



**NUI MAYNOOTH**

Óliscoll na hÉireann Má Nuad

**LAND AGENTS AND ESTATE MANAGEMENT IN KING'S COUNTY DURING THE**

**GREAT FAMINE, 1838-53**

**by**

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## **ABBREVIATIONS**

B.C.A. - Birr Castle Archive

DP- Downshire papers

*FJ*- Freemans Journal

*KCC* - King's County Chronicle

N.L.I.- National Library of Ireland

N.A.I. - National Archives of Ireland

O.P.K.C. - Outrage Papers, King's County

O.R.C. - Offaly Research Centre

P.R.O.N.I.- Public Records Office of Northern Ireland

R.L.F.C.- Relief Commission

S. & K.A. - Stewart & Kincaid Archive

W.W. M. – Wentworth Woodhouse Muniments

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## INTRODUCTION

‘I have to thank my excellent resident agent, Mr James Devery. He is an excellent man of business, sensible, interested and of the strictest integrity. He is beloved by the tenantry, a thing rare in Ireland in the instance of any agent, and much esteemed by all who know him’.<sup>1</sup>

### Introduction

Social memory has cast a dark shadow on the character of the Irish land agent and few if any of the tributes were as glowing as that presented by Frederick Ponsonby when referring to his agent, James Devery, at Cloghan, King’s County in 1847. The oft quoted nineteenth-century verdict that the ‘landlords were sometimes decent men but the agents were devils one and all’ is perhaps more typical of how the agents of landed estates were traditionally represented in Irish nationalist historiography or indeed by contemporary commentators and/or nineteenth-century travellers and writers of fiction.<sup>2</sup> Edward Wakefield writing in 1814 believed that Irish land agents were responsible for the backwardness of Irish estate management and that ‘the most bare faced bribery and corruption are practiced by the class of people without the least sense of fear or shame’.<sup>3</sup> The influential nineteenth-century writer William Carleton was even more condemnatory of agents in general when he wrote that ‘a history of their conduct would be a black catalogue of dishonesty, oppression and treachery’.<sup>4</sup> In his study of the earl of Abercorn and his Irish agents William Crawford more recently made the point that in the aftermath of the Famine perceptions such as these were

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<sup>1</sup> ‘Report on the inspection of the estate of Cloghan, King’s County by the honourable Frederick Ponsonby for the Earl Fitzwilliam, June 1847’ (N.L.I., MS 13,020). [Hereafter cited as ‘Cloghan report’].

<sup>2</sup> Quoted in Kathy Trant, *The Blessington estate 1667-1908* (Dublin, 2004), p. 79.

<sup>3</sup> Edward Wakefield, *An account of Ireland: statistical and political* (2 vols, Dublin, 1812), i, p. 297.

<sup>4</sup> *The Works of William Carleton* (2 vols, New York, 1880) i, p. 1112. See also Margaret Chestnutt, *Studies in the short stories of William Carleton* (Sweden, 1976), pp 112-3.



left unchallenged and so they ‘assumed the status of canon in Irish history’.<sup>5</sup> According to Gerard Lyne Irish folk tradition, particularly in the aftermath of the Famine would seem to reflect an innate prejudice against agents.<sup>6</sup> For example he notes in his study of William Steuart Trench that he and his son are remembered in areas of Monaghan, Kerry and King’s County as ‘ruthless exterminators and tyrants’.<sup>7</sup> Taking account of these perceptions K.T. Hoppen argued in the early 1970s that ‘for too long historians and others have been content with breezy generalisations about the landlord-tenant relationship’ and suggested the need to reappraise the role of the agent in Irish historiography.<sup>8</sup>

Undoubtedly, since the early 1970s the study of landed estates, landlordism and the land question in general has received a new impetus although a comprehensive scholarly study of the land agent has yet to appear. Moreover there are still certain watershed periods in Irish history for which the management of landed estates requires more systematic attention. Thus for example Terence Dooley has noted that despite the wealth of ‘Famine’ research since the early 1990s management policies on individual estates has remained neglected with the exception of a number of important works.<sup>9</sup> While a plethora of research pertaining to the causes and impact of the Famine have been published, only those of W.A. Maguire, J.S. Donnelly Jnr, Robert McCarthy, William Crawford and Lyne have begun to address the role of the land agent and the management of landed estates.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> William Crawford, *The management of a major Ulster estate in the late eighteenth century: The eight earl of Abercorn and his Irish agents* (Dublin, 2001), p. 1.

<sup>6</sup> Gerard Lyne, *The Lansdowne estates in Kerry under the agency of W.S. Trench 1849-72* (Dublin, 2001), p. lii.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 718.

<sup>8</sup> See K.T. Hoppen, Review of W.A. Maguire, *The Downshire estates in Ireland 1801-45: the management of Irish landed estates in the nineteenth century* (Oxford, 1972) in *Irish Historical Studies*, vol. 18, no. 72 (Sep., 1973), pp 637-9.

<sup>9</sup> Terence Dooley, *The big houses and landed estates of Ireland: A research guide* (Dublin, 2007), p. 28.

<sup>10</sup> These include Maguire, *The Downshire estates in Ireland*; J.S. Donnelly Jnr., *The land and the people of nineteenth century Cork: the rural economy and the land question* (London, 1975); Robert McCarthy, *The Trinity College estates*

In his 1970s study of the Downshire estates, Maguire argued that apart from William Steuart Trench, Samuel Hussey and Capt. Boycott most nineteenth-century land agents lie buried in the archives of the estates which they served. He also propounded that if we are to truly understand Irish agrarian history, then a proper appreciation of the role of the agent was necessary.<sup>11</sup> Thus, the primary aim of this thesis is to address this lacuna in Irish historiography by providing a comprehensive and systematic examination of land agents and their role in estate management in the mid-nineteenth century, with particular emphasis on the Famine period. This study is confined to one particular county, King's County (after 1921 Offaly), for reasons which will be elucidated below. The methodology adopted is a traditional case study approach but it allows for a more nuanced understanding of the function, role and perhaps even the psyche and personality of the land agent. It has been decided to adopt 1853 as the end of the Famine in King's County. The reappearance of the potato blight and several failures of the potato crop in 1851 and 1852 meant that there still those adversely affected by such conditions. Moreover it was in 1853 that the sale of estates in the Incumbered Estates Court peaked in King's County.

Many historians have surmised that the basic activity of the agent was simply to secure the payment of rents. However, amongst the other numerous duties performed by him (and occasionally her as in the case of Barbara Verschoyle on the Fitzwilliam estate in the early nineteenth century) were the collection of tithes up to c.1838 (and in some cases beyond), making leases, surveying land, corresponding with the landlord, keeping accounts and allotting work on the demesne. Others were also charged with the task of representing the landlord on special committees and as magistrates, organising agricultural shows and instructing tenants on new farming methods. This thesis

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*1800-1923: corporate management in an age of reform* (Dundalk, 1992); Crawford, *The management of a major Ulster estate* and Lyne, *The Lansdowne estate in Kerry*.

<sup>11</sup> Maguire, *The Downshire estates*, p. 183. See also Dooley, *A research guide*, p. 222

will, amongst other things examine these functions in terms of the overall management of the estate and how policies impacted upon landlord-tenant relations. Focusing on the period beginning with the introduction of the Irish Poor Law Act in 1838 to the end of the Famine in 1853, it is intended to highlight the function and activities of land agents during a time when their skills and knowledge were severely tested.

In the course of research for this thesis, ninety land agents were identified who were involved in the management of an estate or estates either for the entire span of the study or part of.<sup>12</sup> These included the likes of Francis Berry, agent on the Charleville estate; Thomas Murray on the Downshire estate; the Manifold brothers - Thomas, Daniel, John and William Ross - agents to several landowners in the south of the county; George Heenan on the Rosse estate and George Garvey who managed seven estates. These agents in particular will figure prominently throughout the course of this work. But one of the first aims of this thesis is to analyse, as far as the sources allow, the social background of agents in King's County 1838 to 1853; how they were educated/ trained, if at all, to work as agents, how their role differed from estate to estate, depending on whether their employer was resident or absentee, and whether it was a large or small estate. Part of the methodological approach will be to use specific case studies of individual agents, such as those named above, in order to understand their day to day functions and roles, especially at the height of the Famine.

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<sup>12</sup> The ninety identified were described as 'agent' in a variety of contemporary sources ranging from estate papers to newspapers. Some land stewards also carried out the role and function of an agent and in some cases are referred to throughout the course of this work. See appendix 3 for a list of all the agents identified and appendix 4 for bailiffs, land stewards, sub- agents, rent warners etc.

In many cases and at certain times it was an unthankful job being an agent. This is most clearly evident in the fact that at least nine land agents were assassinated in the county during the period 1838 to 1853 and a further twenty were shot or otherwise injured, an aspect that will be dealt with in chapter five. In fact, after county Tipperary, King's County had the highest rate of murder or attempted murder of land agents in Ireland during the period under study. One of the main case studies in this thesis will deal with the murder of Lord Norbury in 1839, arguably in consequence of the management activity of his agent, George Garvey (see chapter three). This case study will allow for an examination of the socio-economic and political contexts in which murders and attacks on landlords or their agents took place.

### **i. Social memory and historiography**

Contemporary poetry, fiction, drama and folklore have all provided numerous stereotypes of the nineteenth-century agent. Claire Connolly has noted that in Irish fiction and drama one of the most popular stereotypes and conventions has been that of the villainous land agent.<sup>13</sup> William Carleton created a number of memorable agents such as 'Greasy Pockets' and 'Yellow Sam' who typified this stereotypical representation but who very likely were based on real life characters. These agents were seen as being a source of ridicule, greed and tyranny to highlight the many wrongdoings which were perpetrated against the Irish peasantry. 'Yellow Sam' appears in the novel *The Poor Scholar* (1833). He was metaphorically born without a heart and carried 'black wool' in his ears to keep out the cry of widows and orphans 'who are now long rotten in their graves through

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<sup>13</sup> Quoted in Joe Cleary and Claire Connolly (eds) *The Cambridge companion to modern Irish culture* (Cambridge, 2005), p. 323.

his dark villainy'.<sup>14</sup> He takes advantage not only of the tenants but also his employer, the absentee Colonel B, a 'good hearted and principled man' whom he has been cheating for many years.

Of course much of Carleton's writing had an agenda that often reflected the politics of the time. In the introduction to *Valentine McClutchey* (1845) he said he hoped that the novel would 'startle many a half-hearted landlord and flagitious agent into a perception of their duty'.<sup>15</sup> According to Eileen Sullivan it was the Young Irelander, Thomas Davis, who encouraged the writing of *Valentine McClutchey* as a means of propaganda for the nationalist cause.<sup>16</sup> It is arguable that fictional representations of this type influenced later perceptions of land agents. Certainly successive generations of Young Irelanders and later Fenian separatists including John Mitchell, John Devoy and Jeremiah O'Donovan Rossa who published their memoirs were particularly hostile towards land agents, with Rossa, for example, comparing William Steuart Trench to Oliver Cromwell who by the mid-nineteenth century had assumed mythical status as a cruel oppressor amongst Irish nationalists.<sup>17</sup>

From Fenian rhetoric to Land League platforms, land agents, as well of course as landlords, were blamed for all the social ills of Irish society. By the late 1870s the speeches of Land League leaders very often harked back to the great clearances of the Famine. For example at Edenderry during

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<sup>14</sup> Ibid, p. 112.

<sup>15</sup> William Carleton, *Valentine McClutchey: the Irish agent or chronicles of the Castle Cumber property* (3 vols, London 1845) i, preface.

<sup>16</sup> Eileen A. Sullivan, 'William Carleton (1794-1869)' in *Eire- Ireland: A Journal of Irish Studies*, xxiv, no. 2 (Summer, 1989), p. 6.

<sup>17</sup> See John Mitchell, *History of Ireland from the Treaty of Limerick to the present time* (Dublin, 1869); Jeremiah O'Donovan Rossa, *Rossa's recollections, 1838 to 1898: Childhood, boyhood, manhood. Customs, habits and manners of the Irish plunder. Social life and prison life. The Fenian movement. Travels in Ireland, England, Scotland and America* (New York, 1898) and John Devoy, *Recollections of an Irish rebel: the Fenian movement. Its origin and progress. Methods of work in Ireland and in the British army. Why it failed to achieve its main object, but exercised great influence on Ireland's future. Personalities of the organization. The Clan-na-Gael and the rising of Easter week, 1916. A personal narrative* (New York, 1929).

1881, Land League activists Fr John Wyer and Fr John Kinsella frequently castigated the record of local landlords and agents during the Famine.<sup>18</sup> As Christine Kinealy argues, the memory of the Famine provided an additional sense of resentment and injustice against such men and increasingly the British state. Moreover, this perception of the land agent became enshrined in folklore and social memory. Peter Somerville Large, for example, has observed that ‘corrupt agents and their employees are part of the “Big House” folklore’.<sup>19</sup> These folklore stereotypes reflect the characteristics of the agents as portrayed in the popular fiction of the likes of Carleton; agents are remembered as avaricious, cruel and oppressive. Cathal Porteir who has examined the files of the Irish Folklore Commission which were gathered in the 1930s and 1940s, found that agents were remembered as ‘mischief makers and always out to make the most out of every situation to feather their own nests’.<sup>20</sup> Interestingly, the novelist Anthony Trollope, who had been employed by the General Post Office in Banagher, King’s County in the early 1840s, made the claim in his novel *The Kellys and the O’Kellys* (1848) that an agent managed property ‘in that manner most conducive to the prosperity of the person he loved best in the world and that was himself’.<sup>21</sup> Possibly Trollope’s agent was based on the real life Arthur Baker who managed the nearby Armstrong estate; equally his work, as in the case of Carleton, may have fed into later recollections of land agents. Similarly, the author, Canon John Guinan, who was born in Millbrook House, Cloghan, King’s County in 1864 included real life characters such as Toler Garvey, son of George Garvey, in his works of fiction. Because of their relevance to this work Guinan’s novels will be referred to

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<sup>18</sup> On one occasion Fr Wyer told those assembled that ‘the day will come when the landlord will be driven bag and baggage out of Ireland’. See Ciarán J. Reilly, *Edenderry 1820-1920: Popular politics and Downshire rule* (Dublin, 2007), p. 58.

<sup>19</sup> Peter Somerville Large, *The Irish country house: a social history* (London, 1995), p. 226.

<sup>20</sup> Cathal Porteir, *Famine echoes* (Dublin, 1995), p. 216.

<sup>21</sup> Anthony Trollope, *The Kellys and the O’Kellys: A tale of Irish life* (London, 1848), p. 20.

elsewhere in this thesis; suffice to say at this stage his agents were generally depicted as cruel and oppressive or weak and inferior characters.

Until recently much of this stereotypical representation, as noted above, was carried through in Irish historiography. Writing in 1956 Roger McHugh in his contribution to Edwards and Williams (editors) *The Great Famine* asserted that in the Irish oral tradition agents are remembered as having been ‘merciless and harsh, grinding for arrears of rent, evicting, levying fees for improvements or without cause’.<sup>22</sup> In the early 1970s W.A. Maguire’s *The Downshire estates in Ireland* became one of the few studies that illuminated on the world of the nineteenth century agent. Thereafter aspects of the lives and role of land agents were examined in studies of landlords and tenants and landed estates in works by historians such as James S. Donnelly Jr., W.E. Vaughan, William Crawford and Desmond Norton.<sup>23</sup> In his study of *Landlords and tenants in mid-Victorian Ireland* (1994) Vaughan concluded that stereotypical perceptions of agents were impossible to avoid: ‘it was widely believed that they were the cause of the trouble for both the landlords and tenants’.<sup>24</sup> One of the most recent studies of a land agent, Michael McMahon’s account of the murder of Thomas Douglas Bateson in county Monaghan in 1851 argues that it was ‘unsurprising that some might conspire to murder him’ given the harshness of life and ill feelings generated by evictions.<sup>25</sup> Denis Marnane in his examination of the career of William Holmes, agent of the Purefoy estate in county Tipperary, makes the legitimate point that ‘land agents in Ireland have not had very good press but then the story of landlord-tenant relations has been told very much from the tenants’

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<sup>22</sup> Roger McHugh, ‘The Famine in Irish oral tradition’ in R. D. Edwards and T. Desmond Williams (eds), *The Great Famine: studies in Irish history 1845-52* (Dublin, 1956), p. 429.

<sup>23</sup> See Donnelly Jr., *The land and the people of nineteenth century Cork*; W.E. Vaughan, *Landlords and tenants in mid-Victorian Ireland* (Oxford, 1994); Crawford, *The management of a major Ulster estate* and Desmond Norton, *Landlords, Tenants, Famine: The business of an Irish land agency in the 1840s* (Dublin, 2005).

<sup>24</sup> Vaughan, *Landlords and tenants*, p. 111.

<sup>25</sup> Michael McMahon, *The murder of Thomas Douglas Bateson, county Monaghan 1851* (Dublin, 2005), p. 35.

point of view'.<sup>26</sup> An aim of this thesis is to build on the more recent historiography of land agents to provide a comprehensive study of their world in one Irish county during the Famine period and therefore to test the historical validity of their representation in social memory that may often have been influenced by works of fiction.

## **ii. Sources**

In any study of those responsible for estate management, estate papers are obviously an important source. Fortunately King's County has been well served with estate papers. These include collections of the larger estates in the Public Record Office of Northern Ireland (P.R.O.N.I.) and the National Library of Ireland (N.L.I.) such as Charleville, Cassidy, Downshire and Rosse which provide an excellent insight into the actions of particular agents and estate management at this time. Amongst the most interesting of these are the Famine diaries of John Plunkett Joly. They will be alluded to throughout this work but suffice to say for the moment they offer an interesting corrective to many of the stereotypical representations of the Famine at a local level. There are also significant collections of papers relating to smaller estates including that of Gamble, King and Fitzwilliam. In total around forty estate collections were identified and have been used. However while these papers are important in terms of correspondence, there is a dearth of estate rentals and accounts. This does not seem to be a phenomenon exclusive to King's County and it would make for an interesting paper to ascertain why so few estate collections of rentals and accounts survive for the period of the Great Famine.

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<sup>26</sup> Dennis Marnane, 'Such a treacherous country: a land agent in Cappawhite 1847-52' in *Tipperary Historical Journal* (2004), p. 233.



This study has also benefited from the survival of the Steward and Kincaid agency archives, parts of which are on deposit in Roscommon County Library and in the Molesworth papers at P.R.O.N.I. The latter contain a series of letters from the Philipstown estate in the 1840s. This author was also fortunate to gain access to collections in private possession most of which have not before been used by historians. These include the papers of the Tyrrell and Gifford estates in the baronies of Coolestown and Warrenstown which were managed by the agent, Charles Hamilton, who was married to a member of the Tyrrell family.

In the past historians of the Famine have obviously made extensive use of the outrage papers deposited in the National Archives of Ireland (N.A.I.). In respect to this study their value lies in the fact that many of the letters were written by land agents in the county and so shed valuable light on the character of such men. The efforts of local relief committees set up in most of the county's twelve baronies provides another insight into the activities of the agent in terms of what support they generated for those affected by the Famine. Another important source is the minute books of the Poor Law Guardians for the unions of Edenderry, Tullamore and Parsonstown. Land agents such as Francis Berry, George Heenan and Daniel Manifold sat on these boards and so the minute books reveal their role in the provision of relief and in many respects their attitudes towards the lower orders.

Parliamentary papers provide a veritable treasure trove of information regarding both the management of landed estates during the mid-nineteenth century and the impact of the Famine on the population. The evidence of the Devon Commission presented to the House of Commons in 1845 includes twenty- one submissions from people in King's County, with agents such as Thomas

Murray, Daniel Manifold and Arthur Fitzmaurice amongst those who contributed. Other parliamentary material including the Census of 1841 and 1851; annual returns of crime and outrage and other official reports have also been used. A systematic examination of the local newspapers, the *Leinster Express* and the *King's County Chronicle*, was also carried out for the period under study which revealed a wealth of important information.

Unfortunately, few agents have left memoirs; however there are a few significant exceptions for King's County. One of the better known agents of the nineteenth century was William Steuart Trench, agent to the Shirley estate in county Monaghan, the Lansdowne estate in county Kerry and the 30,000 acre Digby estate at Geashill, King's County. Although Trench's tenure as agent of the Digby estate at Geashill falls outside the time span of this study (Trench became Digby's agent in 1857) his reminiscences of life as an agent reveal many important observations about the occupation. Writing in 1868, it is arguable that Trench felt compelled to recount his experiences because he believed his fellow agents had been unfairly treated by the newspapers and journals of the day. The land agent in England, he contended, had not to deal with the unimagined dangers experienced in Ireland.<sup>27</sup>

William O'Connor Morris' *Memories and thoughts of a life* (1895) provides a fascinating if flawed firsthand account of life in King's County during the Famine and in particular to the management of the family's 2,000 acre estate at Mount Pleasant, Pallas.<sup>28</sup> There are also unpublished accounts

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<sup>27</sup> William Stewart Trench, *Realities of Irish Life* (London, 1868), preface.

<sup>28</sup> William O'Connor Morris, *Memories and thoughts of a life* (London, 1895). Other accounts of land agents but not connected with King's County include G.F. Trench, *One late an agent. Landlordism in Ireland with its difficulties* (London, 1853) and William Robert Anketell, *Landlord and tenant in Ireland: letters by a land agent* (Belfast, 1869).

of Michael Kearney, a middleman near Parsonstown<sup>29</sup> and Robert Cassidy, an improving landlord who took an active interest in his estate at Killyon which provide interesting sidelights on the role of agents and how management policies altered throughout the 1830s and 1840s. Similarly the Greeson papers (on deposit at the Offaly Historical and Archaeological Society) provides an account of the Dublin based land agent, George Greeson, who administered several estates at Ballycumber, Clara and Kilcommon in King's County.

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The thesis adopts both a chronological and thematical approach. For example management policies in the pre-Famine period, the Famine period and the post-Famine period are examined to analyse change, when and where it occurred. Chapter one provides a short introduction to the topography, estate distribution and demography of King's County on the eve of the Famine. Chapter two examines the social background, education, training, role and function of the King's County land agent on the eve of the Famine. Chapter three provides an overview of the problems land agents faced in the management of estates on the eve of the Famine and in particular the impact of the introduction of the Irish Poor Law Act in 1838. Chapter four examines estate management policy in the early years of the Famine and how agents coped with the initial onset of Famine. Chapter five analyses the changes in policy after the introduction of the 'Gregory clause' in 1848 and the introduction of the Incumbered Estates Act in 1849 which facilitated the sale of many estates which were threatened with bankruptcy as a result of the Famine.

The modern counties of Laois and Offaly were known as Queen's County and King's County respectively following the plantation of 1556 carried out during the reign of Queen Mary and remained so until the creation of the Irish Free State in 1922. Thus throughout the text King's

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<sup>29</sup> 'Survey of an estate in Ballybritt' (N.L.I., MS 2025).

County is used. Several towns and villages in the county were also known by different names and included Frankford (Kilcormac), Parsonstown (Birr) and Philipstown (Daingean).<sup>30</sup> In addition contemporary spellings are used in when referring to townlands and villages. The Parsons family, earls of Rosse, resided at Oxmantown Hall which is frequently referred to as Birr Castle. Indeed the family used both names to describe their place of residence in King's County.<sup>31</sup> The county was divided into twelve baronies namely Ballybritt, Ballyboy, Ballycowan, Clonlisk, Coolestown, Eglisk, Garrycastle, Geashill, Kilcoursey, Lower Philipstown, Upper Philipstown and Warrenstown.

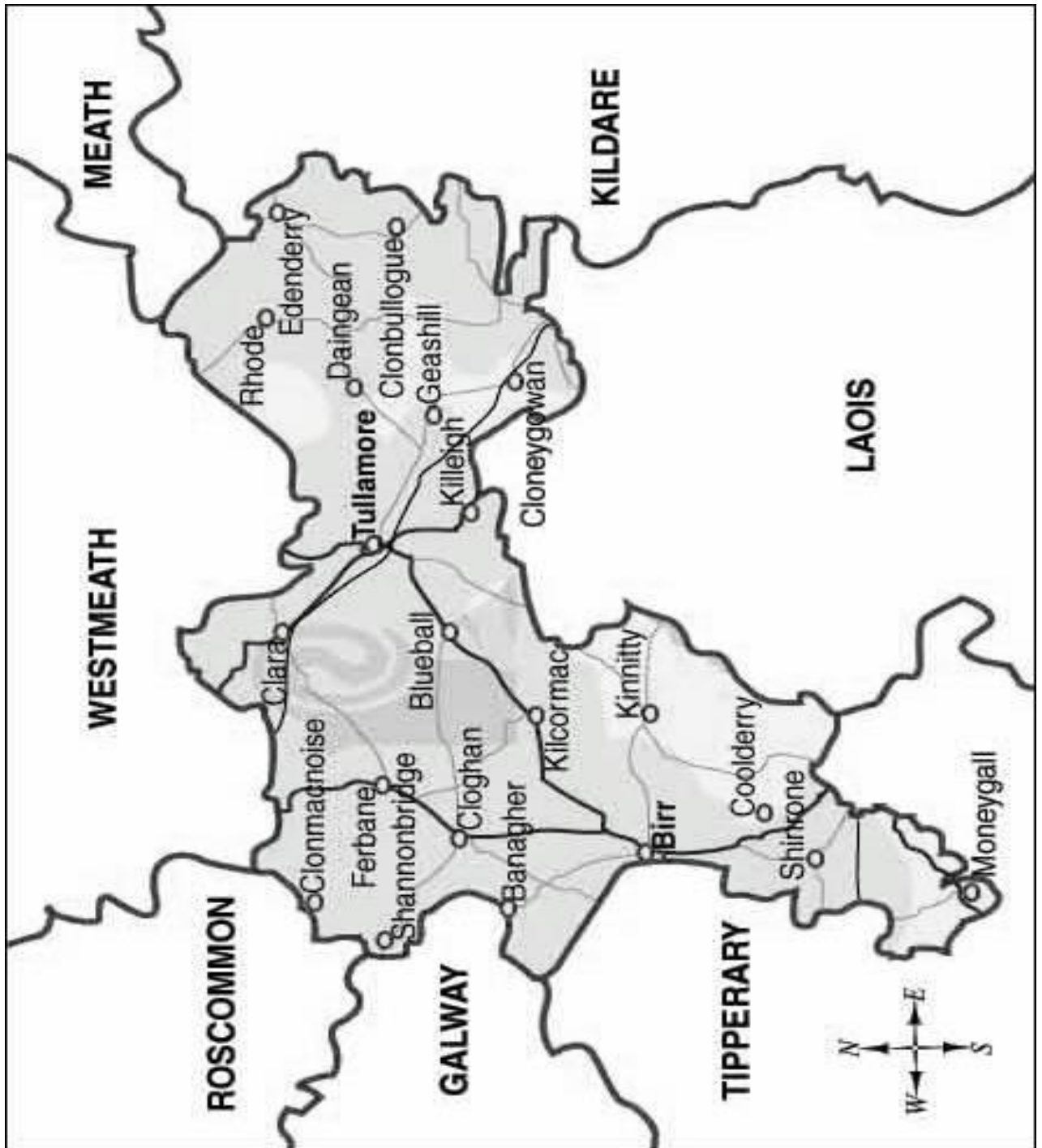
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<sup>30</sup> The name Kilcormac was introduced in 1903 in place of Frankford.

<sup>31</sup> The seventh earl of Rosse, Brendan Parsons (1936- ) has told this writer that the family were happy for the town to be called Birr both before and after Irish Independence in 1921.

MAP ONE

The major towns and villages of King's County (now county Offaly)



## CHAPTER ONE: AN INTRODUCTION TO KING'S COUNTY C. 1838

This short chapter is intended as an introduction to the topography of King's County on the eve of the Famine. King's County is situated in the centre of Ireland and is bordered by seven counties, to the east Kildare and Queen's County (now Laois), to the west Galway and Roscommon, to the south Tipperary and to the north by Westmeath and Meath. At 445 miles long and thirty-nine miles wide it comprises almost 500,000 acres, divided into 1,000 townlands, fifty-one civil parishes and twelve baronies.<sup>1</sup> In their report of 1836 the Commissioners of Public Works found that there was 341,310 acres of cultivated land in the county; 80,900 acres of land uncultivated and capable of improvement while there were 34,954 acres of unprofitable land.<sup>2</sup> That a high percentage of the land needed improvement or was unprofitable was suggested in 1801 when in his survey of the county, Sir Charles Coote noted that the soil 'is not very fertile and only rendered so by manures of bog stuff and various composts',<sup>3</sup> and more so by one resident landowner who described King's County as 'a dreary and comparatively sterile tract, the general character is barren and melancholy'.<sup>4</sup>

The population of King's County increased from 113,000 in 1813 to 131,000 in 1821.<sup>5</sup> On the eve of the Famine in 1841 it had increased again to just over 144,000. Thus in less than three decades the population had increased by twenty-seven per cent. This increase was concentrated 'on the

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<sup>1</sup> Grainne Breen, 'Landlordism in King's County in the mid- nineteenth century' in *Offaly history and society: interdisciplinary essays on the history of an Irish county* (Dublin, 1998), p. 629.

<sup>2</sup> *Select Committee on Amount of Advances by Coms. of Public Works in Ireland, First and Second Reports, Minutes of Evidence, Appendix, Index 1836*, p. 107, H.C. 1836 (573), xx. 169.

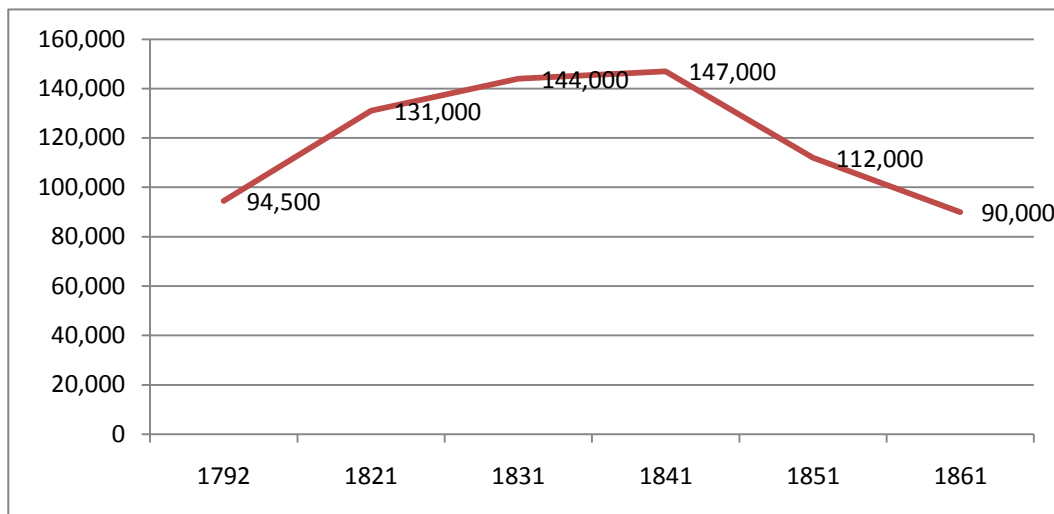
<sup>3</sup> Sir Charles Coote, *Statistical survey of the King's County* (Dublin, 1801), p. 56.

<sup>4</sup> O'Connor Morris, *Memories*, p. 158.

<sup>5</sup> Arnold Horner, *Mapping Offaly in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century with an atlas of William Larkin's map of King's County, 1809* (Bray, 2006), p. 7.

land' as it remained essentially a rural county. Its rural nature was emphasised in the census of 1841 which showed that sixty-three per cent of the county's population was employed in agriculture, with only sixteen per cent in manufacturing and just over nine per cent as domestic servants.<sup>6</sup> There were seven towns- Tullamore, Parsonstown, Banagher, Philipstown, Edenderry, Clara and Shinrone - each with a population of over one thousand people. The largest town was Tullamore with a population of 5,517 while the smallest village was Cadamstown with a population of just ninety people.<sup>7</sup>

**Table 1.1 Population of King's County 1792 to 1861**



Source: Horner, *Mapping Offaly*.

In the late eighteenth century the completion of the Grand Canal, which entered the county at Edenderry and proceeded towards the River Shannon in the west, advanced the prosperity of the region by providing new and wider markets for agricultural produce. In 1801 some 110,855 tons were shipped from Tullamore to Dublin along the Grand Canal; by 1845 the figure had increased

<sup>6</sup> The remaining occupations included 2.26% in industry; 1.9% in trade; 0.71% in mining; 1.9% in building; 0.28% in transport while 1.53% were deemed paupers.

<sup>7</sup> Horner, *Mapping Offaly*, p. 10.

to 280,000 tons.<sup>8</sup> By the 1830s the Grand Canal had changed the fortunes of Tullamore which by then was the established county town.<sup>9</sup> The entrepreneurial Berry family of Eglish were instrumental in its development. Their business had stores in Tullamore, Shannon Harbour (now Shannonbridge) and Dublin. According to Coote, Tullamore was ‘certainly the best town in the county and bids fair to be little inferior to any town in Ireland; the houses are all slated built mostly in two stories in height and ornamented with window stools and top corners of fine hewn stone’.<sup>10</sup> While the Berrys made a significant contribution so also did the landlord, Charles William Bury, who had succeeded to the Charleville estates in 1785. That year part of the town was destroyed by fire when a hot air balloon crashed and burned a number of houses. A new building programme commenced, driven by favourable leases granted by Bury to an entrepreneurial middle class comprised of professionals and merchants, the latter including the Berry family.<sup>11</sup> Landlord and merchant class were linked by the fact that two of the Berry brothers, William (1766-1811) and Francis Octavius (1779-1864), served as land agents to the earls of Charleville.<sup>12</sup> These entrepreneurs included Acres, Slator and Crowe. When Thomas Acres died in 1836 he owned 140 houses in Tullamore or about four per cent of the total number in the town.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Michael Byrne, ‘Tullamore: the growth process 1785-1841’ in *Offaly history and society*, p. 579.

<sup>9</sup> Michael Byrne, *Legal Offaly: the county courthouse at Tullamore and the legal profession in county Offaly from the 1820s to the present* (Tullamore, 2008), p. 13.

<sup>10</sup> Coote, *Statistical survey*, p. 176.

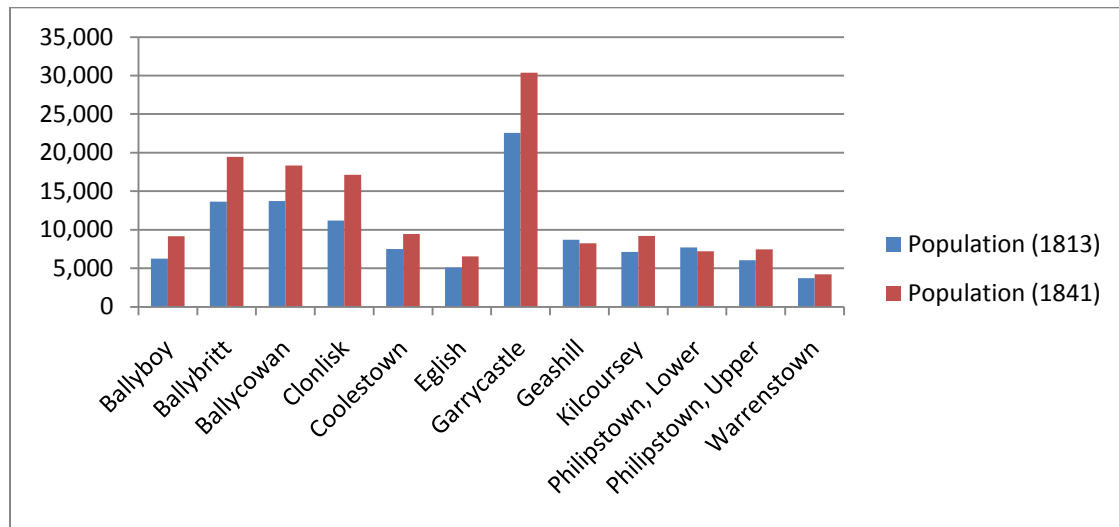
<sup>11</sup> Byrne, ‘Tullamore: the growth process’, p. 592.

<sup>12</sup> Ruth Delany, *The Grand Canal of Ireland* (Newtown Abbot, 1973), p. 76.

<sup>13</sup> The leases are part of the Acres estates collection belonging to Hoey & Denning Solicitors, Tullamore, county Offaly.



**Table 1.2 Population increase per barony in King’s County 1813 to 1841**



**Source:** Adapted from Horner, *Mapping Offaly*, p. 9.

Landlord influence was also evident in the development of Edenderry even though the marquess of Downshire was an absentee proprietor. In 1831 Edenderry was described as ‘very clean, and several of the poor people’s houses have been washed with lime’ and ‘the town is free from fever’.<sup>14</sup> There was an apparent lack of investment in industry by Downshire but Edenderry still had eight public houses, a painter, a nail maker, a plough wright, an earthenware dealer, a shoemaker, a forge, a baker and a general provisions dealer amongst other small shopkeepers. The travel writer Jonathon Binns noted that ‘here as well as in the county of Down, the marquess has the character of being a good landlord. It is delightful to see the comfortable cottages he has provided for the poor of Edenderry, with small gardens in the front and shrubs behind, and neatly painted doors and windows, his lordship’s property may be generally known by the neatness of the buildings’.<sup>15</sup>

<sup>14</sup> W.A. Maguire, *Letters of a great Irish Landlord: A selection of the estate correspondence of the third marquis of Downshire, 1809-1845* (Belfast, 1974), p. 84.

<sup>15</sup> Jonathon Binns, *Miseries and beauties of Ireland* (2 vols, London, 1837), ii, pp 57-60.

In the countryside the quality of land varied greatly from the fertile baronies of Clonlisk and Ballybritt in the south of the county to the boggy and uncultivated barony of Coolestown to the east. In the long term these variations influenced how landlords and agents developed estate policies in terms of agriculture and the new advancements in that area. In total there were approximately about 170 estates.<sup>16</sup> These varied greatly in size ranging from the Digby estate at 30,627 acres to smaller estates such as that of George Rait which comprised just over 1,200 acres. The top five landowners in King's County (see table 1.3 below) owned between them 109,071 acres, or twenty-two per cent of the total acreage of the county. These were all individual families - the aforementioned Digby, Rosse (25,167 acres), Charleville (23,370 acres), Bernard (15,979 acres) and Downshire (13,928 acres).<sup>17</sup> The valuation of this land 8.3 shillings per acre, once again suggesting its generally poor quality in large parts of the county. Two of these landlords were absentees: the earl of Digby resided at Sherborne Castle, Dorset in England and the marquess of Downshire at Hillsborough, county Down. Other absentees included Charles William Baldwin who lived in London (where he practiced as a solicitor<sup>18</sup>) as did Henry Kemmis and Charles Molloy, while Sir William Cox lived in county Wexford. At the time Arthur Fitzmaurice, himself a land agent in King's County, was critical of absentee landlords who 'only care to get the money' as opposed to resident proprietors who 'always manage better'.<sup>19</sup>

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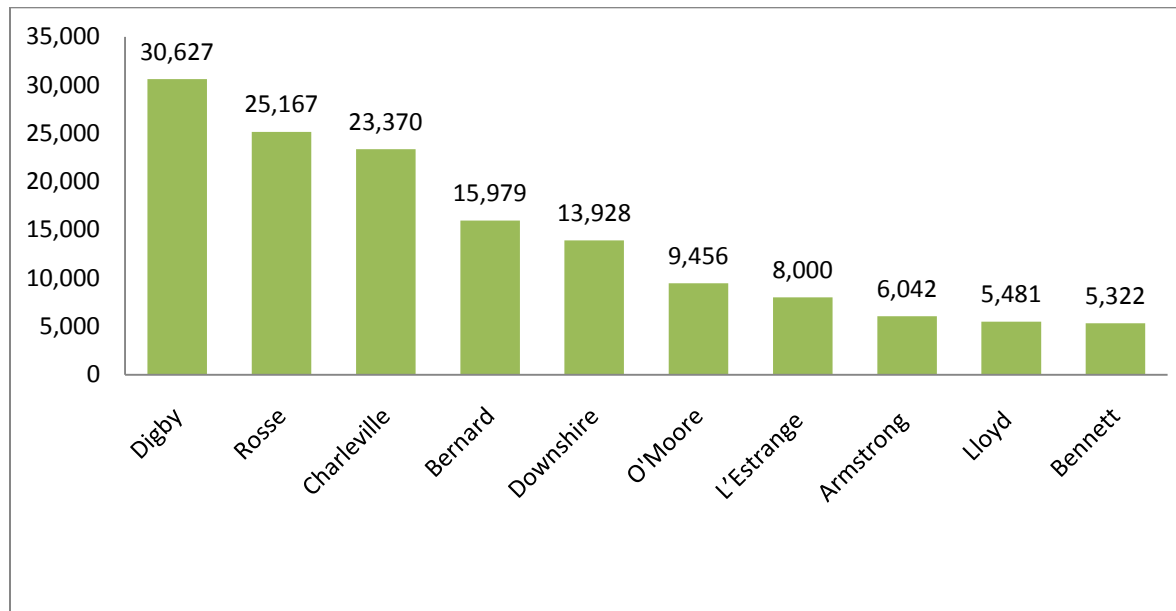
<sup>16</sup> This figure is derived from Breen's findings in 'Landlordism in King's County', p. 636 which is based on her analysis of Griffiths Valuation and therefore is not totally reliable in terms of the Famine landscape.

<sup>17</sup> There were other types of estate owners in King's County including those owned for example by Trinity College Dublin (3,885 acres); Dr Steeven's Hospital (2,237 acres) and Erasmus Smith Schools (1,315 acres).

<sup>18</sup> Baldwin papers (N.L.I., PC 313).

<sup>19</sup> *Report from Her Majesty's Commissioners of Inquiry into the state of the law and practice in respect to the occupation of land in Ireland*, p. 574, H.C. 1845, [605] [606] xix.1, 57. [hereafter cited as *Devon Commission*].

**Table 1.3 The ten largest landowners in King's County c. 1845**



**Source:** Estate papers (see also appendix 2 for a list of all estates over 1,000 acres).

While Arnold Horner has suggested that King's County landlords were in general absentee (and that their commitment to their estates was variable) examination by this author has shown that more than half of the largest landowners in the county were resident on their estates during this period.<sup>20</sup> In the decades prior to the Famine some of these had consolidated their residency by the building of substantial mansions. In the early nineteenth century Coote was unimpressed by the architectural significance of the county's mansions but he did note that Lord Charleville was 'collecting materials for a magnificent edifice' which he would later build at Tullamore.<sup>21</sup> He described Rev William Minchin's house at Greenhills as 'quite modern, elegant and spacious and the demesne is highly ornamented with fine timber', while other new houses mentioned in his survey included James Armstrong's Mount Heaton and Golden Grove, the residence of James Vaughan.<sup>22</sup>

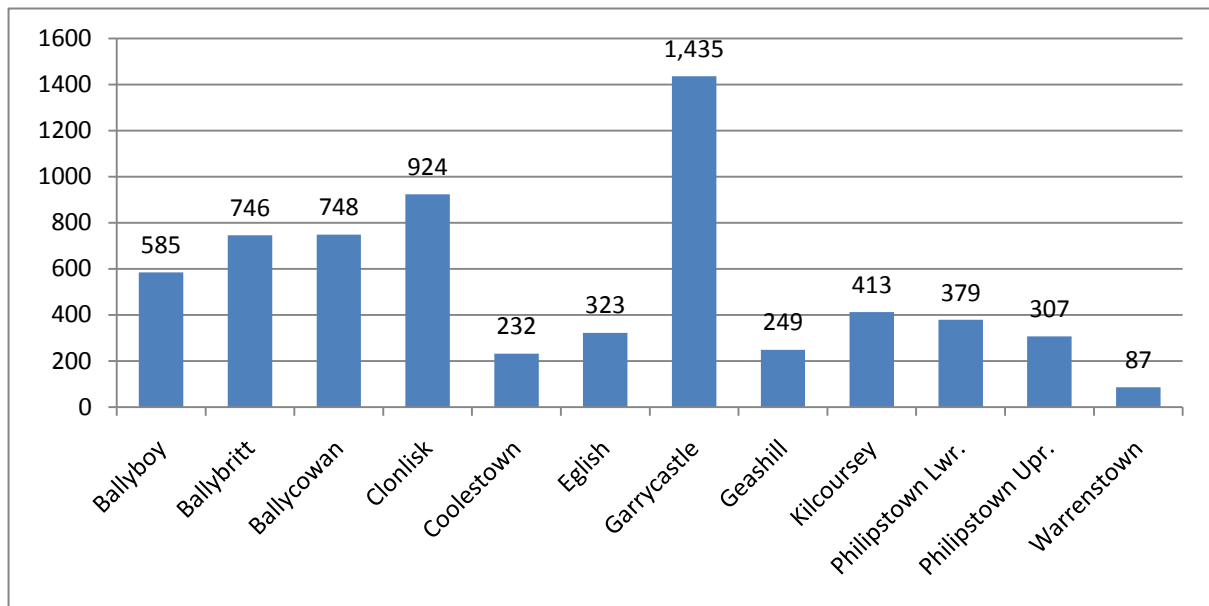
<sup>20</sup> Horner, *Mapping Offaly*, p. 8. See appendix 2.

<sup>21</sup> Coote, *Statistical survey*, p. 19.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid*, pp 62-5.

Moreover in terms of residency the county was also noted for the number of minor gentry of whom Coote said were ‘the guardians of everything which makes the county respectable’.<sup>23</sup> Many of these landed families could trace their ancestors to the colonists of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries including the Biddulphs of Rathrobin, the Wakelys of Ballyburley and the Dames of Greenhills.

**Table 1.4 Total number of fourth class houses in each barony**



**Source: Report of Coms. on Census of Ireland, 1841, 1843 [504].**

While there were only 170 estate owners in the county there were just under 13,000 holdings of one acre or more in 1841.<sup>24</sup> Approximately one third of the county consisted of holdings under five acres while, on the other hand, only two per cent of the holdings were over 200 acres.<sup>25</sup> The average holding in the county was five to fifteen acres. There were three people per acre, emphasising that a high percentage of the population were cottiers or landless labourers. As early as 1801 Coote

<sup>23</sup> Ibid, pp 17-8.

<sup>24</sup> *The Dublin Directory* 1848, p. 202.

<sup>25</sup> Breen, ‘Landlordism in King’s County’, p. 654.

recorded that ‘the cottages of the peasants are miserably poor and wretched, in few instances weather proof; yet fondly clung to by the natives, who are attached to them by custom, and perhaps also from the warmth occasioned by their smoke and lowness’. Labourers were described as a ‘wretched class and not better treated than slaves’.<sup>26</sup> Indeed even the more wealthy farmers ‘live well but are dirty’ and ‘they all refuse to live in slated houses, many of which have been erected by the gentry and are very ornamental to their demesnes, but are of no farther use, as they prefer clay huts’.<sup>27</sup> For these people poverty and destitution was endemic. Famine had occurred periodically in the previous half century. Indeed John Lloyd at Gloster, Shinrone despaired in 1782 that ‘the present alarming aspect of the season gives but too much cause for the most serious apprehensions for the spring corn and the potatoes. I am really filled with terrors at the prospect of a scarcity approaching to famine the next year’.<sup>28</sup> Moreover in the early decades of the nineteenth century there were severe outbreaks of cholera and typhus in 1817 and 1832 adding to their plight.<sup>29</sup>

Part of the reason for the destitution in the pre-Famine period lay in the collapse of the cottage industries after the Napoleonic wars. In 1760 the linen output of King’s County had been £50,000 but had fallen to £20,000 by 1816. By the 1830s the manufacture of linen was in irreversible decline in the country as a whole.<sup>30</sup> The smallholders of King’s County who had supplemented their income through linen industry witnessed a dramatic decline in their fortunes.<sup>31</sup> By 1839 there were only two mills in King’s County employing fifty-six people.<sup>32</sup> Lord Ponsonby had also provided flax spinning machines to his tenants at Philipstown in 1803 and 1804 but saw his efforts to create

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<sup>26</sup> *Royal Com. on Condition of Poorer Classes in Ireland*, p. 25, H.C. 1836, [35] [36] [37] [38] [39] [40] [41] [42] xxx.35, 221, xxxi.1, xxxii.1, xxxiii.1, xxxiv.1, 427, 643, 657. [hereafter cited as *Poor Law Inquiry*].

<sup>27</sup> Quoted in Wakefield, *An account of Ireland*, ii, p. 686.

<sup>28</sup> John Lloyd to John Foster, 13 May 1782 (P.R.O.N.I., D562/1404).

<sup>29</sup> See Tim. P. O’Neill, ‘Cholera in Offaly in the 1830s’ in *Offaly Heritage*, i (2003), pp 96-107.

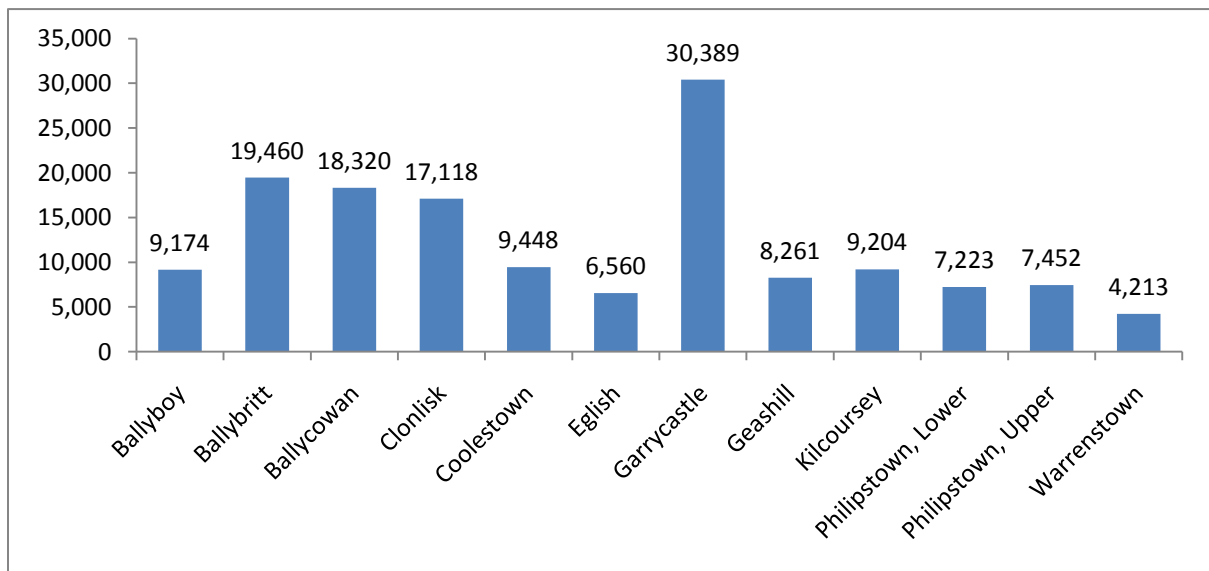
<sup>30</sup> Helen Sheil, *Falling into wretchedness: Fербane in the 1830s* (Dublin, 1998), p. 29

<sup>31</sup> George O’Brien, *The Economic history of Ireland from the Union to the Famine* (London, 1921), p. 317.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid*, p. 307.

employment and prosperity fail after 1815.<sup>33</sup> In an effort to revive the manufacture of flax in the 1820s the King's County and Westmeath Flax Spinning Association was formed but achieved little success.<sup>34</sup> A similar decline in the woollen industry had also occurred most notably at Edenderry where Lord Downshire's tenants had petitioned him for help as early 1810, but no help was forthcoming. In total some forty small businesses whose sole dependence had been in the woollen trade were affected.<sup>35</sup> By 1841 as a result of this economic collapse almost three per cent of the county's families were living purely on charity ('vested means') by 1841; only counties Dublin and Wicklow had a higher proportion of their population in this situation.<sup>36</sup>

**Table 1.5 Population of the baronies of King's County 1841**



**Source:** *Report of the commissioners appointed to take the census of Ireland, for the year 1841*, pp 66-72, H.C. 1843, [504], xxiv.1. [hereafter cited as *Census of Ireland, 1841*].

<sup>33</sup> 'Introduction to the Molesworth papers' (P.R.O.N.I., Molesworth papers, D/1567/E/13/1).

<sup>34</sup> A.G. Richardson to Col. Westenra, 23 Mar. 1824 (P.R.O.N.I., Rossmore Papers, D207/28/80).

<sup>35</sup> 'Petition of the worsted weavers of Edenderry to the Marquis of Downshire October 1810 (P.R.O.N.I., DP/D/671/C/254/12).

<sup>36</sup> Tim P. O'Neill, 'The Famine in Offaly', in *Offaly history and society*, p. 684.

With the collapse of the cottage industry came an increase in competition for land. In 1837 the hunger for land in the barony of Clonlisk was said to be so great that people were willing to pay well above market value.<sup>37</sup> With this competition came the problems of subdivision, overcrowding, the decline in viability of holdings and the rise in agrarian disorder. A King's County land agent, Daniel Manifold, found it difficult to comprehend how the small holders of the county could improve their lot given the dramatic increase in population that could only compound social problems.<sup>38</sup> Unfortunately many land agents and their landlords left it to the so-called middlemen to deal with these social problems. Middlemen existed on all estates ranging from the small to the large in King's County. For example in the barony of Ballybritt in 1821 seventy-four farmers held as much land as the remaining 1,008 holders.<sup>39</sup> Middlemen had emerged in the eighteenth century as something of a Catholic 'semi-gentry' despite the existence of the penal laws.<sup>40</sup> Some had been granted extended leases; for example on the Dowdall estate at Clara and Ballycumber one middleman held a lease for 999 years;<sup>41</sup> while on the Lloyd estate several middlemen held leases for 500 and 1,000 years.<sup>42</sup> Initially the system was attractive to landlords because it essentially facilitated the easy collection of rents; however, during periods of economic growth it became frustrating for those whose ancestors had granted extended leases and who were unable to raise their rents to exploit market forces. By the 1840s agents in King's County such as Arthur Fitzmaurice were convinced that the middleman system was 'ruinous'. In his evidence to the Devon Commission Fitzmaurice suggested that the number of middlemen were declining in King's County because landlords were refusing to renew their leases as they fell in. This he considered to be a good thing

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<sup>37</sup> *The Times*, 7 Jul. 1837.

<sup>38</sup> *Devon Commission*, p. 567.

<sup>39</sup> Quoted in Cormac O'Grada, 'Poverty, population and agriculture, 1801-45' in W.E. Vaughan (ed.), *A new history of Ireland, v: Ireland under the Union, i, 1801-70* (Oxford, 1989), p. 114.

<sup>40</sup> A.W. Hutton (ed.) *Arthur Young a tour through Ireland 1776-1779* (Shannon, 1970), p. 26.

<sup>41</sup> Dowdall papers, (N.L.I., Ainsworth papers, Report on Private Collections no. 99).

<sup>42</sup> Lloyd papers (N.L.I., MS 44,810 (5)).

as: ‘they [middlemen] take no interest to encourage improvements. They take all they can of the land knowing that they will have done with it shortly’.<sup>43</sup> The generality of his claim may be questionable but it did suggest that in the future middlemen would come under increased scrutiny and pressure from agents and landlords alike.

The holdings of middlemen were frequently overpopulated with cottiers living in little more than mud walled cabins on tiny patches of land.<sup>44</sup> For example in the barony of Warrenstown there were 21,462 people crowded onto 4,213 acres, an average of 5.1 persons per acre, while the situation was similar in the barony of Coolestown. The latter had experienced an increase in population of almost 8 per cent from 1831 to 1841 (within the barony the parishes of Monasteroris and Ballinakill had experienced much more dramatic population increases of 23 per cent and 17 per cent respectively).<sup>45</sup> Families, averaging six persons per household, were prepared to crowd onto bog lands where they constructed hovels. One local landlord, Maunsell Dames believed that the people ‘fancy the bogs to be free property for all, and that often a man may find a house upon his bog in the morning where there was not a sign of such a thing the previous evening’.<sup>46</sup> Some of these may have been turf cutters about whom the Halls, during their travels in 1840, wrote that ‘it is hardly possible to imagine more wretched hovels than those which the turf cutters live in’.<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> *Devon Commission*, p. 573.

<sup>44</sup> See Caoimhin O’ Danachair, ‘Cottier and tenant in pre-famine Ireland’ in *Beáloideas*, xlviii-xlix (1980-81) pp 154-65.

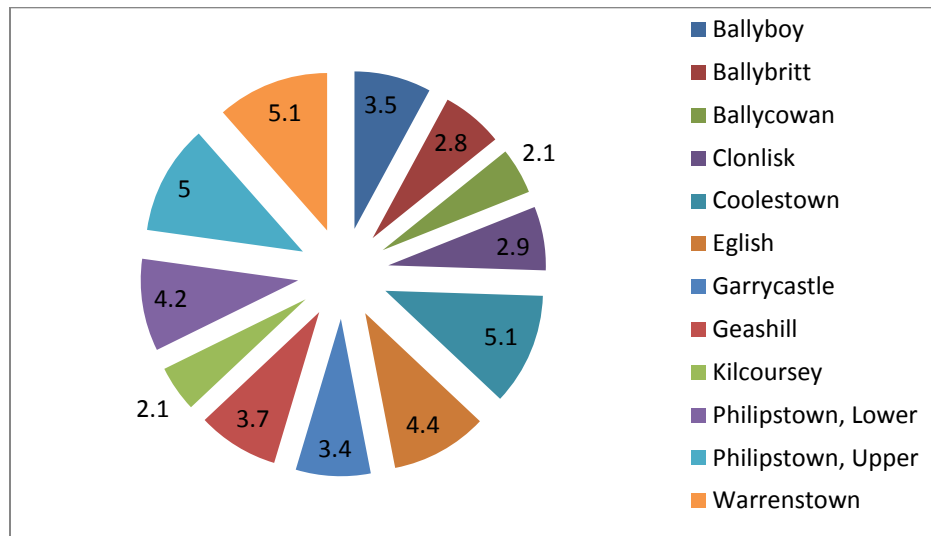
<sup>45</sup> *Census of Ireland, 1841*, p. 70.

<sup>46</sup> Quoted in Oliver P. Dunne, ‘Population and land changes in Croghan District Electoral Division 1841-1911’ (Unpublished BA in Local and Community Studies, N.U.I. Maynooth, 2002), p. 30.

<sup>47</sup> M. Scott (ed.) *Mr and Mrs Halls tour of Ireland* (London, 1840), pp 186-9.



**Table 1.6 No. of people per acre in each of King's County baronies c.1841**



Source: *Census of Ireland, 1841.*

The problems which stemmed from the system of landholding in King's County on the eve of the Famine will be dealt with in more detail in chapter three. Suffice to say for the moment that by the 1841 census the problem of overcrowding on the land was exacerbated by several failures of the potato crop. For example Robert Nugent, the land steward at Rev King's Ballylin estate lamented in 1838 that the potatoes were so wet 'that the poor people hardly eat them, and find they disagree with their health'.<sup>48</sup> Moreover the trend in the post Napoleonic era to shift from pasture to tillage had increased the pressure on the land giving rise to the growth of at least ten different secret societies including Caravats, Shanvests and Rockites whose agendas were driven by the need to control the local agrarian economy.<sup>49</sup> In 1836 George Cornewall Lewis was informed by George Bennett that in King's County 'the character [of agrarianism] appeared to me to be resulting from a

<sup>48</sup> Sheil, *Ferbane*, p. 18.

<sup>49</sup> For more detail see chapter three. For works on agrarian secret societies see for example Michael Beames, 'Rural conflict in pre-famine Ireland: peasant assassinations in Tipperary 1837-47' in *Past and Present*, no. 96 (Nov., 1981), pp 75-91; Samuel Clark and J.S. Donnelly Jnr (eds) *Irish Peasants: Violence and political unrest 1780-1914* (Dublin, 1983), p. 87. In 1822 Lord Rosse discovered that Pastorini had been in circulation among the lowest orders for over three years in King's County and east Galway. See J.S. Donnelly Jnr., *Captain Rock: Irish Agrarian Rebellion of 1821-1824* (London, 2009), p. 124.

conspiracy to prevent any person from taking land, or from possessing land, from which the previous tenant had been ejected for rent, and threatening strangers of every description from coming into the country'.<sup>50</sup> Disturbances of this nature pitted cottiers and labourers against strong farmers as well as against agents and landlords. In some cases disturbances led to a degree of paranoia amongst sections of the ascendancy class especially when agrarianism became associated with sectarianism. For example disturbances in King's County in the early 1820s had led to the formation of a Protestant association which included amongst its members many land agents and landlords.<sup>51</sup> John Legg of Parsonstown was employed by the second earl of Rosse in the management of his estates. In 1820 his wife caused panic amongst the inhabitants of the town when she allegedly posted notices claiming that the Protestants of the town were to be massacred in their sleep, thereby giving rise to the so-called 'Birr rebellion'.<sup>52</sup> While this incident did not escalate and was largely isolated, agrarianism continued to characterise the life of King's County over the next two decades and as chapter five will show, at the height of the Famine the county had the third highest level of agrarian outrage per 1,000 agricultural holdings. Only counties Longford and Tipperary had higher.<sup>53</sup>

The plight of the poorer classes was partially alleviated by seasonal labour or emigration. Again this aspect will be dealt with in later chapters but prior to the Famine, as early as 1828, it was noted that the poor of King's County were being forced by destitution to flock to England either for seasonal labour or permanently.<sup>54</sup> In evidence given to the Poor Law Commission in the 1830s

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<sup>50</sup> Quoted in George Cornwall Lewis, *On local disturbances in Ireland 1836 and the Irish Church Question* (Cork, 1977), p. 91.

<sup>51</sup> 'Disturbances in King's County, n.d. c.1820' (B.C.A., E/35/41).

<sup>52</sup> 'John Legg to Earl of Rosse, 1812-14; 1823 various correspondence' (N.L.I., Rosse papers, Special List 319).

<sup>53</sup> Tim P. O'Neill, 'Famine Evictions' in Carla King (ed.) *Famine, land and culture in Ireland* (Dublin, 2000), p. 36.

<sup>54</sup> Quoted in Peter Gray, *The Making of the Irish Poor Law 1815-43* (Manchester, 2009), p. 61.

Andrew Stoney and Rev. Charles Burton suggested that from 180 to 400 labourers from Ballyboy took part in the seasonal expedition to England; at Durrow the Rev. Peter Toler reckoned up to 800 left, while Dr. William Wallace stated that in Tullamore parish some 1,100 labourers seasonal migrated in summer and 300 in winter.<sup>55</sup> According to Thomas Parker O’Flanagan extensive emigration, both voluntary and landlord assisted, was occurring on the Digby estate at Geashill in the late 1830s.<sup>56</sup> Similarly Lord Ponsonby organised assisted emigration schemes, as did Lord Ashtown on his Clonsast estate in the early 1840s, in order to facilitate the consolidation of small holdings into more viable farms.<sup>57</sup> In 1844 on the eve of the Famine, John Dunne, a large farmer from Franckford believed that hundreds would emigrate from the parish if they were given the means to do so.<sup>58</sup> But to do so was not always socially acceptable. In Canon Guinan’s novel, *The priest and people of Doon* (1903) set in King’s County, the central character Bryan Coghlan, a small tenant farmer goes annually to Lancashire, England for seasonal work to supplement his agricultural income. It remains a family secret because Guinan suggests that it would have been beneath a farmer to have to resort to such measures.<sup>59</sup> On the other hand remittances sent home by emigrants not only allowed families to retain possessions of holdings but literally helped them survive up to the Famine. For example in the late 1830s there was a constant flow of money from America sent to tenants on the King estate at Ferbane. This money was used to pay the rent and to cover shopkeeper’s bills and often to repay loans to gombeen men.<sup>60</sup> The account book of the King estate notes several lodgements which included in March 1839, ‘J. Rigney’s American note £23 1s 6d’

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<sup>55</sup> *Poor Law Inquiry*, appendix A, pp 83-4.

<sup>56</sup> *Devon Commission*, p. 638.

<sup>57</sup> ‘Rent ledger of an estate at Clonsast, Edenderry 1840-1850’ (N.L.I., MS 4,337). This author has identified that the rent ledger belongs to Lord Ashtown’s estate located in the barony of Coolestown at Clonsast and Bracknagh.

<sup>58</sup> *Devon Commission*, p. 642.

<sup>59</sup> Canon Joseph Guinan, *Priest and people in Doon* (6<sup>th</sup> ed., Dublin, 1925), p. 103.

<sup>60</sup> Gombeen - from the Irish *gaimbin* (‘usury’), a derisive term reserved in rural Ireland for those who lent money at exorbitant rates of interest. See D.J. Hickey and J.E. Doherty, *A new history of Irish history from 1800* (Dublin, 2003), p. 171.

and in April 1839 ‘Corcoran’s American note £10’. Robert Nugent, King’s land agent was also in receipt of ‘American notes’ which in turn were lodged to King’s account at Parsonstown.<sup>61</sup>

King’s County was no different than anywhere else on the eve of the Famine in that there was a huge dichotomy between rich and poor, landless and landlord. However one point needs to be made before closing this chapter. Many landlords, for a variety of reasons, were on the verge of bankruptcy even before the Famine. Some estates suffered from the spendthrift nature of their owners or heirs. The Biddulph estate was broken up in 1824 following a litigation case with Robert Waller of Annaghmore which cost over £18,000 and almost bankrupt the latter.<sup>62</sup> The Bernards of Kinnitty, who were much more financially astute, working from an annual rental of over £10,000, purchased the Biddulph’s house at Rathrobin during a time when it was said they ‘feathered their nests nicely’.<sup>63</sup> But they still ran into financial difficulty a decade later when they invested heavily in the building of Castlebernard at Kinnitty in 1833.<sup>64</sup> At Franckford the Magawley estate was in the possession of Francis, third Count Magawley, who was appointed the ambassador from Pope Pius VII to Napoleon I and in 1814 Prime Minister to the Duchess of Parma. An absentee landlord, the rental was used to supplement the family’s residence in Italy thus placing considerable pressure on resources on his King’s County estates.<sup>65</sup> In 1837 the Norbury estate was also heavily encumbered with Lord Norbury complaining of the ‘financial recklessness’ of his son, Viscount Glendine.<sup>66</sup> As well as the building of Castlebernard the cost of living for seven months of the year in London while attending parliament was said to have placed considerable pressure on Bernard’s

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<sup>61</sup> ‘Account book of Rev Henry King 1835-50’ (N.L.I., MS 41,210).

<sup>62</sup> ‘Pedigree of the Biddulph family’ (N.L.I., MS 5,082).

<sup>63</sup> Ibid.

<sup>64</sup> Francis Hely- Hutchinson to Lord Donoughmore, 20 May 1814 (P.R.O.N.I., Donoughmore papers, T3459/D/48/66).

<sup>65</sup> Quoted in Brian Pey (ed.) *Eglish and Drumcullen: A parish in Firceall* (Birr, 2003), pp 90-1.

<sup>66</sup> Lord Norbury, Durrow Abbey to C.M. Vandaleur, Rutland Square, Dublin, 26 May 1837 (P.R.O.N.I., T/1725/4).

finances.<sup>67</sup> Likewise expensive election campaigns of the second earl of Charleville in his attempts to remain a M.P. in the 1830s added to the financial woes of the estate. He failed to win the King's County seat in the general election of December 1832 but was subsequently elected as M.P. for Penryn in Cornwall. To compound matters his marriage to Harriet Beaujolais in 1821 brought no significant dowry to the estate. Furthermore the cost of establishing Tullamore as the county town in place of Philipstown came at a considerable financial cost to the earls of Charleville. However for Charleville the price was justifiable as he regarded it as a victory over 'the jobbery of absentee landlords' like Lord Ponsonby.<sup>68</sup> Despite an annual rental of almost £16,000 the estate was in serious financial difficulties by 1844 when the second earl of Charleville was required to auction crops, stock and farm implements and retired to live abroad on £1,000 a year.<sup>69</sup> As Girourd notes, the earls of Charleville 'did not live cheaply. They spent profusely and hoped things would work out in the end. They continued to live above their income'.<sup>70</sup>

Other estates in financial trouble included that of William O'Connor Morris who believed that he had been left an 'embarrassed heritage in a season of dire distress' when his father died in 1846.<sup>71</sup> William Parsons, Lord Oxmantown (1807-41) and later third earl of Rosse (1841-67) was preoccupied with astronomy and the building of the telescope known as the 'Leviathan', which was at the time the largest in the world. Such research and building must have taken greatly from the financial resources of the estate. As early as 1823 Andrew Gamble was experiencing financial difficulties and was wishing to sell the interest in the house and demesne at Derrinboy, King's County

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<sup>67</sup> Francis Hely-Hutchinson, Oldtown, Naas to Lord Donoughmore 13 June 1814 (P.R.O.N.I., T/3459/D/48/69).

<sup>68</sup> Byrne, *Legal Offaly*, pp 21-2.

<sup>69</sup> 'Statement of the value and location of the Charleville estates in Ireland, c. 1830' (P.R.O.N.I., Charl. Pap., T/3069/B/19) and *LE*, 7 Sept. 1844. See appendix 7.

<sup>70</sup> Breen, 'Landlordism in King's County', p. 639.

<sup>71</sup> O'Connor Morris, *Memories*, p. 129.

which had a rent of £981 15s annually.<sup>72</sup> In 1837 Jonathon Binns noted that after Philipstown lost its assize status ‘its trade has disappeared, many of its houses are in ruins, its shops falling into decay’. The tenants according to Binns were poor and wretched.<sup>73</sup> Ultimately this impacted upon the rental income of the Ponsonby estate. By the 1840s Frederick Ponsonby was forced to sell Bishopscourt, the family seat near Straffan, county Kildare to pay his considerable debts.<sup>74</sup> Denis Bowes Daly borrowed £57,000 during the Napoleonic War to maintain and enhance his estates in the county, the rental of which was little over £3,500 per annum. Such borrowing eventually bankrupted Daly who was forced to sell the estate in 1814.<sup>75</sup>

Family charges were ubiquitous and another significant drain on landlord incomes.<sup>76</sup> At the Rolleston estate as many as nineteen people were entitled to an income from the property.<sup>77</sup> The King estate at Ballylin was heavily mortgaged to meet family charges; its mortgagers included Sir Andrew Armstrong of Gallen Priory, Ferbane.<sup>78</sup> The Rollestons of Frankfort Castle and Glasshouse, Shinrone were also heavily indebted in the nineteenth century to several neighbouring landowners as a result of loans received.<sup>79</sup> Others had been placed in a precarious position by their lavish expenditure and/or their building of great houses. A combination of the building and enlarging of Charleville Forest, its demesne and as noted above the political ambitions of second earl of Charleville put significant strain on the family’s finances by the 1840s. No expense was spared at Charleville Forest in an effort to match the Parsons at Birr Castle. Similarly in the decades prior to the

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<sup>72</sup> *Freemans Journal*, 25 Jan. 1823. [hereafter cited as *FJ*].

<sup>73</sup> Binns, *The miseries and beauties*, ii, pp 31-40.

<sup>74</sup> Frederick Ponsonby to duke of Leinster, n.d (P.R.O.N.I., Leinster papers, D/ 3078/3/29/1-3).

<sup>75</sup> Francis Hely-Hutchinson, Oldtown, Naas, county Kildare to Lord Donoughmore, 13 June 1814 (P.R.O.N.I., Donoughmore papers, T3459/D/48/69).

<sup>76</sup> For an example see ‘Account book of Rev Henry King 1835-50’ (N.L.I., MS 41,210).

<sup>77</sup> Rolleston papers (N.L.I., MS 13,794 (10)).

<sup>78</sup> ‘Rents received on the lands of Ferbane belonging to Rev Henry King 1845-51’ (N.L.I., MS 41,210).

<sup>79</sup> Rolleston papers (N.L.I., MS 13,794 (1)). In the late eighteenth century Rolleston had his estate surveyed in the hope of having it mortgaged for £4,000 or more.

1840s considerable investment was made in the building of or remodelling of houses in the county: Cangort was built for William Trench in 1807; Gloster House, designed by Edward Lovett Pearce was extensively remodelled in the early nineteenth century when Hardress Lloyd was elected MP for the county; Woodfield designed and built by Richard Morrison for the dowager Lady Rosse was later inhabited by the agents of the estate; James Pain re-designed Laughton House for Lord Bloomfield in the 1830s while, along with his brother, he oversaw the work at nearby Castlebernard which was remodelled for the Bernards; the earl of Norbury's house at Durrow was designed to replicate Castlebernard in an effort to reflect the family's emerging status within the county while extensive renovations were carried out at Golden Grove, W.H. Vaughan's mansion, and at Lord Rossmore's house at Sharavogue the building of which necessitated the clearance of tenants.<sup>80</sup> Such building and remodelling was reflected in Mrs Barry Fox's comment to Lady Charleville in the early 1830s when she outlined the changes in the ownership of some 'big houses' and the work being carried out in them. 'Is it not curious' she asked 'how these three houses, Pallas, Annamore and Mount Pleasant so long deserted should within the short space of six months have suddenly become inhabited – masters have popped in them like some Polchinello trick'.<sup>81</sup> What is possibly also significant in this respect is Andreas Eriksson's remark that the number of landlords who had accumulated debts by the mid 1840s highlights the availability of capital in pre- Famine Ireland.<sup>82</sup> Naturally when a decline in the economy came such men were reluctant to discontinue their spendthrift lifestyles.

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<sup>80</sup> Vaughan papers (N.L.I., MS 29,806 (209)).

<sup>81</sup> Quoted in R. Warwick Bond (ed.) *The Marlay letters 1778-1820* (2 vols, London, 1937) ii, p. 725.

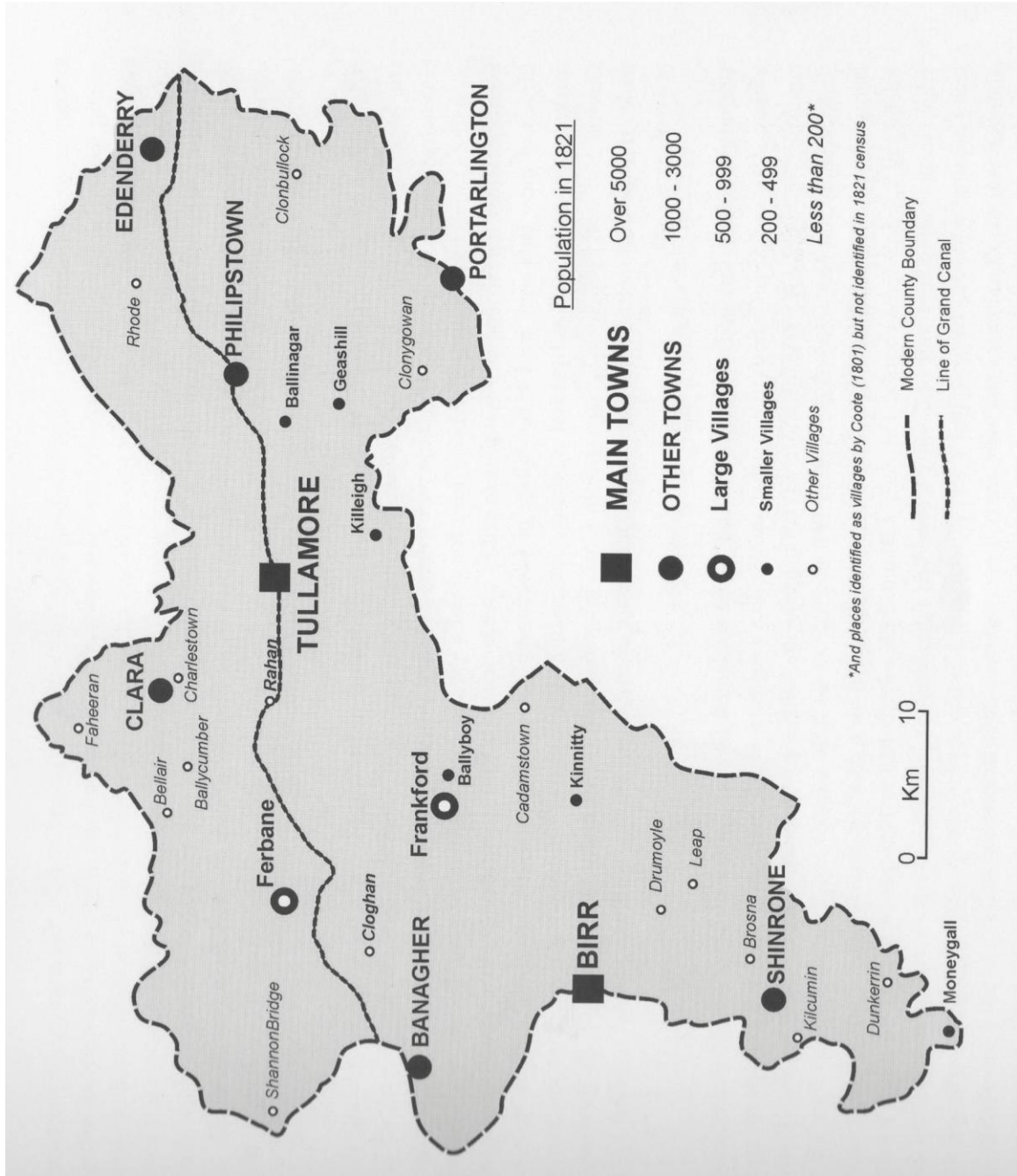
<sup>82</sup> Andres Eriksson, 'Irish landlords and the Great Irish Famine' in *Working Papers Series 1996* (Centre for Economic Research, Dept., of Economics, U.C.D.), p. 8.

On the eve of the Famine there were inherent problems on many landed estates. The difference in circumstances of the county's population could not have been more contrasting. At the top landlords spent lavishly and borrowed heavily to maintain their lavish lifestyles and add to their country retreats. At the opposite end of the spectrum there was an increasing number of cottiers and labourers who vied for access to land. As will be shown in the coming chapters, land agents in King's County in the pre-Famine period were aware of the potential social problems that lay ahead. The question is, were they equipped to deal with these challenges and if so how did they meet the crisis?



## MAP TWO

### Population density and areas of major settlement in King's County 1821<sup>83</sup>



<sup>83</sup> See Horner, *Mapping Offaly*, p. 7.

## CHAPTER TWO: THE LAND AGENT IN KING'S COUNTY ON THE EVE OF THE FAMINE: SOCIAL PROFILE AND FUNCTIONS

‘The post of the land agent itself confessed that kind of status i.e. of the gentry, and any Irish land agent moved virtually as a matter of course into the magistrate class; he lived, entertained and hunted like a gentleman and he took his part like a gentleman in displaying the authority of the established regime; and administrative position. In effect Irish land agents were members of the landed class’.<sup>1</sup>

### **Introduction**

Cormac O’Grada has made the point that land agents were central to Irish rural history, even more so than landlords.<sup>2</sup> This is understandable in the sense that it was agents who dealt with tenants on a daily basis, and who one would expect should have been acutely aware of the problems that existed in the Irish countryside. But were they? The aim of this chapter is twofold: firstly to examine the social background and training, if any, of land agents in the decades prior to the Famine and secondly to describe their function and role in estate management.

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<sup>1</sup> G.E. Mingay (ed.) *The Victorian countryside* (London, 1981), p. 453.

<sup>2</sup> Cormac O’Grada, ‘Irish Agricultural History: recent research’ in *Agricultural Historical Review*, xxxviii, no. 2 (1990), p. 164.

## **i. Social background**

The point has been made in the introduction that while there are studies of landed estates in the nineteenth century few of them offer any significant insight into the men who ran them.<sup>3</sup> Writing in the late 1940s Constantia Maxwell, defending land agents of the eighteenth century, contended that the typical agent ‘was more than a glorified bailiff; he was a much more responsible officer, the landlord’s man of business’.<sup>4</sup> Writing in 1974 J.S. Donnelly Jnr. made the point that Irish land agents were of the class of ‘of the small Irish gentry’.<sup>5</sup> Thus he was suggesting that the sons of lesser landlords found a niche for themselves in Irish rural society by becoming land agents. His study of Sir John Benn Walsh begins in 1823 five years after J.C. Curwen noted that ‘latterly the agency business of landed property has been undertaken by men of talent and character’.<sup>6</sup> To what extent are these claims true, did land agents come predominantly from the small Irish gentry and were they men of talent and character?

The case study for King’s County would suggest that the majority of land agents did come from a landed background but many were trained in a wide variety of different professions or were business men who acted simultaneously as agents for different estates. It is probable that the position of land agent attracted the younger sons of landlords largely because as one observer remarked ‘there seemed nothing else in Ireland for them to do’.<sup>7</sup> Take the example of one of the most prominent land agents of the nineteenth century, William Steuart Trench (1808–1872), who during

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<sup>3</sup> See for example Joseph P. McDermott, ‘An examination of the accounts of James Moore Esq., land agent and collector of port fees at Newport Pratt, county Mayo 1742-65’ (Unpublished M.A. thesis, St Patrick’s College, Maynooth 1994), p. 1.

<sup>4</sup> Constantia Maxwell, *Town and country under the Georges* (Dundalk, 1949) p. 115. For the role of the eighteenth-century land agent see Toby Barnard, *A new anatomy of Ireland: the Irish Protestants 1649-1770* (London, 2003), pp 208-38.

<sup>5</sup> James S. Donnelly Jnr, ‘The Journals of Sir John Benn Walsh relating to the management of his Irish estates 1823-64 [Part I]’ in *Journal of the Cork Historical and Archaeological Society* (1974), p. 91.

<sup>6</sup> Maguire, *The Downshire estates*, p. 154.

<sup>7</sup> Quoted in Vaughan, *Landlords and tenants*, p. 134.

the Famine managed mainly the Lansdowne estate in county Kerry and who came to King's County in 1857 to manage the Digby estate at Geashill. He also resided for a period at Cangort Park, Shinrone 'the residence of my much loved and valued uncle, from whose vast experience and knowledge of country life I derived many and lasting advantage'.<sup>8</sup> In addition Trench also served as secretary of Parsonstown Agricultural society while residing for a period at his uncle's residence at Sopwell Hall in county Tipperary in the early 1840s.<sup>9</sup> Trench was born in 1808 at Bellegrave, near Portarlington, Queen's County. He was the fourth son of Thomas Trench (1761–1834), dean of Kildare and a nephew of Frederic Trench, first Lord Ashtown. Trench had also landed connections on his mother's side who was the eldest daughter of Walter Weldon M.P. According to his own account his father was a 'highly educated and polished gentleman'.<sup>10</sup> From an early stage it was clear that Trench's education was in training for his future career as a land agent. He was educated at the Royal School, Armagh, and was later admitted to Trinity College, Dublin in 1826, where he studied Classics and Science but left without taking a degree.<sup>11</sup> In his memoirs Trench noted that both Classical and Scientific courses stood him well in his later profession.<sup>12</sup> More significantly he stated that he had 'long set my heart upon the profession of an agent, as being the most suitable, in its higher branches to my capacities' and 'lost no time in acquiring information which might qualify for such an office'.<sup>13</sup> He may also have been influenced by the life-

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<sup>8</sup> Trench, *Realities*, p. 45.

<sup>9</sup> *The substance of a speech of the Earl of Rosse on 14 October (1840) at the dinner of the Parsonstown Union Farming Society corrected and reprinted for distribution among his tenants* (B.C.A., J/ 7/1-26).

<sup>10</sup> Trench, *Realities*, p. 38.

<sup>11</sup> In April 1832 he married Elizabeth Susannah (*d.* 1887), daughter of J. Sealy Townsend, master of chancery in Ireland. They had two sons and one daughter. See C. L. Falkiner, 'Trench, (Richard) William Stuart (1808–1872)', rev. Anne Pimlott Baker 'Oxford Dictionary of National Biography, Oxford University Press, 2004' (<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/27704>) (accessed 10 Jul. 2010).

<sup>12</sup> Trench, *Realities*, p. 45.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid*, p. 38.

style led by his uncle, Francis Trench, sometime agent for the duke of Leinster whom he acknowledged as his mentor.<sup>14</sup>

Several estates in the case study including those belonging to Edward Briscoe at Ballycowan and John Drought at Lettybrook employed family members including sons and younger brothers. Henry Warburton was employed by his father and his two uncles to manage their estates at Killeigh. Thomas Murray's appointment as agent of the Downshire estate may have been influenced by familial connections. In fact the three Murray brothers who were employed at the Downshire estates were married to three Bradshaw sisters from the village of Hillsborough, county Down where the marquess had his principal residence. Their father-in-law was a respectable business man at Hillsborough and would have been well placed to influence the marquess in his selection of employees.<sup>15</sup> Henry Lovett acquired the agency of the Rolleston estate at Shinrone following his marriage into the family<sup>16</sup>, while likewise Christopher Hamilton, a Dublin solicitor married Elizabeth Tyrell in 1838 and subsequently took on the management of the Castlejordan estate on behalf of his wife and the co-heiresses.<sup>17</sup> Michael Commins, agent for Major Barry Fox of Anaghmore was also chosen for such relations.

William Steuart Trench noted how his early education stood to him in his choice of career. Several of the land agents employed on King's County estates in the pre-Famine period were trained in the legal profession; about ten per cent of the agents in the sample were men who had acquired legal

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<sup>14</sup> Ibid, p. 45.

<sup>15</sup> Manuscript material in the possession of David C. Murray, Ontario, Canada. Mr Murray is the great, great grand-nephew of Thomas Murray, agent of the Downshire estate 1821-1850.

<sup>16</sup> Rolleston papers (N.L.I., MS 13,797).

<sup>17</sup> Ballinderry papers (in private possession). Hamilton also owned shares in the Skerries Building Company and frequently offered advice about its direction.

training either as an attorney, solicitor or as a judge. The benefits of employing such men probably lay in the fact that they were at least perceived to understand land law, the laws of ejectment and proceedings of the court. It was possibly the intentions of their fathers to educate their sons in legal matters so that estate business would be kept within the family circle. Francis Berry agent at the Charleville estate, George Greeson at the Holmes estate and Richard Gamble, who administered his father's estate at Killooly, were all members of the legal profession. George Greeson, son of Rev George Greeson of Ardnurcher was educated at Banagher Classical College before entering King's Inn in 1822 where he was followed by his brother Robert.<sup>18</sup> Richard Wilson Gamble, second son of Andrew of Killooly Hall and who acted as bailiff and rent collector on his father's properties was also educated at King's Inn during the Famine.<sup>19</sup> However George Heenan, Lord Rosse's agent, a doctor by profession, noted that it was unusual for an agent to be a solicitor or an attorney in his part of the county which was around Parsonstown.<sup>20</sup> However some like John Long, sub-agent on the Holmes estate near Ballycumber did not possess the same literacy skills. Examination of the communication between Long and the agent George Greeson, shows a level of illiteracy or little formal education on Long's part.<sup>21</sup>

Francis Berry was also an entrepreneur and, as described in chapter one, he and his brothers took full advantage of the progression of the Grand Canal through the county in the early nineteenth century and controlled the canal trade from Shannon Harbour and Tullamore to Dublin. By 1812 Berry claimed that they had consolidated the trade on the canal 'in a more spirited and extensive

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<sup>18</sup> Edward Keane, P Beryl Phair and Thomas U. Sadlier, (eds) *Kings Inn admission papers 1607-1867* (Dublin, 1982) p. 202. See also 'Rental of the estate of Andrew Gamble Esq., 1843-47' (N.A.I., Gamble papers, M 3521). In his yearly estimate for the estate Andrew Gamble noted that college expenses amounted to £25, while another son, Andrew, was to be allowed a further £25 for his upkeep while at college in Dublin.

<sup>19</sup> Keane *et al.*, *King's Inn Admission papers*, p. 183.

<sup>20</sup> *Devon Commission*, p. 576.

<sup>21</sup> Greeson papers (MS Offaly Research Centre) [hereafter cited as O.R.C.].

manner than any other trader'.<sup>22</sup> Their careers emphasised the importance of landed and commercial connections. Berry was employed as agent of the Charleville estate for over forty years from c.1820 to 1864. The position was probably secured through his brother Thomas Sterling Berry (1769-1846) who was appointed law agent to Charles William Bury, first earl of Charleville in 1795.<sup>23</sup> Thomas Sterling Berry also secured the agency for Guinness brewery in Ballinasloe, county Galway which had become an important distribution centre for the west; about 2,500 tons of porter were carried to the town each year.<sup>24</sup>

A number of land agents also had military training. Again this may have been seen as an advantage by a landlord who required his agent to be authoritative and effectively discipline his tenants.

Although he did not have a military training, the aforementioned William Steuart Trench remarked that from his education he had learned authority, respect and discipline, principles that landlords demanded from the tenants.<sup>25</sup> George Garvey was perhaps the best known (if infamous) of the agents in the sample, who managed the Bennett, Bloomfield, Drought, Holmes, Mooney and Norbury estates amongst others. Garvey was a retired naval officer, having joined the Royal Navy in 1807. His father was also an officer in the English army and was killed at the British capture of St Lucia in the West Indies in 1796.<sup>26</sup> After a distinguished career which included British victories at the surrender of Helgoland in 1807, at Cadiz in 1811 and at Genoa in 1814, George settled close to Laughton, Moneygall, the residence of his uncle-in-law, Lord Bloomfield, who provided his first job as an agent. His son Toler was later to become agent of the Rosse estate and unlike his father

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<sup>22</sup> Quoted in Ruth Delany, *The Grand Canal of Ireland* (Newtown Abbot, 1973), p. 71.

<sup>23</sup> 'Berry family genealogy' (<http://users.bigpond.net.au/berrygenealogy>) (accessed 9 Feb. 2009). I am grateful to Patrick Fleetwood Berry, Perth, Australia for sharing this information on his family genealogy.

<sup>24</sup> Delany, *The Grand Canal of Ireland*, p. 171.

<sup>25</sup> Trench, *Realities*, p. 2.

<sup>26</sup> John Wright, *The King's County Directory* (Parsonstown, 1890), pp 308-9.

and grandfather before him did not undertake a military career but looked instead to full-time land agency. In fact the Garvey's were to continue as agents for the Rosse estate until the 1930s.<sup>27</sup>

Other agents with military backgrounds included Capt Charles Cox, agent of the St. George estates and Capt Alfred Richardson, Lord Rossmore's agent and firm supporter of the Repeal movement.

Of seventeen other agents in the sample, three were also simultaneously merchants, two were coroners, two were clergymen, four were farmers, five were millers and one was a bank manager. Paul Fawcett, a Tullamore merchant and large farmer, was agent for Rev Ralph Coote's estate at Rahan and sometimes sub-agent at Edenderry for the marquess of Downshire; Rev Henry King employed several men in the administration of his lands at Ballylin, Ferbane, including Rev Henry Fitzgerald, a Church of Ireland rector in a neighbouring parish and Abraham Bagnall a businessman who later had sufficient capital to buy significant lands in the Incumbered Estates Court after 1850; William White a bank manager by profession was briefly agent on the Rosse estate in the early 1850s; Robert Tarleton, a large farmer on the Digby estate, was also agent for Lord Digby; Mr. Walpole, a wealthy shopkeeper from Dundalk, county Louth, was Thomas Bergin's agent at Ettagh. It may seem surprising that five land agents were millers but the reason for this according to W.E. Hogg, was the prevalence of as many as seventy mills located in King's County in 1850.<sup>28</sup> These included Robert Tarleton, Henry Odlum and the Manifold brothers.<sup>29</sup>

There were a few exceptions of men who effectively rose through the estate employment ranks having served something of an apprenticeship at different levels. For example Robert Pyke, agent

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<sup>27</sup> A.P.W. Malcomson, *Calendar of the Rosse papers* (Dublin, 2008), pp 139-40.

<sup>28</sup> William E. Hogg, *The millers and mills of Ireland about 1850* (Dublin, 1998), p. 77.

<sup>29</sup> P. Frazer Simons, *Tenants no more: Voices from an Irish townland 1811-1901 & the great migration to Australia & America* (Victoria, 1996), p. 83.



for Robert Cassidy at Killyon was originally brought to the estate as a drainage instructor but replaced John Corcoran as agent. Frederick Ponsonby believed that James Devery's 'judicious' management of his estate was enhanced by the fact that he was 'born on the estate and I have known him intimately since his childhood'.<sup>30</sup> The aforementioned Thomas Murray had been employed for five years as a surveyor for the Downshire estates when George Matthews, chief agent at Hillsborough, proposed that it made more financial sense to employ him as an agent.<sup>31</sup> He acquired the agency of the Downshire estate at Blessington (1809) and Edenderry (1821).<sup>32</sup> The sons of Valentine Bennett at Thomastown, King's County, were apprenticed to George Garvey, who trained them in all matters of estate management until such time as they were ready to manage their father's estate themselves.

If there was a degree of homogeneity with regard to land agents it was in relation to their religion; of the sample agents it would seem that the vast majority were Protestant, therefore sharing the religion of their landlord employers. This can be perhaps be explained in the context of the much wider 'Big House' culture that determined that those employees in administrative positions should share the religion of their employers as was the case with higher order servants in the 'Big House' itself.<sup>33</sup> On the wider demesne the trend in relation to those in positions of authority was usually the same.<sup>34</sup> In 1840 Thomas Murray's preferred choice to replace his bailiff, Robert McComb, was a Protestant 'as the Roman Catholics all pull together and will go through any oath for each other'.<sup>35</sup> The most obvious reason for these trends is that the backgrounds from which agents were

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<sup>30</sup> 'Cloghan report'.

<sup>31</sup> Maguire, *The Downshire estates*, p. 156.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid*, p. 165.

<sup>33</sup> See Dooley, *The decline of the Big House*, chapter seven.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>35</sup> Thomas Murray to Lord Downshire, 2 Mar. 1840 (DP, D/ 671/ C/ 9/ 627).

drawn such as the landed class or the legal and military professions were all Protestant dominated well into the nineteenth century. There were as always exceptions, for example Laurence Parsons, second earl of Rosse, employed a Catholic agent in the early 1820s. Writing to Lord Redesdale in May 1822, Parsons admitted that he had employed a Catholic agent because ‘no one would have known the middle and lower order of Catholics better’. Rosse described this agent as ‘the man who received for me all my rents in this country’. Interestingly Rosse described him as a man of ‘ordinary capacity’ who ‘had but a poor education’ and what appealed to Rosse most was that he ‘never knew an honest (sic) man or of more strict veracity and he continued in my service till his death’.

<sup>36</sup> However, it should be noted that by the 1830s Rosse had put in place a Protestant agent, George Heenan, a doctor and later county coroner who held numerous land agencies in Tipperary, Roscommon and Mayo and was also the agent for Garrett O’Moore’s estate at Cloghan in the west of King’s County. There were other Catholic agents employed at landed estates including Michael and Joseph Grogan on the Ponsonby estate at Philipstown and Michael Moylan at the Haughton estate at Banagher.

Invariably, especially during periods of crisis, land agents were accused of sectarian bias particularly in terms of the issuing of leases. The first point that needs to be made is that agents, given the overwhelming Catholic majority on southern estates, had to accommodate a majority of Catholic tenants. In the early 1840s George Garvey invoked the wrath of the local Catholic clergy who believed that he had carried out ejections for religious reasons. In 1844 Fr John Dalton of Newport, county Tipperary, spoke out against Garvey’s management policies and claimed that

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<sup>36</sup> Lord Rosse to Lord Redesdale, 3 May 1822 (B.C.A., D/ 20/ 3).

there was a ‘disposition to encourage Protestant tenants in preference to Catholic tenants’.<sup>37</sup> Similarly Thomas Murray was accused of religious bias when he refused fourteen applications for leases in 184, all from Catholics.<sup>38</sup> On the other hand Lord Downshire’s tenants at Edenderry comprised members of four different religious denominations. Likewise Francis Berry was adamant when elected chairman of the Tullamore Board of Guardians that if matters of a ‘religious or political nature’ were introduced into the board room he would at once vacate the chair.<sup>39</sup> On the whole, agents in King’s County were not ‘of the people themselves’ and certainly not of the lower orders which William R. Townsend advised in 1816 should be the case.<sup>40</sup>

The aloofness of agents from the lower orders meant there developed a widely held perception amongst contemporaries and later commentators that these men cared little for the tenantry as summed up in the evidence of Maurice Collis after he had conducted a survey of the vast Trinity College estates in Ireland on the eve of the Famine: ‘The general class called agents are nothing but receivers. The majority of them care nothing for the estates they profess to represent’.<sup>41</sup> There were a variety of reasons for such perceptions. First of all, many agents may have been employed for the wrong reasons, for example family connections as noted above may have overrode consideration of competence for the job. Eric Richards in his study of the English land agent noted that a good agent was a man who improved the agricultural value of the estate.<sup>42</sup> One of the weaknesses of the Irish system seems to have been that there were agents who were employed not because they had potential as agricultural improvers but because they facilitated the easy acquisition of capital

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<sup>37</sup> Thomas McGrath, ‘Interdenominational relations in pre-Famine Tipperary’ in William Nolan (ed.), *Tipperary History and Society* (Dublin, 1985), p. 277.

<sup>38</sup> Reilly, *Edenderry 1820-1920*, p. 31.

<sup>39</sup> Michael Murphy, *Tullamore workhouse: The first decade 1842-1852* (Tullamore, 2007), p. 81.

<sup>40</sup> Quoted in Donnelly Jnr., *The land and the people*, p. 178.

<sup>41</sup> *Devon Commission*, p. 247 See also McCarthy, *The Trinity College estates*.

<sup>42</sup> Eric Richards, ‘The land agent’ in Mingay, *The Victorian countryside*, p. 440.

for their employers. Writing in 1848, Jonathon Pim noted that the ability of the agent to advance the landlord ready capital when required was the ‘chief qualification for the position’.<sup>43</sup> Lord Londonderry rather impertinently advised his agent John Andrews that ‘if an agent of mine managing my county Down estates cannot upon an emergency to myself procure and send me £200 it is impossible for me to continue him in my employment. Without such capability in an agent I consider I am not doing justice to myself’.<sup>44</sup> Sir John Benn Walsh noted ‘an impoverished agent or one prone to debt was not a sought after employee’.<sup>45</sup> When William Holmes was appointed agent of the Purefoy estate in county Tipperary the landlord told him he did not wish to see references but required only £1,000 security from him.<sup>46</sup> When interviewing for an agent, the dowager Lady Rosse claimed that Colonel Moffett would make a good choice ‘as he had made his fortune in India’ and therefore would have personal security.<sup>47</sup>

The system of payment of agents was problematic. First of all the position was a lucrative one and it brought to the holder a life of relative comfort and social respectability. With a salary of £500 per annum Francis Berry was the best paid land agent in King’s County, followed by Thomas Murray who received £350. These salaries dwarfed even the best paid ‘Big House’ employees such as the butler who could hope to earn only around £100 per annum at this time. The agents social status meant that they could mix with the landed gentry, at least on the hunting fields - for example Thomas Manifold, agent on the Bernard estate, was treasurer of the King’s County and Ormond

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<sup>43</sup> Jonathon Pim, *The conditions and prospects of Ireland and the evils arising from the present distribution of land: with suggestions for a remedy* (Dublin, 1848), p. 48.

<sup>44</sup> Quoted in Anne L. Casement, ‘The management of landed estates in Ulster in the mid nineteenth century with special reference to the career of John Andrews as agent to the third and fourth marquesses of Londonderry from 1828 to 1863’ (Unpublished Ph.D thesis, Queens University of Belfast, 2002), p. 125.

<sup>45</sup> Donnelly Jnr., ‘The Journals of Sir John Benn Walsh’ [Part 1], p. 111.

<sup>46</sup> Marrane, ‘Such a Treacherous Country’, p. 234.

<sup>47</sup> Earl of Rosse to Lady Rosse, 2 Feb. 1820 (P.R.O.N.I., Rosse papers, T/3498/ D/ 7/109).

Hunt<sup>48</sup> - and 'Big House' functions and there were cases such as that of George Heenan whose sons were educated together with those of Lord Rosse by a private tutor.<sup>49</sup> A further reflection of their social status were the houses they built or purchased. Thomas Murray's residence, Blundell House, Edenderry, built in 1813 by the then agent of the estate James Brownrigg, was valued at £35, a sum greater than the town's impressive market house.<sup>50</sup> George Garvey's home at Thornvale, Parsonstown was described as being 'situated in the most picturesque part of the country. It was a plain roomy cottage but overtime it became a very picturesque and comfortable dwelling'.<sup>51</sup> When Francis Berry married Alicia Adams, daughter of the rector of Shercock, county Cavan, he inherited his family estate and house at Eglisk Castle.<sup>52</sup> Berry, it seems, never resided at Eglisk which he leased, but at a town house in Tullamore or at 4 Hume Street, Dublin, when his legal duties called him to the capital. Berry also owned another house in Tullamore in 1836 at £63 annually but sold it in 1848 to Robert Goodbody (formerly Lord Mornington's agent) for £300. He then moved to a smaller house on Cormac Street, Tullamore.<sup>53</sup> A retired doctor, George Heenan, agent of the Rosse estate at Parsonstown lived at the neo-classical mansion at Tullynisk Park (sometimes Woodfield) built in 1815 by Sir Richard Morrison as a dower house for the Rosse family.<sup>54</sup> The Manifold brothers resided in substantial comfort at Raheenglass, Heath Lodge and Cadamstown House. The latter is described as a 'five bay two storey house built c.1780'.<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> Thomas Manifold to Lord Rosse, 3 Dec. 1832 (B.C.A., E/25/11). See also 'Diary of hunts made by the King's County Fox Hounds' (N.L.I, MS 16,193).

<sup>49</sup> Information supplied by Tim Insley, a descendant of the agent, George Heenan, 4 Feb. 2009.

<sup>50</sup> 'Valuation of the town of Edenderry, parish of Monasteroris, barony of Coolestown, King's County 1854' (MS material at Edenderry Public Library, local history section).

<sup>51</sup> Wright, *King's County Directory*, pp 308-9.

<sup>52</sup> Pey (ed.), *Eglisk*, p. 254.

<sup>53</sup> Quoted in *Offaly Independent*, 15 Jan. 1994.

<sup>54</sup> Pey (ed.), *Eglisk*, p. 306.

<sup>55</sup> 'National Inventory of Architectural Heritage Survey 2006' ([www.buildingsofireland.ie](http://www.buildingsofireland.ie)) (accessed 16 Oct. 2008).

Indeed so valued was the position of agent that one landlord in the 1840s received over 200 applications for the position when the agency became vacant.<sup>56</sup> They were usually paid a percentage of rents collected (around five per cent) which led to allegations of corruption, bribery and fraudulence. It was widely believed that Irish land agents accepted ‘glove money’ from tenants to purchase their good will.<sup>57</sup> Some tenants ‘by means of a compliment’ would pay the agent a guinea for the granting of a lease.<sup>58</sup> Maguire argues that in many cases the taking of bribes or lease money was prevalent amongst agents who also received presents for their wives or family, though he admits this may have been less prevalent by the 1840s.<sup>59</sup> One witness to the Devon Commission, John Hancock, believed that the payment of fees corrupted an agent and as such they should be paid an annual salary.<sup>60</sup> Similarly the aforementioned Maurice Collis believed that in order to improve the plight of the peasantry and the management of landed estates in Ireland landlords should insist that an agent earning more than £300 from his agency should not be allowed to manage another property no matter how small it might be.<sup>61</sup> Moreover the Society of Friends or Quakers, a relatively large community of which existed in King’s County, warned against the ‘moral and financial temptations’ that the agency of an estate brought.<sup>62</sup> Such warnings went unheeded by Robert Goodbody, a Quaker who served as agent to Lord Mornington’s estate in King’s County before resigning to enlarge his business empire in the county. It has been suggested that Good-

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<sup>56</sup> Vaughan, *Landlords and tenants*, p. 110.

<sup>57</sup> *State of Ireland. Minutes of evidence taken before the Select Committee appointed to inquire into the disturbances in Ireland, in the last session of Parliament; 13th May-18th June, 1824*, p. 844, H.C. 1825, (20), vii.1.

<sup>58</sup> *Devon Commission*, p. 574.

<sup>59</sup> Maguire, *The Downshire estates*, p. 194.

<sup>60</sup> *Devon Commission*, p. 489.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid*, p. 248.

<sup>62</sup> David Dickson, *Old world colony: Cork and South Munster, 1630-1830* (Cork, 2006), p. 596.

body, one of the few Quaker agents, resigned because he was unhappy with Mornington's treatment of his tenants.<sup>63</sup>

Improper conduct often led to strained relations between landlord and agent. This was most obvious in the case of Lord Downshire and Thomas Murray in the 1830s (see chapter three). William Blacker (1777-1855), a noted pioneer of agricultural practice, believed that many of the embarrassments that landlords later encountered resulted from 'the improper selection of their agents'.<sup>64</sup> The dowager Lady Rosse, when interviewing for an agent in 1819, was by her own admission totally ignorant of the agency business.<sup>65</sup> Without any better formal procedures of selection it was inevitable that as K.T. Hoppen argues the profession attracted more than its fair share of unsavoury characters.<sup>66</sup> Elizabeth Smith, the wife of a county Wicklow landlord described one agent, Sandy Grant, as 'the agent of my father's ruin, the mis-manager of all his electioneering matters, who lined his own pockets well, and lived and throve for a while on deceit and falsehoods'.<sup>67</sup> In Ferbane in the late 1830s Rev Henry King's land agent, Robert Nugent, was the subject of numerous allegations and threatening letters throughout his tenure there. In 1837 King's attention was drawn to the alleged fraud which was perpetrated by his agent. It was claimed that Nugent had accumulated vast and unaccountable wealth; he was building a house in Ferbane, taking ground, lodging money in the bank and had set his sons-in-law up in business. Furthermore it was claimed that Nugent had bought potatoes at the market which were given by Mrs King for relief of the poor and

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<sup>63</sup> Michael Goodbody, 'The Goodbody's of Tullamore: a story of tea, tobacco and trade' in *Offaly Heritage*, v (2007-08), p. 173.

<sup>64</sup> William Blacker, *The management of landed property in Ireland* (Dublin, 1834), p. 6.

<sup>65</sup> Lady Rosse to earl of Rosse, 17 Dec. 1819 (Rosse papers, T/3498, D/ 7/ 108).

<sup>66</sup> K.T. Hoppen, *Elections, politics and society in Ireland 1832-1885* (Oxford, 1984), p. 440.

<sup>67</sup> 'Diary of Elizabeth Smith, 11 Jul. 1844' (In private possession).

that his wealth was not from his son in America, as the agent had claimed.<sup>68</sup> It was possible because of these malpractices that agents became unpopular and their lives threatened. In 1844 Roger North, a landlord and magistrate in King's County, argued that amongst agents there is 'scarcely any of the breed left that is affectionate as well as faithful and diligent for love rather than self interest'.<sup>69</sup> North's claim may be somewhat exaggerated; on the other hand, there is probably also some truth in Helen Sheil's contention that some King's County landlords retained dubious and fraudulent agents because they did not want to be seen to bend to the demands of secret societies and disgruntled tenants.<sup>70</sup>

This is not to say that all estates in King's County were mismanged or that agents were universally corrupt and capricious or that relations with their employers were always strained. As Gerard Lyne points out, the relationship between landlord and agent was personal rather than professional. Similarly one of the most prominent land agents of the nineteenth century, Samuel Hussey, declared in his memoir that in his experiences the relationship between landlord and agent 'has in most cases been intimate and cordial'.<sup>71</sup> There were those landlords who perceived the importance of agricultural improvement and the merits of proper estate management, this was certainly the case of large (if absentee) landlords such as the third marquess of Downshire who instructed his agents that he wanted all his properties under the 'same regular and proper management'. In his opinion it was the duty of the agent to be 'active' and have 'constantly the improvement of the estate in view'.<sup>72</sup> The problem was that on an estate as vast as that of Downshire's an agent's duties

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<sup>68</sup> 'Anonymous letter to Rev Henry King, Ballylin, Ferbane' (N.A.I., Outrage Papers King's County, 1837). [hereafter cited as O.P.K.C.].

<sup>69</sup> Sheil, *Ferbane*, p. 43.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>71</sup> S.M. Hussey, *Reminiscences of an Irish land agent* (London, 1904), p. 43.

<sup>72</sup> Lord Downshire to Trevor Corry, 22 Feb. 1811 (DP, D/671/C/17/4).



were so varied that unless he was a good delegator it was impossible to maintain control over all aspects of its management. On the Charleville estate Francis Berry's duties ranged from inspecting the Limerick property at Shannongrove and reporting to his employer on the number of the trees on the estate to purchasing a night shirt and curtains for the earl.<sup>73</sup> However some such as Daniel Manifold, agent on the Bernard estate believed his duties much less cumbersome and told the Devon Commission that it mainly concerned levying for rent.<sup>74</sup> Duties as already noted were administrative, legal, social and often political. The agent was required to deal with the legal matters of grand jury business, the magistracy and policing the estate. He presided as a justice of the peace at the petty session's court. By becoming associated with the magistracy he was also associated with the imposition of law and order emanating from a widening state control that was often resented by the lower orders. Contemporary commentators such as Alexander de Tocqueville noted that for the majority of the people the magistrates were their oppressors.<sup>75</sup> This claim was substantiated by King's County landlords such as Robert Cassidy who believed his fellow magistrates to be a 'very stupid party and not over civil'.<sup>76</sup> This sentiment was also shared by Christopher Bannon of Broughall Castle who believed that his fellow magistrates were 'ignorant and prejudicial'.<sup>77</sup>

Peter Collins in his study of county Monaghan states that where a landlord was absentee the agent assumed the public face and was 'de facto Lord and master'.<sup>78</sup> Lord Dufferin took a subtle approach believing that if 'the landlord was the father of his tenantry' then the 'agent was their

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<sup>73</sup> Francis Berry to earl of Charleville, n.d. (Charl. Pap., T/ 3069/ B/ 24). See also Charleville MS O.R.C.

<sup>74</sup> *Devon Commission*, p. 567.

<sup>75</sup> M.A.G. O'Tuathaigh, *Thomas Drummond and the government of Ireland 1835-41* (Dublin, 1977), p. 11.

<sup>76</sup> 'Personal diary of Robert Cassidy, 10 Mar. 1835' (N.L.I., Cassidy papers).

<sup>77</sup> Christopher Bannon, Broughall Castle to Lord Rossmore, 15 Jan. 1836 (P.R.O.N.I., Rossmore papers, T/2929/4/60). See also *Returns of Courts of Petty Sessions in Ireland*, 1835, p. 114, H.C. (415) xlii. 463.

<sup>78</sup> Peter Collins, *County Monaghan Sources in the Public Record Office of Northern Ireland* (Belfast, 1998), p. xvii.

nurse'.<sup>79</sup> He rather humorously made the point that apart from a wife, the agent was the most important choice that a landlord had to make.<sup>80</sup> Where an agent was diligent and respected both landlord and tenant alike benefited. Edward Wakefield advised that a landlord when choosing an agent should 'take care to select men who not only have knowledge of agriculture sufficient to enable him to manage an estate in such a manner to be conducive to the interest of the landlord'. Furthermore an agent should have 'sufficient justice and honesty to prevent them from having recourse to means which may injure or oppress the tenants'.<sup>81</sup> Several of the agents in King's County seem to have been personalities of this nature. In the post-Famine period William J.H. Tyrrell, a King's County agent was informed that he was a good agent because of his 'ability to deal with troublesome tenants' and that he had 'a thorough insight into the character of Irish tenants'.<sup>82</sup> James Brownrigg was an influential and popular agent of the Downshire estate (1800-17) and it seems won favour with both employer and tenant. He was described as being 'discharged with great judgement, fidelity and advantage tempered with prudence and conscientiousness, tenderness towards the many people committed to his charge'.<sup>83</sup> His funeral in 1817 is thus described: 'in this part of the country there never was anything known like the universal lamentation through all ranks of people which was evinced by every mark of respect and such a funeral as Edenderry never saw. The whole town, road and church yard were a solid mass of carriages and people, consisting of all respectability of the country and the lower classes in thousands!'<sup>84</sup> When Samuel Cooper, agent of the Erasmus Smith School estate at Banagher died in 1831 his body was waked for three days and nights by his tenants in Tipperary, some of whom escorted the remains back to Killenure

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<sup>79</sup> Quoted in Casement, 'The management of landed estates', p. 1.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid, p. 48.

<sup>81</sup> Wakefield, *An account of Ireland*, p. 297.

<sup>82</sup> Ballindoolin papers (In private possession).

<sup>83</sup> Rev Charles Finney, *Records of Castro Petre from the Representative Church Body* (Dublin, 1978), p. 46.

<sup>84</sup> John Brownrigg to Lord Downshire, 9 Jul. 1817 (DP, D/ 671/ C/ 232/168).

from Dublin.<sup>85</sup> A similar feeling of regret was expressed when Francis Berry died in October 1864. Berry was described as being ‘kind and considerate to the tenants and had won the esteem of all who knew him’.<sup>86</sup> Likewise John Corcoran’s funeral in March 1909 was described as being of ‘immense proportions’.<sup>87</sup> While one should guard against the bias of the sources from which these examples are taken there is enough to suggest that not all agents were perceived the capricious evictors of nationalist tradition.

It is evident from the above that land agents in King’s County in the pre-Famine period were not a homogenous group. They came from a variety of different social backgrounds (although predominantly from a landed background) and had various educational experiences. In fact according to W.E. Vaughan some land agents were men who failed to get beyond ‘compound fractions and copper plate’ and their social skills were the result of local balls ‘to which everyone is admitted’.<sup>88</sup> The central question is did they have the relevant experience to manage landed estates, which by the mid-nineteenth century was a complex task which required a high level of competence and organisation in matters such as the day to day running of the estate, the collection of rents, the keeping of accounts, the making and granting of leases and other legal matters, dealing with tenant’s difficulties while also sometimes having to act as a justice of the peace, poor law guardian and occasionally grand juror? In most cases agents were expected to keep regular correspondence with the landlord, reporting on every aspect of estate life. Already mention has been made of the fact that many land agents in King’s County before the Famine faced the unenviable task of administer-

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<sup>85</sup> Denis Marnane, ‘Samuel Cooper of Killenure (1750-1831): a Tipperary land agent and his diaries’ in *Tipperary Historical Journal* 1993, p. 125.

<sup>86</sup> *King’s County Chronicle*, 2 Nov. 1864. [hereafter cited as *KCC*].

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid*, 25 Mar. 1909. For an account of a similar address to the earl of Meath’s agent Charles Hamilton see *The Times*, 8 Sept. 1890.

<sup>88</sup> Quoted in Vaughan, *Landlords and tenants*, p. 110. See also *Remarks on Ireland as it is; as it ought to be; and as it might be ...by a native* (London, 1849), p. 13.

ing an estate which was heavily embarrassed owing to the decline of the economy, the extravagant spending of landlords and the building and enhancing of demesne and country seats. It is arguable that it was difficult for one man to have all the required capabilities to manage a wide range of affairs and it seems that some agents were employed for what might now be deemed the wrong reasons e.g. a former army officer might have been employed because a landlord saw him as a means to disciplining his tenants. Others might have been employed because they had a legal background but, importantly, this did not mean they had a sound knowledge of good agricultural practice. In his submission to the Devon Commission, Patrick Lacey, a large farmer in Ballyheashill, in the barony of Warrenstown contended that the ‘attorney’ agent in particular did little to improve the estate. According to Lacey the general case was that a local landlord appointed ‘some Dublin attorney as his agent; this man, however responsible in his profession, is of all others the worst selection that could be made for the duty of land agent. He drives down to some neighbouring town twice or thrice a year. He there screws out all the money he can by threats of law, seizure and “John Thrustouts”.’<sup>89</sup> Hely Dutton believed that a land agent who was also an attorney or lawyer was totally ignorant of country affairs.<sup>90</sup>

Similarly at the beginning of the nineteenth century William Marshall argued that the primary duty of an estate manager lay ‘in the field’ and that the management of an estate required the ‘whole of any man’s attention’ and thus lawyers were not suitable to a position which could not be under-

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<sup>89</sup> *Devon Commission*, pp 663-7. In 1837 a bill was passed in the House of Commons regulating the profession of attorney and solicitor perhaps indicating that the occupation attracted men of varying character. See *Attorneys and Solicitors (Ireland). A bill for the better regulation of the profession of attorney and solicitor in Ireland and the several offices connected therewith*, H.C 1837-8, (256) i. 35.

<sup>90</sup> Hely Dutton, *Statistical survey of the county of Clare* (Dublin, 1808), p. 34.

taken by those without practical agricultural experience.<sup>91</sup> From some landlords' points of view nominating their sons as land agents allowed the latter to perpetuate their social position even though they might not necessarily have had either the right temperament or training for the position. While it would be wrong to castigate agents for being ill-prepared for the task on the eve of the Famine - it is probable that some acquired significant knowledge of estate management from books, journals and periodicals, participation in agricultural societies and so on – the fact that there was no formal education for a land agent until the establishment of the Royal Agricultural College at Cirencester in 1845 and it was not until 1902 that the profession was recognised with institutional status, meant that there was no font of knowledge that they could draw on in the event of a social catastrophe such as the one which hit Ireland in 1845.<sup>92</sup> Finally, as an occupational group agents formed no local association in King's County and except in rare exceptions (such as when George Heenan and Frederick Bennett came together to cooperate in a joint land agency venture in 1850<sup>93</sup>) there is very little evidence of the sharing of ideas or the coming together to solve problems by land agents before, or as we shall see, during the Famine. The next chapter examines the type of estate-related problems that agents experienced in the lead up to 1845.

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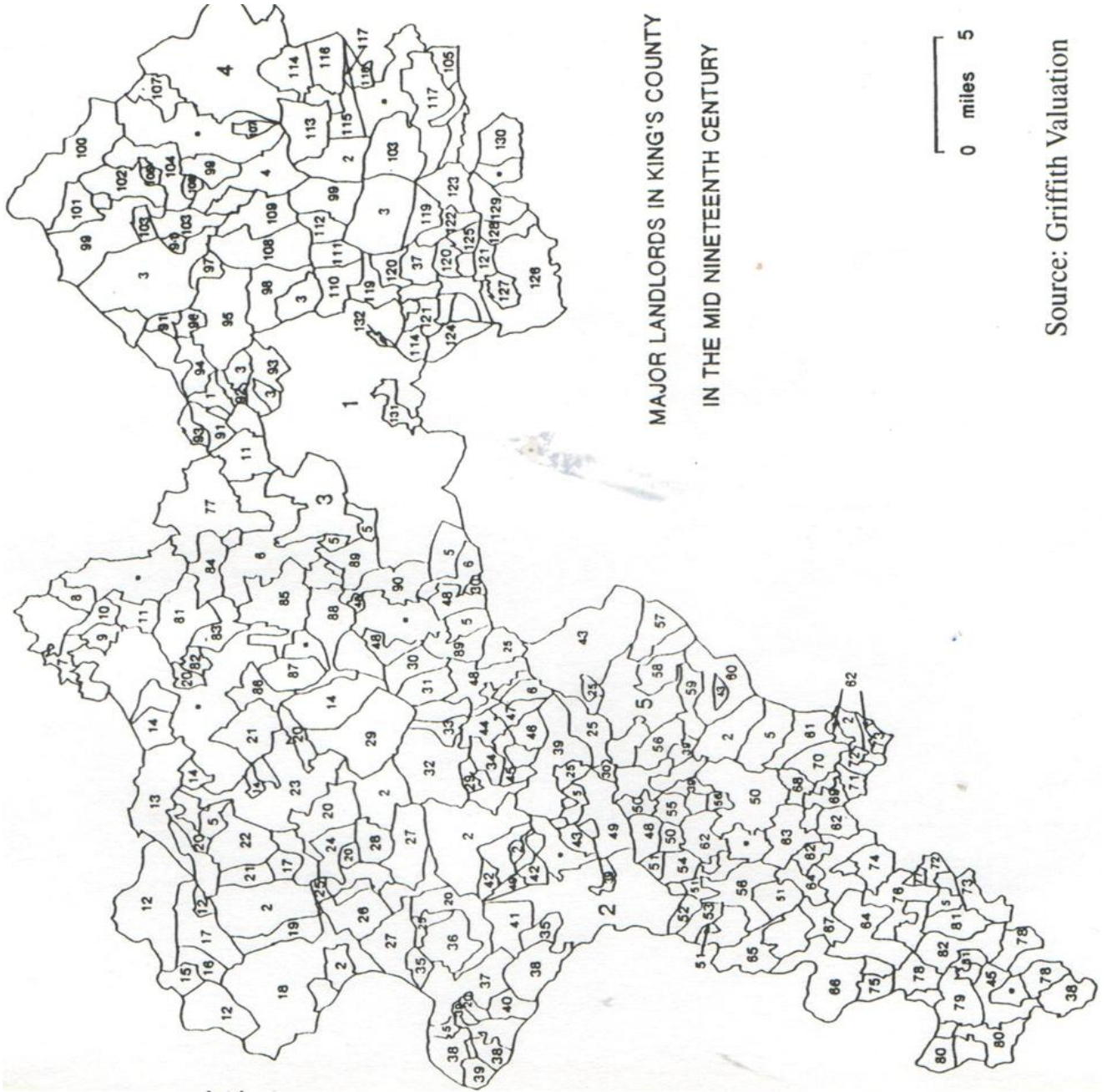
<sup>91</sup> William Marshall, *On the landed property of England: an elementary and practical treatise containing the purchase, the improvement and the management of landed estates* (London, 1804), pp 338-9. Marshall believed that a land agent could not be found in the 'echelons of the law library'.

<sup>92</sup> Sarah Webster, 'Estate Management and the professionalisation of land agents on the Egremont Estates in Sussex and Yorkshire 1770-1835' in *Rural History* (2007) xviii, no.1, p. 50.

<sup>93</sup> 'Assignment policy of George Heenan and Frederick Bennett, 25 May 1850' (University College Cork, Ryan of Inch papers).

**MAP THREE**

The landlords of King's County in the mid-nineteenth century (See appendix 1 for key to map)



## **CHAPTER THREE: CLEARING THE ESTATES TO FILL THE WORKHOUSE: AGENTS, ESTATE MANAGEMENT AND THE IRISH POOR LAW ACT 1838**

### **Introduction**

The previous chapters have suggested that the management of a landed estate by the mid-nineteenth century was a complex task. Indeed G.E. Mingay writing about the situation in Great Britain as a whole argued that the management of estates was much more difficult than running a factory, railway or house of commerce.<sup>1</sup> The question was asked at the end of the last chapter whether land agents as a group were qualified or competent to deal with the various issues that arose in the pre-Famine period. One of the aims of this chapter is to examine in more detail than was done in chapter one the various social issues and land related problems that arguably emanated from the economic collapse after 1815 and which were compounded by a demographic explosion. The chapter will look at how agents and their employers attempted to address these issues and how in many cases they were opposed by tenants who revolted against modernisation. The growth of secret societies in King's County during the 1820s reflected the increased pressure that was put on land as it remained the only occupational outlet for the vast majority in rural Ireland. Something as simple as the destruction of ploughs in King's County suggested that the employment of men was deemed more important than modernisation. In this atmosphere of opposition and the need to reform agricultural practice, agents and landlords welcomed the introduction of the 1838 Irish Poor Law Act. This act provided the stimulus for the clearance of estates by moving impoverished tenants into the workhouse or assisting in their emigration, allowing for the consolidation of small holdings into more viable farms. Thus the period after 1838 was arguably one characterised by

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<sup>1</sup> Mingay, *The Victorian countryside*, p. 439.

clearing the estates to fill the workhouses and that in itself brought further problems which will be elucidated at the end of this chapter. It is proposed to begin this chapter with a case study of Thomas Murray agent of the Downshire estate 1821 to 1850.

### **i. Thomas Murray, agent of the Downshire estate 1821-50**

One of the largest estates in the King's County belonged to Arthur Hills, the third marquess of Downshire who had inherited the family estates of 115,000 acres upon coming of age in 1809. This included 14,000 acres in the barony of Coolestown in King's County, centred on the town of Edenderry. His father had visited his Edenderry estate only once and as has been argued elsewhere by this author this led to various estate management problems.<sup>2</sup> The third marquess of Downshire assumed a more rigorous management policy of the family estates. He promoted the greater involvement of agents who in turn assumed a professional role within a professional estate administration. Amongst the agents appointed was Thomas Murray who has been alluded to briefly in chapter two. Before the third marquess came of age Murray had been one of the partners of Brownrigg (who incidentally along with his father was agent on the Downshire's Edenderry estate from 1799-1819), Longfield and Murray, land surveyors. In 1804 Murray became chief surveyor of the Downshire estates, having parted ways with Brownrigg and Longfield. While he effectively remained chief surveyor from then until 1850, he was also appointed agent on Downshire's estate at Blessington, county Wicklow in 1809 and then at Edenderry in 1821. Obviously the fact that he remained chief surveyor and land agent made his estate management duties more onerous. It possibly made it difficult for him to carry out Downshire's estate management philosophy that agents should familiarise themselves with the tenants by 'constantly going over the estate'.<sup>3</sup> In

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<sup>2</sup> Ciarán Reilly, *Edenderry, county Offaly and the Downshire estate 1790-1800* (Dublin, 2007).

<sup>3</sup> Maguire, *The Downshire estates*, p. 198.



1809 Murray was receiving £150 per annum as chief surveyor. The third marquess inherited massive debts from previous generations and his main priority was to reverse the family's financial decline, to check needless expenditure and to increase the revenue that could be generated from rents.<sup>4</sup> Agents were expected to keep 'a tight ship' in the running of the estate.<sup>5</sup> It was within this context that the then chief agent, George Matthews, suggested to Downshire that it would make better business sense to employ Murray as agent at Blessington where a position had become available.

Thomas Murray was agent at Edenderry for three decades from 1821 to 1850. When he arrived on the estate he faced problems that were common to many new agents, primarily tenants who were in arrears and problems of subdivision and subletting. For example around Monasteroris there was a high level of impoverishment due to overpopulation on small holdings (there was an average of five people per acre). Indeed Murray described Edenderry as 'the most miserable town in Ireland' when he commenced the agency.<sup>6</sup> Murray's correspondence with Downshire suggests that he adopted a hands on approach to the management of the estate. His letters suggest that he at least wanted to portray to his employer that he was fulfilling his obligation to familiarise himself with the tenants, on occasion for example informing Downshire that he had helped tenants bring in their oats and crops.<sup>7</sup>

In the pre-Famine period Murray continuously ran into difficulties with regard to the collection of rents, at various times he blamed this on the influence of the local Roman Catholic priest, Fr James

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<sup>4</sup> Ibid, p. 12. Arthur Hills, second Marquess of Downshire (1793-1801) incurred massive debt when in control of the estate, including spending vast sums on winning the county Down election of 1790.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid, p. 7.

<sup>6</sup> Reilly, *Edenderry 1820-1920*, p. 30.

<sup>7</sup> Thomas Murray to Lord Downshire, 18 Mar. 1842 (DP/D/ 671/C/ 9/ 712).

Colgan about whom he reported to Downshire ‘there is a great leaning’.<sup>8</sup> In 1839 Murray contended that ‘tenants on this estate if left to themselves would be quite happy but they will not be allowed’.<sup>9</sup> He also believed that because of Colgan’s influence tenants were more likely to pay their priests dues than their rent. In 1837 he warned recalcitrant tenants that if they could find money for the priest’s schoolhouse (which had been built in 1835) then they could find money for the rent.<sup>10</sup> Certainly Murray’s pressing of the tenants for the rents did not endear him to either Catholic clergy or tenantry; another of the Catholic priests, Fr Richard Cullen referred to Murray as a ‘jackal’ who was intent on intimidating the tenantry.<sup>11</sup> As a result Murray often found himself the target of abuse and intimidation. In 1835 the feeling against the collection of rent at Edenderry was so great that Murray feared that ‘there would be more Rathcormick work’, a reference to a serious tithing affray in county Cork in 1834. He also seemed to be living in genuine fear for his safety noting that ‘there is hardly a day I don’t get a coffin or death’s head sent to me’.<sup>12</sup> The crafty local tenantry devised a system of lighting signal fires announcing Murray’s imminent arrival to an area to such an extent that in 1843 Lord Downshire was forced to address a letter to them cautioning not to make or allow signal fires on their farms and where found guilty of such he would ‘consider them disloyal subjects and dangerous persons’.<sup>13</sup>

There were times when it was impossible for Murray to collect the full rental which was due. With increased social disorder in the 1830s he looked to the forces of law and order. To help in the maintenance of law and order at Edenderry Murray even recruited those who had ‘subdued the late

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<sup>8</sup> Ibid, 22 May 1839 (DP/D/ 671/ C/ 9/599).

<sup>9</sup> Ibid, 24 Jan. 1839 (DP/D/671/C/9/590).

<sup>10</sup> Ibid, 7 June 1837 (DP/D/671/C/9/502).

<sup>11</sup> Rev Richard Cullen to Robert Cassidy, 24 Mar. 1832 (N.L.I., Cassidy papers).

<sup>12</sup> Thomas Murray to Thomas Parry, 25 Jan. 1835 (DP/D/671/C/9/ 410).

<sup>13</sup> *The Times*, 4 Dec. 1843.

rebellion' [1798] including the 'shuffling' Pilkington Homan. In 1798 Homan was one of a number of informers on the estate who provided information on the Defender and United Irishmen conspiracy at Edenderry.<sup>14</sup> Murray frequently complained that his task at Edenderry was made difficult by the shortage of resident magistrates to keep the tenants in check. Appealing in 1836 for a resident magistrate to deal with the petty sessions, Murray stated that 'there was only old Brownrigg, eighty seven years old, and old Grattan who was seldom present. The petty sessions court had become kind of a sport since Brownrigg was deaf'.<sup>15</sup>

He did have intermittent periods of success for example in the late 1830s when he actually managed to increase the annual rental but by 1843 a large arrears had again accumulated. On this occasion he noted that 'his Lordship having been displeased at my rental and accounts for the estate not having been closed as ordered at the end of the half year, namely the 30<sup>th</sup> June and 31<sup>st</sup> December- I request that you will attend to my regulations in order to meet his Lordships most reasonable and proper wishes'.<sup>16</sup>

This was not the first time that Downshire was displeased with Murray's accounts. In his comprehensive study of the Downshire estate, W.A. Maguire contends that the basic activity of the agent was his ability to secure the full or partial payment of rent and to present rentals and accounts.<sup>17</sup> The latter task, if for example an estate clerk was not available which seems was the case at Edenderry, added to the workload of an overburdened agent such as Murray.

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<sup>14</sup> Thomas Murray to Lord Downshire, 24 Jan. 1839 (DP/D/671/C/9/590).

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

<sup>16</sup> Maguire, *The Downshire estates*, p. 172.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid, p. 173.

He was required to keep several books and records on a daily basis. A minute book was used for recording day to day management activities; a rent ledger to keep an account of each tenant; a rent book for entering rent received; a cash book outlining expenses incurred; a registry book of the leases and the annual rental and account to be made up and returned each half year. The point has been made in the previous chapter that the system of rent collection and payment was fraught with difficulty and sometimes led to embezzlement or fraud. In 1836 Murray came under suspicion. That year the dowager marchioness, Mary Sandys died. The third marquess began an audit of the Edenderry estate from which his mother had been receiving two-thirds of the rental as part of her jointure. Downshire discovered major discrepancies between the amount of rent received and that forwarded on behalf of his mother. Irately, he wrote to Murray declaring that his ‘conduct is inexplicable. You must be a very unhappy man - ask yourself if you are an honest man?’ Downshire was adamant that the agent had received incomes that he kept for his own use, up to £1,500. He also reprimanded Murray for sending his son among the tenants to collect the rent.<sup>18</sup> A grovelling Murray replied to Downshire insisting that there ‘must be some mistake for want of vouchers’ and that ‘your Lordship may be assured that if it was the last penny I had on earth that I would pay it to clear off any sum I owe’. Murray was willing to sell a farm and a house in Hillsborough, county Down to clear his debts.<sup>19</sup> Downshire insisted that in the future he wanted ‘to know every month every farthing that has been received in the preceding month and every farthing which has been spent’.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> Maguire, *Letters of a great Irish Landlord*, p. 45. This son was probably Thomas Richard Murray who was agent of the estate from 1850 to 1893. See appendix 6 for the text of the letter.

<sup>19</sup> Thomas Murray to Lord Downshire, 18 Jan. 1838 (DP/D/ 671/C/ 9/ 541).

<sup>20</sup> Maguire, *The Downshire estates*, p. 182.

There are a number of interesting aspects connected to this incident that reveal something of landlord-agent relations and the management of estates. Firstly it was not to be the last time that Murray was to be reprimanded by Downshire for irregularities. In 1838 as a follow up to the 1836 audit, Murray was removed from the agency of Downshire's county Kilkenny property at Tullaroan.<sup>21</sup> Murray regretted that 'your Lordship thinks me so careless about your business. I most solemnly declare that I cannot sleep, for my constant thought upon your Lordships business and am never easy when I find things do not get on so well as I could wish'.<sup>22</sup> In 1841 Murray's brother John, who had been agent at Downshire's Blessington estate died and discrepancies were found in his accounts. To avoid further embarrassment and sanctions, Thomas Murray undertook to act as security until such debt was paid.<sup>23</sup> Indeed, even his professional skills as a surveyor were frequently questioned. When the first Ordnance Survey of Ireland was carried out in the 1830s it provided another example of Murray's inefficiency as numerous maps and surveys posed problems for those carrying out the new scheme.<sup>24</sup> Yet Downshire did not remove him from his position. Why was he prepared to tolerate such inadequacies and failings? The simple answer may be that to find a suitable alternative to Murray or someone who knew the tenantry and estate in such detail would have been difficult. Also by the late 1830s, as will be discussed below, Downshire had effectively decided to retrain his agent.

Secondly the fact that it took fifteen years from Murray's appointment to the death of the marchioness to discover the discrepancies that then caused Downshire so much distress suggests that the latter did not exactly keep a close eye on how his agents operated, particularly on his outlying

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<sup>21</sup> Ibid, p. 196.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid, p. 172.

<sup>23</sup> Thomas Murray to W.E. Reilly, 25 Apr. 1842 (DP/D/ 671/C/9/ 714).

<sup>24</sup> Maguire, *The Downshire estates*, pp 179-80.

estates. If Murray was not dishonest then he was certainly slovenly in his bookkeeping. Thirdly, he found great difficulty in managing the social problems associated with agrarian issues of over-population, subdivision and increased arrears. In the early 1830s Francis Farrah was taken from Hillsborough to advise on how to manage rent defaulters and suggested that the 'defaulters must be well watched and hard pressed for without sticking to them they will not do what they ought, being unquestionably disposed to take every advantage they can'.<sup>25</sup> Farrah also advised Murray not to replace evicted tenants with those evicted from neighbouring estates. Also Farrah was not in favour of accepting rent in instalments and was surprised by the number of tenants who were disputing their levels of arrears, again indicating possibly slovenly record keeping.<sup>26</sup> Finally the correspondence between agent and landlord indicates that Downshire was disappointed with the return from his southern estates because he promoted the same management on them as he did on the more prosperous and efficient estates in county Down. However it might be instructive to note that these estates were located in close proximity to the prosperous urban areas of Newry, Lisburn and Belfast.<sup>27</sup> Urbanisation and industrialisation did not benefit tenants on the Edenderry estates to the same extent.

As noted above, in 1838 Downshire decided to retrain Murray in the art of estate management. Twenty years before, a decade after taking control of the estate, Downshire had realised that the proposed reform of his estate management policies was proving slow and frustrating, so much so that he wrote to Murray about 'the frequent and nearly futile directions which have from time to time been given for a series of years to those employed upon my estates'.<sup>28</sup> After an increased

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<sup>25</sup> Ibid, p. 82

<sup>26</sup> Ibid, pp 83-4.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid, p. 212.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid, p. 7.

period of downturn landlords and agents alike had come to realise they had lost control of the situation because there were simply too many tenants and small holdings that were unviable.<sup>29</sup>

Little had changed by the time Downshire sent Murray to Belgium and Holland in 1838 to acquire knowledge of the European methods of farming. Reporting back on his trip Murray noted that he had ‘got some useful lessons in the management of lands and other things that may be useful over here’.<sup>30</sup>

Its not exactly clear why Murray was sent to Belgium and Holland but it should be remembered that this was 1838 at a time when Murray was coming under increased pressure because of his mishandling of accounts (or misappropriation of funds at Edenderry). On his European tour Murray may have realised the benefit of larger scale farming because it was around this time that he began clearances on the Downshire estate to consolidate holdings and so relet them in larger farms to more progressive tenants. Of course his priority here would have been to increase the annual rent and to bring him back into favour with Downshire and as was noted above he was successful in increasing the annual rental in the late 1830s.

Of equal significance here is the fact that these clearances took place in the same year that the Irish Poor Law Act was introduced. The terms of this act will be discussed in more detail later in this chapter but suffice to say for the moment it facilitated the clearance of impoverished tenants and cottiers and their removal to the county’s workhouses. Murray was one of the agents who supported the building of workhouses throughout the country. In fact in 1838 Murray cleared twenty-nine families from Ardenderry on the very site where the Edenderry workhouse was later

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<sup>29</sup> W.H. Crawford, ‘Landlord tenant relations in Ulster 1609-1820’ in *Irish Economic and Social History*, ii (1975), pp 5-21.

<sup>30</sup> Thomas Murray to Thomas Parry, 3 Oct. 1838 (DP/D/671/C/ 9/ 576).

built.<sup>31</sup> In February 1840 Murray wrote to Downshire outlining his optimism at clearing the estate of paupers, beggars and ‘bad’ tenants believing that the construction of the workhouse would facilitate this. Murray had been waiting for some years to rid himself of some of these Edenderry tenants who he once described to Downshire as a ‘cunning and knavish population’ and insisted that ‘the persons I wish to get rid of are the poorer class of farmers or rather land holders who cannot get work for their families and eat up all that the land produces so that they never have a shilling in money to meet the rent day’.<sup>32</sup> The 1838 clearances included Mrs O’Brien at Killane who had been continually in arrears since the early 1830s and her ‘host of under tenants’.<sup>33</sup> In total sixty persons were cleared and the incident caused such controversy that Murray warned Downshire that the widow intended to go directly to Hillsborough to see the marquess in person.<sup>34</sup> It should also be noted that Mrs O’Brien had built a substantial Georgian farmhouse, Killane House, which then became the residence of the bailiff, Robert McComb.<sup>35</sup>

The tenants were obviously aware that there was a threat posed by the building of the workhouse and so actively combined to stop its progress.<sup>36</sup> On 10 March 1840 to negate tenant opposition Murray told the tenants that if they conducted themselves with honesty and sobriety that they would be employed in the construction of the workhouse.<sup>37</sup> He insisted that those whom he had ejected were ‘men of loose character’ and that it was just as well ‘to banish them’.<sup>38</sup> Murray warned that he would have ‘no unpleasant feelings about clearing the estate’ and would have little

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<sup>31</sup> Maguire, *The Downshire estates*, p. 59.

<sup>32</sup> Thomas Murray to Lord Downshire, 22 June 1834 (DP/D/671/C/9/455).

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, 2 June 1839 (D/ 671/ C/ 9/ 603); 21 Feb. 1840 (D/ 671/ C/ 9/ 625); 5 Mar. 1840 (DP/D/ 671/ C/ 9/ 628) and 12 Mar. 1840 (DP/D/ 671/ C/ 9/ 633).

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, 12 Mar. 1840 (DP/D/ 671/ C/ 9/ 633).

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, 29 Apr. 1840 (DP/D/ 671/ C/ 9/ 638). Interestingly in 2010 her descendants are again in residence in that same house.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, 10 Mar. 1840 (DP/D/ 671/ C/ 9/ 632).

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, 6 Mar. 1840 (DP/D/ 671/ C/ 9/ 629).



sympathy for those who would be forced unto the edges of the bog who were ‘the ones that never part a shilling for their holdings’.<sup>39</sup> Clearances continued throughout 1840.

Murray’s actions as we shall see below were fairly typical of how agents used the 1838 Poor Law Act to facilitate the clearance of their estates. Equally his actions created renewed tensions in the area and made him a subject of odium. This was compounded by the fact that he cleared a number of tenants in the cottages beside the Roman Catholic chapel at Edenderry. It may have been part of his ongoing feud with Fr James Colgan.<sup>40</sup> Back in August 1837 he had complained to Downshire ‘the priests rule the land’, and, in an indication of what was to come, the agent looked for permission to create twenty new Protestant freeholders at Edenderry.<sup>41</sup> The proposed introduction of these men to the area could only have heightened local tensions. It may be for this reason that Murray gave up his practice of riding over the estate as had been custom in the past and not because of the ill-health he gave as an excuse to Thomas Parry at the Hillsborough estate office in the spring of 1840.<sup>42</sup> He may also have been fortunate in the fact that his residence was near the town’s constabulary barracks.

After 1840 Murray continued to occasionally find himself in difficulty with Downshire. Despite his involvement in the establishment of the Edenderry Poor Law Union he subsequently played a limited role throughout the 1840s and does not appear to have been a guardian. He lost two children and his wife during the course of the Famine which may further explain his limited

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<sup>39</sup> Thomas Murray to Thomas Parry, 1 Feb. 1840 (DP/D/671/C/ 9/ 623).

<sup>40</sup> Thomas Murray to Lord Downshire, 7 Mar. 1840 (DP/D/ 671/ C/ 9/ 630).

<sup>41</sup> Ibid, 17 Aug. 1837 (DP/D/671/C/9/507).

<sup>42</sup> Thomas Murray to Thomas Parry, 1 Feb. 1840 (DP/D/ 671/ C/ 9/ 623).

involvement in local affairs after 1845 but retained his position until 1850.<sup>43</sup> His tenure as agent on the Downshire estate encapsulates some of the issues that agents had to face in the lead up to the Famine and indicates how they used the Poor Law Act of 1838 to address problems associated with increased impoverishment. What they did not expect was that within a decade of the passing of the act workhouses would be unable to cope with the dramatic influx of people suffering from the effects of Famine.

## **ii. The problems of estate management**

The previous section, as a case study, has illustrated some of the difficulties with regard to estate management encountered by one land agent, Thomas Murray on the Downshire estate. By the early nineteenth century most other land agents in King's County found themselves faced with similar issues in the management of their estates, issues that were, indeed problems, throughout the country.

By the early nineteenth century chronic subdivision had produced problems associated with the prevalence of uneconomic holdings. For many landlords and agents this problem was compounded (or even created by) the existence of middlemen who came to prominence from the mid-eighteenth century onwards. In many instances subdivision was worse on estates where there was a negligent system of management.<sup>44</sup> In 1816 James Brownrigg, Murray's predecessor on the Downshire estate, predicted a bleak future for the country as a whole claiming that the system of middlemen and the subdivision of land was the greatest evil facing Ireland.<sup>45</sup> Brownrigg made the interesting point

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<sup>43</sup> Edenderry Historical Society, *Carved in stone: a survey of graveyards and burial grounds, Edenderry & environs* (Naas, 2010) pp 131-2.

<sup>44</sup> Jonathon Bell and Mervyn Watson, *A history of Irish farming 1750-1950* (Dublin, 2008) p. 24.

<sup>45</sup> James Brownrigg to Lord Downshire, 1 Jan. 1816 (DP).

that ‘landlords in general don’t understand’ the management of an estate and ‘their agents think they are bound to let the land to the highest bidder’ and by doing so ‘they are ruining their estates’.<sup>46</sup> According to John Sadlier, an agent for estates in King’s County and Queen’s County, middlemen were the ‘worst class’ of landlord. He denounced the management of estates belonging to Trinity College, the Ecclesiastical Commissioners, Sir Erasmus Smith and Sir Patrick Dunn as adhering to the ‘pernicious system of sanctioning and encouraging the growth and spread of middleman’.<sup>47</sup> It should however be noted that not every landlord or agent advocated the ending of the system of middlemen: some preferred to retain middlemen believing that there was a better chance of collecting rents from such persons than from impoverished tenant farmers. For example Richard Gamble, agent for his father’s estate, was aware of the problem of subletting but conceded that middlemen were inevitable.<sup>48</sup>

In something of a variant on the same theme, Lord Rosse in 1822 was particularly critical of subdivision in Ireland highlighting that ‘forty years ago, the lands of Ireland were let in farms of 500, 1,000 or 1,500 acres. Now landlords, finding that they can get higher rents and have more voters, let them to Catholics in portions of 20, 30 or 40 acres, and these, as they multiply fast, again subdivide them among their sons and daughters as they marry’.<sup>49</sup> On the Downshire estate at Edenderry subdivision caused such confusion that it was impossible to know which tenant held what land. Murray noted in 1839 that ‘there are some cases where the people hold in common and have no regular divisions but lump together as say, two cows grass, three cows and two calves’.

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<sup>46</sup> Ibid, 31 Aug. 1815 (DP).

<sup>47</sup> James O’Shea, *Prince of Swindlers: John Sadlier M.P. 1813-1856* (Dublin, 1999), p. 92.

<sup>48</sup> Gamble papers (N.A.I., M 3493).

<sup>49</sup> Lord Rosse to Lord Redesdale, 30 Mar. 1822 (Rosse papers, T3030/13/1).

That year it took Murray and his newly appointed clerk James Stafford ten days to organise the necessary paper work prior to an audit of the estate.<sup>50</sup>

Increasingly the middleman system, particularly the way they squeezed the smallholders below them, led to increased agrarian tensions. Therefore agrarian disputes were often between smallholders and middlemen rather than tenants and landlords. Part of the difficulty was that the middleman was often free to exert pressure on his undertenants and frequently took the law into his own hands. For example in April 1835 a widow named Hamilton had her cabin burned by the son of a middleman at Carrick, near Edenderry; the likely cause was that his father wanted her evicted because she could not pay her rent to him.<sup>51</sup> In December of the same year at Kilclonfert, William and Catherine Gerathy had their cabin burned after failing to pay the middlemen the rent.<sup>52</sup> In April 1838 at Clonliff, Clonmacnoise a family called Mitchell were put out of their holding and the walls pulled down by a middleman Charles Claffey.<sup>53</sup> Thus it was little wonder that on the eve of the Famine, Rev. William Minchin at Moneygall commented that there was no sympathy felt on the ejection of a middleman and that in many instances they were ‘hunted out’.<sup>54</sup> One of the main social changes brought about by the Famine, as we shall see below, was the ending of the middlemen system. While this was largely inevitable because of the socio-economic impact of the Famine it is arguable that it was also partly deliberate on the part of some landlords who wanted to end what became perceived as a pernicious system. While the attempts to get rid of middlemen had been ongoing for some time the Famine acted as a catalyst. Describing the efforts

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<sup>50</sup> Thomas Murray to Lord Downshire, 20 May 1839 (DP/D/671/ C/9/ 598).

<sup>51</sup> Constable Bailly to under secretary, Dublin Castle, 7 Apr. 1835 (O.P.K.C. 1835).

<sup>52</sup> William Henderson, Ballycumber to under secretary, Dublin Castle, 28 Dec. 1835 (O.P.K.C., 1835).

<sup>53</sup> D.C. Jennings, Banagher to under secretary, Dublin Castle, 25 Apr. 1838 (O.P.K.C., 1838, 114/15)

<sup>54</sup> *Report from Her Majesty's commission of inquiry into the state of law and practice to the occupation of land in Ireland*, H.C. 1845 [605] [606] xix.1, 57, p. 600. [Hereafter cited as *Devon Commission*].

of Sir Richard Bourke to bring the management of his county Tipperary estate into order, Margaret Power noted that ‘it took patience, vigilance, careful management and the catastrophe of the Famine to effectively get rid of the system of middlemen’.<sup>55</sup>

A study of estate records would suggest that there were considerably more middlemen holding long term leases in King’s County prior to the Famine than might be previously assumed. For example on the Charleville estate there were 762 leaseholders in 1845; on the Downshire estate there were over 300 leaseholders and on the Gamble estate, which comprised three small townlands the majority of holders had leases. There was an underbelly of sub-tenants beneath these, so called tenants at will, which meant that considerable time was spent by land agents in the consideration of leases, their terms and so on. Leases varied from one estate to another but generally agents and landlords believed that medium term leases were the best option as they encouraged improvement amongst the tenants. With short term leases there was no incentive for improvement as the tenant had no security in his holding. On the other hand long term leases increased the likelihood of the subdivision of the land.

Land agents in King’s County were criticised by contemporaries for malpractice in terms of the issuing of leases and secondly and perhaps more importantly for not ensuring that tenants adhered to the various covenants in leases. If agents were negligent in any single regard it was that they did not ensure that the covenants of leases were adhered to. With regard to the former it seems that it was not uncommon throughout the country as a whole for an agent to receive fees from tenants

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<sup>55</sup> Margaret M.C. Power, ‘Sir Richard Bourke and his Tenants 1815-55’ in *North Munster Antiquarian Journal*, xli (2001), p. 76.

upon issuing leases.<sup>56</sup> In King's County this certainly seems to have been the case. In 1844 Arthur Fitzmaurice, a King's County land agent stated that it had been 'a very bad custom' but fortunately was now 'going out of practice'. Fitzmaurice claimed that landlords, even those regarded as good landlords, had allowed their agents to extort money from tenants in return for granting leases.<sup>57</sup> Similarly another King's County agent, Samuel Sheane stated that it was 'universal custom' for agents to receive gratuities from tenants in return for favours. Captain Sandes who managed Sir Charles Coote's estates in King's County believed that agents of a 'secondary class are quite in the habit of taking gratuities'.<sup>58</sup> In 1836 a tenant at Kilcommon paid the agent George Greeson £100 to acquire the lease of a holding.<sup>59</sup> One of the difficulties here was that it encouraged tenants to invest more in a holding than they could afford. In some cases it ultimately led to the failure of a tenant who had no remaining capital to improve his holding.

Agents argued that the benefit of leases lay in the power it gave landlords to exert pressure on tenants to improve their holdings. However in the pre-Famine period as the problem of subdivision escalated, coinciding with a demographic explosion, it became more profitable for middlemen to sublet at an unprecedented and dangerous scale. In turn it became impossible for agents in King's County to monitor exactly what was happening upon their estates. By the 1840s many of the pre-existing long term leases had either fallen in or were due to do so. This resulted in a disincentive to improve holdings at a time when it was arguably most imperative to do so. In 1844 John Dunne, a grazier near Franckford, commented that the 'casual passerby can observe where there is a lease or

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<sup>56</sup> Quoted in Eileen McCourt, 'The management of the Farnham estates during the nineteenth century' in *Breifne: Journal of Cumman Seanchais Bhréifne*, iv (1975), p. 552.

<sup>57</sup> *Devon Commission*, p. 575.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid*, p. 615.

<sup>59</sup> *Poor Inquiry*, appendix F., p. 48.

not or whether the lease is newly out for in cases where the lease is nearly out the parties not only neglect the land and let it go on into a state of dilapidation, it is disfigured'.<sup>60</sup>

By the 1840s, for many agents the collection of rent was their primary concern. For the more caustic contemporaries this was to ensure the continuity of landlords' lavish lifestyles. During his tour of Ireland in 1844, James Johnston quoted Lord Byron who contended that with regard to landlords: 'their good, ill, health, wealth, joy, or discontent, being, end, aim, religion- rent,- rent-rent!'.<sup>61</sup> There were agents other than Thomas Murray who had difficulties in collecting rents. For example, Lady Milltown's agent near Shinrone declared that 'the tenants will pay a small proportion, fall on their knees, declare they cannot pay another penny, a thousand excuses from different pieces of ill fortune. When he [the agent] calls in the driver and orders him to proceed immediately to distraint their goods and then from out of some secret pocket comes the whole rent to a fraction'.<sup>62</sup> It was when agents could not collect their rents and so looked to methods of enforcement that agrarian tensions increased.

An agent had two potential methods of forcing payment from defaulting tenants. He could seize the tenant's property or he could threaten him with ejectment.<sup>63</sup> Before 1816 ejectment could only be obtained in a superior court and at a cost of £15, but new legislation made it possible to bring ejectments for as little as £2.<sup>64</sup> No period of notice or court order was required for the seizure of crops or animals, thus this became the preferred method of the agent and his bailiff. There were however disadvantages to such a method as quite often tenants combined to rescue crops and ani-

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<sup>60</sup> *Devon Commission*, p. 640.

<sup>61</sup> Quoted in James Johnston, *A tour in Ireland: with meditation and reflections* (London, 1844), p. 211.

<sup>62</sup> Diary of Elizabeth Smith, 1 Mar. 1855 (In private possession).

<sup>63</sup> See Vaughan, *Landlords and tenants*, pp 21-5.

<sup>64</sup> Patrick Dardis, *The occupation of land in Ireland in the first half of the nineteenth century* (Dublin, 1920), pp 32-7.

mals or boycott the sale of such seized goods. After 1832 the law required that seizures were to be carried out by the sheriff.<sup>65</sup> Francis Longworth Dames stated that in King's County ejection was the most common method in preference to driving or distraining in the recovery of rents.<sup>66</sup> However distraining did take place even though agents such as the notorious William Steuart Trench believed it to be grossly intrusive on the tenants' rights.<sup>67</sup> For example George Heenan believed that tenants in King's County yielded to the threat of distress and that it was enough to prompt payment.<sup>68</sup> It was a practice particularly favoured by Thomas Murray at Edenderry where a number of watchers were put in place under the superintendence of the bailiff, Robert McComb to keep an eye on tenants who had been served with an ejection.

However the distraining of crops and animals in lieu of rent and arrears was dangerous to the lives of both agents and bailiffs who practiced the same. For example, in July 1838 Edward Bracken, a receiver appointed by the Court of Chancery to an estate at Lumcloon was physically prevented from carrying through his work by a combination of tenants. He was intimidated when he attempted to distrain cattle for non-payment of rent. In the same year a bailiff, John Kinna, was severely beaten when he went to distrain crops and animals the property of Denis Egan of Brooklawn. These are just two examples of attacks of a type that became common during the 1830s when there were sporadic outbreaks of agrarian crime in King's County that resulted in similar attacks on agents and their fellow estate employees. Assassination attempts, threatening letters, beatings, burning of crops and mutilation of animals were regular occurrences. Not all agents were af-

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<sup>65</sup> Samuel Clark, *Social origins of the Irish land war* (Princeton, 1979), p. 30.

<sup>66</sup> *Devon Commission*, pp 604-5.

<sup>67</sup> Maguire, *Letters of a great Irish landlord*, p. 87.

<sup>68</sup> *Devon Commission*, p. 820.



fected only ‘those perceived as violators of the code’.<sup>69</sup> These included Robert Lauder of Ferbane who refused to alter his estate management policy despite several requests and threats by members of local secret societies.<sup>70</sup> When Lauder raised the rents of his tenants at Lusmag, the shapes of graves and a gun were carved into a sheep walk he owned. Most attacks were linked to attempts to raise rents, to change estate management policy, the eviction of tenants or attempts at distraining animals and crops. In June 1836 Thomas Molloy, land steward on the Trench estate at Shinrone was severely beaten<sup>71</sup>; in May of the same year William Lusk, a small landowner at Bloomhill, had his home burned on the day that Molloy his bailiff had served notice on four of his tenants to quit<sup>72</sup>; while in 1842 the murder of Michael Roberts, under agent at Lord Bloomfield’s Moneygall estate was carried out by ‘those people who for their own interests stir up the peasantry’ and wish to ‘break up land and to cut in potato ground’.<sup>73</sup> According to Lord Rosse the ‘very barbarous murder’ of Roberts was indicative of the extent to which the ‘great crimes of the previous five years’ had gone unsolved and unpunished in King’s County.<sup>74</sup> The murder of Thomas and William Sheppard, bailiffs for George Greeson at Clara caused considerable outrage and condemnation in the county. A gang had ‘rushed’ their house following a dispute after the Daly family had been evicted from the Holmes estate on which they were employed.<sup>75</sup>

It could be argued that these outrages were symptomatic of a general rise in agrarian and secret society crime that characterised King’s County and other areas around this time. It was suggested

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<sup>69</sup> Review by Barbara Lewis Solow of Michael Beames, *Peasants and Power: the Whiteboy movements and their control in pre famine Ireland* (Great Britain, 1983) in *Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, xvii, no. 3 (1987), pp 664-6.

<sup>70</sup> Sheil, *Ferbane*, p. 43.

<sup>71</sup> Sub Inspector Crawford, Tullamore to under secretary, Dublin Castle, 19 Jun. 1836 (O.P.K.C., 1836).

<sup>72</sup> William Henderson, Ferbane to under secretary, Dublin Castle, 4 May 1836 (O.P.K.C., 1836).

<sup>73</sup> Charles Lucas to Earl de Grey, 11 May 1842 (B. & L.A., Earl de Grey papers, L29/700/21/35).

<sup>74</sup> Earl of Rosse to Earl de Grey, 22 Apr. 1842 (B. & L.A., Earl de Grey papers, L29/700/21/ 19).

<sup>75</sup> KCC, 9 Dec. 1844.

that it was ‘next impossible’ to live in King’s County without being sworn into a secret society.<sup>76</sup> These included the Rockites, Steelboys, Starlights, Terry or Terryalts, Blackfeet, Shanavests, Caravats and Ribbonmen. A Caravat oath was certainly in operation in King’s County by the 1820s.<sup>77</sup> According to William Steuart Trench ‘Tipperary may be raised as the headquarters but King’s and Queen’s County were from time to time the scene of its hallowed operations. Their main object was to prevent any landlord under any circumstances whatever from depriving a tenant of his land’.<sup>78</sup> This was a popular interpretation of the causes of agrarian crime espoused by others such as George Bennett quoted previously.<sup>79</sup> Invariably agrarianism and sectarianism became entwined in different places at different times. For example at Clara in 1820s ‘Cathelicks (sic)’ attempting to buy anything from a Protestant were threatened.<sup>80</sup> At Ferbane and Edenderry ‘twelfth day’ riots frequently broke out at where notices were posted reminding Protestants that the Papists were assembling to massacre them. A poem by John D. Frazer entitled ‘Song for the 12<sup>th</sup> July 1843’ called for unity between the wearers of green and the orange lily in King’s County:

‘Till then the orange lily be, thy badge,  
My patriotic brother,  
The everlasting green for me,  
And we for one another’.<sup>81</sup>

Perhaps of note is the fact that in King’s County the areas where agrarianism was most pronounced coincided with those where secret society activity had been prevalent since the late eighteenth-

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<sup>76</sup> Sheil, *Ferbane*, p. 38.

<sup>77</sup> Samuel Clarke and J.S. Donnelly Jnr., *Irish peasants: violence and political unrest 1780-1914* (Manchester, 1983), p. 97.

<sup>78</sup> Trench, *Realities*, p. 48.

<sup>79</sup> Quoted in Cornewall Lewis, *On local disturbances in Ireland*, p. 91.

<sup>80</sup> Stephen Gibbons, *Captain Rock, Night Errand: The threatening letters of pre-Famine Ireland* (Dublin, 2004), p. 177.

<sup>81</sup> ‘Song for the 12<sup>th</sup> July 1843 by John D. Frazer’ (typescript O.R.C.).

century (it has also been suggested that Ribbonism thrived in the areas where the Grand Canal traversed the country).<sup>82</sup> Considerable Defender activity in the years preceding the 1798 rebellion had threatened the Downshire, Dames and Gifford estates near Edenderry and the Molesworth (later Ponsonby) estate at Philipstown. However many of those who stood accused of Defender or United Irish conspiracy were acquitted and let remain as tenants on these estates.<sup>83</sup> This however was not the case in the southern baronies of Clonlisk and Eglisk where the United Irish conspirators were ruthlessly suppressed and transported. This was particularly the case at Shinrone where many were transported for life for their part in the rebellion. A lasting bitterness for such transportations remained in the locality which resurfaced in the agrarian tensions of the 1820s and 1830s.<sup>84</sup> Once again the area was deeply disturbed in the early 1830s and by 1834 it was necessary to have the baronies of Clonlisk, Eglisk, Ballybritt and Garrycastle proclaimed. Lord Oxmantown commented that ‘as large as the number [outrages] appears to have been from the official returns it falls far short of the reality’.<sup>85</sup> Many outrages had gone unrecorded because ‘the peasant who has been injured prefers to submit quietly rather than to expose himself to another attack by complaining to the proper authorities’ who, protested Oxmantown ‘have no power to protect them’. His father, the second earl of Rosse, had previously spoken against granting reforms to Catholics on the grounds that agrarian outrage had been orchestrated for such ends.<sup>86</sup> The first earl of Norbury, John Toler ruefully lamented that ‘out of the apathy and indolence, or connivance of the gentry, has

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<sup>82</sup> Michael Beames, ‘The Ribbon Societies: Lower- Class nationalism in pre-famine Ireland’ in *Past and Present*, no. 97 (Nov., 1982), pp 128-9. For a further examination of Ribbonism see Jennifer Kelly, ‘A study of Ribbonism in Leitrim in 1841,’ in Joost Augusteijn & Mary Ann Lyons (eds), *Irish History: a research yearbook 2* (Dublin, 2003), pp 42-52.

<sup>83</sup> For more on the Defender movement in King’s County see Reilly, *Edenderry, county Offaly and the Downshire estate 1790-1800*, pp 21-31.

<sup>84</sup> See Ruán O’Donnell, ‘Kings County in 1798’ in *Offaly history and society*, pp 485-514.

<sup>85</sup> Beames, *Peasants and power*, p. 51.

<sup>86</sup> See A.P.W. Malcomson, ‘A variety of perspectives on Laurence Parsons’, in *Offaly history and society*, pp 460-1. However by 1829 he was said to have been in favour of granting emancipation. He withdrew from public life in the 1830s to concentrate on his studies and amongst his published works includes *An argument to prove the truth of the Christian revelation* (London, 1834).

grown the dominion of the mob'.<sup>87</sup> By December 1844 it was stated that in King's County 'not a night passes without an outrage being committed in the county which bids fair to out rival – in deeds of blood and savage barbarity, neighbouring Tipperary'.<sup>88</sup>

Both Gerard Lyne and W.E. Vaughan have questioned the extent to which such violence was directed towards agents and landlords and the effects that this had on frightening them or slowing the progress of estate management.<sup>89</sup> Lyne noted that 'contrary to certain schools of Nationalist mythology Irish tenants generally spent much more of their time doffing their hats to landlords and agents than shooting at them'.<sup>90</sup> In general this was true but there were agents in King's County who took threats seriously enough to consider their position. For example George Garvey resided in Dublin throughout much of the 1840s after several attempts on his life. Even the infamous Trench later admitted to having succumbed to threats by offering abatements to tenants.<sup>91</sup> Few agents showed the bravado of Samuel Hussey who claimed that threatening letters counted for nothing and that he 'had more than one hundred in my time and I shall die in my bed for all that'.<sup>92</sup>

Although it is difficult to quantify, given the dearth of Famine estate records, it is probably the case that much of the agrarian crime prior to 1845 had to do with poor management policy on King's County estates. As already noted this had for example given rise to a proliferation of subdivision and overcrowding leading to impoverishment and a variety of other social problems that affected the lower classes. The poorly managed estates included the Gifford estate at Castlejordan

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<sup>87</sup> Beames, *Peasants and power*, p. 141.

<sup>88</sup> *The Times*, 25 Dec. 1844.

<sup>89</sup> Lyne, *The Lansdowne estates*, p. 718. See also Vaughan, *Landlords and tenants*, p. 157.

<sup>90</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 162.

<sup>92</sup> S.M. Hussey, *Reminiscences of an Irish land agent* (London, 1903), p. 61.

which was under the management of Christopher Hamilton on behalf of the co-heiresses of the late Sir Duke Gifford and was described by a witness to the Devon Commission as ‘an extensive estate badly managed’ where ‘the tenants are wretched’.<sup>93</sup> Likewise at Philipstown there were 329 tenants on the Ponsonby estate when Stewart and Kincaid took over as agents in 1841.<sup>94</sup> On behalf of the owner, they applied to the brewer Arthur Guinness for a loan, but being the astute business man that he was Guinness refused, contending that the estate had too many tenants and was thus unmanageable.<sup>95</sup>

Years of carelessness and neglect had taken its toll by the early 1840s. At Tullamore numerous problems hindered Francis Berry’s management of the Charleville estate including inaccurate maps, leases and accounts, indeed even Lord Charleville was unsure about the value of the estate.<sup>96</sup> In 1839 Berry complained that the estate maps which he was using had been made over fifty years previously and that some 5,147 acres of bog had been reclaimed in the intervening period and thus the estate required a new valuation and mapping.<sup>97</sup> In addition by 1840 James Kidd, the Scottish agriculturalist that Berry brought to the estate in 1837 had become disillusioned: ‘when I came to Charleville it was to improve the land and to instruct the tenantry and I thought it a bad idea to show any other thing in his lordship’s demesne, but if Lord Charleville or Mr Berry had told me to make the most money out of it I would have farmed it in another way’. Prior to this some of the

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<sup>93</sup> *Devon Commission*, p. 655. The estate had five co-heiresses who cared little for the plight of the tenantry. Hamilton subsequently married one of the co-heiresses. The late owner of the estate was an eccentric character who had been implicated in a conspiracy to murder a neighbouring landowner during the 1798 rebellion. See Reilly, *Edenderry 1790-1800*, p. 42.

<sup>94</sup> Law Walker to Stewart & Kincaid, 22 Dec. 1842 (S. &K.A.). I am grateful to Mr Richie Farrell, Roscommon County Librarian for allowing me access to these papers.

<sup>95</sup> Arthur Guinness, Rutland Square to Stewart & Kincaid, 31 Mar. 1843 (S. &K.A.).

<sup>96</sup> ‘Statement of the value and location of the Charleville estates in Ireland, c. 1830’ (Charl. Pap., T/3069/B/19). See appendix 7.

<sup>97</sup> James Perceval Graves to Lord Tullamore, 6 Mar. 1839 (Charl. Pap., T/ 3069/ B/ 95).

improvements made by Kidd included the digging of ‘some thousand of perches of French shores’, the purchase of cows, calves, horses and ploughs which were brought from Liverpool.<sup>98</sup>

There were, of course, other agents, landlords and agriculturalists, such as Berry, Charleville and Kidd who tried to improve the lot of tenantry. As we saw in the case of Thomas Murray there were attempts to re-train agents in the more modern forms of agricultural science. At Blundell House, the residence of Thomas Murray, the library included books on Belgian and Dutch farming.

Murray frequently gave these books on loan to some farmers and advised that they should be translated into a ‘language that the Irish farmer would understand.’<sup>99</sup> Likewise the tenants at the Digby estate were provided with books and other reading material by Dean William Digby, a brother of the earl.<sup>100</sup> Robert Cassidy, who immersed himself in the management of his estate at King’s

County included in his library several books on agricultural improvement.<sup>101</sup> Other agents would have been well versed with the reports of William Greig or William Blacker and other

contemporary writers. The employment of agriculturalists, the establishment of agricultural societies and the undertaking of trips to observe foreign models of agriculture highlighted the attempts of some to progress Irish agriculture on the eve of the Famine. This is best exemplified in King’s

County in the case of the Rait brothers of Rathmoyle, near Rhode. Travelling through Ireland in the 1830s, the Scottish Whig Robert Graham described their farming practices as ‘the best in Ire-

land’. The Rait estate had originally formed part of the Trimleston estates and was acquired by the brothers when they moved from Philipstown around 1805. According to Graham the farm was laid

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<sup>98</sup> James Kidd to Lord Charleville, 5 May 1840 (Charl. Pap., T/ 3069/ B/ 58).

<sup>99</sup> Thomas Murray to Lord Downshire, 4 Feb. 1839 (DP, D/671/C/9/593).

<sup>100</sup> Dean William Digby to Lord Fairford, 28 Dec. 1786 (DP, D607/A/319B).

<sup>101</sup> These included Sir John Watshun, Mr Hawley and Mr Maxwell (eds) *Practical suggestions for a national system of agricultural statistics* (London, 1854); R. Garnett and sons, *Catalogue of illustrated reference list of agricultural implements and machines* (London, 1849) and John Paine Morris, *The valuation and calculations assistant containing various tables* (Dublin, 1850).

out in fields of generally twenty acres, totalling seven hundred acres. Another brother farmed more extensively in the same barony of Warrenstown. For the management of his estate George Rait had three sets of offices located in different parts of his ground. Six of his staff were brought from Scotland to instruct the locals in the best agricultural practice and where ‘Scottish’ horses were chiefly used and were bred at the farm. Long strong carts and a threshing mill were also utilised by Rait. Labourers were allowed one meal and milk per day, a room to eat and a fire to cook. The practice of crop rotation was also in place where oats, barley, turnips, wheat, hay, grass operated on an eight year cycle. Rait a native of Dundee, Scotland, clearly modelled his farming on English and Scottish models and was not an admirer of the tartarian, a variety of oats more suited to the Irish climate than the Scottish. The Chevalier barley which originated in Suffolk was also used while an Italian clover, *trifolium incarnatum* was said to have failed. A quarry on the farm supplied ready lime to be used as manure, while also providing excellent building and paving stones. However their improvements came at a price. Their plans were developed only after the clearance of ‘small unthriving tenants’ which created a ‘great deal of ill will’ and George Rait was eventually shot at and wounded.<sup>102</sup>

George Lewis Smyth contended at the time that ‘a good land agent should understand the best mode of treating land practically and scientifically’.<sup>103</sup> Joseph Lambert, a county Mayo agent who also wrote numerous texts about Irish agriculture believed that knowledge and science was the key to agricultural improvement of Irish tenant farmers. According to Lambert the Belgian system of agriculture was the model which Irish farmers, agents and landlords should adopt.<sup>104</sup> Thomas

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<sup>102</sup> Henry Heaney (ed.) *A Scottish Whig in Ireland 1835-38: The Irish journals of Robert Graham of Redgorton* (Dublin, 1999), pp 224-5. Graham mistakenly refers to the Raits estate at Rathmoyle as Rynnmoyle.

<sup>103</sup> George Lewis Smyth, *Ireland: historical and statistical* (London, 1849), p. 87

<sup>104</sup> Joseph Lambert, *Agricultural suggestions to the proprietors and peasantry of Ireland* (Dublin, 1845), p. 51.

Murray was familiar with the works of Lambert and this may have been the reason why he undertook his Belgian trip. Similarly Samuel Robinson, a King's County landlord and miller, supported the Belgian model of agriculture which involved feeding cattle in houses, the use of dry mould and manure.<sup>105</sup> Indeed, in February 1836 a case was brought before the Kinnitty petty sessions involving two men who were in dispute over the scraping of manure off the public road, such was its value to farmers.<sup>106</sup> Advice in new methods of farming were being shared amongst landowners and agents in the county from the early nineteenth century; in 1813 Fr Delaney of Kinnitty offered Maurice O'Connor Morris of Mount Pleasant advice regarding the promotion of better agricultural practices amongst his tenantry.<sup>107</sup> Similarly Jonathan Darby of Leap Castle took his lead from a French publication on agriculture and had in his possession an excellent threshing machine.<sup>108</sup> In Clonlisk Mr Lewis and Rev William Minchin purchased threshing machines to improve agriculture there.<sup>109</sup>

Thus as John Feehan in his history of Irish agriculture states, advances in farming methods had been made in the decades preceding the Famine, due mainly to the efforts of landlords and their agents.<sup>110</sup> However, just as with the Luddites in England there was opposition to modernisation and this fed into the rise in agrarian crime by the 1830s in King's County.<sup>111</sup> Indeed local societies used the same tactics as Luddites: in 1836 the breaking of a 'Scotch plough' at Capagolan was proof that some of the King's County tenantry were reluctant to see change introduced in agricul-

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<sup>105</sup> *The Nation*, 31 Aug. 1838.

<sup>106</sup> Bernard Cummins, Kinnitty to under secretary, Dublin Castle, 8 Feb. 1836 (O.P.K.C., 1836, 15/27/1).

<sup>107</sup> Rev Delaney, Kinnitty to Maurice O'Connor Morris, 30 Mar. 1813 (P.R.O.N.I., T2929/4/2).

<sup>108</sup> Coote, *Statistical survey of the King's County*, p. 70

<sup>109</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 45.

<sup>110</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 102.

<sup>111</sup> D. George Boyce, *Nineteenth-Century Ireland: the search for stability* (Dublin, 1990), p. 99



ture;<sup>112</sup> similiarly in 1838 a plough was broken in Walsh Island in an attempt to promote employment amongst local labourers. In the 1830s Connaught men working in the barony of Clonlisk had their barrows broken to pieces to prevent them continuing work.<sup>113</sup> As one witness put it to the *Royal Commission on the Condition of Poor Classes in Ireland*, many of the rural population were scared of change and saw the increased use of the plough as detrimental to their livelihoods.<sup>114</sup>

There were also too many landlords and agents who did not wish to accept agricultural improvements. Indeed even some like William Trench of Shinrone, although educated in the benefits of agricultural improvement, informed the Devon Commssion that he would not encourage tenants to do likewise.<sup>115</sup> One of the best examples in King's County is the refusal of significant landlords to develop drainage and reclamation projects. In 1844 John Hussey Walsh argued for government involvement in schemes to reclaim waste land which in turn could be allotted to impoverished people.<sup>116</sup> Land agents in King's County were well informed of the benefits of drainage and those employed by Lord Charleville, Mornington and Rosse were active in the promotion of the drainage of rivers such as the River Brosna which was of benefit to the tenants who farmed the land adjacent and adjoining.<sup>117</sup> In the barony of Eglishe Rev Joseph Barnes was involved in a 'remarkable' land reclamation project and quarried rocks and fenced large tracts of land.<sup>118</sup> By carrying out drainage and reclamation works at Ballyegan, Bernard Mullins was said to have created 'excellent pasture for live stock' which was particularly well suited to the grazing of young horned

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<sup>112</sup> Bernard Cummins, Kinnitty to Dublin Castle, 19 Feb. 1836 (O.P.K.C., 1836).

<sup>113</sup> *Poor Law Inquiry*, appendix D, p. 23.

<sup>114</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>115</sup> *Devon Commission*, p. 586.

<sup>116</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 634.

<sup>117</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 622.

<sup>118</sup> Pey (ed.), *Eglishe*, p. 18.

cattle'.<sup>119</sup> However at Ballycommon and Mount Lucas over 10,000 acres of bog lay uncultivated which housed a considerable number of paupers.<sup>120</sup>

Moreover, despite the fact that in 1839 the editor of the *Leinster Express* recommended to landlords and farmers that agricultural schools should be set up 'for the purpose of grounding the rising generation in a sound practical knowledge of husbandry',<sup>121</sup> little progress was made. There had been agricultural societies in various parts of the county since the early nineteenth century such as the one at Kinnitty established in May 1813 under the direction of Colonel Thomas Bernard and his agent Daniel Manifold.<sup>122</sup> In September 1830 Hugh Scully, a prosperous farmer at Philipstown sought the assistance of Robert Cassidy for establishing a society in that part of the county.<sup>123</sup>

However it was a further ten years before a county society was formed when the Manifold brothers amongst others were foremost in its promotion.<sup>124</sup> The evidence suggests that the society was largely ineffective. The absence of societies at a more local level also hindered progress. Arguably Murray did not put his Belgian trip to any great use when he came home. The absence of a farming society at Edenderry added to the problems at the Downshire estate as has been argued by W.A. Maguire.<sup>125</sup> In some cases there was resentment towards the new society which was 'looked upon as a landlord's movement'.<sup>126</sup> In 1844 in the barony of Ballycowan, Thomas Parker O'Flanagan stated that there was an agricultural society which 'purports to embrace the district, but it does not co-operate with it'.<sup>127</sup> The aforementioned John Dunne emphasised the difficulties with regard to

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<sup>119</sup> J. Feehan and G O'Donovan, *The bogs of Ireland* (Dublin, 1996), p. 39.

<sup>120</sup> Coote, *Statistical Survey of the King's County*, p. 104.

<sup>121</sup> *LE*, 3 Mar. 1839.

<sup>122</sup> Coote, *Statistical Survey of the King's County*, p. 78.

<sup>123</sup> Hugh Scully, Philipstown to Robert Cassidy, 28 Sept. 1830 (Cassidy papers).

<sup>124</sup> Pey (ed.), *Eglissh*, p. 109.

<sup>125</sup> Maguire, *The Downshire estates*, p. 228.

<sup>126</sup> *Devon Commission*, p. 627.

<sup>127</sup> *Ibid*, p. 638.

class divide when he told the Devon Commission that the agricultural societies would be better served by supplying poor tenants with seeds than spending money on educating the wealthy farmers. The societies he believed ‘were benefiting a class of men who already knew what to do’.<sup>128</sup> As Cormac O’Grada has suggested the agricultural society meetings of the 1840s were mainly ‘jamborees’ without substance.<sup>129</sup>

### **iii. ‘Clearing the estates to fill the workhouse’**

Up to now the aim of this chapter has been to suggest that there were numerous problems in relation to estate management and agricultural improvement in King’s County in the decades prior to the Famine. Not least of these was the rise in agrarian crime. The chapter has shown there were attempts by individual landlords and their agents to address many of these problems but their efforts were neither consistent or concerted, or organised through any effective coordinated body or organisation. Even attempts at the promotion of agricultural societies foundered because of the unevenness of support for the same. There were those who feared that a calamity might be on the horizon, particularly in relation to the potato crop, and that there was no plan to avert a disaster, for example in 1835 George Greeson highlighted to the *Royal Commission on the Condition of Poor Classes in Ireland* that in King’s County there was ‘no plan having ever been practiced here to preserve the surplus of an abundant crop to meet the possible failure of the crops of succeeding years’.<sup>130</sup>

Moreover, historians have paid little attention to the severe agricultural downturn of 1839 to 1841 that resulted from dramatic climatic conditions and had contributed to successive crop failures. For

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<sup>128</sup> Ibid, p .642.

<sup>129</sup> O’Gráda, ‘Poverty, population and agriculture 1801-45’, p. 129.

<sup>130</sup> *Poor Inquiry*, appendix E, p. 12.

example Lord Bloomfield's estate at Moneygall had been greatly affected during this period when severe wet weather completely destroyed the potato crops of his tenants. Several other land agents also referred to this disastrous period of weather, including John Hussey Walsh and Maunsell Longworth Dames amongst others to the Devon Commission. By 1841 there was considerable unrest in the county as people agitated for potato ground.<sup>131</sup>

In the midst of all this and to compound matters further came the 'Night of the Big Wind' on 5 and 6 January 1839, an event which has been surprisingly ignored by historians to date. Describing the damage at Edenderry caused by the storm Thomas Murray noted that 'the town at this moment looks like a place which had been destroyed by an army'. In particular Murray highlighted to Lord Downshire how the calamity affected tenants on the estate physically and physiologically: 'your lordship cannot imagine the state of confidence of the labouring class have got to, they will shortly do nothing but what they will themselves; but they will soon become more civil as they will feel the want of labour and the scarcity of provisions'.<sup>132</sup> At Tullamore, Charleville demesne was said to 'have suffered more perhaps, than any other place in Ireland. It is calculated that upwards of ten thousand pounds of timber has been destroyed'.<sup>133</sup> John Hussey Walsh believed that 'the destructive storm of 1839 and the subsequent succession of bad crops have swept away nearly all the previous savings as well as most of the live stock of the farmers'.<sup>134</sup>

Given all these factors, as well as various barriers to improvement, including opposition to modernisation and change and a continued demographic growth that focussed more than ever

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<sup>131</sup> William Wray to lord lieutenant, Dublin Castle, May 1841 (O.P.K.C., 1841).

<sup>132</sup> Thomas Murray to Lord Downshire, 7 Jan. 1839 (DP, D/ 671/ C/ 9/ 589A).

<sup>133</sup> Peter Carr, *The Big Wind* (Belfast, 1991), p. 121.

<sup>134</sup> *Devon Commission*, p. 627.

attention on access to land, and from the landlord's and agent's point of view the need to make farms more economic in order to increase their own profits, it is little wonder that King's County landlords and agents looked with a great deal of interest towards the 1838 Irish Poor Law Act.

There was no organised system of poor relief in Ireland until the nineteenth century. By then there was increasing pressure on government to relieve poverty on grounds of both natural justice and economic utility.<sup>135</sup> In 1833 a Royal Commission to investigate the causes and extent of poverty in Ireland was established and chaired by the Archbishop of Dublin, Richard Whately. After Whately reported his findings in 1836 the government sent George Nicholls, an English Poor Law Commissioner, to Ireland. Following two short visits Nicholls reported that roughly one per cent of the population were living in poverty and that the English workhouse system should be applied to Ireland.<sup>136</sup> However Nicholls specifically warned that in the event of a famine the workhouses would not cope.<sup>137</sup> As it was, the commission's final report, published in 1836, was ignored in favour of a poor law based closely on the English model.

The new act created a system of poor relief financed by poor rates paid maily by Irish landowners. Given this added burden on them it was feared by some politicians and commentators that the act would be exploited in order to facilitate the clearance of estates. It will be argued in this section that the introduction of the Irish Poor Law Act in 1838 afforded land agents in King's County the opportunity to solve some of their problems by exploiting various provisions within it.<sup>138</sup>

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<sup>135</sup> Virginia Crossman, 'Poor relief' in S.J. Connolly (ed.) *The Oxford compnaion to Irish history* (Oxford, 1998) pp 452-3. See also Helen Burke, *The people and the Poor Law in nineteenth century Ireland* (England, 1987) and J. O'Connor, *The workhouses of Ireland: The fate of Ireland's poor* (Dublin, 1995).

<sup>136</sup> Christine Kinealy, *A death dealing Famine: the Great Hunger in Ireland* (London, 1997), pp. 39-40.

<sup>137</sup> Paul Bew, *Ireland: The politics of enmity 1789-2006* (Oxford, 2007), p. 151.

<sup>138</sup> *Poor relief (Ireland). A bill for the more effectual relief of the destitute poor in Ireland*, H.C. 1837-38, (38) iii. 451.

Throughout the 1830s the clearance of smallholders from Irish estates had generated considerable political debate. Leading figures such as Daniel O’Connell, for example in April 1835 lent his support for the introduction of a poor law if it ended ‘politically motivated clearances’ and ‘prevented the retaliatory violence they provoked’.<sup>139</sup> There were accusations in King’s County during the 1841 election that Lord Downshire had threatened eviction on any tenants who voted against his instructions.<sup>140</sup> There was certainly evidence of several land agents and members of the Catholic clergy agitating the people according to their political persuasion to the extent that election proceedings degenerated into ‘a perfect riot’.<sup>141</sup>

While some clearances were undoubtedly politically motivated – and there were also claims in 1844 that ‘politics had induced landlords not to give leases’<sup>142</sup> – other clearances had an economic basis. In 1838 the chief secretary for Ireland, Lord Morpeth, asserted in the House of Commons that there was a ‘wholesale expulsion of tenants’ occurring in Ireland.<sup>143</sup> The previous May, in 1837, much of the debate on the Irish Poor Law bill, including exchanges between Lord John Russell and Robert Peel, involved whether or not the bill would promote clearances.<sup>144</sup> Thomas Davis, later founder of the Young Ireland movement and editor of the *Nation*, feared that Poor Law Guardians would act as agents for ‘clearance projects’ and emigration schemes.<sup>145</sup>

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<sup>139</sup> Gray, *The Making of the Irish Poor Law*, p. 151.

<sup>140</sup> Lord Downshire to Duke of Wellington, 9 Mar. 1841 (DP/D/671/C/12/ 777).

<sup>141</sup> Diary of Elizabeth Smith, 24 Feb. 1841 (In private possession).

<sup>142</sup> *Devon Commission*, p. 588.

<sup>143</sup> Earl of Glengall to earl of Charleville, n.d [1838] (Charl Pap., T3069/D/22).

<sup>144</sup> Gray, *Making of the Irish Poor Law*, p. 188, 264.

<sup>145</sup> *Ibid*, p. 306.

Soon after the introduction of the act there was evidence in King's County that these fears were to be realised. It is obvious from the level of civil bills issued in King's County during the years 1838 to 1842 that clearances of the land were taking place. The number of civil bills issued in King's County rose from eighty-six in 1839 to 166 in 1843. Although legislation enacted in 1840 strove to provide greater protection for tenants issued with ejectment notices, undoubtedly there were some who were cleared which went unrecorded.<sup>146</sup> It has already been noted above that in 1838 the marquis of Downshire's agent Thomas Murray was, it seems, anxious to remove small tenants from his Edenderry estate because the new rates added considerably to the estate's existing financial burden. For some agents and landlords the introduction of the act relieved their consciences about the fate of the tenants that they evicted because there was a perception that they could be thrown on the workhouse system that would provide them with relief.<sup>147</sup> Within a month of outlining his plan for clearances on the estate, Murray wrote to Downshire complaining that the building of the 'workhouse goes on but slowly' and so was preventing him moving more cottiers into it.<sup>148</sup> Again, as discussed above, the clearances continued for the next couple of years and at different stages Murray was forced to distribute relief to a number of those that he had evicted.

Evidently, there were a number of reasons for clearances that included difficulties in collecting rents, possibly in particular areas or estates, due to tenants' inability to pay the same. For example in 1838 there were a number of clearances on the Armstrong and Mullock estates that resulted in a meeting of the tenantry called at Lemanaghan, near Ballycumber. The estimated 2,000 people in attendance were told by the local parish priest, Fr McKeon, that some measure of poor law for Ire-

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<sup>146</sup> *Ejectment and Replevin (Ireland). A Bill to amend the laws relating to Ejectment and Replevin in Ireland*, H.C. 1840, (13) ii. 391.

<sup>147</sup> Samuel David Clark, 'The Land War in Ireland' (Unpublished Ph.D thesis, Department of Sociology, Harvard University, Massachusetts, 1973), p. 22.

<sup>148</sup> Thomas Murray to Lord Downshire, 7 Mar. 1840 (DP/D/ 671/ C/ 9/ 630).

land should be introduced. He denounced the fact that a number of tenants had been ‘turned out upon the world’s wide waste’. Those responsible were denounced as ‘depopulating landlords’.<sup>149</sup> There were cases whereby landlords wanted to clear unsightly cottiers cabins from their estates. In 1844 John Hussey Walsh claimed that most landlords wanted to remove poverty out of sight rather than to relieve it. In the barony of Upper Philipstown there was evidence of several tenants having been ejected from unsightly cabins and on to the edges of the bog.<sup>150</sup> Although a landlord himself, Hussey Walsh believed that he was speaking against his own interest and that ‘justice and common sense’ was needed amongst the county’s landlords.<sup>151</sup>

In some cases agents and their landlords believed that the clearance of tenants was necessary in order for agricultural improvement to take place. Smallholdings had to be consolidated into more viable farms. The point has already been made that the 1830s saw a renewed effort by King’s County landlords and their agents. A number of agents were sent to Belgium and Holland in an effort to learn the new European model of farming.<sup>152</sup> However such ‘high farming’ as practiced by the aforementioned Rait brothers at Rathmoyle, near Rhode was considered to be dependent on the system of clearance and as noted a clearance on the Rait estate of ‘small unthriving tenants’ was carried out from which a ‘great deal of ill will’ resulted.<sup>153</sup> In 1844 Dawson French, agent of the Johnson estate near Tullamore cleared a number of tenants in an effort to ‘square the land’. It resulted in a dispute with two tenants, Patrick and Edward Finlay and threatening letters were sent to French warning him about his future safety.<sup>154</sup> And then there were examples of clearances sim-

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<sup>149</sup> *FJ*, 12 Jun. 1838.

<sup>150</sup> *Devon Commission*, p. 631.

<sup>151</sup> *Ibid*, p. 635.

<sup>152</sup> Thomas Murray to Thomas Parry, n.d [1838] (DP/D/ 671/ C/ 9 / 576).

<sup>153</sup> *Devon Commission*, p. 605.

<sup>154</sup> *KCC*, 4 Mar. 1846



ply for the aesthetic improvement of demesnes. Outside Tullamore, the earl of Charleville evicted some tenants from his estate in 1837 and 1838 in order to extend and embellish his demesne.<sup>155</sup> Further clearances took place on the estate for the building of the Tullamore workhouse in 1840. It seems that having cleared the estate Charleville and his agent Francis Berry were now anxious that as there were so many paupers in Tullamore, without relief provision, they would suffer that same fate as the earl of Norbury (see below). The plight of the poor in the area, as elsewhere, had been compounded by the above mentioned economic downturn from 1839. This was captured in correspondence from Berry in June 1840 when he wrote that ‘twenty able bodied men are at my door starving as there is no work, the weather being so wet they cannot cut the hay and the potatoes are all sown’.<sup>156</sup> It was his misguided belief that ‘if the workhouse was going on nothing could be wanted’.<sup>157</sup> The clearances on this estate were probably also motivated by the earl’s financial predicament. By the early 1840s his debts were close to £100,000 on an annual rental of less than £8,000 and rents were increasingly difficult to collect from the late 1830s. By 1844 the earl had fled to Europe, closing Charleville Castle and selling the farming implements. The earl resided throughout the Famine years in Berlin avoiding debtors.<sup>158</sup>

However in King’s County at this time the most controversial clearance of tenants occurred on the Norbury estate at Durrow (3,600 acres out of a total of 26,700 acres located in counties Clare, Mayo, Sligo and Tipperary). In January 1839 Hector John Toler, second earl of Norbury was shot and killed as he was walked through his demesne with his steward Adam Saunderson. He had succeeded to the earldom on the death of his father in 1831 and began to build a mansion at Durrow

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<sup>155</sup> Francis Berry to earl of Charleville, 19 Sep. 1837 (Charl. Pap., T/3069/B/32).

<sup>156</sup> Francis Berry to John S. Tisdall, 24 Jun. 1840 (Charleville papers, O.R.C.).

<sup>157</sup> Ibid.

<sup>158</sup> *Leinster Express*, 7 Sep. 1844.

and enlarge the demesne, wishing to quickly establish himself amongst the prominent landowners and gentry of King's County.<sup>159</sup> To this extent the mansion was modelled on Castlebernard at Kinnitty, the seat of Colonel Thomas Bernard, MP for the county.<sup>160</sup> Norbury, it seems, had a solid relationship with his tenantry. He appears to have made efforts to relieve the plight of his tenantry and certainly appears to have found favour with the Roman Catholic priest at Durrow, Fr O' Rafferty, who wrote in May 1838 that 'the earl and countess of Norbury are one of the greatest benedictions that kind and propitious heaven could dispense among a humble and deserving people'. His agent George Garvey would later cite this letter as proof that the 'improvement and comfort of the tenantry were among the subjects ever uppermost in the thoughts of the late Lord Norbury'.<sup>161</sup>

It was actually the case that the intended target of the assassination was, in fact, Garvey rather than his employer and it was obvious from the charges made in the weeks following the murder that the agent and his management policy was the real root of the crime. Indeed Alfred Richardson, Lord Rossmore's agent, believed that the murder was 'due to the authoritarianism of his agent'.<sup>162</sup> Several accounts of his estate management policy refer to his 'exterminating mania'. He was accused of being intent on the destruction of the 'poor industrious classes' by 'calling for the rents at unreasonable times, yes before the corn can be reaped'.<sup>163</sup> An anonymous letter contended that he was 'avaricious, persecuting and unfaithful' and that he had put the axe to many trees on the estate

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<sup>159</sup> See Ronan Keane, 'Toler, John, first earl of Norbury (1745–1831)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, (Oxford University Press, 2004) (<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/27498>) (accessed 20 Nov. 2008).

<sup>160</sup> Samuel Lewis, *A Topographical Dictionary of King's County* (Dublin, 1837), p. 45.

<sup>161</sup> *Pilot*, 9 Jan. 1839. It is interesting to note that Norbury's son-in-law, Crofton Moore Vandaleur, would later gain notoriety for his ill treatment of tenants on his estate at Kilrush, Co. Clare.

<sup>162</sup> Alfred Richardson to Col Westenra, 11 Jan. 1839 (Rossmore papers, T2929/4/68).

<sup>163</sup> 'Anonymous letter to Earl of Norbury', 16 Jan. 1839 (Charl. Pap., T/3069/D/ 13).

after the ‘Night of the Big Wind’ for his own use and that the timber was nearly all gone.<sup>164</sup> In his own evidence Garvey denied that clearances had taken place stating that

as proof of how little his lordship was infected with the horrible exterminating mania, it is sufficient to state that during his many years in residence on his estate, on which there are more than 120 tenants, many of them having very small holdings not more than ten have been dispossessed, and notwithstanding that they were men of indifferent character they received large gratuities on their removal.<sup>165</sup>

According to Garvey only fifteen tenants had been evicted in the previous seven years, including five in 1838.<sup>166</sup> However the eviction of those five in 1838 may have been crucial and enough to motivate somebody to make an attempt on his life. Moreover it appears that Garvey’s evidence was disingenuous, at least if one is to believe contemporary newspapers reports from both sides of the political divide. The newspapers condemned the clearance policy which Garvey had denied undertaking at Durrow. Refuting Garvey’s own claims *The Pilot* pointed out that the crime had originated out of the policy of extermination that Norbury had become obsessed with, what it referred to as ‘the horrible exterminating mania’ and claimed that Garvey had served over 250 notices to quit on the Durrow tenantry.<sup>167</sup> The editor went on: ‘what a scene of crime [where] cruelty, calamity and human suffering is presented by the ejection of the homeless, houseless and foodless of 250 families’ who were left to starvation and death. Similarly the editorial in the *Freeman’s Journal* claimed that Norbury was about to begin a clearance on the estate when he was shot.<sup>168</sup>

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<sup>164</sup> J. Stewart to Earl of Charleville, 20 Feb. 1839 (Charl. Pap., T/3069/D/ 17).

<sup>165</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>166</sup> George Garvey to Earl of Charleville, 26 Feb. 1839 (Charl. Pap., T/3069/ D/19).

<sup>167</sup> *Pilot*, 4 Jan. 1839.

<sup>168</sup> *FJ*, 29 Jan. 1839.

The political fallout resulting from the murder was far reaching: debates ranged from Tullamore to the House of Commons and included an attack on the Melbourne administration and in particular the under secretary at Dublin Castle, Thomas Drummond. Lord Charleville chose to attack the under secretary because of his infamous letter to the Tipperary magistrates, reminding them that property had its duties as well as its rights.<sup>169</sup> In Charleville's opinion this correspondence had resulted in the numerous murders in the country, including that of the earl of Norbury.<sup>170</sup>

Subsequently a resolution passed by a meeting of the King's County magistrates assembled on 10 January 1839 to discuss the murder of Norbury noted that 'it appears to this meeting that the answers conveyed to the magistrates of Tipperary from the under secretary, Drummond had the unfortunate effect of increasing the animosities entertained against the owners of the soil by occupants who now constitute themselves as sole arbitrators of the rights as well as the duties of property'. Drummond duly responded, stating that he could understand and make allowance for 'excited feelings' which had been produced by the murder of Norbury but that 'he cannot but lament that a body of magistrates called together as such and presided over by the lieutenant of the county, should so far forgotten the object of the meeting as to consent it into a display of political feeling'.<sup>171</sup>

By the end of March the political fallout from the murder had subsided and revealingly, in May, Garvey undertook a clearance of tenants at Durrow. According to contemporary accounts of the evictions 'the miserable beings were required to pull down their own houses. After the thatch and timber were torn off, they further required that the walls should be levelled, and they were levelled

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<sup>169</sup> Thomas Drummond to the magistrates of county Tipperary, 23 May 1838 (N.A.I., Chief Secretary's Office Papers, 1838/314).

<sup>170</sup> *Pilot*, 12 Jan. 1839.

<sup>171</sup> Thomas Drummond to Lord Oxmantown and the magistrates of King's County, 17 Jan. 1839 (N.A.I., Chief Secretary's Office Papers, 1838/314, Letter books, vol. 160, p. 117). See also *Pilot*, 23 Jan. 1839.

with the earth'.<sup>172</sup> There were also accusations by Fr Dalton of Newport, county Tipperary that Garvey had cleared tenants from the Bloomfield estate near Moneygall on sectarian grounds. Once again Garvey refuted these claims stating that 'no Roman Catholic was ever ejected because he was such and no Protestant was ever retained who ought to have been ejected because he was a Protestant', and further contended that a quarry free of charge was provided on the Bloomfield estate in 1839 for the building of the Roman Catholic Church at Nenagh.<sup>173</sup> He also stated that during his time as agent some eight to ten people had been ejected from Lord Bloomfield's estate at Moneygall out of a total number of 120 tenants.<sup>174</sup> However, his reputation in terms of clearances continued. In evidence given to the Devon Commission one witness claimed that by 1844 clearances on the Bloomfield estate were 'becoming worse and worse' with each passing year.<sup>175</sup> Tenants had been ejected to bring land into Lord Bloomfield's demesne and to get rid of some 'unsightly cabins' near Moneygall.<sup>176</sup>

What this case study illustrates is that there were agents such as Garvey who were prepared to evict tenants, possibly on a large scale, in the aftermath of the passing of the 1838 Irish Poor Law Act, in order to improve the profitability of the estate or even embellish the demesne. When they did so they incurred the wrath of smallholders and labourers who were anxious to retain their lands or to secure employment during the difficult years of the late 1830s and early 1840s. The tenants on the Durrow estate went a stage further than most by attempting to assassinate the agent, except that they murdered the landlord instead by mistake, it seems. There were several agents or their underlings who were also targeted. These of course included the aforementioned Michael Roberts,

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<sup>172</sup> *FJ*, 22 May 1839.

<sup>173</sup> *Ibid*, 11 Oct. 1839.

<sup>174</sup> *Devon Commission*, p. 668.

<sup>175</sup> *Ibid*, p. 582.

<sup>176</sup> *Ibid*, p. 600.

Garvey's under-agent who was shot dead at Ballintemple in April 1842.<sup>177</sup> John Gatchell, a land agent at Clonbullogue was murdered in 1843 following the eviction of tenants from the Gardiner estate.<sup>178</sup> Gatchell was shot, having returned from Edenderry where he had secured ejectment notices on several tenants on the estate. Later that month Daniel O'Connell claimed in the House of Commons that Gatchell had been 'employed for some time past in turning out tenants from a property with which the management he was entrusted'. According to O'Connell 'one family in particular had been driven from their home in pitiless manner and had to take refuge under miserable sheeting' and that the agent had sold all their property and that the tenants had contracted the typhus fever.<sup>179</sup> The extent of the increase in social disorder was reflected in the fact that the number of committals to Tullamore gaol rose from 699 in 1835 to 1,044 in 1838,<sup>180</sup> while the barony of Clonlisk was described in 1841 as a 'confederacy to commit crime'.<sup>181</sup> It seems that the ascendancy became so fearful in rural areas of King's County by October 1841 that *The Times* newspaper noted that landowners there believed that 'no man feels safe in the midst of horrors' and they lived in dread of 'whose turn will it be next?'.<sup>182</sup> By 1844 the situation had not improved. The murders of William and Thomas Sheppard, after they had overseen the eviction of a family called Daly from the Holmes estate near Clara, as described earlier, caused considerable outrage.<sup>183</sup> By the end of that month *The Times*, as noted previously, commented that 'not a night passes without an outrage being committed in the county [King's County]'.<sup>184</sup>

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<sup>177</sup> *Nenagh Guardian*, 18 Mar. 1843.

<sup>178</sup> *Devon Commission*, p. 627. See also *Nation*, 5 May 1843.

<sup>179</sup> *Nation*, 20 May 1843.

<sup>180</sup> Byrne, *Legal Offaly*, p. 211.

<sup>181</sup> Quoted in Seamus O'Rian, *Dunkerrin; A Parish in Ely O'Carroll* (Dublin, 1988), p. 107.

<sup>182</sup> *The Times*, 1 Oct. 1841.

<sup>183</sup> *Ibid*, 9 Dec. 1844.

<sup>184</sup> *KCC*, 26 Dec. 1844. See also Beames, 'Rural conflict in pre-famine Ireland', pp 75-91.

## Conclusion

By 1845 those who owned estates in King's County and those who managed them were clearly in difficulty. The economic downturn and in many cases the refusal of landlords to diminish their expenditure in the face of falling rents meant that many were on the verge of bankruptcy. Even had the Famine not intervened it is probable that by the late 1840s many of these landlords would have disappeared. The earl of Norbury left King's County when his house at Durrow was burned in 1843, as did William Magan when Clonearl House was burned in 1845, while the marquess of Downshire died in 1845 while inspecting his estate at Blessington, county Wicklow. The question is, would increased social disorder have contributed further to their decline? The evidence for King's County from the late 1830s onwards suggests that it was growing unabated, as it was in neighbouring Tipperary. A government report of 1839 concluded that it was 'next impossible' to live in King's County without being sworn into a secret society.<sup>185</sup> These secret societies were agrarian in outlook, their aim being to maintain the status quo with regard to access to land, especially conacre, the maintenance of rents at an affordable level and the prevention of evictions or clearances that, it has been argued above, were facilitated after 1838 by the passing of the Irish Poor Law Act. As it was agents and their fellow estate employees found themselves the targets of increased agrarian outrage. On individual estates they attempted to combat growing disorder in a variety of ways. For example on the Downshire estate Thomas Murray evicted any tenant who was found to have been involved in crime or belonged to a secret society.<sup>186</sup> The main point however is, that as a body agents were ineffectual, they made no coordinated attempt to deal with either the growth in crime or the need to improve the lot of their tenantry, particularly the lower classes. They were ill-prepared for the social catastrophe that was to begin in 1845.

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<sup>185</sup> *The State of Ireland since 1835, in respect of crime and outrage, which have rendered life and property insecure in that part of the Empire*, p. 526, H.C. 1839 (486) xi, I.

<sup>186</sup> Thomas Murray to Lord Downshire, 2 Mar. 1840 (DP/D/ 671/ C/ 9/ 627).

## CHAPTER FOUR: AGENTS AND THE FAMINE 1845 to 1847

‘Landlords use no tyranny, keep your trumpeters at home, tenants gather all your corn into your farmyards; also threaten agents, landjobbers, moneylenders and millers’.<sup>1</sup>

### **Introduction**

The threatening letter quoted above, which was posted near Tullamore in September 1846, indicated the widely held public resentment towards landlords and their agents in King’s County almost one year after the first reports of blight had been noted in the county. As the previous chapter has shown, resentment towards the modernisation of estate management had led to increased agrarian tensions from the 1830s onwards. The underlying causes were overcrowding, leading to subdivision, continued demographic growth, impoverishment and over reliance on conacre for the growth of the potato crop. Landlords were also becoming increasingly wary about the middleman system.

The appearance of *phytophthora infestans*, or the potato blight as it was more commonly known in September 1845, was a natural phenomenon which had not been experienced in Ireland or indeed in Europe before.<sup>2</sup> Although several failures of the potato crop had occurred in Ireland in the previous half century, none were as prolonged or on the same scale as that of the blight. In his article on ‘The Famine in Offaly’ T.P. O’Neill makes the point that ‘the crisis caused by crop failure in Offaly in the late 1840s had proportionally a greater impact than in some of the western counties’.

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<sup>1</sup> Enclosed in ‘Neal Browne, resident magistrate, Tullamore to lord lieutenant, Dublin Castle, 25 Sept. 1846’ (O.P.K.C., 1846, 15/25911).

<sup>2</sup> For more on the origins of the potato blight see P.M.A. Bourke, ‘Emergence of potato blight, 1843-46’ in *Nature*, cciii (Aug., 1964), pp 805-8.



For example excess mortality in Donegal was estimated at 10.7 per thousand while in King's County that rate was 18 per thousand.<sup>3</sup> Over the course of the next six years or so different communities would be affected to varying degrees by the blight. The aim of this chapter is to examine and assess the impact that the Famine had on the various classes and in particular to evaluate how land agents in King's County coped with the crisis in the early years from 1845 to 1847.

### **i. Coming of the blight and reaction**

In his memoirs published half a century after the beginning of the Famine, William O'Connor Morris of Mount Pleasant captured the psychological impact that the starving people had on him: 'the lean and wolfish faces of many of those are stamped on my mind even as I write now'.<sup>4</sup>

O'Connor Morris inherited the family estate, near Pallas at the height of the Famine. He first noticed the potato blight in September 1845 while partridge shooting when the 'sickly smell of corruption' assailed his nostrils.<sup>5</sup> William Steuart Trench later recalled a similar sensation: 'I shall not readily forget the day I rode up as usual to my mountain property and my feelings may be imagined, when before I saw the crop, I smelt the fearful stench, now so well recognised as the death sign of each field of potatoes'.<sup>6</sup> A month after O'Connor Morris noticed the blight, in October 1845 Lord Ponsonby's local agent at Philipstown, Joseph Grogan, reported to Stewart and Kincaid:

The crop is still in the fields in stacks and can't be got into the haggards as it is raining same every day and night and the corn has received some damage in the stacks. With regard to the potatoes at the first time I wrote to you there was not the least appearance of damage on them but at this moment there appears to be great damage to the potato crop in

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<sup>3</sup> O'Neill, 'The Famine in Offaly', p. 681.

<sup>4</sup> O'Connor Morris, *Memories*, p. 128.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid*, p. 129.

<sup>6</sup> Trench, *Realities*, p. 101.

this county or any other part that I am in the habit of travelling along the canal line but it is damaged more or less and the people appears (sic) to be greatly alarmed on that account.<sup>7</sup>

Initial reactions to the blight varied greatly in King's County. There were all types of theories propounded, some more farfetched than others including, for example, that it was God's wrath for the granting of the government grant to Maynooth College. Further afield, in county Down the fairies were even blamed for 'filching the potatoes'.<sup>8</sup> At Philipstown Dr. Cowell suggested that 'great rains and changes in the atmosphere' were responsible for the blight which affected the potato crop.<sup>9</sup> The facts were, as historians have shown since, that the blight originated from the eastern United States or possibly from the northern Andes region of South America.<sup>10</sup>

Initially, agents such as Joseph Grogan were optimistic that the damage would be minimal and that the blight would soon abate.<sup>11</sup> As one of Stewart and Kincaid's sub-agents on the Ponsonby estate, he reported to them at the end of September: 'I have tried my own [potatoes] which I thought were safe and I found that they were damaged. The white potatoes has suffered more than any other kind but I expect when they are digging out that they will not be as damaged as people think'.<sup>12</sup> In December he further reported that the tenants were following his advice about how to lay out a potato pit and that 'the potatoes are not getting any worse than god'.<sup>13</sup> However there were others who were not so optimistic. Daniel Manifold, Colonel Bernard's agent at Kinnitty, feared the worst

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<sup>7</sup> Quoted in O'Neill, 'The Famine in Offaly', p. 685. See also Joseph Grogan to Stewart and Kincaid, 16 Oct. 1845 (S.&K.A.).

<sup>8</sup> Thomas P. O'Neill, 'The organisation and administration of relief 1845-52' in Edwards and Williams (eds) *The Great Famine*, p. 210.

<sup>9</sup> Dr. J. Cowell to Relief Commissioners, 8 November 1845 (R.L.F.C., 2/Z15408).

<sup>10</sup> James S. Donnelly Jnr., *The Great Irish Potato Famine* (Stroud, 2001), p. 41. See also Jacqueline Hill and Cormac O'Gráda (eds), 'The visitation of God?: The potato and the Great Irish Famine' (Dublin, 1993), p. 52.

<sup>11</sup> Joseph Grogan to Stewart & Kincaid, 29 Sept. 1845 (Molesworth Papers., D/1567/F/1/17/77).

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid*, 16 Oct. 1845 (S.&K.A.)

<sup>13</sup> O'Neill, 'The Famine in Offaly', p. 685.

and that the blight would result in Famine.<sup>14</sup> His feelings were shared by Sir Andrew Armstrong who warned in 1845 that ‘there will be more than the usual destitution this year’.<sup>15</sup> As early as October of that year James F. Rolleston reported a riot in Dunkerrin over the shortage of potatoes and requested troops to be sent to that part of the county.<sup>16</sup> Later that month *The Times* reported that the ‘rot is more or less extensive’ in King’s County.<sup>17</sup>

Arguably landlords and agents may have been too far removed from the lower orders to either understand the calamity or to consider that the alleviation of the distress was immediately necessary. This is perhaps suggested by O’Connor Morris who later recalled ‘the memory of the distress of 1818-22 led many of the county’s proprietors to believe that the failure of the potato crop would be short lived’. In his opinion this was ‘not heartlessness but the dangerous ignorance of a class kept apart from the classes beneath it’.<sup>18</sup> At Lusmagh Henry L’Estrange witnessed the early ambiguity of a destroyed potato crop amidst an abundant oat crop and reported that unless relief works were put in place the labouring class would not be able to afford to buy the latter.<sup>19</sup> The real problem in 1845 was the scarcity of seed potatoes for the following season. This was later confirmed at Ballymacwilliam, in the barony of Warrenstown in May 1846 when the constable of the police reported that the poorer classes had not sown potatoes in conacre because of a want of seed, as indicated in table 1.7 below.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

<sup>15</sup> ‘County lieutenants report, King’s County, Nov. 1845’ (R.L.F.C., 2/441/15).

<sup>16</sup> James F. Rolleston, Franckfort Castle to lord lieutenant, 16 Oct. 1845 & 20 Jan. 1846 (O.P.K.C., 1846, 15/ 21049 & 15/1453).

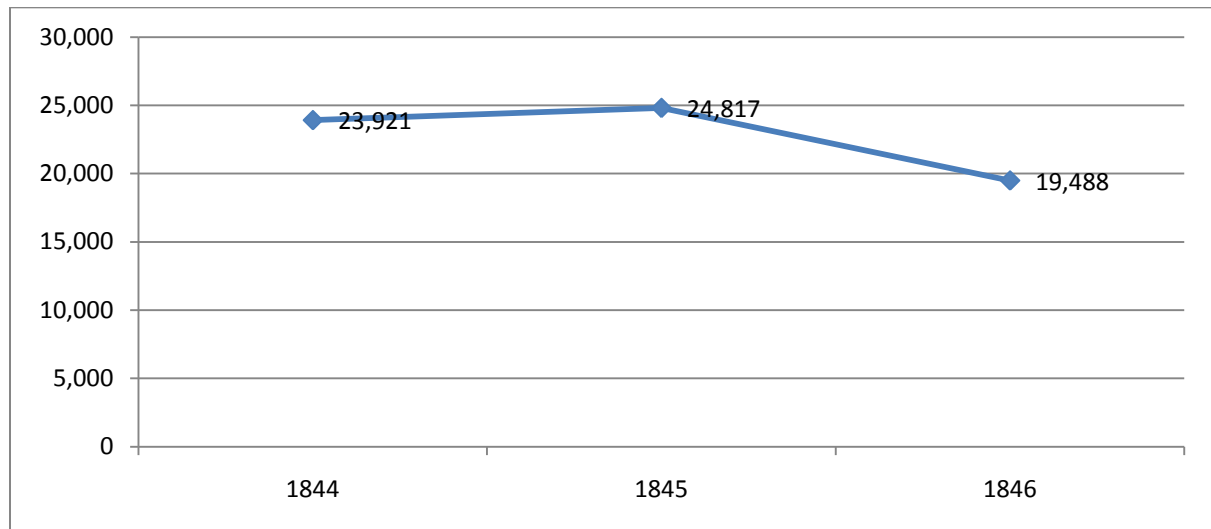
<sup>17</sup> *The Times*, 27 Oct. 1845.

<sup>18</sup> O’Connor Morris, *Memories*, p. 88.

<sup>19</sup> O’Neill, ‘The Famine in Offaly’, p. 687.

<sup>20</sup> ‘Constabulary returns on the potato crop, 24 May 1846’ (R.L.F.C., 2/41/11).

**Table 1.7 No. of potatoes sown in King's County 1844 to 1846**



**Source: 'Constabulary returns on the potato crop. 1846' (R.L.F.C., 2/441/41).**

It is probably true to say that in general this generation of land agents were at a loss as to how to react. This was equally true of their employers and nowhere was it more obvious in the case of Lord Rosse, lord lieutenant of King's County, who mishandled the initial investigations into the effect of the potato blight in the county. Rosse, it appears, misinterpreted the reports which were sent to him, which included amongst others an informative account by the agent Francis Berry. According to Berry a third of the potato crop was lost and he feared 'excitements if not disturbances' would result in further crop failures.<sup>21</sup> Rosse subsequently reported to Dublin Castle that he believed that a third of the crop was injured only and that not more than a ninth of the potato crop would be lost.<sup>22</sup> Meanwhile other agents began to issue instructions to tenants on caring for potatoes to prevent the spread of disease and as in the case of Grogan advised them to construct strage pits.<sup>23</sup> George Heenan informed tenants that he would allow them three and half pence for their rotten potatoes provided that they would pit those potatoes which were sound. Frederick Pon-

<sup>21</sup> Francis Berry to Lord Rosse, 21 Nov. 1845 (R.L.F.C, 2/441/15).

<sup>22</sup> Lord Rosse to Thomas Freemantle, Nov. 1845 (R.L.F.C. 2/441/15).

<sup>23</sup> Joseph Grogan to Stewart & Kincaid, 21 Dec. 1845 (S. & K.A.).

sonby's agent, James Devery, reported that the disease in the potato crop was very general at Cloghan but that he had sent Swedish or common turnip seed and oats instead of potatoes to the tenants. Devery warned that although the potatoes looked healthy and promised a good yield 'so speedy is the change and so rapid its progress' one could not foretell the future.<sup>24</sup> As we shall see below, the problem, as elsewhere, was that there seemed to have been plenty of food to feed the starving but no channels or goodwill to distribute it. Despite the distress, food continued to be exported and this caused great consternation amongst the lower classes. The distress caused by the onset of potato blight had caused consternation amongst the lowest orders of society. In November 1845 Arthur Rolleston claimed that his tenants refused to pay rents when they heard that food was being exported from the county.<sup>25</sup> Similarly George Crampton reported that as an agent of several estates, including William Carter's property at Eglis, he had received threats about the exportation of corn.<sup>26</sup>

Francis Berry was one of the first agents to take the initiative in calling for relief works. In the spring of 1846 he was pleading with Lord Rosse to give money for public works and to build roads from Tullamore to Durrow and Killeigh. Prior to this Rosse had urged caution, noting that the people should replot the potato seeds and wait for the next harvest.<sup>27</sup> Lord Rosse's family gave £250 to the Parsonstown relief committee in 1847 and also contributed to other committees where their estates were located.<sup>28</sup> Such efforts were applauded by Sir Richard Routh who believed that Rosse's excellent judgement and character would do much for the state of the county.<sup>29</sup> However

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<sup>24</sup> 'Cloghan report'.

<sup>25</sup> Arthur Rolleston to lord lieutenant, Dublin Castle, 19 Nov. 1845 (R.L.F.C., 2/441/13).

<sup>26</sup> William Carter, Castle Martin, Kilcullen, county Kildare to relief commissioners, 22 Mar. 1846 (R.L.F.C., 2/Z5616).

<sup>27</sup> Vivienne Kieran, 'The Great Famine in county Offaly' (typescript O.R.C.), p. 16.

<sup>28</sup> Lord Rosse to William Stanley, 6 Jan. 1847 (R.L.F.C., 2/441/41).

<sup>29</sup> *Correspondence explanatory from failure of potato crop in Ireland*, p. 456.

some like Rev Henry Tyrrell at Kinnitty believed that Rosse was ‘taking care of his own’ in contrast to Colonel Bernard and Drought who employed great numbers and increased wages and that ‘all according to their ability have done the same’.<sup>30</sup> Others made similar gestures or at least involved themselves in some form of activity that suggested their concern for the plight of the destitute. William Poole, a landlord and middleman at Clonsast inquired whether relief for labourers with large families could be given in addition to public works.<sup>31</sup> In contrast, William Johnson and his agent Dawson French, were praised for their generous efforts in providing his tenants with seed oats and peas.<sup>32</sup> Henry L’Estrange’s daughter provided work for 100 women spinning and knitting at Moystown while Thomas Manifold offered to mill flour free of charge for the Kinnitty relief committee.<sup>33</sup> Some years previously Manifold was one of those who protested against the importation of foreign goods to King’s County; in 1842 he was one of the millers of King’s County who presented a petition to the House of Lords calling for the importation of flour to be suspended in an effort to protect local interests.<sup>34</sup>

William O’Connor Morris later highlighted his own efforts, possibly exaggerating the same, but claiming that he spent the summer months of 1846 visiting landlords in the county to see how they were managing the distress when ‘thousands stood on the brink of sheer starvation’.<sup>35</sup> Such efforts appear to have been in vain, as twenty families out of seventy disappeared in a matter of months on O’Connor Morris’s own estate.<sup>36</sup> He robustly defended the family position, claiming that ‘neither my mother nor father did a thing wrong to anyone who was dependant on them’ and saw the cause

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<sup>30</sup> Rev Henry Tyrrell to lord lieutenant, Dublin Castle, 13 Oct. 1846 (R.L.F.C., 2/441/41).

<sup>31</sup> William Poole to relief commissioners, 11 Nov. 1846 (R.L.F.C.3/2/15/36).

<sup>32</sup> *KCC*, 17 Mar. 1847.

<sup>33</sup> Henry L’Estrange to relief commissioners, 2 Feb. 1847 (R.L.F.C., 3/2/15/21).

<sup>34</sup> *House of Lords debate*, 18 Mar. 1842, vol 61, c835.

<sup>35</sup> O’Connor Morris, *Memories*, pp 92-8.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid*, p. 98.

of the Famine in much wider terms than the coming of the blight. He remarked that the subdivision of land had prevented prosperous farming, thereby highlighting one of the weaknesses in the land system that required attention in the future as far as progressive landlords and agents were concerned.<sup>37</sup>

By the spring of 1846 the crisis in King's County was deepening. Landlords and agents began to realise that something needed to be done or it was feared, in the words of Rev J.P. Holmes in February 1846, 'all the horrors of starvation will be experienced by half at least of the population'.<sup>38</sup> Similarly Rev Henry Tyrrell, secretary of the Kinnitty relief committee wrote in October 1846 that destitution was widespread, potatoes were no longer available for human consumption and provisions were very dear: 'the people are remarkably quiet and patient', concluded Tyrrell.<sup>39</sup> However there were areas outside Kinnitty where the destitute were less patient. A threatening notice posted at Philipstown in October 1846 warned that if the poor were not soon supplied with relief that they would 'resort to harsh measures'.<sup>40</sup> By December many were reported to be surviving on boiled turnips and a little meal at Philipstown.<sup>41</sup> That same month the Edenderry workhouse, built to provide shelter for 600 inmates was accommodating nearly 1,800 'wretched souls'. The Edenderry Board of Guardians petitioned the government that 'distress daily increases amongst all classes of the poor'.<sup>42</sup> A contemporary travel writer, William Wilde, remarked that 'there must be something

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<sup>37</sup> Ibid, pp 82-3.

<sup>38</sup> Quoted in O'Neill, 'The Famine in Offaly', p. 686.

<sup>39</sup> Rev Henry Tyrrell to William Stanley, 13 Oct. 1846 (R.L.F.C., 2/441/41).

<sup>40</sup> KCC, 21 Oct. 1846.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid, 2 Dec. 1846.

<sup>42</sup> *Correspondence relating to state of union workhouses in Ireland*, p. 21, H.C. 1847, [766] [790] [863] lv. 27, 141, 231 .

wrong in the system which produces all this misery in the neighbourhood of such a fertile country'.<sup>43</sup>

There was at this stage little concerted effort made by the gentry or their agents to alleviate distress even though they began to realise that this was no ordinary crisis. Amongst the areas most affected were those in the west of the county, particularly Banagher, Lusmagh, Gallen and Rynagh.<sup>44</sup> At Edenderry on the motion of Richard More O'Ferrall, a county Kildare M.P. who resided close to the King's County at Ballyna but within the Edenderry Poor Law Union, it was resolved to ask for permission to procure one or two houses in each electoral division for the provision of kitchens. According to O'Ferrall £30 would be sufficient to enable the operation of a soup kitchen.<sup>45</sup> There was no favourable response to this request, in fact very few soup kitchens were ever established in King's County, with the exception of Brosna, Clonmacnoise, Cadamstown and Dunkerrin. The reason at Edenderry was that the union had seventeen electoral divisions and so presumably the relief commissioners deemed that the cost involved would be too great to establish kitchens. By January 1847 after being refused permission for such a plan, the guardians took a stronger stance and questioned the mode of relief which was being granted. Richard Grattan of Drummin House near Edenderry believed that while drainage and other public works schemes were beneficial they were not capable of feeding the masses.<sup>46</sup> In the same month Francis Berry, who headed the Ballycowan, Geashill and Killoughy relief committee, reported that six people had died of starvation in Tullamore because it was with great difficulty that the members found supplies of food.<sup>47</sup> He wrote: 'our poorhouse is full; nay it has 201 more than it was intended for. The wretches would

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<sup>43</sup> William Wilde, *The beauties and antiquities of the Boyne and the Blackwater* (Dublin, 1849), pp 41-2.

<sup>44</sup> Neale Browne to lord lieutenant, Dublin Castle, 25 Sept. 1846 (O.P.K.C., 1846, 15/25911).

<sup>45</sup> *Correspondence relating to...*, p. 22.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid*, p. 23.

<sup>47</sup> Francis Berry to Relief Commissioners, 8 Dec. 1846 (R.L.F.C., 3/2/15/12).



merely commit a crime to have themselves put in jail'. The benevolence of his wife was praised as she had provided soup from recipes given to her by Lady Charleville.<sup>48</sup> At the Wakely estate at Ballyburley in the barony of Warrenstown, such was the scale of the widespread hunger that even the crows were alleged to have been reduced to skeletons.<sup>49</sup> Lord Rosse so despaired of the situation that he claimed that little over six weeks of provisions remained in the county and feared for the outcome.<sup>50</sup>

Thus the early stages of the Famine in King's County were characterised by fairly haphazard attempts at relief by agents and landlords as they tried to come to terms with the deepening crisis. In a fairly typical traditional Nationalist interpretation of landlords, agents and the Famine, Brendan Ryan in his history of Ferbane in King's County said they did little to alleviate the plight of their tenants.<sup>51</sup> But this is too much of a generalisation. Certainly it was the case that some agents feared the effect that providing relief might have in attracting paupers from other localities. In particular, Thomas Murray feared the prospect of paupers and beggars flooding into the town of Edenderry. This prospect seemed likely in light of John James Pomeroy's request for Indian corn for 2,500 souls on his brother's estate at neighbouring Carbury, county Kildare.<sup>52</sup> If this was not enough, Murray's fear was that the town would be invaded by the destitute. A Board of Works' engineer criticised landlords for acting 'like the besiegers of a town in starving them [smallholders and cot-

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<sup>48</sup> Francis Berry to Mr Marlay, 5 Feb. 1847 (Marlay papers, University of Nottingham). This writer consulted copies of these papers at the O.R.C.

<sup>49</sup> *KCC*, 17 Oct. 1846.

<sup>50</sup> *Correspondence explanatory of measures adopted by H.M. Government for relief of distress arising from failure of potato crop in Ireland*, p. 456, H.C. 1846 [735] xxxvii. 41.

<sup>51</sup> See Brendan Ryan, *A land by the river of God: A history of Ferbane Parish from the earliest times to c1900* (Ferbane, 1994), p. 130.

<sup>52</sup> John James Pomeroy to relief commissioners, 30 Mar. 1846 (R.L.F.C., 3/1/1126). This was despite the duke of Leinster's assertion that relief was not needed in the county. See duke of Leinster to relief commissioners, 22 Mar. 1846 (R.L.F.C., 3/1/881).

tiers] out' in attempt to place the impoverished on the relief list.<sup>53</sup> Typical of the hindrances to relief schemes was the petty squabbling in several parishes and baronies about who was responsible for various areas. The squabbling was essentially about boundaries and administration, on which landlords could not agree. For example Lord Rosse was instrumental in the establishment of relief committees for each barony and took it upon himself to establish such. The chairmen of these committees included three land agents; Francis Berry for the baronies of Ballycowan, Geashill and Kilcoursey, Thomas Manifold at Eglisish and George Heenan at Ballybritt. However several areas were left without assistance. There was considerable resentment with Rosse's refusal to divide the barony of Lower Philipstown into three relief districts after an attempt at establishing a committee at Croghan failed.<sup>54</sup> Local rivalries and a reluctance to establish a single relief committee for each of the baronies of Ballycowan, Geashill and Kilcoursey delayed the provision of poor relief for a large part of the county's population.<sup>55</sup> It was unrealistic to expect that three baronies placed under the direction of one committee would be able to carry out the necessary work. This was particularly true of the the barony of Geashill alone where Henry Norewood Trye reported that the lack of relief gave rise to the suffering of a 'miserable and mutinous' population.<sup>56</sup> At Geashill Rev Wingfield Digby refused to raise funds for the baronies of Ballycowan and Kilcoursey and so set up his own relief committee in 1846. Likewise Henry Sheane set up a committee at Lusmagh to relieve the plight of over 1,000 starving tenants<sup>57</sup> but the committee spilt from that at Banagher over Lord Rosse's appointment of chairman.<sup>58</sup> Some squabbles were of a personal nature; at Parsonstown, Captain Thomas Cox tried to keep Fr Spain from becoming a member of the relief

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<sup>53</sup> Ryan, *A land by the river of god*, p. 130.

<sup>54</sup> Lord Rosse to relief commissioners, Nov. 1846 (R.L.F.C., 3/2/15).

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid*, 7 Apr. 1846 (R.L.F.C., 3/1/1266).

<sup>56</sup> Henry Norewood Trye, secretary, Geashill relief committee to relief commissioners, 7 Nov. 1846 (R.L.F.C., 3/2/15/29).

<sup>57</sup> Henry Sheane to William Stanley, 4 Nov. 1846 (R.L.F.C., 2/441/41).

<sup>58</sup> O'Neill, 'The Famine in Offaly', p. 692. See appendix 8 for list of all those involved in the county's relief committees.

committee.<sup>59</sup> This failure to organise properly in order to systematically engage with the crisis and the relative degree of pettiness over geographical considerations led to fundamental difficulties that might have been avoided had landlords, agents and others worked together to move the problem solving along for the benefit of tenants rather than allowing themselves to be divided by personal rivalries and jealousies, as well as straight forward reluctance on the part of some. While there were agents such as George Heenan and Francis Berry at Parsonstown and Tullamore who championed the cause of the suffering, there were equally those who were apathetic. For example John Hussey Walsh noted with disappointment that there was an ‘inability’ or ‘reluctance’ of the landlords of the barony of Lower Philipstown to subscribe to relief efforts.<sup>60</sup> Some such as George Garvey believed that there was no need to overspend. When the Nenagh guardians proposed £4,000 for relief works in upper Ormond Garvey was the only dissenting voice arguing that twenty-five per cent of that figure would be plenty. His objection was revealing because he went on to state that there would be ‘no publicity in giving a larger sum’. There was too much emphasis on frugality when investment might have saved more lives.<sup>61</sup> Likewise as can be seen from the above had landlords and agents been prepared to collaborate in relief measures at barony level rather than concentrating on their own estates more progress might have been made in terms of the relief of hardship.

Too few agents were executive members of relief committees, positions it seems were filled by members of the ‘class specified’ by the relief commissioners guidelines, primarily members of the Church of Ireland clergy. Other relief committees were highly scathing of absentee landlords. For example the agent, Richard Gamble who served as treasurer and secretary of the Killoughy relief

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<sup>59</sup> Capt. Thomas Cox to Fr John Spain (R.L.F.C., 3/2/15/ 8).

<sup>60</sup> John Hussey Walsh to relief commissioners, 9 Jul. 1846 (R.L.F.C.3/2/15/32).

<sup>61</sup> Daniel Grace, *The Great Famine in Nenagh Poor Law Union, county Tipperary* (Nenagh, 2000), pp 74-5.

committee, which at its height catered for 2,313 people, criticised Charles Molloy and Henry Kemmis, calling on them to contribute ‘if they had the welfare of the country at heart’. T.P. O’Neill has made the point that Gamble’s father’s accounts show no great contribution on his own part and that a close examination of the estate papers highlights the embarrassed nature of the family’s fortunes by the late 1840s.<sup>62</sup> In 1848 Gamble warned that the poor of Killoughy, as many as 1,600 destitute person, had no potatoes and the corn supply would only last until December.<sup>63</sup> There was also a considerable number of strong famers who needed the assistance of the relief committee as shown in table 1.8 below. It was at this stage that agents (amongst others) were criticised for not doing enough. They were rebuked from several quarters for their failure to provide adequate relief and guidance for tenants. In February 1846 Captain Haymes of Parsonstown lamented that little or no instruction had been made by the farmers of the county for the coming season.<sup>64</sup> Part of the problem here was that potato seed which had been given to tenants for planting was instead used for food.<sup>65</sup>

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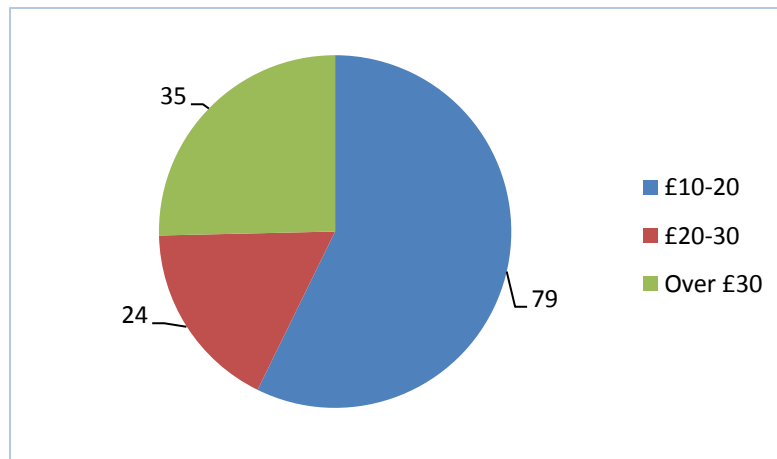
<sup>62</sup> O’Neill, ‘The Famine in Offaly’, p. 691.

<sup>63</sup> Richard Gamble to the Killoughy proprietors, 1848 (N.A.I., Gamble papers, M 3493).

<sup>64</sup> *Correspondence explanatory of measures adopted by H.M. Government*, p. 206.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid*, p. 110.

**Table 1.8 No. of holdings and their valuation depending on relief from the Killoughy relief committee, 1848**



Source: Killoughy relief committee papers (N.A.I., Gamble papers M 3,493).

George Heenan, Lord Rosse's agent did not have the knowledge to pass on to the tenantry about how to use Indian meal.<sup>66</sup> Tenants on the Tyrell estate near Castlejordan had lost all faith in the agent and so bypassed him directly and wrote to the owners when petitioning for rent abatements and relief.<sup>67</sup> Widespread frustration amongst the lower orders and increased hardship meant that secret societies and mobs (perhaps often one and the same) involved themselves in attempts to secure food. W.B. Armstrong of Garrycastle House, Banagher despaired of the dangers of transporting meal and other foodstuffs from a food depot in Banagher because of the 'nightly depredations', meaning that the carts were often attacked.<sup>68</sup> In June 1846 Fr Walsh of Lusmagh dispersed a crowd of 800 men in search of food and employment.<sup>69</sup> When the relief work at Bell Hill, Clareen was cancelled in the same month the labourers protested that 'they would not die like cowards, all we want is work so as not to be allowed to starve. If we don't get that we will be obliged to pro-

<sup>66</sup> George Heenan to relief commissioners, 27 June 1846 (R.L.F.C., 3/1/3740).

<sup>67</sup> Louisa Gifford to Christopher Hamilton, n.d (Ballinderry papers, in private possession).

<sup>68</sup> W.B. Armstrong to relief commissioners, 20 Oct. 1846 (R.L.F.C., 3/2/15/20).

<sup>69</sup> Capt. S.R. Poole, Banagher to relief commissioners, Jun. 1846 (R.L.F.C., 3/1/3857).

cure food with the bayonet'.<sup>70</sup> In the same month over 150 tenants visited Lord Rosse's demesne looking to have over forty men put to work and if not they threatened to go to Parsonstown and take what they could. A special guard of constables was formed amongst the townspeople who pledged their support to prevent disturbance and were coordinated in their efforts by the agent George Heenan.<sup>71</sup> As food and provisions became scarce, predictably the crime rate rose. By 1847 an average of eight robberies a day were reported in King's County.<sup>72</sup> J.W. Armstrong of Banagher asked for police protection stating that he was willing to import 1,000 tonnes of corn or meal to his mills at Banagher, if such could be given.<sup>73</sup> A number of flour carts were attacked at Lemanaghan, Ballycumber while further plunder and intimidation occurred in Ferbane where turnips were amongst the items stolen.<sup>74</sup> Travelling through the county, Alexander Somerville noted that the people of Parsonstown had broken the bridge leading from the town to prevent meal intended for exportation from reaching Shannon Harbour. Without any pity, Somerville noted that 'the peasantry here are very ignorant', failing to mention the fact that they were also starving.<sup>75</sup>

As distress grew crimes became more aggressive and progressed from attacking food carts to threatening and attacking landlords and agents. In December 1846 William Lloyd, a landlord, was shot dead at the door of his home in Parsonstown after having served notice on several tenants who had failed to pay their rent.<sup>76</sup> In April 1847 Owen Power was murdered in a riot near Parsonstown

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<sup>70</sup> Ibid.

<sup>71</sup> Lord Rosse to lord lieutenant, Dublin Castle, June 1846. (O.P.K.C., 1846). A list of those who pledged support to the Defence Committee is included in the file.

<sup>72</sup> *Correspondence relating to measures for relief of distress in Ireland (Board of Works Series), January- March 1847*, p. 110, H.C. 1847 [764] 1.1.

<sup>73</sup> J.W. Armstrong, to General Routh, 17 Oct. 1846 (R.L.F.C., 2/441/41). See also O.P.K.C., 1846 15/29325.

<sup>74</sup> *FJ*, 11 Dec. 1846; 2 Mar. 1847 & 2 Feb. 1848.

<sup>75</sup> K.D.M. Snell (ed.), *Letters from Ireland during the Famine of 1847* (Dublin, 1994), p. 171.

<sup>76</sup> *The Sessional papers presented by order of the House of Lords*, 10 & 11 Victoria, Session 1847, p. 71.

that had its roots in access to conacre.<sup>77</sup> Threatening notices were received by Christopher Bailey asking him to remove the land steward he had employed at Ballycumber.<sup>78</sup> A similar notice posted on the door of Busherstown House, the residence of George Minchin, threatened the landlord with death if he did not change the system of managing his property. A subsequent report noted that Minchin intended to leave the country as a result.<sup>79</sup> (King's County ranked the ninth highest in Ireland in 1846 for the number of threatening letters which were sent.<sup>80</sup>) Michael Cahill, a caretaker of an estate at Kilcoleman was assaulted to compel him to give up land while Philip Fanning an agent at Clonlisk suffered injury to his property because his occupation was deemed 'obnoxious'.<sup>81</sup> Thomas Dunne a driver in Ballybritt and John Bergin a caretaker at Dunkerrin suffered similar attacks.<sup>82</sup> In March 1846 John Leary a gamekeeper in Ballyboy was shot dead in the course of his work.<sup>83</sup>

These attacks were obviously the natural response of a people faced with starvation and for whom the benefits of relief or work schemes were not proportionally shared. In 1846 a petition from tenants at Ballyboy complained that 'the gentry of our parish are negligent in our regard and the farmers who could not go to the helm of relief and shout for work and hire, they will not because they are wallowing in the riches of this world'.<sup>84</sup> This quotation of course raises another issue centred around capability, that is that large farmers did very little to relieve the plight of their less well off

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<sup>77</sup> Ibid, p. 39.

<sup>78</sup> KCC, 24 Sept. 1845.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid, 10 Dec. 1845.

<sup>80</sup> *A return of all murders that have been committed in Ireland since the 1<sup>st</sup> of January 1842*, H.C. 1846 (220) xxxv.293.

<sup>81</sup> *Returns relative to Homicides (Ireland)*, p. 3, H.C. 1846 (363) xxxv.273.

<sup>82</sup> *Return of assaults, incendiary fires, robbery of arms, administering of unlawful oaths, threatening letters, malicious injury to property and firing into dwelling 1845-46*, p. 17, H.C. 1846 (369) xxxv.181.

<sup>83</sup> *A return of all murders that have been committed in Ireland since the 1<sup>st</sup> of January 1842* (220) xxxv.293 (1846).

<sup>84</sup> 'Ballyboy petition' (O.P.K.C., 1846).

cottier neighbours. In March of the same year tenants on the Holmes estate at Shinrone issued the agent George Greeson with an ultimatum which read:

the under mentioned tenants on the Kilcommon estate having been served with processes for arrears of rent submit their cases severally to your consideration hoping that in the present cases you will not take proceedings against them as this year in particular is turning out a year of severe hardship for the potatoes. We expected [we] could hold the summer's provisions for ourselves and for families. Should you proceed against us generally we do not know what we will do in the present trying circumstances, so we humbly hope your honour will consider us in the present cases for which we are duty bound to pay.<sup>85</sup>

How Greeson acted on this occasion is not known but by 1849 large farmers such as William Smith were ejected when they failed to meet the rent. In September the tenants of various local estates marched through the streets of Parsonstown carrying bread on a pole, a symbolic gesture highlighting all that they required.<sup>86</sup> In the same month threatening notices were posted in the county, warning people not to attend the sale of distressed crops.<sup>87</sup> In November a large crowd of men, women and children gathered at Rape Mills, three miles from Parsonstown, to protest about flour leaving the country.<sup>88</sup> In October 1846 the military and police were not sufficient to stop the plunder of canal boats at Shannon Harbour. The following month John Darby of Leap Castle lost two of five carts of flour which were being brought to Cloghan.<sup>89</sup> That same month Alfred G. Richardson, Lord Rossmore's agent at Sharavogue, deplored the state of the county stating that

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<sup>85</sup> 'Petition of Michael Dooley, James Bourke, John Flannery and others to George Greeson, 23 Mar. 1846' (Gresson papers).

<sup>86</sup> John Warburton, Parsonstown to lord lieutenant, Dublin Castle, 8 Sept. 1846 (O.P.K.C., 1846, 15/23459).

<sup>87</sup> Neal Browne, Tullamore to lord lieutenant (O.P.K.C., 1846, 15/ 26257).

<sup>88</sup> Ibid, Nov. 1846 (O.P.K.C., 1846, 15/ 30075).

<sup>89</sup> John McMullan, Grand Canal House, William Street, Dublin to lord lieutenant, Dublin Castle, 2 Nov. 1846 (O.P.K.C., 1846, 15/ 30087).



‘we are in a state of anarchy in this country, no mans property safe’.<sup>90</sup> The walls surrounding Coolacrease House, near Cadamstown, were demolished after William Odlum the owner had dismissed a herd.<sup>91</sup> An estimated crowd of fifty desperate men marched on Daniel Molloy’s house at Clonbeale demanding the immediate commencement of public works.<sup>92</sup> The tenants of various estates at Ballyboy ‘gathered in hundreds outside the residences of Mr Biddulph of Rathrobin, Mr Dunne and other gentlemen and then went to Johnstone Stoney in Frankford seeking employment. Amongst their chief concerns was finding employment, threatening that they would ‘take food by force’ if their demands were not met.<sup>93</sup> William Davis, a poor rate collector at Eglisk, was threatened that he would have a shorter life than that of Mr Lucas of Shinrone if he continued to collect rates in the barony.<sup>94</sup> In March 1846 Edward Russell, Thomas Bernard’s bailiff, was assaulted by disgruntled tenants.<sup>95</sup> In May a threatening note was sent to Mr Smith and his steward at Annville stating that they would be murdered if they did not employ more people.<sup>96</sup> In November Thomas Kemmy, a bailiff at the Mooney estate, was fired at, for which John Boland, Isaac Bradley, Michael and Patrick Campell were later convicted. Kemmy had distrained crops from tenants, one of whom was Boland who had pledged that the bailiff would not live long.<sup>97</sup> In the same month amidst such outrages the Tipperary *Nenagh Guardian*, which was also widely circulated in King’s County, queried ‘can anything be done to put a stop to such proceedings?’<sup>98</sup> A sub-agent Quinn was fired at by two men at Killishin, near Philipstown as he carried out his duties for the absentee

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<sup>90</sup> Alfred G. Richardson, Rathbeg to lord lieutenant, Dublin Castle, 31 Oct. 1846 (O.P.K.C., 1846, 15/30705).

<sup>91</sup> *KCC*, 8 Oct. 1845.

<sup>92</sup> John Duncan, Parsonstown to relief commissioners, 24 Apr. 1846 (R.L.F.C., 3/1/1699).

<sup>93</sup> O’Connor Morris, *Memories*, p. 129.

<sup>94</sup> ‘Information sworn before Thomas Manifold by William Davis’, 15 Nov. 1847 (O.P.K.C., 1847, 15/ 531).

<sup>95</sup> *KCC*, 11 Mar. 1846.

<sup>96</sup> *Ibid*, 6 May 1846.

<sup>97</sup> *Ibid*, 26 Jul. 1848.

<sup>98</sup> *Nenagh Guardian*, 11 Nov. 1846.

Mr Dillon of Dublin.<sup>99</sup> In April 1847 the *King's County Chronicle* expressed its concern about attacks on landlords and agents alike.<sup>100</sup> George Garvey required an armed escort at all times and carried a double-barrelled pistol in his possession. In 1848 two tenants on the Holmes estate near Shinrone, Thomas Shea and William Dwyer, were brought before the court for an unsuccessful assassination attempt on Garvey.<sup>101</sup> At the time Fr Egan of Dunkerrin said of Garvey that he was 'an object of general odium' and believed that his sub-agent Mara was no better.<sup>102</sup>

Despite the high levels of destitution, Henry Sheane, agent on the Bell estate, noted the complete aversion of the poor to the workhouse; they would, he said, 'die in the ditch rather than go there'.<sup>103</sup> Famine relief schemes were largely ineffectual. Relief schemes were first introduced in January 1846 following the passing of the *Public Works (Ireland) Bill* in the House of Commons.<sup>104</sup> When the Shannon scheme ended around July 1846 hundreds of workers streamed into Banagher, and according to Sheane, in the 'most pitiable condition'.<sup>105</sup> The problems at Banagher were exacerbated by the ways and customs of the people. According to Sheane the 'labouring poor rented plots at £20 an acre, built an average of twenty cabins per acre and refused to leave hovels in search of work'.<sup>106</sup> In February 1847 a reporter claimed that the tenant farmers were 'unwilling to work', which probably should have read unfit to work for the writer went on to state that there was an 'appearance and colour [on] their faces which is sickening to behold' and that 'unless these people are supplied with seed and the means of sowing it the land will lay

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<sup>99</sup> *The Times*, 4 Jan. 1847.

<sup>100</sup> *KCC*, 21 Apr. 1847.

<sup>101</sup> *Ibid*, 8 Mar. 1848.

<sup>102</sup> *Ibid*, 15 Mar. 1848.

<sup>103</sup> Henry Sheane to relief commissioners, 23 Jul. 1846 (R.L.F.C., 3/1/4653).

<sup>104</sup> Peter Gray, *Famine, land and politics: British government and Irish society* (Dublin, 1996), p. 133.

<sup>105</sup> Henry Sheane to relief commissioners, 14 Jul. 1846 (R.L.F.C.3/2/15/22). A similar situation was reported at Kinnitty. See John Stothard to John Burke, 27 May 1846 (N.A.I., Quit Rent Office papers, 2B/39/29).

<sup>106</sup> Henry Sheane to relief commissioners, 6 August 1846 (RLFC 3/1/5109)

waste'.<sup>107</sup> There were cases whereby some landlords and agents refused to allow tenants to apply for, or, receive relief. This was often a case of pride before a fall: John A. Burdett, a landlord at Coolfin, near Ferbane stated that he would not allow any of his tenants to take relief because as their landlord he was responsible for them.<sup>108</sup> In June 1846 James Devery, agent on the Ponsonby estate at Cloghan, complained that despite a relief committee being set up for the parish of Gallen nothing had been done and requested that he be sold Indian meal from the store in Banagher in order to feed the poor of the area.<sup>109</sup> Devery hit on a crucial point when he lamented the fact that all the able bodied workers in the district were employed at 'fair wages' but that their earnings were not enough to purchase food for their families, probably owing to the inflated price of provisions that came to be exploited by merchants and others.<sup>110</sup>

It was not until the spring of 1847 that landlords and agents of the county met at Tullamore to discuss the plight of the tenantry. The meeting, chaired by Francis Berry, discussed the best way forward and the most productive way of assisting the small farmers in the sowing of oats and the planting of potatoes.<sup>111</sup> At this stage some agents were becoming critical of landlords. In March 1846 George Garvey called a meeting in Moneygall to help those starving although he pointed out that it wasn't the duty of the magistrates to provide employment. He called upon Rev William Minchin to make a liberal contribution to the relief of destitution. Minchin replied that with a large family to support and having already provided employment he was not in a position to do so. He left the meeting when Garvey reminded him that it was in his interest to give employment and that he only paid his workers 6d per day. As a means of influencing others to join the relief effort,

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<sup>107</sup> Quoted in Ryan, *A land by the river of god*, p. 130.

<sup>108</sup> Pey (ed.), *Eglisk*, p. 111.

<sup>109</sup> James Devery to relief commissioners, 2 Jun. 1846 (R.L.F.C. 3/1/2784).

<sup>110</sup> Ibid. See also Donnelly Jnr., *The Great Irish Potato Famine*, pp 68-9.

<sup>111</sup> Offaly Historical & Archaeological Society, *Farming in Offaly* (Tullamore, 1987), p. 14.

Garvey offered to supply one tonne of grain from his own supply, saying that Lord Bloomfield and Mrs Holmes would do likewise.<sup>112</sup> He also established a soup kitchen at Laughton near Lord Bloomfield's residence in Moneygall.<sup>113</sup> But some landlords had their own stereotypical impressions of what they perceived to be a lazy tenantry unwilling to help themselves, none more so than Lord Rosse on 6 January 1847 who wrote to William Stanley that the tenant farmers of King's County were 'unsuited to work' and thus perhaps relief works were not the best method of solving the crisis. For him smallholders were 'little accustomed to work' and thus would be reluctant to join the public work scheme.<sup>114</sup> He was contradicted by the fact that the numbers employed on relief projects in the county rose from 718 at the beginning of July 1846 to over 3,750 by the end of that month.<sup>115</sup> By the end of 1847 this number had risen to 12,557.<sup>116</sup> Significantly nearly twenty per cent of those employed were from the barony of Ballyboy, which had a number of small landlords who were unable or perhaps reluctant to offer assistance directly to their tenants.

While the administration of relief was largely controlled by landlords and the clergy, many agents were active in the operation of Board of Works schemes, mainly drainage, the building of roads and the development of piers and bridges. Agents such as W.J. Reamsbottom at Ballycumber and Paul Fawcett at Rahan spent much of their time overseeing drainage work on the River Brosna, a scheme which was initiated in 1846 and gave employment to thousands of labourers in the baronies which it passed through.<sup>117</sup> Ultimately the scheme improved the value of holdings and estates.

The careful management of the scheme by engineers and officials of the Board of Works allows

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<sup>112</sup> *Tipperary Vindicator*, 19 Mar. 1846.

<sup>113</sup> George Garvey to relief commissioners, Mar. 1847 (R.L.F.C., 3/2/15)

<sup>114</sup> Lord Rosse to William Stanley, 6 Jan. 1847 (R.L.F.C., 2/441/41).

<sup>115</sup> *Coms. of Public Works (Ireland), Fourteenth Report*, H.C. 1847 [762] xvii.457.

<sup>116</sup> *Return of Advance under 10 Vict., C. 32. PP. 1847-8* lvii.

<sup>117</sup> The scheme commenced under the *Acts 5 and 6 Vict., C. 89-8 and 9 Vict., C. 69 and 9 Vict., C. 4*. The rivers drained included Brosna, Frankford, Clodiagh, Tullamore, Ballyboughin and Cloghatanny.

for an examination into the work undertaken in the county during the Famine. By 1851 the works completed included the construction of a short under watering cut at Moystown; the deepening of the bed of the River Brosna; the building of a weir 500 feet long, the underpinning of Mr Callaghan's mill and the building of a new bridge with three arches. At Ballycumber 1,050 feet of this division of the river had been opened to an average of six feet in depth and the River Tullamore was nearly complete. P.J. Klashen reported that it was pleasing to see 'hundreds of acres which were two years ago impassable swamps now tilled and providing crops'. He continued that 'instances are now to be found in many parts of the county where crops had been obtained from such lands, the value of which in one year has been sufficient to repay the whole expense of relieving them from flood'. However the works had cost £27, 680 more than projected and a further £20, 918 was needed if they were to be completed in full.<sup>118</sup>

## **ii. The management of landed estates 1845 to 1847**

What was the fallout for agents in light of their inability or in some cases their reluctance to deal with the crisis? While William Wilde was complimentary of Thomas Murray's management of the Downshire estate noting that 'the general appearance of comfort in this district at once bespeaks the encouragement of the landlord and the admirable care of the resident agent', the evidence suggests he was somewhat disingenious.<sup>119</sup> As noted above destitution in the Edenderry area was so acute that the workhouse was overcrowded, and while Wilde was complimentary, history has been less so and indeed writers such as William Carleton have portrayed their fictional agents as being men without heart or compassion. Not all were intentionally so and do not deserve the criticism and odium directed at them as a class in the post-Famine period. Firstly as has been shown

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<sup>118</sup> 'Supplemental report to the commissioner showing the present state of the works, the expenditure of the works executed and the total cost of completing the district, Dublin, 1851' (N.A.I., Office of Public Works, 24194/51).

<sup>119</sup> Wilde, *The beauties of the Boyne*, p. 35.

above there were those who assisted tenants either by direct estate relief or else through their work on committees. There were for example agents such as John Long, sub-agent at the Holmes estate at Ballycumber and Clara, who was apprehensive about carrying through his employers' instructions which would have resulted in evictions for non-payment of rent. Writing in June 1847 Long noted that he had visited the tenants and found them 'all unable to pay anything at present as a great number of them are living on the relief store and if you will forbear till next month I hope you would find no great difficulty to get it'.<sup>120</sup> In August he reported that 'no solvent person will join a broken tenant but the tenants say if [you] give them liberty to save the crops and sell them that they will pay you to the last shillin (sic)'.<sup>121</sup> The Ponsonby estate at Cloghan appears to have been well managed by the agent James Devery who, in spite of the difficulties faced in 1846 and 1847, promoted alternative agricultural foodstuffs rather than the affected potato crop. Table 1.9 below illustrates the quantity and type of crops which were promoted by Devery at Cloghan. Ponsonby provided Swedish turnips and oats when the potato crop had become diseased.<sup>122</sup> Devery further offered his own opinions on the more practical management of a landed estate. He also propounded that a good bull, ram and boar should be purchased to improve the quality of sheep, cattle and pigs on the estate. The initiation of a premiums scheme was proposed to reward tenants who kept their holding clean and neat and who drained the land. By setting aside £30-40 for such, the landlord, he argued, would benefit in the long term.<sup>123</sup>

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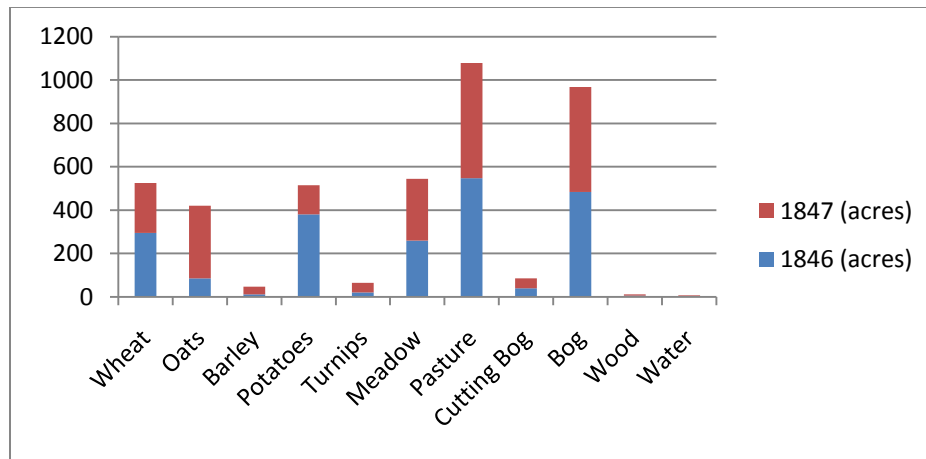
<sup>120</sup> John Long to George Greeson, Jun. 1847 (Greeson papers).

<sup>121</sup> Ibid, 1 Aug. 1847.

<sup>122</sup> 'Cloghan report'.

<sup>123</sup> Ibid.

**Table 1. 9** Acreage and variation of crops sown at the Ponsonby estate, Cloghan 1846 to 1847

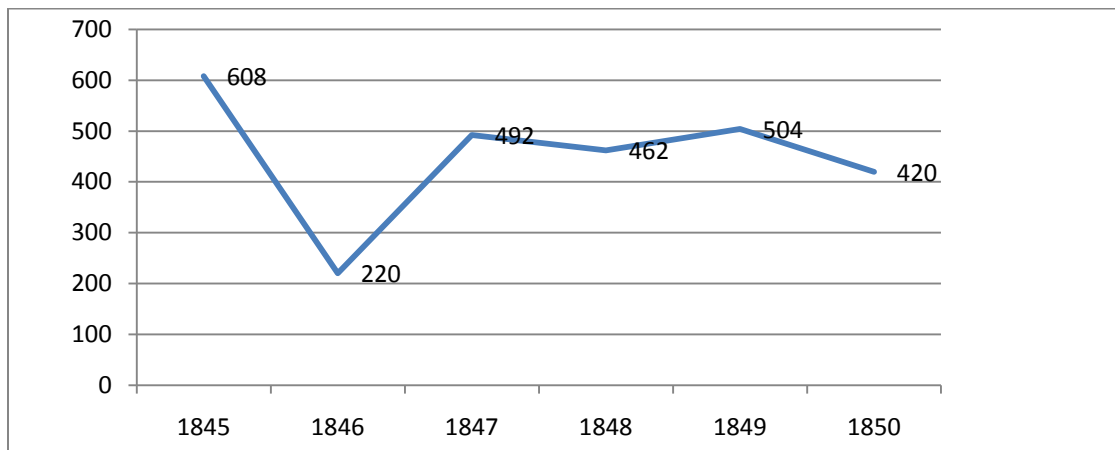


Source: ‘Cloghan report’.

Remarkably there were some agents who were relatively successful in collecting rents in these straightened times. For example, on the Gamble estate tenants found several means to pay rent and arrears. Patrick and Thomas Hennessey paid their rent in wheat and by giving their services as ploughmen. James Feighery paid his rent by making coffins (possibly an indication of the growing number of deaths in the area) and other carpentry work. Others paid their rents by offering their labour in the ‘Big House’ and its surroundings. It seems the case that Gamble continued to gather enough money to pay estate creditors such as Joseph Browne. In September 1848 Browne acknowledged receipt of £265 pounds being the annual interest due to him on a loan obviously secured some years previous. Gamble was also paying interest to Robert Tarleton, Lord Digby’s agent, for money he had advanced to him. There were, however, tenants such as Edward Cantwell, who had been given a lease in 1844 after he was ejected from another neighbouring estate, who was said to have simply ‘ran away’ and all his crops were removed before the November gale of

1847 was due.<sup>124</sup> Likewise at the St George estate rents were remarkably well paid.<sup>125</sup> Abraham Bagnall, agent on the King estate at Ferbane, was equally successful in collecting rents throughout the Famine. Although the King estate was located in the highly troubled barony of Garrycastle, Bagnall collected almost £3,000 in rent for the years 1845 to 1850 as highlighted in table 1.10 below. Even in October 1845, after the first signs of blight had been reported, he called on tenants at Ferbane and Killoge on four occasions receiving over £500.<sup>126</sup>

**Table 1.10 Annual collection of rent on the King estate, Ferbane 1845 to 1850**



Source: ‘Account book of Rev Henry King 1835-50’ (N.L.I., MS 4121).

One must consider that the evidence in the paragraph above is based on limited surviving sources relating to the collection of rent in King’s County during the Famine. It is probably safe to conclude that the ability of these agents to collect rents were the exceptions to the rule. The other documentary evidence points to resistance and refusal, on individual estates, sometimes more organised in a locality but never coordinated by an anti-rent movement at county level.

Undoubtedly the inability of agents to collect rents was dictated by the inability of tenants to pay

<sup>124</sup> ‘Rental of the Gamble estate, 1843-47’ (N.A.I., Gamble papers, M 3521).

<sup>125</sup> ‘Rental of the St George estates 1845-50’ (N.L.I., MS 4001-22).

<sup>126</sup> ‘Account book of Rev Henry King 1835-50’ (N.L.I., MS 4121).



them, but there were cases of large farmers and middlemen who may have taken advantage of the situation in order to avoid payment.<sup>127</sup> Looking back at the early years of the Famine, in 1850, Robert Cassidy, a landlord at Killyon contended that there had been a combined effort by the tenantry on his estate not to pay rent from 1846.<sup>128</sup> In September of the same year Lord Rosse reported his alarm at the fact that large groups were going about the county organising resistance to rents.<sup>129</sup> On some estates tenants were encouraged by the Roman Catholic clergy not to pay rents and to hold part of their crops for their own subsistence. Some of the more radical such as Fr Devine at Eglish used the opportunity to condemn landlords as ‘exterminators’ and advised people to treat them with contempt.<sup>130</sup> On the other hand there were agents like Christopher Hamilton at the Gifford and Tyrrell estates who actively sought the assistance of the local Roman Catholic clergy. Hamilton corresponded frequently with Fr Patrick Kiely during the Famine, looking for help in maintaining ‘some degree of social control on the estate’.<sup>131</sup> From October 1846 William Lucas of Brosna reported that his tenants were refusing to pay rents and that he could not secure the services of a bailiff unless the latter were to be offered protection.<sup>132</sup> The protection must not have been forthcoming and the agitation intensified as Lucas was himself murdered in late 1848 (which will be detailed in the chapter five). In 1847 it was reported that a ‘vicious confederacy’ to restrict the payment of rent was in operation in the barony of Clonlisk.<sup>133</sup> This was one of the worst areas affected by Famine at this stage.

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<sup>127</sup> For a brief mention of this see O’Neill, ‘The Famine in Offaly’, p. 684.

<sup>128</sup> Robert Cassidy to Thomas Redington, 21 Apr. 1850 (O.P.K.C., 1850, 15/351).

<sup>129</sup> Lord Rosse to lord lieutenant, Dublin Castle, 7 Sept. 1846 (N.A.I., C.S.O., Registered papers Box 1389 (no. 415292).

<sup>130</sup> Robert Cassidy to lord lieutenant, Dublin Castle, [nd] (O.P.K.C., 1849).

<sup>131</sup> Ballinderry papers (In private possession).

<sup>132</sup> William Lucas to lord lieutenant, Dublin Castle, 14 Oct. 1846 (O.P.K.C., 1846, 15/27953).

<sup>133</sup> *Morning Chronicle*, 17 Oct. 1847.

The opposition to the collection of rent might have been a lot more determined had agents and landlords in the early years of the Famine not addressed the situation by granting abatements or forgiving arrears. In 1846 James Haslam of Drumcullen, who was acting on behalf of his mother's estate, was fired at when he went to recover arrears. He subsequently agreed to receive half of the year's rent even though four times that amount was due.<sup>134</sup> For many agents receiving something from the tenants was better than nothing. In October 1845 George Crampton, agent on William Carter's estate at Cloncarbin in the parish of Eglis, cancelled a large amount of arrears to tenants. Crampton promised to return to the estate in December and make further reductions after valuing the land.<sup>135</sup> Similarly in November 1845 William Trench of Cangort Park remitted to his tenants both in King's County and in county Galway the hanging gale which was due.<sup>136</sup> The following month Bernard Mullins, of Ballyegan, reduced his rental by one fourth.<sup>137</sup> Lord Ponsonby's agents made reductions in rent on the town properties at Philipstown from 2s 6d to one shilling. Abatements were also granted to improving tenants on the rural estates. As a result the *King's County Chronicle* in March 1847 could not help but describe the Ponsonby family as the 'most indulging and humane landlords [who] have seldom or ever....ejected any tenants even when years of arrears have been due'.<sup>138</sup> At Moneygall the agent Stephen W. Minchin carried out a number of evictions on his brother's estate. He allowed the evicted tenants the growing crops in an effort to encourage them to emigrate. Many of the tenants owed upwards of three years rent.<sup>139</sup>

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<sup>134</sup> A.W. Gamble to lord lieutenant, Dublin Castle, 1846 (O.P.K.C., 1846, 15/32629).

<sup>135</sup> *KCC*, 22 Oct. 1845. Crampton was a native of county Mayo and secretary of the Bellmullet relief committee, one of the worst affected areas of the country. In 1846 he noted that there were only 390 people employed out of a population of 23,000 in the Bellmullet area. See George Crampton to relief commissioners, 11 Aug. 1846 (R.L.F.C., 3/1/5337).

<sup>136</sup> *KCC*, 12 Nov. 1845.

<sup>137</sup> *Ibid*, 10 Dec. 1845.

<sup>138</sup> *Ibid*, 17 Mar., 1847.

<sup>139</sup> *Ibid*, 16 Aug. 1848.

The scenario was somewhat different with the middlemen. Largely because they had themselves rents and arrears to pay, middlemen were often less sympathetic to the plight of their undertenants. In June 1846 one middleman near Shinrone forcibly evicted his under tenants when he set fire to their cabins in an effort to clear the land.<sup>140</sup> Indeed in the midst of all the suffering endured by the lower classes there were many from the upper classes who continued with their traditional lifestyles. At the height of the Famine Francis Berry wryly commented that ‘there are three sets of people making fortunes- the corn and flour merchants (Lord John Russell’s pets), the coroners who hold inquests on dead bodies and the coffin makers’, notably he did not mention that his own family would have benefited from transporting the relief stocks along the Grand Canal to Tullamore, Banagher and Shannon Harbour or that his employer, the earl of Charleville, had escaped the ravages of the Famine by going to live in Berlin.<sup>141</sup> Rev Henry Tyrell secretary of the Kinnitty relief committee, looked for funding from the Relief Commission to carry out repairs on his glebe house at Kinnitty.<sup>142</sup> Capt Charles Cox, agent on the St George estate in the barony of Coolestown, insisted that his estate office would be comfortable and befit the position he was appointed to at the beginning of the Famine; amongst the items purchased for the agent’s office in 1845 were a mahogany office desk and book case, a stool, carpet and an iron safe.<sup>143</sup> In contrast, when George Garvey replaced George Heenan as agent on the Rosse estate in March 1853, a list of items handed over to him by his employer for the position included a copy of Filgate’s *Law of landlord and tenant* and the *Compendium of the Irish Poor Law*; two office stools; 2 candlesticks; one chair; five rulers; six ink bottles; a cash box and a scissors.<sup>144</sup>

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<sup>140</sup> John Kelly, Shinrone to lord lieutenant, Dublin Castle, 21 Jun. 1846 (O.P.K.C., 1846, 15/4723).

<sup>141</sup> Quoted in Mary Molloy, ‘Tullamore during the Famine’ (Unpublished manuscript, ORC) p. 23.

<sup>142</sup> Rev Henry Tyrell, Kinnitty to relief commissioners, 23 Jun. 1846 (R.L.F.C., 3/1/3562).

<sup>143</sup> ‘St George rentals 1845’ (N.L.I., MS 4003).

<sup>144</sup> ‘Inventory of items given up to Mr Garvey, March 1853’ (B.C.A., J/3).

In his personal diaries for the years 1843-48, Rev John Plunkett Joly (1826-1858) appears unperturbed by the Famine or the suffering which must have occurred in the barony of Coolestown in which the family's estate was located.<sup>145</sup> Joly's description of everyday life in King's County during these years' contrasts greatly with the scenes of destitution and the daily pleas of the relief committees for employment schemes and grain. His carefree lifestyle included listening to the 'blackbirds singing in the morning and evening'; the growing of flowers and other vegetables which included cauliflowers and Spanish peas and daily observations on the weather. Throughout this period Joly seems ignorant of the plight of the masses and indeed the murder of the local agent John Gatchell in May 1843 only merits a fleeting mention among the description and sketches of the local landscapes.<sup>146</sup> The Joly's were independent landholders and enjoyed considerable social status around the villages of Bracknagh and Clonbullogue. In his memoirs William O'Connor Morris recalls that he had been left the owner of an 'embarrassed legacy' during the Famine and that his family had done much to relieve the plight of their tenants despite not having the resources to do so.<sup>147</sup> Yet in January 1846 the *King's County Chronicle* reported on the lavish dinner which was hosted at the family home of Mount Pleasant to celebrate the coming of age of William himself. It was reported that upwards of 160 people enjoyed the meal that was served and 'a merry and well prolonged dance, in which our national character for fun was well kept up'.<sup>148</sup> Likewise in February 1847 a lavish dinner was celebrated and attended by upward of 150 people at Thomastown House for the coming of age of Francis Bennett.<sup>149</sup> Two years later in same edition of the *Tipperary Vindicator* there were reports of whole districts being cleared of smallholders and land-

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<sup>145</sup> Joly lived at Hollywood, Bracknagh and was the father of the renowned Irish physicist John Joly (1857-1933).

<sup>146</sup> Diary of John Plunkett Joly, 1843-48 (N.L.I., MS 17,035). The Joly family settled in Ireland in the late eighteenth-century having come from Charneux, Belgium.

<sup>147</sup> O'Connor Morris, *Memories*, p. 92.

<sup>148</sup> *KCC*, 14 Jan. 1846.

<sup>149</sup> *Ibid*, 4 Feb. 1847.

less labourers and another report of Francis Bennett's throwing a feast for all the tenants at his estate, at which it was once again reported nothing was spared.<sup>150</sup> A 'Ball and Supper' were celebrated at Tisaran the home of Edmund L'Estrange in August 1846, while Mr Armstrong of Ballyliver gave a picnic on a 'magnificent scale' at Strawberry Hill House.<sup>151</sup> Likewise great festivities were celebrated on New Year's Day 1849 for Col Westenra's tenants at Sharavogue at which the celebrated Cunningham the piper played and Mr Potter the land steward presided.<sup>152</sup>

While the Famine undoubtedly interrupted the 'Big House' building boom in Ireland it did not deter landlords from embellishing their houses and demesnes. It could be argued that by doing so they provided much needed employment and therefore relief. From 1840 to 1845 the Parsons carried out large scale improvements at Birr Castle which included a 'bell ceiling', a mock gothic structure housing the great telescope and iron gates set into the gate keep of the castle. The design and work was overseen by the countess of Rosse and Colonel Myddleton.<sup>153</sup> Then from 1846 to 1848 came the construction of the Vaubanesque fortifications at Birr Castle. Plans were also put in place in 1850 for two gardens to be set out in front of the castle.<sup>154</sup> The great telescope was eventually unveiled in 1845. Mark Girourd had this to say of about the fortunes of the Rosse family during this period:

generally speaking, the mid-nineteenth century years at Birr are typical of their period in their cheerful and unselfconscious mixture of the functional and the unfunctional, with pioneer suspension bridges and telescopes coming into existence as sham fortifications and

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<sup>150</sup> Ibid, 5 Sept. 1849.

<sup>151</sup> See Brendan Ryan, *The dear old town: A history of Ferbane in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries* (Ferbane, 2002), p. 67.

<sup>152</sup> *Leinster Express*, 13 Jan. 1849.

<sup>153</sup> (B.C.A., c.1800-45, O/30).

<sup>154</sup> (B.C.A., O/32-34, c.1850)

Gothic embellishments, and the third earl climbing the ladder to the platform of his observatory in order to record nebulae from between elaborately crenellated walls.<sup>155</sup> His description is obviously in stark contrast to life outside the demesne walls. During the Famine it was noted that visitors to the castle enjoyed ‘pretty good fishing’ as there were large quantities of fish in the lakes.<sup>156</sup> Many years later Laurence Parsons, sixth Earl of Rosse (1906-1979) noted that his great-grandparents spent most of their time engaged in relief work and that astronomical pursuits only began in earnest after 1848.<sup>157</sup> The rather contradictory contemporary evidence suggests that Birr Castle was a recognised international scientific centre during the Famine and many visitors travelled there to see the great telescope including Lord Stanley and the Prince Imperial, son of Napoleon III.<sup>158</sup> It was amid such celebration and entertaining that Lord Rosse was said to be examining the blighted potatoes under his microscope at the castle.<sup>159</sup>

Moreover the leisure pursuits of the ascendancy were largely undisturbed by the onset of Famine. In particular the Ormond and King’s County hunt continued to meet regularly during this period.<sup>160</sup> Other race and hunt meets included those at Banagher in 1844; at Parsonstown in 1846 and 1850; the Geashill Associated Hunt at Ballymooney in 1846 and Tullamore when it was hosted at Ballykilmurray. In January 1849 under the command of Mr Drought, the King’s County and Ormond Hunt met four times in ten days covering the track at Woodfield, Ballyapple, Rathrobin and Glasshouse.<sup>161</sup> At a meeting of the King’s County and Ormond Hunt, led by Col Westenra, at Golden Grove in March 1849 it was noted that ‘not since the praties ceased to grow’ had such a crowd as-

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<sup>155</sup> Quoted in Malcomson, *Calendar of the Rosse papers*, p. xxvii.

<sup>156</sup> *Ibid*, p. 73.

<sup>157</sup> *Ibid*, p. xxviii.

<sup>158</sup> *Ibid*, p. 72.

<sup>159</sup> *Ibid*, p. 74.

<sup>160</sup> *KCC*, 24 Mar. 1847.

<sup>161</sup> *Nenagh Guardian*, 17 Jan. 1849.

sembled.<sup>162</sup> Other examples of leisure and entertainment in the midst of Famine are to be found in the aforementioned Joly diaries. In September 1847 Joly notes that thirty-six loads of hay were drawn from Clonbullogue which was followed by lively entertainment at which Ned Charmychael played the fiddle while John Connell and Patsy Kelly danced. Another dance in May 1846 was hosted by George Redding at which Joly played the drum and T. Corcoran the fife. Remarkably these diaries show an altogether different perspective of the Famine at local level.<sup>163</sup>

### **Conclusion**

This chapter has set out to describe the initial reaction of land agents and by extension their employers to the Famine from 1845 to the beginning of 1847 and to contextualise the socio-economic conditions within which the crisis developed. No reference has been made to the impact of the workhouse system or indeed to evictions. This is largely because both issues became much more prominent from 1847- traditionally regarded as the worst year of the Famine – onwards, and so will be dealt with in the next chapter. The crisis caused by crop failure in King’s County was not unanticipated. Remarkably in his annual speech to the Parsonstown Agricultural Society in 1843, Lord Rosse drew attention to the twin social evils of over population and sub-division and warned that:

A year of scarcity would at length come, and with it, a visitation of the most awful famine, such as the history of the world affords very many examples of, a famine followed by pestilence, when the utmost exertion of the landlords of Ireland, of the government, and of the

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<sup>162</sup> Ibid, 10 Mar. 1849.

<sup>163</sup> Diary of John Plunkett Joly, 1843-48 (N.L.I., MS 17,035).

legislature, aided by the unbounded generosity of the people of England, would be totally inadequate to avert the most fearful calamities.<sup>164</sup>

He hardly expected that within such a period the calamity that he spoke about would arrive in King's County and the country as a whole. In the early stages, agents as a body were unprepared and disorganised (as Rosse suggested would be the case in general). At first they tried, albeit to a limited extent, to use various relief schemes to alleviate some of the hardship. Evidence suggests that on many estates abatements and rent reductions were granted, although there were others where a much less sympathetic approach was taken. Their actions were sometimes dictated by the growth in agrarian disorder. The evidence also suggests that, as will be discussed in the following chapter, levels of evictions reached a plateau in 1845 to 1846 before escalating in the years which followed. It will be argued in chapter five that when the policy of abatements and reductions failed to encourage tenants to pay their rents (or part thereof) agents adopted a new and more stringent approach to estate management. As described at the beginning of this chapter agents such as Joseph Grogan were optimistic that the damage would be minimal and that the blight would soon dissipate.<sup>165</sup> However he and others gradually began to realise that this was no ordinary crisis; as T.P. O'Neill puts it: 'fear of outrage, passive resistance to payment of rent and a fear of social breakdown convinced them that their optimism was misguided'.<sup>166</sup> This is clearly evident in the reports of agents and landlords to Dublin Castle during 1846.<sup>167</sup> The next chapter considers events from 'Black '47' to end of the Famine.

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<sup>164</sup> Quoted in Margaret Hogan, 'The Great Famine, Birr and District', transcript of lecture at Dooley's Hotel, Birr, 11th May 1996 (typescript, O.R.C.).

<sup>165</sup> Joseph Grogan to Stewart & Kincaid, 29 Sept. 1845 (Molesworth Papers., D/1567/F/1/17/77).

<sup>166</sup> O'Neill, 'The Famine in Offaly', p. 686

<sup>167</sup> See for example – various King's County outrage papers, 1846 in the N.A.I.



## CHAPTER FIVE: AGENTS AND THE FAMINE II, 1847 TO 1851

I am going to a country, where from poor rates I'll be free,  
For Ireland's going to the dogs as fast as can be.  
I know you'd like to stop me so I'll do it on the sly,  
And with me take your half years rent-  
Your honour! Don't you cry.

‘An emigrating tenant’s address to his landlord’.<sup>1</sup>

### **Introduction**

Travelling through Ireland in the summer of 1847 Alexander Somerville lamented that it was an opportunistic time for evictions,<sup>2</sup> the suggestion being that agents and landlords were using the social conditions as a pretext for clearing their estates of the cottiers and smallholders who had obstructed improvement in the past. The statistics rates for King’s County show that evictions did indeed increase rapidly over the ensuing years. Many landlords had not received rent or arrears since 1845, and in some cases before that, and as there was no sign of an improvement in social conditions agents adopted new and more stringent estate management policies. One of the catalysts in this policy was the introduction of the ‘quarter acre’ or ‘Gregory clause’ in 1848 (see below). This was also at a time when public opinion in Britain was changing towards Irish landlords as towns there became swamped with Famine refugees. The *Illustrated London News* and other journals now depicted them as ‘extremely selfish, negligent, ignorant, profligate and reckless’.<sup>3</sup> The

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<sup>1</sup> KCC, 3 Oct. 1849.

<sup>2</sup> Quoted in Snell (ed.), *Letters from Ireland*, p. 19.

<sup>3</sup> Quoted in Norman A. Jeffares and Peter Van Der Kamp (eds) *Irish literature in the nineteenth century* (2 vols, Dublin, 2007) ii, p. 8.

disastrous failure of the potato crop in 1847 placed landlord and tenants alike in an even more precarious situation. Moreover, heavy frost and rain had a disastrous effect on the harvest in King's County in 1848 and 1849.<sup>4</sup> A general depression in agricultural prices in 1849 followed.<sup>5</sup> Tensions, in light of continued hardship and rising levels of evictions, reached new heights and culminated in the murder of three agents (adding to those who were murdered pre- 1847).

### **i. The Gregory clause**

Realising this (or perhaps ultimately to provide a pretext for the clearance of impoverished tenants from his estate) the earl of Rosse introduced a new set of estate rules in January 1847. These rules addressed many of the underlying social problems and agrarian issues that had led to estate management difficulties in the past. Some rules were directed towards the improvement of holdings but it is clear that these improvements could only be carried out by tenants who could afford them. For example, tenants were directed to replace thatch roofs with slate. Rosse was willing to provide half the cost. These improvements could only be carried out with the sanction of his agent George Heenan. Rosse stipulated in the rules that any tenant who was ejected would be compensated for improvements, thereby avoiding public censure. Significantly in an effort to prevent further subdivision of land, middlemen were prohibited from subletting or allowing the erection of a building on the estate without prior approval from the agent. Tenants were prohibited from 'burning' the land or from working it on a 'land jobbing' (or shared basis). His aim was to create more economic and viable holdings. To this extent the rules promoted voluntary emigration allowing the agent to permit tenants in distress to sell their crops and fixtures to (presumably more prosperous) neighbouring tenants. The 'estate rules' concluded that both the agent Heenan and the agricultural-

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<sup>4</sup> *KCC*, 15 Jun. & 10 Sept. 1849.

<sup>5</sup> James S. Donnelly Jr., 'Production, prices and exports, 1846-51' in Vaughan (ed.), *A new history of Ireland*, p. 292.

ist Lyle would be visiting the farm of every tenant to view its management in what appears to have been an in-depth audit of the estate. Rosse contended that his rules were based on best estate practice and on regulations set out on other estates: ‘considered amongst the best managed, and it is hoped they will afford the industrious tenant the up most amount of encouragement that can be reasonably given’.<sup>6</sup> It is probable that Rosse had clearances in mind before he published these rules. He was certainly aware of the negative publicity that had focussed on the much publicised clearances and evictions on the Gerard estate in county Galway in 1846.<sup>7</sup> The Gerrard evictions received popular attention by the newspapers of the day and indeed several pamphlets appeared highlighting the plight of those evicted.<sup>8</sup> Such was the public condemnation of these clearances that other landlords who engaged in evicting tenants were said to be guilty of ‘Gerrardising’ the people.<sup>9</sup> Rosse was astute enough to realise that if he issued the rules beforehand he could argue that evictions were justifiable on the failure of tenants to adhere to them.

According to Robin Haines there were those who believed that Ireland’s improvement could only be brought about by a revolution in landholding and the permanent ejection of smallholders and squatters.<sup>10</sup> A year after the beginning of the Famine an act to regularise ejectments (rather than to stop them altogether) had been introduced by the government.<sup>11</sup> By now there was increased pressure on the various relief schemes and much debate centred on how landholding structures could be altered in order to alleviate congestion. On 1 March 1847 *The Times* newspaper advocated ex-

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<sup>6</sup> ‘Rules for the management of the Rosse estate’ (B.C. A., J/3). See also *KCC*, 3 Feb. 1847.

<sup>7</sup> For more on the Gerrard eviction controversy see ‘Cases of tenantry eviction: letters and comments from newspapers, 1840-47’ (N.L.I., 5A 3234).

<sup>8</sup> S. Redmond, *Landlordism in Ireland: letters on the eviction of the Gerrard tenantry a portion of which appeared originally in the Freemans Journal* (Dublin, 1846).

<sup>9</sup> Lord John Russell believed that clearances were amongst the greatest evils perpetrated on the Irish and was said to have been particularly shocked by the Gerrard evictions. See Gray, *Famine, land, politics*, p. 152.

<sup>10</sup> Robin Haines, *Charles Trevelyan and the Great Irish Famine* (Dublin, 2004), p. 454.

<sup>11</sup> Kinealy, *This great calamity*, p. 218.

clusion from relief all who held more than one rood of ground.<sup>12</sup> Later that month the *Morning Chronicle* warned that such a scheme would create many hardships.<sup>13</sup> Within a few months the soup kitchen scheme was terminated and the government reverted to the poor law system ‘as the principal means of affording relief to the destitute’.<sup>14</sup> There had been various amendments that June, including the provision that those who were not able bodied were to be relieved in or out of the workhouse. However the most significant legislative development was the introduction of the so-called ‘Gregory clause’. This was introduced to parliament by William Gregory, a county Galway landlord and M.P. for Dublin, and included measures to protect landowners from the increased burden of local taxation in the form of rates caused by people claiming poor relief who were not entitled to it.<sup>15</sup> Under its terms ‘no person who shall be in occupation of any land of greater extent than a quarter of a statute acre shall be deemed and taken to be a destitute poor person’.<sup>16</sup> Interestingly when the law was introduced it had no precedent in the English poor law system. According to James S. Donnelly Jnr:

the purpose of this clause was to arm landlords with a weapon that would enable them to clear estates of pauperised smallholders who were paying little or no rent. Only by surrendering their holdings above one rood to the landlord could these tenants qualify themselves and their families for public assistance. Although not all the consequences of the quarter-acre clause were fully appreciated in advance, its enormous potential as an estate-clearing device was widely recognised in parliament.

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<sup>12</sup> *The Times*, 1 Mar. 1847.

<sup>13</sup> *Morning Chronicle*, 31 Mar. 1847.

<sup>14</sup> Donnelly, *The Great Irish Potato Famine*, p. 101.

<sup>15</sup> Kinealy, *This great calamity*, p. 218.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*

Debating the proposed measure in parliament George Poulett Scrope predicted that the clause would have the consequence of creating the ‘complete clearance of the small farmers of Ireland’.<sup>17</sup> It was largely prophetic.

It soon became evident that landowners were using and abusing the quarter acre clause to rid their estates of smallholders, cottiers and the landless. In some cases the lack of sympathy for their plight was contentious. For example in 1848 J. Persse Grome, a Parsonstown guardian told a meeting of the board that ‘it was truly ridiculous to be wasting so much of their valuable time in talking over so much unimportant matters. It was all sympathy for paupers, beggars and brats and in what way they were to be made comfortable, as they had not been used to cabins and hovels of the meanest and filthiest kind from their birth; such talk was really monstrous and absurd’ and while all the pity was for the beggars ‘there was no sympathy for the landlords and gentlemen of the country, at whose expense these persons were to be fed sumptuously’. In conclusion he wished to hear no more of such talk.<sup>18</sup>

Grome’s outburst possibly signified a much wider change in the mindset of King’s County agents and their management policies. In many ways they had an unenviable task of pressing for rent and arrears and were placed under particular pressure to do so by the landlord. Where an agent was deemed to be too lenient on the tenantry he was quickly replaced. Henry Odlum, William Johnson’s agent was one of those who believed that tenants had been shown too much leniency. He believed that the tenants demands on the Johnson estate for a 30% reduction was a ‘really a peremptory demand’. According to Odlum if the landlords of the county were to grant abatements there

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<sup>17</sup> Gray, *Famine, land, politics*, p. 278.

<sup>18</sup> ‘Parsonstown Board of Guardians, Minute Book, 1848’; quoted in Sandra Robinson (ed) *The diary of an Offaly schoolboy 1858-59: William Davis* (Tullamore, 2010), p. xxx.

should be ‘an appearance of unanimity amongst them’.<sup>19</sup> There was not; while there were those such as William O’Connor Morris who granted twenty per cent reductions at Mount Pleasant<sup>20</sup>, George Garvey who was instructed by his employer on the Lettybrook estate to forgive rents<sup>21</sup> and R.L. Moore (the marquess of Drogheda’s agent) who granted abatements to over 200 tenants who paid their gale for the half year ending 25 March on or before the 20 December 1849<sup>22</sup>, these seem to have been the exception rather than the rule. The ‘exemplary treatment’, presumably the reduction of rents, shown by the agent of Mrs W. Nunn near Parsonstown was highlighted by *The Nation* who hastened to add that they infrequently highlight landlord benevolence.<sup>23</sup> Such benevolence included the decision of William White, Capt L’Estrange’s agent at Moystown, to reduce rents and was willing to pay the poor rates of tenants in December 1849.<sup>24</sup>

In 1849 King’s County had the highest rate of eviction in Leinster when some 619 families, numbering 3,255 individuals were evicted.<sup>25</sup> Of these some 123 families (or 631 people) were later readmitted as caretaker tenants. Such was the level of eviction that the inhabitants of King’s County presented a petition to the House of Commons in 1849 through a Mr Reynolds and Roche to alter the law of landlord and tenant in Ireland.<sup>26</sup> However, a year later King’s County again had the highest level of eviction in Leinster with 652 families’ evicted or 3,346 people.<sup>27</sup> These probably included middlemen and strong farmers. T.P. O’Neill has estimated that as many as 40% of tenants

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<sup>19</sup> William Johnson, Grove House, London, to Lord Charleville, Jul. 1848 (Charl. Pap., T/ 3069/D/ 31).

<sup>20</sup> *KCC*, 3 Oct. 1849.

<sup>21</sup> *The Times*, 22 Jun. 1848.

<sup>22</sup> *Leinster Express*, 10 Nov. 1849.

<sup>23</sup> *The Nation*, 8 Dec. 1849.

<sup>24</sup> Quoted in Ryan, *The dear old town*, pp 78-9.

<sup>25</sup> In total the province of Leinster had 3,353 families evicted. *Return by provinces and counties (compiled from returns made to the Inspector General, Royal Irish Constabulary) of cases of evictions which have come to the knowledge of the constabulary in each of the years 1849 to 1880 inclusive*, pp 3-23, H.C. 1881 (185) lxxvii, 725.

<sup>26</sup> *House of Commons debate, 1 & 5 March 1849, vol 103, c9 & 66.*

<sup>27</sup> In 1850 270 families (1,516 people) were readmitted in King’s County.

with land valued at over £50 were ejected from 1847 to 1848.<sup>28</sup> Lord Rosse also hinted at eviction of middlemen when he wrote in 1847

there is another cause which will contribute to render outrages more frequent; that in many cases the immediate lessee having paid poor rates for small tenants who have paid no rent, he will eject; and he will do so with less compunction.

He also believed that the law in Ireland facilitated the rapid removal of tenants.<sup>29</sup>

Many of these were cases of clearances where a number of families from the same area were evicted simultaneously. George Garvey was fired at in July 1848 while carrying out a number of evictions at Moneygall.<sup>30</sup> In December George Greeson oversaw the removal of thirty-one families in Lemanaghan while levelling five houses in the process. Of those evicted twenty-six families were subsequently allowed to re-enter their properties as caretakers. Many of these tenants had not paid rent for three to five years.<sup>31</sup> In August 1849 George Greeson evicted a number of families at Grogan and Lebeg, part of Miss Anne Holmes' estate. On this occasion no mercy was shown from Greeson who took one man lying in bed with fever and put him on the ground.<sup>32</sup> In March 1849 twenty-seven families comprising 126 people were evicted from Forelacka for arrears of rent.<sup>33</sup> In May at George Walpole's estate at Glosterbeg twenty families were evicted.<sup>34</sup> Six families, a total of thirty-nine people, were evicted and their homes levelled at the Harden estate near Parsonstown while three families numbering twenty persons were evicted from Rev William Minchin's estate at Barnagrotty. Having experienced considerable resistance from his tenants over numerous years

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<sup>28</sup> *House of Commons debate, 1 & 5 March 1849, vol 103, c9 & 66.*

<sup>29</sup> O'Neill, 'The Famine in Offaly', p. 710.

<sup>30</sup> O'Rian, *Dunkerrin*, p. 140.

<sup>31</sup> *KCC*, 6 Dec. 1848.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid*, 8 Aug. 1849.

<sup>33</sup> Pey (ed.), *Eglis*, p. 121.

<sup>34</sup> *Leinster Express*, 19 May 1849.

Robert Cassidy commenced a large clearance of his estate in 1848. William Donahue of Ballinree for no stated reason was considered ‘a bad tenant’ and Cassidy would not allow his sons to stay on as he feared they would likewise be bad tenants simply because they were unable to read or write. Some of these could be considered middlemen. For example Michael Fitzgerald and his under tenants who owed four years rent (£104), was presumably a strong farmer as was Dan Carry who owed £78 and Pat Walsh who owed £148.<sup>35</sup> Cassidy was denounced from the altar by Fr Devine who later complained to the Bishop of Meath but to no avail. Devine advised his congregation to withhold part of their crop so long as exterminations continued and urged that women and children should hoot and groan at landlords and their agents as they passed on the road.<sup>36</sup> Cassidy continued the evictions into January 1850 when that month he cleared a number of tenants from Cullawn, Killyon and Ballinree. One evicted under tenant by the name of Williams had five children with fever when the eviction was issued. They were all housed by a sympathetic neighbour. In 1850 A.L. Bride, a small landowner in the south of the county evicted forty-eight families and levelled eight houses. As late as 1851 forty-two families comprising 220 people were evicted and twenty one houses on the Armstrong estate at Gallen were levelled.<sup>37</sup>

As a final example, the clearances on the Rosse estate in 1848 indicated that the introduction of the new rules had an agenda, this being to facilitate the clearance of tenants in arrears from the estate. In 1848 arrears on a total rental of over £8,000 on the ‘Inner’ portion (the town and surrounding areas) amounted to £2,894(see table 2.1 below).<sup>38</sup> George Heenan made a concerted effort to gather in rents and arrears. He treated various classes of tenants differently as undoubtedly was the

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<sup>35</sup> Robert Cassidy to under secretary, Dublin Castle, 21 Aug. 1850 (O.P.K.C., 1850, 15/351).

<sup>36</sup> ‘Note on evictions carried out by John Deany of Cloneen’ (O.P.K.C., 1849, 15/450).

<sup>37</sup> ‘Constabulary Returns of evictions 1850’ (N.A.I., 6482.117 (3/02/4)).

<sup>38</sup> For management purposes the Rosse estate was divided into ‘Inner’ and ‘Outer’ portions.



case on estates elsewhere. He had little difficulty in clearing the smallholders. At Newtown and Fadden eighty-two people were evicted in one month alone. Between 1848 and 1849 at least eighty families (possibly up to 500 people) were forced to quit their holdings. In the country as whole, widespread evictions such as these were becoming all too common so that at the end of 1848 the *Illustrated London News* commented that a ‘vast social change’ was taking place in Ireland.<sup>39</sup> Closer to King’s County a report in the *Tipperary Vindicator* in 1848 lamented that ‘whole districts are cleared. Not a roof-tree is to be seen where the happy cottage of the labourer or the snug homestead of the farmer at no distant day cheered the landscape’.<sup>40</sup> While commenting on the Rosse estate the *Freemans Journal* sarcastically noted on 22 September 1849 that the sheriff and his men in Clonbonniff and Clonliff today continue the ‘good work’ and that ‘they are to evict more families, besides the above of Derrinlough on the day after’.<sup>41</sup> When John Claffey was evicted at Clonbonniff the families that occupied the ten houses on his holding were also forced to leave. On the other hand Heenan was reluctant to evict what he termed ‘quite solvent’ tenants, giving them the opportunity in 1848 to sell the harvests to pay their rents claiming to his employer that he did not think ‘it judicious to press them at present’.<sup>42</sup> Heenan’s stringency seems to have paid off; by the end of 1848 he had collected almost £4,000 in rent and arrears on the ‘Inner’ estate and over £5,000 on the ‘Outer’ estates.<sup>43</sup> But the evictions on the estate continued in 1851 when Heenan evicted a further thirteen families numbering sixty-five persons, readmitting five families but levelling the other cabins.<sup>44</sup> It seems that what Lord Clanricarde, an extensive county Galway proprietor, declared at the end of 1848 rang true for landlords in King’s County: ‘the landlords are

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<sup>39</sup> *Illustrated London News*, 16 Dec. 1848.

<sup>40</sup> *Tipperary Vindicator*, 29 Apr. 1848.

<sup>41</sup> *FJ*, 22 Sept. 1849.

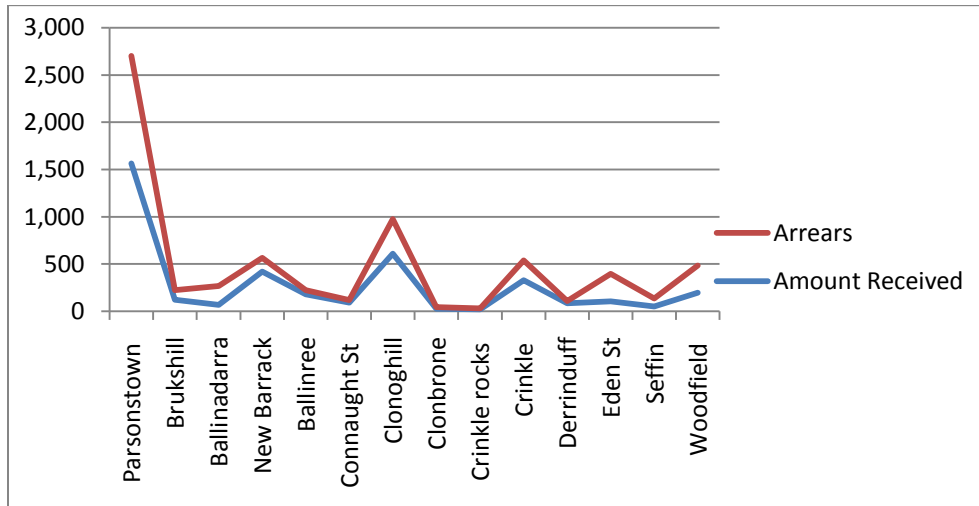
<sup>42</sup> ‘Rental of the Outer Estates, 1848’ (B.C.A., Q100/ B).

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>44</sup> ‘Police returns for evictions, King’s County for the quarter ended June 1851’ (N.A.I., Official papers, 1851/28).

prevented from aiding or tolerating poor tenants. They are compelled to hunt out all such, to save their property from the £4 clause'.<sup>45</sup>

**Table 2.1 Rental of the 'Inner' portion of the Rosse estate, 1848**



Source: 'Rental of the Inner Estates, 1848' (B.C.A., Q100/ A).

Donnelly states that even before the quarter acre clause made the situation worse conditions within the workhouse had underlined the woeful defects of the poor law system as the main instrument of confronting the affects of Famine.<sup>46</sup> There were three union workhouses in King's County in 1847 (Nenagh in county Tipperary and Mountmellick in Queen's County also catered for a large proportion of people from King's County). But they were never built to contend with the mass starvation and disease of a calamitous Famine. For example Tullamore was built to cater for 700 but by April 1848 upwards of 2,000 were receiving relief in the Tullamore division.<sup>47</sup> Evicted and destitute tenants flocked there looking for assistance as shown in table 2.2 below. Conditions were so bad in the workhouse that the dead were not buried on occasion, one report noting that 'within

<sup>45</sup> 'Marquis of Clanricarde to Earl of Clarendon, 31 Dec. 1848' quoted in Cecil Woodham-Smith, *The great hunger: Ireland, 1845-1849* (New York and London, 1962), p. 364.

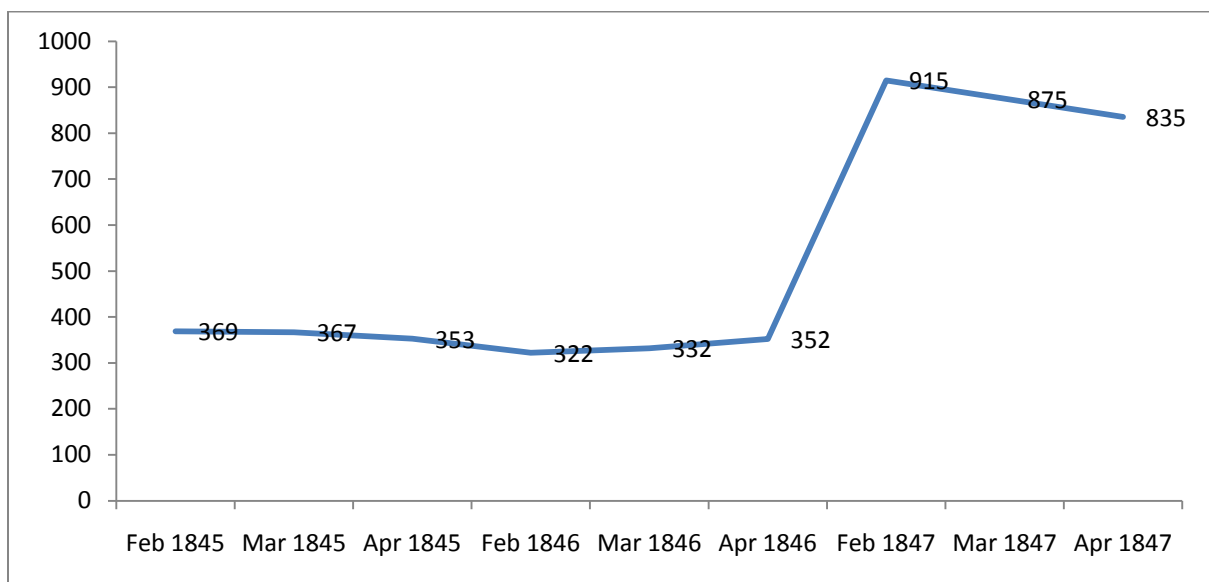
<sup>46</sup> Donnelly Jnr., *The Great Irish Potato Famine*, p. 103.

<sup>47</sup> KCC, 12 Apr. 1848.

the last week the bodies of two persons remained for three days unburied, their friends having no means to purchase coffins and the church wardens had no funds available for that purpose'.<sup>48</sup>

Agents such as Richard Gamble knew there would be a price to pay; that year he informed the absentee proprietors of Killoughy in 1848 that the poor of the barony had only the means to last until December and with almost 1,600 destitute he called for a liberal subscription on their part.<sup>49</sup> By now Tullamore workhouse was described as having no order or discipline, and it was becoming increasingly hard to find someone to occupy the master's role.<sup>50</sup>

**Table 2.2 No. of inmates in Tullamore Workhouse on selected dates 1845 to 1847**



**Source: House of Commons, *Number of inmates in each workhouse in Ireland- certain weeks 1844/7*, lvi (1847).**

Local agents were powerless. While Francis Berry was active on local relief committees and became chairman of Tullamore Board of Guardians in March 1850, there was little he could do faced with a system that could not cater for the swelling numbers of destitute and homeless.<sup>51</sup>

Similarly in January 1848 Parsonstown workhouse was said to have been overcrowded with some

<sup>48</sup> Ibid, 12 Apr. 1848.

<sup>49</sup> Gamble papers (N.A.I., M 3493).

<sup>50</sup> O'Neill, 'The Famine in Offaly', p. 695.

<sup>51</sup> Michael Murphy, *Tullamore Workhouse: The first decade* (Tullamore, 2007), pp 80-1, 115.

1,058 paupers.<sup>52</sup> Two months earlier the guardians were reprimanded for failing to provide adequate provision for the inmates.<sup>53</sup> There were further investigations later that year when it was alleged that the nurses were stealing the children's rations which contributed to the rate of infant mortality.<sup>54</sup> The Parsonstown guardians frequently failed to meet owing to a shortage of committee members; the earl of Rosse stated that he would attend only on a day that there was not quorum.<sup>55</sup> Acting as clerk, Robert Johnstone Stoney, Mr Oakley's land agent, was burdened with the weekly chores of administration including the purchasing of provisions, the distribution of rations and dealing with the queries of the workhouse master. In 1849 Earl Fitzwilliam sent James Massey, chief agent of his Irish estates, to visit Parsonstown workhouse in which several of his tenants had sought relief. Massey noted that the food given in the workhouse 'is not sufficiently nourishing and they are looking very ill and appear much reduced'.<sup>56</sup>

Conditions inside and outside King's County workhouses led to high mortality rates. As disease spread it killed more people than did starvation. In King's County in 1845 there were twelve dispensaries catering for a total population of 147,000 people or an average of 12,238 persons per dispensary.<sup>57</sup> In 1849 the appearance of dysentery, fever and dropsy greatly affected King's County; Parsonstown, for example, had the second highest rate of death in the country where 756 people died and indeed in one week alone there were 101 reported deaths in the workhouse.<sup>58</sup> By 1851 the inability to bury people as quickly as they died in Tullamore became a matter of concern

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<sup>52</sup> *KCC*, 5 Jan. 1848.

<sup>53</sup> 'William Stanley to Parsonstown Board of Guardians, 27 Dec. 1847' quoted in *KCC*, 5 Jan. 1848.

<sup>54</sup> O'Neill, 'The Famine in Offaly', p. 701.

<sup>55</sup> *KCC*, 16 Jan. 1848.

<sup>56</sup> James Massey to Earl Fitzwilliam, 6 Feb. 1849 (Sheffield Archives, Wentworth Woodhouse Muniments G/37/100).

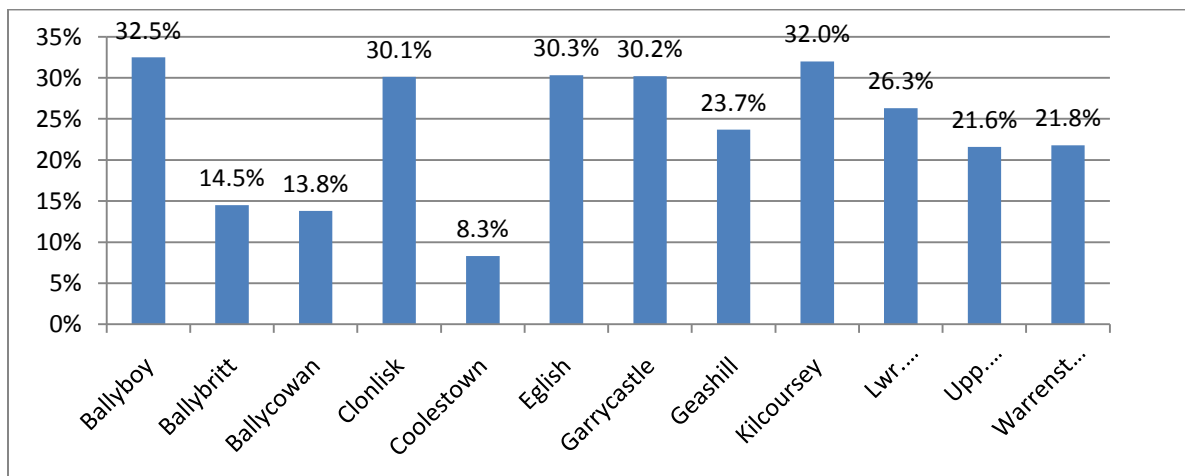
<sup>57</sup> *Report from the select committee of the House of Lords on the laws relating to the relief of the destitute poor and into the operation of the medical charities in Ireland, together with the minutes of evidence taken before the said committee*, p. xxvi, H.C. 1846 (694) (694-ii) (694-iii) xi Pt.I.1, xi Pt.II.1, 697 .

<sup>58</sup> Minute Book of the Parsonstown Union, 1849 (Offaly County Library). See also O'Neill, 'The Famine in Offaly', p. 724.

for Francis Berry who feared that this would lead to further disease. He reported to the board of guardians that Kilcruttin cemetery was so full that no more bodies could be interred there without greatly endangering the health of that neighbourhood. In one corner more than 1,000 paupers were buried in the previous few years and according to returns for 1851 over 200 were buried in that year alone.<sup>59</sup> The board of guardians appealed to Lord Charleville to provide a suitable site for a new cemetery which was subsequently granted.<sup>60</sup>

Overall, the population of the county decreased by 23.6% (34,781 people) from 1841 to 1851 and resulted in the decline of 5,667 inhabited houses. The decline in population in King’s County was the fifteenth highest in Ireland. Excess mortality in King’s County, 1846 to 1851, has been estimated at eighteen people per thousand. Judging by national statistics King’s County was the seventeenth most affected in Ireland.<sup>61</sup> Possibly up to 6,288 people died in workhouses.<sup>62</sup>

**Table 2.3 Percentage decline in population per barony 1841 to 1851**



**Source: Census of King’s County, 1851**

<sup>59</sup> KCC, 30 Jan. 1852.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid, 16 Jan. 1851.

<sup>61</sup> Quoted in J.S. Donnelly Jr., ‘Excess mortality and emigration’ in Vaughan (ed.) *A new history*, p. 352.

<sup>62</sup> O’Neill, ‘The Famine in Offaly’, p. 701. O’Neill notes that over one hundred drowning’s, nineteen suicides and twenty-one executions may also have been Famine related deaths.

Emigration also contributed to population decline. There were examples within the county of landlord assisted emigration schemes as there were elsewhere. Some landlords had controversially deemed emigration a more practical solution than having to pay the poor law rates. John Ross Mahon of the Dublin land agency firm, Guinness and Mahon believed that assisted emigration schemes were a ‘conclusive solution to the management of landed estates’.<sup>63</sup> Such sentiments were reiterated by Major Denis Mahon of Strokestown, county Roscommon. ‘I think’ wrote Major Mahon ‘the first class for us to send is those of the poorest and worst description who would be a charge on us for the poor house or for outdoor relief and that would relieve the industrious tenants’.<sup>64</sup> His sentiment was to lead to his murder there in 1847. Within King’s County the editor of the *Chronicle* advocated in 1848 that assisted emigration was a viable means of solving the increasing social problems faced by landlords in the county and advised the people ‘to prepare yourself for emigration’.<sup>65</sup> By January of 1849 the *Leinster Express* noted that our people are at length having overcome their deep rooted feelings of prejudice – beginning to understand that the only immediate remedy for their present evils, is a system of emigration’.<sup>66</sup> A scheme of assisted emigration on the Ponsonby estate was overseen by James Devery in 1847 at a cost of £350.<sup>67</sup> In November of the same year George Fawcett, an absentee landlord living in Dublin encouraged his tenants in King’s County to sell their holdings, emigrate and offered to pay their passage.<sup>68</sup> Some years later Colonel Westenra sent ten young women from Sharavogue with their parents all fully equipped with clothing to Australia.<sup>69</sup> Compared to other landlord assisted schemes such as those

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<sup>63</sup> Robert James Scally, *The end of hidden Ireland: rebellion, famine and emigration* (New York, 1995), p. 59.

<sup>64</sup> Quoted in Arthur Gribben, *The Great Famine and the Irish diaspora in America* (New Jersey, 2000), p. 141.

<sup>65</sup> *KCC*, 14 Jun. 1848.

<sup>66</sup> *Leinster Express*, 13 Jan. 1849.

<sup>67</sup> ‘Cloghan report’.

<sup>68</sup> *Tipperary Vindicator*, 8 Nov. 1847.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid*, 16 Nov. 1853.

organised by Lord Lansdowne (Kerry), Mahon (Roscommon) and Spaight (Clare) the numbers assisted from King's County were relatively small. However there were also those who left voluntarily because they could afford to do so. Sometimes this was raised with the benevolence of agents. In January 1848 Henry Sheane organised a private subscription in Banagher to assist a man named Stephens, his wife and seven children to emigrate.<sup>70</sup> In February 1849, the aforementioned James Massey noted when visiting Cloghan that much emigration had occurred in the area but could not ascertain a correct figure.<sup>71</sup> In May of the same year another four or five families sought the means to emigrate from Cloghan.<sup>72</sup> According to Massey the farms of those who emigrated were 'thrown to the adjoining tenant for your lordship will perceive the small holders are the worst off'.<sup>73</sup> One tenant upon leaving for America sold his interest in eleven acres for more than £57. Fairly typical of the 'emigrant's farewell' was the description which appeared in *The Times* on 12 June 1852 in relation to Parsonstown:

[emigration is] almost daily enacted in this town (Parsonstown) on the departure of the long car to meet the Grand Canal passage boat on its way to Dublin. The office from which it leaves is generally for some short time before its leaving, surrounded by a crowd of emigrants and their friends, the latter of whom with trifling expressions of grief, largely mingled with shouts of exultation, take leave of their friends and pursue them with loud promises of soon joining them in their distant homes.

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<sup>70</sup> KCC, 19 Jan. 1848.

<sup>71</sup> James Massey to Earl Fitzwilliam, 6 Feb. 1849 (W.W.M., G/37/100).

<sup>72</sup> Frederick Ponsonby, Dublin, to James Massey, 12 May 1849 (W.W.M., G/37/11).

<sup>73</sup> James Massey to Earl Fitzwilliam, 6 Feb. 1849 (W.W.M., G/37/100).

Notably the writer lamented that they are generally the young and sturdy farmers, male or female and the families of the few remaining ‘snug farmers’, again suggesting that it was those who could afford to emigrate.<sup>74</sup>

Folklore in King’s County associates clearances from estates with a corresponding rise in workhouse numbers. Even at the time of the Famine landlords were aware that people did not want to be housed in a workhouse.<sup>75</sup> The association of workhouses with mass evictions fuelled the anti-landlord, anti-agent rhetoric of the post-Famine period as did the loss of huge numbers through emigration, whether assisted or voluntary. While many of those who emigrated were of benefit to the local community they left, through the sending home of remittances, they also brought with them a baggage of resentment. By 1850 in Lusmagh it was claimed that ‘there is not a man in the parish who does not have a son or a daughter sending money home’.<sup>76</sup> Writing from Montreal, Canada to his brother Samuel at Geashill, William Clay urged his family to ‘be sure to clean up the rent, for I intend to see home again’.<sup>77</sup>

The effects that these dramatic social changes had on the smallholders, cottiers and the landless undoubtedly fuelled their resentment against a system that offered little protection. As physical symbols of this system it is hardly surprising that landlords, their agents and other employees became frequent targets of aggression during the Famine.

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<sup>74</sup> *The Times*, 12 Jun. 1852.

<sup>75</sup> Robert Cassidy, Monasterevin to under secretary, Dublin Castle, 21 Aug. 1850 (O.P.K.C., 15/351).

<sup>76</sup> Quoted in Denis Kelly, *Famine: gorta i Lusma* (Lusmagh, n.d.), pp 8-9.

<sup>77</sup> Quoted in P. Frazer Simons, *Tenants no more: voices from an Irish townland 1811-1901 and the great migration to Australia and America* (Richmond, 1996), p. 72.



## **ii. The murder of land agents**

The clearances of 1848 to 1849 followed on earlier evictions from the 1845 to 1847 period. The number of ejectments in King's County before the higher courts increased significantly from 133 in 1846 to 717 in 1847. Initially the majority of these were smallholders. However as the Famine progressed increasingly more large farmers were evicted.<sup>78</sup> For those who had an annual rental of over £50 ejectment notices had to be served in the Assistant Barristers Court further complicating the eviction process for land agents. The number of such ejectment proceedings increased from fifty-seven in 1846 to 137 in 1847 indicating that the strong farmers were being pursued for non-payment of rent. Some pitiful incidents were recorded. For example, in January 1847 an eviction of tenants was carried out at the Westenra estate at Sharavogue in the midst of a heavy snowfall (for a report of festivities there on New Year's Day 1849 see chapter four). According to Fr Francis McMahon one 'wretched mother with her three children' was left lying in the snow and that the 'unfortunate husband whose name is Redmond was trying to remove furniture from the ruin'.<sup>79</sup> In 1847 James Devery evicted twelve to fourteen families comprising about seventy-five people from the Ponsonby estate at Cloghan.<sup>80</sup>

James S. Donnelly Jnr makes the point that despite the clearances and evictions there was remarkably little resistance and still less shooting.<sup>81</sup> This was not the case in King's County where during the period under study in this thesis fifteen men, including four landlords, seven agents and four other estate employees were murdered between 1838 and 1852.<sup>82</sup> Of these, four were agents

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<sup>78</sup> O'Neill, 'The Famine in Offaly', p. 646.

<sup>79</sup> 'Cases of tenantry eviction: letters and comments thereon from newspapers, 1840-47' (N.L.I., 5A 3234).

<sup>80</sup> 'Cloghan report'.

<sup>81</sup> Donnelly Jnr., *The Great Irish Potato Famine*, p. 139

<sup>82</sup> James Stapleton agent of the Pepper estate in county Tipperary was murdered in June 1844 for taking a tract of land at Ballymacurrough, near Kinnitty. This figure does not include others murdered such as James Gleeson and Patrick

murdered between 1845 and 1852. This was merely the most serious manifestation of the violence directed against agents and others during these years. Had would-be assassins been better shots the figures would have been considerably higher. Revealingly in 1847 Lord Crofton, a county Roscommon landlord noted that ‘although I am beyond their reach, my agent, Mr Brown is in a perilous situation’.<sup>83</sup> The aim of this section is to examine, as far as the existing sources will allow, the context in which agents were attacked and murdered and the possible motivations involved in individual cases.

The first recorded murder of a land agent during the Famine was that of John Mayne in 1845 who managed the estates of Sir St George Ralph Gore, ninth baronet (1841-1887) partly located in counties Limerick, Galway and King’s County. Unfortunately there seem to be no reports at all of evidence surrounding his murder. His successor appointed the following year was Charles Trench Cage, ‘a gentleman most respectfully connected’.<sup>84</sup> When he arrived as agent he began an extensive remodelling of the estate in what has been described as the ‘broom syndrome’ where many tenants were quickly cleared.<sup>85</sup> Subsequently reviled by the tenants he was murdered at Ferbane in October 1849 following the eviction of four families and the serving of several others with ejectment bills. The *King’s County Chronicle* noted it was ‘one of the most daring and atrocious murders carried out in this blood stained county’, the latter adjective suggesting the extent of violence there.<sup>86</sup> The Gore estate consisted of the townlands of Endrim and Creggan, near the village of Ferbane in the barony of Garrycastle, amounting to 1,100 acres. By the mid-1840s it seems

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Mortimer, two constabulary murdered at Killoughy in October 1849. See John Julian, Parsonstown to under secretary, Dublin Castle, 20 Aug. 1850 (O.P.K.C., 15/352).

<sup>83</sup> Lord Crofton to under secretary, Dublin Castle, 5 Dec. 1847 (O.P.K.C., 1848).

<sup>84</sup> *The Economist*, 20 Oct. 1849.

<sup>85</sup> Quoted in Ryan, *The dear old town*, p. 75.

<sup>86</sup> *KCC*, 14 Oct. 1849.

that rents were not being paid by tenants at all. When Cage arrived he spent a few months renovating the school that had been built for the tenants' children. Mayne's murder obviously played on his mind and he carried a percussion gun stick on all occasions when going over the estate. His bailiff, Molloy, had been warned that if Cage came to live at Endrim he would be murdered.

On Sunday 12 October 1849 he left Endrim cottage to attend service at Ferbane. Riding a horse belonging to a farmer named Patrick Spollen, he was accompanied by a tenant, Patrick Cahern. He also had the sum of £11 8s in his pocket (which remained untouched after the attack).<sup>87</sup> Somewhere near Ferbane he was ambushed. He unsuccessfully returned fire at his would be assassins before being fatally wounded. This was a very public road and there were several witnesses but the assassins were never convicted.

John Julian, the county solicitor, believed the cause of Cage's death lay in his endeavours to remove the smaller class of tenants and to consolidate their farms into more viable units. There was conflicting evidence about his management policy. He was considered strict towards 'bad tenants' but liberal and encouraging to others. At the height of the Famine in 1848 he had evicted a number of tenants and taken possession of one hundred acres. Unable to secure tenants for this holding he farmed it himself, therefore becoming more odious to the local community.<sup>88</sup>

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<sup>87</sup> Ibid, 17 Oct. 1849.

<sup>88</sup> John Julian to under secretary, Dublin Castle, 15 Oct. 1849 (O.P.K.C., 1849, 15/483).

A number of suspects were arrested. An approver Thomas Johnston named three men - Patrick Kelly, Bernard Gunning and Edward Farrell as the assassins.<sup>89</sup> Julian argued that the evidence of Johnston and another approver, Hugh Egan, 'a miserable cratur (sic)', would not be sufficient to go on trial. They were so destitute that when they were placed in Mullingar gaol they had to be given new clothes for the trial.<sup>90</sup> The prosecutions case collapsed because the magistrates were unable to give credit to the evidence of the informers which was, to say the least conflicting.<sup>91</sup>

Following the murder, David Fitzgerald and his son William were appointed as agents of the estate and also of Gore's property in county Limerick. Fitzgerald adopted a policy of conciliation by negotiating with such tenants who had the 'disposition to act properly' and abatements were duly given. In January 1850 he carried out a survey of the tenants on the estate in the presence of Gore and having assessed their character agreed in some instances to give abatements and in others to increase the size of the tenant's holdings. At this stage some degree of stability seemed to have been brought to the estate. However, seven months later when Gore went back with William Fitzgerald, none of the tenants would meet with them. Fitzgerald believed that the return to Ferbane of three men who had been implicated in the murder of Cage had contributed to the change in the tenants' mindset. He believed that it was now necessary to seize crops and animals to assert his authority, for which police assistance was required.<sup>92</sup> Fearing for their safety, neither the agent nor his son chose to live at Ferbane and infrequently visited the estate, preferring instead to place responsibility in the hands of Molloy the bailiff.

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<sup>89</sup> Brendan Ryan, *Policing in West Offaly 1814-1922* (Tullamore, 2009), p. 20.

<sup>90</sup> John Julian to under secretary, Dublin Castle, 5 Mar. 1850 (O.P.K.C., 15/126).

<sup>91</sup> John Gilbert King and Robert Lauder, Ferbane to under secretary, Dublin Castle, [nd] (O.P.K.C., 15/68).

<sup>92</sup> David Fitzgerald to T.N. Redington, 29 Aug. 1849 (O.P.K.C., 1849, 15/405).

The second agent to be murdered was Robert Pyke in 1850. Pyke had been originally employed on the Cassidy estate as an engineer to instruct on proper drainage and other means of improvement. He was brought in as agent to replace John Corcoran who Cassidy thought was too lenient with tenants, allowing their arrears to accumulate. Like Cage, his eviction policy on the Cassidy estate, mentioned above, made him unpopular with the tenantry. His employer Robert Cassidy saw his murder as being part of a much wider conspiracy. On 21 August he wrote to Dublin Castle stating that ‘a system of low party business which is spread over all that part of the county from Knockhill to Mr. Darby’s of Leap and thence to Ferbane’ was responsible for the murder. Cassidy further noted that the tenants on his estate probably had no part in the murder: ‘yet they rejoice and believe it is a move in their favour’. But significantly he also opined that if there were further attempts to seize crops there would be more murders of that nature and whether intentional or not, revealingly concluded that his tenants would prefer being shot or hanged than to go to the workhouse in Parsonstown.<sup>93</sup> Pyke’s murder caught the attention of the national press with *The Times* noting that not since the murder of Norbury had there been ‘a more audacious, horrible or revolting murder than that of the agent Pyke’.<sup>94</sup>

Once again the motivation for the crime can be traced to the agents’ estate management policy since the beginning of the Famine and his confrontation with tenants who had refused or were unable to pay their rents since the harvest of 1846. Again, like Heenan on the Rosse estate, he seems to have been selective in terms to whom he granted abatements, namely those who were ‘in a position to pay rent’ at a later stage. In 1848 and 1849 Pyke undertook measures to remove those who could not maintain themselves, pay the rent or till their lands to their advantage. At this stage

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<sup>93</sup> Robert Cassidy, Monasterevin to under secretary, Dublin Castle 21 Aug. 1850 (O.P.K.C., 15/351).

<sup>94</sup> *The Times*, 8 Aug. 1850.

he was reputed to have boasted: ‘there is not a ruffian in the country able to shoot me’.<sup>95</sup> Again he was murdered on a public road during harvest time when there were large numbers of people working in the fields. According to one contemporary account at least fifty people had witnessed the murder but none could be found that would testify to what they had seen.<sup>96</sup> Cassidy was adamant that the murder of his agent would not deter him in executing ejectment decrees in an effort to prove that ‘the law is stronger than faction and that even murder will not prevent the rights of property being carried out’.<sup>97</sup> To show example he visited Killyon and was present at the eviction of eleven families.<sup>98</sup> John Corcoran was reinstated as agent and when Cassidy went over the books with him he lamented that all seemed ‘very gloomy’.<sup>99</sup>

One of four brothers employed as an agent in King’s County, William Ross Manifold of Cadams-town was murdered in 1852. He was agent for the O’Connor Morris estate in the barony of Ballyboy. The *King’s County Chronicle* described him as ‘gentleman of usually kind habits and disposition and that it was not in his power to injure or oppress a single human being.’<sup>100</sup> It was reported that he resigned as baronial chief constable because of the harsh measures he was expected to take with the rate payers. It was further claimed that his benevolence was the reason why many of the inhabitants of the Parsonstown Poor Law Union had not ended up in the workhouse.<sup>101</sup> However this eulogy was obviously not shared by all. Capt Carew Shapland Morris took over the O’Connor Morris estate in 1851 having purchased it in the Incumbered Estates Court.<sup>102</sup>

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<sup>95</sup> Pey (ed.), *Eglis*, p. 123.

<sup>96</sup> Alexander Somerville, *The Whistler at the plough: containing travels, statistics and descriptions* (Manchester, 1852), p. 95.

<sup>97</sup> Robert Cassidy, Monasterevin to under secretary, Dublin Castle, 21 Aug. 1850 (O.P.K.C., 15/351).

<sup>98</sup> Pey (ed.), *Eglis*, p. 124.

<sup>99</sup> Diary of Robert Cassidy, 1850 (N.L.I., Cassidy papers).

<sup>100</sup> *KCC*, 21 Oct. 1852.

<sup>101</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>102</sup> For the Incumbered Estates Court see chapter 5.

Contemporary newspaper reports claimed that the previous owner had already collected whatever rent he could from the tenants and that Carew Shapland Morris instructed his agent, Manifold, to collect the rents again. William O'Connor Morris contradicted a report in the *Leinster Express* which laid part of the blame with him for the murder. He refuted that both himself and Carew Shapland Morris had laid claim to the rents on the estate and concluded: 'by expressing admiration of the many excellent qualities of the gentleman who has thus been suddenly taken away. He had been the agent of the former and was the agent of the present proprietor of the estate, and I believe gave the greatest satisfaction to both his employers'.<sup>103</sup> Andrew Gamble, who was employed as agent prior to Manifold also challenged assertions in the *Leinster Express* that he had harshly treated the tenants.<sup>104</sup> At any rate, some of the tenants refused Manifold's request for the rents and he duly took action against seven of them, issuing eviction orders, and having served these he was shot while returning from Tullamore. He had in his possession £47 and ejectment papers, none of which were taken.<sup>105</sup>

If the report in *The Times* is to be believed, 'not one Catholic attended the funeral of Manifold at Ballyboy'. In the days following the murder 'few of the peasantry showed themselves and the few that did, showed their apathy and indifference to what had just occurred'.<sup>106</sup> Two Dunne brothers who had been ejected from their holding near Mount Pleasant became the immediate suspects. However even though the government offered £100 for information none was forthcoming.

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<sup>103</sup> KCC, 27 Oct. 1852.

<sup>104</sup> Ibid, 13 Apr. 1853.

<sup>105</sup> Ibid, 21 Oct. 1852.

<sup>106</sup> *The Times*, 27 Oct. 1852.

At the end of October Lord Rosse called a meeting of the magistrates of the southern baronies of the county to inquire into the murder.<sup>107</sup> The magistrates pledged £300 reward for the apprehensions of the culprits, a sum which was later raised to over £600. Eventually a tenant, Thomas McCormack, was imprisoned for the murder; his house was located at the end of the demesne wall at Pallas and close to the scene of the murder.<sup>108</sup> In local lore Manifold told several tenants, including McCormack, that they would be shortly required to surrender their land to which McCormack allegedly replied that the agent might not be around very soon to oversee such a plan.<sup>109</sup> (Ironically the names of all three of the above murdered agents survive to the present day in ‘Cage’s bridge’, ‘Pyke’s tree’ and ‘Manifold’s hole’, the reputed scenes of the atrocities. Indeed until the end of the Irish War of Independence in 1921 Manifold’s hat hung at Killoughy R.I.C. barracks).

Around the same time as the murder of Manifold *The Nation* newspaper commented that ‘murders do not take place where the rents are fair and the tenures long’.<sup>110</sup> The motivation behind the murder of the three agents in King’s County possibly indicates why a nationalist newspaper would reach this conclusion. Besides agents, landlords also became the targets of a disgruntled tenantry. Perhaps the most notorious and well documented murder of a landlord during the Famine has been the case of Major Denis Mahon at Strokestown, county Roscommon in November 1847.<sup>111</sup> Yet in King’s County two landlords were murdered, one of whom William Lucas, from near Brosna, acted as agent for his own estate. It has been noted previously that Lucas had difficulty collecting

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<sup>107</sup> Ibid, 2 Nov. 1852. This is in contrast to the murder of the agent Robert Pyke in 1850.

<sup>108</sup> *KCC*, 2 Feb. 1853.

<sup>109</sup> Ibid, 3 Mar. 1853.

<sup>110</sup> *The Nation*, 30 Oct. 1852.

<sup>111</sup> Donnelly, *The Great Irish Potato Famine*, pp 141- 3. See also Patrick Vesey, *The murder of Major Mahon, Strokestown, county Roscommon 1847* (Dublin, 2008) and Robert James Scally, *The end of hidden Ireland: Rebellion, famine and emigration* (New York, 1995).



his rents from 1846. In 1847 he began to clear recalcitrant tenants from the estate. A number of these erected temporary huts and continued to reside there.<sup>112</sup> John Julian, the crown solicitor for King's County, regretted that these tenants at Lisduff had returned: 'it affects every person residing and having property in the neighbourhood'.<sup>113</sup> After Lucas was murdered in October 1848 Julian reported that it was by distress and civil bill process that he got rent 'tolerably well'.<sup>114</sup> It mattered little that he had reduced some rents or that he had subscribed to the Seir Kieran relief committee.<sup>115</sup> It seems that Lucas had received a number of threats that his life was in danger but continued to accompany his bailiff and was present at the levelling of fourteen houses at Brosna which eventually sealed his fate.<sup>116</sup> Again no one was ever convicted of the murder but a man named John Scott later confessed to the crime as he lay dying of typhus in Tullamore gaol in May 1849.<sup>117</sup>

The other landlord murdered was Roger North near Croghan in September 1850. Once again, his eviction of tenants at Garyduff was perceived to be the reason for his murder.<sup>118</sup> Other murders in the county included Daniel Egan of Ballydonagh in 1849, the son of a middleman who had evicted a number of sub-tenants.<sup>119</sup> Of more relevance here is the litany of attacks on agents which took place during the course of the Famine. They were frequently the target of ubiquitous threatening letters. One of these to George Garvey suggested the perception that the lower orders had of agents and the gentry during the Famine: 'The poor will not starve while Garvey and other gentlemen

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<sup>112</sup> Anne Lucas, Brosna to Earl of Clarendon (O.P.K.C., 1847, 15/ 638).

<sup>113</sup> John Julian to Colonel Lloyd, 1 Dec. 1847 (O.P.K.C., 1847, 15/ 637).

<sup>114</sup> O'Neill, 'Famine Evictions', p. 35.

<sup>115</sup> Ibid, p. 36. 'Subscribers of the Seir Kieran Relief Committee' (R.L.F.C., 1846, 2/4441/41).

<sup>116</sup> John Julian to Lord Rosse, Oct. 1847 (O.P.K.C., 1847, 15/558).

<sup>117</sup> *Leinster Express*, 2 Jun. 1849.

<sup>118</sup> 'Petition of J.H. Walsh, John Wakely and John Lucas, 16 Oct. 1850' (O.P.K.C., 1850). See also typescript of research conducted by Fr John Moorhead, SMA, a native of Rahugh and a descendant of those directly involved in the murder (O.R.C.).

<sup>119</sup> O'Rian, *Dunkerrin*, p. 141.

have plenty of fat sheep.’<sup>120</sup> (In one reported incident a large number of the tenants of William Trench visited Cangort Park where upwards of thirty sheep were taken but were later recovered by the constabulary.<sup>121</sup>)

In January 1848 James Devery, who had chosen to remain amongst the tenantry of the Fitzwilliam estate at Cloghan was attacked and robbed of three stone of flour, oats and a donkey. A man named James Dolan was subsequently transported for the attack.<sup>122</sup> Patrick Fallon, agent of the Dowdall estate at Ballycumber survived several attempts on his life. In February 1849 he was shot at when collecting rent and the following May ‘a man snapped a gun at him several times’ at Leabeg.<sup>123</sup> In July and December 1849 he was also robbed of the agency books near Ballycumber, suggesting that tenants did want him to have records of their rental accounts.<sup>124</sup> In August 1849 shots were fired into the home of Henry Drought at Oaklawn, Kinnitty, a landlord/agent, a day after he had evicted two tenants from nearby holdings.<sup>125</sup> By June 1850 the north east of the county, particularly the baronies of Warrenstown and Upper and Lower Philipstown were said to be greatly disturbed by Whiteboy offences.<sup>126</sup> By deeming them Whiteboy offences the authorities were suggesting some sort of conspiracy where as in reality offences were sporadic and localised. In December 1850 Mr Colgan, an agent for his mother’s estate near Durrow was fired on as he went from the fair at Tullamore.<sup>127</sup> In the weeks that followed the murder of Manifold in 1852, William White, the former manager of the Provincial Bank of Parsonstown was appointed agent to

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<sup>120</sup> Ibid, p. 129.

<sup>121</sup> KCC, 5 Jan. 1848.

<sup>122</sup> Ibid, 12 Jan. 1848.

<sup>123</sup> Ibid, 23 May 1849.

<sup>124</sup> Ibid, 4 Jul. 1849 & 6 Dec. 1849. Laurence Carroll was later apprehended at Edenderry in June 1849 on the charge of shooting Fallon. He had been concealed in a lumber boat bound for Dublin and was disguised in a sailor’s uniform. See *Leinster Express*, 9 Jun. 1849.

<sup>125</sup> KCC, 1 Aug. 1849.

<sup>126</sup> John Hussey Walsh and John Lucas, Philipstown to under secretary, Dublin Castle 4 Jun. 1850 (O.P.K.C., 15/285).

<sup>127</sup> KCC, 1 Jan. 1851.

collect the rent on the Rosse estate. He was quickly threatened that he would receive the same death as that of Manifold if he did not give up his office.<sup>128</sup> It is likely that he heeded the threat because George Garvey replaced him in March 1853.

Ultimately it seems as if land agents were offered insufficient protection either from their employers or the law enforcement authorities in the carrying out of their duties. This is certainly the case of John Corcoran (who incidentally, when he wrote to the *King's County Chronicle* in October 1852 was rebuked by the editor for having placed himself in rank to the nobility, a stern reminder to him of his place in society<sup>129</sup>) who complained to his employer Robert Cassidy, that despite repeated threats he was not entitled to private protection by the police. He was dependent upon his own appointed bailiffs to, for example, protect the livestock and crops distrained and indeed the other property belonging to the landlord: 'the Killyon men have to patrol Thomastown and watch English pound and leave your property and the furniture in your house much exposed to be carried away. If the Killyon men were left in their own district we could at least call on them to prevent a violation of the peace'. The problem was that if the 'Killyon men' were in Thomastown other areas were left exposed; thus Corcoran reported that one tenant in particular, a man named Troy, was causing him numerous problems. Troy was aware when the men were on duty in Thomastown and openly carried off his distrained crops in the knowledge that he would meet with little resistance.<sup>130</sup> Ironically as Corcoran was busy watching and distraining tenants in arrears he was also bitterly complaining that his own family had been badly treated by their landlord Valentine Bennett of Thomastown. According to Corcoran such treatment would urge a man to look for the introduction of 'Tenant Right'. Bennett had 'treated us worse than the worst pauper tenant' and

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<sup>128</sup> Ibid, 3 Nov. 1852.

<sup>129</sup> Ibid, 20 Oct. 1852.

<sup>130</sup> John Corcoran, Thomastown to Robert Cassidy, Monasterevin, 27 Aug. 1852 (N.L.I., Cassidy papers).

had taken all the stock off their land despite Corcoran having spent over £500 in improvements and his father having paid the rent for over fifty years. However the treatment of the Corcoran's was probably politically motivated, they having voted for the Liberal candidates at the 1852 elections; he was by his own admission penalised 'for giving a vote in accordance with the dictates of his conscience'.<sup>131</sup>

The murder of land agents in King's County represented the most notorious aspect of agrarian crime in the period under study. That nine agents in total were murdered not only suggests the conflicting attitude of tenants towards estate management policy but also, indeed, just how dangerous an occupation it could be during periods of economic crisis. Manifold's murder in October 1852, being the last of the nine, also more or less coincided with the end of the Famine crisis and the beginning of an economic upturn that, with the exception of the early 1860s was to last until the Land War era of the late 1870s. There were to be sporadic outbreaks of agrarian agitation in King's County from the Famine to the Land War; however, there was no further attempt on a land agent's life until 1875.<sup>132</sup> This was despite, for example, the extensive clearances on the Geashill estate in the late 1850s by William Steuart Trench to make way for improvements. However it could be argued that the late 1850s were very different times. These clearances were carried out during a period of economic prosperity and so wider attitudes towards the same were moulded in a different climate.

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<sup>131</sup> Ibid.

<sup>132</sup> An attempt was made on the life of John Exshaw, agent of the Head estate at Derrylahan in September 1875 following the seizure of crops for rent. See *The Times*, 1 Oct. 1875.

### **iii. Epilogue**

That the Famine was mainly responsible for the ruin of many Irish landlords is pervasive in Irish historiography.<sup>133</sup> However, as Donnelly argues, the long awaited day of reckoning would have arrived for many landlords whether the Famine had arrived or not.<sup>134</sup> As we have seen in this and the previous chapter it was impossible for many King's County landlords to collect their rents (and this was the case before the Famine) and so their accumulating debts drove them to the brink of bankruptcy. The scale of their debts, as revealed in their applications to the Incumbered Estates Court (see below) were 'far too great to have been caused by the Famine alone'; quite simply years of extravagant living had finally caught up on many of them and the Famine was the last straw.<sup>135</sup>

That landlord indebtedness was not a new thing is evidenced in the fact that earlier in the nineteenth century a series of statutes had been introduced to deal with insolvency. These included the establishment in 1818 of the Court for the Relief of Insolvent Debtors; in 1835 the Receivers Act was introduced, while two permanent Commissioners of Bankruptcy were appointed in 1836.<sup>136</sup> By 1849, four years into the Famine, property with an estimated rental of £2 million in Ireland was under the control of the Court of Equity – the older debts caused by generations of lavish expenditure and costly litigation, the more recent by the fall in rents and rise in rates<sup>137</sup> - and thus the government was under considerable pressure to deal with the situation.<sup>138</sup> The Incumbered Estates Act was introduced that year; thus, Cormac O'Grada argues that the impact of the Famine

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<sup>133</sup> See Cormac O'Grada, 'Bankrupt landlords and the Great Irish Famine' in Cormac O'Grada (ed.) *Ireland's Great Famine: interdisciplinary perspectives* (Dublin, 2006), p. 59.

<sup>134</sup> *Ibid*, p. 58.

<sup>135</sup> *Ibid*, p. 56.

<sup>136</sup> Tim O'Neill, 'Doing local history' in *Journal of the Galway Archaeological and Historical Society*, liii (2001), p. 55.

<sup>137</sup> O'Grada, 'Bankrupt landlords', p. 58.

<sup>138</sup> Dooley, *A research guide*, p. 31.

on landlordism is difficult to separate from the creation of the Incumbered Estates Court.<sup>139</sup> This act was designed to create a ‘new and more efficient landlord’.<sup>140</sup> It was also designed to expedite the sale of incumbered property by making the legal process less complicated, something that had been called for four years previously by the Devon Commission which had argued that every help should be given for the quick sale to avoid lengthy and costly litigation cases.<sup>141</sup> In King’s County, as early as March 1845, Count Magawley, a landlord in the barony of Ballyboy, had petitioned Sir Robert Peel to encourage the government to facilitate the expediting of land sales.<sup>142</sup> His own estate was later sold under the Incumbered Estates Court in 1852.<sup>143</sup>

Over the next thirty years a quarter of the land in Ireland changed hands as a result of the Incumbered Estates Act.<sup>144</sup> A property was defined as incumbered when the income from the rent did not suffice to service the interest charges or when the property was no longer acceptable as security for a loan.<sup>145</sup> Several landowners in King’s County, as elsewhere, had depended in the past on loans and mortgages provided by their fellow proprietors for survival.<sup>146</sup> When the time arrived for such loans to be repaid it spelled financial ruin for many. The Incumbered Estates Act was designed, as George Boyce commented, ‘to encourage free trade in land’.<sup>147</sup> The government hoped that the act would have the affect of encouraging outside investment, thereby creating a much needed stimulus

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<sup>139</sup> O’Grada, ‘Bankrupt landlords’, p. 49

<sup>140</sup> Paul Bew, *Ireland: The politics of emnity 1789-2006* (Oxford, 2007), p. 208.

<sup>141</sup> Eriksson, ‘Irish landlords and the Great Irish Famine’, p. 3.

<sup>142</sup> ‘Count Magawley to Sir Robert Peel, 17 Mar. 1845’ quoted in Gray, *Famine, land, politics*, p. 84.

<sup>143</sup> Count Magawley sold his estate at Frankford for seventeen and half years purchase or £11, 565. See *The Times*, 19 Nov. 1852. See also Michael Byrne, ‘The Magawley’s of Temora and the Banons of Broughall, county Offaly’ in *Offaly Heritage*, vol 6 (Tullamore, 2010, forthcoming). I am grateful to Michael for making this paper available to me.

<sup>144</sup> Quoted in O’Grada, ‘Bankrupt landlords’, p. 50.

<sup>145</sup> W.A. Maguire, ‘Lord Donegall and the sale of Belfast: a case history from the Encumbered Estate Court’ in *The Economic History Review, New Series*, xxix, no. 4 (Nov., 1976), p. 572.

<sup>146</sup> O’Grada, ‘Bankrupt landlords’, p. 58.

<sup>147</sup> Quoted in Alvin Jackson, *Ireland 1798- 1998: politics and war* (Oxford, 1999), p. 77.

to the economy. In essence, however, such a plan failed and only £3 million of the £20 million invested in 3,000 Irish estates from 1849 to 1857 came from outside the country.

From 1849 to 1855, 148 townlands in King’s County (thirteen per cent of the total number) had land auctioned in the court.<sup>148</sup> Sales of estates in the county up to 1853 amounted to £132,696.<sup>149</sup> In the first fifteen months of the court’s operation some 1,477 cases from King’s County were entered. Francis Longworth Dames, the son of a King’s County landlord, was a barrister in the Incumbered Estates Court and would have been familiar with some of the cases which came before him.<sup>150</sup>

**Table 2.4 Total number of townlands auctioned under the Incumbered Estates Court in King’s County and in Ireland 1849 to 1855.**

	<b>No. of auctioned townlands</b>	<b>Total no. of townlands</b>
<b>King’s County</b>	148	1,167
<b>Ireland</b>	6, 873	60, 915

**Source: O’Grada, ‘Bankrupt landlords and the Irish famine’, p. 55.**

Many of the largest landowners in King’s County were amongst those who sold land. These included Sir Andrew Armstrong, Robert Blosse Lynch, Earl Fitzwilliam, Count Magawley, Garrett O’Moore, the earl of Milltown and William O’Connor Morris. Thomas Spinner’s estate at Shinnone was among the first in King’s County to be sold in the court in April 1850.<sup>151</sup> Sir Andrew Armstrong was forced to sell part of his estate at Gallen near Ferbane for £12,950 or twenty years

<sup>148</sup> O’Grada, ‘Bankrupt landlords’, p. 53.

<sup>149</sup> O’Neill, ‘The Famine in Offaly’, p. 728.

<sup>150</sup> Rob Goodbody, *Sir Charles Domville and his Shankill estate, county Dublin 1857-1871* (Dublin, 2003), p. 15.

<sup>151</sup> *The Times*, 15 Apr. 1850.

purchase of the current rents of roughly £650 per annum.<sup>152</sup> Similarly, Earl Fitzwilliam sold his estate at Cloghan for £31,276 or seventeen years purchase of his rental.<sup>153</sup> In 1852, William Minchin at Moneygall sold his estate before emigrating to Australia with his young family.<sup>154</sup> The auction, held in the court house in Roscrea, was thronged with people taking an interest in it; there were several mortgages, judgments and annuities charged on the estate when Richard Chadwick petitioned the court to force its sale.<sup>155</sup> Montague Blackett, a member of the English gentry and a native of Northumberland, purchased two lot and several tenants bid for remaining lots.<sup>156</sup> Other landlords took advantage of their neighbours' misfortunes; Thomas L'Estrange purchased the townland of Ballyloughan, part of the Fitzwilliam estate in 1853 for £5,000; James Drought purchased much of the O'Moore estate at Cloghan; even the county court solicitor, John Julian, was among the new purchasers of land. A new class of proprietor also emerged: J.J. Bird MD purchased part of Cloghan Castle demesne for £400;<sup>157</sup> in 1851, 3,200 acres of the O'Moore's estates at Cloghan were sold at auction in O'Grady's Hotel in Ballinasloe, county Galway, and were purchased by Dr Robert Graves one of the outstanding doctors of the nineteenth century (prior to the sale of the estate, Garrett O'Moore had granted long leases for ninety years to 'respectable tenants' including the agents, James Devery and Daniel L'Estrange<sup>158</sup>); wealthy merchants who had made fortunes during the Famine such as the Maxwell's of Ballinacard and the Goodbodys of Clara bought large tracts of land in the Incumbered Estates Court and then both families had the architect

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<sup>152</sup> *Ibid*, 28 Jun. 1852.

<sup>153</sup> *Ibid*, 18 Apr. 1853.

<sup>154</sup> Amongst the tenants cleared as a result was Falmouth Kearney an ancestor of Barack Obama, the 44<sup>th</sup> President of the United States of America. See Stephen MacDonagh, *Barack Obama: The Road from Moneygall* (Dublin, 2010).

<sup>155</sup> *Nenagh Guardian*, 4 & 11 Dec. 1852.

<sup>156</sup> *Tipperary Vindicator*, 5 Jun. 1852.

<sup>157</sup> *Nenagh Guardian*, Jun.- Dec. 1851 & Jan.-Jun. 1852.

<sup>158</sup> Sir William Hale-White, *Great doctors of the nineteenth century* (London, 1935), pp 126-7. Graves was a Professor in the Institute of Medicine in Trinity College Dublin (1826-7) and was synonymous with the treatment of disease. His epitaph testified to such: 'He fed fever'.



John Skipton Mulvaney design lavish country homes for them as their fortunes increased in the 1850s.<sup>159</sup>

Agents were also amongst those who benefited from the sale of local estates, none more so than the ‘prince of swindlers’, John Sadlier, the earl of Portarlington’s agent. Sadlier had commenced the agency in the late 1840s when the estate was described as resembling the immediate ‘neighbourhood of some volcano’.<sup>160</sup> From 1849 to 1854 he purchased several estates in counties Tipperary, Cork, Waterford, Mayo, Galway, Kerry, Limerick and Roscommon at a value of £233,000, some of behalf of clients, others for himself.<sup>161</sup> The Manifold brothers were in a position to purchase several tracts of land from their employers; George Garvey purchased several townlands including Cloneganna and Clashagad in 1853;<sup>162</sup> in 1852, Abraham Bagnall, agent on the King estate purchased the townland of Rashina, part of the Armstrong estate for £2,550.<sup>163</sup> In the same year, he also purchased part of the O’ Moore estate at Cloghan Hill, almost 900 acres, for £5,200.<sup>164</sup> On the other hand, the impact of the Famine on the personal finances of a few agents led to their demise and forced some of them into selling their own estates. For example, Charles Hamilton, agent of the Tyrrell estate at Warrenstown (as well as the Colley Palmer and Harberton estates in county Kildare) was forced to sell his estate in the Incumbered Estates Court.<sup>165</sup>

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<sup>159</sup> National Inventory of Architectural Heritage, *An introduction to the architectural heritage of county Offaly* (Dublin, 2006), p. 95.

<sup>160</sup> O’Grada, ‘Bankrupt landlords’, pp 51-2.

<sup>161</sup> See O’Shea, *Prince of Swindlers*.

<sup>162</sup> Rolleston papers (N.L.I., MS 13,794 (1)).

<sup>163</sup> ‘Sale of the estate of Andrew Armstrong 25 June 1852’ (O’Brien Rentals).

<sup>164</sup> ‘The estate of the earl of Fitzwilliam, Cloghan, in the barony of Garrycastle, King’s County sold under the Incumbered Estates Court 15 April 1853’ (O’Brien rentals).

<sup>165</sup> Index of the estates sold in the Incumbered and landed estates court 1850 to 1864 (O’Brien Rentals).

Although some like John Julian noted the tranquility of King's County by 1850, a new wave of clearances began in the years which followed. One of the reasons for these was that insolvent landlords, hoping to sell their estates in the court, wanted to rid them of impoverished tenants so as to make the estate more appealing to potential purchasers. Equally, clearances were part of more stringent estate management policies aimed at consolidating and enlarging smallholdings into more viable units and ridding their estates of middlemen adopted, not only by new owners, but also by those landlords who had survived the Famine and which were dictated by the dramatically altered social and economic demography. In June 1852, the eviction of fifty-six people from lands at Kilcloncouse, near Kinnitty, was amongst the most controversial clearances; it was an assisted emigration scheme and these people were shipped at a cost of £363 19s 8d firstly to Liverpool and then to New York (all that is with the exception of one man, Patrick Lowry, who for the strange reason that he had only one eye was deemed unfit for New York and so was sent to Philadelphia!<sup>166</sup>). In 1829, leases on the estate of almost 900 acres had been granted for twenty-one years. It was shown that rents had been regularly paid until 1846 when twelve families, numbering sixty-eight persons, found themselves without any provisions and 'in most precarious state'. In April 1847 the commissioners acting for the Court of Chancery ordered the rent collector 'to give such indulgence in payment to each tenant as their circumstance may require' after a number of tenants had appealed for lenience. The leases of the estate expired in 1850 by which time arrears on a rental of just over £500 per annum amounted to over £1,531. It was decided to clear 'bad tenants' from the estate, presumably meaning the most impoverished, and to redistribute the land among those selected from the remaining tenants. All arrears were to be abandoned. In 1854, the Kilclon-

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<sup>166</sup> Eilish Ellis, 'State aided Emigration schemes from Crown estates in Ireland c.1850' in *Analecta Hibernica*, no. 22, (1960), p. 383.

couse estate was sold to Loftus Bland M.P. for King's County for £8,390.<sup>167</sup> However, agitation on the estate remained so intense that it became the subject of an inquiry by a Select Committee of the House of Lords in 1854.<sup>168</sup>

While many evictions in the early 1850s were carried out as a result of the introduction of the Incumbered Estates Court, it is necessary to highlight that some may have been as result of the keenly contested election of 1852. In the aftermath of the Famine, landlords and agents in King's County were determined to regain control over both local and national politics and reassert their dominance over the tenantry. The 1847 general election had seen a victory for Repeal candidates despite assumptions that the party was in decline. Lord Palmerston believed that it was not natural that the Irish population had given victory to the Repeal party in 1847 after the British government had prevented the starvation of over three million people.<sup>169</sup> The parliamentary election of 1852 in King's County was a struggle for supremacy between the Catholic clergy and the landlords. For many tenants the fate of being ostracised by the local Catholic clergy was as fearful as being evicted by the landlord. In July 1852 *The Times* reported that the Roman Catholic clergy of King's County were not content with the success at the recent elections but that they continued to 'pour scorn on the renegades' who did not vote for Catholic candidates.<sup>170</sup> A report from Parsonstown in July 1852 before the election outlined the seriousness caused by agitation. 'This town is the scene at this moment of the most frightful excitement and disorder that can be conceived. The landlords are utterly paralysed; all their efforts to protect their tenantry from the open and undisguised in-

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<sup>167</sup> *House of Lords Debates*, vol 134, 599-605 (23 Jun. 1854).

<sup>168</sup> *Correspondence with reference to Drainage and Valuation of Lands of Kilconcouse, in King's County*, H.C. 1862 [286] liii.615.

<sup>169</sup> Thomas P. O'Neill, 'The organisation and administration of relief 1845-52' in Edwards and Williams (eds) *The Great Famine*, p. 255.

<sup>170</sup> *The Times*, 31 Jul. 1852.

timidation of the priests have been unavailing'.<sup>171</sup> A combination of a small electorate and public voting meant that landlords and their agents knew who the tenants voted for at election time. This highly contentious election was also commemorated in a poem 'The star of noble King's County' which praised the efforts of Fr MacMahon of Kinnitty:

'It was in or about the year fifty-three, when our members were all re-elected to be,

And we were resolved to put down tyranny, all over the noble King's County.

Our voters as they did before, at Birr, Philipstown and in fair Tullamore,

With brave Fr MacMahon, the pride of the corps and the star of the noble King's County'.<sup>172</sup>

On the day of the 1852 election George Garvey had many of the Durrow tenants assembled at Norbury's residence in a show of support for the Bernard candidature. However Fr O'Farrell of Durrow appeared and 'with some empty cars used all sorts of spiritual and physical threats to induce the tenants to accompany him to vote for O'Brien and Bland'.<sup>173</sup> Despite the obvious influence on voting by the Catholic clergy the candidates promised to remember the rights of tenants and religion.<sup>174</sup> Writing to *The Nation* newspaper in August 1852, a commentator using the pseudonym 'Rusticus' criticised two landlords in the county who he believed to be 'of no repute or little character'. According to the writer Lord Rosse had left his place 'in the world of science' to lecture on the management of land and local politics. When the results of the election were known, Rosse had ordered his agent to recover the rent and arrears of all those who had dared to vote against the landlords interest. Sarcastically, and playing on Rosse's scientific achievements, 'Rus-

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<sup>171</sup> Ibid, 25 Jul. 1852.

<sup>172</sup> 'The star of the noble King's County' (typescript O.R.C.). MacMahon led the movement of freeholders in the 1852 election and ensured that Capt Thomas Bernard was defeated by Sir Patrick O'Brien (1,976 votes) and Loftus H. Bland (1,839 votes).

<sup>173</sup> *KCC*, 28 Jul. 1852.

<sup>174</sup> *The Nation*, 19 Jan. 1852.

ticus' believed that the earl would soon be able to announce another discovery, that is in 'screwing the very last farthing out of the mere Irish'. Francis Valentine Bennett's 'crowbar brigade' also impounded the cattle, corn and belongings of tenants who owed arrears to the estate in the wake of the election result.<sup>175</sup> It was just another facet in the complex relationship of landlord and tenant in King's County, a facet that would become much more prominent as the tenantry became politically more empowered with the rise of the Home Rule movement from the early 1870s and landlords and agents alike were held up as symbols of everything that nationalist Ireland wanted to overthrow.

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<sup>175</sup> Ibid, 28 Aug. 1852.

## CONCLUSION

‘Black sheep disgrace any flock but it is unjust to characterise them all for the tyrannical and petty meanness of one individual’.

John Corcoran, agent on the Cassidy estate, quoted in *KCC*, 20 Oct. 1852.

An important task of many land agents in the early 1850s was the surveying and mapping of the estate in an effort simply to ascertain who was left after the Famine and who held what land. One such survey was undertaken by John Logan on the Rosse estate at Parsonstown that took four years to complete. The survey provides evidence of the impact of the Famine and the radical transformation of the estate in its aftermath. On the basis of Logan’s work, George Garvey, who was appointed agent of the Rosse estate in 1853, believed that the Famine had caused a ‘revolution in Irish landed property’. He noted in particular the ‘confusion where small tenancies have been numerous and where immediate interests usually termed middlemen have ceased to exist’. This observation points to two separate issues: one, that the Famine had obliterated the middlemen and secondly where that happened small holders who survived found themselves in a limbo, not knowing who to look to for the future. In all likelihood many of these same smallholders were later cleared from the Rosse estate (see below) in order to make way for more viable holdings for it became Garvey’s primary objective to ‘restore and establish order in the rent accounts as well as in the division’s arrangements and valuations of the respective farms’. The rules for the management of the Rosse estates ‘so equitably, liberally and considerably framed’ in 1847 were to be continued with some revisions and additions. These included the ending of the rundale system, the drainage of all lands and

the stipulation that all improvements needed prior sanction from the agent before they could be carried out. Significantly, the 'return to extensive cultivation of potatoes' was discouraged.<sup>1</sup>

Garvey quickly moved to collect what rents he could and received over £11,134 in rent in 1854 (although arrears still amounted to over £6,000).<sup>2</sup> As happened following the publication of the 1847 estate 'rules', a large clearance of tenants was undertaken by Garvey in 1853 and 1854. These evictions resulted in the loss of over £1,404 in arrears, but both Rosse and Garvey believed this was necessary going forward. As noted above these were smallholders. Those evicted included James Towers of Carrigeen, Deborah Guinan at Clonbonniff and, at Fadden, several others including the Claffey and Malone families. These were all smallholders who owed small amounts of arrears. On the other hand, and further evidence of the discrimination against smallholders, was the fact that larger tenants such as Nancy Scully and J. Kennedy at Killeen who owed arrears of £350 were allowed to re-enter their holdings as caretakers and given six months to pay. Generally, and this applied to many King's County estates, the philosophy going forward was that the arrears of smallholders could be done without, it was more important to gain access to their lands so that they could be redistributed in the process of creating more viable farms and in some cases extensive ranches. One of the best examples of this was at Kinnitty where Colonel Bernard was reported to have 'removed some smallholders for the enlargement of his own monster farms'. In the late 1860s, *The Times* questioned why 'a

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<sup>1</sup> 'Address from George Garvey to the tenantry of the Rosse estate, April 1853' (B.C.A., J/ 7/1-26).

<sup>2</sup> 'Rental of the Earl of Rosse's estates and cash account for one year beginning 1 Jan. to 31 Dec. 1854' (B.C.A., Q/106/ B).

single individual, an elderly gentleman [Bernard] without any family should hold in his own hands thousands of acres of arable land, while so many industrious people have to live by the cultivation of the soil and are unable to get a few acres to till'.<sup>3</sup> Other grazier landlords in the aftermath of the Famine included Nesbitt at Tubberdaly and Atkinson at Cangort. This shift to ranching was to cause its own problems in the years ahead and anti-grazierism would come to dominate the land question in King's County in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.<sup>4</sup>

\* \* \* \*

The aim of this thesis was to provide a comprehensive and systematic examination of the role of the land agent in King's County, particularly during the Great Famine drawing, where appropriate, on case studies of various agents. Chapter one described the impact that the end of the Napoleonic Wars had on the rural economy; economic dislocation allied to a growing population put excess strain on land but whether, as Roy Foster contends, the watershed year in the nineteenth century was 1815 rather than 1845 is disputable.<sup>5</sup> Certainly, as William Crawford's study of the Abercorn estates shows, when the transformation occurred many landlords realised that they had lost control of the situation because there were too many tenants on small holdings that were unviable.<sup>6</sup> The simultaneous growth in agrarian agitation meant that land agents faced many and varied challenges after 1815. One of the aims of this thesis was to examine whether as a body

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<sup>3</sup> *The Times*, 29 Oct. 1869.

<sup>4</sup> For a more indepth study of the ranch war in King's County see John Noel McEvoy, 'A study of the United Irish League in King's County 1899-1918' (Unpublished M.A. thesis, St Patrick's College, Maynooth, 1992).

<sup>5</sup> R.F. Foster, *Modern Ireland 1600-1972* (London, 1988), p. 318.

<sup>6</sup> W.H. Crawford, 'Landlord tenant relations in Ulster 1609-1820' in *Irish Economic and Social History*, ii (1975), pp 5-21.



agents were equipped to deal with these challenges, and the answer seems that they were not.

This thesis has argued that land agents were not a homogenous social group. They came from varying social backgrounds, though generally speaking connected somewhere along the line to the landed class. Some were professionally trained, others were appointed merely because they were related to the landlord, while others rose through the ranks in an apprentice-like manner. Their varying social backgrounds, education and training determined how, individually and collectively, they faced the numerous and challenging problems associated with estate management from the mid-1840s. The education of King's County agents was too varied and inconsistent in the pre-Famine decades for them to act coherently when faced with crisis and change. Even if it had been consistent, as Edward Hughes has noted, 'no professional training could guarantee the essential qualities of tact, acceptance and integrity'.<sup>7</sup> For many landlords it was simply a case of agents having an aptitude to keep law and order amongst the lower orders and to gather in their rents. Neither Richard Gamble nor George Greeson, who had been well educated for land agency were successful agents. On the other hand there were those who gained valuable experience in dealing with tenants through their business interests such as milling, transport and distilling and who were arguably more successful.

The findings for King's County more or less substantiate Eric Richards' argument for the Victorian English case that 'some agents had the grace and tact of the landlord' while others 'were of a rougher breed, the kind of man who relished in authority'. There were

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<sup>7</sup> Quoted in Maguire, *The Downshire estates*, p. 194.

both types in King's County: the likes of Francis Berry who was patriarchal towards his tenants in comparison to the likes of George Garvey who mirrored Richards' 'rougher breed' and who 'managed to tyrannise entire rural populations creating riot and an undying legacy of hatred'.<sup>8</sup> When the Famine struck in 1845 there were too many who were untrained or who lacked the necessary personal skills to cope with or alleviate distress amongst their tenantry. Indeed, agents such as the Manifolds too often put personal business interests first. (It has also been argued elsewhere in this thesis that there were those who were enticed into the agency business in the first place because of the potential benefit it brought to their own endeavours). Despite their ineffectiveness in dealing with tenants, improving the estate and collecting rent, few were ever relieved of their position. While the claim by some agents that they knew every tenant on an estate was somewhat dubious, they did know the locality and which tenants were likely to default on the payment of rent. For such reasons many were retained in their positions despite their shortcomings.

In the wider community the agent maintained social morals, enforced law and order, maintained the influence of the gentry and cultivated an attitude of deference towards them (even if deference is difficult to quantify). They acted as arbitrators and were supposedly the point of contact between landlord and tenant. As the case of Thomas Murray shows, they often reported to the landlord what he wanted to hear and so agents' letters to their employers were often manufactured to suit their own agenda. In many cases the agent was given advance notice that the landlord was to visit the estate and so this time to prepare too often masked reality. Did this mean that many landlords were

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<sup>8</sup> Richards, 'The land agent' in Mingay (ed.), *The Victorian countryside*, p. 439.

ignorant of the plight of the tenantry or indeed the fortunes of the estate? The employment of an agent who held multiple agencies was another problem. It was not possible for some like George Garvey to cater for the needs of the tenants on all of the estates for which he was agent, at least not in any consistent way. Employed by seven landlords during the period under discussion Garvey was a reviled figure as the number of attempts on his life indicate. For agents such as George Greeson or Arthur Fitzmaurice, who resided outside the county and who knew little of their tenants daily activity, this task was even more difficult.

The agents' social status was reflected in other positions that they held. For example James Devery was seneschal of the fairs and markets of Cloghan,<sup>9</sup> while Thomas Murray was a church warden and a member of the parish vestry of Castro Petre, Edenderry.<sup>10</sup> The Murrays were also actively involved in antiquarian pursuits and carried out numerous excavations in the locality. During drainage works of the River Boyne near Edenderry, which were carried out to provide relief during the Famine, many Stone, Bronze and Iron Age artefacts were found with which Thomas Richard Murray later used to open a museum in the town's market house.<sup>11</sup> Thomas Murray supported his son Henry's plan in the early 1840s to start a book club to educate tenants or at least to rival those formed by the Repeal party.<sup>12</sup> Likewise George Garvey was a member of the Royal Society of Antiquarians and was also responsible for having the medieval well of Saint Columcille re-

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<sup>9</sup> 'The estate of the earl of Fitzwilliam, Cloghan, in the barony of Garrycastle, King's County sold under the Incumbered Estates Court 15 April 1853' (O'Brien rentals).

<sup>10</sup> Edenderry Historical Society, *Edenderry then and now* (Tullamore, 1991), p. 38. See also Ridgeway papers (N.L.I., MS 8833 (10)).

<sup>11</sup> Reilly, *Edenderry 1820-1920*, p. 53.

<sup>12</sup> Rev E. O'Leary, 'Notes on the collection of Irish antiquities lately at Edenderry' in *Journal of the Kildare Archaeological Society*, iii (1899-1902), p. 325.

stored at Durrow Abbey in the late 1830s,<sup>13</sup> and was also a member of the Kilkenny and South East of Ireland Archaeological Society.<sup>14</sup> It could perhaps be argued that men such as these became custodians of the past; and it would make for an interesting study to determine what past they thought worthy of preserving. Arguably had their community involvement been more active and had they involved themselves in pursuits of a much wider socio-economic nature, they might have been more effective in stabilising landlord-tenant relations on their respective estates.

Chapter three has shown that regardless of their background or experience all agents employed on landed estates in King's County on the eve of the Famine faced numerous problems regarding leasing, subdivision, middlemen, overpopulation and a reluctance to embrace new farming methods that all hindered management policy. Agents reacted differently to each of these problems but generally speaking by the end of the 1830s, aided by the introduction of the Irish Poor Law Act of 1838, many resorted to clearances and assisted emigration. This study has shown that wide scale clearances of estates were taking place in the late 1830s and early 1840s prior to the Famine. That the government saw it necessary to introduce a bill to protect tenants against ejectment in 1840 is evidence that landlords had engaged in a widespread policy of eviction in the late 1830s.<sup>15</sup> At Edenderry on the Downshire estate, Thomas Murray had no regrets about the clearing of beggars and 'bad tenants' that he pushed to the edges of the bogs.<sup>16</sup> Similarly George

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<sup>13</sup> Michael Byrne, *Tullamore Catholic parish: A historical survey* (Tullamore, 1987), p. 15. See also *Journal of the Royal Society of Antiquarians of Ireland*, 1858.

<sup>14</sup> T.L. Cooke, 'Wayside ancient monument at Drishoge, King's County' in *Journal of the Kilkenny and South-East of Ireland Archaeological Society*, New Series, i, no.2 (1857), p. 383.

<sup>15</sup> *Ejectment and Replevin (Ireland). A Bill to amend the laws relating to Ejectment and Replevin in Ireland*, H.C. 1840, (13) ii. 391.

<sup>16</sup> Thomas Murray to Lord Downshire, 21 Feb. 1840 (DP/D/ 671/ C/ 9/ 625).

Garvey undertook to clear Norbury's estate which resulted in the murder of the earl, although it appears that the much reviled agent was the intended target of the assassins. Although such clearances were not as frequent or numerous as those carried out during the Famine, particularly after the introduction of the Gregory Clause and the Incumbered Estates Court, they acted as an important precursor for what was to come.

This work has also illustrated through various case studies that agents and employees of landed estates carried out their duties in the face of constant threat and harassment. While agents might contend that evictions were based on sound business sense, tenants did not see it this way. This was equally true before the Famine. John Manifold had his house and barn at Annamore, Drumcullen set on fire in April 1835.<sup>17</sup> In June of that year an attempt was made on the life of George Garvey.<sup>18</sup> In November 1838 Lord Bloomfield was one of many who received threatening letters, in this case on account of him employing 'a devil for his agent'.<sup>19</sup> Similarly, Lord Charleville was informed that many of the outrages committed in the county stemmed from the 'injustice of bad agents'.<sup>20</sup> Chapter five has shown that the litany of attacks on land agents (and other estate employees) which emphasised the perils of the profession particularly in periods of economic crisis.

John Corcoran's statement quoted at the beginning of this chapter should be noted as in all historical cases generalisations hide a myriad of exceptions and anomalies. On the eve of the Famine many land agents were endeavouring to improve the plight of the tenantry

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<sup>17</sup> Bernard Cummins to lord lieutenant, Dublin Castle 13 Apr. 1835 (O.P.K.C., 1835).

<sup>18</sup> *Nenagh Guardian*, 17 Mar. 1840; 7 Jul. 1841 and 27 Apr. 1842.

<sup>19</sup> Alfred G. Richardson to Lord Rossmore, 29 Nov. 1838 (Rossmore papers, T2929/4/65).

<sup>20</sup> J. Stewart to Lord Charleville, 20 Feb. 1839 (Charl. Pap., T/3069/D/17).

(and of course raise the estate rental capacity). Such efforts were most notably seen in the promotion of agricultural societies at Tullamore and Parsonstown, and a county society; projects of drainage and land reclamation and the employment of Scottish agriculturalists to oversee the same were carried out at the Rait, Rosse and Charleville estates; agricultural premiums were granted to ‘improving’ tenants and visits undertaken by agents to observe model farms and to promote similiar practice on their own estates proved beneficial. Francis Berry and Thomas Murray undertook trips to observe such farms, the latter visiting Belgium and Holland in 1838. In Berry’s case tenants were brought from the Charleville estate to the Gosford estate in county Armagh to observe the pioneering works of the noted William Blacker. However it must be remembered that modernisation and the advance of agricultural knowledge and practice resulted in the clearance of tenants from some estates, and this became a more formidable social memory than improvement.

In the pre-Famine period land agents were often restricted by their employers’ financial position. Mortgages, loose accounting, fire, murder, death, family charges and financial embarrassments all contributed to demise of certain estates by the 1840s. The debt that the Charleville estate had accumulated by 1844 resulted in the second earl residing throughout the Famine in Berlin to avoid debtors. With a reversionary company overseeing the finances of the estate, Francis Berry was severely curtailed in his duties and his correspondence and workload doubled as he served two masters. Lord Downshire borrowed £185,000 in the period 1810 to 1840.<sup>21</sup> The marquess died while surveying his estate at Blessington, county Wicklow in April 1845, leaving a successor who knew little of

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<sup>21</sup> Dooley, *A research guide*, p. 24.

his southern properties. His correspondence with the Edenderry agent Thomas Murray does not appear to have been as frequent as his fathers. However Murray experienced his own personal hardship during the Famine. His daughter Caroline died in August 1846 aged twenty; his wife Margaret died in March 1847 aged fifty-nine while a son William died in the early 1850s.<sup>22</sup> The impact of such personal tragedies should hardly be minimised in assessing Murray's management of the vast Downshire estate. Likewise the destruction of Samuel Robinson's mill at Clara by fire in February 1840 had a considerable impact on his tenantry and the town of Clara. Prior to the burning almost 14,000 barrels of oats per week were brought to the mill.<sup>23</sup> There is no legislating for an accident such as this that undoubtedly impacted upon a whole community and made all the difference between survival and disappearance during the Famine. At Parsonstown the third earl of Rosse was preoccupied with his scientific endeavours and the building of the great telescope. Despite ordering the reorganisation of his 'estate rules' in 1847, Rosse could have done more to prevent the plight of his tenantry in the late 1840s, even if there could be claims that numerous building projects at Birr Castle alleviated some of the distress caused by the Famine. This is possibly best exemplified in the 'celebrations' held at Parsonstown to mark the end of the Famine. In February 1851 Rosse provided an extravagant display of fireworks for his tenants which included the wheel piece, roman candles, rockets and tourbillons. According to the *King's County Chronicle* 'no pains or expense was spared in their procurement', the final bill estimated to be in excess of

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<sup>22</sup> Edenderry Historical Society, *Edenderry then and now*, p. 54.

<sup>23</sup> *FJ*, 17 Feb. 1840.

£400.<sup>24</sup> There is no evidence that he ever provided a lump sum such as this for local Famine relief.

As is evident from chapters four and five, agents in King's County did not act as a body in the face of the crisis caused by the Famine much to the detriment of the tenantry. Certainly the individual actions of many such as Francis Berry and Henry Sheane highlight that some acted with great sincerity and kindness but collectively they failed miserably. In his reminiscences of the Famine, William O'Connor Morris believed that the landlords of King's County were not a wealthy class and many did not have the means to give employment or stem the tide of Famine.<sup>25</sup> However as Tim O'Neill has argued the wealthy landlords of the county could have done more to alleviate the plight of the poor and he highlighted the case of Lord Digby who left more than a million pounds when he died in 1856.<sup>26</sup> Ironically from 1857 onwards there were significantly more improvements carried out on the Geashill estate heretofore and approximately £100,000 spent on the same to make the estate more profitable. Such expenditure a decade previously possibly was not contemplated because of the existence of so many impoverished on the estate. During the initial stages of the Famine agents provided abatements of rent, did not press for arrears, offered instruction on the planting of potatoes; oversaw the distribution of meal and corn and administered relief schemes such as road building and drainage. Agents such as Berry, Sheane, Heenan and Richard Gamble through his role as secretary of the Killoughy relief committee led the way but were not alone in this regard. However many were rendered useless or ineffectual in the administration of local relief committees by

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<sup>24</sup> KCC, 5 & 12 Feb. 1851.

<sup>25</sup> O'Connor Morris, *Memories*, pp 98-100.

<sup>26</sup> O'Neill, 'The Famine in Offaly', p. 710.



the involvement of landlords and the Church of Ireland rectors. Agents such as Greeson, Gamble, Hamilton and Garvey took what they could from the land and cared little for the tenant's plight. Others like Robert Nugent were preoccupied with self advancement and did little outside their routine duties for the estate. It was this type of inactivity that led to their later representation in Irish social memory but sight should not be lost of the fact that culpability was also shared by the land grabbers, gombeen men and the money lenders, described by Haines as the 'merciless and rapacious ogres of the Irish village'.<sup>27</sup>

Moreover, evict their debtors or be dispossessed by their creditors was the choice that many landlords faced in the 1840s.<sup>28</sup> These creditors were just as remorseless in pressing for their money as the landlords were in evicting tenants.<sup>29</sup> The case of Robert Cassidy is instructive. Throughout the 1830s and 1840s Cassidy, a Catholic landlord, endeavoured to improve the plight of his tenantry and was a prominent member of the Repeal party in the county and championed the politics espoused by Daniel O'Connell and later the Young Irelanders. However, by the late 1840s output from his distillery at Monasterevin, county Kildare was severely affected by the Famine and thus greater emphasis was put in collecting rent and arrears on his King's County estate. In 1849 Cassidy began to evict several tenants at Killyon, Drumcullen and Cullawaun and incurred the wrath of the Catholic clergy. His eviction policy during this time determined his representation in local social memory which has depicted him as being amongst the 'merciless' landlord class.<sup>30</sup> Had not the Famine intervened he may have been remembered very differently; his per-

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<sup>27</sup> Haines, *Charles Trevelyan*, p. 23.

<sup>28</sup> Donnelly Jr., 'Landlords and tenants' in Vaughan (ed.) *A new history*, p. 336.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid*, p. 344.

<sup>30</sup> See newspapers clippings included in the Cassidy papers which indicate that the memory of the Famine evictions were frequently recalled (N.L.I.).

sonal diaries of the 1830s and early 1840s show his involvement in the local community and his benevolence towards tenants at Killyon and elsewhere, a benevolence which until now has been lost.

In turn the agent was put under severe pressure as landlords simply looked for the rent to be remitted to them. K.H. Connell suggests that ‘absentee owners told agents to send money not arrears or expenses’.<sup>31</sup> On some King’s County estates tenants owed between three and five years rent. Although evictions had already begun in earnest in 1847 it was the introduction of the Gregory clause in 1848 (just as the Poor Law Act a decade earlier had) which facilitated the wholesale clearance of tenants. Agents were willing to forego arrears believing that large farmers would take over holdings of those who were removed and provide a healthy rent roll for the estate. However, as the records of the Killoughy relief committee highlight, by 1848 many large farmers were themselves seeking relief such was their circumstances.

The fact that eviction was a daily threat for many Irish tenants ensured that the memory of the Famine and subsequent emigration loomed large in the Irish psyche. The clearances and assisted emigration helped create an Irish Diaspora scarred by the Famine and who later used this calamity as a backdrop to subsequent agitation. In King’s County the clearances of estates were greater in the 1850s than they had been during the years of the Famine. This possibly points to one of the reasons why it became one of the most dis-

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<sup>31</sup> K.H. Connell, ‘Land and population in Ireland 1780-1845’ in *The Economic History Review*, ii, no. 3 (1950), pp 278-89.

turbed counties during the 1850s and 1860s in terms of agrarian agitation.<sup>32</sup> Yet it is the Famine clearances which are more vividly recollected in social memory, or at least clearances associated with the Famine, rather than those of the later decades.

While hunger and disease as well as clearances and emigration led to a dramatic decrease in the population of King's County, particularly at the lower end of the social scale, it also represented an opportunity for landlords to address the middleman system of management of estates. For example on the Cox estate near Tullamore new leases included covenants against subletting and middlemen.<sup>33</sup> Undoubtedly many middlemen disappeared but the system itself continued in King's County into the 1850s. Indeed as late as 1880 Toler Garvey told the Bessborough Commission that middlemen and the rundale system were still in operation in King's County; in one instance on twenty-six acres there were fifteen tenants who farmed ninety-eight lots.<sup>34</sup>

Some of the old school of agents became more stringent under new employers. When Charles William George Bury succeeded to the Charleville estate in 1851 its fortunes began to improve. In an eighteen month period some £2,264 was spent on the embellish-

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<sup>32</sup> See *The Times*, 15 & 24 Aug. and 10 Nov. 1859. It is interesting that clearances in Scotland in the mid-nineteenth century have been commemorated by memorials and public apologies in recent times. One such memorial is to the duke of Sutherland who organised many of the clearances. See Malcolm Gray, 'The Highland Potato Famine of the 1840s' in *The Economic History Review, New Series*, vii, no.3 (1955), pp 357-68. See also Liz Young, 'Spaces for Famine: A Comparative Geographical Analysis of Famine in Ireland and the Highlands in the 1840s' in *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers, New Series*, xxi, no. 4 (1996), pp 666-80.

<sup>33</sup> 'Particulars of the sale of the estate of Sir William Cox, Knight of Tinnycross, Tullamore May 1856' (O.R.C.).

<sup>34</sup> *Royal Com. of Inquiry into Working of Landlord and Tenant (Ireland) Acts. Report, Digest and Minutes of Evidence, Appendices*, p. 219, H.C. 1881, [C.2779] [C.2779-I] [C.2779-II] [C.2779-III] xviii.1, 73, xix.1, 825.

ment of the demesne and gardens offering considerable local employment to labourers.<sup>35</sup> By 1854 arrears on the Charleville estate stood at £2,256 (temporary allowances of £696 had been made.) However, Francis Berry was successful in collecting almost £9,000 in rents from 1851 to 1853. In a letter to the editor of the *King's County Chronicle* in 1852, 'Aliquis' highlighted what he termed the 'evils' that existed in King's County – he was particularly critical of two estate agents (and their employers) who were accused of taking on new tenants at a lesser rent if they were of higher social standing – but praised the efforts of Francis Berry, Lord Charleville's 'upright agent' who was 'doing justly' and showing 'loving mercy'. He was deemed exceptional as not every agent 'was at liberty to speak their minds honestly and plainly to some great landed proprietor'.<sup>36</sup> This was despite the fact that four bailiffs were employed to assist Berry in the recovery of arrears and the levelling of cabins on the estate in the early 1850s.<sup>37</sup>

A new generation of agents were equally stringent and often more professional in their training and approach as well as commercially more flexible: there were some who encouraged new estate ventures including the mining of lead at Blundell Hill, Edenderry and copper in the Slieve Bloom Mountains at Kinnitty.<sup>38</sup> The new generation included William Steurt Trench who arrived at the Digby estate in 1857. When commencing the agency Trench stated that it was formerly 'one of the most wretched and discouraging in Ireland abounding in squatters, mud hovels and moors saturated with water'.<sup>39</sup> He quickly

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<sup>35</sup> Ibid.

<sup>36</sup> *KCC*, 4 Feb. 1852.

<sup>37</sup> 'Rental to 25 March 1854 signed by Francis Berry (agent) for the earl of Charleville' (Charleville MS, O.R.C.).

<sup>38</sup> John Locke, *Ireland's recovery* (London, 1855), p. 79. See also John Beare, *Improvement of Ireland: a letter to the King on the practical improvement of Ireland* (London, 1827).

<sup>39</sup> Trench, *Realities*, p. 330.

began to exert his influence over the tenants and in his own words changed the estate ‘from sterility and waste to rich and abundant pasture, well fenced and divided into fields of sufficient size and sheltered by belts of plantation’.<sup>40</sup> To overhaul the pre-Famine problems Trench broke the existing leases and carried out wholesale evictions. In total over 260 families were evicted from the estate in that year. In January 1858 the *Nation* reported that Trench had raised the rents ‘enormously’ and now ‘every new tenant is required under penalty of expulsion to put his name to a paper of rules and regulations of the most odious and grinding tyrannical character’.<sup>41</sup> Countering such claims Trench highlighted that nearly £100,000 was spent on improvements during his tenure as agent.<sup>42</sup> Of this figure some £32,795 was spent by Trench in the first ten years which included drainage and land improvement.<sup>43</sup> Revealingly Trench’s memory in local lore is more associated with hardships caused by his estate policies than his improvements.<sup>44</sup>

The problem with social memory is that it is very selective and discriminatory. For example it fails to record facts such as that in 1852 when George Heenan resigned as agent on the Rosse estate, over 250 tenants entertained him to a dinner at Dooley’s Hotel, Parsonstown ‘to evince their gratitude for the great leniency with which they have been treated by him during the last few years of distress and depression’.<sup>45</sup> It is not hard to

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<sup>40</sup> Breen, ‘Landlordism in King’s County’, p. 638

<sup>41</sup> *Nation*, 30 Jan. 1858.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid*, 15 Jun. & 13 Jul. 1861. See also Breen, ‘Landlordism in King’s County’ p. 659.

<sup>43</sup> Trench, *Realities*, p. 330.

<sup>44</sup> In a number of other much publicised events including the case of Alice Delin, the memory of Trench as agent at Geashill was firmly established. Delin was arrested on Christmas Eve 1861 as she begged for sugar and later died in Tullamore gaol. See *The Case of the old and respected Alice Delin... 'Done to death' on Christmas Eve in the barony of Geashill. No beggar!* (Dublin, 1862). Another woman, Jane Egan, aged seventy two was arrested for begging a halfpenny in Geashill. See also Lyne, *The Lansdowne estate*, p. 261 and Harrison, ‘From King’s County to Quinnsland’, p. 735.

<sup>45</sup> Undated newspaper account [*The Times*] supplied by Tim Insley to this author.

imagine who was present, undoubtedly those who had consolidated their position in the aftermath of the Famine. While agents, in social memory, bore the brunt of criticism from Nationalists for their role in evictions and clearances during the Famine, little was said from Land League platforms and so on about those who acquired land and subsequently social and political status as a result of these clearances.<sup>46</sup>

While landlords went bankrupt and were forced into the Incumbered Estates Court, the fortunes of individual agents also suffered. First of all their income, based on their ability to collect rent, obviously suffered. Secondly when the Famine changed perceptions about the professionalisation of land agents, and, in turn estate management policies, many of the old type of land agents disappeared as more professional agency firms came into vogue. However, from those in the case study, the Garveys, for example, continued as land agents in the county until the 1940s. George's son Toler Roberts was involved in the 'Plan of Campaign' in the late 1880s. In his study of the Plan in Ireland, Laurence Geary concludes that it was the appointment of Toler Garvey which led to the trouble at Broughal.<sup>47</sup> Richard Wilson Gamble continued as a land agent in the post-Famine period. He became a member of the Historical and Literary Society of Ireland to whom he frequently presented lectures.<sup>48</sup> He was also an accomplished writer and wrote about the major issues of the day including landlord and tenant relations and the Land Act of 1870.<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>46</sup> Bew, *Ireland*, p. 214.

<sup>47</sup> Laurence M. Geary, *The Plan of Campaign, 1886-1891* (Cork, 1986), pp 155-7. Some papers relating to the Toler Garvey agency and the Banon estate survive in the Birr Castle archive. See Malcomson, *Calendar of the Rosse papers*, pp 141, 186.

<sup>48</sup> Richard Wilson Gamble, *An address to the member of the Historical and Literary Society on 19 February 1855* (Dublin, 1855).

<sup>49</sup> A selection of the Gamble's writings include *Suggestions as to why the legislature should interfere to secure tenant compensation* (Dublin, 1866); *Compensation for improvements made by tenants in Ireland:*

Having been called to the bar in 1851 Gamble was appointed to the county court judge of Armagh and Louth in 1885, a position he held until his death in 1887. Prior to being called to the bar he was employed as a reporter for the *Daily Express* at a rate of 10s 6d per day.<sup>50</sup> He was also an unsuccessful candidate for the parliamentary boroughs of Rochdale in 1874 and 1880 and Halifax in 1876. Thomas Murray was replaced in 1850 by his son, Thomas Richard, and remained in the position until 1893. In 1891 Murray was described as a ‘fatherly figure’ by the people of Edenderry and praised for the fact that the town was a ‘model of cleanliness’.<sup>51</sup> The Manifold’s continued to double as large farmers and millers and during and after the Famine were amongst those who benefited from the misfortune of others. In the 1850s they accumulated large tracts of land through the Incumbered Estate Court. The sons of other King’s County land agents were also considerable landowners by the 1870s and included William Berry, son of Francis who owned 800 acres valued at £400 and Toler Robert Garvey of Thornvale held 1,300 acres valued at £840.<sup>52</sup> The Manifolds were still in residence at Heath Lodge in 1901 where they employed a cook, a herd, a yardman, a coachman and a maid.<sup>53</sup>

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*When and how far should it be secured by law* (London, 1867) and *Fair Rents? The only test is free contract... the report of the Royal Commission on the Land Act 1870: its errors as to fair rents* (Dublin, 1881).

<sup>50</sup> Byrne, *Legal Offaly*, pp 121-2. See also Wright, *King’s County directory*, p. 29.

<sup>51</sup> KCC, 28 May 1891.

<sup>52</sup> U.H. Hussey De Burgh, *The landowners of Ireland: An alphabetical list of the owners of estates of 500 acres or £500 valuation and upwards in Ireland with the acreage and valuation in each county* (Dublin, 1876).

<sup>53</sup> Pey, *Eglisish*, p. 364.

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In 1844 the editor of the Young Irelander newspaper, the *Nation* expressed the view that ‘sharpness and harshness are too often the best qualification in an agent’.<sup>54</sup> In the same year, a King’s County landlord, John Hussey Walsh of Kilduff, argued that the management of estates had been left to ‘low and unprincipled people’ and as a result of the actions of sub-agents and bailiffs ‘the tenants are reduced to a state of misery and insolvency’.<sup>55</sup> It was pointed out in the introduction to this work that such perceptions as these influenced the stereotypical representation of Irish agents that became widespread in the aftermath of the Famine (and, indeed, had existed beforehand) and that despite a recent plethora of work published about this period in Irish history, the land agent has remained largely neglected and his function seen as little more than a rent collector. This work has shown the need to reappraise this perception and has challenged many of the existing generalisations and presumptions. The role of the agent was much more complex. His actions were determined by the social, political and economic conditions of the time but had also much to do with his personality and the private and financial circumstances of his employer. As in every aspect of life there were the good and the bad; as John Corcorans quote at the beginning of this chapter suggests, certainly not all should have been tainted with the same ‘black sheep’ image.

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<sup>54</sup> *The Nation*, 3 Nov. 1844.

<sup>55</sup> *Devon Commission*, p. 635.



## Appendix 1

### Major landlords in King's County in the mid-nineteenth century (Key to map four)<sup>1</sup>

No.	Name	No.	Name	No.	Name	No.	Name	No.	Name
1	Digby	29	Longworth	57	Winter	85	O'Brien	113	Hume
2	Rosse	30	Gamble	58	Turpin	86	Plunkett	114	Downes
3	Charleville	31	Kemmis	59	Erasmus Smith	87	Pierce	115	Gatchell
4	Downshire	32	Banon	60	Harding	88	Fox	116	Hoare
5	Bernard	33	Hobbs	61	W. Grace	89	Briscoe	117	Ashtown
6	Coote	34	Robinson	62	Vaughan	90	O'Connor Morris	118	Morrison
7	Jones	35	Burdett	63	Palmer	91	North	119	Fawcett
8	Hughes	36	Kane & Dowling	64	Lloyd	92	Johnston	120	Tibeaud
9	Higgins	37	Trench	65	Toome	93	Chenevix	121	Newcombe
10	Fuller	38	Bloomfield	66	Atkinson	94	Greene	122	Poole
11	Cox	39	Bennett	67	TCD	95	Grogan	123	Reps Kelly
12	McGuinness	40	Persse	68	Jackson	96	Coffey	124	Odlum
13	Mooney	41	Blake	69	Wolfe	97	Bor	125	Smyth
14	Mullock	42	Perry	70	White	98	Ponsonby	126	Warburton
15	Bishop of Meath	43	O'Connor Morris	71	Cooper Penrose	99	Dames	127	Reps Dillon
16	Robbins	44	Stoney	72	Jackson	100	Jeffers	128	Vincent
17	Lauder	45	Holmes	73	Lady Carden Smith	101	Fletcher	129	Portarlington
18	Ashbrook	46	Smith	74	Taylor	102	Wakely	130	Evans
19	L'Estrange	47	Clarke	75	Jones & Adamson	103	Nesbitt	131	Tarleton
20	Armstrong	48	Biddulph	76	Spinner	104	Trimleston	132	Rev Clarke
21	Alexander	49	Clarke	77	Norbury	105	Milltown		
22	Gore	50	Darby	78	Minchin	106	Brownrigg		
23	King	51	Baldwin	79	Burrows	107	Manly		
24	Berers	52	Hackett Simpson	80	Andrews	108	Garden		
25	Drought	53	Mullins	81	Mornington	109	Lucas		
26	Murray	54	Harden	82	Hornridge	110	Steeven's Hospital		
27	Thompson	55	Winter	83	Levings	111	Tuthill		
28	Bagwell	56	Westenra	84	Kemmis	112	Harte		

<sup>1</sup> See Breen, 'Landlordism in King's County', p. 637, 676-7.

## Appendix 2

### Landed estates in King's County over 1,000 acres c. 1838

Landlord	Location	Size(acres)	Absentee	Resident
Earl of Digby	Geashill	30,627	A	
Earl of Rosse	Parsonstown	25,167		R
Earl of Charleville	Tullamore	23,370	A	
Capt Thos Bernard	Kinnitty	15,979		R
Marquis of Downshire	Edenderry	13,928	A	
Garrett O'Moore	Cloghan	9,456		R
Henry Peisley L'Estrange	Moystown	8,000		R
Armstrong	Ballycumber	6,042		R
Col Lloyd	Shinrone	5,481		R
FV Bennett	Thomastown	5,322		R
Thomas Mulock	Lemanaghan	5,200		R
RJE Mooney	Doon	4,800		R
Francis L Dames	Rhode	4,809		R
Lord Ashtown	Bracknagh	4,414	A	
Lord Rossmore	Sharavogue	3,992	A	
Rev Henry King	Ballylin	3,900		R
Trinity College	Endrim/ Creggan	3,885	A	
Earl of Norbury	Durrow	3,598		R
Robert Cassidy	Killyon	2,582	A	
Sir George Gore	Ferbane	2,306	A	
Dr Steeven's Hospital	Philipstown	2,237	A	
Frederick Ponsonby	Cloghan	2,134		R
Mrs. Dowdall	Clara	2,095		R
James Rolleston	Frankford	2,031		R

Lord Ponsonby	Philipstown	2,000	A	
Andrew Gamble	Killooly	1,808		R
Lord Trimleston	Rhode	1,600	A	
O'Connor Morris	Pallas	1,423		R
Lord Mornington	Clara	1,360	A	
Erasmus Smith School	Banagher	1,315	A	
Sir William Cox	Tinnycross	1,240	A	
Lord Bloomfield	Moneygall	1,230		R
George Rait	Rhode	1,200		R

### Appendix 3

#### Land agents associated with the management of landed estates in King's County 1838 to 1853

<b>Name</b>	<b>Estate</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Other profession (where known)</b>
Ashton, John	W.H. Turpin	Forelock	
Baker, Arthur	Sir Andrew Armstrong	Gallen	Solicitor
Bailey, Daniel	Dr Belton	Lumcloon	
	Earl of Mornington	Clara	
Bagnall, Abraham	Rev Henry King	Ballylin	
Barnes, Joseph	Charles C. Palmer	Edenderry	
Bennett, Frederick P.	Francis Bennett	Thomastown	
Berry, Francis	Earl of Charleville	Tullamore	Solicitor
Berry, Thomas	Capt Nesbitt	Tubberdaly, Rhode	
Blunden, Mr	Earl of Glandore		
Boland, James	W.B. Buchanan	Glynn	
Bracken, Edward	Court of Chancery	Lumpcloon	
Briscoe, Edward	William Briscoe	Ballycowan	
Bryant, John	E.J. Briscoe	Ross, Tullamore	
Butler, Gerard Villiers	Col Westenra	Sharavogue	
Cage, Charles Trench	Chris St. George	Ferbane	
Colgan, Michael	Mrs. Colgan	Durrow	
Connolly, Mr	Dean Laufane	Ballinamere	
Cooper, Samuel	Erasmus Smith Schools	Banagher	
Corcoran, John	Robert Cassidy	Killyon	
Cox, Capt Charles	Sir Charles St George	Coolestown	
	Sir William Cox	Clara	

Crampton, George	William Carter	Eglis	
Dennis, Edward	Trinity College Dublin	Killmurryley	
Devery, James	Frederick Ponsonby	Cloghan	
	Earl of Fitzwilliam	Cloghan	
Doorly, Terence	Richard Malone	Pallas	
Drought, Philip	John A. Drought	Lettybrook	
	Cmmrs. of Education	Banagher	
Dunne, James	John O'Brien	Rahan	
Fallon, Robert	Mrs. Dowdall	Clara	
Fawcett, Paul	Rev Ralph Coote	Rahan	
Fitzgerald, David	Chris St. George	Ferbane	Attorney
Fitzgerald, Rev Henry	Rev Henry King	Ferbane	Clergy
Fitzmaurice, Arthur	W.F. Burton		Solicitor
French, Dawson	William Johnson	Tullamore	
Gamble, Andrew	W O'Connor Morris	Mount Pleasant	Solicitor
Gamble, R.W.	Andrew Gamble	Killooly	Solicitor
	N Biddulph	Rathrobin	
Garvey, George	Bassett W Holmes	Moneygall	Navy Officer
	Drought	Whigsborough	
	RJE Mooney	Doon	
	Norbury	Durrow	
	O.F. Toler	Parsonstown	
	Bennett	Thomastown	
	Rosse	Parsonstown	
	R Tyndall	Ballymeely	
Gatchell, John	Gardiner	Coolestown	
Gibbs, George	Tyrell	Warrenstown	Solicitor

Greeson, George	Mrs. Armstrong	Kilcoursey	Solicitor
	Holmes	Ballycumber	
Going, Caleb	Johanna Going	Ratheshill	
Greer, Thomas	Mathew Higgins	Gurteen, Kilcoursey	
Haire, Mr	Viscount Ashbrook	Shannonbridge	
Hamilton, Charles	Tyrrell	Rooske, Edenderry	
	Gifford	Castlejordan	
Handcock, Charles	Lord Castlemaine	Tubber	
Heenan, George	Earl of Rosse	Parsonstown	Doctor
	Garrett O'Moore	Cloghan	
Hopkins, Edward	Lord Ponsonby	Philipstown	
Howard & Palmer	Court of Chancery	Kyle, Kinnitty	
Hunt, E.L.	Banagher Royal Classical School	Banagher	
Joly, Jasper Robert	Gifford	Castlejordan	
Jones, Robert Lloyd	Rev Henry King	Co Leitrim	
Maher, Mr	Mrs. Minnitt	Annabeg	
Manifold, Daniel	Capt T. Bernard	Kinnitty	Miller
Manifold, John	Capt T. Bernard	Kinnitty	Miller
Manifold, Thomas	Capt. Valentine Bennett	Thomastown	Miller
Manifold, William Ross	W. O'Connor Morris	Mount Pleasant	Miller
Matthews, Edward	Joseph Gough	Lurgan, Kilcoursey	
Mayne, John	St. George Gore	Ferbane	
McDonald, John	Rev W. Minchin	Moneygall	
	R. Going		
	Rev J.C. Walker		
	W. Harding		

Meredith, William	Rev John Baldwin	Clonaslee, Queens Co.	
Minchin, Stephen W.	William Minchin	Busherstown	
Moore, John H.	Garrett O' Moore	Cloghan	
Moore, R.L.	Marquis of Drogheda	Dovehill	
Moylan, Michael	Christopher Haughton	Banagher	
Murray, Thomas	Marquis of Downshire	Edenderry	Surveyor
Murray, Thomas R.	Marquis of Downshire	Edenderry	Engineer
O'Connor Morris, W	O'Connor Morris	Mount Pleasant	Judge
O'Hara, Mr	Dames	Warrenstown	Attorney
	Gifford	Castlejordan	
O'Reilly, John	Oliver Plunkett	Tubber	
O'Reilly, Philip	Robert Blossie Lynch	Banagher	
Owen, Mr	Erasmus Smith Schools	Banagher	
Price, John Robinson	Marquis of Lansdowne	Killnagall, Ballyboy	
Pyke, Robert	Robert Cassidy	Killyon	Engineer
Reamsbottom, W.J.	Benjamin Humphrey	Ballycumber	
	John Emerson	Ballycumber	
	Arthur S. Bride	Ballycumber	
Redden, Patrick	Major Jackson	Emmel West	
Reynolds, E	Lord Rossmore	Clonscara	
Richardson, Alfred	Lord Rossmore	Sharavogue	
Ridgeway, Samuel	Court of Chancery	Kilcooney	
Robinson, John	Lord Milltown	Shinrone	
	Nicholas Biddulph	Rathrobin	
Rutherford, John	C.R. Baldwin	Lisduff	
Sadlier, John	Earl of Portarlington	Portarlington	
Sands, Charles S.	Sir Charles Coote	Ballycowan	

Sharpe, Richard	James Banks	Banagher	
Sheane, Henry	Rev Ball	Banagher	Merchant
Sherrard, Mr	Rodolph de Sales	Eglis	
	Sir R. Robinson	Eglis	
	Smith Berry	Eglis	
Smith, John	Sandford Palmer	Parsonstown	
	T.F. Golding	Parsonstown	
Smith, Robert	John Smith	Glasshouse	
Spinner, Henry	Francis E. Mooney	Doon	
Stewart & Kincaid	Lord Ponsonby	Philipstown	
Stoney, Robert J.	Mr Oakley	Parsonstown	Retired attorney
Tarleton, Robert	Earl of Digby	Geashill	
Telford, John	Capt Telford	Ballycowan	
Thompson, George	Earl of Digby	Geashill	
Thompson, Thomas	Peter Thompson	Garrycastle	
Trench, Henry	Francis H Toone	Shinrone	
Walpole, Mr	Thomas Bergin	Ettagh, Drumcullen	
Walsh, Thomas	William Longworth	Ballyboy	
Warburton, Henry	William Kemmis	Ballycowan	
	Earl of Rosse	Parsonstown	
White, William	Capt L'Estrange	Moystown	Bank Manager



#### Appendix 4

#### **Land stewards, under agents, bailiffs and other estate personnel involved in the management of landed estates in King's County 1838 to 1853**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Position</b>	<b>Estate</b>	<b>Location</b>
Allen, James	Clerk	Downshire	Edenderry
Bagnall, Robert	Bailiff	Charleville	Clonminch
Baker, Arthur	Land steward	M. of Drogheda	Portarlington
Beecham, Edward	Clerk	W. Reamsbottom	Ballycumber
Bermingham, John	Bailiff	John A. Burdett	Coolfin, Ferbane
Butler, JC	Rent collector	Col. Westenra	Sharavogue
Butler, Mr.	Land steward	William Trench	Cangort
Byrne, Mr	Land steward	Capt Nesbitt	Tubberdaly
Cahill, Michael	Bailiff	Rev B. Savage	Shinrone
Carroll, Michael	Sub-agent	Col. Westenra	Sharavogue
Cathcart, James	Land steward	Thos H. Mulock	Ballycumber
Cavanagh & O'Hagan	Law agents	Robert Cassidy	Killyon
Chitson, Charles	Land steward	Lord Trimleston	Warrenstown
Cloran, Timothy	Land steward	Capt Richardson	Rathbeg
Colgan, Michael	Driver	Court of Chancery	Kilcooney
Cope, William	Drainage expert	Downshire	Edenderry
Coughlan, Owen	Bailiff	Cassidy	Killyon
Daly, Bernard	Watcher	Court of Chancery	Lumcloon
Day, Thomas	Bailiff/ rent warner	F.V. Bennett	Thomastown
Deegan, James	Land steward	Francis Berry	Eglis
Duffery, John	Land steward	John Ridgeway	Ballydermot
Dunne, M	Herd	Roger North	Philipstown

Egan, Martin	Rent warner/ driver	Robert Lauder	Ferbane
Ellis, George	Process server	Robert Lauder	Ferbane
Fagan, Michael	Bailiff	Earl of Charleville	Tullamore
Fawcett, Paul	Sub-agent	Downshire	Edenderry
Feltus, Francis	Land steward	Col. Westenra	Sharavogue
Gill, Mr	Land steward	Roger North	Croghan
Gleeson, Denis	Caretaker	William Wells	Ballycormack
Grogan, Joseph	Sub agent	Lord Ponsonby	Philipstown
Grogan, Michael	Sub agent	Lord Ponsonby	Philipstown
Grogan, Peter	Bailiff	Earl of Charleville	Croghan
Hinsey, Mr.	Bailiff	Robert Cassidy	Killyon
Hogan, Thomas	Rent collector	Henry Trench	Banagher
Hume, Mr.	Land steward	Col. Bernard	Kinnitty
Hynes, John	Rent warner		Clonfanlough
Jackson, Mr.	Agriculturalist	O.F. Toler	Parsonstown
Jordan, Michael	Land surveyor	Capt T. Bernard	Kinnitty
Kemmy, Thomas	Bailiff	R.J.E. Mooney	Doon
Kennedy, James	Receiver of rent	Court of Chancery	Lumcloon
Keyes, Henry	Bailiff	Henry Kemmis	Ballicallahan
Killeen, James	Bailiff	Robert B. Lynch	Banagher
Larkin, John	Land steward	John Drought	Lettybrook
	Land steward	Miss Anne Burdett	
Lavin, Alexander	Caretaker	D.H. Vaughan	Shinrone
Leeson, John	Driver	Col. L'Estrange	Lusmagh
Little, Mr	Bailiff	Richard Malone	Pallas
Long, John	Sub-agent	Bassett Holmes	Clara/ Ballycumber
Lowe, John	Bailiff	Philip McCormick	Clonmacnoise

Lyle, Mr	Agriculturalist	Earl of Rosse	Parsonstown
Maffett, William	Rent receiver	Lord Bloomfield	Redwood
Malone, Edward	Bailiff	C. St. George Gore	Ferbane
	Keeper of rent	Garrett O'Moore	Cloghan
McComb, Robert	Bailiff	Downshire	Edenderry
McCormick, John	Driver	Luke Loftus Fox	Kilcooney
McLoughlin, A.	Woodranger	W. Armstrong	Ballycumber
McLoughlin, Patk.,	Bailiff	Lord Mornington	Clara
Meara, Dinny	Bailiff	Lord Bloomfield	Moneygall
Mills, Kenneth	Land steward	William H. Magan	Philipstown
Mitchell, Daniel	Bailiff	Sir George Gore	Ferbane
Mitchell, Patrick	Bailiff	Sir George Gore	Ferbane
Molloy, Thomas	Land steward	William Trench	Kilcooney
Molloy, Mr	Bailiff	Sir George Gore	Ferbane
Neale, Edward	Herd	George Rait	Rathmoyle
Nugent, Robert	Land steward	Rev Henry King	Ferbane
O'Driscoll, Wm. J.	Receiver of rent	Col. H. Lloyd	Gloster
Perry, George	Bailiff	Robert Cassidy	Killyon
Potter, Mr	Land Steward	Col. Westenra	Sharavogue
Porter, Thomas	Bailiff	Earl of Charleville	Walsh Island
Quinn, Mr	Sub-agent	Dillon	Philipstown
Quinn Jnr., Mr	Bailiff	Dillon	Philipstown
Reilly, Thomas	Bailiff	Norbury	Durrow
Roberts, Michael	Sub-agent	Lord Bloomfield	Moneygall
Ross, Mr.	Agriculturalist	Sylvester Rait	Warrenstown
Russell, Edward	Bailiff	Capt T. Bernard	Kinnitty
Ryan, Philip	Rent collector		Dunkerrin

Salmon, James	Bailiff	John Drought	Whigsborough
Saunderson, Adam	Land steward	Earl of Norbury	Durrow
Sheppard, Rev	Receiver of rent	Trinity College	Endrim/ Creggan
Sheppard, Thomas	Bailiff	Holmes	Clara
Sheppard, William	Bailiff	Holmes	Clara
Smith, Patrick	Bailiff	Rev B. Savage	Shinrone
	Receiver of rent	Smith Berry	Eglis
Stapleton, James	Sub-agent	Mr Pepper	Tipperary
Tierney, Patrick	Bailiff	Sir George Gore	Ferbane
Toone, Francis H	Receiver of rent	Trinity College	Endrim/ Creggan
Vancouver, Mr	Agriculturalist	Lord Shelbourne	Rahan
Watson, John	Rent collector	Bassett Holmes	Clara/ Ballycumber
Williams, Thomas	Watcher	Gamble	Killooly
Willis, William	Bailiff	Maunsell Andrews	Rathenny

## Appendix 5

### King's County houses valued at £30 and over in 1854<sup>2</sup>

<b>Lessor/ Owner</b>	<b>Residence</b>	<b>Valuation (£)</b>
Earl of Rosse	Oxmantown Hall	140
Earl of Charleville	Charleville Castle	130
Samuel Winter	Castlebernard	110
Earl of Norbury	Durrow Demesne	88
Lord Bloomfield	Ballinlough	85
Rev Henry King	Ballylin	74
D.H. Vaughan	Golden Grove	70
Lucreatia Taylor	Mount Heaton	65
Reps T Robinson	Townparks	62
Hardress Lloyd	Glassderrymore (Gloster)	55
JC Westernra	Sharavogue	53
T Bernard	Annaghbrack Glebe	50
G.A. Atkinson	Cangort Park	45
Capt Nesbitt	Tubberdaly	45
M Andrews	Rathenny	45
J.F. Rolleston	Dunkerrin	45
H Lloyd	Glasshouse	45
H Lloyd	Milltown	45

<sup>2</sup> See Breen, 'Landlordism in King's County', p. 643.

Mary Carden	Cooleshill	45
D.M. Hackett	Clonohill	45
Ambrose Cox	Clara	45
Earl of Charleville	Brookfield	41
Edward Grogan	Clonearl Demesne	40
Rev R. Clarke	Glebe East	40
Thomas Drought	Balliver	40
Lord Ashbrooke	Moystown Demesne	40
John Wakely	Greenhills	40
F.H. Toome	Ballinacor	38
Earl Digby	Dalgan, Geashill	36
Henry Trench	Cuba, Rynagh	36
Joshua Manly	Monasteroris	35
John Wakely	Ballyburley	35
G.A. Atkinson	Cangort Demesne	30

## Appendix 6

**Letter sent by the third Marquis of Downshire to Thomas Murray, 19 January 1838 in relation to his handling of the estate finances.**<sup>3</sup>

Clough, 19<sup>th</sup> Jan 1838

Murray,

Yr. conduct is inexplicable. You must be a very unhappy man- Ask yourself if you are an honest man? You own yourself to be in debt to the executors & to me.

How has this happened? I answer by yr. having recd. MY rents & tithes & having disobeyed orders by retaining money from time to time & making use of it instead of paying it into my account & to that of the executors.

You have applied my money & theirs to your own use.

What is the term to be applied to such an act? I leave you to name it.

What do you mean by sending your son to the tenants,

What tenants? Whose tenants? How come they owe you money?

Are they my tenants? I cannot go to Edenderry whilst you are under such a cloud.

When you write to Mr Reilly or Mr Parry under cover to them, send yr. notes unsealed, as I always see them. As (to) my buying the tenement wh. You have in Hillsborough my answer is certainly not. You must get Mr Bradshaw or someone to advance the balance you owe. I am shocked at this shameful irregularity.

Yrs.

Downshire.

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<sup>3</sup> Quoted in Maguire, *Letters of a great Irish Landlord*, p. 45.

## Appendix 7

### **Statement of the value and location of the Charleville estates in Ireland, c. 1830.<sup>4</sup>**

‘The town of Tullamore, Charleville Forest and estates in King's County in the heart of Ireland of the annual value of about £9,000. In County of Limerick in the south of Ireland, Shannon Grove on the expiration of the subsisting leases it is understood will be of the annual value of about £9,000, this latter estate now producing, as it is believed, only from £5,000 to £7,000. Sopwell Hall estate in the County of Tipperary of the annual value of £1,200 to £1,300. N.B. Lord Tullamore understands that the Sopwell Hall estate is entailed on him, having been the property of his grandmother, Miss Sadlier, afterwards Lady Dunalley, the mother of Lord Charleville. This latter estate is said to be let on leases in perpetuity. Lord Charleville has also property in the City of Dublin of the annual value of about £1,200, and also in the north of Ireland (Lord T. thinks) in Cavan, of about £1,200.’

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<sup>4</sup> ‘Statement of the value and location of the Charleville estates in Ireland, c. 1830’ (Charl. Pap., T/3069/B/19).



## Appendix 8

### The administration of relief in King's County 1846-49

<b>Name</b>	<b>Position on relief committee</b>	<b>Relief committee</b>	<b>Barony</b>
Philip Belton	Secretary	Kilbride & Lynally	Ballycowan
Rev John Egan PP	Secretary	Dunkerrin	Clonlisk
George Smith	Chairman	Lockeen	Clonlisk
Rev Wm Minchin	Treasurer	Moneygall	Clonlisk
Rev H. Wolfenden	Secretary	Shinrone	Clonlisk
Rev Henry Joly	Secretary	Clonbullogue	Coolestown
Dr Michael Galligan	Secretary	Edenderry	Coolestown
Rev Robert Healy	Secretary	Eglis	Eglis
Francis Berry	Chairman	Tullamore	Ballycowan
J.P. Kennedy	Secretary	Tullamore	Ballycowan
Anthony Molly	Treasurer	Tullamore	Ballycowan
John O'Brien	Chairman	Rahan & Durrow	Ballycowan
Robert Slator	Secretary	Rahan & Durrow	Ballycowan
John Hussey Walsh	Chairman	Philipstown	Lr. Philipstown
John Brereton	Secretary	Philipstown	Lr. Philipstown
Roger North	Chairman	Philipstown	Lr. Philipstown
William Kelly	Secretary	Philipstown	Lr. Philipstown
William Poole	Secretary	Upper Philipstown	Upr. Philipstown
Rev Richard Clarke	Treasurer	Upper Philipstown	Upr. Philipstown
Henry Sheane	Secretary	Banagher	Garrycastle
Henry Coolahan	Secretary	Banagher & Lusmagh	Garrycastle
Capt W Johnston	Secretary	Clonmacnoise	Garrycastle
Rev Henry King	Chairman	Ferbane	Garrycastle
Garrett O'Moore	Chairman	Lusmagh & Rynagh	Garrycastle

Rev J.J. Fletcher	Treasurer	Lusmagh & Rynagh	Garrycastle
Henry N.Tyre	Secretary	Geashill	Geashill
Ambrose Cox	Chairman	Clara	Kilcoursey
Charles Goodbody	Secretary	Clara	Kilcoursey
Rev Henry Tyrell	Secretary	Kinnitty	Ballybritt
John Warburton	Chairman	Parsonstown	Ballybritt
Capt Thomas Cox	Secretary	Parsonstown	Ballybritt
Rev J.H. Scott	Secretary	Clareen	Ballybritt
Maunsell L Dames	Chairman	Edenderry	Coolestown
Lord Rosse	Chairman	Parsonstown	Ballybritt
Andrew Gamble	Chairman	Ballyboy & Eglis	Ballyboy

## Appendix 9

**Average annual rates of excess mortality in Ireland by county 1846 to 1851 per thousand people.<sup>5</sup>**

County	Rate	County	Rate
Mayo	58.4	King's County	18
Sligo	52.1	Meath	15.8
Roscommon	49.5	Armagh	15.3
Galway	46.1	Tyrone	15.2
Leitrim	42.9	Antrim	15
Cavan	42.7	Kilkenny	12.5
Cork	32	Wicklow	10.8
Clare	31.5	Donegal	10.7
Fermanagh	29.2	Limerick	10
Monaghan	28.6	Louth	8.2
Tipperary	23.8	Kildare	7.3
Kerry	22.4	Down	6.7
Queen's County	21.6	Londonderry	5.7
Waterford	20.8	Carlow	2.7
Longford	20.2	Wexford	1.7
Westmeath	20	Dublin	-2.1

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<sup>5</sup> Quoted in Donnelly Jnr., 'Excess mortality and emigration' in Vaughan (ed.) *A new history*, p. 352.

## Appendix 10

### Landed estates affected by the Brosna Drainage Scheme 1846 to 1851

Name	Address	Townland	Barony	Total area affected		
				A	R	P
John O'Brien	Rahan lodge		Ballycowan	841	1	30
James Peebles	61 Eccles St, Dublin	Cransallagh	Garrycastle	29	2	15
Dr Pierce	Tullamore	Derrycooley	Ballycowan	12	2	10
Edward Pim	Mountrath, Queens Co	Mount Armstrong	Ballycowan	24	3	20
Oliver Plunkett		Derrynagun	Garrycastle	715	1	2
		Pollagh				
		Oughter				
Mr Robins	Kinnitty	Ballyshae	Garrycastle	3	3	20
Patrick Robins	Moate	Ballycumber	Kilcoursey	21	3	4
Rev Robinson	Borrisokane	Tinnamuck East	Kilcoursey	65	3	15
Thomas Robinson	Parsonstown	Tinnamuck West	Kilcoursey	52	2	15
William Robinson	Coolderry	Curaghmore	Eglish	14	0	20
Earl of Rosse	Parsonstown	Derrycarney	Garrycastle	621	2	13
		Drinagh	Eglish			
		Lumclon	Garrycastle			
Thomas Ryan	Tullamore	Ballyclare	Garrycastle	4	0	32
William Ryan	Tullamore	Puttaghan	Ballycowan	2	0	30
Robert Slater	Tullamore	Coleraine	Ballycowan	54		
Andrew Stoney	Franckford	Ballincloghan	Ballyboy	51	3	21
Captain Telford		Agall	Ballycowan			
		Ballykeenghan				
		Killaranny				

John Telford	Clara	Gorteen	Kilcoursey	361	0	36
		Kilmanaghan				
Peter Thompson		Stonestown	Garrycastle	32	1	14
A. Molloy	Tullamore	Brackagh	Ballycowan	174	1	38
		Clonshanny				
		Cappadonagh little				
Keadow Molloy	Clara	Cappadonagh big	Ballycowan	54	1	12
		Backsteel				
Dennis& Jas Mooney	Franckford	Franckford	Ballyboy	8	3	20
Earl of Mornington		Newtown	Kilcoursey	16	1	22
Bernard Molloy		Tully	Ballycowan	190	3	12
		Cornalaur				
Robert Morgan	Wilton Lodge	Wilton	Kilcoursey	22	2	16
Thomas Mullock	Bellair	Leamore	Garrycastle	26	0	6
Mr Murray Esq.,		Clonongmore	Garrycastle	65	0	39
Lady Norbury	Durrow	Kildangan	Ballycowan	504	0	26
		Ballynamona				
		Acantha				
Thomas L'Estrange	Belmont	Belmont	Garrycastle	6	0	19
Mrs Lauder		Clonmore	Garrycastle	13	3	32
John Longworth	Glynn, Athlone	Leabeg	Garrycastle	105	2	10
William Longworth		Contiglass	Ballyboy	206	3	6
		Bolart	Kilcoursey			
Count Magawley		Ballincloghan	Ballyboy	73	2	28
Henry Manly		Tullamore	Ballycowan	4	0	12
Richard Mears	Moyvora, Westmeath	Gorteen	Kilcoursey	60	1	3

Thomas Mitchell		Ballynacarn	Eglis	8	1	10
John Kilmartin	Franckford	Killadrown	Eglis	56	1	30
		Ballincloghan	Ballyboy			
Rev King	Ballylin	Aghaboy	Garrycastle	2,212	0	21
		Ballydaly	Garrycastle			
		Ballyvlan	Garrycastle			
		Ballyvora	Garrycastle			
		Brehoge	Garrycastle			
		Coole	Garrycastle			
		Curraghweery	Garrycastle			
		Derries	Garrycastle			
		Ferbane	Garrycastle			
		Keelogue	Garrycastle			
		Kilcolgan More	Garrycastle			
		Kilcolgan Beg	Garrycastle			
		Kincora	Garrycastle			
		Vicarstown	Garrycastle			
		Wheery	Garrycastle			
Marquis of Lansdowne		Kilnagall	Ballyboy	15	3	26
Dean Laufane	Blackhall St, Dublin	Ballinamere	Ballycowan	109	2	30
Edmond L'Estrange		Hunstanton	Garrycastle	31	0	30
		Cams	Garrycastle			
Benjamin Humphrey	Lifford, Donegal	Cloghtanny	Kilcoursey	240	3	29
Jesuits Order	Rahan	Tullybeg	Ballycowan	19	3	10
Wm Johnson		Bracklin Beg	L. Philipstown	11	1	12
Rev F Jones	Middleton, Cork	Cloghabrack	Ballycowan	11	1	35
Arthur Judge		Ballysheil	Garrycastle	10	0	36

John C Judge	Gageboro, Moate	Cloncraft	Kilcoursey	199	3	17
		Doonard	Kilcoursey			
		Runagh	Kilcoursey			
Henry Kemmis		Coolnateely	Ballycowan	513	2	28
		Doony	Ballycowan			
		Loughaun	Ballycowan			
Joseph Gough		Lurgan	Kilcoursey	44	0	20
Mrs Grennan	Spring Garden, Clara	Bolart South	Kilcoursey	112	3	30
Rev S Greeson		Glebe	Kilcoursey	15	1	15
James Haslam	Ballyboy	Killadrown	Eglis	92	0	10
Ellen Henderson	Faheran, Moate	Faheran	Kilcoursey	36	1	39
Matthew Higgins		Gorteen	Kilcoursey	85	3	35
Mr Hobbs	Franckford	Ballincloghan	Ballyboy	40	0	27
		Barnaboy	Ballyboy			
Bernard James Hodgins		Ballycumber	Garrycastle	29	1	6
Charles Holmes	Prospect, Ballycumber	Greenville	Kilcoursey	54	0	10
		Kappeenduff	Kilcoursey			
Robert Holmes		Greenville	Kilcoursey	6	1	5
William Horne	Ferbane	Ballyclare	Garrycastle		2	32
Richard Hornedge	Tulfarris, Wicklow	Clonshanig	Ballycowan	44	0	8
		Ballybreancullin	Ballycowan			
John Emerson	39 L. Ormond Quay	Clonshanig	Ballycowan	98	0	37
		Deerpark	Ballycowan			
Cuthbert Fetherson	Moycashel, Kilbeggan	Ballina	Garrycastle	189	1	5
		Derries	Garrycastle			
Jos & Thos Fynamore	Ballycumber	Ballybrancullin	Ballycowan	16	2	15
William Fynamore	Clonaslee	Clonshanig	Ballycowan	19	2	7

Earl of Fitzwilliam		Ballylough	Garrycastle	7	0	21
Major Fox	Annaghmore	Tullymorerahan	Ballycowan	79	3	30
		Derrynagh	Ballycowan			
Adam Fuller	Woodfield, Clara	Carraghboy	Kilcoursey	238	0	4
Ambrose Cox	Clara	Clara	Kilcoursey	247	0	34
		Raheen	Kilcoursey			
Sir William Cox		Ballynasrah	Ballycowan	160	1	3
		Tinnycross	Ballycowan			
		Derrynagall	Ballycowan			
		Ballydaly	Ballycowan			
Miss Crowe	Tullamore	Tullamore	Ballycowan	4	3	6
Joseph Daly		Newtown	Ballycowan		2	20
James Devery	High St, Cloghan	Belmont	Garrycastle	48	1	35
Mrs Dickenson	Clara	Bolart North	Kilcoursey	21	2	34
Samuel Dickenson	Ashmount, Clara	Ballyboughlin	Kilcoursey	59	0	28
Lord Digby	Geashill	Annagarvey	Geashill	2,293	0	27
		Ballinagar	Geashill			
		Ballycue	Geashill			
		Ballymoney	Geashill			
		Cappincur	Geashill			
		Clonmore	Geashill			
		Killeenmore	Geashill			
		Meelaghans	Geashill			
		Toberlaheen	Geashill			
Rev William Drought	Newtown, Tyrellspass	Castletown	Ballycowan	217	3	27
Mrs Elwood	Franckford	Kilnagall	Ballyboy	13	3	20
Dr Coolahan	Ballinasloe	Skenagh	Garrycastle	1	2	36



Mrs Joyce	Caltra, Galway			
Hugh Kelly	Ballinasloe			
Sir Charles Coote	Ballyfin, Mountrath	Aghanagh	Ballycowan	977 3 7
		Aharney	Ballycowan	
		Ardan	Ballycowan	
		Ballycowan	Ballycowan	
		Ballydrohid	Ballycowan	
		Ballykilmurray	Ballycowan	
		Ballynasrah	Ballycowan	
		Cartron West	Ballycowan	
		Goldsmith lot	Ballycowan	
		Kilbride	Ballycowan	
		Killiskea	Ballycowan	
		Srah	Ballycowan	
		Murnigh	Ballycowan	
Rev Ralph Coote		Rahan Demesne	Ballycowan	199
		Lynally	Ballycowan	
Arthur S Bride	Ashford, Wicklow	Cornafurnish	Garrycastle	319 2 12
		Corrabeg	Garrycastle	
		Grogan	Garrycastle	
		Corroe	Garrycastle	
William Briscoe		Derrygranagh	Ballycowan	58 2 10
William Buchanan	Banagher	Ballycumber	Garrycastle	75 0 10
		Glynn	Garrycastle	
Mrs Caughtley		Franckford	Ballyboy	7 2 35
Earl of Charleville		Ballyragh	Ballycowan	679 0 32
		Charleville de-	Ballycowan	

		mesne		
		Cloncollig	Ballycowan	
		Glaskill	Ballycowan	
		Kilcruttin	Ballycowan	
		Tullamore	Ballycowan	
George Chevenux	Hyde Park, London	Bracklin Little	L. Philipstown	86 2 24
Commissioner of Education	Merrion St., Dublin	Ballinagowan glebe	Garrycastle	36 2 11
Grand Canal Company		Cornalaur	Ballycowan	68 3 10
		Derrycarney	Garrycastle	
		Falisk	Garrycastle	
		Pollagh	Garrycastle	
		Turraun	Garrycastle	
Capt Collins	Cloghan	Belmont	Garrycastle	11 2 35
Daniel Bailey	Moorock, Ballycumber	Erry	Kilcoursey	162 1 29
Christopher Bannon	Castlewood, Franckford	Broughall	Ballyboy	492 0 15
Dr Belton		Lumcloon	Garrycastle	14 1 32
Capt Belton		Coleraine	Ballycowan	2 2 25
Robert Belton	Balleek, Tullamore	Ballynamona	Ballycowan	148 0 26
Edward Birmingham	Moate	Killfoylan	Kilcoursey	122. 2 35
Capt Thomas Bernard	Kinnitty	Culleen	Ballycowan	115 1 25
Francis Adams	Seabeg, Ferbane	Seabeg	Garrycastle	66 2 9
Rev James Alexander	Gallen	Killgally Glebe	Garrycastle	539 1 22
		Lemanaghan	Garrycastle	
Sir A Armstrong	Gallen	Coolnahinch	Garrycastle	602 1 18
		Falsk	Garrycastle	
		Gallen	Garrycastle	

Mrs Armstrong	2 Eagle Trce, Leeson St	Newtown	Garrycastle	24 0 20
Capt Aylmer		Ballybrancullin	Ballycowan	215 2 7
		Castletown	Ballycowan	
		Kilpatrick	Ballycowan	
<b>Total</b>				16,512 2 7

**Appendix 11**

**Rental of the 'Inner' estate belonging to the Earl of Rosse, 1848**

Denomination	Arrear			Half Years			Rent & Ar-			Amount Re-			Arrears left		
	£	s	d	£	s	d	£	s	d	£	s	d	£	s	d
Parsonstown	£851	9	2	£1852	8	1	£2703	17	3	£1,563	7	10	£1,140	9	5
Brukshill	£98	4	5	£128	0	9	£226	5	2	£123	13	10	£102	11	3
Ballinadarra	£167	9	7	£99	15	3	£267	4	10	£69	8	1	£197	16	8
New Barrack	£131	18	3	£436	4	0	£568	2	3	£420	13	7	£147	8	7
Ballinree	£38	11	3	£186	10	11	£225	2	2	£180	3	8	£44	18	5
Connaught St	£20	6	2	£98	7	5	£118	13	7	£91	1	9	£27	11	10
Clonoghill	£360	3	7	£615	11	11	£975	15	6	£608	10	7	£367	4	11
Clonbrone	£21	5	7	£23	7	3	£44	12	10	£27	8	7	£17	4	3
Crinkle rocks	£6	6		£24	17	8	£31	3	8	£22	15	8	£8	8	
Crinkle	£94	3	5	£445	10	7	£539	14		£330	18		£208	16	
Derrinduff	£49	0	10	£61	10	11	£110	11	9	£84	6	5	£26	5	4
Eden St	£244	6	7	£154	9	9	£398	16	4	£106	16	7	£291	19	9
Seffin	£51	12	2	£84	11	8	£136	3	9	£52	9	6	£83	14	3
Woodfield	£195			£290	15	9	£485	15	9	£255	18	11	£229	16	10
<b>Total</b>	£2,329	17		£4,502	1	11	£6,831	19		£3,937	13	3	£2,894	5	8

## Appendix 12

**‘Return of all notices served upon the relieving officers of Poor Law Districts in Ireland by landowners and others under the act 11 & 12 Vict., c.47’ involving tenants of King’s County estates.<sup>6</sup>**

Union	Townlands	Name	Notice Server	No. ejected (families)
Mountmellick	Eneghan		Anthony Molloy	5
Parsonstown	Lisduff	John Rutherford	Agent to C.R. Baldwin	1
	Parsonstown	George Heenan	Agent to earl of Rosse	5
	Ditto	Frederick Hobert	Landowner	4
	Ditto	Francis Woods	Ditto	4
	Ditto	William Larkin	Ditto	2
	Ditto	Thomas Hackett	Ditto	5
	Ditto	Patrick Mann	Ditto	3
	Coolnagrower	John Rutherford	Agent to C.R. Baldwin	1
	Parsonstown	Patrick Mann	Landowner	1
	Madinch	A.G. Richardson	Agent to Col Westenra	6
	Parsonstown	John Smith	Agent to T.F. Golding	1
	Mullnarone	John H. Burdett	Landowner	2
	Banagher	Michael Moylan	Agent to Christopher Haughton	3
	Cloghan	John H. Moore	Agent to Garrett Moore	8
	Banagher	Richard Sharpe	Agent to James Banks	2
	Mullnarone	John H. Burdett	Agent to landowner	3
	Breakmore	Robert J Stoney	Agent to George Stoney	2
	Clonlee	William Harden	Landowner	4

<sup>6</sup> *An act for the protection and relief of the destitute poor evicted from their dwellings*, H.C. 1849 [1089] xlix.315.

	Clonlee	A.G. Richardson	Agent to Col Westenra	4
	Forelock	John Ashton	Agent to W.H. Turpin	1
	Glynn	James Boland	Agent to WB Buchanan	7
	Frankford	James Drought	Landowner	7
	Ballinamona	Paul Fawcett	Agent to Rev R Coote	3
	Coolfin			1
	Lower Heath	P.F. Drought	Agent to John T. Drought	2
	Ballyordan	John R. Price	Agent to marquis of Lansdowne	2
	Ballynagilsha	Smith M. Berry	Landowner	1
	Annaghmore	Thomas Manifold	Agent to trustees of Bennett estate	6
	Knockbarron	Ditto	Agent to John H Drought	2
	Rathure	Ditto	Agent to Capt Thomas Bernard	2
	Clondalla	George Heenan	Agent to the earl of Rosse	1
	Loughill	Henry Spinner	Agent to Francis E Mooney	1
	Clonfanlough	Robert Lauder	Agent to landowner	3
	Boherfada	George Greeson	Landowner	1
	Clonmacnoise	C. Handcock	Ditto	2
	Lemanaghan	Rev J. Alexander	Ditto	8
Roscrea	Cooraclevin	S.W. Minchin	Landowner	16
	Ballymeely	George Garvey	Agent to R. Tyndall	7
	Ratheshill	Caleb Going	Agent to Johanna Going	11
	Glasshouse	Robert Smith	Agent to John Smith	5
	Emmel West	Patrick Redden	Agent to Major Jackson	3
	Brownestown	Daniel Keogh	John Andrews	1
	Ballinakill	Denis Meara	Agent to F.L. & V. Holmes	3
	Moneygall			2
	Moneygall			2

	Barnagrotty	John McDonald	Agent to Rev W. Minchin	1
	Drumore	John McDonald	Agent to R. Going, Rev J.C. Walker & W. Harding	1
Tullamore	Tara	Thomas Reilly	Bailiff to the countess of Norbury	1
	Ballyhugh			1
	Lug			1
	Ballybaugh			3
	Tara			1
	Ballicallahan	Henry Keyes	Bailiff to Henry Kemmis	1
	Coolnahiley			4
	Tara			2
	Balleek	Robert Belton	Landlord	1
	Ballyduff	George Garvey	Agent to countess of Norbury	1
	Ross	John Bryant	Agent to EJ Briscoe	2
	Puttaghan	Francis Ridley	Landowner	1
	Mount Pleasant	W.R. Manifold	Agent to Mrs Morris	1
	Ballinacanty			2
	Annaghmore	Edward Russell	Agent to Thomas Bernard	1
	Annabrack	Paul Fawcett	Agent to Rev R Coote	3
	Derryesker	James Dunne	Agent to John O'Brien	1
	Holmshill	WR Manifold	Agent to Mrs Morris	4
	Raheen	Ambrose Cox	Landowner	5
	Ballickmahee	George Greeson	In Chancery	1
	Feirgarrow	Thomas Seamons	Landowner	1
	Curraghanna			1
	Rockfield	Adam Fuller	Landowner	1
	Bonagapagh	Francis Berry	Agent to the Earl of Charleville	1

	Raheenkeerin			1
	Killarles	G. Thompson	Agent to the Earl of Digby	1
	Cloncogher			1
			<b>Total served in King's County</b>	211
			<b>Total served in Ireland</b>	12, 859
			<b>Percentage of total</b>	1.60%



### Appendix 13

**Survey of the townland of Lisclooney, part of the Rosse estate carried out by George Heenan, c1850 (B.C.A.)**

Tenants Name	Size of Holding			No. of houses
	A	R	P	
Claffey	33	3		3
Doolan	19	3		2
Dolan	12			3
Daly	16			2
Egan	25			1
Heelan	6			1
Kelly William	8	2		1
Kelly Dennis	6			1
Kelly Thomas	6			1
Kelly Stephen	6	1	6	1
Kelly Michael	7			1
Heenan & Melia	16			2
Keenan Francis	7			1
Kelly William	45			1
Lally Peter	8	0	10	2
Lally John	8	0	20	2
Lynch James	7			1
Larkin John	6	0	4	1
Ryan John	45			1
Rigney J & Rody	36	2	0	2
Rigney & Leary	16			2
Rigney James	25			4

Sullivan Mary	6			2
Whelan Martin	6			1
Whelan John	6			1
Kelly Dan	26			0
Total	474	0	31	38

## Appendix 14

### A list of 'orphan' girls sent from King's County workhouses to Australia

Those on board the ship *William and Mary* which arrived in Sydney 21 November 1849.<sup>7</sup>

<b>Name</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Religion</b>	<b>Parents status</b>
Jane Adderly	17	Clonmore	COE	Dead
Mary Adderly	16	Clonmore	COE	Dead
Mary Browne	18	Edenderry	RC	Dead
Mary Byrne	15	Mount Lucas	RC	Dead
Anne Connell	17	Edenderry	RC	Mother in Edenderry
Bridget Connor	17	Castlejordan	RC	Father alive
Margaret Connor	15	Castlejordan	RC	Father alive
Margaret Cooke	16	Edenderry	RC	Mother in Carbury
Mary Crosby	18	Churchtown	RC	Dead
Mary Hyland	16	Ballyheashill	RC	Mother living
Bridget Kelly	15	Tieravon	RC	Mother living
Bridget Maher	18	Edenderry	RC	Dead
Bridget Quinn	15	Tullamore	RC	Mother in Dundee
Mary Seery	17	Rhode	RC	Dead

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<sup>7</sup> Trevor McClaughlin, *Barefoot and pregnant? Irish famine orphans in Australia, vol 2 (Victoria, 2001)*, pp 200-12.

Those on board the ship *Tippo Saib* which arrived in Sydney 29 July 1850.<sup>8</sup>

<b>Name</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Religion</b>	<b>Parents status</b>
Sarah Larkin	17	Durrow	RC	Mother alive
Catherine Lantrey	17	Banagher	RC	Dead
Eliz. Matthews	18	Parsonstown	RC	Dead
Mary Mullen	17	Shannonbridge	RC	Dead
Maria Murray	17	Cloghan	RC	Dead
Eliza Needham	18	Durrow	RC	Dead
Margaret Noctor	16	Ferbane	RC	Dead
Ellen Ryan	14	Eglish	RC	Mother in England
Mary Taylor	16	Parsonstown	RC	Dead
Ann Walsh	14	Kilcoleman	RC	Dead
Mary Scally	15	Lorha	RC	Mother in Parsonstown
Eliz Walsh	16	Ferbane	RC	Dead
Margaret Lawler	18	Kinnitty	RC	Mother living at Kinnitty
Fanny Groves	14	Eglish	RC	Unknown
Mary Galvin	13	Eglish	RC	Dead
Ann Franklin	17	Gallen	COE	Dead
Ann Frighny	17	Kilmanaghan	RC	Dead
Sarah Farrell	18	Durrow	RC	Mother at Durrow
Catherine Farrell	18	Shannonbridge	RC	Mother at S/bridge
Ann Fahy	18	Banagher	RC	Dead
Sarah Dunleavy	13	Parsonstown	RC	Dead
Catherine Dooley	15	Kilcoleman	RC	Dead
Johanna Curry	18	Kinnitty	RC	Father at Kinnitty

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<sup>8</sup> Ibid, pp 272- 89.

## Appendix 15

### Population change 1841-51 in selected townlands in King's County

Townland	Barony	Landlord	Area (acres)	1841	1851	% Decrease
Broughal	Ballyboy	N. Fitzsimons	3,785	425	299	29.60%
Ballinacanty	Ballyboy	O'Connor Morris	537	58	93	60.30%
Leap	Ballybritt	John Darby	158	31	25	19.30%
Kinnitty	Ballybritt	Thos Bernard	680	621	452	27.20%
Killooly	Ballyboy	Andrew Gamble	1,347	226	134	40.70%
Durrow Dem.,	Ballycowan	Earl of Norbury	605	35	42	20%
Clonminch	Ballycowan	Earl of Charleville	717	379	257	32.10%
Moneygall	Clonlisk	Rev W. Minchin	663	296	93	68.60%
Laughton	Clonlisk	Lord Bloomfield	702	312	136	56.40%
Drumcaw	Coolestown	John Lucas	1,250	136	95	30.14%
Derries	Coolestown	Lord Downshire	1,693	55	26	52.70%
Killyon	Eglis	Robert Cassidy	60	172	38	77.90%
Woodfield	Eglis	Earl of Rosse	624	146	90	38.25%
Galros	Garrycastle	Garrett O'Moore	667	321	167	48%
Doon Dem.,	Garrycastle	R.J.E. Mooney	581	161	73	54.66%
Gurteen	Geashill	Earl of Digby	1,513	424	343	19.10%
Kilcoursey	Kilcoursey	Earl of Mornington	394	255	177	30.60%
Brackagh	Kilcoursey	O'Connor Morris	159	147	106	27.90%
Kilduff	L. Philipstown	Roger North	612	58	31	46.60%
Clonearl	L. Philipstown	W.H. Magan	91	51	56	9.80%
Walsh Island	U. Philipstown	F.L. Dames	700	109	61	44.03%
Ballintemple	U. Philipstown	Earl of Charleville	314	60	74	23.33%
Ballyburley	Warrenstown	J Wakely	431	71	40	43.66%

Tubberdaly	Warrenstown	Capt. Nesbitt	1,552	297	250	15.82%
Total			19,835	4,846	3,158	34.83%

## Appendix 16

### Percentage population decline per county 1841 to 1851.<sup>9</sup>

County	Decrease
Dublin	16
Antrim	-9
Wexford	-11
Down	-11
Derry	-14
Donegal	-14
Waterford	-16
Kildare	-16
Louth	-16
Armagh	-16
Tyrone	-18
Kerry	-19
Limerick	-21
Carlow	-21
Westmeath	-21
Kilkenny	-22
Wicklow	-22
King's County	-23
Meath	-23
Cork	-24
Tipperary	-24
Clare	-26

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<sup>9</sup> Quoted in Ivor Hamrock, *The Famine in Mayo 1845-50: A portrait from contemporary sources* (Mayo, 2004), p. 148.

Fermanagh	-26
Queen's County	-27
Galway	-27
Cavan	-28
Leitrim	-28
Longford	-29
Monaghan	-29
Sligo	-29
Mayo	-29
Roscommon	-32



## Appendix 17

### **Estates (or part thereof) in King's County sold under the Incumbered Estates Court 1850 to 1863**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Date of Sale</b>	<b>Location of lands</b>
Andrew Armstrong	June 1852 & Nov 1856	King's County & Kildare
Matilda Bagnall	Feb 1855	King's County & Tipperary
Richard Bewley	July 1864	Edenderry
Robert Belton	Feb 1856	King's County & Meath
Lt Col Bernard	June 1857	King's County & Carlow
JC Bloomfield	June 1852	Banagher
Sir R Lynch Blossie	Dec 1855 & Nov 1858	Banagher
George Clarke	Jan 1855	King's County & Tipperary
John G Collins	July 1859	Belmont
Robert Cooke	Feb 1856	Tullamore
Richard Damer	July 1850	Shinrone
Rev AL Dames	July 1862	Clara
Amos Doolan	May 1852	Shinrone
John A Drought	Feb 1857	Parsonstown
Robert J Drought	Dec 1855	Franckford
Trustee Lord Dunsany	Nov 1863	King's County & Galway
Denis Egan	May 1852 & March 1853	Moneygall
John Emerson	Nov 1861	King's County, Westmeath & Dublin City
Anne Featherstonehaugh	May 1855	Tullamore
Earl Fitzwilliam	April 1853	Cloghan
Adam Fuller	July 1851	King's County
J Gatchell	March 1860	Portarlinton
B Gerathy	Nov 1861	Tubber
Robert Grace	May 1859	Parsonstown
Thomas Grattan	Nov 1854	Edenderry
Eliz F. Gyles	Nov 1863	Clara
Thomas Hackett	June 1856	King's County, Galway & Tipperary
Samuel Hanks	Feb 1861	Parsonstown
Alex Hardy	May 1860	Tullamore
Henry Higgins	Feb 1851	Tubber
Joseph Horne	June 1862	King's County
Gus R. Jones	July 1851	King's County
Arthur Judge	Dec 1852	Parsonstown
John Judge	March 1857	King's County & Westmeath
Bernard Kelly	July 1863	Ferbane
Rev JG Kelly	March 1864	Geashill
Rev AJ Labatt	July 1850	King's County & Meath
Gustave Lambert	July 1850	King's County & Meath
Robert Leeson	June 1855	Franckford
Count Magawley	Nov 1852	Tubber
Rev James Matthews	April & June 1864	King's County & Tipperary
Rev William Minchin	Nov 1851 & June 1852	Tubber

Arthur Molloy	July 1857	Banagher
Thomas Mitchell	July 1857	Tubber
Trustees of Maloney	May 1851 & May 1855	Tullamore
Moloney	June 1854	Clonona
Elizabeth Moore	March 1855	Tubber
Elizabeth Morris	June 1851	Tullamore
Garrett O'Moore	Oct 1852	King's County, Roscommon, Mayo & Clare
Earl Milltown	Jan 1856	King's County, Dublin, Wicklow, Kildare, Meath and Louth
Samuel Parker	Apr 1852	Tullamore
William Poole	Dec 1855	Portarlington
Taylor M Read	May 1858	King's County
Simpson Robinson	July 1854	Parsonstown
Thomas Robinson	July 1853	King's County & Westmeath
Edward Shawe	Dec 1850	Philipstown
John Smallhorn	July 1851	Portarlington
Joseph Smith	June 1851	King's County, Tipperary & Queens County
WA Steele	March 1858	Parsonstown
George Stoney	Dec 1850	Ballybritt
Edward Synge	June 1850	King's County & Clare
John F Thewtes	Nov 1854 & June 1856	King's County, Cavan, Meath, Dublin City
Clifford Trotter	March 1851	King's County and Galway
Francis Usher	June 1852	King's County and Meath
Samuel Walsh	Oct 1855	Geashill
Secretary of War	May 1860	King's County, Dublin and Youghal
Helen Wybrant	July 1854	Edenderry

**Appendix 18**

**Particulars of the sale of the Fitzwilliam estate Cloghan, in the barony of Garrycastle, King's County sold under the Incumbered Estates Court, 15 April 1853**

<b>Townland</b>	<b>Acreage A R P</b>	<b>Net Rent £ s d</b>	<b>Amount realised in sale</b>	<b>Purchaser</b>
Galros	658 3 22	389 8 3 <sup>3</sup> / <sub>4</sub>	£5,300	Mr Moore
Tonelemore	349 0 15	200 7 10	£2,300	Mr Wilson
Magheranascagh/ Cappaliskey	158 3 12	95 17 7 <sup>1</sup> / <sub>2</sub>	£1,900	Terence Dolan
Cloghan Hill	859 1 36	247 19 4	£5,200	Mr Bagnall
Manor, town and parks of Cloghan	879 2 38	611 7 1	£10,000	R.J. Fox
Ballyloughan	313 2 39	234 7 2	£5,050	Thomas L'Estrange
Drishoge or Strawberry Hill	181 2 12	65 14 3	£1,475	Mr Fottrell
		<b>Total Realised in sale</b>	£31,275	

## Appendix 19

### **Letter to the tenants of the Earl of Rosse from George Garvey, upon commencing the management of the Rosse estate in April 1853.**

In undertaking the management as agent of the earl of Rosse's estates Mr Garvey earnestly solicits and hopes for the cordial co-operation of his lordships respectable and well disposed tenants; their general intelligence will point out to them that the late revolution in Irish landed property caused by the potato failure and its results has created much confusion where small tenancies have been numerous and where immediate interests usually termed 'middlemen' have ceased to exist.

To restore and establish order as well in the rent accounts as in the divisions arrangements and valuations of the respective farms and holdings will be Mr Garveys anxious study; and in practically carrying out his objects he hopes to be assisted and supported by the many respectable and intelligent men, whose names he finds on his lordships rental.

In carrying out those arrangements it is Mr Garvey's wish and intention to avoid all strong measures so long as it is in his power to do so with justice to Lord Rosse's interest; but he will not hesitate to resort to them promptly and decidedly where he finds them unavoidably necessary.

The rules for the management of Lord Rosse's estates' so equitably , liberally and considerably framed by his lordship will be adhered to by Mr Garvey and practically carried into effect, with the addition of the following, which have received his lordships sanction, and which the improved state of agricultural knowledge and the altered state of the population call for, viz:-

The 'rundale system' must cease. No tenant from year to year will be allowed to hold portions of land scattered over a townland; his holding as a farm must lie together and be properly defined and secured by bounds.

No tenant will be allowed to break grass land requiring draining until it is thoroughly drained; nor will he be allowed to sow two corn crops in immediate succession.

No allowances for any improvements will be made that have not received the sanction of the agent before carrying into effect.

Tenants to whom bogs are not leased are to apply annually to the agent for tickets of permission to cut and draw turf and bog mould from Lord Rosse's bogs for the use of their houses and farms on his lordships estates; but permission to cut and sell tuft and bog mould may be purchased from the agent by any parties making application.

All rents are to be paid half yearly; and any tenant allowing a year's rent to become due, without obtaining Lord Rosse's or his agents permission must expect immediate legal proceedings either for its recovery or by ejection.

A return to extensive cultivation of potatoes will be discouraged. No allowance will be made for any failure that may take place in that crop, nor allowance in any way made to the tenant who tries to cultivate more than a moderate quantity.

Men of good character and intelligence will be selected to act as bailiffs and caretakers who will be paid for their services and who are in no case to receive money, or any consideration in lieu of money from any tenant without the written directions from the agent under forfeiture of fine or dismissal.

All rents are to be paid and accounts settled in Lord Rosse's office in Parsonstown, to and by persons authorised by his agent to receive and settle same.

Mr Garvey believes that those rules strictly observed, will ultimately prove beneficial to landlord and tenant whose joint interests it has been his anxious wish to advance during the many years he has acted as agent to extensive and he trusts now well circumstanced estates.

Parsonstown, April, 1853.

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