all the available `port books' one cannot test this assumption. The real level of imports for certain goods can never be calculated because of the high incidence of smuggling in Ireland during this period. See S.J. Connolly, `Religion, Law and Power', p. 67; L.M. Cullen, `The Galway Smuggling Trade in the 1730s', *Journal of the Galway Archaeological and Historical Society,* Vol. XXX (1962), D. Dickson, `Economic History of the Cork Region', p. 525.

[212]Prof. Clarkson's study of 13 household accounts from other parts of Ireland (covering the period 1674-1828) for example has already begun to tackle some of these earlier assumptions. Clarkson's provisional findings have indicated that the per capita consumption of wine and spirits in Ireland was substantially lower than that of England. Leslie Clarkson, `Hospitality in Ireland', paper given at the Irish Conference of Historians, at St Patrick's College, Maynooth in May 1997. I am grateful for his comments.

[213]In 1743 the total came to £39.8.10 and in the following year it was £64.3.3. In 1736 the bill (possibly incomplete) came to £17.17.7, Flower Papers, N.L.I., Ms. 11,467.

[214]E.g. Savoy lettuce, Windsor beans, celery, Dutch cabbage, radish, `esshallots', Reedbeet', onions etc. The Veseys also ordered a wide variety of vegetable seeds, including asparagus and coriander; Flower Papers, N.L.I., Ms. 11,467; De Vesci Papers, N.L.I., J/3.

[215]A cargo book among the De Vesci papers lists oranges and lemons in 1665 being sold ny Netherlandish traders; De Vesci Papers, N.L.I., m/film, P. 6797

capital' his grandfather made sure they were `packed in boxes and immediately sent to the Great House of Cullenahgmore, and not sooner did they arrive, than the good news of fresh fruit was communicated to the colonel's neighbouring friends, accompanied by the usual invitation'.[216] In 1708/09 Lady Vesey asked Mr. Fitzgerald to keep his eyes peeled `if there be any good oranges in town [Dublin] find a 1/4 hundred' and in 1715 the Veseys paid 9 pence for 6 oranges (i.e. 1.5 pence each). By 1729 the Flowers were able to buy 100 oranges and lemons for 5 shillings 10 pence (i.e. 0.7 pence each). The drop in price might have been due to the greater availablity of such goods (and not just seasonal fluctuations).[217] Within a relatively short space of time an item of food could change from being a novelty to an accepted part of the daily diet.

One can underestimate the rate of change in the diet and tastes of certain social groups. In the early seventeenth century for example tobacco and spices were valuable commodities and they have been used as an indicator of expenditure in the top echelons of society. But by the 1690s tobacco was considered as a staple good and is a less valuable as an index of gentry consumption. In 1719 for instance William Flower was able to buy 8 pounds of tobacco for 0.6.8., and this might well have been given to the servants of the household.

In the eighteenth century tea, coffee, chocolate and sugar were among the most important high status foodstuffs. Indeed in the household accounts and bills these 4 goods are generally listed next to each other. The demand for these goods was relatively inelastic and the state was quick to recognise their fiscal potential. A reading of the household accounts would suggest that sugar was already part of the diet in virtually all gentry households by 1690. The inventories of the Quaker losses in the period 1689-91 do not refer to stocks of sugar since it was bought in small quantities (by the pound in lumps or cones). Instead there are numerous references to cheese (for which the Quakers were renowned) that could have been used to sweeten the palate. But the price of sugar, unlike tea, was not prohibitively high and it is likely that the `middling sort' were able to buy the coarser varieties of cane sugar. The gentry, always keen to keep one step ahead of their social inferiors, became more discriminating and looked for the highest quality sugar. Lady Vesey noted in a shopping list of the goods to were be bought at the Three Keys in Castle Street in Dublin in 1708/09 that she was not satisfied with the last batch of

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[216]Barrington, Personal Sketches, Vol. 1, p. 6.
[217]De Vesci Papers, N.L.I., Ms. J/2; Flower Papers, N.L.I., Ms. 11,458 (1).

white sugar. In another list from 1713 the Veseys ordered a pound of `double refined sugar' for 0.5.6[218].

The vogue for coffee and chocolate had caught on in the fashionable town house circles of England and Ireland three decades before tea. Some of the letters that Gilbert Rawson wrote to his landlord, John Fitzpatrick, in 1709 for example were addressed to `Lucas's Coffee House in Dublin'.[219] By the early eighteenth century there was less of a shortage of these goods and in 1715 the Veseys were able to buy a pound of coffee in Dublin or Kilkenny for a little as 0.3.3.[220] By contrast the cult of tea drinking had only just begun and demand soared.[221] There was little if any time laspse between the beginning of this craze in England and Ireland. Upper gentry families such as the Veseys and the Flowers were at the vanguard of these new developments. The earliest Irish made silver teapots date from c.1700 and in 1707 the Flower accounts show that a goldsmith was paid 0.2.6. for mending the teapots in the household.[222] Tea drinking became one of the most important social rituals and both the Veseys and the Flowers engaged the top silversmiths of the day to make teapots. In 1709 Alderman Thomas Bolton (who became the Lord Mayor of Dublin in 1716) made a teapot and frame with the Vesey arms engraved on it for £12.15.9.[223] In 1714 Flower commissioned Thomas `Warkman' (possibly Thomas Walker) of Dublin to make a teapot and `dish' for £11.5.9.[224] The equipage needed for tea making had also become much more elaborate by the first decade of the century as a letter from an associate of Lady Vesey in 1710 shows:

> My lady [Vesey?] begs the favour of you to send this copper tea equpage to the people that made then and to get them to clean it very well and mend the hook of the kettle and get a glass lamp for it to fit the trim thing it goes in and lett the mouth of it fitt the brass that the cotten goes through and 2 chinna cups to fitt where the lamp is putt in for carrying for it is to

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[218]The Flowers also tended to specify if they required `Bristol lumps' or some other type of sugar' Lady Vesey to Mr. Fitzpatrick, 9 Jan. 1708/09, and 15 April 1713; De Vesci Papers N.L.I, J/2.
[219]Lucas's Coffee House was established by 1706; Fitzpatrick Papers, Nat. Arch. Ire., M.3189 and 3191.
[220]De Vesci Papers, N.L.I. Ms. J/3; coffee bought in Kilkenny, Flower Papers, N.L.I., Ms. 11,463 (1).
[221] Between 1720 and 1740 for instance the tea exports to Europe are estimated to have doubled from about 30,000 to 60,000 piculs a year (one picul = 60.5 kg), John E. Willis Jr., `European consumption and Asian production in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries', in J. Brewer and R. Porter eds., *Consumption and the World of Goods* (London, 1993), p. 144.
[222]Flower Papers, N.L.I., Ms. 11,458 (1).
[223]De Vesci Papers, N.L.I., Ms. J/3 envelope 2 (tradesmen's bills).
[224]N.L.I., Ms. 11,467. For Walker and other early eighteenth century silversmiths, *Irish Silver, 1630-1820,* (exhibition catalogue, Trinity College, Dublin, 1971), p. 26.

be made a present of to Mr. Sing [Synge?] to make his tea in Portegil [Portugal].[225]

It is noteworthy that this description was sent by a woman to another and concerned the needs of the lady of the house at Abbey Leix. From the 1690s many of the tea shops that had sprung up in London and Dublin had became very popular among the ladies just as the coffee houses in the Restoration period were traditional haunts of professionals and gentlemen. By the early eighteenth century tea drinking, unlike the taking of alcohol and coffee, had become associated with quiet domesticity in a country as well as an urban setting.[226] To some clergymen, like John Vesey of Abbey Leix, tea drinking in the afternoon might have been seen as a way of expressing sobriety and gentility just as the swilling of wine and port in the evening demonstrated a more masculine form of hospitality.

The accounts show that in the first quarter of the eighteenth century the Vesey family spent considerable sums on tea and the other new high status beverages. One bill in 1711 shows that £14.11.9 was spent on canisters of chocolate and coffee alone and in 1718 at least £6.1.3. was spent on 4/4 pd Imperial and Green tea'. Green tea was more expensive than the black tea called Bohea that was drunk by most gentry families. After c.1720 the price of tea began to decline and this trend continued throughtout the century.[227]

One important drink that has been overlooked by earlier chroniclers is bottled water. Spas were very popular in the eighteenth century and a number of Irish gentry families travelled to resorts in England and parts of Ireland. The Blundells, Blands, Cookes, Cootes, Cosbys, Flowers, Molesworths and Veseys are among the families from The King's and Queen's counties who are known to have `taken the waters' in Bath between 1690 and 1760. If one was unable to go to a spa in person then the supposed medicinal properties of the spa were brought to the household in the form of bottled water. Among the consignment of goods sent to Dublin from Bristol cargo ship in

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[225]This seems to refer to some kind of portable tea making kit, Mary Nicholls to Elizabeth Fitzgerald, 11 August 1710, De Vesci Papers, N.L.I., Ms. J/8.

[226]Indeed it has been said that the `ladys' tea party' was popular enough to have become a source of amusement for many contemporary satirists; John E. Willis Jnr, `European consumption and Asian production', p. 142.

[227]In 1775 for instance the King family were able to buy a pound of green tea for just 0.10.0. The account book from a household in Clandonagh probably gives a better idea of the expenditure of a more middling gentry familiy on these goods. In 1753 `sugar and sundries' came to £4.8.11, `tea at 3 1/2' was £2.1.4 and coffee and chocolate bought in Kilkenny came to 0.13.0; King household accounts, N.L.I., Ms. 4180; N.L.I., Ms. 1593.

December 1719 were `20 dozen bottles of Hotwells Water'.[228] The water was drawn from a spring near the River Avon at Bristol and the Hotwells area of the city became a minor resort (and was visited by Pole Cosby in 1733).[229] Lady Vesey who was a regular spa goer ordered `2 dozen bottles of sealed `Bath water' in 1706/07 for 0.16.0.

The adoption of these new beverages should not be taken as a sign that the Protestant elite became more sober. These new drinks acted as supplements rather than alternatives to alcohol. In an urban context the communal drinking of tea, coffee and chocolate was not always synonymous with civilised behaviour. In Dublin during the 1690s the societies for the `reformation of manners' had attempted to clamp down on the kinds of vice that was induced by alcohol.[230] Coffee houses might at first have been seen as more sober alternatives to ale houses but many of them also sold alcohol and they were far from tranquil, as shown by the number of duels and fights that took place in these establishments.[231] The accounts of Dublin town house society in the first half of the eighteenth century give the impression that alcohol lubricated the wheels of sociability at all levels of society (from the vice-regal court to the coffee house).[232] How far did the attitudes and pattern of alcohol consumption in the countryside compare to that of the capital?

On the basis of some of the more sensational accounts it must appear that a large proportion of country gentlemen were alcoholics. Cosby wrote that William Freeman of The Queen's County `dyed at Mr. Higgins of Draming' and that Nathaniel Freeman `his second brother died three or four years before him of Draming and Drinking' .The third and fourth sons also, according to Cosby, had the same fate and even `Mrs. Freeman alias Keiring was as bad as any of her children' and `dyed about the year 1713 of drinking'.[233] Pole Cosby also spoke at great length about his father's severe gout in the 1720s and there

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[228]The Shipping Book of Noblett, Ruddock and Co.. 1719-1721, Bristol Record Office, Doc. 08226.
[229]D.M. Beaumont, `An Irish Gentleman in England: The Travels of Pole Cosby, c. 1730-35', *Journal of the British Archaeological Association,* Vol. CXLIX (1996), pp. 37-54.
[230]T.C. Barnard, `Reforming Irish Manners: The Religious Societies in Dublin during the 1690s', The *Historical Journal,* Vol. XXXVI (1992), p. 805.
[231]Lucas's Coffee House on Cork Hill near Dublin Castle was notorious for duelling, James Kelly, *That Damn'd Thing Called Honour: Duelling in Ireland 1570-1860,* (Cork, 1995), p. 77.
[232]In Mary Delany's vivid descriptions of the lavish entertainments at Dublin Castle in the 1740s and 50s she records the more complex and at times contradictory views towards alcohol. She did attend Bacchanalian feasts where wine literally flowed from elaborate indoor fountains but she also noted that there were more Arcadian venues where `If tea, coffee or chocolate were wanting, you held your cup to a leaf or a tree, and it was filled'; 7 Feb. 1752, Angelique Day ed. *Letters from Georgian Dublin: The Correspondence of Mary Delany 1731-1768,* (Belfast, 1991), p. 50.
[233]Cosby Autobiog. p. 258.

are references throughout the eighteenth century to this particular malady.[234] Jonah Barrington wrote in the 1820s that:

> I have often heard it said that, at the time I speak of, [the early and mid-eighteenth century] every gentleman in the Queen's county was honoured by the gout. I have since considered that its extraordinary prevalence was not difficult to be accounted for, by the disproportionate quantity of acid contained in their seductive beverage, called rum-shrub which was then univerally drunk in quantities nearly incredible, generally from supper time till morning, by all country gentlemen, as they said, to keep down their claret.[235]

What historians, such as Lecky and MacLysaght, writing in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries considered excessive drinking was probably conventional by the standards of eighteenth-century Europe. It might well have been considered normal to drink a bottle of wine as well as other spirits at each evening meal. In Pole Cosby's account of his father's consumption in the 1710s and 20s he said that the household got through 2 hogsheads of wine each year. If each hogshead was of a standard size (i.e. approximately 50 imperial gallons) then the household at Stradbally consumed about 1.2 litres (or 2.1 pints) of wine a day. Given that `his table was never covered with less than 5 & 6 but very often more', the alcohol intake of this family was not high. Dudley Cosby was probably more abstemious than many of his neighbours on account of his gout and one can almost detect a Purtianical zeal to his character that would have put a stop to any drunkenness.[236]

The household bills from Castle Durrow indicate that Mrs. Jane Sampson of Dublin was the principal supplier of wine to the Flower family in the 1740s. Each of the surviving bills was for £14.0.0 (this sum might represent the family's monthly consumption of wine).[237] In addition there must have been other suppliers of wine based in Kilkennny.[238] The Irish gentry may have had a penchant for red wine, but this was not at the exclusion of other drinks. Dudley Cosby was advised by Prof. Bourhave of Leiden

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[234]The accounts of the King family for instance show that in 1775 Doctor Feegan was paid £1.2.9. `when I had a violent fit of the gout'; King Papers, N.L.I., Ms. 4180.

[235]Jonah Barrington, *Personal Sketches of His Own Times*, (London, 1827), Vol. 1, p. 6.

[236]Cosby Autobiog., p. 91.

[237]Flower Papers, N.L.I., Ms. 11,467 and 11,468 (1).

[238] The most complete run of bills from Abbey Leix indicates that between April 1751 and April 1752 the Veseys spent no less than £260 on wine; De Vesci Papers, N.L.I, Ms. K/2.

to drink `Renish and Moselle' white wine in order to ease his gout.[239] The Veseys and Flowers also had a taste for French and Dutch varieties of white wine.[240] In 1708/09 Lady Vesey wrote to Mr. Fitzpatrick `I beg of you to look out for some good white wine'.[241]

In the grander establishments beer and cider seems to have the staple drink of servants rather than family members at meal times.[242] Cosby mentioned that the household consumed 60 barrells of beer each year. Castle Durrow, like most large country houses, had its own brew house and hops and apples were grown in the kitchen gardens. But the references to beer glasses (in addition to the tankards that servants probably drank from) in inventories suggest that members of the middling and lower gentry varied their mealtime drinking.

The wide range of specialist drinking vessels that were being produced point to a more sophisticated drinking palate than some of the traditional images of the gentry would suggest (i.e. squires swilling bumpers of claret all night). Among the glasses inventoried at the home of George Piggott of Knapton in 1763 were `9 long beer glasses' , 3 hob nob glasses', 12 liqour glasses', `38 weine glasses', `10 tumblers' and `9 decanters'.[243] Among the glasses bought by Laurence Parsons of Birr from an auction in Dublin in 1741/42 was a `Glass the Glorious Memory' for which he paid 0.9.0.[244] Monteiths and punchbowls have been associated with mascululine excess and *louche* behaviour (as portrayed in Hell Fire paintings) but punch was in fact drunk by a wide variety of families. The Veseys may have enjoyed tea and coffee in the 1730s but they also must have served punch (they repaired the handle of a punch ladle in 1736).[245]

Exploring the context in which alcohol was drunk rather than just the precise amount or type of alcohol brought into the household may provide a better indicator of the level of gentry consumption. The gentleman at home probably drank a variety of alcoholic and non-alcoholic beverages in moderation, yet when placed in a more

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[239]Cosby Autobiog., p. 178.

[240]Flower Papers, N.L.I., Ms. 11,465; De Vesci Papers, N.L.I., J/2.

[241]1 Jan. 1708/09, De Vesci Papers, N.L.I., Ms. J/2.

[242]Although the customs records suggest that the Irish were very fond of brandy there is little direct reference to it in the accounts in the period 1690-1760. There are far more direct references to port; e.g De Vesci Papers, N.L.I., Ms. J/3.

[243]Inventory of furniture, cattle and corn of George Piggott, 9 Sept, 1763, De Vesci Papers, N.L.I., Ms. K/10.

[244]R. ffolliot ed. `Captain Balfour's Auction, 15th March, 1741-2', *Irish Ancestor,* Vol. XVI, no. 1, (1984), p. 30.

[245]Strictly speaking monteiths are not punch bowls, even though they were commonly used as such, and the most sophisticated gentlemen like Lord Bessborough (who owned `one monteeth and Rim' in 1743) probably used them for what they were originally intended for (i.e. to rinse glasses in); De Vesci Papers, N.L.I., Ms. K/2; Lord Bessborough's inventory, private coll. Ireland.

masculine environment he may well have been more tempted to drink to excess. A number of bills from local inns and taverns show that alcohol was not only consumed within the enclosed world of the country house. For the period c.1710-1730 13 inn-keepers bills survive in the Flower papers, and in 1746 it was noted that `the lord's bill at Red Lyon' in Kilkenny came to £2.7.0.[246] The account book from Clandonagh records payments to a tavern for dinner and wine and £31.15.5 for the `recorders entertainment' in 1750 (possibly post-election drinking). In taverns and clubs gentlemen might have felt more able to drop their cloak of gentility and behave in a manner that would have been deemed unacceptable in a country house. Indeed it is the existence of the notorious Hell Fire clubs in Ireland that has done most to generate the image of the drunken and debauched squireen. John St. Leger who resided at Grange Mellon near Athy (with lands in The Queen's County) was said to have been a leading light in the Kildare Hell Fire Club during the 1760s.[247] But one must also remember that by the 1760s there were new types of club that were more than just drinking dens. There were masonic lodges at a Birr and Banagher and a Kilkenny knot of the Friendly Brothers of St. Patrick (ostensibly an anti-duelling organisation).[248] Lord Knapton of Abbey Leix is listed among the `prefects' of the Friendly Brothers between 1751 and 1794.[249]

3.8 Household activities

In the most sophisticated Dublin households the rituals of eating and drinking were carefully contrived to achieve a delicate balance between the amount and type of food and drink. Too much of any food could lead to a lack of refinement and too little might give the impression of parsimony. In 1736 William Flower complimented Jonathan Swift on both the quality of his food and on the way in which it was served:

> Your puddings I am acquainted with these forty years, they are the best sweet thing I ever eat. The oeconomy of your table is delicious, a little and

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[246]Flower Papers, N.L.I., Ms. 11,468 (2), 11,463 (1).
[247]T.U. Sadleir ed. `Kildare M.P.s', p. 235.
[248]There may have also been a lodge at Tullamore since Charles Moore was Grand Master of the Masonic Order from 1742/42-60; reference to the lodge at Birr in Cooke, *History of Birr*, (Dublin, 1875 ed.), p. 89 and Banagher, H.P. Berry, `The Lodge of Banagher (no. 306) 1758-1859', (Dublin, 1986), pp. 64-74. The meetings of the Friendly Brothers were advertised in *Finn's Leinster Journal*, e.g. 11 March, 1767, (issue 57).
[249]James Kelly, *That Damn'd Thing Called Honour*, p. 66.

> perfectly good, is the greatest treat, and that elegance in sorting company.[250]

The households of certain grandees in Dublin were renown for their cuisine and in the same letter Flower described the high standards set by Lord Chancellor Midleton. His table was:

> the neatest served of any I have seen in Dublin, which to be sure was intirely owing to his lady. You [Swift] really surprise me when you say you know not where to get a dinner in the whole town. Dublin is famous for vanity this way, and I think the mistaken luxury of some of our grandees, and feasting those who come to laugh at us from the other side of the water, have done us much prejudice as most of our follies.[251]

How closely did the county gentry follow these metropolitan standards?

News travelled fast in Irish Protestant society. Even if squireens were unable to experience the lavish lifestyle in some of the grander Dublin town houses they could still read about it in the newspapers and in letters. In 1686 Thomas Hales, who for a time lived in Dublin's Castle Street, was asked by his father to `lett me know where you are lodged, and at what table you eate. Write who are the chiefe officers of the household and how many gentlemen's places there are'.[252] The county gentry were very well informed about the latest fashions. The specialist eating implements that appear in most inventories by the 1740s show that rural households were not slow to adopt new foods and novel methods of eating. Among the goods belonging to George Piggot of Knapton in 1763 were 4 `oister knives', `11 breakfast knives and forkes' and 7 `jelly glasses'.[253] If gentry hospitality seemed `provincial' or `traditional' by comparison it was not because of a lack of understanding or knowledge, rather it was because the rhythm and the purpose of the hospitality in Dublin differed from that in the countryside.

Some nobles and substantial gentlemen attached far more importance to their Dublin town house entertainments than those they organised back at their country seats. Inventories show that some of the best high-status symbols (especially the plate and

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[250]Lord Castle Durrow to Jonathan Swift, 11 Jan 1736, Swift Letters, Vol. V, p. 1.
[251]Ibid.
[252]To Thomas Hales from his father, 20 June 1686, Pym and Hales estate, Somerset Record Office (Taunton), DD/BR/ely Bundle B3/4/10.
[253]De Vesci Papers, N.L.I., Ms. K/10.

furniture) were put on show in their Dublin residences rather than in their ancestral homes. The list of `Lord Bessborough's plate in Dublin' in 1746 shows a staggering array of silver made by the best Dublin craftsmen such as John Hamilton and Robert Calderwood. Altogether there were over 640 pieces of silver ranging from a `marrow spoon' to `two pair of large new candlesticks'.[254] For the peers and members of Parliament (and those seeking preferment at Dublin Castle) the town house functioned in a very different way from the country house.[255]

For county gentlemen like Pole Cosby, the Dublin town house was less of a show case and more of a convenient abode where they could spend some time in the capital (mainly to consult lawyers, tenants, bankers and physicians). Cosby tended to rent fully furnished houses for six month periods. In April 1730 for instance he took a house on King Street when his wife was about to have a baby.[256] A spell in a town house elsewhere was seen as a means of cutting costs, as Cosby's residence in Bristol shows.[257] Table 3.8 shows the Dublin addresses of a number of the region's substantial gentlemen and nobles.

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[254]Inventory of Silver, 7 March, 1746, Private Collection (solicitors).
[255]The Dublin abodes of Irish M.P.s are recorded in the *Dublin Directory* from 1780.
[256]Cosby Autobiog., p. 256; this is confirmed by the Vestry Minute Book of the Parish of St. Pauls, Dublin 1698-1750. In a return of the parishioner and houses Pole Cosby Esq was recorded at King Street and St. George's Lane (presumably his stables), R.C.B. Lib., Dublin, P. 273/6/1. I am grateful to Dr. Barnard for directing me to this source.
[257]The hospitality that was dished out at the country seat at Stradbally was rather more expensive, D.M. Beaumont, `An Irishman in England: The Travels of Pole Cosby'.

Table 3.8 Dublin addresses of landowners from The King's and Queen's Counties, c. 1670-1760

Name	address	date	average rent per 6 months
Cosby, Dudley	Stephen's Green	1725-27	£50
	Abbey Street	1727	£60
Cosby, Pole	Queen Street	1704-1709	-
	Capel Street	1727	-
	King Street	1730	-
	Arran Quay	1739	£55
Fitzpatrick, Thomas	Charles Street	1710	-
Parsons, Sir William	Merchants Quay	1669	-
Prior, Thomas	Bolton Street	c. 1750	-
Vesey, Archbishop of Tuam	Dame Street	1693	
Vesey, Bishop of Ossory	Abbey Street	1720	-
Vesey, Lord Knapton	Dawson Street	1749/50	*
	Kildare Street	1760-66	

***ground rent £6.5.0. per annum**
Sources: Cosby Autobiog; De Vesci Papers, *C.S.P.I.*

Important social events in Dublin were compressed into a very short period. The contemporary accounts describe hectic months between November to March.[258] Anne Cooke noted her movements whilst she was in Dublin. This was her social schedule for one week in February 1762:

> Monday the 18-Dine at Col. Bagshaw's; [Mary Street] sup there.
> 19th-Lady Caldwell, Mr. Weldon & Mr. Vaughan went in the morning to St. Catherine's [seat of Sir Samuel Cooke]; dine at Miss Trench's.
> 20th-Dine at Power Trench's.
> Wensday the 21- Dine at my Uncel Cookes and sup there.
> Thursday the 22-Mr. W.[eldon] left town for the Queen's County.
> Friday the 23-Dine at Coll. Bagshae, a viset in the Even.

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[258]T. Mooney and F. White, `The Gentry's Winter Season', in D. Dickson ed. *The Gorgeous Mask: Dublin 1700-1850,* (Dublin, 1987), pp.1-14.

Saturday-at Mr. Warburton's.
Sunday the 25-Dine at my uncle Cooke; sup at tome
Monday the 24 [26]- Left town with Mrs. Despard for the Queen's Co.[259]

Whilst in Dublin Anne Cooke dined at a different house almost every day. When she returned to Sportland in The Queen's County for two months she did not record any of her movements in the countryside. This gives the impression that her social life ceased and was reactivated only when she `Left Sportland for Dublin' once more. The accounts of women tend to highlight the two extremes of life in a country house, the daily tedium (or *ennui)* and the excitment of the once-off event. There must have also been many other layers of hospitality that contemporaries did not record because they were such an everyday event. One needs to try and reconstruct the rhythm of hospitality in the country.

There were times when gentlemen had no company (neither family nor friends). The contemplative and more solitary pursuits of the Irish gentry are sometimes overlooked. Much of the humanistic writings from the late sixteenth century emphasised bookish pursuits and the improvement of the mind. The Cosbys had a small house called The Fort that was surrounded by water and ideally placed to catch wild fowl. Sometimes guests would be invited to stay for a number of weeks and they would go fowling and boating. But Pole Cosby also mentioned that he `sometimes wo'd stay there for a week or 14 days by myself and sometimes I would have a friend with me'.[260] The grotto and `cold bath' that was built at Abbey Leix in 1712 would also have provided a private place for members of the Vesey family to relax or dwell on the sublime effects created by the `rustick pillars' and arches.[261] In the 1740s the Flowers also had a `bathing ponn' where they might have gone swimming in the summer months. Hunting with hounds could be an important county event but other sports and pastimes may have involved just one or two people. In 1726 Knightly Chetwood of Woodbrook hinted that his friend John Usher spent a great deal of time fishing. He wrote `I hear a great deal of your Diversions and Ratara fishe [a stream near Castlegar famous for its fish]'.[262] Shooting could also be a

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[259]`The Diary of Anne Cooke', p. 112.
[260]Cosby Autobiog., p. 169.
[261]Account Book from 1712, De Vesci Papers, N.L.I., M/film. P.6797.; Flower Papers, N.L.I., Ms. 11,462 (2-3), 11,463 (2).
[262]2 April 1726, `The Chetwood Letters', p. 274. The Veseys owned a number of books on angling in the 1720s, De Vesci Papers, N.L.I., J/3 (inventory of books c. 1720).

solitary pursuit. Before 1760 direct references to shooting are scarce but the household bills show that this sport was popular much earlier in the century.[263]

There were periods when the household entertainments at Stradbally Hall were strictly *en famille*. Pole Cosby recalled that for part of the summer of 1724 `my sisters conversation and company was my chief leisure'. Yet in the previous summer his time was `taken up in returning and receiveing visits'. These visits helped to hold the fabric of county society together. Cosby thought Lancelot Sands was a `rough unpolished...country squire' but had to admit that he `lived very plentifully and hospitably and did entertain his friends heartily and cheerfully'.[264]

The household accounts show that country house hospitality was centred on eating and drinking. What is less clear is just how many different types of dinner function there must have been in this period. The inventories of plate, china, furniture and linen indicate that dinners were rather more intimate than one might have expected.[265] Among the plate at the Flower seat in Abercunrig in 1709 were `a dozen silver hafted knives with a lyer crest' and in 1748 the household at Clandonagh ordered a dozen `china hafted knives and forks'.[266] A small country house in Castletown in 1675 contained a set of 12 leather chairs and a number of other more modest chairs and stools.[267] Small numbers of guests could be accommodated handsomely whereas larger gatherings created practical problems. At George Piggot's house in Knapton there was `1 mohogney side bord table' and `9 cheers with check covers' and `2 mohogany square dining tables', which was enough for a small group. When there were larger gatherings he would have probably have had to bring out some of the more rudimentary furniture, such as the `24 rush bottom cheers[sic]'.[268] The Flower and Vesey households also had a large number of

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[263]In his youth Dudley Cosby was said to have been very fond of tennis and hurling; Cosby Autobiog., p. 179. Shooting was evidently also popular. Among the goods taken from a Quaker household in Mountmellick by soldiers in 1689/90 was `a fowling piece'. In the 1730s William Flower paid £3.14.6. to have his `musquet, carbine and flowing [fowling]' guns repaired and he ordered a `shooting vest' to be made. When Sandy Cosby committed suicide in the gardens of Stradbally he was said to `have shot himself with a foulingpiece'. In 1770 Anne Cooke mentioned that `Mr. Weldon went out a shooting, Quaker Sufferings, Friends Historical Library, Portfolio 18, no. 25; Cosby Autobiog., p. 270; N.L.I., 11,469 (11); `Diary of Anne Cooke', p. 208.

[264]Cosby Autobiog., pp. 168, 173, 254.

[265]The cutlery belonging to Lord Bessborough came in sets of 12 and 18: an indication of the the number of dinner guests he entertained at his Dublin town house in the 1740s. Inventory, (private Collection).

[266]Inventory from Abercunrig, Brecon, Wales, 8 July 1709, Flower Papers, N.L.I., Ms. 11,453; Clandonagh account book, N.L.I., 1593.

[267]There were `enventy [sic] of goodwin Castletowne this day 18 February 1675'; miscellaneous correspondence of John Fitzpatrick, N.L.I., Ms. 10,718.

[268]De Vesci Papers, N.L.I., Ms. K/10.

these less expensive cane and rush bottom chairs which were used in bedrooms, servants quarters and as stand-by furniture for large events.[269]

There were also other activities, besides eating and drinking, that amused guests and reinforced familial bonds in gentry households. The tradesmen's bills indicate that card playing, music and dancing were very popular. It was noted in the accounts from Clandonagh that 0.2.11 was paid out when `Mrs. Mossum won at cards' and the appearance of the card table in country houses is indicative of the respectability that card playing acquired in the eighteenth century.[270]

One hears of the balls, assemblies, plays and concerts in Dublin during the great age of Handel and Haydn, but what was played in houses like Castle Durrow and Abbey Leix? The large number of gentry children who were taught to play instruments meant that many households could make their own musical entertainments.[271] In 1768 Mr. Crow settled in Kilkenny so that he could teach the violin, and in the same year Mr. McCarthy announced in the press that `having now completed his scholars in several genteel families in The Queen's County' he was available to take on new students.[272] Harpsichords, spinets and violins were the most popular instruments. In one household account of 1734 it was noted that a trunk was made to contain a harp.[273] The earliest reference to a forte piano in the two counties is in the King household accounts for 1771, just three years after the first recorded forte piano performances in London and Dublin.[274]

If one had more evidence it would be useful to identify other types of country house hospitality and the social conventions of the period. It would be interesting to know for instance how many dinner guests actually slept in the household of their host. Research on the Irish gentry in this period is still bedevilled by Victorian notions of hospitality and images of rambling country houses with numerous guest bedrooms. In the eighteenth century dinner guests might have been placed into much more rigid social

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[269]In 1741 Flower bought two dozen rush bottom chairs and in 1710 Vesey bought 1 dozen rush bottom red chairs and 1 dozen black chairs, N.L.I.,Flower Papers, Ms. 11,468 (1); De Vesci Papers, N.L.I, J/3.
[270]N.L.I., Ms. 1593.
[271]Among the objects that were stolen from the household of William Domville in The King's County during the Irish Rebellion were `a pair of virginalls, a violl' and a `harpe'; T.C.D., Ms. 814, dep. 64.
[272]20 April, 1768 and 14 May 1768, *Finn's Leinster Journal,* nos. 33 and 40.
[273]Unidentified household (the bundle is believed to come from Viscount Gormanston's household in The King's County), N.L.I, Ms. 5882.
[274]The`carriage of the forty piano', King account book, N.L.I, Ms. 4180. Indeed it has been suggested that the birth of the forte piano in Dublin was a separate event from that in London and was the result of the German craftsmen who settled in Ireland. This is another indication of the precocity of the county gentry; Alec Cobbe, `Beethoven, Haydn and Irish Genius: William Southwell of Dublin', *Irish Arts Review,* Vol. 13, (1997), p. 73

categories. Blood relations and gentlemen of the same social standing may have been able to sleep at the house but other guests may have had to stay elsewhere.

Another important household activity that needs to be explored is religious worship. Recent research on lay piety in the seventeenth century has shown the ways in which the bible could shape the daily lives of gentry families.[275] One of the key features of Protestantism in England after the mid-sixteenth century was the emphasis that was placed on private prayer and introspection: the laity were actively encouraged to record their daily thoughts in written form. The journals and annotated Bibles and prayer books that survive in England can provide us with an insight into the beliefs of the gentry and middling sort. A single line in a private journal or letter can sometimes reveal far more about the religious devotion of an individual (or lack of) than the more public physical evidence would suggest (e.g. church architecture, furnishings, plate etc.). Unfortunately very little evidence of this personal nature relates to the Anglican gentry of the two counties in the period 1690-1760. The few documents that do survive were written by either Protestant non-conformists (particularly Quakers) or the leaders of the established church (e.g. Bishop Dopping's notebook from the 1670s and Archbishop Vesey's journal covering the period 1683-1705).[276]

The absence of written evidence does not necessarily mean that there was absence of piety. Unlike other forms of gentry activity (e.g. estate management and consumption) worship cannot be easily measured. Pole Cosby's autobiography provides the only clue as to the level of piety within gentry households in this period. Dudley Cosby was said to be:

> perfectly and well skilled in the Christian religion, knew all the controversy of all the different sects, and knew perfectly well what was the true orthodox doctrine of Christ's Church, held the keeping of the Christian Sabbath, seldom or never missed public worship and had most every night worship in his own family, reading the scriptures of the Old and New Testament and on Sabbath days other good books, and singing on Psalms and reading prayers, all which he did himself, he did constantly read the church prayers but sometimes other good prayers that he wo'd meet with in good books.[277]

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[275]Raymond Gillespie, `The religion of Irish Protestants: a view from the laity, 1580-1700', in Alan Ford et al, eds., *As By Law Established: The Church of Ireland since the Reformation,* (Dublin, 1995), pp. 89-99.
[276]Bishop Dopping's notebook, C.U.L., Add Ms. 711; the journal of Archbishop Vesey of Tuam, DeVesci Papers, N.L.I, G/5.
[277]Cosby Autobiog., p. 180.

Most of the activities that Pole Cosby described (e.g. private prayer in the household, Psalm singing and Bible reading) required little or no financial outlay and they would not therefore have been recorded in the types of document that survive (i.e. estate accounts, household bills, rentals and estate correspondence). It is difficult to tell what religious books were read in gentry households (as opposed to the books used during church services) because most of the book collectors in this period were clergymen (e.g. Thomas Vesey, Bishop of Ossory).[278] The inventory that was taken of `Mr. Flower's Bookes' at Abercunrig (their Welsh seat) in 1707 included a Bible and a `Book of Homilies' as well as volumes on travel, history, literature and law.[279]

The reduction in the cost of printed religious books (such as Bibles and prayer books) and the resultant standardisation of the liturgy may have meant that Anglican gentlemen were less inclined to keep spiritual journals than non-conformists. The growth and vitality of non-conformist groups in the period c. 1650-1700 can in part be explained by their promotion of individual thought and expression. Joseph Gill, a Quaker who settled briefly in Edenderry, wrote candidly in his journal in 1700 that he was `often too busy to find time for inward spiritual improvement', but other Quakers have left us with detailed accounts of their visions and mystical experiences.[280] Given the lack of evidence relating to the religious practices of the Anglican gentry in the household one has to rely instead on the more abundant material relating to church patronage (see Chapter 5.5).

3.9 Household display

A gentleman could make a good impresion before even crossing the door of a country house. Gift-giving was a vital part of hospitality. Gloves were the most traditional gift and the constant demand for high quality gloves helped to support dozens of local craftsmen. In 1710 Montague Blundell ordered that three dozen pairs of gloves were sent to him while he was in England, and in 1717 John Fitzpatrick had two dozen pairs sent to England.[281] Foodstuffs such as exotic fruits, cheeses, and venison were also commonly sent to households. Knightly Chetwood sent his sister a `basket of Wodebrook produce, which fruit I find is very acceptable to her', and he asked John Usher if he could lay his

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[278]De Vesci Papers, N.L.I, library lists from c. 1717-1720, J/3.
[279]Inventory, 28 Oct. 1707, Flower Papers, N.L.I., Ms. 11,453.
[280]The journal of Joseph Gill, Friends Hist. Lib. Ms. 134.
[281]Downshire Papers, ledger, 1707-1744, P.R.O.N.I., D.671/A1/1B; Fitzpatrick rental, N.L.I., Ms. 3000.

hands on ` a side of very fine venison' so that he could give it as a present.[282] In 1736 William Flower promised Jonathan Swift that he would send him `a pot of woodcocks for a christmas box'.[283] Pole Cosby recorded in his autobiography that in 1740 `Laurance Parsons Esq...sent me a present of 12 brace of fresh water craw fish, 3 brace of `em died on the way, the other nine brace I put into the Ponds of Grutnegoe'.[284] There were also more unusual gifts. Flower presented the Duke of Dorset with some acorns and Charles Coote sent a walking cane that was manufactured in Bath to Dean Swift.[285]

The frequency of mutual country house visiting by the county gentry depended on terrain and the mode of transport that guests used. From Stradbally a good horseman like Pole Cosby could get to a number of seats (e.g. Ballykillcavan, Culnebacky, Brockley Park) and many farmhouses in less than an hour, and to a number of other important houses in the county (such as Rathleague, Sheffield and Cullinagh) in a matter of hours. But most gentry families would have travelled by coach. Coach travel could be painfully slow and uncomfortable and there were dangers. The almost daily buffeting that passengers endured on pot-holed roads also took their toll on the coaches as the huge repair bills at Abbey Leix for damaged foot boards, axles, felloes and spoke show.[286] Coaches regularly over-turned causing injuries to passengers and on slow roads they could be easy prey for highwaymen. For gentry families the manner in which they arrived was perhaps as important as the speed at which they travelled. The entries and exits at country houses were of prime importance: arriving at the door of a country house in a coach was an important mark of `quality' and gentility.

The coach was more than just a mode of transport, it was one of the most important high-status symbols of the eighteenth century. In the estate papers from the two counties the earliest reference to a coach is in the household accounts at Birr in 1652.[287] It was after this date, in the period 1650-1700, that the coach underwent a transformation: in terms of speed, design, decoration, comfort and cost.[288]

By 1760 gentlemen could chose from a great array of coach designs from the commodious four wheeled carriages to Berlin Chariots, Phaetons, Ringsend Cars and one

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[282]Chetwood Letters, pp. 100-101.
[283]Flower to Swift, 4 Dec. 1736, Swift Letters, Vol. IV, p. 548. In 1714 Swift wrote to Knightley Chetwood `I here send some snuff to Mrs. Chetwode', 3 Dec. 1714,Vol. 2 , p. 146.
[284]Cosby Autobiog., p. 435.
[285]Flower Papers, N.L.I., Ms. 11,463 (1); Coote to Swift, 13 Dec. 1733, *Letters Written by the Late Jonathan Swift,* (London, 1766), Vol. V, p. 353.
[286]Rent ledger and misc. notes for 1757, De Vesci Papers, N.L.I., M/film, P. 6798.
[287]In the accounts it is noted that £5.0.0. was received for an `ould coach', Birr Castle, A/16.
[288]England was at the vanguard of these new technical developments, Laslo Tarr, *The History of the Carriage,* (London, 1969), p. 239.

horse chairs. Coach designing, like country house building, was a collaborative enterprise and involved both patrons and craftsmen. These new designs were shaped by the ingenuity and requirements of gentlemen as much as the talent of the coach builders.[289] Robert Molesworth meticulously described all the working parts of the type of coach that he ordered in 1706:

> You must be aquainted that there is a great difference in springs as between anything of the same kind in nature. Some are ten times better than others, made of fine steel, very pliant, better contrived have more springs to them, 10 or 12 in each corner, in short the Paris springs are much better than any I ever saw in London, unless it be by Aubrey. Whenever you buy, I would have the best that can be gotten for being a well-tempered metal, they will never break.[290]

The design and finish of the coach had to be impressive and practical without looking too brash. As with food and drink there was a delicate line between refinement and excess. The trend for elaborate carving and gilt work, of a kind that was to be found on continental coaches, does not seem to have caught on in England and Ireland. In 1706 Robert Molesworth said `I do not love flowered velvet lining, nor to high a roof , nor a high coach or box seat, nor too much heavy brass either on the coach or the harness, where the footmen stand of the old London fashion.[291] To the unacustomed eye the coaches of the gentry would have looked rather plain and they were painted in quiet colours (a bill in the Flower papers shows that one of the coaches was painted lamp black, and at Abbey Leix in 1747 Richard Jones was paid for `painting coach cream colour').[292] But small details such as the quality of the arms that were painted on the doors or the sumptuousness of the interiors helped contemporaries to place the passengers into a particular social group. In 1750 when John Denny Vesey was created

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[289]Gentlemen were also well aware of the special tensile qualities of the woods that were needed to make coaches. In 1709 it was noted at Abbey Leix that `ash and other coach timber' was set aside and advertised in `the gazette'; to Mr. Fitzgerald, 16 July 1709, De Vesci Papers, N.L.I., Ms. J/2.

[290]Robert Molesworth to Mrs. Molesworth, 1 June 1706, H.M.C. *Clements Manuscripts and Various Collections*, Vol. VIII (1913), p. 228.

[291]Molesworth, 1 June 1706, described above.

[292]Flower Papers, N.L.I., Ms. 11,458; De Vesci Papers, N.L.I., Ms. K/2.

Baron Knapton he paid £9 to a Dublin craftsmen `for painting his arms and supporters on vellum and the same on his coach'.[293]

The number of horses that pulled the coach was another indicator of status.[294] Periam Pole, who was among the upper gentry of The Queen's County, was said to have `kept his coach and chariot and six mares'. Robert Meredith had a number of carriages (a coach, chariot, four wheeled chair and Ringsend car) but had just `four clever coach geldings' to pull them.[295] Robert Molesworth preferred the Paris fashion of either two or six horse carriages. He said:

> I hate a carriage without six, tis what we always had, and my consideration is more for safety than state. I protest I never in my life went in any gentlemen's coach and four that I was not in continual agony for fear of my neck...for it is impossible for one man to rule four good and pampered horses without a postilion.[296]

The cost of the coach itself could be considerable. In the period 1690-1760 a gentleman would have to lay out somewhere between £80-100 for a decent vehicle. The inventory of the effects of Sir Edward Massey in 1674 included `an ould coach and horse' that was worth £50.0.0. and in 1710 the Veseys paid £100.0.0 `for a new coach and six harness'.[297] In 1728 the Veseys bought another coach for £75.0.0 and in the same year Pole Cosby paid £84.17.9 for `a very handsome chariot-Berlin'.[298] The second-hand value of the horses and carriages at the Blundell family's English residence in 1757 was £99.16.6.[299] The ownership of one carriage was beyond the means of all but the wealthiest landowners in the two counties. William Flower paid £2.1.0 in tax alone for a chaise in 1741 and in 1733 the revenue collectors received £50.3.0 in duties charged on coaches and chaises in the two counties.[300] What is striking is that by the 1720s and

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[293]May 1750, De Vesci Papers, N.L.I., K/2.

[294]It was expensive to keep a postillion as well as a coachman and six good horses. When Sarah Cosby began to rationalise her personal expenditure after the death of her husband the coach staff and horses was one of the luxuries that she axed. Clothes and equippage were also expensive. Just one pair of boots for Mr. Burgess the coachman at Abbey Leix cost 0.12.0 on 20 Mar. 1733; De Vesci Papers, N.L.I, Ms. K/2; Cosby Autobiog., p. 184.

[295]Cosby Autobiog., pp. 90, 317.

[296]Molesworth to his wife, 1 June 1706, as above.

[297]The will and inventory of Sir Edward Massey, 1674, De Vesci Papers, N.L.I., Ms. B/4.

[298]October 1710, coach bills, De Vesci Papers, N.L.I, Ms. J/3; Cosby Autobiog., p. 177.

[299]Ledger, 1755-1798, Downshire Papers, P.R.O.N.I., D.671/A2/9.

[300]Flower Papers, N.L.I., Ms. 11,456; Thompson report on the state of the Revenue, 1733, Nat. Arch. Ire., 2c.36.1, p. 104.

1730s the very richest gentry families such as the Flowers, Cosbys and Veseys could afford to own more than one coach (typically one decent coach, and one or more two-wheeled chaises and chariots).

Coach makers were highly regarded in the eighteenth century and were of the same standing as the top cabinet makers and perhaps even the portrait painters of the day. Often they are mentioned by name in the accounts.[301] In 1671 `Walter Goodwin, City of Dublin, coachmaker, charged £7 for a set of wheels and he sent a written guarantee that the `wheels on the said Denny Muschamp's glass coach shall hold firme for the space of one year'.[302]

Bills for repairs to coaches are listed in almost every household account and they amounted to a sizeable proportion of the annual budget on house keeping. The accounts from the Vigors family in 1719 show just how much could be spent on emergency repairs on a single journey to Maryborough or Dublin.[303] Back at the country house a coach needed to undergo a complete overhaul. The accounts at Abbey Leix give a more detailed break-down of the various repairs carried out on vehicles. One bill c.1745 for covering a carriage with cloth, greasing the wheels and putting in new spokes, came to £23.14.6. The parts and specialist labour that was required to repair coaches were, when compared to the costs of maintaining the demesne, extremely expensive.[304]

The horses that were used for racing, hunting and general riding were also a great source of prestige. One only has to look at the stable blocks and equestrian art of the period, as well as the household accounts, to understand the importance that contemporaries attached to their horses. It could be argued that the process of conquest and re-conquest by armed English settlers on horse back left a deep impression in county society. Barrington's `half mounted gentlemen' descended from the `small grantees of Queen Elizabeth, Cromwell and King William' and they were said to have `exercised the hereditary authority of keeping the ground clear at horse races, hurlings and all public

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[301] In 1771 the King family paid `Mr. Hussey the coach maker' £96.10.4' and further sums were disbursed to other Dublin coach makers such as Christopher Madden and Thomas Gandy; N.L.I., Ms. 4180.

[302] Misc. bill, 1671, De Vesci Papers, N.L.I., Ms. H/24.

[303] E.g. on the 27 July 1719 £2.6.4 was `laid out at Carlow and for mending the coach several times'; Vigors Papers, N.L.I., 7629.

[304] One might argue that expenditure on coaches and horses in some gentry households represented the largest slice of the household budget: more than servants' wages, labour costs, food, wine and clothes. The bills that that were generally higher are those for legal services. A typical bill for fairly light repairs to a carriage at Castle Durrow in 1728 was for £3.14.0. The cost of `shoes and physic' for the coach horses alone came to £2.8.9. in 1751; to Thomas Harrison, Flower Papers, N.L.I., Ms. 11,471.

meetings, as the soldiers keep the lines at a review'.[305] Gentlemen seemed especially keen to join the militia so that they would generally head a troop or regiment of horse.[306]

The ownership of horses also has a special significance because of the Penal Laws.[307] Irish Catholics were not actually prevented from owning horses by legislation, but there were more subtle ways in which they were prevented from acquiring the best horses. It would be misleading to suggest that the English settlers were responsible for the many different types of horse that existed by 1690 since the Gaelic Irish had their own tradition of horse breeding. But one area that needs to be investigated is horse endogamy (the extent to which the best blood lines of English horses were kept within a narrow social or religious group). The first new English Protestant settlers swapped and sold horses.[308] In the 1641 Depositions the despondents made a distinction between the `English' and `Irish' bred horses that were lost during the rebellion.[309] In the eighteenth century Protestant gentlemen still coveted particular blood lines and they bought and sold horses from each other. In the accounts of John Fitzpatrick in 1717 it was noted that Col. William Flower was paid £4.2.10 (which was` expended about the Turkish horse').[310] In 1746 Flower paid his servants for `bringing 2 English geldings from Dublin'.[311] Jonah Barrington categorised the gentry according to the date at which they arrived into Ireland and the amount of land they held. But he also took into account the type and appearance of horses they owned and the quality of their horsemanship. He said of the first class of gentry known as `*half mounted* gentlemen' that:

> They generally had good clever horses, which could leap over anything, but never felt the trimming-scissors or currycomb. The riders commonly wore buckskin breeches, and boots well greased...and carried large thong whips heavily loaded with lead at the butt-end, so that they were always prepared either to horse whip a man or knock his brains out.[312]

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[305]Jonah Barrington, *Personal Sketches,* p. 79; O'Hanlon, *History of the Queen's County*,p. 606.
[306]William Flower for instance was made a Colonel of a Regiment of Dragoons in 1727, N.L.I., D.20,236.
[307]Charles Ivar McGrath, `Securing the Protestant Interest: the origins and purpose of the Penal Laws of 1695', *I.H.S.,* Vol XXX, no. 117, (1996), pp. 25-47.
[308]In a letter of 1633 one landowner mentioned that he had `written to the Lord Poulet to bestow an ould stallion on me..to putt me in a breed of horses'; letter from Thomas Poulett, Waterford, 8 Sept. 1633, Bristol Record office, Ms. 36074 (125).
[309]E.g., Edward Welsh lost `6 English greate mares & 2 Irish', T.C.D, Ms. 814, dep. 62.
[310]Rental of Cat. Fitzpatrick, c. 1700-1719, N.L.I, Ms. 3000.
[311]Flower Papers, N.L.I., Ms. 11,458.
[312]Jonah Barrington, *Personal Sketches,* p. 79; O'Hanlon et al, *History of the Queen's County,* p. 606.

Some of the contemporary comments about the prices of horses in Ireland compared to England can be misleading. One landowner argued in 1686 that `certainly horses are good and cheape in Ireland'. But the choice horses in the best stables were as expensive as those in England. Even in the troubled conditions of 1689 the Archbishop of Tuam had hoped that he could sell his horses for £300-400 and live off the proceeds `till the storm that drove me over were past'. To his great consternation Tyrconnel organised a raid on his stables and he `took away my sett of coach horses and my pad for his own use'.[313] The sophistication of the horse market and the subtle differences between horses meant that prices varied considerably. In 1757 the Vaughan family paid £21.0.10 for a chestnut horse and £11.7.6 for a superficially similar horse in the same year.[314]

The buildings in which horses were kept as well the saddles, harnesses and equipage, were also an important source of display in eighteenth-century Ireland. The impressive coach houses that still survive adjacent to the houses at Ballykillcavan and Capard in The Queen's County (with circular windows and arches and elaborate mouldings) are important pieces of architecture in their own right.[315] Saddles were valuable and could be highly decorated. In 1686 Thomas Hales was told by his father that `if you want a fine saddle your sisters will embroider one', and Vesey paid for `lineing and laceing, `a green cloath' and `silk sash' for his saddles in 1746.[316] Such distinguishing features helped the magistracy track down stolen saddles. In 1768 a `hog-skin saddle with blue cloth' with `flaps bound with scarlet' was taken from the stable of Mr. Humphrey Mitchell of Graigue in The Queen's County and a reward of £5 was offered for the conviction of the thief.[317] Different equestrian events required different types of tack and the gentlemen who hunted incurred further expense. In 1698 the household at Abbey Leix ordered a hunting horn and a hunting saddle for £2.5.10, and in 1714 Flower laid out £9.5.0 on `hunting saddles'.[318]

Among the repairs that William Flower carried out on his demesne in 1732 was the `wall to old dogg kennell'. The role that dogs played in the displays of wealth and gentility in gentry households is another important area that has been neglected. According to one King's County Protestant who was attacked during the 1641 rebellion

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[313]Archbishop of Tuam's journal, De Vesci Papers, N.L.I., Ms. G/5.
[314]Nat. Arch. Ire. M.4915.
[315]Photographs in Irish Architectural Archive, Laois photo box, 29/56 and 29/57. Both appear to be mid-eighteenth century structures.
[316]Thomas Hales from his father, 9 May 1686, Somerset Record Office, DD/BR/ely- B3/4/10; De Vesci Papers, N.L.I. J/3.
[317]24 August 1768, *Finns' Leinster Journal,* no. 69.
[318]Sadlers bills, Flower Papers, N.L.I., Ms. 11,469 (14); De Vesci Papers, N.L.I, Ms. K/2.

`The very dogs that were English breed they killed'.[319] Did Irish Catholics asscociate certain types of dog (as well as horse) with the new settlers, and were dogs seen as tokens of conquest? Irish `setting dogs' and wolfhounds were highly prized by English and Irish gentlemen alike. The state correspondence of the 1660s shows that men in high office treated dogs as high status gifts. In 1666 Sir William Domville promised to send Lord Arlington an `Irish wolf dog' and in the following year Sir George Rawdon (an agent for the Arlington estate in The Queen's County) asked Viscount Conway to `look out for a good Irish dog, but I think that it not so important to any Englishman that an English mastiff would be the conqueror'.[320] Such breeds of dog were still coveted at the the end of the period. In 1768 George Dunbar Esq. was moved to put an advertisment in *Finn's Leinster Journal* when his `small red pointer bitch' was stolen from Sportland.[321] The eating habits of the canine as well the human residents of Castle Durrow are recorded in the accounts. In 1740 £1.14.0 was spent on `meale for the dogs', and in 1746 at least 0.16.0 was laid out on dog meat. The expenditure on `physic' for the horses and dogs seemed to outstrip that which was spent on the medical welfare of the servants.[322]

The Irish country gentlemen tended to keep large and impressive dogs that could be taken out shooting or hounds that could catch foxes and hares. But their wives and children also enjoyed keeping pet dogs. Among a list of pictures at Abbey Leix in 1733 was a `sett small dog', and the accounts of 1747 show that a `dog chain and strap' was purchased.[323] In certain Dublin circles there might even have been an element of competition among the ladies as to who had the most expensive dogs. Mrs. Bagshawe said of Lady Cooke (the mother of the diarist, Anne Cooke) in 1755 that `She is as fond of pets as ever, parrots, doves and dogs in abundance. Her number of lap-dogs is now stinted to eight, among which three are Spaniards that out-rival the rest'.[324]

Food, drink, coaches, horses and dogs were therefore used by the elite to display their wealth and social status to one another as well as to their social inferiors. But there were occasions when such trappings would have been of little use to gentlemen. In the large bustling city of Dublin (which had population in excess of 130,000 by the mid-eighteenth century) there were places where `the quality' could only be recognised by

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[319]1641 Depositions, T.C.D., Ms. 814, dep. 53.
[320]Domville to Arlington, 21 August 1666 and Rawdon to Conway, *C.S.P.I. Ireland, 1666-69*, p. 196 and *C.S.P.I. 1665-68*, p. 482.
[321]5 Oct. 1768, *Finn's Leinster Journal,* no.81.
[322] Sometimes the animals are even mentioned by name. In 1745 medicinal powder was purchased `for curing the mange in the dogg Booby'; Flower Papers, N.L.I., Ms. 11,469.
[323]De Vesci Papers, N.L.I., Ms. K/2.
[324]W.H. Greaves-Bagshawe, *The Bagshawes of Ford* cited in `The Diary of Anne Cooke', p. 112.

their outward appearance. And even here the citizenry of Dublin might easily mistake a well- heeled professional for a landed gentlemen. Clothes were the most visible and univeral guide to status and they feature prominently in the household accounts. All over Europe and in America clothes presented `the most troubling challenge to the traditional hierarchy' in the eighteenth century. In 1733 a writer for the *Boston Gazette* complained that `there is scarce any distinction between Persons of great Fortune and the People of ordinary rank'.[325] Such sentiments were also echoed by the Irish gentry in the eighteenth century.

The pre-1690 inventories reveal more about the value and quantity of the clothing that was owned by the `middling and upper sort' than they do about changes in fashion and the quality of the clothes that could be found in different households. Until the late eighteenth century clothes were relatively expensive. The lesser Protestant farmers and craftsmen who were robbed at the time of the Irish Rebellion did not have stock-piles of clothing. Many deponents lost all the clothes they owned when they were `stripped stark naked' by the rebels. Then there were other richer farmers like Nicholas Walsh of Harristown whose `wearing apparell, linen, pewter and brass' was valued together at £80. William Domville, who was described as `vicar of Killnurkin', was rich enough to itemise his goods and his `money and gold rings' were worth £27 and his `apparrell' £80.[326]

Large quantities of woollen goods could be found in the Quaker households during the Williamite War (although these tended to be in the form of pieces of cloth and unfinished garments). In 1689 Joseph Charter's house in Mountmellick was raided by 14 or 15 men and `they took woosted, woolen yarn, serge, cloth, kersys, broad cloath and stuff that they cutt out of the looms' worth £60.[327]

The 1641 Depositions, the accounts of the `Quaker Sufferings' and the small number of inventories from gentry households, reveal the acquisitive instincts of contemporaries rather than the desire to cut a fine figure. For many householders clothes (like plate and furnishings) had an intrinsic as well as a fashion value. Clothes, table linen and blankets were stowed away like gold bullion in one of the most ubiquitous pieces of furniture in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the coffer or mule chest.

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[325]26 Feb. 1733, *Boston Gazette*, cited by T.H. Breen, `The meaning of things: interpreting the consumer economy in the eighteenth century', in John Brewer and Roy Porter, *Consumption and the World of Goods*, (London, 1993), p. 255.

[326]T.C.D., Ms. 814, deps. 64 and 66.

[327]Quaker Sufferings, Friends Historical Library, Portfolio 18, nos. 33 and 34.

During the first half of the eighteenth century the priorities of the elite changed. Before 1690 there was a tendency for the upper gentry to invest in a few exceedingly expensive formal costumes and items of jewellery rather than buy a larger selection of lesser garments (that would have been suitable for more occasions). The `2 rose of Pearls' that a lady in the Parsons household wore c.1650 were worth £66 and at a social event would have set her apart from almost every other woman in The King's County.[328] Similarly Sir Edward Massey's `3 stone rings diamond saphir and pibble and 16 plain rings most mourning rings' were valued at £40 which was as much as all his `wearing apparrell' put together.[329] In the following century persons of a similar status might have had preferred to invest in a variety of clothes and jewellery to suit the many different social events in town and country rather than rely on a few conspicuous symbols of wealth. In Dublin the very rich could afford to have both variety and quality, but even here some of the most expensive costumes and accoutrements were considered anachronistic and vulgar by the mid-eighteenth century. Refinement could not be achieved simply by investing in the most costly garments. One needs to explore the more subtle ways in which the elite endeavoured to distance themselves from their social inferiors between 1690 and 1760.

In 1686 Thomas Hales bought a watch, cravats, a hat, fringed clothes and other small garments of the latest Paris fashion. His father asked `How are wigs with you cheaper or shall you want one sent from London'.[330] In the same year Captain George Hayman bought 4 French hats at Bridgewater, 1 wig in Taunton and a walking cane in Bristol.[331] One might deduce from such evidence that both Hales and Hayman were of the same social group (they both acquired high status clothes and wigs and were aware of the latest fashions and they both moved freely between the West Country and Ireland). In fact Hayman was a merchant who operated between Minehead and Youghal while Hales was a gentlemen who later inherited estates in England and Ireland. This highlights how difficult it was for the gentry to distinguish themselves from some urban professionals even before 1690. In the context of landlocked King's and Queen's counties a merchant like Hayman was probably a rare bird (he made a living out of mercantile activites and

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[328]`Recd. Lady Padget for 2 rose of Pearls which she bought', Nov. 1652, account book, Birr Castle A/12.
[329]De Vesci Papers, N.L.I, Ms. B/4.
[330]The Hales family had interests in Dublin, Kilkenny and The Queen's County, 9 May 1686 and 2 March 1685, Pym and Hales Papers, Somerset Record Office, (Taunton), DD/BR/ely- bundle B3/4/10.
[331]August 1686, the account book of George Hayman 1685-1687 (the blank pages in the account were later used as an account book by John Yendal 1737-1741), Somerset Record Office, DD/X/HYN 1 -5/2563 Vol. 1.

his social orbit was centred on coastal towns). How far did the sartorial displays of the country gentry differ from those of urban elite in the eighteenth century?

The ownership of clothes *per se* is not the only guide to social status but an understanding of the cost and number of clothes that members of the upper gentry purchased (as shown in the household accounts) does help to sift the elite from the vast proportion of the population. In 1728 Lord Palmerston advised his nephew, William Flower that `money is allways best spent when one makes the best figure'.[332] After discussing the income from the Welsh estate in 1731 Flower's agent went on to explain that `a demand the countesse will make for cloathes very soon will demolish it.[333] The bills indicate the high spending on clothes in the Flower household. In 1712 William Flower paid the clothes bill of his brother `Mr. Jeffreys Flower' and this can be broken down into separate categories. The tailor was paid £74.12.6, the wigmaker £32.12.0, the shoemaker £14.14.6 and the glover £1.7.2.[334] Thus the cost of maintaing the sartorial elegance of just one adult member of the Flower family (i.e. £123.6.2) was higher than the incomes of most urban professionals and small Protestant farmers in the two counties. Of the many different types of `wearing apparrel' that are listed in the accounts shoes stand out as an important guide to consumption. Lady Vesey at Abbey Leix was particularly fond of shoes and she bought a wide selection. The tradesmen's bills show that she ordered about 45 pairs of shoes, pumps, soles and boots between c. 1743 and 1745.[335]

The materials for clothes (the fabric, buttons, trimmings and thread) were usually bought in Dublin and then made up by local tailors. As with shoes it is the sheer quantity of satin, silk and shagreen that makes the Veseys and Flowers stand out from the `middling sort' and the lower gentry. In 1710 the `Green silk for lineing my Lady Vesey's night goune' came to £2.8.9 alone; in 1723 a bill for damask and satin amounted to £24.13.4; in 1731/2 £43.7.9 was spent on satin, silk and shagreen; and when they visited one Dublin shop on Dame Street the Veseys bought 13 1/2 yards of `grey flowerd silk' and 5 `yards of white florence sattin'.[336] There were an extraordinary number of variations to the outfits that were worn by the gentry in the first half of the eightneenth century as shown by the

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[332]Lord Palmerston to Flower, Oct. 1728, Flower Papers, N.L.I., Ms. 11,478 (1).
[333]Mr. Hatch to Flower, Dec. 1731, to Flower, Ms. 11,478 (2).
[334]Flower Papers, N.L.I., Ms. 11,458 (1).
[335]And they were likely to have been for her own use since servant's shoes tended to be listed separately. In 1709 it was noted that there was a need for a new pair of `Spanish shoes for my lady' since `those you sent down last was a size too big; Henry Web to Mrs. Elizabeth Fitzgerald, 23 April 1709, De Vesci Papers, N.L.I., J/8.
[336]De Vesci Papers, N.L.I., Ms. J/3, K/2.

dazzling array of trimmings that were needed to make up coats, waistcoats, hats and gowns. Typical clothes bills included French brocade, `cherry culler ribbon', gold and silver lace and `gold lace and hoops for gents hat' (costing £6.5.6).[337] Clothes had not become more ephemeral, since they remained expensive, but there is evidence that gentlemen and women became more flexible in their tastes. In 1650 a couple of formal dresses and a string of pearls might well have served the needs of the lady of Birr Castle; but in the following century a gentlewoman would need to buy more fabric and more trimmings in order to make continual adjustments to her garments.[338]

Thus in terms of the overall expenditure on clothes the urban professionals could not compete with the gentry. It was the manufacture of cheaper substitutes and imitations that had the potential to undermine the image making process of the elite. In 1707 the Veseys bought a wig from John ffolliot for £4, and in 1718 they bought two more whilst they were in Bath for £8.[339] However there were many different types of wig and the quality and price varied greatly. In 1686 Thomas Hayman was able to buy a wig for just 0.18.0.[340] In a sense the elite were victims of their own success. Organisations like the fledgling Dublin Society encouraged the manufacture of cheaper imitations of textiles and ceramics and the expansion of the market for luxury goods. In 1743 for instance Mrs. Grattan of The King's County won a premium for the `best needle work imitation of lace'.[341]

The elite had to continually find new costumes and fabrics of an ever higher quality to distance themselves from the parvenu. The Dublin shop keepers jostled with one another to import the latest fashions and their advertisements became much more elaborate. In 1747 one printed advertisment informed the genteel public that `Grogan at the Green man in Dame Street in Dublin has just imported Great variety of Rich Gold and Silver silks flowerd silks damasks and several sorts of plain and broaced silks and is also well furnished with all sorts of Irish silks, poplins and camblets which he is determined to sell at the lowest rates', and another shopkeeper boasted on an ornate trade card in 1743 that `he brings all his patterns from England, and such only as are of the newest taste'.[342]

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[337]Ibid., K/2, J/7, J/3.
[338]The household accounts only reveal a fragment of the overall budget for clothes. In 1712/13 William Flower ordered `two suites, gold twist, brass nailes, silk lace as in journal'. Gentlemen carried around pocket books and they recorded sundry expenses in the towns they visited; Flower Papers, N.L.I., Ms. 11,458 (1).
[339]De Vesci Papers, N.L.I., Ms. J/2, K2.
[340]August 1686, Somerset Record Office, DD/X/HYN 1 -5/2563, Vol. 1.
[341]21 April 1743, Minute Book, 1741-1746, R.D.S. Library.
[342]De Vesci Papers, N.L.I., Ms. K/2.

The richest bought the latest novelties at source. The Veseys bought in London and Bath as well as Dublin. A letter to Mr. King in 1712 said `my Ld Mountrath has sent for me in great haste to England' and the correspondent was directed to `Mr. Verdons the king's shoemaker in Catherine St. [in London]'.[343] This gives a sense of the priorities of Irish grandees in this period. A trip to the tailor, shoemaker, hatter, wig maker or glover was as noteworthy as a sitting in the House of Lords.

At an important event in Dublin and London `the quality' were unmistakeable. When Pole Cosby visited London in 1721 `the first thing I did was to deck myself out with fine cloaths to make a good appearance judging that I should be more taken notice for it', and `for the Queens' birthday I bought 16 yards of the most extraordinary fine thick crimson Genua Velvet which made me waistcoat, westcoat & 2 pairs of britches...& had everthing else equal to what I have told so was very gentlely furnished'.[344] The Cosbys, Flowers and Veseys were among the handful of the very rich families in the two counties and they socialised in the most sophisticated circles in England and Ireland. The question that remains to be answered is the extent to which the lower gentry were concerned with clothes and fashion.[345] What did country gentlemen wear at home among family and servants, on the estate in the presence of tenants and among other gentlemen in the court room?

As with the other types of display that have been mentioned in this chapter one can detect a conflict between austerity and luxury, formality and informality, tradition and modernity. Among the gold trimmings and lace in the accounts from Abbey Leix and Castle Durrow there is also great deal of `darke gray cloth' and `black suits'. These were not just reserved for funerals. When Pole Cosby toured the continent in 1721 he wore `a new black suite of the famous Leyden Black (cloath)' and `a light fine gray cloath'. In the accounts from Clandonagh (a household which appears to have been a more modest than those aforementioned) black cloth and rateen was ordered in 1754 to make a suit of clothes (but it must also be noted that in 1752 a tradesman was paid for the `freight of a box of silk').[346] It was probably more dignified for a magistrate to wear a black coat and breeches when he was enforcing the law than peach or cherry coloured shagreen. Indeed it would be interesting to know whether the the term `black Protestant' derives from the

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[343]30 April 1723, to Mr. King from Mr. Worthington, King Papers, N.L.I., P.C. 308-312, (3).

[344]Cosby Autobiog., p. 167.

[345]A reading of the journal of Nicholas Peacock of Limerick would suggest that the `small gentry' were far closer to the middling sort in material terms than they were to the upper gentry. On one trip to Dublin in 1744 Peacock noted that he had `Nothing to show but a pair of pumps, 4s 4d, and a pair of buckles, 10d'; T.C. Barnard, `Integration or Separation?, p. 131.

[346]N.L.I., Ms. 1593.

attire of the Protestant gentlemen as well as the sombre colours of the dissenting ministers. The clothes, wigs and shoes that were worn by men at the court and at the most formal county events were designed to withstand the relatively sedate activities of dancing, eating and drinking. In the countryside more practical materials were required for the long hours that were spent on horseback and provision had to be made for firearms and swords. With hindsight the period 1690-1760 was relatively peaceful but there were times when Protestant gentlemen of The King's and Queen's counties still felt that they were vulnerable in the countryside. Among the goods that were bought for Abbey Leix in 1698 was a case of pistols for £3.10.0.[347] The Catholic population and armed outlaws were not the only dangers. Violenct behaviour could be internecine (between members of the Protestant gentry). In theory elections provided a perfect excuse for showing off latest fashions in clothes. In reality such occasions could turn nasty, and gentlemen needed to wear garments that would highlight their authority and masculinity. At the Maryborough elections of 1703 and 1727 a number of gentlemen drew their swords and interrupted the proceedings.[348] Many of these men would have felt far more comfortable wearing the distinctive tunics of the county militia rather than the brocaded coats of Dublin society.

3.10 Rites of passage events

Rites of passage events help us to understand the intereaction of all of the elements of household consumption, hospitality and display that have been described (i.e. food and drink, gift-giving, coaches, horses and clothes). Funerals involved a great deal of stage craft and required elaborate preparations.[349] Dudley Cosby died at Busherstown in the company of the Minchins family on a Saturday night in 1729 (his son heard the news of his death at Stradbally the following morning) and he was to be buried on the following Wednesday. This meant that Pole Cosby had less than 48 hours to prepare everything for the burial. The first thing he did was to `send off a letter to Hawkins King of Arms in Dublin to provide Escutchons and Hangings and all things necessary for the funeral'. He then went by coach on Monday afternoon to Busherstown to arrange for the removal of the body and `to get coffin, herse and other things'. He made arrangements for the corpse to be taken to Stradbally by Tuesday evening. By Wednesday morning the house below

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[347]Misc. accounts, De Vesci Papers, N.L.I., Ms. J/2.
[348]P.R.O.N.I., ENV/HP/24/3- Maryborough.
[349]For the importance of heraldic processions see, David Cressy, *Birth, Marriage, and Death: Ritual, Religion and the Life Cycle in Tudor and Stuart England,* (Oxford, 1997), p. 449.

St. Patrick's church `was hung in Black and Scutchons hung close quite round every room, herse and six horses with all proper orniments every creature that came that had the least tolerable appearance had scarves and gloves'.[350]

Given the number of details that had to be attended to (such as the hangings, the food and drink, the gloves and scarves etc.) it is striking how quickly Dudley Cosby was buried. This was in part due to the services of a number of individuals who were well trained in funeral arrangements. The office of the Ulster King of Arms in Dublin must have had an efficient team of craftsmen at its disposal who could provide hatchments and hangings in a hurry.[351] They must also have also been able to make arrangements for the speedy transportation of funerary objects to all parts of Ireland. The heralds and the professional funeral arrangers had by 1690 already acquired a great deal of experience in dealing with the dead.[352]

Such high status objects and services were expensive and there is evidence that prior to 1760 many craftsmen and entrepreneurs in Dublin and the provinces broke the monopoly of the heralds and produced their own funerary accoutrements. If Dudley Cosby had died three decades later his mourners may have availed themselves of the services of John Minchin, a merchant in Rathdowney in The Queen's County. He advertised in *Finn's Leinster Journal* that he had `lately furnished himself with a regular assortment of Palls, Cloaks, Stands, hangings and clasps- supplying funerals in the newest taste'.[353] Funerals had become quite commercialised and large numbers of craftsmen were kept in busy by the demand for woollen, linen and wooden goods. In towns like Stradbally, Mountmellick and Birr there were a number of shops and houses where small items such as gloves, hats, sheets, shirts, scarves and metal pins could be bought in sufficient quantities `off the shelf' (see chapter 5.6). In 1707 members of the Vesey family bought £1.17.8 worth of gloves from `Jewune [?] the Quaker'.[354] By the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries the town of Mountmellick became famous for its lace (which was used among other things to dress corpses).[355]

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[350]Cosby Autobiog., p. 180.

[351]For an analysis of the costs in the first half of the seventeenth century, R. Gillespie, `Funerals in Early Seventeenth-Century Ireland', *R.S.A.I.,* Vol. CXV, (1985), pp. 86-91.

[352]In about 1669 a schedule of expenses for a gentlewoman's funeral in Dublin included `2 hundred Branches of Rosemary, use of a velvat to the herald of arms, Mr. Midle Brooke for a coffin and ringing Christ Church bells'. Total of the funeral was £30. 9. 2, account book attributed to David Johnston of Dublin, Birr Castle, A/16.

[353]*Finn's Leinster Journal,* 31 Aug. 1768, No. 71.

[354]Account book, 1701-08, De Vesci Papers, N.L.I., Ms. J/3.

[355]Jane Houston-Almqvist, *Mountmellick work: Irish embroidery, a survey and manual,* (Mountrath, 1985).

The commercialisation of funerals had many implications. The proliferation of craftsmen may have given gentry families with relatively modest incomes the opportunity to purchase cheaper heraldic objects and to make a greater visual impact at funerals than they had in the past. The only way that the very top echelons of society could distance themselves sufficiently from their inferiors was to commission craftsmen to make more elaborate and costly items such as brass nails for the coffins, embroidered palls and the finest kid leather gloves.

Dudley Cosby's funeral was relatively straight forward because he died in the adjoining county. In other instances the transportation of the corpse caused more difficulties. There does seem to have been a strong desire on the part of some county gentry families to be buried in their own church. When in 1734 Cosby's two-year-old daughter died in Bristol they `put her into a leaden coffin and for 2 guineas had her sweet corpse carried over to Dublin & in about a fortnight after her Death she was buried in the church of Stradbally'.[356] Many other individuals from upper gentry and noble families would have died in Dublin and further afield. Some members of the Flower family of Castle Durrow were buried at their vault in Finglas, Co. Dublin where they also held lands.[357] Other gentlemen were buried in the Dublin parishes where they had a town house.

Not all funerals were the same. Fascinating as it is, one should not see Cosby's account as a carbon-copy of all the other funerals in the two counties in this period. Much depended on the income, social status, gender, age and personal preferences of the deceased and his family. The will of Sir Edward Massey of 1674 highlights most clearly the gulf between a funeral for a substantial gentlemen (with high level political contacts in Dublin and London) and a more perfunctory burial for a gentlewoman. Masseys own funeral costs came to £195.15.6 (which must have also included some other sundry debts that had not been paid while he was alive), whereas `Cozen Betty Massies funeral' came to £26.18.0.[358]

Cosby lumped together his father's debts with his funeral charges so that one cannot be certain how expensive his father's funeral was in 1729. One can speculate that the total cost of food, drink and accoutrements would have come to at least £100 (by way

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[356]Cosby Autobiog, p. 269.

[357]E.g. in 1730 Master Jeffrey Flower died in Carlow and he `was laid in the family vault at Finglas'. bill, Oct. 1730, Flower Papers, N.L.I., Ms. 11,470 (7).

[358]Will 30 May 1674, De Vesci Papers, N.L.I., Ms. B/4. At Birr there is `a note of my father's funeral' in 1652- which came to £37.6.0. Two other bills from the same archive show that the the funerals of two gentlewoman in Dublin came to £30.9.2 and £38.7.2 respectively, misc. account book 1668-75, Birr Castle, A/16.

of comparison he spent c. £300 on election expenses in the same year). The accounts from Castle Durrow in the 1730s show that even the funerals of male children could add up to £20-30. At Mr. Jeffrey's funeral, a coach and six was hired and gloves and scarves were distributed. Miss Flower's funeral was a cheaper (c. £12) though no less dignified an affair.[359] By way of comparison Mr. Rawson (a head tenant of William Brereton of Loughteague) requested £20 in 1709 to pay for the medical bills and funeral charges that he incurred when his brother died of small pox.[360]

It was common for gentry families in this period to distribute monies, food or clothes to the poor at funerals. This could take place in a ritual form outside the door of the country house or the parish church. Cosby said that at his father's funeral `100 poor were served at the door with bread and ale and great quantatyes of victuals of all sorts within, with plenty of wine.[361] Landowners could also show paternalism by paying for the funerals of servants and other dependants. In 1751 one gentleman at Clandonagh paid 0.2.5. towards the funeral of a widow.[362] Such gifts, whether it be in the form of fine leather gloves for friends and family, cheaper items of clothing for prominent townsmen and farmers, or bread and coin for the poor, were designed to reinforce the hierarchical bonds between all levels of society.

As well as funerals there were other rites of passage events that served to bring together members of the county gentry and to reinforce paternal ties between landowners, tenants and dependants. After his education on the continent and his unsuccessful attempt to find a bride in London, Pole Cosby returned to Stradbally in April 1724. It was not by chance that Cosby returned to Ireland when he did. On the 15th of April he celebrated his 21st birthday. Reaching majority was a crucial moment for an heir. On his birthday `there was danceing and long danceing and great joy amongst all the tenants and a great deal of company dined with us, and every day for a long time there was company dined with us who came to see me on my Returning from abroad'.[363] Even if Cosby exaggerated the degree to which the servants, tenants and labourers were pleased to see him (they may have been disingenuous) there can be no doubt that they were at least expected to appear when the heir apparent returned home. The account shows that the lower echelons of society were an integral part of such events. It is also yet another reminder of the wider

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[359] A velvet pall, Holland cloth and 10 pairs of white lamb gloves were bought. The fees to the minister for breaking the chancel ground and opening and closing the family vault came to £1.18.8 in 1731. There are numerous other refs. to gloves and scarves in this document, N.L.I., 11,471 (7).
[360]Rawson to Capt. Fitzpatrick, 19 Aug. 1709, Nat. Arch. Ire., M.3190.
[361]Cosby Autobiog., p. 180.
[362]Household book 1748-54, N.L.I., Ms. 1593.
[363]Ibid., p. 168.

social and cultural importance of the country seat in local communities. Much later in the century Anne Cooke described in her diary in August 1771 a `Ball to all the Gentel Men and Lady about this Country on Steuart's coming of age. We had about 70 to supper'.[364]

When Cosby got married three years later there were similiar expressions of local hospitality and display. The wedding itself took place in Dublin and `was deemed but a private wedding'. Back at Stradbally they were met by `Longdancers. And Great joy there was, bonfires &c. my bringing home my wife'.[365] Country dancing seems to have been an important feature of all these big family events. Though Cosby would have been familiar with a more courtly style of dancing he was obviously not adverse to watching `long dancing', a traditional Irish country dance.

Bonfires have long been associated with political and religious celebrations in Ireland (e.g. burning effigies to commemorate certain events in the Protestant or Catholic calendar). Cosby's account also shows that bonfires, like church bells, could be used in other more secular contexts.[366] Such rites of passage events did not just concern the family, household and friends. They were also major county events and need to be also discussed in the context of the wider political and social bonds that held Protestant landed society together (see Chapter 6.7).

Before the newly married couple moved into Stradbally Hall a number of structural alterations were made to the house and Pole Cosby bought additional `chairs, tables, beds, and all sorts of household stuff'.[367] The architecture of country houses, the internal arrangement of the rooms and the furnishings help us understand further the structure and functions of the family and household. Buildings can also be used as an important interpretative tool for our understanding of the complex social, cultural and mental contours of Irish county society since they were a constant point of reference and a daily concern for virtually all echelons of society, from the tiny fraction of the population who lived in them, to the many rural and urban communities who were drawn into their orbit. More than just ornaments, vying only with church towers for attention on the skyline, they were in the period c.1700-1850 (before the onset of the railways) the most striking man-made features on the Irish landscape and the most visual manifestation of the Protestant landed interest. Ireland, like England, could be said to have been a confederation of country houses.

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[364]`Diary of Anne Cooke', p. 448.
[365]Cosby Autobiog., p. 176.
[366]For the English context, D. Cressy, *Bonfires and Bells: National Memory and the Protestant Calendar in Elizabethan and Stuart England,* (London, 1989), p. 67.
[367]Cosby Autobiog., p. 176.

CHAPTER 4

The Country Seat

> I came to Stradbally a small market town in a well improved country. Near it is Mr. Cosby's seat with the finest improvements of high hedges of white thorn, Horn beam etc. I ever saw around the quarters, which are full of kitchen stuff and excellent fruit trees. Mr. Pigot is building an handsom house in a park near the town, the most beautiful part of this garden is a terrace, over a river and other walks about it and another river which falls into it.
> Richard Pococke, 21 July 1753.[1]

From whatever vantage point, and no matter what mode of transport- horse drawn on a rough track or turnpike road, on a river barge, or from the end of the eighteenth century on the canal, travellers including Molyneux, Loveday, Pococke and Cooper, were always struck by the conspicuous agricultural improvements and the large number of fine country houses dotted around The King's and Queen's Counties. In 1782 Stradbally was said to be `improved with Gentlemen's seats, for which this part of the county is remarkable'.[2] Just outside the gates of Cosby's wooded demesne to the north was Brockley Park and Ballykillcavan, and Taylor and Skinner maps show that there were 15 larger houses in the environs of the town.[3]

Though covering a small geographical area, the two modern counties of Laois and Offaly still have a large number of country houses, with examples from the beginning of the seventeenth century to the present.[4] Maurice Craig felt that Laois is `remarkable for

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[1]John Mcveigh ed. *Richard Pococke's Irish Tours*, (Dublin, 1995), pp. 132-133.

[2] Molyneux's journey of 1709 (he passed through Queen's), T.C.D. Ms. 883, Vol. 2, pp 107 and 129; Willam Loveday, `A Tour of Kildare in 1732', extracts edited by T.U. Sadleir, printed in *J.K.A.S.*, Vol. 7, (1912-14), pp 168-177; Cooper, A Journey in Kildare, Carlow and Queen's County, 1782, (typescript, Canon Leslie Coll.), N.L.I, Ms. 773 (6).

[3] Taylor and Skinner, *Maps of the Roads of Ireland*, (Dublin, 2nd ed. 1783), plate 157.

[4] The houses in Laois in particular have been much commented upon in numerous reports, articles and gazeteers and the published lists of the surviving houses are more comprehensive than those for nearly every other Irish county. The principal sources for both counties are: 1) Irish Architectural Archive [I.A.A.]- particularly the boxes of photographic evidence relating to buildings which still survive and those which have been destroyed, the newspaper cutting files arranged by county as well as pamphlets, miscellaneous reports, correspondence and guide books arranged alphabetically; 2) The official reports produced by An Foras Forbatha and the photographs (catalogued separately in the archive) which were taken at the time [Foras report]: Maurice Craig and William Garner, ` Preliminary Report of the survey of areas and sites of Historic and Artistic interest in County Offaly', (June, 1973), and `The Second Report on areas and sites of Historic

the large number of second and third rank country houses which it contains, most often, of a type eminently characteristic of Ireland'.[5] However, if the numerous late Georgian classical boxes, the Regency villas and the Victorian piles are excluded and only the houses built before 1760 are considered the amount of now standing evidence is hardly striking, and if one further excludes those structures altered beyond recognition, then the surviving houses from that period in Laois consists of around 12 examples (out of about 50 principal seats).[6] Though this remaining cluster of early houses are among the most impressive (of their type) in Ireland and have been singled out for investigation by architectural historians, they still comprise only a small fraction of the network of country houses that once existed and they are not necessarily the most representative types of houses that gentlemen built in the period.[7] The more modest farmhouses of the period (some of which could be classified as seats) have survived to an even lesser extent even though they are by far the most common form of gentry habitation.[8]

This slim architectural evidence can be amplified by the the use of the photographic records, topographical drawings and archaeology to reconstruct some of the buildings which have long since gone. To get a clearer sense of the function of country seats, the building periods and the social status of the gentlemen who built them one must turn to documentary evidence.

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interest in County Laois', (June, 1976); 3) Mark Bence-Jones, [Bence-Jones] *Burke's Guide to Irish Country Houses,* Vol. 1, Ireland, (London, 1978). The additional material for Laois includes, *Archaeological Inventory of County Laois,* (O.P.W., 1995) [O.P.W. Inven.]; Rev. W. Carrigan, *The History and Antiquities of the Diocese of Ossory,* (orig. Dublin, 1905) (reprint, Kilkenny, 1981) [Carrigan]; *Some Ecclesiastical Edifices, Forts and Castles of Queen's County and Kildare,* (Maryborough, 1901); D. O'Byrne, *The History of the Queens' County,* (Dublin, 1856); O'Hanlon et al, *History of the Queen's County,*(Dublin, 1907 and 1914) (reprint Kilkenny, 1981) [Byrne]; David Griffin, `The Georgian Houses of County Laois', in *Laois: History and Society,* ed. P. Lane, (forthcoming). More generally, Maurice Craig, *Classic Irish Houses of the Middle Size,* (London, 1976); D. Griffin, N. Robinson and The Knight of Glin, *Vanishing Country Houses of Ireland,* (2nd ed. 1989).

[5] Maurice Craig, Foras report for County Laois, p. 3.

[6] The houses which were considerd as seats in the Grand Jury map c.1765 and still survive; that are wholly or partially from the first half of the eighteenth century are: Ballykillcavan, (early 18c.), Blandsfort (b.1715, with late 18c. third storey), Coolrain (early-mid 18c.), Corbally, (much altered 18c. house), Cranagh, (early-mid 18c.), Edmondsbury (c.1734), Middlemount (early-mid 18c.), Moyne (parts early 18c.,much altered), Roundwood (1740s) and Tentore (early-mid 18c. house incorporated into a castle). One should add to this list Castle Durrow (1715 with additions) and Summer Grove (1750s).

[7] For e.g. a whole *Bulletin of the Irish Georgian Society,* Vol. 16, no. 4, (Oct-Dec, 1973) examines houses in Laois: including Castle Durrow, Summer Grove and Roundwood .

[8] So far only a handful of this type of house in The Queen's County have been recorded (there might originally have been as many as 200). The attractive and comfortably sized houses like Roundwood and Summer Grove have remained inhabited and relatively unaltered whereas the humble farmhouses have been swept away almost un-noticed to make way for the more economical bungalows. Surviving `farmhouses' include: Aghaboe, Archerstown, Ballinstubbert, Cooper's Hill and Coolrain.

4.1 Houses and social status

A Grand Jury type map engraved by Oliver Sloane c.1765 of The Queen's County is the most important guide to the number, type and distribution of houses that existed in the first half of the eighteenth century.[9] The document also highlights the necessity of a careful definition. Different symbols are employed by the map maker to represent seats, castles, farmhouses, churches and ruins. By dividing the map into a grid and counting these symbols one can estimate the number of substantial dwellings that were habitable. Map 6 shows the north-eastern section of the map (which includes Stradbally Hall), However, obtaining a true figure for the number of seats is more difficult since the map maker did not appear to have exact criteria in deciding what was a `seat'.

It is unclear why inhabited castles (of which there were 10 marked) were put in a category of their own. Shrule Castle for instance, the Hartpole family's ancestral home which had been extended and modernised in the 1730s, had become more of a seat than a fortification and Castle Durrow was no longer a castle in any sense. The remains of the episcopal manor house was completely destroyed when the country house was built (approximately 50 years before the map was drawn). The map maker was a native of Hillsborough Co. Down and may not have had first-hand experience of the whole county he was surveying. Sloane dedicated the map to the gentry of the county and the suspicion is that the engraver would have represented the homes of those who showed an interest in the project and dispatched their subscriptions (especially Grand Jurymen and magistrates) as full-blown seats.

The farmhouses depicted on the map which still survive like Aghaboe are impressive buildings and architecturally closer to what were termed as seats (in terms of design and the materials used) than they were to the vernacular houses of the rest of the country population. This suggests that contemporaries, and not just historians, were often unable to distinguish clearly between seats and farmhouses. It is difficult to de-code the architectural language since it changed over the period. The topographers and map makers working in the 1760s, familiar with the terminology from the architectural literature that was then becoming far more accessible, were likely to use the word `seat' quite loosely to describe any relatively modern classically proportioned house in the country whether it was owned by a substantial tenant farmer or by a noble.

The bright new classical boxes built by clergymen and other professionals living on the edge of town are called seats in the Taylor and Skinner maps by the last quarter of

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[9] Map of The Queen's County by Oliver Sloane, c. 1765, N.L.I. Map. 16. H. 9 (2).

the century. By contrast, antiquaries and the county gentry themselves placed more emphasis on land ownership, office holding and the continuity of residence. In the parish of Aghaboe at the end of the eighteenth century Ledwich described the dwellings below those owned by landed proprietors of `large fortune' as `plain comfortable houses'. [10] Rushall Court which was built in about 1660 is of a double-H plan with massive walls and chimneys. In the middle of the eighteenth century it might have appeared to some as a crumbling relic of a more martial age and it is shown as a ruin with adjoining farmhouses in Sloane's map, but Molyneux commented that it was `a well situated fine seat', and as late as 1789 one antiquary said it was still the principal ancestral seat of the Coote family.[11]

The terms used also depended on the social status of the person who was commenting on a building. A substantial landlord might have referred to the home of one of his head tenants as a farmhouse, whereas the occupants themselves after several generations of improvement may have erected a country house comparable with those of neighbouring gentlemen and used the term `seat'. There can be no fixed definition of a seat but it is important to have some criteria, and to rank the country houses according to the status of the occupants and not just upon architectural elements.

If one considers the magistracy as providing the hard core of the resident county gentry (which is the best indicator of economic and social status), then there should have been about 60 seats in The Queen's County at any given time. Sloane identifies only 34 seats and 10 castles.[12] But some of the so-called farmhouses on Sloane's map were lived in by men in the magistracy. The fine early eighteenth-century house called Olderrrig for example was built by Benjamin Fisher before he was prominent enough to become a J.P. in 1751 (after he became a J.P., Fisher's home might well have been described as a seat).[13] Other gentlemen like John Bland built grander houses just after they were appointed as magistrates.[14] There were 100-110 families in The Queen's County who had at least one forbear who served as magistrate between 1660 and 1760 (which is twice the

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[10] Edward Ledwich, `Aghaboe', in *A Statistical Account or Parochial Survey of Ireland* (Dublin, 1814), Vol. 1, p. 31.

[11] Rush Hall: Molyneux, on his journey to Kerry in July 1709, T.C.D. Ms. 883 Vol. 2, p. 129; Carrigan suggests that it was the principal seat of the Coote family until 1789, p.183; Byrne, p. 60; Foras report, p. 81; O.P.W. Inven. 1029 and 1038.

[12] 28 of the seats can be matched firmly with family names and virtually all of them had some tradition of serving in the magistracy and/or parliament.

[13] Olderick passed from Benjamin Fisher to his step son Samuel Galbraith c.1760, indentured 1 August 1744, Nat. Arch. D.20,187 (1); the house: Foras report p.74, I.A.A. photos: *Disappearing Country Houses* p. 96-97.

[14] There were also J.P.s like Thomas Drought of Mount Oliver or William Carden of Ballybrittas whose houses escaped the map makers net.

number of seat-owners).[15] This shows that office did not necessarily entitle a family to elevate the status of their house. A large proportion of office holders and individuals who are repeatedly styled as `gent' or esquire might not have lived in seats because they were a junior member of a county family. William and Robert Finn are described as esquires in corporation accounts and both were commissioned as J.P.s in 1717 and 1724 respectively. They resided at the family seat called Coolfinn, whereas another member of the family, who was not styled in the same way, lived in or near the ruins of Castle Fleming (almost certainly in a farmhouse).[16] Between c.1699 and 1748 at least six members of the Despard family served in the magistracy and they lived at four different residences.[17]

A seat could be described as being the principal residence of a senior branch of a landed family and the hub of an estate. Though such a dwelling was usually accompanied by a demesne it does not necessarily have to be in the countryside. Occasionally, as with Birr, the landlord's residence and the estate town grew up side by side. One might exclude most of the dwellings of the prosperous urban elements or pseudo gentry such as those adjacent to the Quaker towns of Mountrath and Mountemellick which had parks and garden plots adjoining them rather than estates, but some country houses like Roundwood (built by a wool merchant) and Dawson's Court (a former Dublin banker) were originally acquired with income that was made from urban enterprises as opposed to traditional agricultural activities, and yet their houses like those of other wealthy newcomers became recognised as seats as soon a they were built. Thus there is not always a direct relationship between the amount of time a family lived in the county and the point at which their home became referred to as a seat.

The ownership of land, ancestral or newly gained, was the common thread that determined the owners of seats. The problem is deciding exactly how much landed

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[15]See Appendix 6.

[16] Robert and William Finn of Coolrain, Robert Finn on Mountrath and another Finn from Castle Fleming, Maryborough corporation lists, N.L.I., Ms. 1726.

[17] Cranna appears to have been the principal seat, and by the time c.1765 map was made there was also a subsidiary seat called Coolrain. A more junior Despard lived at Cardtown (where a farmhouse is depicted on the map), though he was still styled as an esquire. Magistrates: William Despard (1699), William Jnr. (1703), John (1719), Richard (1722), William (1743) and George (1748); freemen: Henry (Mountrath), Richard Esq. (Cranna), John Esq. (Cardtown). Houses: (i) Cranna- a Foras Forbatha photograph at I.A.A. shows a substantial early house with a thatched roof called `Crannagh', with the caption `Samuel Dunne Esq.,' this might in fact have been the Despard seat; (ii) Cardtown- the Foras report mentions that there was a large house at Cardtown that has now gone; (iii) Coolrain- I.A.A. photos (54/17) shows a early-mid 18c. house, Foras report and photos, mentions a 5 bay two storey gable ended house witha Gibbesian doorcase (similar to Roundwood) with the remains of a canal to the front; Taylor and Skinner show it to be the seat of the Despards.

income was needed to enter the ranks of this elite and whether those who do not actually own the lands that they farm (i.e. the majority of Catholics) should be excluded from this category. Long leases and fee farm tenure could mean that the head tenant effectively owned the land in all but name like William Flower (tenant of the Ormondes until c.1708) or Gerard Fitzgerald Esq. who lived at Newtown Hartpole (farmhouse depicted on the map) where he rented several hundred acres from the Hartpoles.[18] Norfield House near the Abbey Leix demesne is a tall plain rendered 3 storey 5 bay dwelling probably built c.1750. Architecturally, it ranks along side many seats, yet it was almost certainly held by a head tenant of the Vesey family.

Some landlords spent much of their time outside the county or had subsidiary houses while they rented out their seats. In the 1750s Humphrey Bland, the owner of Blandfort, lived in England and let the house and demesne to a Mr. Evans until his nephew could inherit. It is clear that although Bland spent his retirement `in a pleasant situation close on the River Thames', Blandsfort was still considered as the family seat.[19] Tentore House, adjoining a castle of the same name, was an ancestral home of the Fitzpatricks (Earls of Upper Ossory) and a map c.1740 shows that the family intended to make improvements to the house and demesne (see Map 7). By c.1745 it had been leased to Robert Gregory (who must have been a substantial gentleman in his own right, for he became a J.P. in 1748). In this scenario the house might have functioned as the seat of Robert Gregory Esq. even though it was not actually owned by him.[20]

Grand Jury-type maps can give the impression of a static society. Certainly by the mid-eighteenth century the gentry had secured their estates and social position in their county and until the early nineteenth century the *dramatis personae* of The King's and Queen's remained largely the same. Oliver Sloane's map is, for the purposes of this study, a guide to the social topography as it had emerged by 1760. But the period between 1600 and 1690 was rather more unsettled, and in the first half of the eighteenth century many gentry families were still in the process of establishing and re-establishing themselves, as reflected by their country house schemes.

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[18] Flower and Ormonde; Carrigan pp. 213, 217, 220-221. FitzGerald; Hartpole papers, T.C.D. Ms. 1933 (193) .

[19]Bland to Desbrisay[?], 24 June 1754, Bland to Richard Vicars Esq., 4 June 1757, Bland Papers, private Collection.

[20] Tentore House: the castle was in repair at the time of the Down Survey; see also plan of the intended improvements to the house and demesne, undated c.1740?. Tentore appears as a seat on Sloane's map; and on maps of the estate of the Earl of Upper Ossory, 1776 (which shows that Miss Gregory was in possession),Taylor and Skinner map shows it as the property of the Earl of Upper Ossory, Nat. Arch Ire. M.3230; castle description in O.P.W. Laois Inven. 969; N.L.I., Ms. 1571.

4.2 Continuity of site

The most precocious Jacobean and Caroline houses that survive in Ireland should be seen as a reminder of the path that the grandees would have followed given the landed income and political stability, rather than being a text book illustration of the the linear progression of architecture that begins with the castellated house and ends neatly with the advent of the neo-Palladian house. The demise of the tower house and the emergence of modern domestic architecture has, until recent years, been hindered by the lack of interaction between research in medieval architecture and into the country house. The survival of so many tower houses, often carefully concealed by later fabric, has blurred the distinctions between old and modern, and martial and domestic architecture. The development of the country house in Ireland must be understood in the context of the regular conflict that caused ancient castles to be re-used, new ones to be built, or slighted, repaired, extended, modernised, incorporated into new houses or demolished to make way for a completely new dwellings. Buildings were in and out of repair at different stages, and sometimes buildings fitted out as a temporary abode ended up becoming permanent homes (e.g. a house at Rushall was occupied while Rushall Court was being built; the stable block at Lismore was converted into a dwelling by the Carden family after the house went up in flames).[21]

There were sound practical and strategic reasons for re-using sites (e.g. proximity to a clean water supply), but these are not the only motives. One senses that other mental and social impulses encouraged continuity of settlement. Few seats were built on green field sites and names like Grange House and Grange Castle betray medieval origins (`Grange' being an agricultural satellite of a monastery). An O'More castle was built at Stradbally adjacent to a Franciscan monastery; this was destroyed by the Cosbys and replaced by a fortified house, which in turn was upgraded and then succeeded by at least two country houses.[22] Nor was this building behaviour limited to the older English families. Newcomers like the Walpoles, a Quaker family who originally came from Suffolk, built a house on a site once held by the Fitzpatricks next to the ruins of Mondrehid Castle in about 1750.[23] The same pattern can also be seen with the lesser

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21 Lismore: Q.C: Carrigan, p. 132; Byrne p. 43; Ledwich `Aghaboe', p. 20. Rush Hall: Q.C., Carrigan, p. 183; O.P.W. Inven. 1038.

22Report on the Cosby Papers by A. Malcomson and D. Beaumont, P.R.O.N.I. T. 3829 (introduction); Bence-Jones, pp. 265-266.

23 Mondrehid: The castle is shown in the Down Survey as being in ruins. The Walpoles arrived c.1670 and built their house c.1750, Carrigan, p. 133-134; O'Byrne, *History of the Q.C.*,p. 38; O.P.W. Laois Inven. 962. A demesne map shows that at about the same date Sir Robert Staples erected his house called

Map 6 The north-eastern portion of Oliver Sloane's map c. 1765

shaded areas denote seats and farmhouses within the vicinity of Stradbally

Stradbally Hall is circled

dwellings.[24] A farmhouse called Barrow House on the eastern edge of The Queen's County, which is on Sloane's map (c.1765) and on Taylor and Skinner's was situated very near to a moated site, two other possible enclosures and a ring fort.[25] Consciously or sub-consciously the more recent settlers hung on to these relics of the not so distant Irish past. Just as the arms and family trees procured by heralds gave them a veneer of antiquity, so the acquisition of a previously occupied site was another step towards their creation of a new identity. And although some names of castles and houses were changed or anglicised (like Barnet's Grove, or Whitewalls) the vast majority (c.80%) held onto their Irish name. Thus though the sixteeenth and seventeenth century conquest of the two counties was cataclysmic for the native Irish, there were elements of continuity.

Just as the Norman invaders of Ireland had seized whatever defensible structures they could in the first years of conquest, so too did the mid-sixteenth century settlers of the territories which became The King's and Queen's counties. Between c.1550 and 1600 the new English settlers built very few new castles. The royal forts at Maryborough and Philipstown were in a category of their own, followed by a handful of castles, including Shrule and Grange, that were built by the most prominent office holder Robert Hartpole (Governor of The Queen's County and Constable of Carlow Castle) in the reign of Elizabeth. The rest of the settlers occupied castles that had been built before the plantation.[26] Some early castles had a remarkable longevity: Ballyadams was last occupied in 1840 and Dunamase was restored as an alternative and picturesque occasional residence by the Parnell family in the late eighteenth century.[27]

The other main settler houses that had existed before 1600 were of the tower-house type, like Clonreher which was probably originally owned by the O'Dowlings before being granted to John Dunkirley in 1550, or Dysert Castle which belonged to the Lalors before being granted to John Piggott in 1577.[28] The English jostled uncomfortably

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Dunmore next to what was described as a `Danes Fort; Dunmore: A book of maps of the manor of Castletown, 1776, N.L.I., Ms. 1571.

[24]The Finn family's dwelling at Castle Fleming in the 1760s would have been next to the ruins of a tower house and the castle(s) which pre-dated it, there are also earthworks nearby which suggest there might have even been prehistoric occupation on the same site.

[25] O.P.W. Arch. Inven. nos. 161, 330, 329 and 920.

[26]A number of these were medieval fortesses built between c.1200 and 1400 (at least five of them had originally been built by Anglo-Norman families such as Dunamase and Lea erected by the Earl Marshall in the early thirteenth century); Anglo-Norman castles: Lea, Dunamase, Abbeyleix, Gash and Rathpiper. Other early castles include, Dysart, Ballyadams, Castle Brack, Galesquarter and Ballylehane.

[27] Ballyadams, Q.C.: I.A.A. photo 54/16; description of castle in 1782, N.L.I., Ms. 773 (6); Byrne, p. 60; Foras Report, p. 81, O.P.W. Inven. 942, 1021; Lord W. FitzGerald, `Ballyadams and the Bowens', *J.K.A.S.*,.Vol. 7, (1912-1914), p. 180. Dunamase, Q.C.: Francis Grose, *The Antiquities of Ireland,* (London, 1791), Vol. 1, p. 12.

[28] Clonreher, Q.C.: Foras report, p .63, p. 81, O.P.W. Inven. 951; Dysert [Disert], Q.C.: O.P.W. Inven. 935.

beside those members of the indigenous Irish families who avoided early forfeiture and who carried on living in fortified houses. In 1600 there were 17 `chef' castles and approximately 25 principal gentlemen in the two counties (see Map 5) .[29]

From the beginning of the seventeenth century the settlers had engaged in greater building activity. In some cases this was because the towers were too cramped for their expanding needs, in others because the castles had received some damage as a result of the fighting which accompanied the English revanche.[30] The old-style tower house design lingered on (e.g. between 1606 and 1612 Sir Thomas Ridgeway erected a five-storey tower), and often a two-or-three storey hall was built alongside an existing tower (e.g. Ballyadams has a large rectangular seventeenth century addition) to provide more accommodation.[31] But increasingly those who built from scratch (whether they were English or Irish) preferred the fortified house design (usually more horizontal in aspect with tall chimney stacks and gun loops).[32]

If one assumes that all the castles mentioned in the surviving Down Survey maps had been in repair before 1641 then there would have been more than 200 large stone houses/castles in the two counties on the eve of the rebellion.[33] The noticeable expansion

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[29] For e.gs of known castles built by Irish families up to 1600 in Leix see: Ballygharahin (Fitzpatrick),Ballygeehin (Fitzpatrick), Ballyknocken (Colclough), Blackford (O'Moore), Clonburren (Fitzpatrick), Ballykealy (Fitzpatrick), Clonreher (O'Dowlings), Coolnamony (O'Doyne), Galesquarter (MacGillapatrick), Garranmaconly (Fitzpatrick), Gortnaclea (Fitzpatrick), Grantstown (Fitzpatrick), Kilbreedy (O'Phelans), and Morett (FitzGerald). For the principal castles c.1600, Q.C.: The Quene's [sic] Fort [Maryborough], The Shyan [Shaen], The Abbey of Lease [Abbey Leix], Stradbellie [Stradbally], Pallace [near Stradbally], Dunas [Dunamase alias Park], Blackfort, Baleclochan, Disert, Ballyadams. K.C.: Philipstown, Ballyburlie, Ballyburtne, Warren, Castle Jordan and Eden Durrick [Edenderry], Edmund Hogan ed. *The Description of Ireland in 1598,* (Dublin, 1878).

[30]Ballygeehin Castle for instance was burned down in 1600 to prevent it from being converted to an English garrison and Gash Castle was burnt down by Teige Fitzpatrick in about the same year; Carrigan, Vol. 2, p.56 and 171-172.

[31] Gash Castle, Q.C. : O.P.W. Inven. 956, Ballyadams, Q.C. : O.P.W. Inven. 942 and 1021.

[32]The so called `Z' and `U' planned houses- there are no clear early seventeenth century examples in the two counties- are a feature of the very grandest early seventeenth century houses. At its simplest the fortified house could just be a small two storey rectangle (like Oldcourt in Offaly) or the same design with a projecting entrance hall- which is `T' shaped- (like Derrin) which developed into the `L' (Rush Hall) and `H' plan (Castle Cuffe), variants. Many of these houses had outer defensives such as bawn walls with turrets and there is a more noticeable scattering of bawns in the midlands and the north of Ireland than elsewhere in the country. The types of fortified houses are discussed (including, Clonaslee, Q.C. , Derrin, Q.C., Castle Cuffe, Q.C., and Oldcourt, K.C.) in N. Mc Cullough and Valerie Mulvin, *A Lost Tradition: The Nature of Architecture in Ireland,* (Dublin, 1983), pp. 45, 51, 52 and 55.

[33] There were 55 castles in 7 of the 11 baronies in King's: a true figure for the whole county might be somewhere nearer 100. O'Hanlon et al counted 84 castles and houses in repair in The Queen's County- I would estimate that there were somewhere between 100-150. It is diffcult to arrive at reliable estimates because of the marked differences between baronies (the large barony of Upper Ossory in The Queen's County had at least 35 castles and houses alone). It is unclear which version of the Down Survey that they used, the present m/film in the N.L.I. has data for just 2 baronies since the `Dublin Down survey' was

in the number of houses/castles between c.1600 and 1641 is partly explained by the arrival of new English proprietors and their need to accommodate head tenants and kinsmen. It is also a reflection of the marriage and inheritance patterns of Irish and Old English landowners: families such as the Fitzpatricks, Carrolls and Moores tended to divide up their estates among their sons, and this led to new castles being built. In the barony of Clonisk in The King's County for example 15 out of the 16 castles mentioned in the Down Survey had belonged to members of the O'Carroll family.[34] This contrasts with the new English practice of primogeniture which helped to restrict the number of principal residences or seats. It appears that the rate of new house and tower-house building reached a peak before 1641, perhaps only matched by the spate of new gentry house building in the mid-eighteenth century.

It is well known that warfare during the 1640s and the sequestration of lands led to a decline in the number of inhabited castles. The notes written by antiquaries on ancient castles read like catalogues of destruction, and the Rebellion is most commonly cited as the cause of ruin. The Rev. Edward Ledwich, writing at the end of the eighteenth century found 10 castle ruins in the vicinity of Aghaboe alone which before 1641 were owned by noblemen including the Duke of Buckingham and Barnaby Fitzpatrick, and he regreted that now `not one landed proprietor resides in the parish, nor is there a house in it, which a man of large fortune could inhabit.'[35] The surviving Down Survey maps for The King's County show that 37 large houses and castles were in repair whereas 18 were out of repair or in ruins.[36]

The effects of warfare have however been exaggerated.[37] A castle which was out of repair or ruined in 1654 might have gained a new lease of live at a later period. Watercastle was, according to the Down surveyors, `a castle out of repaire with an orhyard [orchard] and a thatht house and no other improvements' and the fact that no

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partially destroyed in 1712 whereas O'Hanlon et used data from 8 baronies. They also appear to have scrutinised just the baronial maps and not the parish desriptions which mention buildings that are not depicted on the accompanying map (i.e. underestimating the total number of castles), The Down Survey maps, N.L.I. Ms. 716, m/film, P. 8687; *History of the Queen's County*, p. 540-541.

[34] Ibid., the only castle which was not in O'Carroll hands was a castle in the parish of Linrone belonging to `Mac Gillfoile'.

[35] Rev. Edward Ledwich, `Aghaboe', p. 31.

[36] Down Survey maps, N.L.I. M/film, P. 8687.

[37] More standing evidence has been destroyed since Carrigan wrote his *History and Antiquities of the Diocese of Ossory* in 1905 and when the 1906 edition of the 6 inch Ordnance Survey maps was published than in the preceeding 250 years. There are examples of once well preserved tower houses that have been reduced to a featureless piles of limestone in more recent years. Examples: `Cody's Castle' was according to one of Carrigan's local sources in perfect condition in 1800, today only a small proportion remains. Ballymadock was reported to have been destroyed with the aid of dynamite in the 1950s/60s., Carrigan Vol. 2, p.281; O.P.W. Laois Inven. 976.

visible traces survive today might give credence to the suggestion that the site had been abandoned in the 1640s or 1650s. But other evidence suggests that the castle underwent repairs and was enlarged in the early eighteenth century.[38] Similarly Tankardstown Castle was described as `a ruin' in 1654 but it is shown as one of the 10 inhabited castles on Sloane's map over a century later. One can be confident that a castle was no longer habitable when described as a `stumpe of a castle' or `a few old walls'. But in only a very few cases (including key strategic places like the fortress of Dunamase) would scarce gunpowder in the 1640s have been used to bring down the massive castle walls thus preventing any further use. And even in this scenario a replacement castle (like the new one at Ballinakill in 1680 which replaced that built between 1606 and 1612) was erected on the same site and even to a similar design.[39]

The dispossession of lands (from the rebels) rather than physical damage explains why up to a third of the region's castles went out of use in the 1650s. Similarly it was the abandonment of castles as dwellings, coupled with the urgent demand for stone needed to re-build local towns after the Williamite Wars, that led to the destruction of many fortified houses in the 1690s. In 1709 for example Molyneux noted that at Balliboy there was a `large gravel Danish mount on which stood lately a strong castle, now pulled down to build the houses of the town'.[40]

In addition to the towers and fortified houses there was also another category of house known mainly by the occasional references in the Down Survey maps rather than surviving physical evidence. In contrast to the typical Irish cabins, crates and cots, there were solid but modest settler habitations, substantial enough to be recorded by the surveyors yet too flimsy to be called castellated houses, and these were termed `stone houses' and `English like houses'. In the surviving parish and baronial Down survey maps for The King's County there are about 11 houses of this type in repair (compared to 26 castles in repair).[41] These slated and thatched `English type' houses would have fared

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38 Watercastle, Q.C.: O.P.W. Inven. 674 and 1012; N. Mc Cullough, *Palimpsest: Change in Irish Building Tradition,* (Dublin, 1994), p. 64.

39 More typically owners of castles like Galesquarter were faced with three choices, a) that of repairing a serious breach to its defences (in this case replacing most of the northern side of a tower which had walls almost a metre thick) b) to rebuild completely (incorporating more modern features such as gun loops and thus following a trend that had started before the rebellion; especially as this castle was originally built c.1425) or finally c) to abandon the site (which is what seems to have happened in this case), Ballinakill, Q.C.: Foras photo, O.P.W. Inven. 943 and 1023.

40 Molyneux, journey to Kerry, July 1709, T.C.D. Ms. 883 Vol. 2, p. 108.

41 Most of these houses were in clusters, in the parish of Killaghy (barony of Balliboy) `stand five handsome houses', (one is called `castle like'), `Killogh' belonged to Sir John Sherlock a Protestant settler while the others belonged to the O'Molloys and O'Diggins, and in the parish of Linrone (barony of Clonisk) there

much worse during the 1640s. John Thurloe received a report in 1654 that `there hath scarce been a house left undemolished fitt for an Englishman to dwell in'.[42] Indeed the losses recorded in the 1641 depositions suggest that with the return of peace the region must have witnessed an extensive reconstruction.

Unfortunately there is little hard evidence of new building in the countryside. There are no fine examples in either The King's or Queen's counties of country house architecture that can be firmley dated to the period between the Restoration and 1690 (no building was recorded which was even vaguely similar to Beaulieu in Co. Louth or Eyrecourt in Co. Galway reflecting the new ideas that filtered through to Ireland in the late Caroline period).

It could be argued that all traces of a once impressive group of early country houses have been completely obliterated by successive re-building work. Alternatively a case could be made that such houses were simply not prevalent in King's and Queen's (or any other county for that matter) in the first place. Castle Cuffe and Rush Hall (both originally owned by the Cootes) are probably the largest houses built between 1650 and 1700 in the counties and their H and L shape plan and massive construction make them far more reminiscent of English Jacobean mansions than country-house prototypes. Castle Cuffe had an extraordinary sequence of huge chimney stacks set at right angles to each other, reminiscent of other fortified houses like Ballinakill (which are generally ascribed to the early seventeenth century on architectural grounds but may in fact be examples from nearer the end of the century).[43] A tantalising sketch by Thomas Dineley (1680) of Clogrenan Castle, (once on an important crossing point over the River Barrow on The Queen's/Carlow border controlled by a branch of the Butler family) shows a large house with five storeys, with three decorative gables at the front and a crennellated parapet at the sides. This was either a sixteenth century castle with modifications or a massive fortified house and demonstrates how those who did not carry out new building

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were `three English like houses and many Irish cabins'. Down Survey maps -information for 7 out of 11 baronies survive, N.L.I. Ms. 716, m/film P.8687.

[42] C. Fleetwood, M. Corbett and John Jones to John Thurloe, June 27, 1654, *A Collection of State Papers of John Thurloe,* Vol. 2, p.404, cited by Rolf Loeber, `Irish country houses and castles of the Late Caroline Period: An unremembered past recaptured', *I.G.S. Bulletin,* Vol. XVI no. 2 (Jan-June 1973), p.12.

[43] Castle Cuffe: built c.1660, despite its name O'Hanlon says that it was built by Coote, *History of the Q.C,* p. 771, Charles Coote M.P. for the county in 1642 was from Castle Cuffe, it is depicted on Sloane's map as a ruin c.1765; I.A.A. Photos, Foras report p. 81; Craig, *Classic Irish Houses,* p.18; O.P.W. Laois Inven. 1024. Rush Hall: also built c.1660 by the Cootes, Carrigan p. 183, Daniel O'Byrne, *the History of the Queen's County,* (Dublin, 1856), p. 60; Molyneux's description of, T.C.D., Mss. 883 Vol. 2; tiny sketch of Rush Hall in the 1740 Book of Maps of the Earl of Mountrath depicts a house with tall stacks with gabled projecting bays , N.L.I. , m/film, P.3427; Foras report p.81; O.P.W Inven. 1029 and 1038. Ballinakill: O.P.W. Inven. 1023.

projects could still nod to contemporary fashion by cannabilizing existing fabric and making cosmetic alterations to the front of a house.[44] At the other end of the social scale there are some modest houses extant from this period like Garendenny (3 bay, 2 storey gable ended dwelling) which look as though they are cut down tower houses.[45]

Ballaghmore House provides the clearest evolutionary link between the fortified house and the country house. It is a small 4 bay, 2 storey rectangle with end gables and tall chimneys. In terms of construction it is very robust, yet it has large well-proportioned windows and may well be be a rare surviving example of a small classically inspired house of the late seventeenth century.[46]

The considerable overlap of architectural periods is aptly demonstrated by the survival of the functioning tower house right up to and beyond 1760. In his personal sketches Jonah Barrington gives an illuminating description of Shrule castle, the seat of the Hartpole:

> it had long resigned the dignity of a castle without acquiring the comforts of a mansion... Its half levelled battlements, its solitary and decrepid tower, and its rough and dingy walls, (giving it the appearance of a sort of habitable buttress) combined to portray the downfall of an ancient family'.[47]

Writing in the 1820s the author saw Shrule as a curious survival which blended martial and domestic architecture. In the latter half of the eighteenth century this kind of seat was less incongrous, for as one traveller noted in 1782, `Shrule is an ancient and beautifully situated seat... a small square modernised castle with modern wings and addtitions'.[48] In the early eighteenth century such castles would have been unexceptional. Before 1731 the only dwelling house of the Hartpole family was the `castle at Shrule without any habitation adjoining and the farm was then much out of repair and the furniture thereof very indifferent'. Soon afterwards Robert Hartpole `repaired the castle at considerable expense and also built thereto a good and convenient dwelling house three stories high'.[49]

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44 O.P.W. Inven. 986.
45 Foras report, p.81.
46 Ballaghmore, Q.C.: I.A.A. photo 73/43; Foras report, p. 57, Foras photo.
47 Jonah Barrington, *Personal Sketches of His Own Times,* (London, 1827), Vol. 2, p. 61.
48 Travel journal for Kildare, Carlow and Q.C., (modern transcript of the original by Austin Cooper), August 1782, N.L.I, Ms. 773 (6).
49 Description of the Hartpole estate, 18 Nov. 1765, T.C.D., Ms. 1933 deed 354.

Though often radically modified to ease the problems caused by cramped spaces, poor lighting and spiral staircases, fortified houses and castles were still not suited to the lifestyle and the new standards of comfort required by the settlers, and yet they remained until at least the 1730s the most common type of residence for the gentry in the two counties. It is sometimes assumed that the lesser landowners, particularly Catholics, were more likely than families from the highest echelons to hang on to their castles because they did not have the capital to build anew. The argument here is that the architectural conservatism of many families (both Protestant and Catholic) and their sentimental attachment towards older dwellings also explain why so many towers survived. An examination of the standing evidence shows that the dwelling houses that were incorporated into these towers (or were built nearby) were not insignificant buildings, and some of them stand out as important pieces of architecture in their own right. The construction of a `convenient' farmhouse may have meant that there was no longer any need for the castle and that it could therefore be demolished. And yet it seems that many landowners were reluctant to see the old tower go.

The dwellings that adjoin a sample of 16 surviving tower houses appear to be from the 1730s, 1740s and 1750s, although the rendering and neat sashes may fool the eye.[50] Alterations took place in a piece-meal fashion in the early decades of the century but from the 1730s there is a spate of building activity. In 1693 Owen Carroll for instance built a house onto Borris Castle, part of which was over the foundations and barrel vaulted cellars of a demolished segment of the castle; then in the 1730s his successor a Mr. Stephens improved the house and added another wing. [51]

Some owners showed great ingenuity in their attempt to find an ongoing function for the tower, even if it compromised the symmetry and internal communications of the new house. The Gibbsian front to Stradbally Hall (shown on the estate painting c.1740) looks rather awkward since it has been grafted on to an earlier fortified house. Watercastle was sandwiched between two additions: the original tower became the entrance hall and location of the staircase, with the new sections providing the living accommodation. Clonreher Castle had a farm house built on to it in the early eighteenth

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50 Ballybrittain Castle and Ballagharine House, which are both captured on pre-Victorian drawings, are typical examples: the modern addition generally consisted of a 2/3 storey farmhouse with 5-6 bays and a steep slated roof with stacks placed at the gable ends. The elevations are exceedingly plain articulatated only by a doorcase. BallyBrittain: copy of a watercolour by S. Symes, 1837, I.A.A. photo 56/54. Ballagharine, naive view depicted on a map of 1776 of the estate belonging to the Earl of Upper Ossory, N.L.I., Ms. 1569.

51 Borris Castle and Borris house: In the Down Survey a castle and a house at `Burrhis' were in repair; Carrigan, p. 125; O.P.W. Laois Inven. (known as Town Parks),1011.

century and one of the turrets was converted into a dovecot.[52] A tower could be made into the centre-piece of a design, balanced by the addition of another tower, regularized by the inserion of sashes or completely encased by newer buildings. By the mid-eighteenth century when the Gothick style was being popularized Jonathan Darby of Leap Castle added windows to the massive O'Carroll tower and built two flanking wings which at the time were thought to have been in keeping with the medieval style.[53]

Old fabric can still be found in the most unlikely places. The exterior of Castle Bernard suggests a set-piece Tudor-Revival castle of 1833, but an examination of variations in the thickness of the walls on the ground plans reveals the ghostly outline of a T-shaped fortified house. Even Roundwood with its doll's house symmetry is said to have a number of peculiarities (e.g. differences in ceiling height) which could mean that a small proportion of the previous house has been carefully disguised. This all shows that the architecture and patterns of settlement of earlier settlers has left a subtle but indelible mark. Few of the new seats could be said to be completely `new' in the years 1690-1760.[54]

4.3 Motivations for new building

In the first quarter of the eighteenth century only a handful of gentlemen were fired with the zeal for building, and only two houses survive which reflect neo-Palladianism in its embryonic form. In the 1730s and 1740s Richard Castle's building practice does not appear to have stretched to The King's and Queen's counties, even though there are many examples of his work elsewhere in Leinster. As yet no house can be safely attributed to an important architect of the period; it also appears that very few in the region were planned on an ambitious scale. There were rather a preponderance of small and medium-sized houses, which is perhaps a reflection of the dense network of lesser gentry families rather than of large landowners. The notable exceptions are Castle Durrow, which was begun in 1715, and Cuba House, built c.1735 (now demolished), which in architectural

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52 Watercastle, Q.C. : N. Mc Cullough, `Palimpsest', p. 64, Clonreher, Q.C.: Foras report, p. 63.
53 Leap Castle, K.C.: *I.G.S. Bulletin,* (Jan-March, 1964); B. De Breffny and R. ffolliot, *the Houses of Ireland,* (London, 19750, p. 146-147; Bence-Jones, p. 182; Foras report p. 20.
54 Killeigh House has a nondesript late Georgian front, it is only a discreet narrow round headed window which rouses suspicion. When measured the walls were in places found to be 1.1 metre thick and the staircase is a rare Jacobean example. The bare bones of this house are at least sixteenth century and quite possibly medieval. Castle Bernard (alias Kinnity): architects plan , I.A.A. photo 13/36, photo of exterior Bence-Jones p.62; `Killeigh House', *Archaeology Ireland,* Vol. 8 no. 4, issue no. 30, 1994; Roundwood: information provided by David Griffin, Director of I.A.A.

terms are of national as well as local importance and can indeed be used as benchmarks in charting the development of classical architecture.[55]

In the two decades between the construction of Castle Durrow and of Cuba House (near Banagher) there was intense architectural debate in England and Ireland surrounding the `new style' and the formulation of neo-Palladian designs for country houses. But ideas alone were not enough to bring about the transformation of the regional landscape. From the 1650s the designs of Serlio and Palladio had been popularized by English architects like Roger Pratt and the concept of the double-pile passed across to Ireland only a little later than in England but this had more of an effect on the houses in Dublin than in the countryside. It was the changing attitudes and economic circumstances of the gentry which turned architectural drawings into bricks and mortar. From 1715 an increasing number of the county gentry were no longer content with the enlargement and modernization of existing houses and were prepared to invest considerable resources in the construction of country houses *de novo*.

In 1715 William Flower began drawing up contracts with workmen to demolish the old castle at Durrow and to build a new house. In the very same year John Bland began to build Blandsfort. In April 1715 Knightley Chetwood was also making preparations for building a new dwelling house at Woodbrook; he wrote in a letter to Jonathan Swift, that `I am impatient to begin'.[56] One needs to ask what motivated such landowners to break away from the trend of merely patching up existing houses and to build virtually from scratch at this particular juncture?

Castle Durrow has no defensive features such as gun loops or bawn walls. In the previous two decades it would have been rather less prudent for landowners to build such houses. During the Williamite War rapparees had been responsible for burning the stables at the older Castle Durrow and it was probably only the massive walls of the old castle that had preserved the estate steward and the Dutch troopers quartered there from

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55 Castle Durrow, Q.C.: I.A.A. photo 29/59; The Knight of Glin, `The Irish Palladians', (unpub. and undated paper, Harvard Univ.: copy in the I.A.A.); Rolf Loeber, `The Building of Castle Durrow', *IG.S. Bulletin,* Vol. XVI, (Autumn-Winter, 1973), pp 103-106; Bence-Jones, p. 66-67; Brian De Breffny and Rosemary ffolliot, *The Houses of Ireland,* pp,. 92-94; P. Somerville-Large, *The Irish Country House: A Social history*, (London, 1995), p. 118; Carrigan, *History and Antiquities of the Diocese of Ossory*, (Dublin, 1905), pp 220-221; E. O'Brien, *An Historical and Social Diary of Durrow*, (Kilkenny, 1992), pp 1-19; *The Durrow Review*, (Winter, 1980-81)- commemorative booklet. Cuba House, K.C. : I.A.A. photos and modern architectural drawings by John O'Connell; M. Craig, *Classic Irish Houses,* pp. 6, 22, 34, 80-84; The Knight of Glin et al, *Vanishing Country Houses,* p. 120-121; Bence-Jones, p. 96.

56 Construction was interrupted when Chetwood left Ireland between c. 1715 and 1718, Chetwood to Swift, 5 April 1715, Swift Letters, Vol. 2, p. 162; Walter Strickland, `The Chetwoods of Woodbrook in the Queen's County', *J.K.A.S.,* Vol. 8 (1915-1917), p. 218.

mortal danger. Even in more settled times when the danger from rapparees had receded, a house like the new Castle Durrow with large sash windows and carved stone work would have been easily penetrated by gangs of armed robbers. The year 1691, we know in retrospect, inaugurated the long ascendancy of the Protestant elite. However contemporaries, who did not have the benefit of hindsight, had become accustomed to serious insurrections in every lifetime. In the light of such uncertainties building a country house represented the optimistic reading of the future on the part of English landowners in Ireland. The new Castle Durrow like so many Irish houses maintained its martial air by keeping the name of its medieval predecessor, yet it was in a classical style and would have looked extremely striking and modern in comparison to the neighbouring fortified houses.

Income was another factor in explaining new building. It is difficult to ascertain figures for Flower's total acreage and rentals (notably relating to his subsidiary estates in County Dublin and Brecon in Wales), but it is likely that his annual rental at the beginning of the eighteenth century approached £2000 and that this steadily increased.[57] Though Flower was (in relation to other county families) a substantial gentleman there were many demands on his resources. The greater proportion of income from the rental was used to improve the demesne and estate, to pay for domestic servants and the running of the household, and to maintain a lifestyle that was commensurate with his status. Lord Palmerston remarked to his nephew (William Flower) in 1728, `there is no making a show without money'. It was not just wealth *per se* that was a prerequisite for building. A landowner also needed liquidity: the ready cash to pay off the constant flow of craftsmen who arrived at the steward's office clutching bills for materials and labour. Bland and Chetwood were newcomers and used some of the capital which was left over from buying their estates to build seats. John Bland, `with money he got from his regiment (£10,000)... purchased the estate of Blandsfort in 1714 and then began the house'.[58]

Office holding and local status were also determinants. In 1715 Flower was elected as M.P. for County Kilkenny, which coincides with commencement of the actual building work. As early as 1712 he had purchased 43 tall trees (each 15-20 feet long) from Mr. Allen of Maryborough, and as the timber element of construction was usually one of the first items to be settled (on account of the maturing process), it is possible that

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[57]By 1775 the Flowers were one of only seven families in or adjacent to County Kilkenny whose incomes were in the range £3000-£5000 p.a.; *Analecta Hibernica,* Vol. XII, (1943), pp. 144-147.
[58] Cosby Autobiog. p. 253.

he had toyed with the idea some years before and that political success only spurred him on to build a pile worthy of an M.P. Similarly elevation to the Irish peerage in 1733 coincided with extensive improvements to the pleasure grounds. Flower, aged only 30 at the time of his electoral triumph in 1715, was a highly ambitious man with a growing family and keen to put his imprint on county society. One way of securing this clearly was by investing in a new seat. His uncle Palmerston is particularly revealing on the subject. He wrote, `if you complain of poverty you cant [sic] buy a county without money, and if your Irish savings are gone, touch your English ones.. money is always best spent when one makes the best figure, your marble pallaces your woods...parterres orchards and plantations. Sett you in an elevated view, than in a dirty smoaking coal fire, an old harpsicord, one valet, and two quarrelling chairmen at your old lodging [a reference to Flower's town house?]'.[59] A seat was seen a means of advancement since one could attract the attention of men of quality by having a house that could accommodate new forms of hospitality and display. Flower for example operated in vice regal circles; and the Duke of Dorset, whom he described as `an old intimate of my youth', was entertained at Castle Durrow during his his term as Lord Lieutenant. In the light of the many favourable reports about the house during and after his lifetime, Flower would have considered the money well spent.[60]

4.4 The transmission of architectural ideas

Many theories have been offered as to why the classical (particularly the neo-Palladian) style was favoured by the Irish Protestant elite. The coincidence of intellectual (e.g. the publication of *Vitruvius Britannicus* and editions of *De Quattro Libri*) and political and economic factors (e.g. the consolidation of estates and greater prosperity after the first decade of the eighteenth century) is undoubtedly one of the key reasons but this needs to be qualified. It has been suggested that the classical style was popular in Ireland because it could be easily imitated by squireens who did not have access to individuals with architectural expertise.[61] Informal discussions among gentlemen-builders were one means of formulating designs and houses in the two counties tended to follow a limited number of basic models. But it is not true that builders simply plucked designs from pattern books or slavishly copied neighbours.

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[59] Lord Palmerston to William Flower, Oct 1728, N.L.I. Ms. 11,478 (1).
[60] T.U. Sadleir ed., `A Tour in Kildare in 1732 [of John Loveday]', *J.K.A.S.*, Vol. 7 (1912-14), pp. 168-177.
[61] E.g. De Breffny asserted this in *Houses of Ireland* (London, 1975).

It is only after 1750 that books of design were printed in Ireland which specifically catered to the needs of Irish gentlemen and the first useful pattern book for the lesser gentry was published in 1757.[62] The illustrated architectural books available in Dublin were re-prints (or imported from England) and were produced in small editions.[63] Most of the books found in Irish libraries of the period (editions of Vitruvius, Palladio and Vignola) showed classical architecture in its purest form without due modification to the English or Irish context, and one suspects that for all but a small minority they were used as merely handsome reference works. In the Vesey household at Abbey Leix in 1720 could be found volumes by Batty Langley and William Halfpenny; these along with other popular works such as William Kent's *Designs of Inigo Jones* and James Gibbs' *Book of Architecture* did show classical buildings which had been executed in England.[64] But if a gentleman like Thomas Vesey opened any of these books with the expectation of finding a model for a new house he would have been disappointed. There were some designs for smaller country houses and town houses (unlike nearly all of the engravings in *Vitruvius Britannicus* which were of very large houses), but these were articulated by the use of the orders, pediments, porticos, loggias and rustication. Such features were too expensive for most country gentlemen.

The idiosyncratic designs produced by the Irish architect John Aheron between 1740 and 1744 were strongly influenced by the architectural publications that could be obtained in Ireland. Aheron did not visit the capital until 1745 and his laborious drawing technique actually emulated the cross-hatching found on copper engravings. With the exception of three plates (including one for Stradbally Hall), his designs (with elevations generally between 150 and 200 feet long) were fanciful and impractical in an Irish context.[65] Castle Durrow and Gloster are the only houses which used the orders (and here pilasters rather than columns were used in the interests of economy). There is not a single example locally of a house with a portico before 1760. Building a small and handsome house which was classically proportioned, using only the arrangement of elevational features such as the roof, stacks, windows and doorcases to provide embellishment, required more than a passing knowledge of architecture gleaned from books.

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[62]Rev. John Payne, *Twelve Designs for Country Houses,* (Dublin, 1757).
[63]C. Casey, `Books and Builders: A Bibliographical Approach to Irish Eighteenth Century Architecture', (PhD, T.C.D., 1992), p. 6.
[64]29 May 1720, book binding bill, De Vesci Papers, N.L.I., Ms. J/3.
[65]`A new design for the front of Stradbally hall in the Queen's County belonging to Poole Cosby Esq'; see Casey, `Builders and Books', p.108.

Houses fulfilled many functions as homes, places of hospitality and nerve centres of estates and the internal layout of the house was arguably more important than the architectural style of the exterior. Indeed for the majority of landowners in The King's and Queen's counties who owned modest seats and farmhouses, the intellectual debate which raged in the 1720s in aesthetic circles such as the `New Junta' would have been of little relevance.[66] Owning a convenient, comfortable and well laid out house was as much as they could aspire to, and this was recognised by bodies such as the Dublin Society who in 1745 organised a competition `for designs of houses from two to eight rooms in a floor'.[67] Thus the problem is not only understanding the means and the speed by which these ideas were transmitted but also how they were adapted to suit the requirements of an Irish county elite.

It has been argued that by the end of the seventeenth century an architectural profession had emerged in Ireland out of three main groups: the officer-architects (skilled engineers and builders of fortifications who sometimes turned their hand to domestic architecture); the gentlemen-architects (who were educated and often well travelled); and the craftsmen-architects (particularly the master masons and carpenters, who were contracted to carry out various aspects of construction).[68] The professionalisation of architecture did not mean that the above three groups became obsolete by the eighteenth century. Although there is evidence that both Thomas Burgh and Edward Lovett Pearce worked in the two counties one can not be sure that they they acted as architects in the strict sense (designing and supervising all aspects of the construction of a house from start to completion).

Architects often wore many hats and it is sometimes difficult to disintangle their professional activities from their personal ones. In 1661 the offices of Director, Overseer and Surveyor-General of the Fortifications in Ireland were held by John Hallam. He was granted lands in The King's County and his seat was called Hallam Hill.[69] Hallam could be said to be an amalgam of officer-architect and landed gentleman. In the eighteenth century the same chameleon-like architects can still be found. Thomas Burgh was a soldier and military engineer before becoming Surveyor-General in 1700. He possessed an estate at Oldtown near Naas, Co. Kildare, and was known to have been involved with the building projects of private clients. Ballyburley House, the seat of the Wakely family

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[66]E. McParland, `Edward Lovett Pearce and the New Junta for architecture', in T.C. Barnard and J. Clark eds., *Burlington: Architecture, Art and Life*, (London, 1985), pp. 151-165.
[67]Dublin Society minute book. 1741-46, Vol. 3, 1745, p. 132.
[68] Rolf Loeber, *A Biographical Dictionary of Architects in Ireland*, (London, 1981), pp. 1-5.
[69]In 1663/4 he was made J.P. and Sheriff of the county and it is also likely that he had served as an army officer, Loeber, p. 57.

near Edenderry on the Kildare border, has been attributed to Burgh. The entrance front was restrained and horizontally inclined (11 bays, 2 stories) with a slight projection of the central 5 bays (which is surmounted by a pediment) and an imposing doorcase; it is very reminiscent of many of his designs for barracks and other royal works.[70] There is also a strong link between Burgh and Castle Durrow. A fragment of the design of Burgh's seat at Oldtown which was built at the same time as Flower's house shows some striking stylistic similarities (such as the use of the giant order and very heavy entablatures). Among the Flower papers is an isolated memo from `Thomas Burgh' dated October 1726; it refers to pilasters `nine feet, ten inches broad with Pedestals 10 shillings for wainscott behind them and their capitals ...of the corinthian order fluted and counter fluted', presumably for the interior of the house.[71] The importance of family connections with architects can be seen elsewhere. The alterations to the exterior and interior of Gloster for Trevor Lloyd in about 1730 were probably carried out after consultation with Edward Lovett Pearce; he was a first cousin.

Some gentlemen were suitably qualified to play a large part, if not a key role in the design of their own houses. William Flower was educated at Christ Church, Oxford (he entered in 1701) at a time when there was a flurry of collegiate building in the `new style'.[72] Dons were taking to their drawing boards and disseminating classical ideas to their students as well as actually realising architectural designs. The Dean of Christ Church, Henry Aldrich, was responsible for the first truly neo-Palladian square in England (Peckwater Quadrangle, 1711), and since Christ Church was a particularly popular college for Irish grandees some of these ideas would have passed into Irish society.[73] William Perceval wrote that, `Mr. Flower (who was my pupil at Oxford) has built a most noble house at Durragh'.[74] In a letter to Jonathan Swift in 1736 Flower

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[70] Ballyburley, K.C.: the Wakely family came to Ireland in 1462, in 1588 grants were confirmed by Elizabeth and they built a house on the site of the original castle and named it after Lord Burleigh the Chancellor of England. It was said that before it was destroyed by fire in 1888 it was the last remaining house in Ireland to be roofed by bog oak; see *The Chronicle* newspaper, 5 Feb. 1902; Bence-Jones suggests that it was built by John Wakely (died c.1713) or his son John, p.19; I.A.A. photos; stylistically it looks early eighteenth century and in a photogragh of 1902 the doorcase looks similar to the one at Dr. Steevens's Hospital in Dublin; see also Loeber, p.39.

[71] In 1720 Flower's uncle, Lord Palmerston, refers to the progress of Dr. Steeven's Hospital in Dublin which was also designed by Burgh and the site of the building was originally owned by the Temple family, Burgh bill, Flower Papers, N.L.I., Ms. 11,481 (9).

[72] Matric. 21 July 1701 aged 15; J. Foster, *Alumni Oxonienses 1500-1714,* (London, 1892), vol. II., p. 510.

[73] See the numerous references in *Alumni Oxonienses* and portraits of Irish alumni in Christ Church college collection.

[74] Quotation comes from the O'Hara Mss. in the N.L.I. and is cited by The Knight of Glin in his unpublished paper, `Irish Palladians' (Harvard Univ.), p.16.

recalled that he was a favourite of Dean Aldrich.[75] Another Irish alumnus, Robert Southwell, sought advice from Aldrich in 1680 about `a means to cure a smoaking chimney'.[76] Similarly among the list of the books at Abbey Leix in 1720 was a framed print of `Dr. Aldridge' who would have been familiar to the four members of the Vesey family who attended Christ Church. [77]

Informal discussions among gentlemen-builders was another means of formulating country house designs. In 1731 Jonathan Swift wrote to Knightley Chetwood of Woodbrook `As to your building I can only advise you to take advice, to go on slowly and to have your house on paper before you put it into lime and stone'.[78]

While living in Bristol for a year Pole Cosby lived in a neo-Palladian villa in Clifton which was built in 1711 and at the vanguard of the new classical style which was being adpoted by the merchants of Bristol. And while travelling in England he also had first hand experience of some of the finest houses, gardens and parks which provided inspiration when it came to improving his own seat at Stradbally. Though lacking the resources of the wealthier English nobles he could still replicate, albeit on a much smaller scale, the new architectural and garden forms that he would have seen in England onto his own estate.[79] When he returned to Ireland in 1734 he may have been a little embarrassed by his own demesne and he observed `tho I was absent but one year', the house and gardens were `much out of order, so yet I had a lot of work to do', and he immediately set about making improvements.[80]

The estate painting c.1740 shows a large house which is similar to `a new design for the front of Stradbally hall in the Queen's county belonging to Poole Cosby Esq.' in an album of drawings produced between 1740-44 by John Aheron. Perhaps the final design incorporated modifications made by Cosby to the original drawing. Compared to the most *avant garde* houses that were being erected locally in the 1730s such as Cuba House, the design for Stradbally was already a little outmoded before it was even executed. The overall shape of the house (with its three stories of an equal height and the

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75 Lord Castle Durrow to Jonathan Swift, 4 Dec. 1736, Swift Letters, Vol. IV, p. 556.

76 The buildings which were commissioned by the Southwell family (including the fine alms houses in Downpatrick, Co. Down) drew heavily on this classical education, Robert Southwell to Dean Aldrich, c.1680, Bodleian Lib., Ms. Eng. Lett. C. 130, fol. 57-58.

77 John Vesey matriculated in 1678, Thomas in 1689 and George and John in 1697, *Alumni Oxonienses*, Vol. IV), p. 1554.

78 Swift to Chetwood, 10 June 1721, Swift Letters, Vol. 2, p. 390; Walter Strickland, `The Chetwoods of Woodbrook in the Queen's County', *J.K.A.S.*, Vol. 8 (1915-1917), p. 218.

79D. Beaumont, `An Irish Gentlemen in England: The Travels of Pole Cosby c. 1730-1735, *Journal of the British Archaeological Association.*, Vol. CXLIX, (1996), pp. 37-54.

80Cosby Autobiog., p. 273.

short wings) gives it the appearance of a Caroline or even Jacobean mansion and yet it has an assemblage of venetian windows: it is a curious blend of sevententh-century classicism with neo-Palladiansim'.[81] But seen in the context of what was being erected elsewhere in the two counties up to 1760 Stradbally Hall would (if the Palladian design was fully executed) rank among the top handful of houses in the region.

4.5 Costs and logisics of building

As revealing as the process of designing new houses is the relationship between clients, craftsmen and the local communities. The building accounts relating to Castle Durrow are voluminous and offer a rare insight into the mechanics of house construction in the early eighteenth century.[82] They point to an increasing specialization of the building trade, a multiplicity of contracts and other deeds outline the exact specifications for craftsmen, the estimated costs, the schedule of work and the various components of the project (carried out by the numerous masons, bricklayers, joiners, sawyers, slaters, plumbers, glaziers, plasterers and painters in the years 1715, 1716 and 1717).

Mr. Benjamin Crawley was employed as the supervisor of works.[83] He worked elsewhere in the county for other gentlemen. Captain Fitzpatrick paid him at least £420 for various gardening and ditching work between 1712 and 1715 at his seat called Tentore.[84] A plan c.1740 shows `the three intended avenues and improvements' as well as the pleasure gardens, wilderness and canal.[85] Crawley's name occurs in other bills in conjunction with the same team of craftsmen who worked at Durrow.[86]

The Quaker, Joseph Gill, mentioned in his journal that c.1697 he had moved from Edenderry in The King's County to Dublin because, `he was recommended by George Rooke to one Benjamin Crawley an eminent builder', indeed Gill assisted `Crawley' on

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[81] Casey, `Builders and Books', p. 108.

[82] The bulk of the accounts relating to the main construction 1715-1718 are in N.L.I., Ms. 11,455 (1-3), but a considerable proportion of the references are scattered over the collection, N.L.I., Ms. 11,455-11,471.

[83] He was a local man and was responsible for walling work on the demesne in 1713 and at the time of construction Benjamin Crawley was probably in debt to Flower. His kinsman Abraham Crawley appears on a lease of 1708 and on a rent roll of 1732 with a holding of 171 acres at Durrow and Knockinovan, Flower Lease of 23 August 1708, St. Kieran's College, M.M.S. 168, also cited by E. O'Brien, *An Historical and Social Diary of Durrow,* p. 12; rent roll 1732, N.L.I., Ms.11,451 (1); Oct. 1713, N.L.I., Ms.11,468 (5)., N.L.I., Ms.11,455 (1).

[84] Fitzpatrick rental and account book 1700-1719, N.L.I., Ms.3000.

[85] Plan of the intended avenues and gardens for Lord Gowran's seat, undated, Nat. Arch. Ire., M.3230.

[86] Darby and Phelan the masons, Rudd the joiner, `Mr. Kenselagh' the painter and upholsterer (probably the same `Kinsela' who painted Flower's sash windows); N.L.I., Ms.3000.

building schemes in southern Leinster at around the same time.[87] It is likely that Gill's Crawley was from The Queen's County and after achieving some standing had set up in Dublin with his own timber yards (certainly large quantities of deal was required at Durrow and transported from Dublin).[88]

In 1715 Benjamin Crawley made his `proposals for building a house for Wm Flower esq', and was appointed to supervise the works for 4 hours a day in the autumn and winter and 6 hours during the spring and summer months at a salary of £40 a year. He was required to re-use the building materials from the old house and to put up a dwelling 96 feet long and 53 feet deep.[89]

Throughout 1715 the raw materials trundled into Durrow. Men busied themselves raising 80 tons of stone from Flower's own quarry, drawing 800 barrels of lime, firing 100,000 bricks and five teams of men, boys and horses spent hundreds of hours dragging timber from nearby woods. [90] Flower was fortunate in living in an area rich in natural resources, including a variety of unusual stone types; apart from the excellent stone to be found in the upper strata of the Slieve Bloom Mountains, there was slate, sandstone, flagstone, fine grey marble, ironstone and fine clays. The Barrow, which stretched from Philipstown to Waterford, was suitable for moving heavy cargo such as building materials.[91]

Much of the timber came from the immediate district around Durrow, which until the end of the eighteenth century had dense plains of primeval woods and was noted for this by travellers to the area.[92] Some timber was purchased from neighbouring gentlemen

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[87]Including `a large house in the County of Catherlo now called Burton Hall', for the Dublin Alderman Benjamin Burton between 1697 and 1700, and after 1700 he worked at three barracks,` one at Catherlugh [Carlow], one at Tullah [Tullow] and one at Athy'. His architectural career came to an abrupt end when he decided to take a wife from his native Cunmberland and set up a grocer's shop on Meath Street, Dublin; The Journal of Joseph Gill, (esp. c.1697-1700), Friends Historical Library, Dublin, Ms.134.

[88]Ibid., his surname, together with Rudd and Jellicoe (craftsmen in his team) are common among the Quaker community; Olive Goodbody, *Guide to Irish Quaker Records 1654-1860,* (I.M.C, Dublin, 1967), see appendix for list of recurrent names. Regular payments for carriage of timber from Dublin, 1710-1748, N.L.I., Ms.11,471 and 1715-20, N.L.I., Ms.11,455 (1).

[89] At the same time contracts were drawn up to build a barn, stables, cow and hen houses. John Rudd, the joiner, made detailed plans for work, `rais'd after the best manner', assisted by John Owens and John Coultman promising to complete the work by November 1718. Stone cutters, Demave, Phelan, Daly and Gilfolye left estimates and descriptions including `architraves and freeze, 8 figures on the corners of the battlements, rustick quoines, pilasters and pediments'; Crawley and Rudd, N.L.I., Ms.11,455 (1), masons and others, Ms.11,455 (3).

[90] N.L.I. Ms.11,455 (1-3).

[91] For a discussion of the geology and climate see, O'Hanlon et al, *History of the Queen's County,* vol. 1, pp 4-14; for availability of materials in North Leinster see, A. Rowan and C. Casey, *North Leinster*, (London, 1993), pp 84-85.

[92] Eileen McCracken, `The Woodlands of North Leinster in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries', *J.K.A.S.,* Vol. 14, (1964-70), pp 431-442.

(particularly the Cuffes, Despards and Breretons), and other consignments came further afield, such as one from `Shannon' in 1717.[93] A century earlier much of the indigenous woodland of the Midlands, which had been such a noted feature in the sixteenth century when the area was first planted by English settlers, was on the way to being cleared by industrial activity. As a result by the eighteenth century there was a brisk and sophisticated market for different types of timber.[94] Gentlemen advertised in newspapers such as *Faulkner's Dublin Journal* giving detailed description of the wood that they had on offer.[95]

The sequence of bills suggest that the offices were completed first, and in early 1716 payments were made for flagging, paving, painting and plastering. The shell of the main house was completed late in 1716, and this is the date carved above the front entrance. By 1717 the interiors were already taking shape. In the period from February 1716 to September 1717 Rudd was paid for a row of columns, windows shutters, doorcasings, various mouldings, the stairs and wainscotting in the hall. The presence of plasterworkers and painters Thomas Lett and John Thompson are shown by the many disbursements for brushes, pencils, gallons of paint, linseed and whiting. The plumber, Thomas Woods from Dublin, put up gutters, pipes and spouts, which were proudly emblazoned with the Flower coat of arms.[96]

What was the final cost of the house? Crawley gave two initial estimates of £356 and £673, a very poor indicator of the overall amount spent.[97] A detailed examination of *all* the bills has allowed some crude computations. Between 1715 and 1718 at least £1584 was laid out in the construction. The cost did not end here: further disbursements were made in the 1720s and 1730s for joinery in the interior, and it does not take into account the cost of furnishing the house. John Loveday mentions on his tour of 1732 that `it is not all finished'.[98] Though this figure is imprecise one can still get a sense of the

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[93] Misc. receipts, N.L.I., Ms.11,468 (3).

[94] By the 1730s exports of hardwoods had virtually ceased and at least £35,000 worth of softwoods, mostly from the Baltic, were imported every year; Eileen McCracken, `The Woodlands of North Leinster in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries', pp 431-442.

[95]For example in 1733 at Tinnakill, in the north of the Queen's County, there was the opportunity of buying `190 acres of oak and ash' Ibid, extracts from Faulkner's Dublin Journal, p.442. The Durrow bills highlight the variety of woods that were required for different purposes. Rudd used oak boards for the hall, deal for the dining room floor, and no possibly more exotic woods for some of the finer panelling and the staircases.

[96] N.L.I., Ms.11,455 (1-3).

[97]Though these accounts provide the most complete assemblage of bills for a house of this date anywhere in Ireland it is still difficult to discern the original pattern: some bills record payment for works completed, others are estimates for work about to be completed, there are numerous duplicates, some are missing, some appear out of context in correspondence elsewhere in the Flower archive.

[98]T.U. Sadleir ed., `A Tour in Kildare in 1732', *J.K.A.S.*, Vol. 12 (1912-14), pp. 168-177.

allocation of funds for various components of the construction. These are summarised in Table 4.5.

Table 4.5 Break down of expenditure at Castle Durrow between 1715 and 1718

Type of work carried out	Cost (£)	% of the total
Stone work (cutting, carving and laying)	423	27
Joinery	333	21
Raw materials (stone, timber and carriage)	263	17
Painting and plasterwork	153	10
Leadwork	143	9
Brickwork	117	7
Glazing	98	6
Flagging and Paving	54	3

Source; The Flower Papers, N.L.I.

From the accounts it would appear that it was very difficult for Flower to operate a tight budget (afer all he spent at least £1584 instead of the projected £600). This is supported by a revealing letter from William Perceval of Oxford to O`Hara of Annaghmore in 1718. He warned of the dangers of over-spending by citing the very case of William Flower, `I asked him [Flower] what his house cost him, he could not or would not tell me. I ask'd him whether it did cost him double what he proposed. He answered more than treble. I mention this for your caution'. Flower was not by any means the only gentleman with a money-depleting `genius towards building'. Perceval went on to mention George Matthews recommending that, `if his building scheme allows for £2000 set aside another £1000 for unseen changes'.[99] Despite the substantial cost of building Castle Durrow the household accounts show no impact on the ordinary recurring expenditure. If anything, Flower's lifestyle became even more costly; there was always enough cash for travel to England, for election entertainment, for the patronage of a local horse race, or for the beautification of the pleasure grounds and the Dublin town house.

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[99]O'Hara Papers Special List, N.L.I., 338, letters form W. Best from Oxon and George Matthew of Co. Tipperary; Knight of Glin, `The Irish Palladians', (unpub. paper), p.16.

4.6 Interiors

Castle Durrow was not just an imposing ornament on the landscape. First and foremost it was a home and the nerve centre of an estate. To get a sense of how the building was used one must turn to the interior.[100]

The ground floor contained a hall, dining room, parlour (or salon) and three other rooms for entertainment (known as the `blue', `green' and `gilt leather' rooms on account of the materials adorning the walls). On the first floor was a gallery or long room (above the dining room), three to four bed chambers with adjoining closets, and dressing rooms and a nursery.

Rudd's joinery agreement of 1716 outlined in detail the types of wainscot panelling. Oak was used in the hall `raised after the best manner', whereas deal boards were chosen for the dining room, drawing rooms and bed chambers.[101] Further work was carried out in the 1720s and 1730s assisted by John Cosgrave who in 1726 carved `8 corinthian capitals'. Barnaby Demave supplied the chimney pieces and at least one sturdy table using white marble as well as the high quality black Kilkenny marble quarried locally.[102]

Wood and stone were not the only sources of decoration. Rooms were eventuallly decorated out with wallpaper and hangings, particularly after 1730. In 1732 virtually the whole house was re-painted and materials purchased for re-hanging the rooms, including `buckrum and canvas, kidderminster, silk, curtain rings, glue, cord, wax etc'. At the same time upholsterers worked on `arm chears', yellow damask curtains, `sheyses', `a blue paragon bed', white window curtains, a tapestry, gilt leather and `painting the floor cloaths'. In 1739 Mr. Taylor was employed for a week papering rooms and his materials included gold, lapis, ochre and other paints and a graining tool which (as with the greater proportion of materials) were bought in Dublin. The last phase of internal decoration was in 1746/47 when many rooms were hung with `fine peper'. This coincided with the emploment of a stuccodore named John Jellecum (or Jellicoe).[103] Between 1745 and 1747 £45 was spent on ceilings in the dining room, parlour and best bedchamber.[104] Some of this work can still be identified and is of a very high quality, if slightly archaic.

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[100] The inventory of 12 Aug.1871 lists the contents of 45 rooms, but changes in the naming of rooms and extensions to the house makes the reconstruction of the original layout very difficult, Nat. Arch. Ire. (Four Courts), K.K.4/29.

[101] They were `framd with a full oge stuck on the margent of the pannells'; N.L.I., Ms. 11,455 (1-2)

[102] Ibid.

[103] A local name recurrent in Quaker records.

[104] Interiors, N.L.I., Ms. 11,469 (11-12) and Plasterwork, Ms.11,462 (3) and 11,471.

There is a contrast between the assemblage of heavily decorated polygonal panels with deep prominent mouldings arranged into a geometric shapes, (which are so redolent of the late seventeenth century) and the delicacy of the swirling mass of acanthus leaves, scallop shells and baskets of fruit (more typical of mid-eighteenth century rococo). [105]

The detailed nineteenth-century inventories do not appear to include any of the original belongings.[106] It is only by looking through the daily household accounts and bills that can one compile a list of William Flower's high status goods and moveables (furniture, pictures, ceramics, books and plate) and get a sense of how a house of this type was furnished. From the moment the house was begun, Flower set about acquiring furniture. One tantalising fragment of a list entitled, `money expended towards furnishing my house in Durrow (1716-18)' contains a `second hand japanned cabinett with drawers (£9), a large walnut chest of drawers (£2, 10 shillings), five pieces of old tapestry containing 150 ells bought in London (£11), severall chaires from Rider in Meath Street (£16, 15 shillings), eight brass locks from Perry on Heron Street (£6, 16 shillings)'.[107]

This shows that there was a strong market in high quality used goods even among the very top echelons of society. One might have expected that along with the fireplaces and the panelling designed *en suite* a *moderne* house would be decked out only with the latest novelties. Instead one should visualise Castle Durrow's rooms with slightly old-fashioned and shabby furnishings as well as new objects. Trying to understand the subtle gradations and the chronology of changing tastes requires some caution, particularly in an Irish context. What at first sight apears to be *passé* often turns out to be *de rigueur.* The `second hand cabinet with drawers' for example could be a respectable left over from the previous century, but because it is `japanned' it could conform to the first craze for `chinoisserie'. Tapestries remained popular in Ireland long after they were discarded by most English households. An account from nearby Clandonagh refers to `tapestry hangings left in the house' in 1750, [108] and a traveller to Ballyadams Castle in 1782 observed that the `state room still remains hung with elegant tapestry now let to rot a way'.[109] Second-hand goods were not to be sneezed at (providing they were of a high quality) as shown by the high prices for which they were sold. In a discussion about

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105 Photographs at the Ire. Architec. Arch. (Laois box file, 029/59).

106 Inventories of 12 Aug. 1871 and 29 Nov. 1906, Nat Arch. Ire., K.K.4/29 and K.K.4/31.

107 List of furniture, N.L.I., Ms. 11,455 (2). For e.g. N.L.I., Ms. 11,458 (1). In addition to the fragment list of furniture bought for Castle Durrow there were many new acqusitions including numerous looking glasses, 2 writing desks with seven chairs (£5, 9 shillings in 1732), a chest of drawers (19 shillings 1738), a dozen rush bottom chairs with a guarrantee to `uphold joynts for 7 years' (1741), a book case with a further cost for `puting in an apartment for ladyship'. (1748).

108 Clandonagh household book 1748-54, N.L.I., Ms.1593.

109Notes on Austin Cooper's visit to Ballyadams Castle, N.L.I., Ms. 773 (6).

Persian carpets one lady advised Mrs. Flower in 1685, ` truly those at second hand if they be not tarnished or faded will be sould at little less than those that are new'.[110] From the early eighteenth century, auctions become more popular particularly in Dublin. In 1728/9 the Veseys bought a number of books (at a cost of £11.13.9) at `Dr. Friend's auction'.[111] Sir Lawrence Parsons bought a number of household goods at Captain Balfour's auction in 1741.[112]

The plate was of the very highest quality and from the workshops of the best craftsmen in Dublin and London. In 1711 the goldsmith Thomas Bolton (whose status is shown by the fact that he became Lord Mayor of Dublin in 1716) was commissioned to make `13 spoones, 12 desart forks' and a stand for a dish (£25.11). Three years later another Dubliner Thomas Warkman made a teapot and dish (£11.5), and in 1741 John Briscoe,`jeweller and Goldsmith on Friday Street, Cheapside, London' whose elaborately printed trade bill states thst he dealt particularly in second hand plate was paid for, `12 plates and `the taking out of their 12 coats (of arms) and burnishing '(£53.18). [113] When the surviving bills of other families in the two counties are compared one can observe distinct patterns in tastes and shopping habits. For example, in 1709 the Veseys paid a visit to Bolton and spent £12.15 and in 1713 they also went to `Workman the Goldsmith' (£9.8).[114] Both the Veseys and the Flowers traded in their old silver to get a discount on new commissions. Not only did silver play an important part in their grand shows of largesse and deportment at the dining room table but it was, especially in a more unsettled Irish environment, valued for its intrinsic worth which could be turned into ready cash at a time of crisis.

There are very few documentary references to pictures in late-seventeenth or early eighteenth-Ireland. Of the small sample of inventories that have survived a few mention the total number and value of the pictures; very rarely are they listed or described. One fragmentary list of Flower portraits c.1700 mentions the names of a dozen sitters. It is a indication not only of the types of picture originally hung on the walls but also of the network of English, Welsh and Irish friends and associates, and perhaps even his political sensibilities.[115]

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[110] Letter to Mrs. Flower at Finglas, Co, Dublin, c. 1685, N.L.I., Ms. 11,472 (1).

[111] Household bills, De Vesci Papers, N.L.I., J/3.

[112] R. ffolliot ed. `Captain Balfour's Auction 15th March 1741-2', *Irish Ancestor,* Vol. XVI, no. 1 (1984), pp. 21-31, 121.

[113] N.L.I., Ms. 11,467.

[114] Tradesmen's accounts, 1699-1729, De Vesci Papers, J/3 (2).

[115] Listed are `Mrs. Kate Jeffreys, her Mother and two of Colonel Jeffreys (from the Welsh branch of the family related to Thomas Flower by his second marriage), Lady Ossory (possibly the wife of Fitzpatrick, Baron of Upper Ossory until 1715), the Earl of Meath, Lord Lichfield and Judge Turner, and St. John the

There is further evidence of Flower commissioning and circulating portraits.[116] A letter received from London in 1732 said,` Mr. Pulteney sent one word the picture of himselfe was att his house for you. It is a half length very like him and well done, butt no frame to it, I will send for my father's picture from Sheen and get a copy according to your directions by Zeeman'.[117] In the very same year the Veseys at Abbey Leix also left instructions with `Mr.Zeeman' (possibly a well known London-based painter called Seaman) to dispatch a painting, `dessiering to lett my son Francis ...that he should be dress'd like a Reverend Clergge mann in the picture hee is to send mee of himself'.[118] In 1734 Mr. Carter was paid £3.9 for, `coppying one half lenth picture of Sir Peter Lellys painting'.[119] Emelia Burton of Cardiff asked for the return in 1733 of a portrait of her father that was in Flower's possession, `this request for the pictuare not being a pece belonging to your famelely it can be of no value.'[120] The stray bills do not confirm her assumption. Flower acquired pictures which did not have any direct family connection for their artistic or decorative qualities such as the, `picture of a landskip' (£2.17) or the, `picture of a sheep from Dublin'.[121] In addition to the numerous framed prints there were enough sundry paintings to account for the outlay of monies spent on cleaning them in 1732.[122]

When William Flower reached his majority (which coincides with the date of many of the inventories) it is likely that he selected some of the choice and more personal items from his Welsh estate such as the `dressing table plate with my Mother's and Mother-in-Law's coat of arms... small patch box, pin cushions, looking glass in a silver frame, small boxe containing sevral [sic] purses, gold and silver pieces, seals and locketts'.[123] Inventories of Flower's small sundry items can be compared to others (e.g.

Baptist's head' and `King Charles the First'. The list further mentions that `madame Sir Edward Turner's picture is at Mr. Bowells in King Street, Dublin. In addition Loveday noticed `pictures of the present Lord Lieutenant, the Duke and of Dorset and his Duchess' when he visited in 1732. N.L.I., Ms. 11,455 (1), `A Tour in Kildare in 1732', pp. 168-175.

[116] In 1691 it was noted that, `thee (Mrs. Stephens) would writt to you herself to lett you know that shee had recieved the pictuare which you were pleased to order her to have it'.From Edward Doyne to Thomas Flower, 15 Mar. 1691, N.L.I., Ms. 11,473 (2).

[117] N.L.I., Ms. 11,478 (2).

[118]From Mr. Payne in Calais, 26 Aug. 1732, De Vesci Papers, G/4. The Knight of Glin has suggested that Zeeman was Seaman, the London portrait painter. No doubt `Zeeman' acted as an agent for gentry families.

[119] N.L.I., Ms. 11,469 (12).

[120] N.L.I., Ms. 11,475 (1).

[121] N.L.I., Ms. 11,465 and 11,463 (1).

[122] Dec. 1732, 10 shillings, N.L.I., Ms. 11,468 (7).

[123] Flower may have moved some of the furniture from his house at `Abercunrig', Brecon, in South Wales to Castle Durrow. A series of inventories from 1707-1713 enables one to compare the interior of a more modest Welsh dwelling with his Irish seat. Apart from the large quantities of the more mundane and utilitarian, particularly fabrics, such as,` moth eaten napkins and blankets, flower'd curtens, cushions,

those relating to Burton House or to Kilkenny Castle in the late seventeenth century) which highlight the contrast between the carefully calculated grand and formal rooms and parades, with the intimate closets crammed with very small pictures, miniature portraits and silver for the edification of the immediate family and close friends.[124]

The copious references to the packing and transportation of objects (such as directions for buying brown paper and linen trunks to wrap up plate and china, canvas and wooden cases for pictures, frames and looking glasses, the movement of horse loads of beds and household goods) are reminders of the fluidity of the contents of Castle Durrow. Objects seemed to contiually move between Durrow, Finglas (where there was family property), Wales, and from the 1730s, an address in London. When Pole Cosby moved to Bristol for a year in 1733 he took back to Ireland `78 different parcels of goods, yet it is in trunks, chests, boxes, tables, hampers, baskets'.[125] Such movements make it even more difficult for one to ascertain the changing functions of the various rooms in the house.

The type, quantity and quality of the moveables suggests that William Flower and his son were not provincial squireens, nor particularly avid or scholarly collectors. Castle Durrow was furnished in a manner that was appropriate for a gentleman who had recently propelled himself into the top echelons of Irish Protestant society. And the work that went on in the interior in the 1730s was paralleled by the great improvements to the gardens and demesne when Flower was `called to the Lords'. [126]

4.7 Pleasure grounds

No contemporary plans of the gardens at Castle Durrow exist nor is there a `bird's eye' painting of the house and demesne, like the one of Stradbally Hall. But the scattered bills and memos of household expenditure enable us to recreate what the view that a visitor would have seen if he had looked across from the tower of the nearby parish church in

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hangings made from damask , holland silk and Aras', the pewter, brassware and kitchen furniture, there are listed a number of looking glasses, 29 pictures, 14 small prints and an `old little mapp'. The separate lists of plate from 1709-1710 includes, silver candle box, a porringer estimated to be worth £100 alone), cups, spoons, a cruet, salvers and candlesticks with `Lyer Crest'; `An account of what plate was delivered to Mr. Price', 24 Jan. 1710, N.L.I., Ms. 11,453. Welsh inventories 1707-1713, 28 Oct. 1707, 24 Jan. 1710 and 8 July 1709; N.L.I. Ms. 11,453.

[124] Burton House inventory, `An account of the things in Sir Philip's closett and trunks', 3 Nov. 1680, Brit. Lib., Egmont Papers, Add. Mss. 47037; Kilkenny Castle, J. Fenlon, `The Ormonde Inve ntories 1675-1717', in Agnes Bernelle ed., *Decantations: Essays in honour of Maurice Craig,* (Dublin, 1992), pp 29-39.

[125] Cosby Autobiog., p. 271.

[126] As announced to the freemen of Portarlington 29 Nov.1733, N.L.I., Ms. 90.

about 1740 when Flower's grand scheme was virtually complete. The plan of the `three intended avenues' at Tentore House (which was not far from Flower's estate) gives one a sense of what the pleasure grounds might have looked like at Castle Durrow c. 1730 (see Map 7).

The symmetrical mass of the house was surrounded by small and intricate garden plots, probably laid out in a formal manner necessitating the purchase of tens of thousands of nails each year to secure the wooden boards and posts.[127] Labourers were paid for making frames for the hot beds and attending the many different species of vegetable crops; the assortment of seed bills often amounted to £5 or £6 each year. The orchards were equally well stocked with types of fruit once noted for their topical or patriotic names like, `Anne peach', `Royal George', `Duke Cherry' or `Blue figg'. There were in 1736 at least 1300 hop plants. Though the climate and soil was unfavourable they probably produced enough for the estate brew house and the beer consumption of the household.[128]

The pleasure grounds, a little further from the house, comprised woodland groves including an area known as the `wilderness'. This was a less formal area contrived to raise more sublime thoughts. It was a place for perambulation with convenient places to rest. Craftsmen were employed for `painting 3 book eases [lecterns?] and seat at the wood'. There was a more substantial building which periodically had to be shingled and plastered, perhaps used for entertainments.[129]

Having been refreshed, family and guests could walk to the elaborate terraced gardens and ascend the `great slope'. This was probably the biggest garden project undertaken by William Flower. It began in 1731 and involved removing part of an existing hill `between house and towne'. It was erected slowly in stages and a very large investment of money and man-power was involved. In 1735 a group of men worked for 314 days, a decade later in 1746 one payment was for 2,027 men and 1,063 horse hours at work during one season. What appeared to rise up from the demesne was a large mound, `with a circular terrace and a pallisade at the bottom of garden next the lane', adjoining a further complex of terraced gardens next to the River Nore which fed a canal, some lakes and fish ponds and a `bathing ponn', with the water level carefully controlled

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127 Nails for the garden, N.L.I. Ms.11,469 (10).

128 In 1732 122 apple trees were introduced, probably bought from a Dublin nursery like a similar consignment in 1740; Fruit and seeds, N.L.I., Ms.11,463 (1), 11,465, 11,467 and 11,470 (3).

129 In 1733 men were paid for, `plastering and onaments in the pleasuring House in the welderness and for making cieling and seat...and a frame for the garden light'; Wilderness, N.L.I., Ms.11,462 (1-3), 11,463 (1) and 11,469 (2,3 and 8).

Map 7 Plan of the intended avenues at Tentore House in The Queen's County c. 1740

A PLAN of the Three intended AVENUES &c. to the Rt. Hon.ble IOHN Lord Baron of Gowran's House in TENTORE in the Queen's County in IRELAND.

Omne tulit punctum qui miscuit utile dulci

E.

Wilderneff.

Canal.

Pleasure Garden.

Kitchen Garden.

Stables.

Court.

Offices.

Bridge

House.

Road from Grantstown

to Durrow and Kilkenny.

by a series of sluices. The surviving accounts show that at least £324 was laid out on the mound, the greater proportion, £232 (72%) in the period 1745-46.[130]

Water was also an integral part of the garden design at Woodbrook. In 1715 Knightley Chetwood reported to Swift that the `Deans field [named in his honour] flourishes...I assure you your river walk is thirty feet wide, has in all its windings and meanders'. Swift replied:

> sure you stretch your walk when you talk of 5000 foot, but your ambition is to have it longer than Mr. Rochforts canal, and with a little expense it will be made a more beautiful thing. Are you certain it was madam's green legs you saw by the riverside, because I have seen in England a large kind of green grasshopper, not quite so tall but altogether as slender, that frequent low marshy ground.[131]

One prominent garden feature at Castle Durrow, which still survives, was the `obelisk', erected in 1742/3. Barnaby Demave, the mason employed on the construction of the house and the fireplaces, was contracted for, `making a pillar beyond the water... and marble ornaments for the obelisk' (paid £26.4). It is in fact a column of some 21 feet high and with a circumference of 10 feet. The motivation behind its erection is not clear, perhaps an eye catcher and a source of employment for the poor at a time of dearth or a political symbol. Four years later in 1747 the Parsons family commemorated the victory of the Duke of Cumberland at Culloden with a column in the town square at Birr.[132]

In architectural terms garden buildings are often more interesting than the country houses themselves. The seats built between c.1715 and 60 tended to conform to certain simple classical models. By contrast the pleasure houses that are known to have been designed for landowners in the two counties were very sophisticated. Whereas gentlemen, for financial and practical reasons, were often unable to build their main residences in the very latest styles (e.g. rococo or Gothick) they could experiment with new designs on a much smaller scale in their pleasure grounds. Gardens were in a sense a laboratory for new architectural ideas.

The album of drawings by Samuel Chearnley (c. 1745) at Birr Castle contains the earliest known designs for garden buildings in Ireland. Sir Lawrence Parsons was a

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130 `Slope', N.L.I., Ms.11,462 (2-3), 11,463 (2).
131 Chetwood to Swift, 2 July 1715, Swift to Chetwood, 7 July 1715, Swift Letters, Vol. 2, pp. 178-180.
132 `obelisk', N.L.I., Ms.11,469 (8) and 11,471.

patron of Chearnley and he had hand-first hand experience of classical architecture while on the grand tour. Though there is no evidence that any of Chearnley's buildings were executed at Birr the album does show the extraordinary range of ideas that were in currency at the time (there were refined classical studies as well as grotesque rustic work).[133]

Elsewhere in the two counties impressive garden buildings were actually built. At Abbey Leix the accounts show that a grotto and `rustic pillars' were constructed in 1712.[134] The `Temple' at Dawson's Court (now Emo Court) still exists and consists of a ocatgonal gazebo perched on top of a triumphal-arch style base. It is similar to the work of Edward Lovett Pearce in the 1720s.[135] This building was considered note-worthy enough to be depicted on the Grand Jury map c.1765.[136]

Further afield from the main enclosures and pleasure grounds at Castle Durrow were parks, plantations and subsidiary buildings whose function was as much functional as aesthetic. The area around Durrow had a great amount of natural woodland, and new varieties of trees were added.[137] Among the buildings there was a stone dwelling for the gardener, a dog kennel, slaughter house, duck house, dairy and pigeon houses. Each area was securely enclosed by sturdy stone walls. Walling took up by far the greater proportion of the estate maintenance budget and the bills can provide a clue as to the actual physical extent of the demesne. In 1729 men quarried stone to make 1311 perches of wall stretching from the, `wood at Durrow to along the high road'.[138] Most of them were between 7 and 10 feet high. They were not only there to keep animals in their designated areas and to deter rustlers and intruders; one senses that there was also a mental purpose. In England and Ireland gentlemen constructed *cordons sanitaires:* havens of civility and improvements in a potentially hostile environment.

In addition to the changing social position and the financial circumstances of the owner one must also take into account the growing awareness and sophistication of

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[133]Parsons did intend to acquire a number of ornamental casts for his demesne and he might have actually collaborated with Chearnley on a number of the drawings in the album, C. Casey, `Miscellanea Structura Curicosa', *Irish Arts Review,* (1990-1), pp. 85-91; James Howley, *The Follies and Garden Buildings of Ireland,* (Yale, 1993), pp. 218-222.

[134]Misc. account book, 1712, De Vesci Papers, N.L.I., M/film, P. 6797.

[135]For comparison of Pearce's designs of gazebos see Howley, pp. 130-131.

[136]It is the only garden building that is depicted, N.L.I., Map. 16.h.9 (2).

[137] In 1727 alone 611 firs , 250 yews and 122 elms were planted. In addition to the `Ash Grove'and `Fir Grove' there was a deer park and `feeding park' (whose existence is revealed by the blacksmith's regular servicing of the locks on the gates), `cow bawn', `piggeon park' and warren, which provided meat all the year round, and other `plots' and `closes' whose extent can be elucidated from the mower's bills (an area of 32 acres); parks, N.L.I., Ms.11,469 (8-9), 11,471.

[138] Walls, N.L.I. Ms.11,468 (5) and 11,469 (8).

gardening as a tool for more general improvement, for the prestige that it gave, and increasingly as an art form. Whereas in 1716 payments for garden work were on a purely ad hoc basis to sundry labourers, by 1740 there were full-time professional gardeners and assistants being paid salaries. This is evidence of the higher esteem in which such projects were held .

The country seat was not a hermetically sealed environment. The Flowers endeavoured to improve the neighbourhood by repairing the roads adjoining the estate and the parish church, building bridges, houses, walls, a curragh, planting hedge rows and by laying out the market place at Durrow.[139] This interaction between house and community is symbolised by the great avenue which cut a swathe from the `house towards Durrow town'.[140]

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139 Repairs to the locale, N.L.I., Ms.11,456, 11,468 (5).
140 Which required 293 men between 1721-2; avenue, N.L.I. Ms.11,462 (1).