



**MAYNOOTH UNIVERSITY
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**THE EXPERIENCES OF THE ARISTOCRACY IN COUNTY
WESTMEATH DURING THE PERIOD 1879 TO 1923.**

by

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Abbreviations

BMH	Bureau of Military History
DL	Deputy Lieutenant
DMA	Dublin Metropolitan Area
GHQ	General Headquarters
ILPU	Irish Loyal and Patriotic Union
IPP	Irish Parliamentary Party
IRA	Irish Republican Army
IRB	Irish Republican Brotherhood
IUA	Irish Unionist Alliance
JP	Justice of the Peace
MP	Member of Parliament
NAI	National Archives of Ireland, Dublin
NLI	National Library of Ireland, Dublin
O/C	Officer in Command
PRONI	Public Record Office of Northern Ireland, Belfast
RIC	Royal Irish Constabulary
RM	Resident Magistrate
TD	Teachta Dála (Member of Dáil Éireann)
TNA	The National Archives, London
UIL	United Irish League

Introduction

For hundreds of years, the aristocracy in Ireland represented the economic, social and political elite of the country. They owned extensive estates, built great houses to project their wealth and social status, embellished them with the finest contents, designed magnificent landscapes and gardens, and retained an army of staff to maintain everything. However, in the period 1879 to 1923, all of this changed dramatically. This period extended from the beginning of the Land War to the end of the Civil War. While the decline of the landed class that characterised this period of extraordinary social and political upheaval has been examined and described by historians at national level, this is the first attempt at a county case study that will expose some of the anomalies hidden by national surveys.¹ Westmeath has been chosen for a number of reasons. Firstly, it had a good spread of aristocratic families, eight in total, amidst a large cohort of gentry and farmers. Secondly, there has already been a number of scholarly studies on Westmeath showing that it had a long history of agrarian agitation which suggests the impact of this on aristocratic life is worth further investigation, in particular with reference to the relationship between aristocratic landlords and tenants. Thirdly, Westmeath had very active hunt clubs and other social outlets catering for the aristocracy that provides a further dimension worthy of research.

Historically, the great aristocratic families of Ireland had been involved in the political, military and economic fortunes of the island. Families such as the Fitzgeralds (earls of Kildare and later dukes of Leinster), the Butlers (earls of Ormond), the Nugents (earls of Westmeath), and the Parsons (earls of Rosse) had

¹ For a critique of the historiography see below.

been rewarded and bestowed with aristocratic titles by successive English monarchs for their loyalty to the crown and their role in the governance of Ireland. The main priorities of these aristocratic dynasties were the maintenance of wealth, power and status. This class-consciousness ensured that the purpose of every action was to enhance, preserve and consolidate the family's place on the aristocratic ladder. In contrast to the wider population, the aristocratic families in Ireland lived privileged lives. Moreover, they disproportionately held the main offices responsible for the governance of Ireland at national and local levels. As a result, and particularly with the rise of nationalism, the Land League and the Home Rule movement in the nineteenth century, Irish aristocratic families came to be regarded as the representatives of British colonialism in Ireland. That would have repercussions during the revolutionary period, as will be detailed in the later chapters of this work.

In 1879 there were eight aristocratic families whose main residence was in County Westmeath; six of the families resided in the north of the county while the other two were located in the southern part of Westmeath (see appendix 1). The families in the north of the county were the Pakenhams; the Greville-Nugents; the Chapmans; the Levings; the Nugents of Donore; and the Nugents of Ballinlough. The Castlemaine and Ennis families resided in the south of the county. All of these families had their own individual experiences arising from the revolutionary changes of 1879 to 1923.

It was not until the publication in 2001 of Terence Dooley's groundbreaking work *The decline of the Big House in Ireland* that light was shone on the social and political experiences of the Irish landed class, aristocracy and gentry. Dooley's work provided a scholarly examination on all aspects of the lives of country house families – political, social and economic - in the period from 1860 to 1960 and he identified

the reasons for their demise as a class in Ireland. This study opened up many avenues of research which have since been followed by other scholars, including Olwen Purdue whose *The big house in the North of Ireland* (Dublin, 2009) looks specifically at Ulster and post-partition Northern Ireland; hers is a 'study of families and of a social class rather than of country houses'.² These seminal books provided an Irish perspective complementing important research in Britain by historians such as David Cannadine, but they also generated an increased awareness of the difficulties faced by Irish landed families and opened up avenues for future exploration.³

There have also been a number of studies on aspects of aristocratic estate management and lifestyles published in the Maynooth Local History series including: Anthony Doyle, *Charles Powell Leslie II's estates at Glaslough, County Monaghan* (2001), Rob Goodbody, *Sir Charles Domville and his Shankhill estate, County Dublin, 1857-1871* (2003), Gerard Moran, *Sir Robert Gore Booth and his landed estate in County Sligo, 1814-1876* (2006), Mary Delaney, *William Steuart Trench and his management of the Digby Estate, King's County, 1857-71* (2012), Joe Mooney, *The changing fortunes of the Headfort estates, 1870-1928* (2012), and Glascott J.R.M. Symes, *Sir John Keane and Cappoquin House in time of war and revolution* (2016). Two books in the Maynooth Studies in Local History series are relevant to this study of Westmeath, namely Jim Lenihan's, *Politics and society in Athlone 1830-1885* (Dublin, 1999) and Ann Murtagh's, *Portrait of a Westmeath tenant community, 1879-85* (Dublin, 1999).

² Olwen Purdue, *The big house in the North of Ireland* (Dublin, 2009), p. 1.

³ Terence Dooley, *The decline of the big house in Ireland* (Dublin, 2001). See also Terence Dooley, *Sources for the history of landed estates in Ireland* (Dublin, 2000), and *The big houses and landed estates of Ireland: a research guide* (Dublin, 2007), also Terence Dooley and Christopher Ridgway (eds) *The Irish Country House, its past, present and future* (Dublin, 2011); see also, Terence Dooley et al, *Aspects of Irish aristocratic life, essays on the Fitzgeralds and Carton House* (Dublin, 2014); Terence Dooley, *The decline and fall of the dukes of Leinster 1872-1948* (Dublin, 2014).

There are a number of published works that refer to Westmeath aristocratic families including Eliza Pakenham's, *Tom, Ned and Kitty* (London, 2007) which focuses on three individual members of the Pakenham family in the eighteenth century, and Jeremy Wilson's, *Lawrence of Arabia, The authorised biography of T. E. Lawrence* (London, 1989) which looks at Lawrence's family background and his connection to the Chapman family of South Hill, Delvin and their cousins the Chapmans, baronets of Killua Castle.⁴ Siân Evans' work, *Mrs Ronnie, the society hostess who collected Kings* (London, 2013) is a biography of Dame Margaret Greville, wife of the Hon. Ronald Greville, elder son of Algernon Greville, 2nd baronet. Amongst other things, this book examines the Greville family's relationship with the British Royal family. Another member of the Greville family, Violet Greville, wife of Algernon Greville, a writer and journalist, published many works of fiction as well as an autobiography entitled *Vignettes of memory* (London, 1927). Lady Greville who lived to the age of ninety, provides a less than favourable impression of County Westmeath and its people in a chapter entitled 'Ireland'.⁵

William Magan's *Umma-More: The story of an Irish family* (Shaftesbury, 1983), charts the history of his family from 1590 to the 1980s. The family, which he claims are descended from the McDermott Roe dynasty of County Roscommon, were native to the townland of Umma-More in County Westmeath. The author places the history of his family within the wider events of the time and describes their links with the Chapmans, baronets of Killua Castle, Clonmellon, as well as their connection with Lawrence of Arabia.⁶ Magan, who attained the rank of brigadier in the British Army, laments the end of the ascendancy which he dated to the period between 1912 and

⁴ Jeremy Wilson, *Lawrence of Arabia, The authorised biography of T. E. Lawrence* (London, 1989), pp 941-4.

⁵ Lady Violet Greville, *Vignettes of memory* (London, 1927), pp 80-96.

⁶ William Magan, *Umma-More: The story of an Irish family* (Shaftesbury, 1983), pp 222-3.

1922, placing major emphasis on the large number of members of the landed class who died in the First World War. These works have been useful in providing important first hand information on some aspects of aristocratic life dealt in Westmeath.

This thesis will focus on the political, economic and military aspects of the Westmeath aristocratic families rather than on their social and recreational activities, which have already been comprehensively examined in Tom Hunt's excellent study *Sport and society in Victorian Ireland: the case of Westmeath* (Cork, 2007). This thesis aims to place the experiences of the Westmeath aristocracy in a wider national context demonstrating, for example, how national events had an impact on their lives at local level, but it also illustrates how events at a local level affected events nationally.

In order to place this study in a proper historical context it is necessary to begin in 1870. This year saw the first significant land act passed for Ireland by Gladstone's government and thus the beginning of a process that would eventually undermine the territorial position of the aristocracy; this year also saw the beginning of the Home Rule movement that would undermine their political power and authority at local and national level. The thesis ends in 1923, at the end of the Irish Civil War, by which time tumultuous social and political change, not least of all the impact of an Irish revolution, had brought the aristocracy from a position of ascendancy to one of descendancy.

In order to present as complete a study of the aristocracy in County Westmeath as possible, a wide range of primary sources were examined. Unfortunately, few estate records exist belonging to the families in the case study. However, it should be noted that the private family papers of the Nugent family of

Ballinlough, which had not been previously examined by historians, were made available to this author and extensively utilised; they provide an invaluable insight into the operation and management of an Irish aristocratic estate in a period of economic and political turbulence. Moreover, the paucity of estate records cannot be offered as an excuse for not carrying out a study of this nature as there are ample other sources available. These range from memoirs and diaries, published and unpublished, to an extensive range of parliamentary papers. With regard to the latter, for example, detailed annual returns of sums advanced to landlords under the land acts were provided to parliament each year which recorded the amount of money allocated during the sale of an estate and to whom it was advanced. These returns of advances for the period from 1870 to 1920 were comprehensively analysed. While a laborious task, this served to establish the extent of the reduction of the estates in the period of this study.

The National Archives at Kew contains War Office files pertaining to members of aristocratic families that fought and died in the Great War.⁷ These files were investigated so as to gain a greater understanding of the traumatic effect of war, as well as the sacrifices made by the aristocracy in Westmeath. The archives at Kew also contain detailed records of criminal injuries and compensation awards to those affected during the revolutionary period from 1919 to 1923.⁸ Considerably more information regarding the impact of the revolutionary period and, indeed, all of the earlier period, was extracted from an exhaustive search of local newspapers.

Documents and files retained in the National Archives of Ireland, including wills, were examined, as were police records from Kew including the county inspector of the Royal Irish Constabulary monthly reports from February 1914 to

⁷ War Office: Service Medal and Award Rolls Index, First World War, (T.N.A., WO339).

⁸ Criminal Injuries-Irish Grants Committee, 1922-1930, (T.N.A., CO762).

December 1921 (copies of which were available on microfilm in the library of Maynooth University.) These reports proved an excellent source, containing detailed information on matters that came to the attention of the authorities relating to the activities of various organisations as well as ongoing agitation, disputes and criminal activity.

The availability of new sources such as the Bureau of Military History witness statements was crucial in providing insights into the revolutionary period. While they have their inherent weaknesses, they do throw light on attitudes to the landed class in general. Another source recently made available by the National Archives of Ireland are the Compensation (Ireland) Commission files in respect of County Westmeath which are a record of all claims for compensation submitted by victims of violence, intimidation and damage to property committed prior to and following the truce of 11 July 1921.⁹

This thesis is essentially divided into three parts. The first section, consisting of chapters one, two, and three, examines the origins, background and arrival of the aristocratic families into Westmeath. It then proceeds to investigate agrarian agitation as well as the social and political changes that occurred during the extended Land War from 1879 to 1909. Between 1870 and 1909 the British Government passed ten land acts which allowed for tenant farmers, with the assistance of government funding, to purchase their landholdings. This triggered a massive transfer in land ownership in Ireland, including County Westmeath. During almost the entire period the aristocracy and landed gentry were under attack on two fronts, firstly from the land acts which reduced the size and viability of their estates, and secondly from the campaign for Home Rule which compromised their political status. The alteration in the

⁹ The Compensation (Ireland) Commission: (N.A.I., FIN/Comp/2/24).

relationship between landlord and tenant, along with the changes to the political administration of Ireland, saw the aristocracy lose much of their power and influence.

The second part of this study covering chapters four and five, examines the implications that the Wyndham Land Act of 1903 had for the aristocracy in Westmeath, and moves beyond the revolutionary transfer of landownership to look at the impact of the so-called Ranch War from around 1907. The third part of the thesis, comprising chapters six, seven and eight, deals with the First World War, the Easter Rebellion of 1916 and the subsequent rise of Sinn Féin, the War of Independence and the Irish Civil War. This thesis offers the first extensive examination of the impact of the revolutionary period on the aristocracy at local level. It considers why country houses and estates in Westmeath were sold, abandoned or burned during and after the turbulent years of 1919-23, but it also enquires into the reasons why other houses remained untouched. The enactment of additional land legislation by the Free State government in 1923 saw the remaining estates disappear, bringing an end to the power and influence of the aristocracy in Westmeath. It was a phenomenon mirrored throughout Ireland.

Chapter 1

The aristocratic families of County Westmeath

1. Introduction

The pre-eminent position of the aristocratic families of Westmeath in the political, judicial, administrative and social fabric of the county was absolute. It ensured their dominance in all local decision making processes, and their position as members of the highest social order made them central figures in the history of County Westmeath. The aristocratic families of County Westmeath were moulded by their experiences which shaped their outlook on political, religious and economic matters and in order to gain a greater understanding of their experiences it is necessary to examine the roles and responsibilities that went with being a member of this class. No study of the Westmeath aristocracy would be complete without a thorough investigation of a number of important questions relating to the families.

What was the origin of each family, and how did it come to prominence? What were the circumstances surrounding their arrival in Westmeath? How were their extensive estates and palatial mansions acquired and utilised to enhance the family's position? The process involved in arranging suitable marriages in order maintain the family dynasty, together with the education of aristocratic children, and the desire to find suitable careers for them, was of crucial importance and also warrants systematic investigation. In this chapter these and other questions will be examined by analysing the aristocratic families under a number of thematic headings, including origins, landownership, marriages, education and careers. Addressing these areas will provide a greater insight into the lives of the aristocratic families of County Westmeath and will lay the foundations for the study to follow.

2. Origins

For many generations the aristocracy in Ireland enjoyed a comfortable and sheltered lifestyle in large country houses surrounded by high estate walls and waited upon by a retinue of servants and other staff. They were members of the upper class who socialised, interacted and married within their own social order, remaining largely isolated and aloof from their tenants and the population in general. David Cannadine correctly refutes the representation of the aristocratic land owning classes as ‘elegant, exquisite patrons of the arts, living lives of tasteful ease in beautiful surroundings’. He believes that they should be recognised for what they really were, which was ‘a tough, tenacious and resourceful élite, who loved money, loved power, and loved the good life’.¹

In 1870 there were approximately two hundred aristocratic families in Ireland of which eight resided in County Westmeath. The aristocratic families arrived in the county at distinct historical periods. The Nugent families of Ballinlough Castle, Delvin, and Donore House, Multyfarnham came to Ireland during the Anglo-Norman invasion of the late twelfth century. Four families arrived in Ireland during the Cromwellian wars of the seventeenth century: the Pakenham family of Tullyally Castle, Castlepollard; the Levinge family of Knockdrin Castle, Mullingar; the Chapman family of Killua Castle, Clonmellon; and the Handcock family of Moydrum Castle, Athlone. The Ennis and the Greville-Nugent families came to Westmeath in the nineteenth century. The aristocratic families that settled in Westmeath grew into powerful dynasties, playing an important role in the administration of Ireland, the British Empire, and in the case of the Nugents of Ballinlough, the Austrian Empire, as politicians, diplomats and soldiers, as well as judicial and local administrators.

¹ David Cannadine, *The decline and fall of the British aristocracy* (London, 1990), p. 4.

Between 1704 and 1869 members of these Westmeath families were elevated to the peerage and given aristocratic titles (see Table 1) for their dedicated service to the British Empire.

Table 1. The aristocratic families of County Westmeath and the year of their elevation to the peerage

Family Name	Aristocratic Title	Year Created
Pakenham	Baron Longford	1756
	Earl of Longford	1785
Levinge	Baronet Levinge of High Park	1704
Nugent	Baronet of Donore	1768
	Title Extinct	1799
	Recreated	1831
Chapman	Baronet Chapman of Killua	1782
Nugent	Baronet of Ballinlough	1795
Handcock	Baronet Castlemaine of Moydrum	1812
Ennis	Baronet Ennis	1866
Greville-Nugent	Baronet Greville of Clonyn	1869

Source: John Charles Lyons, *The grand juries of the county of Westmeath, ii* (Mullingar, 1853); *Burke's peerage and baronetage* (London, 1976).

The oldest aristocratic family in Westmeath was the Nugent family of Ballinlough. In the late sixteenth century Hugh O'Reilly, Clonmahon, County Meath married Katherine Plunkett of Clonabrany in the same county and received the Ballinlough estate near the village of Delvin as a dower.² On 22 July 1795 Hugh O'Reilly's great-great grandson, also Hugh O'Reilly (1741-1821) was created a baronet by King George III.³ In 1812 O'Reilly assumed by royal licence his maternal surname of Nugent in compliance with the will of his maternal uncle.⁴ The Nugent family as Roman Catholics had joined the Austrian rather than the British army, commencing

² John Charles Lyons, *The grand juries of the county of Westmeath, ii* (Mullingar, 1853), p. 243.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 244.

⁴ G. E. Cokayne (ed.) *Complete Baronetage*, v (Exeter, 1906), p. 434.

with Andrew and James O'Reilly, brothers of Sir Hugh, 1st baronet.⁵ Sir John Nugent, 3rd baronet (1800-1859), a Count of the Holy Roman Empire also served the Hapsburg dynasty as chamberlain to the emperor of Austria and as a major in the Hungarian Hussars.⁶ Upon his death in 1859 the hereditary title passed to his eldest son Sir Hugh, 4th baronet (1845-1863). In 1863 Sir Hugh was tragically killed at the age of eighteen in a shooting accident while at school in Suffolk, and was succeeded by his younger brother, Charles (1847-1927), as 5th baronet.⁷

The Nugent family of Donore were of similar origin to their Ballinlough namesakes. They were descendants of Sir Gilbert de Nogent, a Norman knight who had come to Ireland with Hugh de Lacy in 1172.⁸ The Hon. James Nugent, eldest son of Richard Nugent, 10th baron of Delvin (d.1475) had obtained the estate at Donore near the village of Multyfarnham through his marriage to Elizabeth Hollywood of Artane, Dublin.⁹ The estate remained in the Nugent family from that time and passed down to James Nugent who was elevated to the peerage in 1768 as Baron Nugent of Donore. In 1797 the baronetcy expired on the death of Sir Peter Nugent, 2nd baronet, but was recreated again in 1831 when Percy Nugent was elevated to the peerage as 1st Baronet of Donore. Sir Walter George Nugent (1827-1893), 2nd baronet succeeded his father in 1874.¹⁰ As well as being a member of the aristocracy Sir Walter had served the British Empire as a soldier and local administrator.¹¹

⁵ *Burke's peerage and baronetage* (London, 1976), p. 2005. Andrew O'Reilly attained the rank of Field Marshal in the Austrian army, fighting in the Napoleonic wars at Marengo, Austerlitz and Caldiero. In 1797 he was made a Count of the Holy Roman Empire, in 1805 was awarded the Order of Maria Theresa and in 1809 was appointed governor of Vienna.

⁶ Lyons, *The grand juries of the county of Westmeath*, p. 245.

⁷ *Burke's peerage*, p.2006. Sir Charles had served as a Lieutenant in the 17th Lancers and like his late brother was a Count of the Holy Roman Empire.

⁸ Lyons, *The grand juries of the county of Westmeath*, p. 203.

⁹ *Ibid*, p. 204, 216. Her father Sir Robert Hollywood (d.1430) had purchased the estate from the heirs of Sir Theobald de Verdon (1278-1316).

¹⁰ *Burke's peerage*, pp 2005-6.

¹¹ *Ibid*, p. 2007. In addition to this role as a J.P. Sir Walter was high sheriff for County Longford in 1862 and for Westmeath in 1866 and 1873. He had been a major in the Westmeath Rifles and a

The first family in Westmeath to have been elevated to the aristocracy was the Levinge family with Sir Richard Levinge, (1656-1724), of Parwich, Derby having been created a baronet of Ireland in 1704.¹² Levinge had been very successful at the English bar and made a large fortune which he used to purchase his Westmeath estate from the Commissioners of Forfeited Estates.¹³ Members of the Levinge family had served in the British army and royal navy. Sir Richard Levinge, 7th baronet, (1811-84) (see Figure 2) who had succeeded his father in 1848 was no exception, having served in the military as well as being involved in politics.¹⁴

Sir Richard, while twice married, had no children, and on his death in 1884 was succeeded by his younger brother Vere (1819-1885). When Sir Vere Henry Levinge died unmarried the following year in Madras, India,¹⁵ the title and estates passed to his nephew, William Henry Levinge (1849-1900), 9th baronet.¹⁶ The origins of the Pakenham family can be traced to Suffolk where they were holders of the Manor of Netherall in Pakenham at the end of the eleventh century. The first member of the family to acquire land in Ireland was Captain Henry Pakenham, second son of Robert Pakenham of Cambridgeshire. Henry and his brothers Philip and Robert each commanded a troop of horse and, having obtained commissions, were amongst the first soldiers to be sent to Ireland in 1642 following the outbreak of rebellion the

captain in the 33rd Regiment and had fought in the Crimean war at Alma, Inkerman and Balaclava. He received the Crimean medal with three clasps, the Turkish medal and the Order of the Medjidie awarded by the Turkish government to British and French officers for distinguished service.

¹² *Burke's Peerage*, p 1598. Levinge had served as MP for Chester from 1690 to 1695 and for Derby from 1710 to 1711. He was speaker of the Irish House of Commons, 1692, Solicitor General for Ireland in 1692 and 1704-9, Attorney-General 1711-14 and Chief Justice of the Common Pleas 1720-24.

¹³ Lyons, *The grand juries of the county of Westmeath*, p. 132. This land had been forfeited by Andrew Tuite in 1641.

¹⁴ *Ibid*, p. 139. Sir Richard Levinge was MP for Westmeath from 1857 to 1865 and served as a captain in the 5th Dragoon Guards a lieutenant-colonel in the Westmeath Militia. As well as being a JP and DL he was also high sheriff for the county in 1851.

¹⁵ G. E. Cokayne (ed.), *Complete Baronetage*, iv (Exeter, 1904), p. 236. Sir Vere Levinge had served in the Madras civil service from 1857-67.

¹⁶ *Burke's peerage*, p 1599. Sir William Levinge had served as a captain in the 9th battalion Rifle Brigade and as a major in the 5th volunteer battalion Hampshire Regiment.

previous year.¹⁷ In 1756 Thomas Pakenham (1713-1766) was elevated to the peerage and created Baron Longford. In 1785 his widow Elizabeth was created Countess of Longford by King George III.¹⁸ In 1870 William Lygon Pakenham, (1819–1887), the 4th earl, was head of the family having succeeded to the title in 1860. He was the highest ranking peer in Westmeath and had given distinguished service to the crown over a long military and political career.¹⁹

John and William Chapman were the first members of their family to arrive in Ireland. They came to Ireland from Hinckley in Leicestershire when John, through the influence of his first cousin, Sir Walter Raleigh, obtained land in County Kerry, which he later sold to the earl of Cork. William Chapman's only son Benjamin became a captain in a cavalry regiment under the earl of Inchiquin and in 1667 was granted land at Killua in County Westmeath.²⁰ Benjamin Chapman's grandson, also Benjamin, was created a baronet in 1782.²¹ He died without issue in 1810 and was succeeded by his brother Thomas, (1756-1837). Thomas was in turn succeeded by his son, Montagu Chapman, as 3rd baronet in 1837.²² Sir Montagu was controversial in that he was involved in the assisted emigration of some two hundred persons from the Clonmellon

¹⁷ Lyons, *The grand juries of the county of Westmeath*, p. 247. Henry Pakenham's troop having fought with the Parliamentary army was disbanded in August 1655. In October of the same year he received a debenture for £4,363 arrears of pay due to him and his men. See *Burke's peerage and baronetage* (London, 1976), p 1646. In lieu of the arrears in pay Henry was granted land in County Wexford and at Tullynally in County Westmeath, which was confirmed by the twenty-fifth patent of King Charles I.

¹⁸ *Ibid*, p. 249. Thomas Pakenham's grandsons Edward and Hercules both attained the rank of major-general and fought in the Peninsular war. Edward Pakenham was killed in the United States at the battle of New Orleans in 1815, while his granddaughter Catherine married Arthur, Duke of Wellington in 1806. See also Lyons, *grand juries*, pp 250-1.

¹⁹ *Burke's peerage*, p. 2005. Sir William Pakenham had served as under-secretary for War from 1867 to 1868, and was Lord Lieutenant and *custos rotulorum* for County Longford from 1874 to 1887. He had served as adjutant general of the British forces in Turkey in 1855, as deputy adjutant-general to the British army in India from 1858 to 1860.

²⁰ Lyons, *The grand juries of the county of Westmeath*, p. 33. The lands had been forfeited by the earls of Westmeath.

²¹ *Ibid*, p. 34.

²² Eugene Sheridan, *A history of the parish of Clonmellon/Killalon* (Unknown, 2001), p. 36. Montagu Chapman was MP for Westmeath from 1830 to 1841 and high sheriff for the county in 1844.

area to Port Adelaide, South Australia in 1847 during the Great Irish Famine.²³ In 1851 Sir Montagu Chapman sailed for Australia to visit his estate. However, sometime after 17 May 1852 his ship disappeared in the vicinity of Cape Howe, eastern Australia. He was later declared dead and was succeeded as 4th baronet by his brother Benjamin (1810-1888).²⁴ While Sir Benjamin had not served in the army he was a staunch unionist and was involved at the highest level of politics and local administration in Ireland.²⁵

The leading aristocratic dynasty in south Westmeath was the Handcock family. William Handcock, MP for Westmeath in 1661, was granted five thousand five hundred acres of land in the barony of Kilkenny West near Athlone in 1680 under the Act of Settlement, which punished those who had supported the confederates in the 1641 rebellion.²⁶ William Handcock, (1761-1839), MP for Athlone in the Irish parliament, had originally been an opponent of parliamentary union with Britain, but on the promise of a peerage had voted in favour of the Act of Union.²⁷ Handcock was rewarded in 1812 when he was created Baron Castlemaine of Moydrum. Additional honours were bestowed in 1822 when he was elevated to the title of Viscount Castlemaine. When he died without issue in 1839 the viscountcy became extinct. However, the baroncy passed to his brother Richard, 2nd baronet (1767-1840). The family estates and aristocratic title passed to his son, Richard (1791-1869), 3rd

²³ Eugene Sheridan, *A history of the parish of Clonmellon/Killaloe* (Unknown, 2001), p. 35. In 1840 Montagu Chapman had purchased a large quantity of land in that area for £4,000, which allowed him to send migrants to Australia at no additional cost.

²⁴ *Ibid*, pp 71-2. While part of the vessel was subsequently located, no trace of Montagu Chapman's body was ever found.

²⁵ Sheridan, *A history of the parish of Clonmellon/Killaloe*, p. 36. Sir Benjamin Chapman was MP for Westmeath from 1841 to 1847. He was a JP and DL for Westmeath, high sheriff for the county in 1856, and lord lieutenant of Westmeath from 1883 until his death in 1888.

²⁶ Lyons, *The grand juries of the County of Westmeath*, p. 105. William Handcock supported the crown and following the restoration was appointed the first high sheriff of Westmeath in 1661. He was chosen as a commissioner to raise revenue for William III in 1695, 1697 and 1698.

²⁷ G. E. Cokayne, Vicary Gibbs and H. A. Doubleday (eds), *The complete peerage of England, Scotland, Ireland, Great Britain and the United Kingdom*, iii (London, 1913), p. 93.

baronet, in 1840 and subsequently to his grandson, also Richard (1826-1892), as 4th baronet, in 1869.²⁸

The origins of the Ennis family are less well known. According to Lyons the family were mercantile traders from County Down. A member of the family, Andrew Ennis had moved to Dublin where he amassed a large fortune. In 1800 he purchased an estate at Griffinstown near Kinnegad.²⁹ In 1828 Ennis extended his land holdings in Westmeath with the purchase of Ballinahown Court and estate near Athlone from the Malone family of Baronston House, Ballynacargy.³⁰ In 1866 John Ennis (1809-1878), was elevated to the peerage as Baron Ennis of Ballinahown. In addition to his political activities he had extensive banking and railway interests.³¹ John James Ennis (1842-1884) succeeded his father as 2nd baronet in 1878.³² When Sir John James Ennis, 2nd baronet, died without issue in 1884, the title became extinct.³³

The Greville family were the most recent of the aristocratic families to arrive in Westmeath. The first member of the family to settle in the county was Fulke Southwell Greville (1821-1883), 2nd son of Algernon Greville, North Lodge, Barnet, Hertfordshire.³⁴ In 1840 he married Lady Rosa Emily Nugent, (1814-1883) only child

²⁸ G. E. Cokayne, Vicary Gibbs and H. A. Doubleday (eds), *The complete peerage of England, Scotland, Ireland, Great Britain and the United Kingdom*, iii (London, 1913), p. 94. Sir Richard, 4th baronet was a JP and DL for Westmeath, had served as a captain in the 41st Foot. He was elected a representative peer to the House of Lords for Ireland in 1874 and was lord lieutenant of Westmeath from 1889 to 1892.

²⁹ Lyons, *The grand juries of the County of Westmeath*, p. 71.

³⁰ Jeremiah Sheehan, *South Westmeath, farm and folk* (Dublin, 1978), p. 90.

³¹ Lyons, *The grand juries of the county of Westmeath*, p.71. Ennis was a JP for King's County and Westmeath and was high sheriff for Westmeath in 1837 and Dublin in 1840. He was Liberal party MP for Athlone from 1857 to 1865 and had extensive banking interests as a governor and director of the Bank of Ireland. Ennis was also chairman of the Midland Great Western Railway Company.

³² Robert Henry Mair (ed.), *Debrett's illustrated House of Commons and the judicial bench* (London, 1881), p. 72. John James Ennis, 2nd bt, was a JP and DL for County Westmeath, and high sheriff for the county in 1866. He was Liberal M.P. for Athlone from 1868 to 1874 and again from 1880 until his death in 1884.

³³ *Debrett's baronetage, knightage and companionship* (London, 1893), p. 195. The estate passed to Daniel O'Donoghue, The O'Donoghue of the Glens, a Catholic Irish chieftain from County Kerry who was married to Mary Sophie, sister and co-heir of the 2nd baronet. See Bernard Burke, *The landed gentry of Ireland* (London, 1912), p. 527.

³⁴ G. E. Cokayne, *Complete peerage of England, Scotland, Ireland, Great Britain and the United Kingdom*, iv (Exeter, 1892), p. 93.

and heiress of George Thomas Nugent, (1785-1871) 8th earl and 1st marquess of Westmeath.³⁵ Fulke Greville, through his lineage to Algernon Greville, 5th baron Brooke, could trace his origins back to 1398.³⁶ On 8 August 1866 Fulke Greville took by royal licence his wife's surname of Nugent, and became Greville-Nugent. He was a member of the Liberal party and supporter of Prime Minister William Gladstone who elevated him to the peerage on 15 December 1869 as Baron Greville of Clonyn.³⁷ On the death of his father-in-law in 1871 Fulke Greville-Nugent and his wife inherited the earl's estate of almost 10,000 acres.³⁸ In the generations leading up to 1879 each of the aristocratic families in Westmeath became well established as powerful land owning dynasties who dominated all aspects of social, political and economic life in the county. (Family trees in respect of each family are outlined at Appendix 2).

3. Landownership

In nineteenth-century Ireland land was power; the more land a family owned the greater the status and influence they wielded. This was certainly true in the case of the aristocratic families of Westmeath who were substantial landowners with large sections of their estates rented out to tenant farmers, who in the absence of any major industries in County Westmeath were very dependant on agricultural production for

³⁵ *Burke's peerage*, p. 1174.

³⁶ Lyons, *The grand juries of the county of Westmeath*, pp 100-1. A member of the family, Fulke Greville had distinguished himself during the reigns of Elizabeth I and James I, at whose coronation he was made a Knight of the Bath. Greville also served as Chancellor of the Exchequer and a member of the Privy Council. In 1604 he obtained a grant of Warwick Castle and was created Baron Brooke in 1620. His nephew Robert Greville, 2nd Baron Brooke, a puritan nobleman, was a general in the parliamentary army during the English civil war. He fought at the battle of Edgehill and was killed by a sniper in 1643 at the siege of Litchfield. Fulke Southwell Greville (1821-1883) was great-great grandson of the Hon. Algernon Greville, 2nd son of 5th Baron Brooke.

³⁷ Cokayne, *Complete peerage of England, Scotland, Ireland, Great Britain and the United Kingdom*, pp 93-4. Greville-Nugent was Liberal MP for County Longford from 1852 to 1869 and succeeded his father-in-law as lord lieutenant for County Westmeath in 1871 and held the post until his death in 1883.

³⁸ Donal O'Brien, *The houses and landed families of Westmeath* (Athlone, 2014), p. 48.

their livelihood. In U.H Hussey De Burgh's, *The landowners of Ireland, owners of estates of 500 acres or £500 valuation and upwards in Ireland* published in 1878 there were thirty persons who owned estates in excess of 3,000 statute acres in County Westmeath.³⁹ This was the sixth highest density of landowners per county in Ireland.

The largest aristocratic landowner in County Westmeath (see Table 3) was William Lygon Pakenham, 4th earl of Longford who held a total of 19,989 acres, comprising of 15,014 acres in Westmeath, 4,555 acres in County Longford and 420 acres in County Dublin.⁴⁰ In 1876 the size of the Westmeath estate increased to 19,571 acres when the Cookesborough estate of 4,557 acres was acquired by the family as a result of a bequest from Adolphus Cooke, an eccentric landowner who resided near Mullingar. Cooke's will was contested by another local landowner, Wellington Purdon of Joristown, Killucan who was of the belief that he should have been the main beneficiary. Following a hard-fought court hearing over nine days, as well as two subsequent appeals, a compromise was agreed between the parties. The terms remained confidential but Lord Longford retained possession of the property.⁴¹ Fulke Southwell Greville-Nugent, 1st baronet, the second largest landowner in Westmeath, had estates of 9,783 acres in Westmeath, 3,990 acres in Roscommon, 1,970 acres in Cavan, 1,236 acres in Longford 451 acres in Cork as well as a 1,178 acre estate in Kent. Greville's total landholding was 18,608 acres with a valuation of £18,194.⁴² At the time of his death in 1883 he had a rental income of £12,000 per year from his properties.⁴³

³⁹ 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, 1878), pp xxvii – xxviii.

⁴⁰ *Ibid*, p. 278.

⁴¹ M. McDonnell Bodkin, *Famous Irish Trials* (Dublin, 1918), pp 1-24.

⁴² John Bateman, *Great landowners of Great Britain and Ireland* (London, 1883), p. 195.

⁴³ *Irish Times*, 3 Jul. 1883.

Sir Benjamin Chapman, 4th baronet, owned an extensive estate of 9,516 acres in Westmeath, 3,600 acres of poor land in Mayo, which only had a valuation of £36, and thus was used largely as a shooting estate, and 241 acres in County Meath, amounting to a total of 13,357 acres with an annual valuation of £6,785.⁴⁴ Sir Richard Handcock's estate consisted of 11,444 acres in the south of Westmeath, with an additional 597 acres in County Roscommon, a total of 12,041 acres with a value of £8,919.⁴⁵ His neighbour, Sir John Ennis was also a substantial landowner with a total estate of 10,935 acres, comprised of 8,774 acres in Westmeath, 326 acres in Dublin, 262 acres in Roscommon and 1,573 acres in County Meath. The three smaller aristocratic landowners were Sir Walter Nugent, 2nd baronet, of Donore with 7,955 acres, made up of 7,218 acres in Westmeath and 737 acres in County Meath.

In 1869 the Nugent's of Ballinlough were the owners of an estate of 7,479 acres, comprised of 2,106 acres in Tipperary, 679 acres in Meath and 4,694 acres in Westmeath,⁴⁶ with an annual rental income of £5,059 1/- 3d.⁴⁷ However, that same year, due to financial difficulties, which will be outlined later, Sir Charles Nugent, 5th baronet, was not in control of the estate having conveyed his life interest in the property to his mother, Lady Letitia Nugent, who in return had assumed his debts.⁴⁸ In 1871 the family sold the Tipperary section of the estate through the Landed Estates Court and by 1883 the estate had been reduced to 5,381 acres, 4,697 acres in Westmeath and 684 acres in Meath. The Westmeath aristocrat with the smallest land

⁴⁴ 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*, p. 78.

⁴⁵ Bateman, *Great landowners of Great Britain and Ireland*, p. 81.

⁴⁶ Estimated selling value of the estates of Sir Charles Nugent, 24 December 1869 (Nugent family Papers, uncatalogued).

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

⁴⁸ Indenture dated 24 July 1869 between Sir Charles Nugent and Lady Letitia Nugent (Nugent family papers, uncatalogued).

holding was Sir Richard Levinge, 7th baronet, with an estate consisting of 5,017 acres in Westmeath and 1 acre in Huntingdon.

Table 2. Quantity of land (acres) owned by the Westmeath aristocracy 1883.

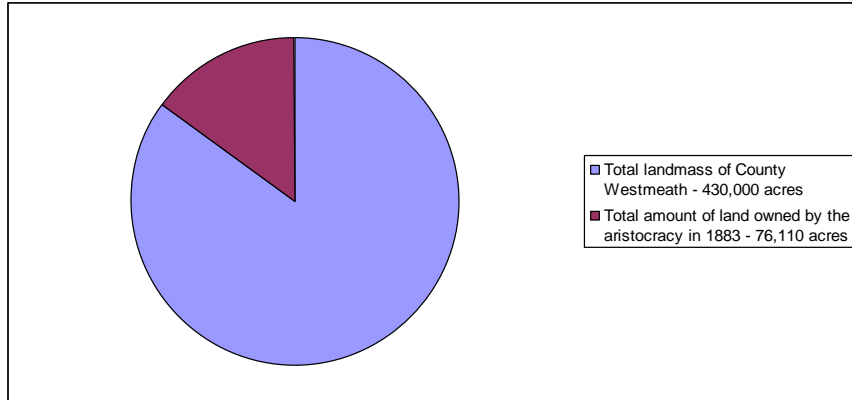
Family	Residence	Where Land Held & Extent (Statute acres)	Total Acreage
Pakenham	Tullyally Castle	Westmeath 19,571 Longford 4,555 Dublin 420	24,546
Levinge	Knockdrin Castle	Westmeath 5,017 Huntingdon 1	5,018
Nugent (Donore)	Donore House	Westmeath 7,218 Longford 737	7,955
Chapman	Killua Castle	Westmeath 9,516 Meath 241 Mayo 3,600	13,357
Nugent (Ballinlough)	Ballinlough Castle	Westmeath 4,697 Meath 684	5,381
Handcock	Moydrum Castle	Westmeath 11,444 Roscommon 597	12,041
Ennis	Ballinahown Court	Dublin 326 Roscommon 262 Westmeath 8,774 Meath 1,573	10,935
Greville-Nugent	Clonyn Castle & Clonhugh House	Westmeath 9,783 Roscommon 3,990 Cavan 1,970 Longford 1,236 Cork 451 Kent 1,178	18,608

Source: John Bateman, *Great landowners of Great Britain and Ireland* (London, 1883); M. McDonnell Bodkin, *Famous Irish trials* (Dublin, 1918).

As can be seen in table 2, the size of aristocratic estates varied greatly from one family to another with the fortunes of each aristocratic family being determined by events that affected it over time. An examination of the geographical location of estates owned by the Westmeath aristocracy outside the county, shows that the bulk was located in adjoining counties of Roscommon, Longford and Meath, with three estates each, followed by Dublin with two estates, Cavan, Cork and Mayo with one each, and one estate in the county of Kent in England. In 1876 County Westmeath consisted of 430,003 acres, 1 rood and 10 perches.⁴⁹ The eight aristocratic families between them owned 76,110 acres or 17.7% of County Westmeath (See Table 3).

⁴⁹ *Summary of returns of owners of land of one acre and upwards in the several counties, counties of*

Table 3. Total amount of land owned by the aristocracy in County Westmeath, 1883.



Sources: John Bateman, *Great landowners of Great Britain and Ireland* (London, 1883); *Return of owners of land of one acre and upwards in the several counties, counties of cities and county of towns in Ireland [C.1492], H C 1876, lxxx.61.*

The Irish landed gentry, especially those who owned estates in excess of 10,000 acres were among the wealthiest people in Ireland. In addition to the eight aristocratic families there were six other landowners in Westmeath who had estates in excess of 10,000 acres (see Table 4).

Table 4. Resident Westmeath landlords who owned in excess of 10,000 acres in 1883.

Name	Residence	Where Land Held & Extent (Acres)	Total Acreage
George Augustus Rochfort-Boyd	Middleton Park Mullingar	Westmeath 16,397	16,397
Charles Brinsley Marlay	Belvedere House Mullingar	Westmeath 9,059 Louth 3,067 Cavan 1,668 Limerick 453 King's 38	14,285
John Malone	Baronston House Ballynacargy	Westmeath 13,715	13,715
Francis Travers Dames-Longwood	Glynwood House Athlone	Westmeath 6,547 Galway 3,271 King's 2,422 Roscommon 1,192 Lancashire 7	13,439
Ralph Smyth	Gaybrook House Mullingar	Westmeath 6,287 Antrim 5,592	11,879
Thomas Smyth	Ballinegall House Mullingar	Westmeath 9,778 Meath 150 King's 343 Kildare 785	11,056

Source: John Bateman, *Great landowners of Great Britain and Ireland* (London, 1883).

cities and county of towns in Ireland [C.1492] HC 1876, lxxx.61, 87.

George Augustus Rochfort-Boyd, father-in-law of Sir Thomas Chapman, 7th baronet, by his marriage to Edith Hamilton Rochfort-Boyd was the single largest landowner in County Westmeath with 16,397 acres. The other landowners while not directly related to the aristocracy interacted closely with them, politically, as members of the grand jury, and socially, at meetings of the Westmeath hunt, and other philanthropic events.

Unlike some English aristocratic families who had alternative sources of income, such as mines, quarries, forestry or indeed slavery, the aristocratic families of Westmeath's main source of income was derived from their estates, and they were not disposed to sell their main asset except as a last resort or unless financially incentivised, or politically coerced.

4. Aristocratic houses in Westmeath

As members of the highest social order the aristocracy were the leaders of society in Ireland and they constructed new residences and extended existing estate houses to reflect their pre-eminent position. The trend with regards to the eight families was that construction of houses generally occurred within a few years of a family being elevated to the aristocracy, which was mainly between 1730 and 1815, with only two residences being built in the post-Famine period, both by the same individual, Fulke Southwell Greville-Nugent, 1st baronet. (see Table 5).

Table 5. The aristocratic families of County Westmeath and year of construction of principal residences.

Name of Family	Name of Residence	When Built (Year)	When Extended (Year)
Nugent, Baronet of Ballinlough.	Ballinlough Castle	1614	1740 & 1790
Pakenham, Earl of Longford	Pakenham Hall (Later) Tullynally Castle	1730	1780, 1806, 1820, & 1842-5
Baronet Ennis	Ballinahown Court	1746	Purchased from the Malone family in 1828.
Baronet Nugent Of Donore.	Donore House	Not stated	During the 19 th century
Baronet Chapman of	Killua Castle	1780	1830

Killua.			
Handcock, Baron Of Castlemine.	Moydrum Castle	1814	
Baronet Levinge Of High Park.	Knockdrin Castle	1815	
Baronet Greville Of Clonyn.	Clonyn Castle & Clonhugh House	1870-6 1867	

Source: Christine Casey and Alistair Rowan, *The buildings of Ireland: north Leinster* (London, 1993).

The great houses of the Westmeath aristocracy were built in three clearly defined periods which reflected the economic and political situation of the time. The first phase of construction between 1730 and 1780 coincided with a period of relative tranquillity and economic prosperity in Ireland and a time when the Protestant ascendancy was at the height of its power.⁵⁰ The second phase occurred between 1810 and 1815 at a time when the Irish economy was in a period of prosperity arising from the Napoleonic wars in Europe. The third and final phase occurred in 1860s and 1870s when the economy had improved somewhat from the effects of the Great Famine, and prior to the immense economic depression that crippled Ireland from the late 1870s to the Great War. The pattern of extensions and renovations also coincided with the prevailing economic climate, as well as the financial circumstances of each individual family.⁵¹

In addition to being dependent on the prevailing economic conditions, the design and construction of these great houses was also determined by the political situation in Ireland. The necessity for fortified dwellings and steadfast security had receded in the decades following the Williamite wars. This permitted more flexibility and creativity in the planning and design of aristocratic houses. The leading architects and designers of the day, Richard Castle (d.1751), James Wyatt (1746-1813), Francis

⁵⁰ R. B McDowell, 'Ireland in 1800', in T. W. Moody and W. E. Vaughan (eds), *A new history of Ireland iv* (Oxford, 1986), pp 679-83.

⁵¹ *Ibid*, p. 682.

Johnston (1760-1829), James Sheil, and Sir Richard Morrison (1767-1849) were commissioned to design and build mansions that would project their owner's status as a member of the aristocracy. The classic style and character of these mansions reflected the fashion of the time, as well as the thoughts and ideas of their aristocratic owners and architects who added their own distinctive features to the buildings. The oldest aristocratic residence in Westmeath was Ballinlough Castle, built in 1617 by the Nugent family.⁵² The property was one of the few large estates that had remained in the possession of its original Roman Catholic owners. The castle was initially altered and extended in c.1740 by Francis Bindon (d.1765), an amateur architect, who created a two-storey hall, stairs and bridge gallery, and later in c.1770 by James Wyatt who added a wing in a Georgian Gothic style containing a drawing room, dining room, bedrooms and corner towers to the castle.⁵³ Wyatt, one of the most eminent architects of his time, designed many other public and private buildings in Britain and Ireland.

As previously stated, the first phase of construction saw the building of four aristocratic houses: Pakenham Hall, Ballinahown Court, Donore House and Killua Castle. Pakenham Hall, the home of the earl of Longford was built about 1730. The house was renovated and extended by its owners every fourteen to twenty-five years between 1780 and 1842. The initial internal alterations to the castle in 1780 were carried out by a Mr Myers. The building was remodelled again in 1806 by Francis Johnston who added two round towers in a Gothic style to the main block of the house. In 1820 James Sheil added a bay window and turrets as well as internal

⁵² Christine Casey and Alistair Rowan, *The buildings of Ireland: north Leinster* (London, 1993), pp 138-9.

⁵³ Lecture on Ballinlough Castle by Sir Hugh Nugent to Ulster Architectural Heritage Society, 30 May 1982 (Nugent family papers, uncatalogued).

decorations to the castle, and in 1842-5 Sir Richard Morrison added two long wings with additional architectural features making it a substantially larger building.⁵⁴

Ballinahown Court, near Athlone was not built as an aristocratic mansion but was purchased in 1828 by Sir John Ennis from the Malone family of Baronston House, Ballynacargy. Ballinahown Court, a square three-storey house with a hipped roof and a large central chimneystack, and attributed to Richard Castle, was built in 1746. According to Casey and Rowan the house was the largest and finest Georgian house in south Westmeath.⁵⁵ The third aristocratic mansion erected during this period was Donore House, a late Georgian three-storey, seven-bay dwelling built by the Nugent family on the scenic shores of Lough Derravaragh. Unfortunately, little is known about the construction of the house, the exact year it was erected, or the identity of its designer.⁵⁶ A lower two-storey wing containing a billiard room was added to the house in the nineteenth century.⁵⁷ The other house constructed during this phase was the Chapman family residence of Killua Castle, originally known as St. Lucy, completed c.1780. In 1830 the building was enlarged and extended by James Shiel, in a Gothic style, with the addition of battlements, parapets and towers.⁵⁸

The two mansions built during the second phase of construction were Moydrum Castle near Athlone, and Knockdrin Castle outside Mullingar. The Handcock family residence at Moydrum, designed by Richard Morrison, was completed in 1814.⁵⁹ The castle built in a Tudor-Gothic style was a manifestation of the newly acquired status attained by the family following the elevation of William

⁵⁴ Casey and Rowan, *The buildings of Ireland: north Leinster*, pp 525-8.

⁵⁵ *Ibid*, pp 148-9.

⁵⁶ Mark Bence-Jones, *A guide to Irish country houses* (London, 1988), p. 106.

⁵⁷ Donal O'Brien, *The houses and landed families of Westmeath* (Athlone, 2014), p. 98.

⁵⁸ Casey and Rowan, *The buildings of Ireland: north Leinster*, pp 212-3.

⁵⁹ *Ibid*, pp 406-7.

Handcock to the peerage in 1812.⁶⁰ The other aristocratic residence, Knockdrin Castle, was completed c.1815 for the Levinge family. While Sir Richard Morrison submitted design plans for the castle they were rejected in favour of ones prepared by James Shiel. The castle, built in Shiel's trademark Gothic style, replaced an earlier house on the same site.⁶¹

The two houses constructed in the post-Famine period were Clonhugh House, Ballinafid, and Clonyn Castle, Delvin. Both were built for Fulke Southwell Greville-Nugent. Greville-Nugent commissioned William Caldbeck (1824-1872) to build at Clonhugh. The house, a two-storey limestone dwelling overlooking Lough Owel was constructed in the style of an Italian villa and completed in 1867.⁶² Caldbeck, a favourite architect of Lord Greville, designed a number of other buildings in Mullingar, including the town's Market House.⁶³ The other residence commissioned by Greville-Nugent, Clonyn Castle was built between 1870 and 1876, and was, according to Casey and Rowan, one of the last Victorian baronial castles to be built in Ireland.⁶⁴ The Clonyn estate had been inherited in 1871 by Lord Greville's wife, Rosa Emily Nugent, on the death of her father, George Nugent, 8th earl and 1st marquess of Westmeath. The castle, designed by John McCurdy (1824-1885), and built in a Romanesque style, consisted of a two-storey dark grey limestone central block with a round tower at each corner adorned with battlements. The building was also surrounded by a dry mote. It was located close to the site of the original castle built in

⁶⁰ *Burke's peerage*, p. 494.

⁶¹ Casey and Rowan, *The buildings of Ireland: north Leinster*, pp 370-1.

⁶² *Ibid*, p. 426. The Clonhugh estate had been purchased by Greville in 1858 from the earl of Granard through the Encumbered Estates Court.

⁶³ *Ibid*, p. 421.

⁶⁴ *Ibid*, pp 214-5.

1639 by Richard Nugent, (1583-1642), 15th baron of Delvin and 1st earl of Westmeath.⁶⁵

The mansions of the Westmeath aristocratic families were among the most impressive country houses in Ireland and Tullyally Castle, which had sixty-seven rooms, was one the largest. Bence-Jones described the castle in striking terms:

With its long picturesque skyline of towers, turrets, battlements and gateways stretching among the trees of its rolling park Tullyally covers a greater area than any other castellated country house in Ireland; it looks not so much like a castle as a small fortified town; a Camelot of the Gothic revival.⁶⁶

The other seven aristocratic houses were no less impressive and they varied in size from forty-eight room in the case of Killua Castle, described by Lewis in 1847 ‘as the handsome castellated residence of Sir T. Chapman, Bart.’,⁶⁷ to the smallest residence, Ballinlough Castle, which had twenty-eight rooms.⁶⁸ The interiors of these aristocratic houses had their own unique design characteristics. Ballinlough Castle had a two-storey hall and stair with a bridge gallery,⁶⁹ Pakenham Hall had Gothic panelled doors throughout the main room of the house,⁷⁰ while Killua Castle had an octagonal entrance hall.⁷¹ The later mansions of Moydrum and Knockdrin were also characterised by design features such as an octagonal vestibule with round-headed niches and recesses in the case of Moydrum,⁷² while Knockdrin had a rectangular entrance hall decorated with ornate plasterwork that led to a triple-arched Gothic

⁶⁵ Hannah Fitzsimons, *The great Delvin* (Dublin, 1975), p. 31. In 1651 rather than surrender the castle to Cromwell’s forces, Richard, 2nd Earl, (c.1621-1684) set the building on fire. Nugent who supported the rebels in the confederate war was dispossessed and transplanted to Galway. However, in 1660 he was restored to his lands by Charles II and in 1680 he rebuilt the castle.

⁶⁶ Bence-Jones, *A guide to Irish country houses*, p. 277.

⁶⁷ Samuel Lewis, *A topographical dictionary of Ireland, Vol. II* (London, 1847), p. 120.

⁶⁸ Census of Ireland 1901, available at <http://census.nationalarchives.ie/reels/nai001255490/> [22 October 2013].

⁶⁹ Casey and Rowan, *The buildings of Ireland: North Leinster*, p. 139.

⁷⁰ *Ibid*, p. 527.

⁷¹ *Ibid*, p. 213.

⁷² *Ibid*, p. 407.

screen with ornate columns.⁷³ Clonhugh House had an Italianate interior,⁷⁴ while the rooms of Clonyn Castle were arranged in two-stories around an elaborate entrance hall.⁷⁵

These great houses were very ostentatious and varied in their décor, paintings as well as portraits of family members adorned the walls, while expensive furnishings and family heirlooms populated every room. Killua Castle alone contained over two hundred paintings by masters such as Rembrandt, Raphael, Rubens and Caravaggio, as well as furniture by the renowned designers Adam and Chippendale.⁷⁶ Visitors to these houses were surrounded by objects that reflected a luxurious and comfortable lifestyle. Large rooms permitted the display of precious silver, as well as items gathered while on grand tours of Europe and Asia. Turkish and Oriental rugs and carpets covered the floors, while Chinese cabinets and screens decorated dining rooms, bedrooms, saloons and billiard rooms.⁷⁷ Aristocratic families were avid collectors; Sir Benjamin Chapman (1810-1888) had a collection of coins which realised a total of £350 when sold by his widow at Sothebys in 1894, with one very rare gold coin known as an ‘Inchiquin pistole’, minted c.1646, making £50.⁷⁸ Furthermore, every aristocratic mansion had a library. The library at Killua Castle, for example, contained two hundred and eighty-nine multi-volume works.⁷⁹

In addition to their intrinsic value, items such as paintings or collections of silver could be also used as a means of safeguarding family finances at a time of banking uncertainty, and if the need arose, could be liquidised by sale at short notice. In the operation and management of their houses and estates it was important for the

⁷³ Casey and Rowan, *The buildings of Ireland: north Leinster*, p. 372.

⁷⁴ *Ibid*, p. 426.

⁷⁵ *Ibid*, p. 215.

⁷⁶ Catalogue of auction at Killua Castle, 2 June 1920 (N.L.I. Ir 018 b 2).

⁷⁷ *Ibid*.

⁷⁸ *Irish Times*, 9 Nov. 1894.

⁷⁹ Catalogue of auction at Killua Castle, 2 June 1920 (N.L.I. Ir 018 b 2).

aristocratic families to keep up to date with developments in agriculture and domestic technology. In this regard Tullyally was one of the first houses in the British Isles to install a central heating system, designed by Richard Lovell Edgeworth (1744-1817), a neighbour and close acquaintance of the Pakenham family.⁸⁰ Further improvements were made to the castle in the 1870s with the installation of gas lighting, the gas being made in a gas house in the farmyard and stored in a gasometer, as well as the extension of the heating system to other parts of the house.⁸¹ Externally, considerable purchases of modern agricultural machinery were made, but no reduction in estate staff had taken place as a consequence.⁸²

5. Westmeath aristocratic marriages

The importance to aristocratic families of a good marriage should not be underestimated. A good marriage fulfilled a number of crucial roles: it allowed a family's status in the aristocratic hierarchy to be maintained and sometimes enhanced by forging links with other such families. The conditions of the marriage settlement agreed by the two families beforehand ensured that the bride was provided for, and together with the production of male heirs, ensured the continuation of the family dynasty. According to Cannon: 'the terms were a matter of close and hard bargaining, often protracted over months, the amount of the dowry and the jointure being of particular importance'.⁸³ Prior to the marriage of Katherine Nugent, daughter of Lady

⁸⁰ Mark Bence-Jones, *Life in an Irish country house* (London, 1996), p. 238. Edgeworth was the father of novelist Maria Edgeworth.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, p. 243. For a comprehensive outline on the importance of technology in supporting the big house in Ireland see Charles Carson, *Technology and the big house in Ireland, c.1800-c.1930* (New York, 2009).

⁸² *Royal Commission on labour. The agricultural labourer. Vol. IV. Ireland. Part IV. Reports by Mr. Arthur Wilson Fox (assistant commissioner), upon certain selected districts in the counties of Cork, Mayo, Roscommon and Westmeath; with summary report prefixed [C.6894-XXI], HC 1893-94, xxvii Pt.1.341, 126.*

⁸³ John Cannon, *Aristocratic century, the peerage of eighteenth century England* (Cambridge, 1984), p. 73.

Letitia Nugent of Ballinlough to Thomas Gordon Stoker of Budderpore, India in 1875, twenty-five letters were received by the Nugent family from their solicitor in relation to the proposed marriage, which included background checks on the suitability and means of the prospective groom.⁸⁴ A successful union had the effect of consolidating, stabilising and in many cases improving a family's financial position, particularly if the bride's dowry was substantial. Wilson contends that despite the desire to make adequate provision for family members in these settlements, the primary concern was the protection of the family estate, as well as the need to consolidate the power and authority of the husband or father over the family members and the family property.⁸⁵

The religious composition of the aristocracy in County Westmeath was both Protestant and Roman Catholic. Five families were members of the Anglican churches namely, the Pakenham, Levinge, Chapman, Handcock and Greville-Nugent families, while three were Roman Catholic, the Nugents of Donore, the Nugents of Ballinlough and the Ennis family. Members of the Protestant aristocratic families in Westmeath traditionally married their British or Irish co-religionists, a custom that originated during the Cromwellian conquests, where an English Protestant landowner marrying an Irish Catholic was frowned upon.⁸⁶

However, there were incidents where prospective partners converted prior to marriage, such as, the Hon. Mildred Charlotte Greville-Nugent (1850-1906), only daughter of Fulke Southwell Greville-Nugent, 1st baronet, who converted to Catholicism prior to her marriage to a French aristocrat, Alexis Huchet, Marquis de la

⁸⁴ Letters from John Meldon, Solicitor to Lady Letitia Nugent Oct-Dec 1875 (Nugent family papers, uncatalogued).

⁸⁵ Deborah Wilson, *Women, marriage and property in wealthy landed families in Ireland, 1750-1850* (Manchester, 2009), p. 39.

⁸⁶ John Patrick Prendergast, *The Cromwellian settlement of Ireland* (London, 1870), p. xxvii. If the Irishwoman did not convert to Protestantism within one year her husband was reduced in status to that of his wife's family. He was also deprived of all rights and regarded as a 'Papist'.

Bêdoyère in 1869.⁸⁷ In 1745 marriages between Catholics and Protestants were outlawed, but not ended,⁸⁸ and although there were a number of mixed marriages, such as that of Sir Charles Nugent, 5th baronet, who married Emily Ruth Eades Walker in 1871, it was an infrequent event. Sir Charles informed his mother that any sons of the marriage would be raised as Roman Catholics while any daughters would be brought up in his wife's faith.⁸⁹ It subsequently transpired that he had only one son and no daughters.

Between 1704, the year the first family in Westmeath were elevated to the aristocracy, and 1923 there was a total of one hundred and thirty-seven persons in the eight aristocratic families in Westmeath. This consisted of ninety males and forty-seven females (see Appendix 3). Of this total, thirty-seven persons did not marry (twenty-eight males and nine females). The most common reasons for non-marriage were death at a young age or extended military or naval service. The family with the highest number of members who did not marry was the Pakenham family with ten (all male), followed by the Nugents of Donore with nine (five male and four female) and the Chapman family with seven (two male and five female). Four of the five unmarried females in the Chapman family were the daughters of Sir Thomas Chapman, 7th baronet (1846-1919), who following his desertion of his wife, Edith Rochfort-Boyd, also fathered five illegitimate sons, the second of whom was T. E. Lawrence (Lawrence of Arabia).

When the thirty-seven persons that did not marry are excluded, it leaves one hundred persons, sixty-two males and thirty-eight females who married. The objective of maintaining the family's position in the aristocratic social order was of utmost

⁸⁷ W. Gordon Gorman, *Converts to Rome: A biographical list of the more notable converts to the Catholic Church in the United Kingdom during the last sixty years* (London, 1910), p. 80.

⁸⁸ Toby Barnard, *The kingdom of Ireland, 1641-1760* (Basingstoke, 2004), p. 54.

⁸⁹ Letter from Sir Charles Nugent to his mother Lady Letitia Nugent (Nugent family papers, uncatalogued).

importance and this was reflected in the status of the families into which the aristocrats of Westmeath married. Of the sixty-two males that married, sixteen married daughters of aristocrats, twenty-one married into landed gentry families, while eight married daughters of high ranking military officers. In many instances these officers were also members of the landed class. The remaining fifteen marriages were to daughters of clergymen, merchants and barristers with only one marriage that could be described as out of the ordinary or 'beneath one's station', that of Sir Richard Levinge, 10th baronet to Irene Marguerite Pix, also known as Irene Desmond, an English actress in 1910. It had been announced in August 1907 that Sir Richard intended getting married to Miss Cécile Royse, Ayesbury Road, Dublin.⁹⁰ However, two months later the wedding was called off for no apparent reason.⁹¹ It is not stated which party cancelled the nuptials. Miss Royse may have become aware of Sir Richard's relationship with Miss Pix, or perhaps Sir Richard had a change of heart. From the thirty-eight women that married, ten took aristocratic husbands, thirteen married into landed gentry families, while a further twelve married military officers. The remaining three ladies married an antiquary and a clergyman's son with one husband of unknown status.⁹²

The aristocratic families in County Westmeath married into Irish as well as English families of their own class and social standing. The evidence from the analysed marriage patterns of the Westmeath aristocratic families supports the contention that members of Irish aristocratic and landed families took an almost equal number of Irish and English spouses. In the case of the sixty-two male aristocrats and their sons, twenty-nine married Irish women while twenty-eight took English brides,

⁹⁰ *Irish Times*, 7 Aug. 1907.

⁹¹ *Ibid*, 3 Oct. 1907.

⁹² The information in this paragraph has been collated from *Burke's peerage and baronetage* (London, 1976), as well as from local and national newspapers.

with the remaining five marrying women from other countries. Of the thirty-eight females that married, twenty-six married into Irish families while ten took English husbands and only two married men from other countries. The family that took the highest number of English spouses was the Hancock family with ten, followed by the Levinge family with eight and the Pakenhams with seven. Conversely, the Nugents of Donore and the Ennis family had only one wedding to an English spouse while the Chapmans had none at all. Ironically, the same families also had the highest number of marriages to Irish partners. The Handcocks had the most with thirteen weddings, followed by the Levinge and Pakenham families with ten marriages each, while the family with least number of Irish partners was the Greville family with just two. The analysis of the marriage patterns of the Westmeath aristocratic families substantiates Dooley's findings that marriages generally remained within well-defined class boundaries.⁹³

The number of marriages into aristocratic families reflected the standing of the Westmeath aristocracy, (apart from the Pakenham family), on the lower levels of the aristocratic ladder. The total number of aristocratic marriages by all the Westmeath families was twenty-six, while the number of marriages to landed gentry families was thirty-four, with an additional nineteen marriages to military officers. As the highest ranking aristocratic dynasty in Westmeath, the Pakenham family had the greatest number of aristocratic marriages with eight, followed by the Levinge family with seven, the Handcocks with six and the Grevilles with four. The Nugents of Ballinlough had only one aristocratic marriage while the Chapman, Ennis, and Nugents of Donore did not have a single aristocratic marriage between them. The highest number of marriages into landed gentry families was by the Handcocks with

⁹³ Terence Dooley, *The decline of the big house in Ireland* (Dublin, 2001), pp 64-70. Dooley has analysed the marriage patterns of the younger sons and daughters of peers in a sample of 246 persons from 100 families who married between 1850 and 1914.

seven such marriages, followed by the Pakenham and Nugents of Ballinlough with six each. The fewest number of marriages into landed gentry families was by the Greville family with just one union. The practice of marrying close family relatives was not unique. However, the only aristocratic family in Westmeath where this occurred was in the Chapman family where two such marriages took place, the first in 1849 when Sir Benjamin Chapman, 4th baronet, married Maria Sarah Fetherstonhaugh, his first cousin, and the second in 1894 when Sir Montagu Chapman, 5th baronet, married his first cousin, Caroline Margaret Chapman.

6. Education of Westmeath aristocratic children

The social standing, family tradition, religious persuasion and financial position usually dictated where the sons of an aristocratic family received their formal education. The initial educational role was usually taken by a governess, nanny or teacher employed by the family who taught the children in a room of the mansion dedicated or adapted for that purpose, such as at Tullynally Castle where the family wing was converted into schoolrooms and nurseries for the young family of the 4th earl and his wife.⁹⁴ Those sons of Westmeath aristocrats who did not remain at home in private education were normally shipped off at an early age to board at elite public schools in Britain. This was the case with Sir Richard Levinge, 6th baronet (1785-1848) who at twelve years of age was admitted to Rugby School in July 1797.⁹⁵ The purpose of a public school education was to prepare young men such as Levinge for their role and responsibilities as members of the upper class. It would reinforce and strengthen a sense of duty and destiny, the foundation of which had already been instilled in them by their family. This is typified by the ethos of elite public schools

⁹⁴ Bence-Jones, *Life in an Irish country house*, p. 243.

⁹⁵ G. E. Cokayne (ed.) *Complete Baronetage*, iv (London, 1904), p. 235.

such as Eton in shaping the outlook of a young gentleman and was exemplified in the words of Lionel Cust, a teacher at the school who stated:

He thus quickly becomes conscious of responsibilities—of duties to perform and unwritten laws to obey. These at last become mere matters of daily routine, until one day he discovers that a great change has taken place in his position, and that where before he was content to obey and follow, he is suddenly called upon to lead and perhaps eventually to govern.⁹⁶

Despite Eton having a reputation for the harsh treatment of its pupils,⁹⁷ Cust claimed that the school, ‘still remains the chief nursery of the peerage’.⁹⁸ Public school also trained young men for life in the world beyond. Attendance at public schools by the sons of aristocrats was often more beneficial than a private education as it allowed them to develop friendships and create networks and contacts, the concept of ‘the old school tie’, which might later prove useful in adult life. While the sons left to attend boarding school the daughters of these families remained at home, at which stage their formal education often came to an end. They were sometimes taught what were known as ‘accomplishments’, the ability to draw, sing, play music and speak a European language such as French, which following a short time in finishing school, prepared them for marriage.⁹⁹

It is apparent that there was no religious cross-over in relation to the education of the aristocratic children of Westmeath. The sons of Protestant aristocrats went to Protestant schools, while Roman Catholic boys likewise attended Catholic schools, such as Stoneyhurst, Downside and Ampleforth. From 1704, the year that the Levinge family were elevated to the peerage, to 1923, there were a total of eighty-four boys of school-going age among the aristocratic families of Westmeath, sixty-six Protestants

⁹⁶ Lionel Cust, *A history of Eton College* (London, 1899), p. 279.

⁹⁷ Lord Edmond Fitzmaurice, *Life of William, Earl of Shelburne, Vol I* (London, 1875), p.72.

⁹⁸ Cust, *A history of Eton College*, p. 281.

⁹⁹ Janet Howarth, ‘Gender, domesticity, and sexual politics’, in Colin Matthew (ed.) *The nineteenth century*, (Oxford, 2000), p. 182.

and eighteen Roman Catholics (see Appendix 4). While not all of them were educated privately and details are not available in respect of sixty-six boys, the remaining eighteen boys (eleven Protestant and seven Catholic) attended public schools.

The most popular public schools among the Protestant aristocracy in Westmeath was Eton, with three boys attending the school, Sir Montagu Chapman, 5th baronet (1853-1907)¹⁰⁰ his cousin Sir Thomas Chapman, 7th baronet (1846-1919)¹⁰¹ and Sir Albert Handcock, 5th baron Castlemaine.¹⁰² Eton was followed by Winchester College where Sir William Pakenham, 4th earl of Longford (1819-1887)¹⁰³ and his son Sir Thomas Pakenham, 5th earl (1864-1915) were educated.¹⁰⁴ Two earlier Pakenham brothers, Thomas, 2nd earl (1774-1835) and Edward (1778-1815) sons of Sir Edward, 2nd baronet, had been educated at the Royal School in Armagh.¹⁰⁵ Sir Richard Levinge, 6th baronet, and Ronald Greville (1864-1908) eldest son of Algernon Greville, 2nd baronet, went to Rugby school,¹⁰⁶ while Sir Robert Handcock, 6th baronet (1864-1954) attended Harrow.¹⁰⁷ Sir Charles Greville, 3rd baronet (1871-1952) received his education at Radley.¹⁰⁸

The Roman Catholic aristocrats Sir John Ennis, 1st baronet (1809-1878) and his son Sir John James Ennis, 2nd baronet (1842-1884) attended Stonyhurst College, a Catholic public school run by the Jesuit order in Lancashire.¹⁰⁹ Sir Percy Fitzgerald Nugent, 1st baronet (1797–1874) went to Old Hall Green in Hertfordshire, while his

¹⁰⁰ G. E. Cokayne (ed.) *Complete Baronetage*, v (London, 1906), p. 405.

¹⁰¹ Jeremy Wilson, *Lawrence of Arabia: The authorised biography of T. E. Lawrence* (London, 1989), p. 941.

¹⁰² *Dod's peerage, baronetage and knightage of Great Britain and Ireland* (London, 1915), p. 132.

¹⁰³ *Debrett's illustrated peerage and titles of courtesy of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland* (London, 1876), p. 301.

¹⁰⁴ *Dod's peerage, baronetage and knightage of Great Britain and Ireland* (London, 1915), p. 356.

¹⁰⁵ Eliza Pakenham, *Tom, Ned and Kitty: An intimate portrait of an Irish family* (London, 2007), p. 85.

¹⁰⁶ *The Times*, 6 Apr. 1908.

¹⁰⁷ *Dod's peerage, baronetage and knightage of Great Britain and Ireland* (London, 1915), p. 132.

¹⁰⁸ *Walford's county families of the United Kingdom* (London, 1919), p. 577.

¹⁰⁹ *Dod's peerage, baronetage and knightage of Great Britain and Ireland* (London, 1872), p. 275; U. H. Hussey De Burgh, *The landowners of Ireland* (Dublin, 1878), p. 147.

son Sir Walter George Nugent, 2nd baronet (1827-1893) attended Oscott from 1840 to 1841,¹¹⁰ followed by Ushaw College, Durham for the remainder of his formal education.¹¹¹ Sir Walter's sons Sir Percy Nugent, 3rd baronet (1861–1896) and Laval Arthur Nugent (1863-1895) went to Beaumont College, Old Windsor while Sir Walter Nugent, 4th baronet (1865-1955) attended Downside, a public school run by the Benedictine order near Bath.¹¹²

Following completion of their public school education relatively few of the aristocratic youth of Westmeath continued their education at university level. Only five members of the Westmeath aristocracy attended university in Britain: Sir William Levinge, 9th baronet (1849-1900) was admitted to Oriel College, Oxford in October 1867 aged eighteen years,¹¹³ where he obtained an M.A in 1874.¹¹⁴ Sir Montagu Chapman, 5th baronet (1853-1907) enrolled at Christ Church, Oxford in May 1872, aged nineteen years where he obtained a B.A. three years later.¹¹⁵ Sir William Pakenham, 4th earl of Longford, enrolled at Oriel College, Oxford in May 1836,¹¹⁶ and his son Sir Thomas Pakenham was admitted to Christ Church, Oxford in October 1881, where he obtained a B.A. in 1885 and an M.A. in 1889.¹¹⁷ Sir Thomas then enrolled in the Royal Military College, Sandhurst.¹¹⁸ Sir Albert Handcock, 5th baronet (1863-1937) also obtained a B.A. from Christ Church College in 1885.¹¹⁹

Trinity College, Dublin was also popular with the Westmeath aristocracy, Sir Montagu Chapman, 3rd baronet (1808-1853) obtained a B.A. there in 1828, while his

¹¹⁰ *The Oscotian: A literary gazette of St. Mary's College, Oscott* (Birmingham, 1888), p. 88.

¹¹¹ *Debrett's baronetage, knightage and companionage* (London, 1893), p. 409.

¹¹² Email from Sir Walter Richard Nugent, 6th baronet to author, 28 February 2014.

¹¹³ G. E. Cokayne (ed.) *Complete Baronetage*, iv (London, 1904), p. 236.

¹¹⁴ *Debrett's baronetage, knightage and companionage* (London, 1893), p. 338.

¹¹⁵ G. E. Cokayne (ed.) *Complete Baronetage*, v (London, 1906), p. 406.

¹¹⁶ G. E. Cokayne (ed.) *Complete peerage of England, Scotland, Ireland and the United Kingdom*, v (London, 1893), p. 136.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid*, p. 137.

¹¹⁸ *Walford's county families of the United Kingdom* (London, 1909), p. 683.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid*, p. 192.

brother Sir Benjamin, 4th baronet (1810-1888) graduated with a B.A. in 1830 and qualified as a barrister in 1835.¹²⁰ Other members of the Westmeath aristocracy to attend Trinity were Henry Corbyn Levinge (1828-1896) youngest son of Sir Richard Levinge, 6th baronet,¹²¹ and Robert Handcock (1830-1902) second son of Sir Richard Handcock, 3rd baronet (1791-1869).¹²² Despite Roman Catholics being discouraged from attending Trinity, Sir Walter George Nugent, 2nd baronet (1827-1893) attended the college.¹²³ However, his grandson Sir Walter Nugent, 4th baronet, studied at University College Dublin as his parents did not wish to send him to Trinity College, a Protestant university.¹²⁴

Rather than attend university or enlist in the military two members of aristocratic families took alternative routes in their education. Sir Vere Henry Levinge, 8th baronet (1819–1885) second son of the Sir Richard Levinge, 6th baronet, enrolled in Haileybury College in 1836 at the age of seventeen and remained there until 1839. Levinge appears to have been a good student winning prizes in his first and fourth terms.¹²⁵ Haileybury College had been established in 1806 for the specific purpose of educating and training men for service with the East India Company.¹²⁶ Levinge subsequently became a magistrate in the Indian province of Mysore. However, he fell ill and died at Madras in 1885 while on route to Ireland shortly after succeeding to the baronetcy.¹²⁷ Sir Thomas Chapman, 7th baronet (1846-1919), followed his time at Eton by attending the Royal Agricultural College at Cirencester from 1866 to 1868, as he had been expected to take over the running of the family

¹²⁰ G. E. Cokayne (ed.) *Complete Baronetage*, v (London, 1906), p. 405.

¹²¹ *Debrett's baronetage, knightage and companionship* (London, 1893), p. 338.

¹²² *Burke's peerage*, p. 495.

¹²³ *Debrett's baronetage, knightage and companionship* (London, 1893), p. 409.

¹²⁴ Email from Sir Walter Richard Nugent, 6th baronet, to author, 28 February 2014.

¹²⁵ Frederick Charles Danvers, Sir M. Monier-Williams, Sir Steuart Colvin Bayley, Percy Wigram and Brand Sapte, *Memorials of Old Haileybury College* (London, 1894), p. 510.

¹²⁶ A. Lawrence Lowell, *Colonial civil service* (New York, 1900), p. 11.

¹²⁷ G. E. Cokayne (ed.) *Complete Baronetage*, iv (London, 1904), p. 236.

estate at South Hill, Delvin. However, his family's plans had to be changed following the unexpected death of his older brother, William, a soldier, in 1870.¹²⁸

7. Careers of the Westmeath aristocrats

In aristocratic and landed gentry families the tradition of primogeniture, where the eldest son inherited the family estate, was vital in ensuring that the property remained intact. It prevented the reduction and division of the holding as it passed through succeeding generations. While the daughters were usually married off to suitable husbands of their own class, bringing with them an appropriate dowry, the eldest son of the aristocratic family, following the completion of his education, and while waiting to claim his prize often spent some time in the military. However, this option was not always available for the younger sons of Westmeath aristocrats, other than in exceptional cases, such as the early death of an older brother, as they needed to find a suitable career. Some eldest sons, such as 4th and 5th earls of Longford, having inherited the title and family estate chose to remain in military service as career officers. As there was nothing to inherit, other than perhaps some cash, and having no formal role in the running of family estates, younger sons of aristocrats had to find careers appropriate to their station and make their own way in life.

The number of male members in the Westmeath aristocracy between 1704 and 1923 was ninety-two. It was comprised of thirty-five older and fifty-seven younger sons (see Appendix 5). Of the thirty-five elder sons, thirty-two were landowners, the exceptions being Ronald Greville (1864-1908), Charles Hugh Nugent (1878-1904), and Richard Handcock (1859-1860), all of whom died before their fathers, Sir Algernon Greville, 2nd baronet, Sir Charles Nugent, 5th baronet of Ballinlough, and Sir

¹²⁸ Wilson, *Lawrence of Arabia: The authorised biography of T. E. Lawrence* , pp 941-2.

Richard Handcock, 4th baronet respectively, and therefore did not inherit the family estate. According to Cannadine, aristocrats were of gentle status in that they did not have to work for a living and they were a leisured class in that they had no occupation.¹²⁹ Therefore, having the benefit of an income from their estates, which were being run by land stewards and agents, allowed elder sons of aristocratic families the necessary time to devote themselves to other activities.

Together with a sense of duty instilled from a young age, many of them used their military training and experience to get involved in local government as well as national politics as members of the House of Commons. Eleven elder sons became members of parliament: the Greville family had the highest number with three parliamentarians, followed by the Chapman, Ennis and Levinge families with two each. The Nugents of Ballinlough and the Handcocks had no MP in the family, although, the 4th and 5th barons of Castlemaine were Irish representative peers in the House of Lords.¹³⁰ Younger sons tended not to get involved in politics as MPs did not receive a parliamentary salary until August 1911. Only two younger sons of a Westmeath aristocrat became MPs, Reginald Greville-Nugent, (1848-1878) 3rd son of Fulke Greville-Nugent, 1st baronet who was elected M.P for Longford in 1869,¹³¹ and his older brother George who was returned in the election re-run in 1870 following Reginald's removal by petition.¹³²

In addition to being landowners and politicians, fourteen elder sons also served in the army or royal navy. The Levinge family had four such members, followed by the Pakenham and Greville families with three members each. Of this group, one became a general, the 5th earl of Longford, one a colonel, Fulke Greville-

¹²⁹ David Cannadine, *The decline and fall of the British aristocracy* (London, 1990), p. 13.

¹³⁰ *Burke's peerage*, p. 495.

¹³¹ Brian M. Walker (ed.) *Parliamentary election results in Ireland, 1801-1922* (Dublin, 1978), p. 113.

¹³² *Ibid*, p. 113.

Nugent, 1st baronet, three were lieutenant-colonels, one a major, six captains, one lieutenant and one a captain in the royal navy, Sir Edward Pakenham, 2nd baron Longford. Fourteen younger sons became landowners, arising from the death of an eldest brother, while one nephew, Sir Richard Levinge, 9th baronet (1849-1900) inherited Knockdrin estate in 1888 owing to the death of his uncle, Sir Vere. Despite Sir Thomas Chapman, (1846-1919) becoming the 7th baronet in 1914, following the death of his cousin Sir Benjamin, 6th baronet, he did not inherit the estate lands at Killua which remained the property of his sister, Caroline, widow of Sir Montagu Chapman, 5th baronet.

The most popular full-time career for younger sons of Westmeath aristocrats who did not become landowners was military service in an ever-expanding British Empire. In the nineteenth century it was necessary to have a private income in order to have the means of purchasing a commission in the army, and this was usually provided by the family of the prospective officer. The funds available therefore dictated the rank to which the young gentleman could reasonably aspire. The practice of purchasing commissions was not abolished until 1871. Kerr claims that this move was a decisive moment in the transformation of Victorian society as it changed a system based on aristocratic privilege, to one of advancement based on merit and professionalism.¹³³ Another initiative unveiled in the wake of the poor performance by the British army in the Crimean War was the introduction of short service enlistment with the length of service reduced from twenty-one to seven years.¹³⁴ This meant that a young aristocrat could spend some time in the army without having to commit himself to a full career prior to taking over the family estate or entering another profession.

¹³³ Paul Kerr, *The Crimean war* (London, 1997), p. 243.

¹³⁴ Trevor Royale, *Crimea: The great Crimean war 1854-1856* (London, 1999), p. 505.

Twenty-one younger sons joined the army and navy, while a further three spent some time in the military prior to taking over the family estate. The family that had the highest number of younger sons in the military was the Pakenham family with eight members. In a reflection of the family status and wealth, three of them became generals: Edward Michael Pakenham (1778-1815) a major-general, was killed at the battle of New Orleans; his younger brother Hercules Robert Pakenham (1781-1850) became a lieutenant-general; and William Lygon Pakenham, 4th earl (1819-1887) became a full general in 1879. Two more of the family were admirals, Thomas Pakenham (1757-1836) a full admiral, was also a politician and master general of the ordnance for Ireland, Thomas Alexander Pakenham (1820-1889) was a rear-admiral, while another member, William Pakenham (d.1811) was a captain in the royal navy. The Levinge family had five sons in the military followed by the Handcock family with four. The highest rank attained by a member of these two families was lieutenant-colonel, with three reaching that rank, with the remaining six being of lower officer rank. Three members of the Levinge family also enlisted as non-commissioned officers in the Australian army while living in that country at the outbreak of the Great War.

A career overseas in the service of the Empire was an acceptable profession and was particularly popular in the Levinge family who had three younger sons in the Indian civil service, all were sons of Sir Richard, 6th baronet. Sir Vere, 8th baronet, was a collector and magistrate in Madras; Edward (1825-1865), was a judge of the Supreme Court of Calcutta; while Henry (1828-1896) was secretary to the Government of Bengal Public Works Department.¹³⁵ Only four younger sons had religious vocations and became men of the cloth, Henry Pakenham (1787-1863) 5th

¹³⁵ *Burke's peerage*, p. 1599.

son of the 2nd baron, became Dean of St. Patrick's, Dublin,¹³⁶ Henry Robert Pakenham (1822-1856), 5th son of the 2nd earl, John Handcock, (1799-1838) was Rector of Annaduff, County Leitrim, and George Nugent (1867-1896) of Donore, a Benedictine monk at Downside.¹³⁷ Only one younger son became a barrister, Charles Handcock (1808-1879), 7th son of Richard Handcock, 2nd baronet. There is no information in respect of seventeen sons of aristocrats, some of whom died at a young age.

While the eldest son was generally well provided for with the prospect of inheriting the family estate, particularly if the family finances were in good order, the importance of finding suitable careers for the younger sons presented certain difficulties which were best summed up by Lady Violet Greville in her essay 'Younger sons' when she stated:

What is to be done with them? They are as expensive as white elephants, and much more common. Banking houses do not care for them; merchants' offices politely decline them; the army is a poor profession for those who have extravagant ideas; law requires profound learning and vast intellect, who, then, will help to take the younger sons off our encumbered hands?¹³⁸

8. Conclusion

The evolving economic and political climate in both Britain and Ireland would transform the fortunes of the aristocratic families in Westmeath in a manner that they could never have foreseen. As five of the eight aristocratic families in County Westmeath were originally from England, with four having relocated to Ireland during the Cromwellian conquest, they naturally held close ties with Great Britain, and cherished strong feelings of loyalty to the crown. These links were maintained and enhanced by educating their children in elite English public schools, and

¹³⁶ *Burke's peerage*, p. 1648.

¹³⁷ Email from Sir Walter Richard Nugent, 6th baronet, to author, 28 February 2014.

¹³⁸ Lady Violet Greville, 'Younger sons', in *Faiths and fashions* (London, 1880), p. 87.

marrying into British upper class families. The number of aristocratic children that forged careers in the army and navy, as colonial administrators or as members of the House of Commons and House of Lords clearly illustrates the close links that existed between the Irish and British aristocracy, and the attachments that bound the aristocracy in Westmeath to Great Britain and the British Empire.

The aristocratic families of Westmeath were a tight-knit group that interacted closely with each other politically as well as socially. Their most important priority was to maintain, and enhance if possible, their standing on the aristocratic ladder. Political, and to a lesser extent religious allegiances, were utilised to safeguard and consolidate this position. Members of the aristocratic families held different views on almost every political, agrarian and economic issue that arose during the period of this study. However, this did not extend to the question of loyalty, where the overwhelming desire was for Ireland to remain part of the British Empire. Instead, they were divided on how Ireland should be governed, whether from London, or from a parliament in Dublin with limited powers. The debate surrounding this major issue will be examined in greater detail in later chapters. Despite these divisions, the aristocratic families of County Westmeath had a common bond, which was their shared social class. Residing in close proximity to each other, and interacting frequently, gave them an acute awareness of the other families' political views and economic circumstances. While the religious persuasion of particular families influenced their political outlook, it was not a factor in their dealings with families of other denominations. The complex conditions that determined the future prospects for individual aristocrats as well as their families will be better understood when examined in the context of the economic decline of the Westmeath aristocracy which

occurred in the period after 1879. This decline will be investigated in detail in the following chapter.

Chapter 2

The Westmeath aristocracy, the extended land war and changing circumstances, 1879-1903

1. Introduction

The Land War was one of the most important events that occurred in Ireland in the late nineteenth century. The campaign of agrarian unrest which began in 1879 was the result of a series of adverse events that occurred over the preceding three years which culminated in an economic depression on a scale that had not been experienced in Ireland since the Great Famine. The economic downturn which affected every class of society in Ireland had major implications for the aristocratic landowners and their tenants. In this chapter the experiences of the Westmeath aristocracy during the Land War will be investigated from an economic perspective. Political dimensions will be examined in a later chapter.

In order to investigate the Land War in Westmeath, and its effect on the aristocracy in the county, it is necessary to examine the conditions that led to the outbreak of agrarian hostilities and to establish the economic state of the Westmeath in 1879. In the context of the struggle for agrarian reform there are a number of central issues that must also be explored. These include the campaign by the Irish Land League for fair rent, free sale and fixity of tenure, as well as the demand from hard pressed tenant farmers for abatements in rents due to economic hardship. Reforming legislation passed by the government in 1881, in response to the unrest will be also be examined, as will the dramatic increase in the eviction of tenant farmers who were unable to meet their rental commitments, and the incidents of agrarian related crime against aristocratic landowners and their tenants that this led to.

The financial solvency of the aristocratic families was imperilled by the economic depression with reduced rental income causing increased indebtedness. This will be illustrated by a case study of the Nugent family of Ballinlough Castle who experienced severe financial difficulties during the period. The provisions contained in the land act of 1881 established the Irish Land Commission with land courts to adjudicate on rental disputes between landlords and their tenants. The act also included improved terms to allow tenants to purchase their holdings and cash strapped aristocrats saw it as an opportune time to sell estate land.

What follows will address each of these areas from the perspective of the aristocratic families and their tenants. This will illustrate how both groups were affected by events at local, as well as national level, and will demonstrate how the events of the extended land war contributed to the downward spiral in the fortunes of the aristocratic families in Westmeath.

2. Westmeath economy, 1879

The economic decline of the aristocracy in County Westmeath can be attributed to a number of factors that accelerated a downward spiral from which they were unable to survive as a class. Dooley has suggested that the seeds of economic decline had been sown during the prosperous years from the mid-1850s to the late 1870s as many landlords had taken out large mortgages. They had also failed to exploit the commercial values of their estates and continued, in many cases, to live extravagant lives with little regard for any difficulties that might arise in the future.¹ The main economic factor that had an impact on the financial well-being of the aristocracy in

¹ Terence Dooley, *The decline of the big house in Ireland* (Dublin, 2001), pp 79-80.

Westmeath was the severe depression that occurred in the late 1870s. According to Sperber:

This crisis was universal, affecting every European country, all social groups involved in agriculture, from noble landlords to farm labourers, and all forms of farming.²

Commencing in 1877 three bad harvests due to unseasonal weather conditions caused a severe reduction in crop yields, and the situation was such that certain areas of the country were on the verge of famine. The conditions prevailing in 1878 were no better so that by 1879 Ireland was suffering the worst economic and agricultural depression to affect Britain and Europe since the end of the Crimean War.³ Dooley states that the agricultural depression ended almost three decades of economic prosperity which had benefited both landlord and tenant. Likewise, the shop-keeping class had profited from the improved economy and financial circumstances of the tenant farmers and in many cases afforded them goods on credit.⁴ This was similar to the position in the north of Ireland where Purdue remarks that the sudden fall in agricultural prices exacerbated the level of tenant farmers' indebtedness as they attempted to service bank loans and repay local traders, as well as pay their rent and sums borrowed to secure tenant right.⁵

The economic downturn had not been expected as crop yields in the years 1874 to 1876 had been the best in almost a decade.⁶ While the importation of cheaper grain and cattle from America following that country's recovery from civil war alleviated the deficit, it caused a reduction in agricultural prices.⁷ (see Table 1 &

² Jonathan Sperber, *Europe, 1850-1914* (Harlow, 2009), p. 129.

³ Barbara Solow, *The land question and the Irish economy 1870-1903* (Harvard, 1971), p. 123.

⁴ Dooley, *The decline of the big house in Ireland*, pp 90-1.

⁵ Olwen Purdue, *The big house in the north of Ireland* (Dublin, 2009), pp 38-9.

⁶ Solow, *The land question and the Irish economy 1870-1903*, pp 119-20.

⁷ *Report of the Royal Commission on the Land Law Ireland Act, 1881, and the Purchase of Land (Ireland) Act, 1885, [C.4969][C.4969-I][C.4969-II], HC 1887, xxvi.1, 954.*

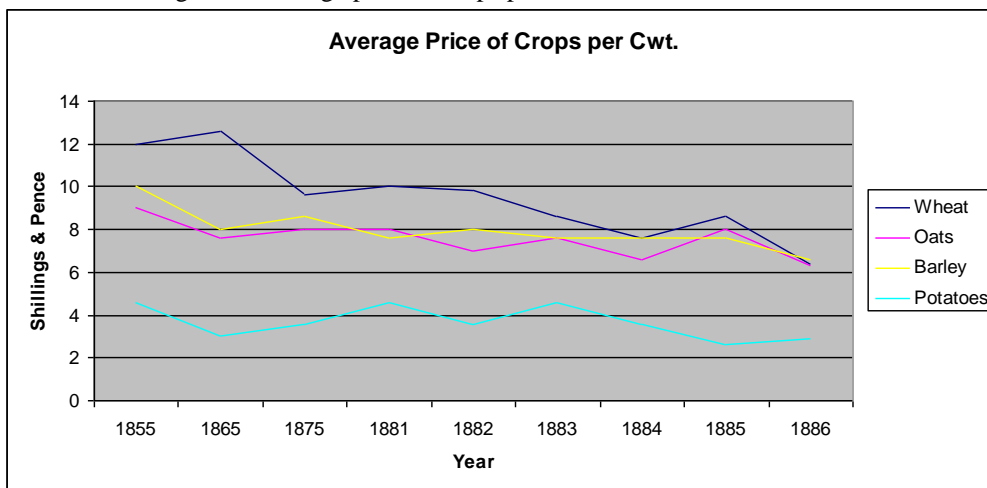
Figure 1). The United States itself had not escaped from what was in reality a world-wide economic downturn, experiencing worker's strikes as well as widespread industrial and domestic unrest.⁸

Table 1. Average prices of crops per hundredweight in Ireland, 1855-86.

Year	Wheat s. d.	Oats s. d.	Barley s. d.	Potatoes s. d.
1855	12 0	9 0	10 0	4 6
1865	12 6	7 6	8 0	3 0
1875	9 6	8 0	8 6	3 6
1881	10 0	8 0	7 6	4 6
1882	9 8	7 0	8 0	3 6
1883	8 6	7 6	7 6	4 6
1884	7 6	6 6	7 6	3 6
1885	8 6	8 0	7 6	2 6
1886	6 4	6 3	6 6	2 9

Source: *Report of the Royal Commission on the Land Law Ireland Act, 1881, and the Purchase of Land (Ireland) Act, 1885, [C.4969][C.4969-I][C.4969-II], HC 1887, xxiv.1.*

Figure 1. Average price of crops per cwt between 1855 and 1886.



Source: *Report of the Royal Commission on the Land Law Ireland Act, 1881, and the Purchase of Land (Ireland) Act, 1885, [C.4969][C.4969-I][C.4969-II], HC 1887, xxvi.1.*

In the decades following the Famine there had been a major shift in agricultural practices in Ireland, especially in north Leinster and parts of Connacht. The aristocracy in Westmeath were party to these changes which had a major impact on the lives of tenant farmers in that part of Ireland. Land was the chief source of wealth and power and in the absence of an industrial base the Irish economy was largely dependent on agricultural production. As large landowners the aristocracy in

⁸ Howard Zinn, *A people's history of the United States* (Harlow, 1980), pp 238-46.

Westmeath played an important role in the management of the agricultural economy in Ireland. Many tenant holdings tended to be small and uneconomic, especially in the poorer areas of the west of Ireland, and the size of these holdings condemned many families to an existence of poverty and hardship as they struggled to survive.

County Westmeath was part of the great midland grazing area of Ireland and as owners of large tracts of untenanted land the aristocracy became involved in what was known as ranch farming. Ranch farming became a major part of the Irish agricultural economy in the post-Famine period and these farmers, otherwise known as graziers or ranchers, reared cattle and sheep on a commercial basis on grassland holdings usually in excess of two hundred acres. Between 1870 and 1885 the amount of livestock exported from Ireland to Great Britain grew dramatically with the number of cattle shipped out of Ireland increasing from 415,673 to 588,170, calves from 38,296 to 52,300, sheep from 520,834 to 629,000. An exception was in the number of swine exported, which decreased from 422,076 to 398,564.⁹ At the same time the total area under tillage dropped from 3,792,393 acres in 1871 to 2,939,708 in 1886. However, the area under meadow and clover increased from 1,829,044 acres to 2,094,138 acres in the same period.¹⁰

While these changes benefited the graziers and landowners who increased their profits, it ruined the livelihoods of agricultural labourers and small farmers as one or two herdsmen and a few casual labourers were all that was required to manage a grazing ranch.¹¹ The changes in agricultural practices together with the residual effects of the Famine were reflected in the population change that occurred in the county between 1841 and 1881 which saw the total population of Westmeath decline

⁹ *Report of the Royal Commission on the Land Law Ireland Act, 1881, and the Purchase of Land (Ireland) Act, 1885, [C.4969][C.4969-I][C.4969-II], HC 1887,xxvi.1, 952.*

¹⁰ *Ibid*, 952.

¹¹ David Seth Jones, *Graziers, land reform and political conflict in Ireland* (Washington, 1995), p. 10.

from 141,300 to 71,798, a decrease of 49.7 per cent, while in the same period the rural population of the county declined from 131,316 to 63,936, a decrease of 51.3 per cent.¹²

3. Background to the Land War in Westmeath

According to Bull there had been a long history of land agitation in Ireland which had first appeared in an organised form in the guise of the Whiteboys in the middle of the eighteenth century in response to enclosure and the extension of pasture farming.¹³ This was the case in County Westmeath where in the years following the Great Famine land agitation and lawlessness reached epidemic proportions. As early as 1858 Fulke Greville, later Baron Greville of Clonyn, commented on the lack of law and order remarking: 'I desire to see all secret societies whether Orange or Riband put down by the strong arm of the law and to see the law vindicated and respected'.¹⁴ The Ribbon Society was deep rooted in Westmeath and was behind many agrarian outrages that occurred in the county.¹⁵ However, it was not the sole motivation for the violence. Vaughan in his examination of the causes of agrarian outrages concluded that:

Agrarian outrages responded to a variety of causes not only to disputes between landlords and tenants, but to family disputes, and disputes between tenants as well.¹⁶

During the period 1861-70 Westmeath had the highest number of agrarian outrages of any county in Ireland.¹⁷ Between 1848 and 1871 in addition to numerous incidents of

¹² *Report of the Royal Commission on the Land Law Ireland Act, 1881, and the Purchase of Land (Ireland) Act, 1885, [C.4969-I][C.4969-II], HC 1887, xxvi.1, 942.*

¹³ Philip Bull, 'Land and Politics, 1879-1903', in D. G. Boyce (ed.) *The revolution in Ireland, 1879-1923* (Dublin, 1988), p. 25.

¹⁴ *The Times*, 23 Dec. 1858.

¹⁵ Ann Murtagh, *Portrait of a Westmeath tenant community, 1879-85* (Dublin, 1999), pp 11-2. For an analysis of Ribbonism, see W. E. Vaughan, *Landlords and tenants in mid-Victorian Ireland* (Oxford, 1994), pp 189-202.

¹⁶ W. E. Vaughan, *Landlords and tenants in mid-Victorian Ireland* (Oxford, 1994), p. 157.

assaults and intimidation, forty murders were committed in the county. In the period 1860-70 there were fourteen murders, (see Table 2) with only one person convicted arising from these crimes. In 1868 there was one murder, that of James Howard Fetherstonhaugh of Bracklyn Castle, a landlord, shot dead in April of that year for raising rents.¹⁸

Table 2. Murders committed in County Westmeath 1860-70.

1860	1861	1862	1863	1864	1865	1866	1867	1868	1869	1870
0	1	1	3	1	1	0	0	1	2	4

Source: *Report from the select committee on Westmeath &c. (Unlawful Combinations)*, [147], HC 1871, xiii.

In addition to the murders outlined, there were a further fifty-five incidents of shootings at persons, of which only five convictions were recorded.¹⁹ The extent of lawlessness was such that the authorities were forced to suspend the Habeas Corpus Act in Westmeath from 1866 to 1869.²⁰ In 1871 the House of Commons established a select committee to enquire and report on the state of Westmeath. Comerford was clearly of the belief that the British Government overacted to the level of agitation and violence that occurred in the county when he stated:

Exaggerated assessments of what was essentially petty criminal activity, extending to an occasional murder led to the enactment in June 1871 of the so-called Westmeath act.²¹

The committee's report concluded that the Ribbon society was present in County Westmeath and stated that its actions were responsible for the violence and

¹⁷ W. E. Vaughan, *Landlords and tenants in mid-Victorian Ireland* (Oxford, 1994), p. 283.

¹⁸ *Report from the Select Committee on Westmeath &c. (Unlawful Combinations)*, [147], HC 1871, xiii, 157.

¹⁹ *Ibid*, 155.

²⁰ *Ibid*, 62.

²¹ R. V. Comerford, 'The home rule party 1870-77' in W. E. Vaughan (ed.), *A new history of Ireland*, vi (Oxford, 1989), p. 3.

lawlessness that surrounded the tenure and occupation of land in the county.²² The report also stated that:

This Ribbon Society had existed for a considerable length of time, and has within the previous three years, as compared with those immediately preceding, increased its power and influence.²³

However, Vaughan remarked if Ribbonism was an anti-landlord conspiracy then it was strange that Westmeath, which was the scene of a formidable anti-landlord conspiracy in the late 1860s and early 1870s, produced only one case of Ribbonism.²⁴ Hoppen attempted to explain why areas such as Westmeath were particularly disturbed, noting that contemporary explanations fell into four categories, namely, bad landlords, absentees, bad farming or some great oppression for which the law afforded no protection. He noted that other academics cited unusually high rates of evictions, farm consolidation, transfer of tillage to pasture, low rates of land reclamation or a decline in rural population for agrarian unrest.²⁵ Hoppen summed up his analysis of rural unrest by stating:

In the end rural unrest remains a profoundly mysterious phenomenon. Its locus was remarkably stable over long periods. It involved labourers, cottiers, in opposition to, but sometimes in an uneasy alliance with farmers. It was driven by distress but generally absent from the most distressed counties and seasons.²⁶

He also noted that a special return of outrages in Westmeath for the years 1862-69, recorded one hundred and forty-two Ribbon outrages, which makes the single case recorded in 1869 even more puzzling.²⁷

²² *Report from the select committee on Westmeath &c. (Unlawful Combinations)*, [147], HC 1871, xiii, iii-iv.

²³ *Ibid*, iii-iv.

²⁴ Vaughan, *Landlords and tenants in mid-Victorian Ireland*, p. 193.

²⁵ K. Theodore Hoppen, *Elections, politics and society in Ireland, 1832-1885* (Oxford, 1984), pp 374-6.

²⁶ *Ibid*, p.378.

²⁷ Vaughan, *Landlords and tenants in mid-Victorian Ireland*, p. 193.

The aristocracy in Westmeath were not immune to criminal activity during this period. Sir Richard Levinge, 7th baronet received a threatening notice on 20 February 1870 ‘for having let land from which a man was disposed in April 1868’.²⁸ The Hon. Charles Handcock, (1808-1878), Creaghduff, Athlone, brother of Sir Richard, (1791-1869), 3rd baronet, received a threatening letter on 15 December 1869 ‘to deter him from doing his duty as a land agent’,²⁹ while Sir Percy Nugent (1797-1874), 1st baronet, was the victim of arson in April 1870 when a fox covert was maliciously set on fire.³⁰ While these incidents were not in response to landlord activity, as the Landlord and Tenant (Ireland) Act did not come into force until 1 August 1870,³¹ there was some concern among tenants that landlords would increase rents in order to avoid having to pay compensation under the act.

In an effort to curtail disorder in Westmeath the British government enacted the Protection of Life and Property in Certain Parts of Ireland Act, 1871.³² The act empowered the lord lieutenant or other chief governor or governors of Ireland:

To apprehend and detain for a limited time persons suspected of being members of the Ribbon Society, or of being concerned in the commission of any crime or outrage under the direction or influence of the said Ribbon Society, in the county of Westmeath or in certain adjoining portions of the county of Meath and the King's county.³³

While the act went some way towards reducing the number of incidents, it failed to eliminate them completely. There were a number of outrages in the county between 1872 and 1877, including the murder of Thomas Griffin, a fifty-five year old gamekeeper in the employment of Sir Walter Nugent 2nd baronet, who was found

²⁸ *Report from the select committee on Westmeath &c. (Unlawful Combinations)*, [147], HC 1871, xiii, 182.

²⁹ *Ibid*, 181.

³⁰ *Ibid*, 192.

³¹ *The public general statutes passed in the thirty-third and thirty-fourth years of the reign of her majesty Queen Victoria, 1870* (London, 1870), pp 252-283.

³² *Protection of life and property in certain parts of Ireland Act [34 & 35 Vict. c.25] (16 June 1871)*.

³³ *Ibid*.

dead on the avenue to Donore House on 24 March 1875. Griffin, a widower, had been employed by the Nugent family for over twenty-five years. The inquest determined that he had been killed by a number of blows to the head from a sharp heavy instrument. The deceased left a family of six children.³⁴ It was this backdrop of local disturbance and economic hardship, as well as increasing disquiet over the question of land reform, that resulted in open agitation and the beginning of the land war at Claremorris, County Mayo in 1879.

4. The Land War in Westmeath

The situation in County Westmeath in 1879 following the events of the previous two years reflected the general state of the Irish economy and the cumulative effect was that many tenants and smallholders in the county were unable to meet their rental commitments. A lack of understanding from unsympathetic landlords who were themselves, in many cases, under severe financial strain caused a consequential increase in agrarian related incidents as the number of evictions grew. It was in the ongoing climate of severe economic crisis and depression that the National Land League was founded by Michael Davitt in 1879, with Charles Stewart Parnell as its president. The land war, manifested in a campaign for land reform, was conducted in three phases. The first phase, between 1879 and 1882, was a sometimes violent struggle between the landlords and tenants; the second phase known as the Plan of Campaign where tenants on over 100 estates withheld rent payments, occurred between 1886 and 1891; while the third and less violent phase occurred between 1891 and 1903. The Land League was committed to improving the conditions of the tenant farmers and as a result there were many violent incidents as tenants who were unable

³⁴ *Irish Times*, 29 Mar. 1875.

to pay their rents were evicted from their holdings. The level of evictions in County Westmeath during this period will be examined later in the chapter. Vaughan states that:

The usual causes of friction between landlords and tenants were multiplied when rents were hard to collect, when evictions increased, and when farms changed hands.³⁵

On 7 November 1880 Charles Stewart Parnell visited Athlone. In a speech to an assembled crowd he set out the goals of the Land League and the campaign for land reform stating:

We seek first of all to reduce the rents and afterwards to abolish them altogether. We don't wish either to fix or maintain them. We believe that the only true system of land tenure in a country is that by which the people own the land which they till.³⁶

The Irish National Land League quickly became established throughout County Westmeath with branches springing up in almost every parish and hamlet. One of the first branches of the league was established on 6 June 1880 at Killucan, where the earl of Longford had a large estate, when thirty members enrolled. On a personal level and in an act of defiance against his father with whom he had a strained relationship, the Hon. Robert Greville-Nugent, third son of Fulke Greville-Nugent, 1st baronet, expressed unqualified approval of the principles of the league and asked by letter to be enrolled as a member.³⁷ He was duly elected at a meeting held in Dublin on 23 November 1880.³⁸ There is no further information available on his role or involvement, if any, in the organisation. The establishment of the Land League had major implications for the aristocracy in Westmeath. As large landowners whose estates were populated by tenant farmers, any adverse changes to the economic

³⁵ Vaughan, *Landlords and tenants in mid-Victorian Ireland*, p. 159.

³⁶ *Irish Examiner*, 8 Nov. 1880.

³⁷ *Ibid*, 24 Nov. 1880.

³⁸ *Nation*, 4 Dec. 1880.

circumstances and wellbeing of their tenants would also have implications for their own situation.

5. Rent Abatements

The demand by the Land League for rents to be reduced to Griffith's valuation was successful as, according to Dooley, all landlords could be portrayed as being rack-renting and capricious, whether it was true or not, if their rents were compared to the out-dated valuation.³⁹ The severe drop in income experienced by tenants left them with no alternative but to demand a reduction of their rents, and though some landowners acquiesced, the demand was in many cases refused by cash-strapped landlords who themselves were struggling to keep creditors at bay, while at the same time endeavouring to maintain their lifestyle and position in society.⁴⁰ Curtis states that 'anything likely to cause hardship among the tenantry was bound sooner or later, to effect the economic position of the landlords'.⁴¹ The response of landlords to appeals for reductions in rents was, according to Clark, slow and reluctant. The landlords were of the belief that for most tenants the level of distress was insufficient to warrant abatements.⁴² Landlords were not inclined to give abatements to all their tenants as it would have a detrimental effect on their own incomes. Some landlords granted abatements on certain parts only of their estates, therefore, not all the tenants benefited from the arrangement. Moreover, the size of the abatement was in many cases inadequate in providing relief to the hard-pressed tenant. Comerford states that

³⁹ Dooley, *The decline of the big house in Ireland*, p. 91. For an analysis of the situation in Ulster see Olwen Purdue, *The big house in the north of Ireland* (Dublin, 2009), pp 31-57.

⁴⁰ *Nation*, 12 Jun. 1880.

⁴¹ L. P. Curtis, 'Incumbered wealth: Landed indebtedness in Post-Famine Ireland', in *The American Historical Review*, Vol. 85, No.2 (Oxford, 1980), p. 335, available at <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1860559> [18 May 2015].

⁴² Samuel Clark, *Social origins of the Irish Land War* (Princeton, 1979), p. 237.

‘on many estates there was no agitation as landlords granted abatements or other concessions that took account of difficult times’.⁴³

The aristocratic landowners of Westmeath did grant abatements of rent to their tenants, but only on a limited scale (see Appendix 6). One of the first aristocratic landlords to recognise the gravity of the situation was Lord Longford. In October 1879 he granted an abatement of ten per cent to the tenants on his county Longford estate, provided they were not in arrears.⁴⁴ The grateful tenants of his Killucan estate expressed their appreciation in an address of thanks for a similar reduction in their rents which stated:

We your tenants in Westmeath, beg to express our most grateful thanks for your sympathy and the liberal abatement you are kind enough to make us in our rents under the present agricultural depression, which are evident proofs of the kind feeling that your lordship entertains towards your tenantry and peasantry. We trust that the present unpropitious season may be exceptional, and that in years to come, when blessed with good harvests and general prosperity, we may with grateful hearts, look back to this as a season which had the effect of drawing your lordship and us into closer bonds of kind-heartedness on your part and deep thankfulness on ours. It may be too, that the present unfavourable season may have the effect of stimulating us to greater industry and exertion, and to the practice of greater economy, that we may be able to meet such another unpropitious season. We cannot conclude without expressing our deepest respect for the Countess of Longford and each member of your family, and our prayer is that you may be long spared to them and us and that they may be attended with every blessing.⁴⁵

In return for their rent abatement the tenants effectively undertook to increase productivity and be more economical in case another unfavourable season should occur at some future time. However, the earl was sceptical of some of the reports of hardship being endured and he suggested an additional solution to relieve distress, that of temperance. In January 1880 he proposed that:

⁴³ R. V. Comerford, ‘The politics of distress’, in W. E. Vaughan (ed.) *A new history of Ireland vi* (Oxford, 1996), p. 43.

⁴⁴ *Freeman's Journal*, 17 Oct. 1879.

⁴⁵ *Ibid*, 28 Oct. 1879.

If all classes in Ireland, or individuals, without waiting for others, would spend on relieving the wants of poorer neighbours, to their own credit, what they now spend on whisky, to their own destruction, it would be less necessary to make frantic appeals to the Government, or the landlords, or to public charity.⁴⁶

The campaign for abatements also had a sinister side and the response by aristocratic landlords to demands for abatements occasionally resulted in acts of intimidation and violence. On 10 November 1879 two armed men entered the house of one of Lord Longford's tenant farmers in Killucan and warned his wife of dire consequences should her husband pay his rent then due. As they were departing one of the men fired a shot from his revolver. They then proceeded to the house of another tenant where a similar message was delivered.⁴⁷ The tenants were warned not to accept an abatement of less than twenty-five per cent in their rent.⁴⁸ At this time in the south of the county Sir John Ennis informed his tenants that he would reduce their rents, the amount involved was not stated.⁴⁹ Lord Castlemaine's tenants were also seeking favourable rent reliefs. In November 1880 over forty tenants met his land agent outside Athlone and offered their rents at Griffith's valuation. When the offer was refused the tenants departed without paying any rent.⁵⁰ The following summer Lord Castlemaine offered an abatement of ten per cent to his tenants.⁵¹

In the north of the county Sir Benjamin Chapman's tenants held a meeting at Clonmellon in March 1881 where they signed a letter addressed to their landlord outlining the reasons they were seeking a reduction of their rents to the standard of Griffith's valuation. In response Sir Benjamin refused the claim and offered a ten per cent reduction, confined only to a few tenants in a particular location. The tenants

⁴⁶ *The Times*, 1 Jan. 1880.

⁴⁷ *Ibid*, 15 Nov. 1879.

⁴⁸ *Belfast Newsletter*, 12 Nov. 1879.

⁴⁹ *Irish Times*, 23 Oct. 1879.

⁵⁰ *Ibid*, 4 Dec. 1880.

⁵¹ *Nation*, 6 Aug. 1881.

having decided not to pay more than Griffith's valuation drafted a letter to Sir Benjamin requesting a meeting to discuss the matter. At the appointed time the tenants accompanied by a local priest, attended at the Chapman residence. However, the meeting ended prematurely as Sir Benjamin refused to recognise the priest, Rev. Fr. Minnock, as a tenant of his and requested him to withdraw. The tenants decided that if the priest withdrew, they would all do so, and as they were leaving Fr. Minnock handed Sir Benjamin a letter informing him that the tenants would not pay more than Griffith's valuation pending a settlement of the land question.⁵²

In August 1881 in a form of protest to illustrate their unhappiness at Sir John Ennis, the Athlone Land League committee decided that a cup presented by him to the Athlone regatta should be returned.⁵³ In November that year, Sir Richard Levinge, 7th baronet, granted rent abatements of between ten and twenty-five per cent to his tenants.⁵⁴ On 17 November 1881 when Mr. James Stewart, receiver of the rents on the Pakenham estate at Cookesborough near Mullingar, attended the rent office at Killucan on the appointed day, none of the tenants appeared. They had previously informed him that they would refuse payment unless they received a rent abatement of thirty per cent. The tenants also decided not to accept any terms from the landlord unless recently evicted tenants were included. The receiver initiated court proceedings to ascertain what action should be taken. The court directed that the receiver not enter any agreement with evicted tenants or those held under leases without leave of the court. The receiver was informed that he could offer an abatement of ten per cent, but if it was refused and the rent went unpaid, he should take proceedings against the defaulters through the courts.⁵⁵

⁵² *Irish Times*, 8 Mar. 1881.

⁵³ *Nenagh Guardian*, 24 Aug. 1881.

⁵⁴ Ann Murtagh, *Portrait of a Westmeath tenant community, 1879-85* (Dublin, 1999), pp 21-2.

⁵⁵ *Irish Times*, 20 Dec. 1881.

Vaughan states that ‘organised resistance both legal and illegal, between 1879 and 1882, played an important part in changing landlordism in Ireland’.⁵⁶ In 1879 there was one Land League meeting in Westmeath, held in October of that year, with thirty-six agrarian related crimes reported to the police. However, the following year 1880, while the number of agrarian crimes remained at the same level of thirty-five incidents, the number of Land League meetings increased to sixteen with ten alone being held in December of that year, thus indicating an escalation of the reform campaign. The figures for Westmeath are broadly in line with the numbers of reported incidents in the neighbouring counties of Longford, King’s County and Meath.⁵⁷

Table 3. Number of Land League meetings held and agrarian crimes reported to the Police in the years 1879 and 1880.

County	Land League meetings held in 1879	Agrarian crimes reported to the police 1879	Land League meetings held in 1880	Agrarian crimes reported to the police 1880
Westmeath	1	36	16	35
Longford	3	16	11	31
King’s County	5	19	10	41
Meath	2	34	10	49

Source: Return showing for each month of the years 1879 and 1880, the number of Land League meetings held and agrarian crimes reported to the Inspector General of the Royal Irish Constabulary in each county throughout Ireland, (5), HC 1881, lxxvii.793.

The reductions in rent had a significant impact on the aristocracy. It resulted in their incomes being noticeably reduced which meant that it became increasingly more difficult to service their own debts while at the same time maintain their luxurious life style. In the case of Lord Longford who had granted a ten percent reduction to his tenants, it amounted to a reduction of approximately £1,000 per year on his Killucan estate alone which had 311 tenants.⁵⁸

⁵⁶ Vaughan, *Landlords and tenants in mid-Victorian Ireland*, p. 177.

⁵⁷ *Land League meetings and agrarian crime (Ireland). Return showing for each month of the years 1879 and 1880, the number of Land League meetings held and agrarian crimes reported to the Inspector General of the Royal Irish Constabulary in each county throughout Ireland, (5), HC 1881, lxxvii.793, 4.*

⁵⁸ *Royal Commission on Labour. The agricultural labourer. Vol. IV. Ireland. Reports by Mr. Arthur Wilson Fox (assistant commissioner), upon certain selected districts in the counties of Cork, Mayo,*

6. Land Law (Ireland) Act, 1881

In 1880 the British Government headed by Prime Minister Benjamin Disraeli established a Royal Commission under Lord Bessborough to examine and report on the workings of the Landlord and Tenant (Ireland) Act 1870.⁵⁹ Upon its completion in January 1881 the commission recommended that the three Fs, fair rent, fixity of tenure and free sale, be enshrined in law.⁶⁰ A previous royal commission on the state of agriculture in Ireland headed by the earl of Richmond had also made similar recommendations. The proposed land bill introduced in the House of Commons in April 1881 was met with a degree of hostility. Sir John Ennis was not in favour of the legislation, and in May 1881 was the only Liberal among the 176 MPs that voted against the second reading of the bill. However, the vote was won with 352 members being in favour.⁶¹

On 22 August 1881 the British Government enacted the Land Law (Ireland) Act 1881. The act was passed in response to the Land War of 1879, and was designed to weaken the influence of the National Land League while at the same time improve the lives of the tenant classes. The act contained a number of provisions that granted the long sought after 3 Fs of fair rent, free sale and fixity of tenure. Section one of the act dictated the conditions whereby a tenant was permitted to sell his tenancy. Sections four and eight of the act made provision for a tenant who failed to come to an agreement with his landlord regarding the rent of his holding to apply to land courts to have a rent fixed in law (known as judicial rent) for a statutory term of

Roscommon and Westmeath; with summary report prefixed. HC 1893-4[C.6894-XXI] xxxvii, pt.1.341, 125, and The Times, 8 Dec. 1903. In 1893 there were 311 holdings on Lord Longford's Killucan estate and the rental income on the estate was £7,000 per annum in 1903. These matters will be further examined in Chapter 4 of this thesis.

⁵⁹ J. C. Beckett, *The making of modern Ireland* (London, 1981), p. 389.

⁶⁰ *Report of Her Majesty's Commissioners of Inquiry into the working of the landlord and Tenant (Ireland) Act, 1870, and the acts amending the same [C.2779][C.2779-I][C.C.2779-II][C.2779-III], HC 1881, xviii.1,73, xix.1,825, 1-37.*

⁶¹ *Irish Examiner*, 21 May 1881.

fifteen years.⁶² Section five granted fixity of tenure, while section forty-one established the Irish Land Commission to supervise the operation of the act and to act as a tribunal to fix fair rents between landlords and tenants.⁶³ Sections twenty-four and twenty-six of the act also extended the facilities for tenants to purchase their holdings.

Lord Greville while praising the introduction of the land bill as an earnest effort by the Prime Minister to settle a difficult question pondered the key predicament facing the government, whether or not the act was actually capable of settling the land question. He articulated his fears that the act might not work unless some amendments were made, in particular to the section that related to the acquisition of land by tenants. Greville claimed that tenants were in general too poor to purchase their holdings and if the government's intention was to establish a peasant proprietary then the full purchase price should be advanced to them. He further suggested that the landlord should also be given the opportunity of disposing on fair terms land that he might not wish to retain. In a very enlightened remark by a landowner, Greville stated that 'no landlord should be allowed to stand in the way of a change required in the interest of the community at large, but he should be compensated for the loss he sustains'.⁶⁴

On 13 October 1881, two months after the land act came into force, Charles Stewart Parnell and four other leading activists were arrested under the Coercion Act and lodged in Kilmainham Gaol for making speeches against Gladstone and the land act. In a response to their incarceration the Land League organised a No Rent manifesto which urged tenants to withhold rent until the government restored the

⁶² T. Henry Maxwell, *An outline of the law of landlord and tenant and of land purchase in Ireland* (Dublin, 1909), p. 34.

⁶³ *Ibid*, p. 37.

⁶⁴ *The Times*, 23 Apr. 1881.

'rights of the people' and the Kilmainham detainees had been released. A list of landlords in twenty-one counties was compiled by the league where tenants undertook to pay no rent. Among them were the tenants on Lord Greville's Longford and Roscommon estates.⁶⁵ The No Rent manifesto did have an impact upon the income of the aristocratic landlords. In November 1881 when Philip O'Reilly, land agent for Lord Greville went to Carrick-on-Shannon to collect rents due on his Roscommon estate, the tenants decided they would only pay if the rents were twenty-five per cent less than usual. When Mr O'Reilly refused to accept these terms the tenants left without paying.⁶⁶ However, Clark states that the manifesto was a failure as many league supporters regarded the new land act as a victory and not an opportunity for further agitation.⁶⁷ Ultimately, the manifesto caused the government to issue a proclamation on 20 October suppressing the Land League as an unlawful and criminal organisation.⁶⁸ This action served to diminish the role of the league as an instrument of change in Ireland.

7. Fair Rents

The effect of the new land legislation was immediate and its impact obvious despite the reservations of the Land League. The newly-established Land Commission was almost immediately inundated by applications from tenant farmers seeking reductions in rent. Palmer notes that by 10 November 1881 over 22,000 applications had been submitted.⁶⁹ The demand for rent reductions by tenants of aristocratic estates increased as the depressed state of the agricultural economy showed no sign of improvement in the short term. This had serious consequences for landowners. A

⁶⁵ *The Times*, 6 Apr. 1882.

⁶⁶ *Ibid*, 30 Nov. 1881.

⁶⁷ Clark, *Social origins of the Irish land war*, pp 336-7.

⁶⁸ Norman Dunbar Palmer, *The Irish Land League crisis* (New York, 1978), p. 300.

⁶⁹ *Ibid*, pp 301-2.

measure of the financial turbulence being experienced by landlords was demonstrated at a large protest attended by over 3,000 noblemen and landed gentry in Dublin on 4 January 1882. The meeting was chaired by the duke of Abercorn who stated:

That our object in meeting here today is not to condemn or criticise the Land Act itself...neither do we wish to enter into any political question. But our object is to condemn and criticise the mode in which the Land Act has been administered by the local Sub-Commissioners.⁷⁰

The landlords, while not blaming tenants for seeking the best terms available to them, were critical of the decision of the sub-commissioners to grant wholesale reductions in rents. A number of Westmeath aristocrats were present at the meeting, namely, Lords Longford and Castlemaine, Sir Benjamin Chapman, and the Hon. Robert Handcock. Sir John Ennis sent a letter of apology for his non-attendance.⁷¹ Lord Longford continued to express the concerns of landlords when in May 1882 he presented a petition in the House of Lords from landowners in Ireland requesting that the principles adopted by the Land Commissioners in the assessment of 'fair rents' be made public as soon as possible.⁷² The landowners were seeking explanations and clarification of the rules under which the Land Commission Court dealt with and adjudicated on large properties and came to its decisions. While the petition received some support from other peers, it failed to resolve matters. Lord Longford was informed by Earl Granville, the Liberal leader in the upper house that the government had no power to direct the commissions in how to perform their functions.

The first applications to the Land Commission for rent adjustments on aristocratic estates in Westmeath were submitted in February 1882 by tenants of Lord Castlemaine.⁷³ Between 1882 and 1903 applications for adjustments were submitted

⁷⁰ *The Times*, 4 Jan. 1882.

⁷¹ *Irish Times*, 4 Jan. 1882.

⁷² *Ibid*, 5 May 1882.

⁷³ *Freeman's Journal*, 9 Feb. 1882.

by tenants on every aristocratic estate in Westmeath. An example of the number of applications can be gauged from a sitting of the sub-commission held at Mullingar on 21 February 1883 where there were 187 cases listed for hearing. Of these eighteen cases referred to Lord Greville, nine to the estate of Sir Walter Nugent and four to Lord Longford's estate.⁷⁴ While the list of applicants who sought rent adjustments outlined at Appendix 7, is probably incomplete, it provides a good insight into the state of Westmeath during this period. Between February 1882 and September 1903 there were 258 applications to the sub-commission of the Land Commission for rent adjustments by tenants of Westmeath aristocrats (see table 4).

Table 4. Applications to sub-commission for rent adjustments by tenants of Westmeath aristocrats, 1882-1903.

Name of Landlord	Number of applications by tenants.
Lord Castlemaine, 4 th bt (d.1892).	30
Lord Castlemaine, 5 th bt.	14
Sir Benjamin Chapman, 4 th bt (d.1888).	19
Sir Montagu Chapman, 5 th bt	16
Fulke Greville-Nugent, 1 st bt (d.1883).	6
Algernon Greville-Nugent, 2 nd bt.	26
Hon. Patrick Greville-Nugent.	9
Hon. George Greville (d.1897)	1
Sir Walter Nugent, 2 nd bt (d.1893).	33
Sir Walter Nugent, 4 th bt.	18
4 th earl of Longford (d.1887).	3
5 th earl of Longford.	40
Hon. Edward Pakenham.	1
Sir Richard Levinge, 7 th bt (d.1884).	2
Henry Corbyn Levinge, Knockdrin (d.1896).	9
Lady Letitia Nugent, Ballinlough (d.1895)	31
Total	258

Source: *Westmeath Examiner*, *Longford Leader*, *Irish Times*, *Freeman's Journal*, *Anglo-Celt*, *Connacht Telegraph*, *Ballinrobe Chronicle*, *Dundalk Democrat*.

Arising from the work of the land courts, the rents on 288,054 holdings in various parts of Ireland were reduced by an average of 20.7 per cent in the period from 1882 to 1893.⁷⁵

⁷⁴ *Westmeath Examiner*, 24 Feb. 1883.

⁷⁵ L. P. Curtis, 'Incumbered wealth: Landed indebtedness in Post-Famine Ireland', in *The American Historical Review*, Vol. 85, No.2 (Oxford, 1980), p. 343, available at

One landlord seemingly oblivious to the difficulties being endured by his tenants was Sir Benjamin Chapman. In March 1882 he applied to the Board of Public Works to increase the rents of about forty of his tenants as a result of their holdings increasing in value due to drainage works having been carried out to the upper stretches of the river Inny. The drainage works which improved 11,600 acres in the area was funded by the local landed proprietors. The arrangement was that the landowners would be refunded in instalments by the Board of Public Works along with an interest payment of four per cent per annum. Under the terms of the Drainage Acts landlords were permitted to apply to the board to adjust rents of occupying tenants. Sir Benjamin pointed out to the board that the majority of those affected were year to year tenants.⁷⁶

On 28 December 1884 Sir William Pakenham, 4th earl of Longford proposed several changes to the four year campaign of the Land League and National League, which he claimed had failed in their objectives. He suggested a number of changes to take effect from January 1885 which were:

Dissolve the league; disemploy the politicians; adapt thoroughly the Union; recognise the fact that Ireland, a poor country, with great qualities, but without capital or credit or commercial instincts, has everything to gain by the closest alliance with England, which is its market, its bank, and its field for employment. Obey the law, support the police; admit that the 'Irish idea' is disorder, no government; invite from outside the prudence, the thrift, the methodical industry, united with which, local intelligence and ingenuity can work on profitable lines.⁷⁷

The earl's comments clearly demonstrated his pro-Unionist views which drew a terse response from the editor of the *Westmeath Examiner* newspaper who replied: 'We beg to suggest a simpler plan - to buy out on fair terms those who do no work but live on other men'. The editor claimed that the earl's proposal would not increase the price received for agricultural produce, or improve the lot of the tenant farmer or indeed the

<http://www.jstor.org/stable/1860559> [2 October 2014].

⁷⁶ *Irish Times*, 30 Mar. 1882.

⁷⁷ *Westmeath Examiner*, 3 Jan. 1885.

landlord who did nothing other than ‘draw rack-rent from the toil of others’.⁷⁸ Later that year in a reflection of the general feeling locally towards landlords, the *Westmeath Examiner* described the earl of Longford as ‘a faithful example of tyrannic landlordism as well as being a model of landlord ignorance’.⁷⁹ Another example of local hostility arising from the refusal by a landlord to grant concessions to his tenants was demonstrated by the difficulty experienced by two of Lord Castlemaine’s bailiffs in their efforts to gather sufficient funds from the tenantry to purchase a testimonial to mark the upcoming marriage of the aristocrat’s daughter Agnes,⁸⁰ with the local newspaper remarking:

It is much to be feared the two disinterested gentlemen will have to stump out pretty liberally themselves to make the testimonial anything like respectable. If Lord Castlemaine or the recipient to be were aware of all the circumstances, the testimonial would die a speedy death.⁸¹

When he became aware of what was surely an embarrassing state of affairs, Lord Castlemaine sent a letter to the person in charge of the collection thanking him for his efforts, but declining to receive the gift.⁸²

In November 1885 as the price of agricultural produce was falling, leaving the tenants on many aristocratic estates in rent arrears, the tenants of Lord Longford’s Cookesborough estate near Mullingar requested a reduction of twenty-five per cent on their rents. Their request was refused by Lord Longford who stated by way of excuse that ‘Prices are as high now, and rents are not so high as in former years when the

⁷⁸ *Westmeath Examiner*, 3 Jan. 1885.

⁷⁹ *Ibid*, 11 Apr. 1885.

⁸⁰ A testimonial usually took the form of an ornate document known as an address which was presented by the tenantry to the family of the landlord to mark notable family events such as marriages and the coming-of-age of sons. For further analysis on the purpose of addresses see Terence Dooley, *The decline and fall of the Dukes of Leinster 1872-1948* (Dublin, 2014), pp 12-3.

⁸¹ *Westmeath Examiner*, 20 Dec. 1884.

⁸² *Irish Times*, 17 Jan. 1885.

rents were paid'.⁸³ This clearly distorted comment elicited a blunt response from the local *Westmeath Examiner* newspaper which stated:

The Earl of Longford comes forward and has the effrontery to proclaim that no depression exists in Ireland. For such a type of man as Lord Longford, with his insatiable appetite for wealth an explanation can readily be found. Did he admit that the times were depressed, he would be constrained to disorganise some of his rents in abatements.⁸⁴

In December 1885 when Lord Castlemaine refused a request from his tenants for a general reduction of twenty-five per cent in rents, announcing instead that he would consider each case on its merits, the tenants decided to lodge the rents in a local bank less twenty-five per cent.⁸⁵ Events such as those that occurred on the Longford and Castlemaine estates served to ignite the Plan of Campaign. In the autumn of 1886 a policy was formulated by the Irish National League whereby tenants banked their rents in the name of a National League committee member as a response to their landlord's refusal to accept a reduced rent.⁸⁶

Other landlords such as Lady Letitia Nugent of Ballinlough, whose financial problems will be examined later in this chapter, found it difficult to accommodate their tenants. In late 1886 eleven tenants on her Walshestown estate near Mullingar wrote to her outlining their poor circumstances and requested an abatement in rents.

The tenants stated:

That it is with feelings of deep sorrow and regret we are reluctantly obliged to have recourse to your Ladyship's well known sympathy with those in distress knowing that it is only necessary to bring same under your notice in order to have the remedy applied. We therefore beg most respectfully to state in consequence of the almost unprecedented severity of the present season our crops are in a most deplorable and wretched condition – the potato crop in a very bad state and in very many cases a total failure – the oats not having reached maturity is also in a hopeless state – and the cattle, on the sale of which we depend solely to tide us over the intervening season, are almost

⁸³ *Westmeath Examiner*, 7 Nov. 1885.

⁸⁴ *Ibid*, 7 Nov. 1885.

⁸⁵ *Irish Times*, 7 Dec. 1885.

⁸⁶ D. J. Hickey and J. E. Doherty, *A new dictionary of Irish history from 1800* (Dublin, 2003), p. 396.

unsalable, and when compelled to part with them, we were obliged to sell them at a very great sacrifice in order to procure the necessaries of life. A number of us had prior to this to struggle with a series of bad harvests coupled with the endeavour to meet arrears of rent, and under all the circumstances we confidently hope that your Ladyship will be pleased to grant us an abatement of rent the amount of which we confidently leave to your Ladyship's generosity.⁸⁷

On 25 October 1886 the Walshestown tenants held a meeting with the land agent, John Meldon, where they requested an abatement of twenty per cent on the rents. Meldon, in refusing their demand, informed them in dramatic fashion that if Lady Nugent were to accede to the request 'she might prepare at once for an unlimited sojourn in the workhouse'.⁸⁸ Despite her status as a leading Roman Catholic landowner, Lady Nugent's failure to publicly announce a reduction in rents resulted in an organised campaign by the Irish National League which culminated in a mass meeting on 28 November 1886 at Walshestown. The meeting attended by local clergy, leading nationalist politicians Timothy Sullivan MP the Lord Mayor of Dublin, his brother Donal Sullivan MP, Timothy Harrington MP and James Tuite MP, as well as estate tenants were informed that Lady Nugent's tenants were the first in Westmeath to adapt the Plan of Campaign. The presence of so many national politicians turned what should have been a local demonstration in support of the tenants into a national event.⁸⁹

The campaign by the tenants and their supporters was ultimately successful. In May 1887 John Meldon offered the large tenants on Lady Nugent's Delvin estate an abatement of ten per cent, with the smaller tenants and those under a rental of £60, receiving a reduction of fifteen per cent. This offer was accepted by the tenants.⁹⁰ In September 1886 the government in response to the ongoing agrarian agitation and

⁸⁷ Letter to Lady Nugent from Walshestown tenants (Nugent family papers, uncatalogued).

⁸⁸ *Westmeath Examiner*, 30 Oct. 1886.

⁸⁹ *Ibid*, 4 Dec. 1886.

⁹⁰ *Ibid*, 21 May 1887.

campaigns of land reform by nationalist politicians established a Royal Commission under Earl Cowper to examine the operation of the 1881 and 1885 land acts.⁹¹ However, there is no record of any Westmeath aristocrat having given evidence before the Richmond, Bessborough or Cowper Commissions.

The failure by tenants to meet their rental commitments often resulted in livestock, other property and on occasions the farm itself being seized and sold at auction by the sheriff. Pole suggests that landlords, rather than evicting tenants and thereby risk the possibility of boycott as well as agitation against so called 'land grabbers' who took over the evicted farms, preferred to use the system of sheriff's sales to recover arrears of rent. It also had the effect of reducing the influence of the Land League as well as the risk of serious violence due to the presence of the military and police. Pole also points out that sheriff's sales were one of the most common events of the land war and were more frequent than agrarian crimes or evictions.⁹²

There were a number of incidents of sheriff sales involving the aristocracy in Westmeath. In July 1881 at Mullingar, in the presence of a large force of police and military, nine of Lord Longford's tenants had their cattle and sheep sold. The animals were subsequently purchased by representatives of the affected tenants. On the same day four farms were purchased in a similar fashion.⁹³ A similar sale took place in Mullingar on 9 February 1886 when fifteen head of cattle seized from a tenant of Lord Greville were sold by the sheriff. The cattle decorated with laurels and preceded by a banner bearing the inscription, 'Down with rack-rents', were driven into the town

⁹¹ Terence Dooley, *The big houses and landed estates of Ireland, a research guide* (Dublin, 2007), p. 86.

⁹² Adam Pole, 'Sheriff's sales during the Land war, 1879-82', in *Irish Historical Studies, Vol. 34, No. 136* (Cambridge, 2005), pp 386-7, available at <http://www.jstor.org/stable/30008189> [27 June 2016].

⁹³ *Nation*, 9 Jul. 1881.

from the owners property. The animals were subsequently purchased by their original owner for the full amount owed to the landlord.⁹⁴

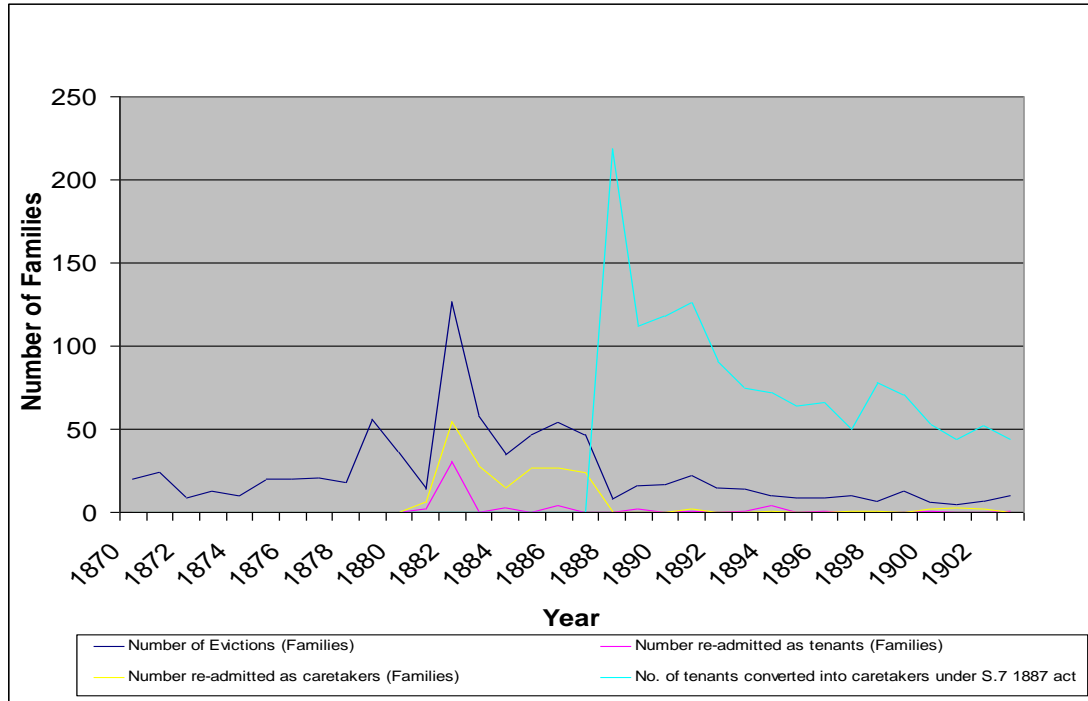
Sheriff's sales were a pragmatic method used by landlords to recover rent owed by their tenants but these actions only served to increase the level of mistrust and divisions between landlords and their tenants. The tenants perceived the landowners as being unsympathetic to their plight, while landlords considered the demands for rent reductions to be unjustified and excessive.

8. Evictions

Between 1870 and 1878 the number of evictions in the county had remained at a consistent level with an average of seventeen in each year. However, in 1879 the number of evictions increased sharply to fifty-six, but decreased again to thirty-six in 1880, with a further reduction to fourteen in 1881. But as the economic crisis began to bite and increasing numbers of tenants were unable to pay their rents, evictions grew dramatically (see Figure 2 also Appendix 8, 9 and 10). The year 1882 saw the highest number of evictions in Westmeath with one hundred and twenty-seven families put out of their holdings. That year also had the highest number of families re-admitted as tenants and as caretakers. Between January and September 1883 there were a further fifty-eight evictions. There were thirty-five evictions in 1884, forty-seven in 1885, fifty-four in 1886 and forty-seven in 1887.

⁹⁴ *Freeman's Journal*, 10 Feb. 1886.

Figure 2. Evictions in County Westmeath 1870-1903.



Sources: *Evictions (Ireland). Return (compiled from returns made to the Inspector-General of the Royal Irish Constabulary) of cases of eviction which have come to the knowledge of the constabulary from 1870 to 1903, showing the number of families evicted, the number re-admitted as tenants and the number re-admitted as caretakers.*

Between 1870 and 1903 a total of 807 families were evicted from their holdings in County Westmeath, of these fifty-one families were readmitted as caretaker tenants. A tenant became a caretaker tenant where a judgement of rent had been attained against him in the courts. This applied in cases where the rent did not exceed £100 per year. A notice was then served on the tenant converting him into a caretaker tenant.⁹⁵ This had the effect of excluding him from the terms of the Land Law Ireland Act 1881. Between 1881 and 1903 194 families were readmitted as caretakers in Westmeath, while in the period 1888 to 1903, a further 1,335 families in the county were converted into caretakers under section seven of the Land Act, 1887.

As large landowners the aristocracy in Westmeath were embroiled in the land war as struggling tenants campaigned for a reduction in rents. The aristocratic landowners were active in securing eviction notices and ejection decrees from the

⁹⁵ Section 7(1) & (2), *Land Law (Ireland) Act 1887* [50 & 51 Vict, c.33], (23 August 1887).

courts which were then served on tenants who had failed to keep up to date with their rents. Religion did not appear to be a factor as evictions were carried out by both Catholic and Protestant aristocrats. Details of eviction notices and ejectment decrees in respect of the aristocratic landowners are outlined at Table 5 and Appendix 3 and 4.

Table 5. Eviction notices and ejectment decrees served on tenants of Westmeath aristocrats, 1882-1903.

Name of Landlord	Number of eviction notices served on tenants.	Number of ejectment decrees served on tenants.
Sir John Ennis, 2 nd bt (d.1884)	1	1
Sir Benjamin Chapman, 4 th bt (d.1888).	2	4
Sir Montagu Chapman, 5 th bt	4	3
Fulke Greville-Nugent, 1 st bt (d.1883).	5	
Algernon Greville-Nugent, 2 nd bt.	22	14
Hon. Patrick Greville-Nugent.	2	1
Sir Walter Nugent, 2 nd bt (d.1893).	8	8
Sir Walter Nugent, 4 th bt.		
4 th earl of Longford (d.1887).		2
5 th earl of Longford.	1	3
Lord Castlemaine, 4 th bt (d.1892)		11
Sir Richard Levinge, 7 th bt (d.1884).		
Henry Corbyn Levinge, Knockdrin (d.1896).		5
Lady Letitia Nugent, Ballinlough (d.1895)		2
Total	45	54

Source: *Westmeath Examiner, Freeman's Journal, Anglo-Celt*.

While the details outlined in table 5 are probably incomplete they provide an insight into the attitude of some landlords towards the non-payment of rents. It is apparent that Algernon Greville, 2nd baronet while being the second largest aristocratic landowner was also the least tolerant when it came to the matter of non-payment of rents, being responsible for 50 per cent of the eviction notices and almost 25 per cent of ejectment decrees served on tenants.⁹⁶

The practical difficulties in enforcing court orders were experienced by persons acting on behalf of aristocratic landlords. In April 1881 an agent accompanied by 150 police travelled from Longford to serve ejectment notices on tenants of Lord Castlemaine's Dromod estate in County Leitrim. On arrival at Rooskey they found

⁹⁶ *Westmeath Examiner, Freeman's Journal and Anglo Celt*, Jan. 1882-Dec. 1903.

that the drawbridge across the Shannon had been opened rendering a crossing impossible. After a long delay the police succeeded in closing the bridge and the party successfully completed their mission.⁹⁷ The following month a process server named James Whittingham, while serving writs on Lord Castlemaine's Westmeath estate, without police protection, was attacked and severely beaten by a mob, and but for the intervention of the police would possibly have been killed. On the same day Lord Castlemaine's agent and another process server were assaulted during the course of their work near the village of Glasson.⁹⁸

A particularly notable incident of the land war took place at Caulry near Athlone on 24 March 1884 when Lord Castlemaine evicted a widowed woman named Kelly and her family of four from a poor seventeen acre farm. The rent on the holding was seventeen pounds per year with the annual valuation being eleven pounds, fifteen shillings, thus the rent was much higher than the productivity of the land could sustain. Prior to 1852 the annual rent of this holding had been six pounds, six shillings but the tenant's father had reportedly incurred the wrath of his landlord for voting against his wishes, whereupon the rent had been raised to seventeen pounds as a consequence.⁹⁹ Lord Castlemaine appeared to have had little sympathy for his tenantry. In November 1885 he attempted to evict a prosperous tenant named Kearney from his holding at Ballykeeran near Athlone. Approximately one hundred members of the Royal Irish Constabulary were present to protect the deputy sheriff, the land agent and three bailiffs from the five hundred local people and clergy who were in attendance. The furniture had just been removed from the house which was about to be smashed up when friends of the tenant decided to pay the rent owed. As the sheriff and his staff were withdrawing they were pelted with mud and but for restraint by the

⁹⁷ *The Times*, 23 Apr. 1881.

⁹⁸ *Nation*, 4 Jun. 1881.

⁹⁹ *Westmeath Examiner*, 29 Mar. and 5 Apr. 1884.

police and calming presence of the clergy the affair could have ended violently.¹⁰⁰ On 14 December 1885 another tenant of Sir Richard's named Kilduff had her cattle seized by the landlord for non-payment of rent. Mrs Kilduff's request for a reduction of her rent had been refused by Sir Richard. Five bailiffs accompanied by about two hundred police made the seizure. The cattle were removed to Athlone where on the date of sale, 17 December, a thousand people, one hundred police and a large number of local clergy assembled. The Athlone Brass Band was also in attendance. The cattle were sold by auction to a representative of Mrs Kilduff to the delight of the crowd.¹⁰¹

There was no let up in the number of evictions carried out by the Westmeath aristocracy the majority of which could be attributed to the economic, agrarian and political difficulties afflicting the country. As evictions declined after 1888, the number of tenants that were converted into caretakers under section 7 of the Land Act, 1887 increased substantially before levelling out somewhat during the 1890s, and while agrarian agitation abated to some extent it did not disappear completely and would come to prominence again in Westmeath during the years 1904 to 1910 in what would come to be known as the 'Ranch War'.

9. Agrarian crime against aristocrats and their tenants 1879-1903

The general depressed state of the economy in the county was having ramifications in other areas of society. The rising level of crime in Westmeath was of concern to the administrators of justice in the county. On 4 August 1879 a meeting of local magistrates held at Mullingar passed resolutions requesting that police numbers be increased to previous levels, barracks closed in 1876 be re-opened, and additional

¹⁰⁰ Jeremiah Sheehan, *South Westmeath farm and folk* (Dublin, 1978), pp 128-30.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid*, pp 130-3.

legislation be enacted to deal with the problem.¹⁰² Their views were forwarded to Lord Greville, the lord lieutenant for the county for onward transmission to the lord lieutenant of Ireland in Dublin Castle. Sub-Inspector Samuel Waters of the Royal Irish Constabulary posted to Castlepollard in November 1879 claimed that the area was a stronghold of Ribbonism.¹⁰³

Taking possession of a farm from which the previous tenant had been evicted, commonly referred to as ‘land grabbing’, was perhaps the most despised and odious practice in rural Ireland. On occasions it ended with fatal consequences, when the new tenant, contrary to the wishes of the local population, failed to give up the holding. On 4 December 1879 a cattle dealer named Michael Ball was shot dead near Mullingar. In 1864 he had taken a farm from which a widow had been evicted and despite being threatened had refused to give it up. Ball had also been a steward and stock buyer for Lord Vaux of Harrowden.¹⁰⁴ During the early summer of 1880, a notice was posted at various locations in the north-east of County Westmeath warning of fatal consequences for persons that had taken land from which tenants had been evicted (see Figure 3).

¹⁰² *Nation*, 9 Aug. 1879.

¹⁰³ Samuel Waters & Stephen Ball (ed.), *A policeman's Ireland: Recollections of Samuel Waters RIC* (Cork, 1999), p. 11.

¹⁰⁴ *Freeman's Journal*, 2 Mar. 1880. George Charles Mostyn, 6th Baron Vaux of Harrowden (1804-1883) was educated at Oscott Roman Catholic school. He was a magistrate for counties Westmeath, Mayo and Surrey. (see Debrett's Peerage, 1876). Mostyn was a substantial landowner with 4,323 acres comprised of 1,182 acres in Kilkenny, 677 acres in Meath and 2,464 acres in Westmeath (see Hussey De Burgh). He sold his Westmeath estate at Rosmead near Delvin to Lord Greville in the early 1880s.

Figure 3. Warning notice posted on chapel walls at Delvin, Killallon and Clonmellon, 1880.

"FELLOW-COUNTRYMEN,—At the present time, when the good and true hearted men and women of the world are helping the famine-stricken people of this suffering country, it is a dreadful thing that amongst us there are men with hunger in their hearts and eyes longing for their neighbours' downfall, and encouraging landlords to evict embarrassed tenants by making private proposals for their land. These men are —, of —, and —, of —, and his gutter agent —. Fellow-countrymen, do with these men as the noble priests and people of Connaught do with land-grabbers—despise them, scorn them, make nothing of them, don't buy or sell with them, and they are conquered.

"Signed on behalf of the I. R. B.

"After this notice, barrack-hacks, land-grabbers, exterminators, or any person taking land from which a tenant is evicted, will get no further warning, but be shot to death by

"ROBY OF THE HILLS."

Source: Leinster Express, 22 May 1880.

The threat was subsequently carried out on in the north Westmeath area on 4 March 1881 when a man named Patrick Farrelly was shot dead on his way home from a fair near Multyfarnham. In 1874 he had occupied a farm from which a tenant had been evicted three years earlier and had refused to give up possession to the evicted tenant.¹⁰⁵ At the end of 1881 two men were shot near Castlepollard and there were eleven other agrarian incidents near the town. According to Samuel Waters the area was reported to be 'the worst and most dangerous part' of the county. Waters states that the authorities responded to the shooting incidents by sending an extra sixty soldiers to patrol the locality.¹⁰⁶ On 19 March 1882 George Crawford, a rate collector, land agent and tenant farmer from Athboy, Co. Meath who had been under police protection was shot while on his way to church near the village of Clonmellon and later died of his injuries. He had been responsible for evicting several tenants for non-payment of rent.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁵ *Kildare Observer*, 12 Mar. 1881.

¹⁰⁶ Waters & Ball (ed.), *A policeman's Ireland: Recollections of Samuel Waters RIC*, p. 11.

¹⁰⁷ *Nenagh Guardian*, 22 Mar. 1882.

The level of agrarian crime and the disturbed state of the country was of increased concern to the members of the Landlord's Association. On 7 October 1880 a hundred members of the organisation, including Lords Longford and Castlemaine, met the lord lieutenant, Lord Cowper, and the chief secretary, William Forster, to express their concerns about the state of Ireland and to urge the administration to take the necessary steps to protect life and property. The lord lieutenant undertook to act on their concerns.¹⁰⁸

Paying rent to one's landlord was discouraged in certain areas to such an extent as to result in fatalities as illustrated by an incident that occurred in south Westmeath. In November 1881 an elderly tenant of Sir John Ennis named Greene from Moate paid the rent when due to his landlord. That same night upon answering the door to some callers he was shot and subsequently died from his wounds. Four days later, while his body was laid out in the house, shots were again fired into the dwelling wounding the dead man's son in the head.¹⁰⁹ Also the same month shots were fired into the houses of Robert Johnson and Robert Walsh, large tenant farmers of Sir John Ennis near Athlone, because they had paid their rents.¹¹⁰

Arising from agrarian agitation, Boyce remarks that 'the high moral tone of the [Land] League was difficult to maintain as the agitation absorbed local vendettas, violent criminal activity and attempted murder with firearms'.¹¹¹ This is borne out by three incidents that occurred in Westmeath. On 27 June 1881 a herd named Michael Curran was stabbed to death near Mullingar by a labourer who lived nearby. Curran had threatened to summons the labourer for cutting grass and timber on land over

¹⁰⁸ *Irish Times*, 8 Oct. 1880.

¹⁰⁹ *The Times*, 2 Dec. 1881.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid*, 23 Nov. 1881.

¹¹¹ D. George Boyce, *Nineteenth century Ireland: The search for stability* (Dublin, 1990), p. 170.

which the deceased had charge.¹¹² On 27 August 1882 near the village of Raharney in the east of the county an argument between two men ended tragically when one struck the other on the head with a spade with fatal consequences. The participants had been involved in ongoing disputes over land.¹¹³ On 8 October 1883 a police constable named Crowley, attached to Rochfortbridge, was stabbed to death on his wedding day while walking with his new wife. The motive for the murder was again agrarian, in that the constable and his wife were due to get a farm which had been occupied by his assailant.¹¹⁴

However, an outrage occurred on Palm Sunday, 2 April 1882 at Barbavilla near Collinstown in the north of County Westmeath that made national headlines and epitomised the reckless nature of the agrarian violence that was gripping County Westmeath at this time. William Barlow Smythe, the owner of 5,035 acres in Westmeath, Galway and Meath had recently evicted a local tenant named Richard Riggs who had rented a sixty-seven acre farm from him. It was the first occasion that Smythe had evicted a tenant for non-payment of rent in the fifty-two years he had been landlord.¹¹⁵ On the day in question Smythe, his sister-in-law Mrs Maria Smythe, wife of his brother Henry, and Lady Harriet Monck, sister of William's late wife Emily, were driving home from church along the avenue to the house when a hidden assassin fired a shot which killed Mrs Smythe.¹¹⁶ The attack was believed to be the work of Ribbonmen, the intended purpose being to intimidate local landlords into not evicting tenants who were in rent arrears.

¹¹² *Nenagh Guardian*, 29 Jun. 1881.

¹¹³ *Freeman's Journal*, 29 Aug. 1882.

¹¹⁴ *Nenagh Guardian*, 13 Oct. 1883.

¹¹⁵ Ann Murtagh, *Portrait of a Westmeath tenant community, 1879-85* (Dublin, 1999), p. 29. Murtagh's book examines the circumstances surrounding the murder at Barbavilla.

¹¹⁶ *Irish Times*, 4 Apr. 1882.

Following a two-year police investigation ten local farmers were convicted of conspiracy to murder, five were sentenced to ten years imprisonment, the maximum allowed, and the remaining five received seven year sentences.¹¹⁷ The person believed to have fired the fatal shot, William Boyhan, absconded to America.¹¹⁸ The murder of Mrs Smythe changed the nature of the relationship between Barlow Smythe, the intended victim, and his tenants whom he criticised for their apparent condoning of the incident and their failure to assist the police in their investigation. Barlow Smythe who had previously dealt directly with his tenants brought in an unpopular land agent, Matthew Weld O'Connor from Co. Meath, to run the estate and he moved to Ilfracombe, Devon where he died in 1886.¹¹⁹ He was succeeded by his brother Henry.¹²⁰ The incident at Barbavilla received widespread coverage in the newspapers. Florence Arnold-Forster who kept a journal during her father William Forster's tenure as chief secretary for Ireland recorded that he was quite despondent with the lack of support from the landlords and gentry of County Westmeath, which was described as 'at present one of the worst and most dangerous parts of the country'.¹²¹

The apparent breakdown in law and order in the county was not helped by a lack of action on the part of Lord Greville, lord lieutenant for Westmeath. In April 1882 he wrote to the chief secretary informing him of his refusal to call a meeting of the magistrates in the county. He was concerned that excessive expenses might be incurred by the magistrates in connection with their duties. He also objected to measures being taken to curb lawlessness due to the fear of boycotting. Lord Greville suggested that the government send over a contingent of militia from England which

¹¹⁷ *Irish Times*, 28 Jun. 1884.

¹¹⁸ Waters & Ball (ed.), *A policeman's Ireland: Recollections of Samuel Waters RIC*, p. 12.

¹¹⁹ Murtagh, *Portrait of a Westmeath tenant community, 1879-85*, p. 40.

¹²⁰ Sir Bernard Burke, *A genealogical and heraldic history of the landed gentry of Ireland* (London, 1912), pp 652-3.

¹²¹ T. W. Moody, Richard Hawkins and Margaret Moody (eds), *Florence Arnold-Forster's Irish Journal* (Oxford, 1988), p. 433.

he believed would do the job, while at the same time sparing local landlords the additional expense.¹²² It is clear that Lord Greville was conscious of the precarious financial circumstances of many of the Westmeath landed classes which prevented them from funding additional police resources. An indication of the level of agitation and disturbed state of the county can be gauged by the decision in April 1883 to call up the Westmeath Militia for training for the first time since 1880.¹²³

10. Aristocratic Indebtedness, 1879-1903

While the majority of the aristocratic families in County Westmeath appeared to have been financially solvent, the paucity of estate records makes it difficult to give an accurate financial picture of each family's circumstances.¹²⁴ However, it is possible to provide some information from which conclusions may be drawn as to the economic well-being of the Westmeath aristocratic families. Curtis remarks that there was a close connection between a landlord's debts and assets, his annual income and operating costs, which in reality determined his net worth, and ultimately his solvency.¹²⁵ This appears to be particularly apt in the case of the Westmeath's aristocratic landowners. While the larger Pakenham, Castlemaine and Greville estates appeared to be better off financially, the smaller estates of the Nugent's of Donore and Ballinlough were struggling under an increasing weight of debt as their incomes declined, along with the additional problem of financial mismanagement. Lord Castlemaine appeared to have been financially secure. In 1874 he had a rental income

¹²² Moody, Hawkins and Moody (eds), *Florence Arnold-Forster's Irish Journal*, p. 437.

¹²³ *Westmeath Examiner*, 28 Apr. 1883.

¹²⁴ Vaughan, *Landlords and tenants in mid-Victorian Ireland*, p. 130. According to Vaughan it was difficult to measure the indebtedness of Irish landlords.

¹²⁵ L. P. Curtis, 'Incumbered wealth: Landed indebtedness in Post-Famine Ireland', in *The American Historical Review*, Vol. 85, No.2 (Oxford, 1980), p. 333, available at <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1860559> [18 May 2015].

of £9,400 from his estates in Westmeath and Roscommon,¹²⁶ and upon his death in 1892 Sir Richard, 4th baronet, left a personal estate of £20,516. He left the bulk of his estate to his son and successor Albert, 5th baronet. He bequeathed £1,000 a year as a dowry for Albert's wife, if he should have one and he also left £5,000 to his daughter Agnes and £3,000 each to his other daughters Florence, Edith, Meta and Alice.¹²⁷

At the time of this death in 1883 Fulke Greville-Nugent, 1st baronet, had an annual rental income of £12,000 from his holdings and he left a personal estate of £84,000.¹²⁸ In the previous two decades, as already outlined, he had invested heavily in the construction and renovation of his residences at Clonhugh in 1867 and Clonyn in 1875, which according to Fitzsimons left him financially impoverished.¹²⁹ A similar claim by Sian Evans is examined later in this chapter. Lord Greville's Irish estates were divided equally between three of his sons and his daughter. The most unusual aspect of the will was his decision to leave Clonyn Castle and estate to his youngest son, Patrick, a notable departure from the practice of primogeniture, while his other Irish residence Clonhugh House went to his eldest son, Algernon.¹³⁰ In his will Greville-Nugent bequeathed certain other estates to Algernon (1841-1909), 2nd baronet, as well as to his other children. As a charge on his Kent estates Fulke Greville-Nugent left £4,000 to each of his younger sons George (1842-1897), MP for Longford 1870-74, Robert (1847-1912), and Patrick (1852-1925), and his daughter Mildred, the Marquise de la Bedoyere (1850-1906). He also bequeathed an additional £6,000 to Patrick and Mildred. Another son, Reginald (1848-1878), a former captain in the Coldstream Guards, race horse owner, amateur jockey and master of the

¹²⁶ Jeremiah Sheehan, *South Westmeath farm and folk* (Dublin, 1978), p. 46.

¹²⁷ *Irish Times*, 24 Nov. 1892.

¹²⁸ *Westmeath Examiner*, 7 Jul. 1883.

¹²⁹ Hannah Fitzsimons, *The great Delvin* (Dublin, 1975), p. 106.

¹³⁰ *Kildare Observer*, 3 Mar. 1883. The report described the decision to leave Clonyn to his youngest son as 'curious'.

Westmeath hunt from 1872 to 1874,¹³¹ had died after a fall in a steeplechase race at Sandown Park in February 1878.¹³²

However, the will was contested in both the London and Dublin courts by his third son Robert on the grounds that his sister Mildred, the Marquise de la Bedoyere had exercised undue influence over their father, prejudiced him and thereby giving her an unfair preference, a claim that she denied.¹³³ Robert Greville failed in his efforts to have his father's will overturned and was ordered to pay the costs in the case.¹³⁴ Siân Evans suggestion that despite having huge holdings of land in Ireland, the Grevilles were short of ready cash is probably accurate. She attributes this difficulty to the agricultural depression of the time but also from expensive lifestyles led by some of its members. The most notable family member in this regard was the Hon. Ronald Greville, eldest son of Algernon, 2nd baronet, who was a member of the Marlborough House Set and a close friend of the future king, Edward VII.¹³⁵ On 25 April 1891 the economic fortunes of the family received a boost when Ronald married Margaret Anderson, only daughter of William McEwan MP, a Scottish brewing magnate worth in excess of one million pounds. Unfortunately, the good fortune was to end prematurely in 1908 with Ronald's death from pneumonia following an operation for throat cancer.¹³⁶ Other members of the Greville family were not so financially fortunate. Fitzsimons claims that the Hon. George Greville, 2nd son of

¹³¹ Edmund F. Dease, *A complete history of the Westmeath hunt* (Dublin, 1898), pp 72-3.

¹³² *Freeman's Journal*, 1 Mar. 1878.

¹³³ *Ibid*, 27 Mar. 1884.

¹³⁴ *Irish Times*, 10 Jun. 1884.

¹³⁵ Siân Evans, *Mrs Ronnie, the society hostess who collected kings* (London, 2013), pp 26-7. The Marlborough House Set was a group of friends of Edward, Prince of Wales who engaged in dancing, drinking and partying to the revulsion of Queen Victoria. In the late 1880s Ronald Greville met and intended to marry Virginia Bonyng a wealthy American heiress. However, her father was engaged in a bitter feud with a former associate which was so ugly and public that the Greville family decided against the marriage. She later married Viscount Deerhurst. (For further details see Evans, page 27).

¹³⁶ *Ibid*, p. 51.

Fulke Greville, 1st baronet, was a spendthrift and when his sources of borrowing dried up he could be seen outside the gates of parliament selling newspapers while his older brother, Algernon, a government minister passed through.¹³⁷ There is nothing to confirm the accuracy of this account. George, who died childless in 1897, had been a magistrate for Middlesex.

Another member of the Greville family undergoing financial difficulties was Hon. Patrick Greville-Nugent. As already outlined Patrick, the youngest son of Fulke Greville-Nugent, 1st baronet, had inherited the Clonyn estate on his father's death in 1883. However, on two occasions in 1890 he was brought to court by his sister Mildred, Marquise de la Bedoyere. The first occasion was in March when she sought to have a receiver appointed over part of his estate. The reason for her application was that she was due a payment of £32,000 and an additional £6,653 16s 11d in interest out of the estate lands at Clonyn. Greville-Nugent objected to the appointment and requested another agent, Matthew Weld O'Connor, a district receiver and the existing agent over the estate be appointed as receiver, claiming that the Plan of Campaign had been adopted by the tenants on the estate and that a large portion of the estate was in the process of being sold to the tenants under the land purchase acts. The court agreed with his request and appointed O'Connor.¹³⁸ The second case occurred the following month when his sister applied for an injunction to restrain him from cutting specimen trees on the Clonyn estate. The court found that he had cut 12,000 larch, ash and sycamore trees, that a great deal of the timber was ornamental and therefore he had no authority to cut it. The court was also satisfied that the trees had been cut for the

¹³⁷ Fitzsimons, *The great Delvin*, pp 106-7.

¹³⁸ *Westmeath Examiner*, 22 Mar. 1890.

purpose of making money. The judge ordered Greville-Nugent to cease his activities immediately.¹³⁹

The Pakenham family of Tullynally were the largest landowners in County Westmeath. According to Curtis, Lord Longford had an annual rental in the 1870s of £21,262 from the estates in Westmeath and particularly in Dublin where he and Lord de Vesci owned the majority of Kingstown.¹⁴⁰ Curtis further states that the termination of an expensive jointure of £2,000 per year, with the death of Georgina, Dowager Countess of Longford in 1880 allowed Lord Longford to reduce his interest payments from £2,948 in 1874-75 to £267 in 1876 and during the turbulent years between 1881 and 1885 Lord Longford successfully maintained an annual rental income of £21,199.¹⁴¹ According to Florence Arnold-Foster the Pakenham and de Vesci families had inherited the Kingstown estate from a Mr Dunbar who left the property to Lord Longford's grandfather and Lord de Vesci's great-grandfather on the sole grounds that they were the two best landlords in Ireland.¹⁴² At his death in 1887 the 4th earl left a personal estate in excess of £130,000 in both Ireland and England. He left the bulk of his estate to his eldest son Thomas, 5th earl. He bequeathed £1,000, his London residence and contents to his wife and he left his new Irish three percent annuities to his daughters, and a charge of £12,000 on the Cookesborough estate near Mullingar to his younger son the Hon. Edward Pakenham. The bequests to his

¹³⁹ *Westmeath Examiner*, 5 Apr. 1890.

¹⁴⁰ L. P. Curtis, 'Incumbered wealth: Landed indebtedness in Post-Famine Ireland', in *The American Historical Review*, Vol. 85, No.2 (Oxford, 1980), pp 357-8, available at <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1860559> [18 May 2015].

¹⁴¹ *Ibid*, p. 358.

¹⁴² Moody, Hawkins and Moody (eds), *Florence Arnold-Forster's Irish Journal*, p. 324.

daughter and younger son were in addition to the settlements executed prior to his marriage.¹⁴³

Despite having large estates in several counties, Sir John J. Ennis MP appeared to have had severe cash flow problems and a number of outstanding debts. In August 1881 a company named Bewley and Anderson made a successful application before the courts for an order to recover £415 8s 1d owed to them by Ennis. Between July 1879 and April 1880 the company had supplied Ennis with groceries and other goods which had not been paid for despite repeated requests, the last reply having been received in April 1881. By way of excuse Sir John stated that he hoped to get his rents in early and would therefore be in a position to discharge his debts.¹⁴⁴ In his will following his death in 1884 Sir John left a personal estate in excess of £14,000. As he was predeceased by two of his sisters Sir John left the bulk of his estate to his only surviving sister Mary, wife of The O'Donoghue of the Glens.¹⁴⁵

On 17 April 1900 Sir William Levinge of Knockdrin Castle died at the relatively young age of fifty-one. He was succeeded by his eldest son Richard as 10th baronet.¹⁴⁶ In his will Sir William left estates worth £20,000 to Richard, £3,000 each to his daughters, Dorothy and Beatrice and £3,500 to each of his younger sons, Thomas, Reginald, Charles, Bernard and Gerald. The estate was valued for probate at £1,204 4s 3d.¹⁴⁷ While the Levinge family were small landlords there is nothing to suggest that they were in financial difficulties. Sir Richard would later inherit

¹⁴³ *Irish Times*, 23 Aug. 1887.

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid*, 18 Aug. 1881.

¹⁴⁵ Will of Sir John James Ennis, 2nd baronet (NAI T/5472).

¹⁴⁶ *Burke's peerage and baronetage* (London, 1976), p. 1599.

¹⁴⁷ *Irish Times*, 25 Sept. 1900.

substantial lands and property in Nottingham, which would make him an extremely wealthy man when sold at auction.

The practice of investing in company stocks and shares had become increasingly popular among the aristocrats in Westmeath during the nineteenth century. Algernon Greville, 2nd baronet, invested in nine companies located in the United States, Brazil, Mexico and Mozambique, then a Portuguese colony, as well as in Britain and Ireland. The type of business in which the companies that Lord Greville invested varied greatly, from railways in Brazil, Britain and Ireland, to mining in Mexico, as well as refrigerated meat processors and exporters, and electrical manufacturers in the United States.¹⁴⁸ Apart from the Mexican mining company where he was a trustee for debenture holders, Lord Greville was chairman and director of the other companies (see Appendix 11). Lords Longford and Castlemaine also invested in trading companies. Lord Castlemaine was a trustee for debenture holders in the Atlantic Oyster Fisheries Company in Galway, while Lord Longford was a patron of The Carriage Co-Operative Supply Association, as well as The London and Provincial Traders Wholesale Stores Limited. He was also a member of the council of the Conservative News Agency whose object was to supply provincial electors with cheap Conservative newspapers on a commercial basis.¹⁴⁹ However, as already detailed, smaller aristocratic families such as the Nugents did not have the financial resources or means necessary to invest or indeed speculate on the stock market.

¹⁴⁸ *The Times*, 16 Sept. 1886, 22 Feb. 1889, 12 Jul. 1890, 13 Oct. 1890, 18 Oct. 1898, *Freeman's Journal*, 9 Jul. 1888, *Irish Times*, 10 Oct. 1890, 11 Dec. 1895. See also James Critchell and Joseph Raymond, *A history of the frozen meat trade* (London, 1912), pp 209-10, and Richard Graham, *Britain and the onset of modernisation in Brazil, 1850-1914* (Cambridge, 1972), pp 58-60.

¹⁴⁹ *The Times*, 2 Jun. 1880, 20 Jul. 1880, *The Times*, 3 Jul. 1885, *Irish Examiner*, 27 Jun. 1899.

Curtis states that ‘both landlords and tenants...depended for their well-being if not for their survival, upon an elaborate and secretive system of short and long term loans’.¹⁵⁰ While the aristocratic families of Westmeath had the outward appearance of solvency not all escaped the problem of debt and two members of the class, Sir Walter Nugent (1827-1893), 2nd baronet of Donore and Sir Charles Nugent (1847-1927), 5th baronet of Ballinlough had to suffer the embarrassment of public bankruptcy. In 1881 Sir Walter Nugent, 2nd baronet of Donore and his wife Lady Maria were fighting financial ruin and reputational damage on two fronts. On 5 April 1881 Sir Walter appeared before the Dublin Police Court charged with obtaining £1,600, having forged the name of Mr Robert Caddel, DL, Balbriggan, a childhood acquaintance of Lady Nugent, on a bill of exchange for that amount. There were eleven counts on the indictment. The case generated considerable public interest owing to the high position of the accused. Lady Maria Nugent was also charged with the same offences, but she absconded prior to the case and could not be located. Pending the arrest of Lady Nugent, Sir Walter was remanded in custody to Richmond Prison, Grangegorman as he could not raise the necessary £2,000 required for bail.¹⁵¹ On 20 April Sir Walter failed to obtain bail despite the failure of the authorities to locate his wife.¹⁵²

The case was finally heard in the Commission Court, Dublin on 13 August 1881. During the course of evidence it transpired that the forgery had in fact been committed by Lady Nugent without the knowledge of her husband, who was totally innocent. It would appear that Sir Walter had abdicated from many of his responsibilities and spent much of his time attending race meetings in Britain and

¹⁵⁰ L. P. Curtis, ‘Incumbered wealth: Landed indebtedness in Post-Famine Ireland’, in *The American Historical Review*, Vol. 85, No.2 (Oxford, 1980), p. 335, available at <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1860559> [2 October 2014].

¹⁵¹ *Irish Examiner*, 6 Apr. 1881.

¹⁵² *Belfast Newsletter*, 21 Apr. 1881.

Ireland leaving Lady Nugent to run the financial affairs of the estate. In court her husband was described by his legal team as being ‘one of those easy going-men’.¹⁵³ The jury failed to agree a verdict and were discharged: nine had been in favour of acquittal with three for a conviction.¹⁵⁴ However, Sir Walter’s woes were far from over. In July 1881 he was petitioned before the Bankruptcy Court and adjudicated a bankrupt.¹⁵⁵ The size of his debt was not stated. On 3 August he again appeared before the Bankruptcy Court to have an assignee appointed over his estate, which was duly ordered. The Nugent estate consisted of 8,277 acres with 200 tenants, and an annual rental of £4,332. At the time the National Bank had an encumbrance of £30,000 on the estate.¹⁵⁶ Sir Walter also owed £2,856 to three creditors as well as an additional £2,596 to a number of others.¹⁵⁷ In October he came before the court for final examination. Sir Walter informed the court that in 1871 he executed a bill of sale to a neighbour, Peter Nugent Fitzgerald, in respect of all his furniture. At that time Sir Walter had two or three estates but no personal effects, except what were included in the bill of sale. The bill of sale was in respect of £962 that had been advanced to him by Fitzgerald. Nugent had put up a 138 acre farm as security which was in the possession of petitioner with the debt owed by Sir Walter amounting to a total of £1,500 of which £1,000 had been repaid. The judge admitted Sir Walter into bankruptcy.¹⁵⁸

In November 1881, John Gallagher made an application to the courts for a judgement against Lady Maria Nugent for an unpaid debt of £102 13s 10d.¹⁵⁹ In May

¹⁵³ *Irish Times*, 15 Aug. 1881.

¹⁵⁴ *The Times*, 15 Aug. 1881.

¹⁵⁵ *Irish Times*, 7 Jul. 1881.

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid*, 14 Dec. 1901.

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid*, 3 Aug. 1881.

¹⁵⁸ *The Times*, 22 Oct. 1881.

¹⁵⁹ *Freeman’s Journal*, 13 Nov. 1881.

1883 Sir Walter found himself back in the Court of Bankruptcy on another petition brought by Peter Nugent Fitzgerald who, as already stated, held the bill of sale on Sir Walter's furniture and pictures. Among the pictures were two valuable paintings, one by Sir Joshua Reynolds and another of Sir John Falstaff. The dispute arose over a sum of £67 owed by Sir Walter to Fitzgerald which he was unable to pay.¹⁶⁰ An indication of the precarious state of the estate finances and the failure by Sir Walter and Lady Nugent to discreetly obtain new sources of credit can be gauged by the decision in December 1896 to place a notice in *The Times* newspaper seeking a mortgage:

Safe income. Liberal interest. Absolute security. No trouble - A mortgage of £9,768 secured upon the Irish Estates of Sir Walter Nugent, Bart, which comprise a handsome mansion and 6,915 acres, and produce £4,059 per annum. Interest regularly paid at 4 per cent, with a well secured bonus added. If the mortgage fetches less than £9,768 then the difference will increase the income and with the bonus would yield a liberal interest perfectly well secured.¹⁶¹

By 1901 there were other encumbrances amounting to £25,000 on the estate.¹⁶² In March 1902, 110 tenants on the Nugent estate, which was in liquidation, reached an agreement with the land agent for the trustees of the late Sir Walter to purchase their holdings. The terms were eighteen years purchase for first term tenants and twenty years purchase for second term tenants.¹⁶³ The arrears of rent due were considered to be included in the purchase money and pending completion of the purchase agreement four per cent on the purchase money to be accepted in lieu of rent. Some difficulties arose with eighteen to twenty tenants in the Rathowen part of the estate when the vendors sought twenty years purchase from first term tenants who declined to

¹⁶⁰ *Irish Times*, 9 May 1883.

¹⁶¹ *The Times*, 26 Dec. 1891.

¹⁶² *Irish Times*, 14 Dec. 1901.

¹⁶³ First term tenants were tenants whose rents had been fixed by the land courts under the Land Law (Ireland) Act, 1881, while second term tenants were those tenants whose rents had been fixed in and after 1896. See also F. S. L. Lyons, 'The aftermath of Parnell, 1891-1903 in W. E. Vaughan (ed.) *A new history of Ireland*, vi (Oxford, 1996), p. 96.

purchase their holdings but it was hoped that a settlement could be reached in the matter.¹⁶⁴ The assignees remained in charge of the estate until 1916, long after Sir Walter, 2nd baronet's death in 1893, and the succession of his son Percy as 3rd baronet. Sir Percy's (1861-1896) tenure only lasted three years and upon his death in 1896, aged thirty-four he was succeeded by his younger brother Walter, as 4th baronet.

11. The financial difficulties of the Nugent family, Ballinlough

According to Curtis: 'circumstantial evidence suggests that the Irish landed elite devoted much of its private life to money cares, which meant in practice searching for low-interest loans and dodging bill collectors'.¹⁶⁵ While this claim maybe an over simplification of the situation it was certainly true in the case of the Nugent family of Ballinlough. In 1863 Sir Charles Nugent, 5th baronet, inherited the Ballinlough estate following the unexpected death of his older brother Hugh in a shooting accident. In 1869 the estate amounted to 7,479 acres, comprised of 2,106 acres in Tipperary, 679 acres in Meath and 4,694 acres in Westmeath.¹⁶⁶ In December 1869 a report outlining the estimated selling value of the estate was prepared for the family by Brassington & Gale, Surveyors. The report stated that the Tipperary estate consisted of 2,106 acres of medium quality land near the village of Two-Mile-Borris, with an annual rent roll of £862 and a value of £14,700. The Walshestown estate located three miles west of Mullingar consisted of 1,867 acres of superior quality land that produced an annual rent of £1,655 4s 6d and was worth £39,800. While the Ballinlough portion of the estate consisted of 3,506 acres, 679 acres in County Meath and 2,827 acres in

¹⁶⁴ *Westmeath Examiner*, 29 Mar. 1902.

¹⁶⁵ L. P. Curtis, 'Incumbered wealth: Landed indebtedness in Post-Famine Ireland', in *The American Historical Review*, Vol. 85, No.2 (Oxford, 1980), p. 333, available at <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1860559> [18 May 2015].

¹⁶⁶ Estimated selling value of the estates of Sir Charles Nugent, 24 December 1869 (Nugent family Papers, uncatalogued).

Westmeath, including the demesne measuring 432 acres that produced an annual rental of £2,541 16s 9d. The report concluded that the selling value of the Nugent estate at that time was £73,700.¹⁶⁷

However, prior to his coming of age Sir Charles had accumulated large debts and on reaching his majority had borrowed £10,000 with the intention of clearing them. But his finances deteriorated further as he began to spend this money instead of paying his debts. He continued to borrow, eventually accumulating debts of between £40,000 and £50,000.¹⁶⁸ In July 1869 having exhausted all sources of revenue and in return for a payment of £1,000 Sir Charles conveyed all his life interest in the estate to his mother on condition that she took all the debts, which at that time amounted to £44,055.¹⁶⁹

In 1871 Lady Nugent took out a mortgage of £15,000 from the English & Scottish Law Life Assurance Office, Edinburgh on the security of charges on the Tipperary and Walshestown estates and on Sir Charles life rent on the Ballinlough estate, as well as on policies of £3,000 and £2,000 on Lady Nugent's life. The interest payable on the loan was fixed at five per cent.¹⁷⁰ In 1871 the Tipperary estate was sold through the Landed Estates Court to the Rev. Josias Leslie Porter for £12,500. Of this sum, Lady Letitia Nugent received £10,000, while Sir Charles received £2,500.¹⁷¹ Following the sale of the Tipperary estate the policy for £3,000 on Lady Nugent's life was released and the mortgage reduced after a payment of £3,000 out of the funds

¹⁶⁷ Estimated selling value of the estates of Sir Charles Nugent, 24 December 1869 (Nugent family Papers, uncatalogued).

¹⁶⁸ *The Times*, 23 May 1878.

¹⁶⁹ Indenture dated 24 July 1869 between Sir Charles Nugent and Lady Letitia Nugent (Nugent family papers, uncatalogued).

¹⁷⁰ Letter from English & Scottish Law Life Assurance Office to J. G. Oulton, Solicitor, 18 July 1912 (Nugent family papers, uncatalogued.)

¹⁷¹ Landed Estate Court Conveyance to Reverend Josias Leslie Porter, 21 July 1871 (Nugent family Papers, uncatalogued). Josias Leslie Porter (1823-1889) was an Irish Presbyterian minister, writer, traveller, missionary and educationalist. He wrote a number of books on his travels in the Middle-East as well as on religious matters.

obtained for the sale. The policy was subsequently surrendered by the assignee of the estate.¹⁷²

In 1871 Sir Charles married and his father-in-law Thomas Walker paid £40,000 to reduce his debts. In 1873 he cleared a further £6,000 by paying some creditors 10s in the pound, but his biggest difficulty appeared to be a gambling problem.¹⁷³ In 1878 Sir Charles (1847-1927) was undergoing severe financial difficulties due to heavy gambling losses on the race track. In May that year he appeared before Leicester Crown Court for public examination with liabilities of £12,000 and assets of about £20. During the hearing Nugent revealed that his estates had a rent roll of £6,000 per annum, a slight exaggeration; it was actually just over £5,000. In addition to being heavily encumbered, the estate was entailed with a jointure of £1,500 to his mother. Nugent stated that he had an income of £2,500 a year from the estate. Sir Charles lived in England where he kept seven or eight racehorses and had succeeded in losing over £60,000 on the turf, squandering as much as £5,000 at a time.¹⁷⁴ Nugent's inability to pay his debts was attributed to his losses on the turf and he was admitted to bankruptcy, where he remained for a number of years.¹⁷⁵

In 1886, during the height of the Plan of Campaign Lady Nugent succeeded in having the interest rate on the loan reduced from five per cent to four per cent for a period of two years. However, due to the severe economic difficulties at the time no interest was paid on the loan during the next three years. In 1887 a receiver was appointed to administer the estate which was the subject of family charges amounting to £10,461, and also six different sums of £2,700 along with a further charge of £63 to the Board of Works, making a total debt of £26,952 13s 6d. There was also an

¹⁷² Letter from English & Scottish Law Life Assurance Office to J. G. Oulton, Solicitor, 18 July 1912 (Nugent family papers, uncatalogued).

¹⁷³ *The Times*, 23 May 1878.

¹⁷⁴ *Ibid*, 23 May 1878.

¹⁷⁵ *Ibid*, 23 May 1878.

additional sum of £5,000 outstanding.¹⁷⁶ But over the next five years the interest arrears were cleared and in April 1895 the mortgage on the estate was reduced by a further £2,000. In March 1895 following the death of Lady Letitia Nugent the remaining estate lands including Sir Charles life interest were left to his cousin James Nugent for his life.¹⁷⁷ In 1895-6 the family sold the Walshestown estate.¹⁷⁸ The entire proceeds of the sale were used to service the mortgage on the estate but the property remained in receivership. Sir Charles' fortunes did not improve in the interim and in 1886 he was admitted to bankruptcy at Stafford with liabilities of £700 and assets of only £600, having gone surety for a friend.¹⁷⁹ He was again admitted to bankruptcy at Oxford in 1895.¹⁸⁰ In January 1896 Sir Charles was prosecuted for obtaining credit of £219 9s 5d from a hotel landlady having failed to inform her that he was an undischarged bankrupt. He initially pleaded not guilty stating that the money was to have been paid out of his wife's estate.¹⁸¹ However at a subsequent hearing he changed his plea citing difficulties with his wife's estate. The court found that Sir Charles had not intended to commit fraud or act dishonestly. The judge stated that 'a statutory wrong had been committed but not a crime', and he sentenced Sir Charles to two days imprisonment.¹⁸²

In September 1901 a disentailing deed (a deed used to bar an entailed interest) was made between Sir Charles and his son Charles Hugh which meant that the latter would not receive any income from the Ballinlough estate.¹⁸³ In April 1902 John

¹⁷⁶ *Freeman's Journal*, 30 Apr. 1902.

¹⁷⁷ Originating application to Irish Land Commission by Sir Charles Nugent, 1907 (Nugent family Papers, uncatalogued).

¹⁷⁸ Letter from English & Scottish Law Life Assurance Office to J. G. Oulton, Solicitor, 18 July 1912 (Nugent family papers, uncatalogued).

¹⁷⁹ *The Times*, 1 Feb. 1896.

¹⁸⁰ *Ibid*, 24 Jan. 1895.

¹⁸¹ *Ibid*, 2 Jan. 1896.

¹⁸² *Ibid*, 1 Feb. 1896.

¹⁸³ Abstract of mortgage title between Anna Maria Nugent, Sir Charles Nugent and Edward Eaves, 23 January 1925 (Nugent family papers, uncatalogued).

Meldon successfully petitioned the court to have the receiver discharged. He informed the court that the owners had raised the necessary £31,703 and that all the charges had been assigned to trustees in trust for the persons who had lent the money.¹⁸⁴ This was detailed by Meldon, in a letter to Sir Charles the following month where he outlined that he had been successful in taking the estate out of court, therefore avoiding a possible sale under Section 40 of the Land Act 1896.¹⁸⁵ John Meldon further stated that many of the charges on the estate were more than a century old and that he had experienced severe difficulties in resolving them. He informed Sir Charles that the previous arrangement meant his son Charles Hugh would not be entitled to receive any income from the estate during his (Sir Charles) lifetime. Moreover, in the unlikely event of an income surplus, after paying interest on incumbrances, other fees and interest charges, such income would be payable to his cousin James Nugent who had helped keep the estate afloat by mortgaging his charge of £2,737 19s 3d on the Ballinlough estate, as collateral security for the loans that saved the estate from being sold in 1870. Had James Nugent not done so he would have received interest payments of five percent on his charge, as well as the repayment in full of the charge. Instead, he received none of the charge or any interest payments. The interest payments from 1870 to 1902 would have amounted to £2,600, so on the first transaction he was at a total loss of over £5,000.

In 1888 James Nugent had also advanced £2,000 to save the estate from being sold when the National Building Company, the mortgagees, went into liquidation. So, in addition to the loss of his charge, its interest, as well as the £2,000 and the interest on that amount, John Nugent was at a total loss of over £7,000. Meldon hoped to

¹⁸⁴ *Freeman's Journal*, 30 Apr 1902.

¹⁸⁵ Section 40 of the Land Act 1896 sets out the provisions where an order for the sale of an estate under the Landed Estates Court (Ireland) Act 1858 applied, and where either a receiver had been appointed over the estate or it where it could be sold without the consent of the owner as to price.

persuade the new mortgagees to allow an annuity of £100 to be paid to Charles Hugh and another £50 a year to James Nugent.¹⁸⁶ An indenture dated 11 March 1904 between John Nugent, son of James Nugent and Sir Charles Nugent disentailed Sir Charles' life interest from Lady Letitia Nugent's will thereby giving him control of the Ballinlough estate.¹⁸⁷ However, the financial situation of the estate would remain tenuous for many years as new mortgages were taken out and existing ones discharged in the decades after 1901. The financial turmoil experienced by the Nugent family was not unique among the aristocratic and landed families. It was symptomatic of the economic decline arising from the agricultural depression of the late 1870s which together with a decreasing income arising from the sale of estate lands meant that the Nugent family was unable to remain financially solvent. The situation was also exacerbated by the reckless behaviour of Sir Charles Nugent.

12. Sale of aristocratic estate lands, 1879-1902

In 1882 Lord Salisbury, leader of the British Conservative party, reflecting on the position of Irish landowners concluded that:

Nothing could be done to save the Irish landlords in the long run and that their only hope was to sell out on the best terms rather than run the risk of forcible appropriation at a later date at the hands of a more radical government.¹⁸⁸

Between 1881 and 1903 the British Government passed eight land acts which allowed for the possibility of tenant farmers, with the assistance of government funding, to purchase their landholdings, thereby triggering a massive transfer in land ownership in Ireland. In the period after the passing of the 1881 Land Act the average rent of a

¹⁸⁶ Letter from John Meldon to Sir Charles Nugent, 8 May 1902. (Nugent family papers, uncatalogued).

¹⁸⁷ Originating application to Irish Land Commission by Sir Charles Nugent, 1907 (Nugent family Papers, uncatalogued).

¹⁸⁸ David Cannadine, *The decline and fall of the British aristocracy* (London, 1990), p. 65.

tenant farmer decreased by 21 per cent.¹⁸⁹ In 1882 an amending act passed to deal with rent arrears saw 51,000 applications submitted in Ireland by 1 December 1882.¹⁹⁰ There were 438 applications for arrears to be written off submitted in respect of Westmeath aristocratic landlords. The arrears owed to the landlords amounted to £6,277 18s 10d. As the landlords were paid a total of £2,921 6s 10d, it left them with a deficit of £3,356 12s 0d (See table 6).

Table 6. Return of payments made to landlords by the Irish Land Commission.

Name	County	No of holdings in respect of which payment was made	Annual rental of holding			Amount of arrears extinguished by Land Commission			Amount paid to landlord by Land Commission		
			£	s	d	£	s	d	£	s	d
Sir John Ennis	Roscommon	1	7	17	3	18	5	6	7	17	3
	Westmeath	43	475	8	10	469	14	1	234	16	11
	Meath	3	32	5	10	46	8	1	23	4	0
		47	515	11	11	534	7	8	265	18	2
Lord Longford	Westmeath	42	486	15	8	434	5	3	215	17	7
	“	6	135	10	7	110	14	3	58	7	1
	Meath	1	12	10	0	6	5	0	3	2	6
	Longford	16	198	5	9	206	8	10	97	4	5
		65	833	2	0	757	13	4	374	11	7
Sir Richard Levinge	Westmeath	8	144	1	4	210	15	1	98	0	1
		8	144	1	4	210	15	1	98	0	1
Lord Greville	Westmeath	8	100	14	0	87	1	0	43	10	5
	“	18	151	3	11	128	8	7	64	4	3
	Roscommon	73	715	14	0	1,303	6	3	535	15	3
	Cork	1	4	4	0	4	4	0	2	2	0
	Cavan	1	37	17	10	56	16	9	28	8	4
	“	50	554	7	7	726	10	2	332	0	8
	Longford	7	130	19	0	180	14	11	90	7	4
		158	1,695	0	4	2,487	1	8	1,096	8	3
Sir Walter Nugent	Westmeath	9	65	7	2	58	16	7	29	8	3
	Longford	2	42	0	0	63	0	0	31	10	0
	Meath	12	152	10	5	118	8	9	59	4	0
		23	259	17	7	240	5	4	124	12	3
Lord Castlemaine	Westmeath	79	919	11	6	1,020	17	9	502	13	10
	Roscommon	14	178	1	11	288	5	3	137	5	1
		93	1,097	13	5	1,309	3	0	639	18	11
Sir Benjamin Chapman	Westmeath	24	308	14	10	217	1	0	108	0	2
	Mayo	1	6	4	1	6	4	1	3	2	0
	Meath	1	13	4	6	6	12	3	3	6	1
		26	328	3	5	229	17	4	114	8	3
Lady Letitia Nugent	Westmeath	16	234	15	9	362	5	10	133	18	0
	“	2	92	3	6	146	9	7	73	4	9
		18	326	19	3	508	15	5	207	2	9
Total		438	5,200	9	3	6,277	18	10	2,921	6	10

¹⁸⁹ Terence Dooley, *'The land for the people': The land question in independent Ireland* (Dublin, 2004), p. 9.

¹⁹⁰ *Westmeath Examiner*, 2 Dec. 1882.

Source: *Arrears of rent (Ireland) Act, 1882: Return of payments made to landlords by the Irish Land Commission, [C.4059] HC 1884, lxiv.97, 11-243.*

The sum of money received by the aristocratic landlords was £2,279 2s 5d less than the annual rental on the holdings. While all the landowners could ill afford to lose substantial income of this nature, it is apparent that the larger landlords, Lords Greville, Castlemaine and Longford suffered the biggest write-down in rents, while Sir Walter Nugent of Donore, Lady Letitia Nugent of Ballinlough and Sir Richard Levinge who had smaller estates were least affected.¹⁹¹

Algernon Greville, 2nd baronet, was ahead of his time in proposing that a tenant should be allowed to borrow the full amount of the purchase price of his holding, a provision that was subsequently included in the Purchase of Land (Ireland) Act, 1885. Further acts in 1887, 1888 and 1891 and 1896 made extra funding available for the purchase of land. Beginning with the Land Act of 1881 the pattern of land ownership in Westmeath underwent fundamental change. In the two decades to the end of 1902 approximately 9,635 acres changed hands for a total of £100,215. The aristocratic families in Westmeath had not sold any land under the 1870 land act and were initially slow to sell estate lands under the terms of the 1881 act (See Table 5). In 1881 Sir John James Ennis, 2nd Baronet (1842-1884) was the first member of the aristocracy in County Westmeath to dispose of estate land when he sold 209 acres in Meath for £4,100.¹⁹² However, between 1882 and 1888, for various reasons which will be outlined, there were no land sales conducted by the Westmeath aristocracy. Within five years of their father's death in 1883 Fulke Greville-Nugent's children began to dispose of their properties in Ireland. The first sale was in 1888 when Hon.

¹⁹¹ *Arrears of rent (Ireland) Act, 1882: Return of payments made to landlords by the Irish Land Commission, [C.4059] HC 1884, lxiv.97, 11-243.*

¹⁹² *Return of the number of purchases and sales of lands pursuant to part V of the land law (Ireland) Act, 1881, to the end of January 1882, [C.3122], HC 1882, lv, 4-5.*

George Greville, sold 1,671 acres in Roscommon for £13,741.¹⁹³ In 1891 he sold additional land to twenty-one tenants for which he received £1,518.¹⁹⁴ As George was the first member of the family to sell estate land it would indicate that the claims of indebtedness made by Fitzsimons had some merit.¹⁹⁵ Mildred, marquise de la Bedoyere, only daughter of Fulke Greville-Nugent, sold 125 acres in Westmeath in 1888 for £2,014.¹⁹⁶ In 1891 she sold a further 200 acres, also in Westmeath, for £3,000.¹⁹⁷ In July 1900 she disposed of 220 acres in County Longford for £2,079.¹⁹⁸ In 1901 she made two further sales, both in Longford. In January she sold sixty-six acres for £1,180,¹⁹⁹ and in July, thirty-one acres for £270.²⁰⁰ In 1892 Hon. Patrick Greville-Nugent received £21,399 for the sale of 66 holdings.²⁰¹ In 1901 he sold 607 acres in Westmeath for £9,601,²⁰² and in 1902 he sold 342 acres in Westmeath for £3,782.²⁰³ Algernon Greville, 2nd baronet had not sold any of his land following the contesting of his fathers will. However, in 1896 he sold 1,211 acres in Cavan for which he received £10,121.²⁰⁴ He continued disposing of his estate land and in 1897 he sold a further 103 acres in Cavan for £813.²⁰⁵ In 1901 he sold 306 acres in

¹⁹³ *Return giving the names of landowners the purchase of whose properties under the land purchase (Ireland) Act 1885 has been sanctioned by the Irish Land Commission, (81), HC 1889, lxi.865, 17.*

¹⁹⁴ *Irish Land Commission. Purchase of Land (Ireland) Acts, 1885, 1887, 1888. Report of the Irish Purchase Commissioners with respect to sales completed within the six months ending 31st December, 1892, [C.6785], HC 1892, xxvi.143, 6.*

¹⁹⁵ Hannah Fitzsimons, *The great Delvin* (Dublin, 1975), pp 106-7.

¹⁹⁶ *Return giving the names of landowners the purchase of whose properties under the land purchase (Ireland) Act 1885 has been sanctioned by the Irish Land Commission, (81), HC 1889, lxi.865, 15.*

¹⁹⁷ *Report of the Irish Land Purchase Commissioners with respect to sales completed within the six months ending 31st December 1891, [C.6785], HC 1892,xxvi.413, 5.*

¹⁹⁸ *Return of advances under the Purchase of Land (Ireland) Act 1891, (308), HC 1901, lxi.563,106-7.*

¹⁹⁹ *Ibid, 111.*

²⁰⁰ *Return of advances under the Purchase of Land (Ireland) Act 1891, (334), HC 1902,lxxxiv.929 ,92.*

²⁰¹ *Irish Land Commission. Purchase of Land (Ireland) Acts, 1885, 1887, 1888. Report of the Irish Purchase Commissioners with respect to sales completed within the six months ending 30th June, 1892, [C.6871], HC 1893-94, xxiv.109, 6; Irish Land Commission. Purchase of Land (Ireland) Acts, 1885, 1887, 1888. Report of the Irish Purchase Commissioners with respect to sales completed within the six months ending 31st December, 1892, [C.6925], HC 1893-94,xxiv.117, 6.*

²⁰² *Return of advances under the Purchase of Land (Ireland) Act 1891, (334), HC 1902,lxxxiv.929, 102-3.*

²⁰³ *Return of advances under the Purchase of Land (Ireland) Act 1891, (335), HC 1903, lvii.31 ,95-6.*

²⁰⁴ *Return of advances under the Purchase of Land (Ireland) Act 1891, (42), HC 1898,lxxiv.195, 11-3.*

²⁰⁵ *Ibid, 14.*

Roscommon under the 1891 land act for £1,314.²⁰⁶ In 1902 he sold 58 acres in Cavan for £502.²⁰⁷ While particulars of advance payments to George and Patrick Greville in the years 1891 and 1892 are outlined in the House of Commons Parliamentary papers, the land acreage in respect of these advances is not detailed. In estimating the price per acre paid in these transactions at £10 per acre it can be shown that an additional 2,300 acres approximately may have been disposed of in these sales. These sales reflected a pattern highlighted by Dooley where the initial sales had been of outlying estate land for the purpose of obtaining a quick capital injection.²⁰⁸

The Nugent family of Donore did not sell any part of their estate under the Land Act of 1881. There had been a legal delay when the assignees came into possession of the estate as they did not have previous knowledge of the title and some of the deeds were missing. In 1897 the examiner ordered that the rentals be divided in two types, the first under section 40 of the 1896 Land Act, and the second into town lots and fee farm rents.²⁰⁹ The examiner then wrote to all the tenants, a number of whom were middlemen, for their leases, but many leases could not be found. Other disputes with and between tenants over turbary rights delayed matters. Furthermore, as the estate was owned by a bankrupt it caused additional delays in finalising affairs.²¹⁰ The legal position regarding the sale of land to the estate tenants was finally clarified by the land courts in December 1901 which meant that the sale of estate land by the assignees of Sir Walter Nugent, 4th baronet, could proceed.

²⁰⁶ *Return of advances under the Purchase of Land (Ireland) Act 1891, (334), HC 1902,lxxxiv.929, 238; Return of advances under the Purchase of Land (Ireland) Act 1891, (308), HC 1901, lxi.563, 227.*

²⁰⁷ *Return of advances under the Purchase of Land (Ireland) Act 1891, (335), HC 1903,lvii.31, 20, 22.*

²⁰⁸ Dooley, *The decline of the big house in Ireland*, p. 105.

²⁰⁹ Fee farm rent was the annual rent payable in respect of freehold land. Fee farm was a type of land tenure where land was held by another person in perpetuity at a yearly rent.

²¹⁰ *Westmeath Examiner*, 14 Dec. 1901. Note: A turbary right on a particular bog allowed the holder to cut and carry away turf from that bog.

As the Nugents of Ballinlough had already sold two large sections of their estate in 1871 and 1895 due to financial difficulties, all that remained of the original estate were the lands in the vicinity of Ballinlough Castle. In the period prior to 1903 no additional sales were conducted. Sir Charles' status as an undischarged bankrupt may have been a factor, as he did not have control of estate matters which were in the hands of a receiver.

The Pakenham family of Tullynally who were the largest and wealthiest landowners in County Westmeath were under no financial pressure to sell any of their estate lands. Sir Thomas, 5th earl of Longford had made only one sale during this period, in 1888, when he sold thirty-one acres in County Longford under the 1885 Land Act for which he had received £900.²¹¹ But matters would change drastically in the following years as new legislation containing financial incentives would persuade many landlords, including Sir Thomas, that it was an opportune time to sell to their tenants.

Table 7. Sale of estate land by Westmeath aristocrats, 1879-1902.

Name	Year Sold	Where Sold (County)	Amount Sold (Acres)	Amount Received (£)
Sir John Ennis 2 nd baronet	1881	Meath	209	4,100
			209	4,100
Hon. George Greville	1888	Roscommon	1,671	13,741
	1891	Roscommon	185 (est.)	1,518
			1,856	15,259
Algernon Greville 2 nd baronet	1896	Cavan	1,211	10,121
	1897	Cavan	103	813
	1901	Roscommon	306	1,314
	1902	Cavan	58	502
			1,678	12,750
Mildred de la Bedoyere (nee Greville)	1888	Westmeath	125	2,014
	1891	Westmeath	200	3,000
	1900	Longford	220	2,079
	1901	Longford	66	1,180
	1901	Longford	31	270
			642	8,543
Hon. Patrick Greville-Nugent	1892	(Not stated)	1,646 (est.)	21,399
	1901	Westmeath	607	9,601
	1902	Westmeath	342	3,782

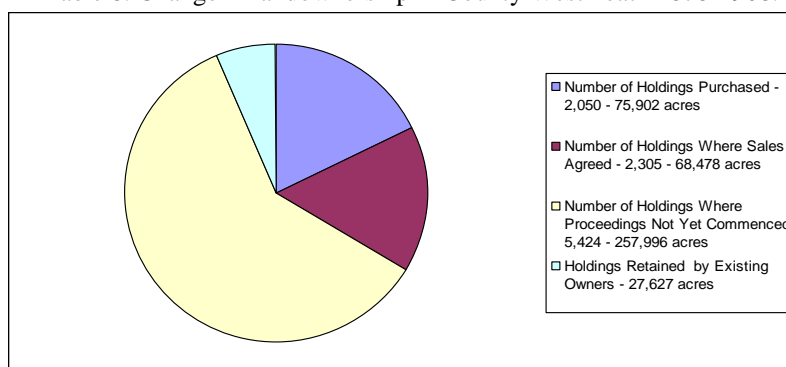
²¹¹ Return giving the names of landowners the purchase of whose properties under the land Purchase (Ireland) Act 1885 has been sanctioned by the Irish Land Commission, (81), HC 1889, lxi,865, 13.

			2,595	34,782
Assignees of Sir Charles Nugent	1895/6 (Private sale)	Westmeath	1,867 1,867	12,500 12,500
Sir Thomas Pakenham (5 th earl)	1888	Longford	88 88	900 900
Sir William Levinge 9 th baronet	1892	Westmeath	700 (est.) 700	11,381 11,381
Total			9,635	100,215

Return of the number of purchases and sales of lands pursuant to part V of the Land Law (Ireland) Act, 1881; Return of advances under the Purchase of Land (Ireland) Act 1891. John Bateman, Great landowners of Great Britain and Ireland (London, 1883).

Between 1878 and November 1908 a total of 2,050 holdings amounting to 75,902 acres had been purchased in County Westmeath for £1,042,094. Sales had been agreed in respect of an additional 2,305 holdings of 68,478 acres for a further £1,037,776. This left 5,424 holdings of 257,996 acres with an estimated purchase price of £4,218,847 where proceedings had not yet commenced.²¹² The total amount of land earmarked for transfer in Westmeath was 9,779 land holdings totalling 402,376 acres with a total purchase price of £6,298,717.²¹³ Therefore, from a total of 430,003 acres that made up County Westmeath, only 27,627 acres would be retained by its existing owners. Whilst a sizable amount of land had, or was about to change hands, there remained over a quarter of a million acres of land in the county that had yet to be prepared for sale (see Table 8).

Table 8. Change in landownership in County Westmeath 1878-1908.



Sources: U.H. Hussey De Burgh, *The Landowners of Ireland, owners of estates of 500 acres or £500 valuation and upwards in Ireland (Dublin, 1878)*; *Westmeath Examiner*, 26 December 1908.

²¹² *Westmeath Examiner*, 26 Dec. 1908

²¹³ *Ibid*, 26 Dec. 1908.

Not all the aristocratic landowners in Westmeath were willing to sell estate land. Sir William Levinge, 9th baronet, made only one sale in 1892 for which he received £11,381.²¹⁴ The amount obtained suggests that he sold in the region of 700 acres. Sir Montagu Chapman, (1853-1907), 5th baronet and his wife Lady Caroline declined to sell any estate land, as did Lord Castlemaine.

Between 1888 and 1903 the majority of aristocratic sales were made by members of the Greville family who appeared anxious to liquidate their inheritance in the aftermath of their father's death in 1883. Land was sold by family members in various counties in seven separate years between 1888 and 1902. This was in contrast to the Pakenham, Levinge families and Nugents of Ballinlough who each made only one sale, and the Chapman, Castlemaine and Nugents of Donore who made none at all. In deciding whether or not to sell estate land each family had a number of factors to take into consideration, the main factor being economic. The Chapmans, Pakenhams, Castlemaines and Levinges were financially solvent and under no pressure to sell, while the Greville-Nugents and Nugents of Ballinlough had to sell in order to alleviate pressing financial difficulties. The Nugents of Donore were also in economic turmoil but as their estate was being managed by a receiver the question of land sale was out of their control.

13. Conclusion

In the decades following the Great Famine the economy in Westmeath had shown steady improvement which had benefited the aristocratic landowners and their tenants. This had occurred despite a high level of agrarian related strife. The disorder had arisen from the changes in agricultural practices, which, in particular, had a

²¹⁴ *Irish Land Commission. Purchase of Land (Ireland) Acts, 1885, 1887, 1888. Report of the Irish Purchase Commissioners with respect to sales completed within the six months ending 31st December, 1892, [C.6925], HC 1893-94, xxiv.117, 6.*

detrimental effect on the labouring classes. The impact of the severe economic depression of the late 1870s on the agricultural economy led to the outbreak of the Land War in County Westmeath. The campaign by the Land League for agrarian reform, and the demand for reductions in rents, in opposition to landowners whose own financially encumbered position prevented agreement, caused increased levels of evictions, and an upsurge in agrarian related crime.

In response to the disturbed state of Ireland the government enacted the groundbreaking Land (Law) Ireland Act of 1881, in which the principal demands of the Land League were enshrined in law. The act established the Irish Land Commission and land courts to judicially fix rents and provided improved terms for tenants to purchase their holdings. The increased indebtedness of aristocratic landlords as exemplified by the case of the Nugent family of Ballinlough Castle forced some aristocratic families, who up to that point had not sold any land, to dispose of portions of their estates. By the end of December 1902 the aristocratic families in Westmeath had sold very little land considering the size of their estates and they remained for the most part substantial landowners. However, the passing of the Wyndham Land Act in August 1903 changed the attitude of many Irish landowners and accelerated the sale of land by the Westmeath aristocracy, who were encouraged by the incentives contained in the act. The transformation in land ownership in County Westmeath that occurred in the wake of the Irish land Act, 1903 will be examined in a later chapter of this thesis. The severe economic depression experienced by the aristocratic families during the extended Land War had a detrimental effect on their financial circumstances. It was a fiscal decline from which they were never able to recover, and which would put at risk their survival as a class in Westmeath.

Chapter 3

The Westmeath Aristocracy and Politics, 1870-1903

1. Introduction

The involvement of the aristocracy in politics was important in preserving their status as members of the highest class in society. Aristocratic participation in local and national politics as members of the grand jury and as members of the House of Commons and House of Lords placed them at the heart of the political process. It allowed them to influence political decisions, and to protect their interests at the local and national level. It also ensured that no legislation could be enacted, or action taken, that could adversely affect their position without their knowledge or approval.

In 1870 the aristocratic families of Westmeath dominated local politics and occupied every major judicial and administrative position in the county. This chapter will chart the decline of the Westmeath aristocracy's political power, both in County Westmeath and at Westminster, between 1870 and 1903, by addressing a number of fundamental questions. What defined political power and how was political power exercised by the aristocracy in Westmeath? What was extent of political corruption? That corrupt practices were used to gain and maintain a hold on power by corruption will be illustrated by a case study of the Ennis family. In addition, this chapter will consider the implications for the aristocracy in Westmeath of political reforms enacted by the British Government. What, for instance, were the political consequences for the aristocratic landowners and their tenants in Westmeath of the Land Law (Ireland) Act 1881? The enactment of the Secret Ballot Act, 1872, the Representation of the People Act, 1884, and the Redistribution of Seats Act, 1885 saw aristocratic politicians struggle to keep hold of political power at national level and

brought about the end of their representation in the House of Commons. But what happened at the local level? What was the result of the changes to the system of local government in Ireland with the establishment of county councils in 1898? And what were the ramifications for the aristocracy in Westmeath?

The most important political issue during the period from 1870 to 1903 was the question of Home Rule for Ireland. The origins of the campaign for Home Rule in Ireland and the involvement of aristocratic politicians in the defeat of the Home Rule Bills of 1886 and 1893 will be investigated, as also will the broader context of aristocratic political involvement. As loyal supporters of the union between Great Britain and Ireland, how did the issue of taxation and financial relations between Britain and Ireland, and the perception that Ireland was overtaxed, divide the aristocracy in Westmeath? And how did the royal visit to Westmeath in 1897, and the outbreak of the Boer War allow the aristocracy to affirm their loyalty to the crown? Between 1870 and 1903 the political power of the aristocracy declined significantly. Addressing these questions will attest to this progression, which was a key factor in their overall decline as a class.

2. Political Power

The maintenance and exercise of political power was of foremost importance to the aristocracy of County Westmeath. The aristocratic families had been involved in politics for generations with members having served in both the House of Commons and House of Lords. This placed them at the centre of political power and party to all major decisions that affected the Empire. In addition to being substantial landowners, the power and status that came with holding an aristocratic title placed these families at the highest level of society in Ireland. Furthermore, members of the aristocracy in

Westmeath had occupied the administrative and judicial positions of lord lieutenant, deputy lieutenant, and high sheriff, as well as sitting on the grand jury. This ensured that the local aristocratic families controlled all aspects of political authority within the county.

The two issues that dominated political discourse during the period from 1870 to 1903 were agrarian reform, and the question of Home Rule for Ireland. The idea of self-government was suggested as early as 1 September 1870 at a public meeting of the Home Government Association where Isaac Butt, a Dublin Protestant lawyer, produced a blueprint for an Irish parliament with the queen as head of state. Butt proposed a House of Lords composed of resident Irish peers, augmented by an unspecified number of life peers, and a House of Commons of 250-300 elected members.¹ O'Day states that while the proposal received some support it aroused no more than modest interest.² This was borne out at three by-elections held in 1870 where Home Rule advocates were unsuccessful. However, matters improved in 1871 and 1872 when seven candidates were elected and only two rejected at the polls.³ These electoral successes led in November 1873 to the creation of the Home Rule League with Isaac Butt as leader.

The 1874 general election was a watershed for the aristocratic politicians of Westmeath, all of whom lost their seats, and its implications will be analysed later in this chapter. The election also saw the virtual collapse of the Liberal party in Ireland with the loss of fifty-five seats out of sixty-six previously held, and while the Conservatives suffered some reversals, they still held onto thirty-three seats. The big

¹ Alan O'Day, *Irish Home Rule 1867-1921* (Manchester, 1998), p. 30.

² *Ibid.*, p. 31.

³ Brian M. Walker (ed.) *Parliamentary election results in Ireland, 1801-1922* (Dublin, 1978), pp 113-4. See also Alan O'Day, *Irish Home Rule 1867-1921* (Manchester, 1998), p. 31.

winner in the election was the Home Rule League who finished with sixty seats.⁴ The election result changed the political landscape of Ireland and brought the issue of Home Rule to the top of the political agenda. On 30 June 1874 Isaac Butt introduced a Home Rule motion in the House of Commons, which after a two-day debate was rejected, as expected, by 458 votes to 61.⁵ However, the die had been cast, and the question of Irish Home Rule would remain an issue that would simmer beneath the political surface, returning to the apex of political debate on two further occasions in the period leading up to 1903.

3. Tenant Rights

Fulke Greville-Nugent (later 1st Baron Greville of Clonyn), was under no constraints when it came to the subject of tenant rights, unlike Isaac Butt, who Comerford states had to sing dumb on the issue so as not to give offence to landlords and activists.⁶ In July 1852, Greville-Nugent, a magistrate for counties Cavan, Longford, Monaghan, Roscommon and Hertfordshire, was elected Liberal party MP for County Longford, topping the poll with 1,066 votes out of a total 2,321.⁷ Greville-Nugent's major election issue was that of tenant rights and it was a subject that he would return to many times during his political career. In 1853 Greville-Nugent, a follower of Gladstone, was more outspoken than most landlords in articulating his sympathy for the harsh conditions being endured by Irish tenant farmers. He expressed these concerns when he wrote in 1853:

It remains to be seen whether the principle of compensation for improvements made by tenants in Ireland recognised by the late government, though at all

⁴ R. V. Comerford, 'The Home Rule party 1870-77', in W. E. Vaughan (ed.) *A new history of Ireland*, vi (Oxford, 1996), p. 13.

⁵ David Thornley, *Isaac Butt and Home Rule* (London, 1964), p. 233.

⁶ R. V. Comerford, 'The Home Rule party 1870-77', in W. E. Vaughan (ed.) *A new history of Ireland*, vi (Oxford, 1996), p. 15.

⁷ Walker (ed.) *Parliamentary election results in Ireland, 1801-1922*, p. 84.

times obstinately refused by the Whigs, will receive the sanction of the legislature.⁸

He outlined his intentions concerning his future role in the House of Commons when he stated: ‘we were returned to Parliament to obtain a measure of justice, too long denied, for the Irish tenant farmer, and to oppose all measures restricting any class of Her Majesty’s subjects in the free exercise of their religion’.⁹ At this time a tenant who rented a land holding from a landlord enjoyed very few rights. Vaughan states that before the land act of 1870 ejectment procedures were simple and swift and while they varied slightly depending on the size of the holding all were comparable in certain respects to the procedure used to eject yearly tenants who could be evicted if their rents fell into one year’s arrears or after the expiry of six months notice to quit.¹⁰ The tenant, if evicted, was not entitled to any compensation from the landlord for improvements made by him to the holding, such as the cost expended in land drainage or erection of farm buildings. The tenant had no recourse if the landlord decided to increase the rent and if the tenant wished to quit the holding he could not sell the tenancy without the approval of the landlord.¹¹

In 1858 Fulke Greville-Nugent again articulated his views on the lack of rights held by Irish tenant farmers when he wrote: ‘in this country it is no uncommon thing for a tenant to be evicted for voting contrary to the orders of his landlord’.¹² He continued: ‘No sooner do they incur his high displeasure than they are liable to be turned adrift upon the world without one farthing of compensation. The law says ‘all

⁸ *The Times*, 17 Jan. 1853.

⁹ *Ibid*, 17 Jan. 1853.

¹⁰ Vaughan, *Landlords and tenants in mid-Victorian Ireland*, pp 21-2

¹¹ For detailed examination of tenant right’s, see W. E. Vaughan, *Landlords and tenants in mid-Victorian Ireland* (Oxford, 1994), pp 67-102, Moritz Bonn, *Modern Ireland and her agrarian problem* (Dublin, 1906), pp 66-91, and H. D. Gribbon, ‘Economic and social history 1850-1921, in W.E. Vaughan (ed.) *A new history of Ireland, iv* (Oxford, 1989), pp 268-270.

¹² *The Times*, 23 Dec. 1858.

belongs to the Landlord'.¹³ Greville-Nugent recognised the need for land reform in Ireland. In a letter to *The Times* in December 1858 he stated:

If the tenant has made no improvements he will be unable to recover anything. If he has made improvements the landlord will have value of what he pays. But in no case is it proposed that the claim for compensation shall arise except in the event of eviction by the landlord.¹⁴

In 1865 he again returned to the topic of land reform, tenant rights and evictions. He wrote that 'No one can be more opposed than I am to an unrestricted power of eviction, the exercise of which has brought so many calamities upon the country, and which I would endeavour to restrain by all legitimate means'.¹⁵ Greville-Nugent's views on tenant rights received greater backing from landlords who were members of the Liberal party than from those who supported the Conservative opposition.

As a loyal member of the Liberal Party Fulke Greville-Nugent was elevated to peerage and given a seat in the House of Lords by Prime Minister Gladstone on 15 December 1869 as Baron Greville of Clonyn and his advancement caused a by-election for the vacant County Longford seat. The expense involved in contesting parliamentary elections meant that only those persons of substantial means could afford to put themselves before the electorate. Furthermore, it was necessary to have an alternative source of income, as members of Parliament did not receive a salary from the state. To say that the election was a vicious and violent contest is an understatement. Fulke Greville-Nugent wished to hand over the seat to his fourth son, Reginald, a former captain in the Coldstream Guards. Reginald (22), a member of the Church of England was the Liberal Party candidate and had the support of the Roman Catholic clergy, who practically ran his campaign. He was opposed by John Martin (57) an Irish Presbyterian nationalist who had the support of many leading Fenians. In

¹³ *The Times*, 23 Dec. 1858.

¹⁴ *Ibid*, 23 Dec. 1858.

¹⁵ *Ibid*, 3 Apr. 1865.

a hard fought campaign where election meetings were regularly disrupted Reginald was described in the Nationalist *Nation* newspaper as:

A brainless boy, a beardless diminutive creature, who would be more at home in the playground spinning tops or playing marbles, than in a political assembly where important subjects are debated and the affairs of nations are at stake.¹⁶

Polling day was fixed for 31 December 1869 and as the election was held prior to the enactment of the Secret Ballot Act in 1872, voting was conducted openly. The person in charge of the vote was the high sheriff for the county, Philip O'Reilly, a minor landowner, who just happened to be Fulke Greville-Nugent's land agent, and while the polling towns of Longford and Ballymahon were relatively quiet, the same could not be said of Granard where the main street resembled a battlefield. Most of the windows in the town were smashed as mobs, several thousand strong and mainly comprised of persons from outside the county, battled each other.¹⁷ One publican's yard contained 300 people who were in such a state of intoxication as to be incapable of rioting.¹⁸ In Granard two troops of Scots Greys, two companies of the 40th Regiment along with 150 RIC men attempted to keep order.¹⁹ The result saw Greville-Nugent victorious by 1,578 votes to Martin's 411.²⁰ Greville-Nugent's election expenses amounted to £4,825, a small fortune, most of which was funnelled through the Catholic clergy and Fr. James Reynolds of Longford, in particular.²¹ Fulke Greville's effort was ultimately in vain as the election result was overturned by parliament two months later on the grounds of bribery, coercion, violence and

¹⁶ *Nation*, 26 Dec. 1869.

¹⁷ *Freeman's Journal*, 5 Jan. 1870. This report includes a detailed account of the violence that occurred in Granard.

¹⁸ K. Theodore Hoppen, *Elections, politics, and society in Ireland 1832-1885* (Oxford, 1984), p. 430.

¹⁹ *Freeman's Journal*, 5 Jan. 1870.

²⁰ Walker (ed.) *Parliamentary election results in Ireland, 1801-1922*, p. 113.

²¹ *Longford Election. Copy of the shorthand writer's notes for the judgement delivered by Mr. Justice Fitzgerald, and of the minutes of the evidence taken at the trial of the Longford election petition (178) HC 1870, lvi.283, 139-49.*

intimidation and Reginald was forced to vacate the seat by order of Mr Justice Fitzgerald.²² However, at the election re-run in May 1870 his older brother George, successfully took the seat and held it until February 1874.²³ In May 1871 Fulke Greville's father-in-law, the marquis of Westmeath, died at the age of eighty-five. Greville-Nugent and his wife inherited almost 10,000 acres in counties Roscommon, Cavan and Westmeath as a consequence. He also succeeded his father-in-law as lord lieutenant of Westmeath, a post he held until his death in 1883, when he was succeeded by Sir Benjamin Chapman, 4th baronet.²⁴

In 1870 Gladstone's first land act was passed into law. Lord Greville was vindicated by a number of provisions contained in the act concerning the right of a tenant, on giving up his holding, to compensation in respect of improvements made to it and if evicted to be properly compensated by the landlord for disturbance, provided he was not in arrears. The act also made provision for the purchase of land by the tenant who could borrow two thirds of the price repayable over thirty-five years at £5 per year for every £100 borrowed.²⁵ Fulke Greville had estates in both England and Ireland and was familiar with the methods employed by landlords in both countries. He participated in the debate over land reform identifying major differences on a practical level between England and Ireland stating:

In England the landlord invariably provides the dwelling-house, stables, barn, cow-sheds, and other necessary offices besides gates &c., on the farm, and the occupier has merely to provide what is necessary to till the land, to sow and reap and gather in his crops; whereas in Ireland as a general rule, the landlord provides only the land, and the tenant has to erect everything he requires. The same law prevails in both countries, but see how differently it operates. The English landlord gives his tenant six months notice to quit, he gets back his land with all the buildings he has erected. The Irish landlord gives his tenant

²² *Longford Election. Copy of the shorthand writer's notes for the judgement delivered by Mr. Justice Fitzgerald, and of the minutes of the evidence taken at the trial of the Longford election petition (178) HC 1870, lvi.283, iii-iv.*

²³ Walker (ed.) *Parliamentary election results in Ireland, 1801-1922*, p. 113

²⁴ *Irish Times*, 31 Mar. 1883.

²⁵ Vaughan, *Landlords and tenants in mid-Victorian Ireland*, pp 94-101.

six months to quit and gets back his land with all the buildings which the tenant has erected, no matter how valuable, without the tenant having the power to claim one sixpence.²⁶

Greville-Nugent concluded his remarks by saying: ‘when the law extends the same security to the property of the tenant that is enjoyed by the landlord in respect of his property, then, and not till then, shall we find the people pay a cheerful obedience to the law’.²⁷ Lord Greville was a shrewd political operator, who understood the importance of maintaining close ties to the Roman Catholic clergy. In 1872 he cemented these ties by donating a prominent site in the village of Delvin for construction of a new Catholic church. He also made a large donation of £500 towards the building costs.²⁸ Between 1870 and 1874, in addition to being a member of the House of Lords, Lord Greville had two sons in the House of Commons. George, elected in the Longford re-run of 1870, and Algernon, his eldest son, elected MP for Westmeath in 1865. As wife of the local MP, Violet Greville became aware soon after her marriage to Algernon in 1863 of the importance of having good relations with the local Catholic clergy if her husband was to continue enjoying electoral success. She explained the importance of these visits: ‘My husband represented the county in Parliament and our first visits were naturally to the priests, who were immensely important as constituents’.²⁹

Algernon Greville was appointed to a number of positions in the Liberal government of W. E. Gladstone when he was prime minister. He served as groom-in-waiting to Queen Victoria from 1868 to 1873, was private secretary to Gladstone from 1872 to 1873, and was Lord of the Treasury from 1873 to 1874. However, in the general election of 1874 he lost his seat in parliament, when both seats in Westmeath

²⁶ *The Times*, 7 Sept. 1869.

²⁷ *Ibid*, 7 Sept. 1869.

²⁸ Fitzsimons, *The great Delvin*, p. 104.

²⁹ Lady Violet Greville, *Vignettes of memory* (London, 1927), pp 82-3.

were taken by Patrick Smyth and Lord Robert Montagu of the Home Rule League.³⁰ In 1878, in an attempt to return to the House of Commons, Algernon contested a by-election for the Perthshire seat in Scotland caused by the death of Sir William Sterling-Maxwell. However, he was defeated by a margin of one hundred and eighty-four votes by the Conservative candidate, Colonel Henry Drummond-Moray.³¹ Algernon's decision to contest the election was probably influenced by the fact that his wife Violet was a daughter of a prominent Scottish aristocrat and politician James Graham, 4th duke of Montrose, as well as the family being originally from the adjoining county of Stirlingshire. Algernon eventually returned to national politics in 1883 as a member of the House of Lords, following the death of his father.

4. Political Reform

While eight land acts were introduced in Ireland in the period from 1870 to 1902, as discussed in chapter 2, in an effort to avert agrarian agitation and deal with inequalities in a clearly unjust system, political reform was a more gradual process. However, a number of measures were introduced in the period from 1870 in recognition of the political ambitions of an emerging and more educated Catholic middle-class. According to Hoppen 'a growing realisation in the 1870s that the political power of the landed class was receding in the face of an increasingly strong and coherent farmer electorate induced both pessimism and a closing of ranks'.³² The enactment of the Secret Ballot Act in 1872, which ensured a secret ballot in all future elections, was a crucial political reform in that it reduced the power of landlords to influence the outcome of elections by intimidation of voters. However, bribing of voters, which will be examined later in this chapter, was far more difficult to

³⁰ Walker (ed.) *Parliamentary election results in Ireland, 1801-1922*, p. 119.

³¹ *Belfast Newsletter*, 15 Jan. 1880.

³² Hoppen, *Elections, politics, and society in Ireland 1832-1885*, p. 168.

suppress. Twelve years passed between the enactment of the Secret Ballot Act in 1872 and the passing of the Representation of the People Act in 1884. This act resulted in the increase of the Irish electorate from 222,018 to 737,965.³³ The number of persons eligible to vote in Westmeath was 11,197.³⁴

The increased number of persons entitled to vote changed the demographic balance as the majority of new voters were Roman Catholics, who in future elections would support Nationalist candidates, to the detriment of Protestant landed gentry contenders, many of whom were voted out of office. This new reality was apparent in County Westmeath, which now had an overwhelming Catholic electorate thereby ending the likelihood of a Protestant Unionist aristocrat being successful at any future parliamentary election. The continuing upward progression of the Catholic middle class was beginning to worry Southern Unionists. On 13 June 1884, in a speech to the House of Lords, Lord Longford expressed some concern over the appointment of Dr. Gleeson, a Catholic, from Glasson, as a magistrate for Westmeath. He incorrectly claimed that the appointment had been made on the recommendation of Dr. Bartholomew Woodlock, the Roman Catholic Bishop of Ardagh. In actual fact Dr. Gleeson's appointment had been approved by Sir Benjamin Chapman, lord lieutenant for Westmeath.³⁵ In 1884 the religious imbalance in the magistracy in counties Longford and Westmeath was clearly evident. Of sixty-six magistrates in Longford, fifty-two were Protestant while only fourteen were Catholic. Thirty-six were landlords, five were land agents, seven were military officers, while only two were

³³ O'Day, *Irish Home Rule 1867-1921*, p. 93.

³⁴ *Return, showing in each County and County of a City in Ireland, having a separate Assize, the number of Special and Common Jurors, the Qualification in each County, and also the Number of Parliamentary Electors in the same Areas, (153), H C 1887, lxvii.395, 3.*

³⁵ *Freeman's Journal*, 14 Jun. 1884.

farmers. In Westmeath there were 116 magistrates, ninety-one of whom were Protestant with twenty-five Roman Catholic.³⁶

On 25 June 1885 the Redistribution of Seats Act was passed into law. This resulted in the division of Westmeath into two constituencies, north and south Westmeath, each of which returned one member to the House of Commons. As a consequence the borough of Athlone which had previously returned one member to Parliament was abolished.³⁷ As with changes in the area of land reform, political changes only came following many heated debates and protests by the aristocratic members of parliament. While most members of parliament were in favour of some political reform in Ireland, the nature and extent of the proposed reforms caused major disagreements between the Conservatives and Liberal Unionists who favoured changes to the system of local government in Ireland, and the Liberals who supported the introduction of Irish Home Rule.³⁸

5. Political Corruption

Corruption was not a new phenomenon in Irish politics, it had been adopted and utilised in its various forms for many decades. Therefore, its use by members of the Westmeath aristocracy for political gain is hardly surprising. The most glaring example of political corruption by the aristocracy in the county was perpetrated by Sir John Ennis, 1st baronet, and later by his son John James, 2nd baronet. Prior to his elevation to the peerage in 1866 John Ennis (1809-1878) sat in the House of Commons as the Liberal MP for Athlone from 1857 to 1865. Ennis, an ambitious

³⁶ *Freeman's Journal*, 14 Jun. 1884.

³⁷ *Redistribution of Seats Act, 1885 (contents of county divisions). Return showing, with respect to the several counties of England, Scotland, and Ireland, divided by " the Redistribution of Seats Act, 1885," the contents of each division as constituted by that act, with the population in each case; the return to be published separately for each county, and to be accompanied by a map showing the boundaries of each division [258] H C 1884-85, lxiii.1, 735-42.*

³⁸ O'Day, *Irish Home Rule 1867-1921*, p. 124.

man, had been actively seeking a peerage for almost a decade. Between 1857 and 1859 in return for being made a baronet he had undertaken to supply three votes, those of himself, his son-in-law Daniel O'Donoghue and John Lanigan, in support of Prime Minister Disraeli's government on critical divisions. Disraeli decided not to give him the honour until he felt Ennis had earned it.³⁹ The appointment was subsequently made by Prime Minister Lord John Russell and upon his death in 1878 John Ennis was succeeded by his son, John James, as 2nd baronet.

John James Ennis and his father were not well regarded by the general populace of Athlone and were considered harsh landlords. John James Ennis was first elected to the House of Commons in 1868 and sat until 1874 when he was defeated by Edward Sheil, of the Home Rule League. Allegations of corruption on the part of Sir John Ennis and his son, John James, quickly followed and it soon became apparent that Ennis and his father were not adverse to bribery when it came to attempting to maintain their hold on political office. Members of the Roman Catholic hierarchy were clearly disgusted by their conduct as detailed in a letter of 6 February 1874 from Bishop Laurence Gilooley of Elphin to Archbishop Paul Cullen of Dublin which claimed that:

John Ennis and his father had been for years notoriously engaged, directly and thro' agents in corrupting the electors by loans of money, which after the young Ennis's election were to be instantly converted into gifts. Over a hundred electors were universally believed to be bound in this way.⁴⁰

The scheme was exposed in 1874 when an agent acting on behalf of John Ennis initiated court proceedings in an attempt to secure re-payment of loans following the

³⁹ M. G. Wiebe, Mary S. Millar, Ann P. Robson, Ellen L. Hawman (eds) *Benjamin Disraeli letters: 1857-1859, vii* (Toronto, 2004), p. 377.

⁴⁰ Hoppen, *Elections, politics, and society in Ireland 1832-1885*, p. 63 & 449. Edward Sheil (1851-1915) was a son of General Sir Justin Sheil. He was educated at Christ Church College, Oxford. He sat as MP for Meath from 1882 to 1885 and for South Meath from 1885 to 1892. See Robert Henry Mair (ed.) *Debrett's House of Commons* (London, 1886), p. 137.

failure of his son, John James Ennis, to secure re-election.⁴¹ At the conclusion of evidence the chairman of the tribunal in his charge to the jury stated that:

Athlone for the last forty years enjoyed an unenviable reputation as being the very centre of corruption. The present case, whatever the result, showed that corruption prevailed to as large an extent as ever.⁴²

The jury after a short deliberation found against Ennis. The newspaper report of proceedings concluded with a comment that ‘The verdict gave satisfaction to the people of the town’.⁴³ The election campaign of 1880 saw Sir John James Ennis attempt to regain the seat that he had lost to Edward Sheil in 1874. On 23 March at a public meeting in Athlone in support of Sheil, Charles Stewart Parnell described Ennis as ‘a miserable West British Whig’, and advised any electors who were looking for payment for their votes to get it from Ennis in advance. Another speaker T. P. O’Connor MP, referring to Sir John Ennis stated that ‘however respectable they might be, either father or son, they were both political humbugs’.⁴⁴ On the day of the vote an article in the *Nation* newspaper came down heavily in favour of Sheil:

The candidates are Mr. Sheil and Sir John Ennis. The former gentleman has hitherto been true to the trust reposed in him, and has received the highest testimony to his worth from more than one of the leaders of the patriot party; the latter is a worthless Whig.⁴⁵

However, despite the support of the nationalist print media, the seat was retaken by Sir John Ennis, standing for the Liberal party, who secured victory by a margin of one vote. The result was immediately petitioned by Edward Shiel, who alleged that there had been personation of dead and absent voters, the engagement of electors as paid

⁴¹ Jim Lenehan, *Politics and society in Athlone 1830-1885* (Dublin, 1999), pp 39-46.

⁴² *Freeman’s Journal*, 25 Oct. 1874.

⁴³ *Ibid*, 25 Oct. 1874. For reports on court proceedings, see *Freeman’s Journal*, 25 June 1874 and 1 Jul. 1874.

⁴⁴ *The Times*, 25 Mar. 1880. Note: according to the Oxford dictionary ‘Humbug’ means dishonest talk, writing or behaviour that is intended to deceive people.

⁴⁵ *Nation*, 3 Apr. 1880.

agents, as well as undue influence, intimidation and bribery by Sir John Ennis and his agents.⁴⁶ The petition failed to overturn the result with the judge in the case, Baron Fitzgerald, ruling against Sheil on every point, and declaring Ennis duly elected.⁴⁷

It is apparent that Ennis was a difficult individual as well as being a maverick politician who did not feel answerable to his electorate, voting on more than one occasion against the Liberal government on issues relating to Ireland. In May 1881 Ennis was the only Liberal MP that voted against the proposed Land Law (Ireland) Bill, 1881, much to the surprise of his fellow party MPs,⁴⁸ who soon realised that his vote could not be counted upon.⁴⁹ Such was the fallout from his action that a public meeting was held at Athlone on 2 September 1881 for the purpose of denouncing his parliamentary conduct in voting for a coercion bill, and against the land bill. The meeting passed two resolutions which stated ‘That we condemn the Parliamentary conduct of Sir John Ennis in voting for coercion and against the Land Bill’, and secondly:

That we call upon Sir John Ennis, believing him to be an honourable man, who would not retain the representation of the borough against the will of the majority of the electors, to resign it into the hands of the constituency’.⁵⁰

The pleas of the meeting fell on deaf ears as Sir John did not give up the seat. However, his difficulties were not over. On 22 April 1882 he was compelled to write to the editor of the *Irish Times* to refute rumours that he had failed to collect rents from his tenants, that his estates were for sale, and that he intended to retire as MP for Athlone.⁵¹ In July 1882 he was one of a large number of Liberal MPs who failed to vote in support of a government motion introducing a subsection into the Prevention

⁴⁶ *Irish Examiner*, 27 Apr. 1880.

⁴⁷ *The Times*, 1 Jun. 1880.

⁴⁸ *Irish Examiner*, 21 May 1881.

⁴⁹ *Nenagh Guardian*, 3 Sept. 1881.

⁵⁰ *Nation*, 3 Sept. 1881.

⁵¹ *Irish Times*, 25 Apr. 1882.

of Crime (Ireland) Bill, which was defeated as a result.⁵² In November 1882 Ennis repeated his action of the previous year in voting against the Liberal government on the introduction of specific new procedures for the conduct of business in the House of Commons.⁵³ Sir John Ennis sat in the House of Commons until his death on 28 May 1884, at the age of forty-two.⁵⁴ His passing elicited a wry comment in the *Nation* which remarked:

The death of Sir John Ennis has given to Athlone the chance for which the patriotic men of the borough have long and ardently longed. We do not wish to say anything harsh of the late member for the constituency now that he has passed away; but that he reflected no credit on Athlone, and that he did no good for either that town or the cause of the country as a whole.⁵⁵

6. Land Law (Ireland) Act 1881

The examination of the effects of the Land Law (Ireland) Act 1881 from an economic and agrarian perspective, which was carried out in the previous chapter, warrants an assessment of the political implications of a law which Comerford has rightly described as ‘one of the momentous pieces of legislation in the history of modern Ireland’.⁵⁶ Prime Minister Gladstone introduced his new land bill for Ireland on 7 April 1881 which he hoped would resolve many of the outstanding issues surrounding the land question, such as fair rents, tenant rights and land ownership. During the debate on the proposed legislation Lord Greville remarked on the possible political ramifications when the bill passed into law, whereby the 500,000 tenants residing in Ireland would become joint owners of their holdings with their landlord, and he posed the question:

⁵² *Irish Times*, 10 Jul. 1882. See also *Hansard* 3, cclxxiv, 768-842 (3 November 1880).

⁵³ *Ibid*, 4 Nov. 1882.

⁵⁴ Robert Henry Mair (ed.), *Debrett's illustrated House of Commons* (London, 1881), p. 72.

⁵⁵ *Nation*, 7 Jun. 1884.

⁵⁶ R. V. Comerford, ‘The politics of distress 1877-82’, in W. E. Vaughan (ed.) *A new history of Ireland*, vi (Oxford, 1996), p. 47.

Political power is now with those 500,000 occupiers. They will not cease to agitate until they get the entire government of the country into their own hands. When that event happens, what will the landlord get for his property?⁵⁷

In September 1881 at the height of the ‘No Rent’ campaign Lord Greville had called on one of the prisoners detained with Parnell at Kilmainham Gaol, James Tuite from Mullingar, and offered him immediate release if he gave a verbal promise and his word of honour not to resume his position as secretary of the local branch of the Land League. Tuite, needless to say, declined the offer.⁵⁸ The possibility that provisions contained in the Land Law (Ireland) Act 1881 could interfere with the value of rents obtainable on the open market was of concern to Lord Longford. He expressed the opinion that the profits would go in the form of augmented tenant rights to the present tenants, at the expense of the landlords and all future tenants.⁵⁹ Lord Longford, because of his political stance, was not popular with the Nationalist press, and on more than one occasion was on the receiving end of critical commentary and character lampooning, such as when the *Freeman’s Journal* remarked on his demeanour in the House of Lords, suggesting that:

This peer is in the habit of sitting in the farthest back bench on the Conservative side, rarely opens his lips to speak or even to applaud, and, as a rule, seems absorbed in a dark reverie. The only mark of distinction about his speaking is that he mumbles to a degree remarkable even in a Conservative peer.⁶⁰

In February 1883 a by-election was triggered in the Westmeath parliamentary constituency following the resignation of Henry Gill MP, a Home Rule Parnellite. A

⁵⁷ *The Times*, 23 Apr. 1881.

⁵⁸ *Kerry Sentinel*, 30 Sept. 1881. James Tuite (1849-1916) was born in Mullingar and was a watchmaker by occupation. He was chairman of Mullingar Town Commissioners and was imprisoned under the Coercion Act for his involvement with the Land League. He was Irish Parliamentary Party MP for North Westmeath from 1885 to 1900. See also Robert Henry Mair (ed.), *Debrett’s illustrated House of Commons* (London, 1886), p. 150.

⁵⁹ *Irish Times*, 18 Nov. 1881.

⁶⁰ *Freeman’s Journal*, 27 Jul. 1884.

week before polling day Robert Greville-Nugent, a younger brother of Lord Greville, issued an address to the electors of Westmeath stating that in the event of Timothy Harrington not going forward, he would submit himself as a candidate for the county as a member of the Irish Parliamentary Party.⁶¹ It was probably wishful thinking on the part of Greville-Nugent, as it was unlikely that the son or brother of an aristocratic landed magnate would ever be acceptable to the Westmeath electorate, whatever his political views. In the event, Harrington was chosen as the party's candidate and was returned unopposed.⁶² He sat as the Irish Parliamentary Party MP for Westmeath from February 1883 until November 1885, when he was elected MP for Dublin Harbour.⁶³

7. The Irish Loyal and Patriotic Union

On 1 May 1885, six months prior to the general election of 1885, an organisation called the Irish Loyal and Patriotic Union was established to highlight the concerns of Unionists in the three southern provinces regarding the possible introduction of Home Rule for Ireland. A large number of aristocrats supported its principles and activities, among them, Lord Longford. During the election campaign the organisation tried to undermine the efforts of Charles Stewart Parnell and his party by contributing to the election expenses of Unionist candidates, as well as by circulating 14,000 pamphlets and 270,000 election leaflets. Members who made large donations to the union received an undertaking that their names and size of donation would not be made

⁶¹ *Irish Examiner*, 20 Feb. 1883. Henry Gill (1836-1903) was born in Dublin and educated at Trinity College. He was principal partner in the publishing company M. H. Gill & Son. He was Irish Parliamentary Party MP for Westmeath from 1880 until his resignation in 1883, and for Limerick City from 1885 until 1888 when he resigned a second time. See also Walker (ed.) *Parliamentary election results in Ireland, 1801-1922*, p. 133 and 142.

⁶² Walker (ed.) *Parliamentary election results in Ireland, 1801-1922*, p. 128.

⁶³ *Ibid*, p. 132. Timothy Harrington (1851-1910) born in Castletownbere, Cork was a journalist and barrister. In addition to being an MP he was Lord Mayor of Dublin in 1901,02 and 03. He was also a tenant representative at the 1902 Land Conference. He sat as MP for Dublin Harbour until his death in 1910.

public.⁶⁴ The 1885 election, held in November and December, saw the total eclipse of the Liberals in Ireland, where the party lost all of its fourteen seats. The Irish Conservatives also suffered electoral reverses, losing seven seats to finish with sixteen MPs.⁶⁵ However, the efforts of the ILPU proved to be in vain as the Irish Party won 85 of the 103 Irish constituencies, plus an additional seat in Liverpool to make 86 seats.⁶⁶ This was the exact difference between the number of seats won by the Liberals (335) and Conservatives (249). In addition, not one of the fifty-two candidates put forward in the southern provinces by the ILPU was elected.⁶⁷

The campaign against Home Rule continued despite the disappointing election result. On 8 January 1886 a meeting of the ILPU was held in Dublin where a number of resolutions were passed in favour of maintaining the union between Great Britain and Ireland and Lord Longford, who chaired the meeting, was proposed as one of the vice-presidents of the organisation.⁶⁸ A few days prior to the meeting Lord Longford had written to Lord Belmore, a long standing representative peer for Ireland, enquiring if Belmore had ‘any constructive project to be proposed in dealing with the Irish situation’. Longford was uncertain as to what action should be taken, and confessed to Belmore that he had not yet completely formulated his own ideas on the issue.⁶⁹

8. First Home Rule Bill, 1886

During the 1885 election campaign, Parnell supported the Conservative Party as he was of the belief that they intended introducing some form of Home Rule for Ireland.

⁶⁴ *Freeman's Journal*, 9 Jan. 1886.

⁶⁵ Walker (ed.) *Parliamentary election results in Ireland, 1801-1922*, pp 130- 6.

⁶⁶ O'Day, *Irish Home Rule 1867-1921*, p. 106.

⁶⁷ David Cannadine, *The decline and fall of the British aristocracy* (New Haven, 1990), p. 169.

⁶⁸ *Freeman's Journal*, 9 Jan. 1886.

⁶⁹ Lord Longford to Lord Belmore, 3 Jan 1886 (P.R.O.N.I., Belmore Papers, D3007/R/1/255).

When that legislation failed to materialise he shifted support to the Liberals in January 1886, which resulted in Gladstone becoming Prime Minister. On 8 April 1886 Gladstone introduced the first Home Rule Bill for Ireland.⁷⁰ On 2 May 1886, the week prior to the vote on the Home Rule Bill in the House of Commons, Lord Greville spoke at a meeting of the Liberal Club in Poole, Dorset on the question of Irish Home Rule. He informed an audience of prominent local liberals that as a person who had known Ireland since he was a boy, who lived for many months of the year in Ireland and had large estates there, it was important that a person such as himself declare his position on Home Rule: ‘I have come after mature consideration to the conclusion that it is absolutely necessary for the benefit of Ireland that it should be given Home Rule’.⁷¹

Lord Greville outlined his reasons for coming to this decision; firstly, the previous general election result had returned a majority of MPs who supported Home Rule, and secondly, he believed that the majority of the Roman Catholic hierarchy and a significant number of the Protestant clergy also believed that Home Rule was the best solution to the problems in Ireland. Lord Greville claimed that since 1800 there had been seventy coercion acts which had only served to bury discontent under the surface and a further twenty-seven land acts in the period between 1829 and 1869, none of which had been effective prior to Gladstone’s act of 1870. He continued his remarks:

If you allow Ireland to rule herself, you find that there will be peace and prosperity in the country; and that Irishmen instead of hating and loathing the name of the English nation as at present, will be as fond of England as they are of their own country.⁷²

⁷⁰ Hickey and Doherty, *A new dictionary of Irish history from 1800*, p. 209.

⁷¹ *Freeman’s Journal*, 3 Jun. 1886.

⁷² *Ibid*, 3 Jun. 1886.

Lord Greville cited the cases of Canada, Jersey and Guernsey, that had Home Rule and all of which were peaceful, loyal and prosperous. He then posed the question, if so, then why not Ireland. At the same meeting the local Liberal MP Pascoe Glyn and John Durant, Liberal MP for Stepney, spoke in support of Lord Greville's position.⁷³ Lord Greville's support for Home Rule was unusual among the Irish aristocracy and was noted by the *Westmeath Examiner* which remarked:

By their actions in recent years landlords have severed themselves from the people. Few indeed of them are to be found on this side...Therefore it is that when an individual separates from a hostile class he is so welcomed by those whose cause he espouses. In this manner they feel pleasure in the decision which Lord Greville has made, and they extremely hope that his example shall be followed by other landlords.⁷⁴

Gladstone's Home Rule Bill was defeated in the House of Commons on 8 June 1886 by 341 votes to 311.⁷⁵ Following its rejection Lord Greville joined the Protestant Home Rule Association,⁷⁶ an organisation founded that year to bring together Protestant supporters of the first Home Rule Bill. However, failing to gather sufficient popular support the organisation disappeared within a short time.⁷⁷

Despite the rejection of the Home Rule Bill Lord Longford was very concerned that the government would relent and give in to Parnell on the issue. On 13 June 1886 he wrote to Lord Belmore expressing his doubts regarding a meeting that had taken place between the lord lieutenant, Lord Carnarvon (1831-1890), and Parnell which he described as 'risky business'. He believed it correct that Carnarvon should meet Parnell, but counselled that a careful record should be kept of what was said as

⁷³ *Freeman's Journal*, 3 Jun. 1886. Glyn and his two brothers George and Sidney who were also MPs were ardent followers of Gladstone and supported his position on Home Rule.

⁷⁴ *Westmeath Examiner*, 26 Jun. 1886.

⁷⁵ O'Day, *Irish Home Rule 1867-1921*, p. 116.

⁷⁶ *Anglo Celt*, 26 Jun. 1886.

⁷⁷ Hickey and Doherty, *A new dictionary of Irish history from 1800*, pp 407-8.

‘he must have been certain there that any expression of his would be distorted to suit the views of the other side’.⁷⁸

The issue of Home Rule split the Liberal party and following the rejection of Home Rule by the Conservatives and Liberal Unionists, the government called a general election. The election which was held between 1 and 17 July 1886 resulted in victory for Lord Salisbury and the Conservative party. On 29 May 1889 the marquis of Salisbury, the British Prime Minister met a deputation of peers and MPs who presented a proposal in favour of substituting a secretary of state and an under-secretary for Ireland in place of the lord lieutenant and the chief secretary. Among the peers in attendance were Lords Greville and Longford. The deputation outlined four grounds for the proposed changes, namely that a viceroy encouraged the idea that a complete union between Great Britain and Ireland had not taken place, that the lord lieutenant was not like a colonial governor in that he held the double position of official representative of the Sovereign as well as being a member of the Irish executive government which placed him in an anomalous position, that the money saved by the abolition of the viceroy could be used to maintain a royal residence in Ireland, and finally that the implementation of the proposals would assimilate the administration of Ireland with the rest of Britain. The Prime Minister in rejecting their proposals stated that legislation would have to be passed before any changes could take place. Meanwhile, the work of the viceroy would continue as before and he informed the deputation that he had just appointed Lord Zetland to the position of lord lieutenant for Ireland.⁷⁹

The apparent demise of the Conservative party in Ireland, of which Lord Castlemaine was a member, was beginning to come to the notice of the British

⁷⁸ Lord Longford to Lord Belmore, 13 Jun 1886 (P.R.O.N.I., Belmore Papers, D3007/R/1/263).

⁷⁹ *The Times*, 30 May 1889.

establishment. In August 1889 *The Times* posed the question as to the future of the party in Ireland pointing out that outside of the province of Ulster ‘there is absolutely no Conservative organisation worthy of the name’. The writer blamed the changes in franchise requirements contained in the Reform Act 1885, postulating that before the passing of the act Conservative organisers were more interested in getting comfortable position for themselves, than teaching new members how to organise politically. The writer was possibly confusing the Redistribution of Seats Act, 1885 with the Representation of the People Act 1884 also known as the Third Reform Act, which increased the number of persons entitled to vote in parliamentary elections. The paper criticised the use of paid agents by the Irish Conservatives to organise the party locally, as well as their apparent inability to respond to changing circumstances. This failure according to the newspaper had parallels in the area of land ownership whereby:

The landowners largely sacrificed themselves to the luxury of the agency system, which has pervaded Irish life in every relation to an almost incredible degree, and when the cataclysm came those most interested moved as though they were in the dark.⁸⁰

The report compared the situation of landlords who abdicated their responsibilities by handing over the running of their estates to agents, so that when difficulties arose they were incapable of dealing with them.

When the events surrounding the relationship between Katharine O’Shea and Charles Stewart Parnell and her divorce from Captain William O’Shea in November 1890 became public knowledge it caused deep divisions within the Irish Parliamentary Party. Between 1 and 6 December 1890 the party’s MPs met to debate the matter. The result was a split in the party with forty-five members rejecting

⁸⁰ *The Times*, 2 Aug 1889.

Parnell, while twenty-seven supported him.⁸¹ Sir Walter Nugent, (later 4th baronet) who was an assistant to Parnell, accompanied him during the O'Shea divorce scandal and recalled sitting beside him on a train as the crowds spat at the windows of the train, and shouted Kitty's name.⁸²

The Parnellite split in December 1890 prompted the re-organisation of the Irish Loyal and Patriotic Union which on 6 April 1891 became the Irish Unionist Alliance.⁸³ Its stated purpose was to unite all Unionists, both Liberal and Conservative, in a sustained campaign of opposition to Home Rule in both Britain and Ireland. The organisation immediately attracted patronage from members of the aristocracy in Westmeath, with Lord Longford and Sir Montagu Chapman among its leading supporters. The general election of 1892, held between 4 and 26 July, was the first election that the Irish Parliamentary Party contested following the death of Charles Stewart Parnell the previous October. The party which had split into Pro and Anti-Parnell factions, under the leadership of John Redmond and Justin McCarthy respectively, maintained its representation despite the upheaval. The McCarthy faction won seventy-two seats, Redmond's group took nine, Unionists took a further seventeen seats, with four seats being won in Ulster by Liberal Unionists.⁸⁴ In County Westmeath matters remained unchanged with the continued non-participation of aristocratic landowners in the parliamentary election process.

9. Second Home Rule Bill – 1893

While no party won an overall majority in the election of 1892, the Liberals under Gladstone formed a minority government with the support of the Irish Nationalist

⁸¹ Paul Bew, *Enigma, a new life of Charles Stewart Parnell* (Dublin, 2011), p. 172.

⁸² Email from Sir Walter Richard Nugent to author, 28 Feb 2014. See also Katharine O'Shea, *Charles Stewart Parnell, his love story and political life Vol. 2* (New York, 1914), p. 22.

⁸³ Patrick Buckland (ed.), *Irish Unionism 1885-1923* (London, 1973), p. 124.

⁸⁴ Walker (ed.) *Parliamentary election results in Ireland, 1801-1922*, pp 144-51.

MPs. On 13 February 1893 Gladstone introduced a second Home Rule Bill for Ireland in the House of Commons. The proposed legislation immediately generated strong hostility among the Unionist aristocrats of Westmeath and mobilised them into a campaign of opposition with political meetings being arranged in both Britain and Ireland. The Unionists of Westmeath, especially Lord Longford and Sir Montagu Chapman, were increasingly aware that their position, both socially and economically was becoming more uncertain, particularly now that they were in the minority, politically.

In March 1893 Lord Longford organised an anti-Home Rule meeting at his home at Pakenham Hall, Castlepollard which was attended by Unionists from the local area. A resolution protesting against the Home Rule bill was proposed by Edmund F. Dease, a Roman Catholic Unionist of Turbotstown House, Coole and seconded by John R. Battersby of Loughbawn, Collinstown.⁸⁵

On 15 March 1893 all the magistrates for County Longford were summoned by Lord Longford to a meeting in Longford on 20 March. The meeting was scheduled to take place prior to a public meeting in the town to protest against Home Rule.⁸⁶ Later that evening Lord Longford presided over the public meeting which was attended by approximately one thousand Unionists. He informed the audience that they were present, not as landlords, tenants, tradesmen or even as Protestants, but as good Irishmen and women and as British subjects. In an early recognition of their political disadvantage he asserted that unlike their Northern counterparts, they were in

⁸⁵ *Irish Times*, 17 Mar. 1893. A speech in support of the resolution, which was adopted, was also made by the Rev. Dr. Todd, Rector of Moyne. Edmund Dease was author of the book; *A complete history of the Westmeath Hunt* (Dublin, 1898). His nephew Maurice won a Victoria Cross in WW1. For history of Dease family see Sir Bernard Burke, *A genealogical and heraldic history of the landed gentry of Ireland* (London, 1912), pp 170-1. For Battersby family history, see Burke, *Landed gentry*, pp 33-4.

⁸⁶ *Ibid*, 20 Mar. 1893.

the minority and as such were more courageous in speaking out against the proposed legislation. He claimed that:

One of the reasons therefore, of their meeting was to show not only to the people of England but to the rest of Ireland that still the Unionist minority in the Southern provinces, though they were weak in numbers, were strong in their opinions and were by every constitutional means and as forcibly as their brethren of the North were determined to resist to changes proposed by Mr. Gladstone.⁸⁷

The Home Rule Bill was severely criticised and repudiated by all the speakers and a number of resolutions condemning the bill and supporting the union were adopted.⁸⁸

However, the opposing political perspectives held by members of the Westmeath aristocracy were later demonstrated in an exchange that took place between Lords Longford and Greville. On 28 March 1893 Lord Longford contacted Lord Greville with a request to use the Fair Green in Mullingar to hold a Unionist meeting. Lord Greville who was in favour of Home Rule responded:

Will lend you use of the Fair Green for Unionist meeting on condition Protestant Clergymen do not attend. I consider the clergy are here and paid by us to instruct us in religion. They are here for no other purpose, certainly not to talk politics and stir up the passions of men, as the Roman Catholic Bishop of Meath and most of his priests have been doing for so many months past. As long as I have house or property I shall never lend them to any 'Priest or Parson' for political purposes.⁸⁹

On 4 April 1893 the gathering of Westmeath anti-Home Rule Unionists went ahead at Mullingar. The assembly was chaired by Sir Montagu Chapman, 5th baronet, and among the speakers was Lord Longford.⁹⁰ Sir Montagu in the course of the meeting stated that they as Unionists claimed the right to live as citizens under the rule of the queen and of 'the glorious empire', which their Unionist ancestors had helped to build

⁸⁷ *Irish Times*, 21 Mar. 1893.

⁸⁸ *Nenagh Guardian*, 22 Mar. 1893.

⁸⁹ *Westmeath Examiner*, 1 Apr. 1893.

⁹⁰ *Leinster Express*, 8 Apr. 1893.

up.⁹¹ At the conclusion of the meeting those in attendance sang ‘God save the Queen’. During the singing Lord Longford saw that two of the journalists present had failed to remove their hats, whereupon he went behind the offending gentlemen and without a word of warning knocked their hats onto the floor. As Lord Longford failed to apologise for his actions one of the reporters, Patrick Nally of the *Westmeath Examiner* newspaper instituted court proceedings of assault against him. At the hearing Lord Longford admitted the charge but claimed that he had asked the journalists to remove their hats while the national anthem was being sung, but they refused, at which point he tipped off their hats. Among the magistrates that heard the case was Sir Percy Nugent, 3rd baronet. Upon conclusion of the evidence, and despite Lord Longford’s admission, Major O’Brien, magistrate announced that:

The magistrates are unanimously of the opinion that the case be dismissed. Mr. Nally had shown disloyalty to her Majesty the Queen and discourtesy and disrespect in refusing to join in the prayer to the Almighty for the welfare of our Sovereign.⁹²

On 19 April 1893 a large meeting of Unionists was held at Athboy, Co. Meath. Sir Montagu Chapman presided at the gathering where a number of speeches were made and resolutions adapted opposing the Home Rule Bill and resolving to establish a branch of the Irish Unionist Alliance in the area.⁹³ On 22 April 1893 an anti-Home Rule demonstration attended by 1,200 Irish delegates was held in the Royal Albert Hall, London. On 2 September 1893 the Home Rule Bill was passed by the House of Commons by 301 votes to 267. However, on 8 September the bill, as widely expected, was overwhelmingly defeated in the House of Lords by 419 votes to 41.⁹⁴ The Irish peers, as Unionists and landowners voted against the measure, among them, Lord

⁹¹ *Westmeath Examiner*, 22 Apr. 1893.

⁹² *Freeman’s Journal*, 10 Apr. 1893.

⁹³ *Nenagh Guardian*, 22 Apr. 1893.

⁹⁴ O’Day, *Irish Home Rule 1867-1921*, p. 167.

Longford. The only Irish peer that voted in favour of the second Home Rule Bill for Ireland was Lord Greville.⁹⁵ The critical response of his fellow peers towards those that supported the bill can be gauged by the comments of Francis Needham, 3rd earl of Kilmorey from County Down, an Irish representative peer and member of the Conservative party who stated:

If the Prime Minister and his colleagues seriously laid the flattering unction to their souls that this Bill, the magnum opus of the century, would prove a settlement of the Irish question, what a shock it must have been to them to realize the reception it got from the Irish, especially from their own particular friends.⁹⁶

On the same day that the bill was defeated a deputation of peers and MPs representing the three southern Irish provinces, including Lord Longford, met the leader of the Conservative Party, Lord Salisbury, where they presented him with an address of thanks from the delegates that had attended the Albert Hall Convention. The address signed by the president and vice-president of the Irish Unionist Alliance stated:

Your generous recognition of our action placed more prominently before the British public the breadth and strength of Unionist sentiment, not alone in Ulster but in those provinces which we represent, and will serve to cheer us with a fuller sense of the support and consideration which we rely on receiving from our fellow loyalists. Your lordship's words will gladden us during many days in the arduous efforts before us, in which we shall not falter.⁹⁷

On 6 June 1894 a social and political gathering of Unionists, under the auspices of the Clonmellon branch of the Irish Unionist Alliance, was hosted by Sir Montagu and Lady Caroline Chapman in the grounds of Killua Castle. A marquee was erected and music was provided to entertain the large crowd that included members of other aristocratic families from the county. Among those present were Benjamin Chapman, the younger brother of Sir Montagu, Francis Chapman, brother of Lady Caroline,

⁹⁵ *Western People*, 7 Oct. 1893.

⁹⁶ *The Times*, 11 Sept. 1893.

⁹⁷ *Irish Times*, 9 Sept. 1893.

Henry Corbyn Levinge of Knockdrin Castle, as well as Lady Letitia Nugent of Ballinlough Castle and her daughter, Kathleen Stoker. In the late afternoon a political speech in support of the continued union with Britain and against Home Rule was made by Daniel J. Wilson, the Unionist candidate for the North County Dublin constituency in the upcoming general election.⁹⁸ However, despite the Conservative Party being returned to government in the 1895 election, Wilson failed to take the seat which was retained by John Joseph Clancy of the Irish Parliamentary Party. Clancy received 4,520 votes against 2,280 for Wilson.⁹⁹ Sir Montagu Chapman continued to support the Unionist agenda as a staunch member of the council of the Irish Unionist Alliance attending their 1895 annual meeting in Dublin where the activities carried out in support of the union were detailed.¹⁰⁰

10. Royal visit to Mullingar

The ongoing political, economic and agrarian difficulties were not a deterrent when it came to matters involving the Royal family in Ireland. This was demonstrated in the autumn of 1897 when Prince George, duke of York, and future king, accompanied by his wife went on a tour of Ireland. The visit included a brief stopover at Mullingar where the reception afforded to the royal dignitaries validated the close ties and deference felt by the Unionists of County Westmeath towards the monarchy, while at the same time using the occasion to publicly express their loyalty. On 1 September 1897 at 4.20 pm the royal couple's train pulled into Mullingar railway station. The duke and duchess of York had travelled earlier that day by steamer from Killaloe to

⁹⁸ *Irish Times*, 7 Jun. 1894. Henry Corbyn Levinge (1828-1896) had succeeded to the Knockdrin estate following the death of his brother Sir Vere, 8th baronet in 1885. On his death the estate passed to Richard Levinge (later 10th baronet), see also *Irish Times*, 16 Mar. 1896.

⁹⁹ Walker (ed.) *Parliamentary election results in Ireland, 1801-1922*, p. 153.

¹⁰⁰ *The Times*, 27 Apr. 1895.

Banagher, and then by rail to Mullingar via Clara. Shortly after arrival the duke alighted from the train and received an address from Lord Greville which began:

We, the Town Commissioners and inhabitants of Mullingar and surrounding districts, without distinction of class and creed, desire to bid your Royal Highnesses a hearty Irish welcome, and to assure you of our loyalty to the person of her Majesty the Queen.

In reply, the duke thanked them for their address of welcome and accepted with satisfaction its assurance of their loyalty to the queen.¹⁰¹ Among the large crowd of local dignitaries at the railway station were Lords Greville and Castlemaine, members of the Levinge family of Knockdrin Castle, as well as Lord Kilmaine, who had a residence at Gaulstown near Rochfortbridge. There was no demonstration or protest against the visit by local Nationalists. The royal visit to Mullingar fulfilled a number of important political considerations, namely, to reinforce the bond with the Unionists of the Mullingar area, to acknowledge their support and commitment to the United Kingdom and British Empire, and to reaffirm Ireland's position as an integral part of the United Kingdom. It also allowed Prince George to prepare for his future role as monarch by representing his grandmother and sovereign, Queen Victoria.

11. Irish representative peers

As southern Irish Unionist representation in the House of Commons had all but disappeared the House of Lords now provided the only forum where the aristocracy of Westmeath could engage in political discourse while protecting their position and status. The power, status and prestige attached to being a member of the House of Lords, as well as the burden of responsibility to properly represent the interests of

¹⁰¹ *Westmeath Examiner*, 4 Sept. 1897. For a detailed account of the royal tour see, *The Times*, 3 Sept. 1897 and *Kildare Observer*, 4 Sept. 1897. For political analysis of the visit see James H. Murphy, *Abject loyalty, nationalism and monarchy in Ireland during the reign of Queen Victoria* (Cork, 2001), pp 273-5.

one's fellow peers, was something that no politically minded aristocrat could ignore. The quest for a seat in the Upper House as one of the twenty-eight representative peers for Ireland required a deal of political scheming and intrigue as Lord Castlemaine discovered when attempting to follow in the footsteps of his father and grandfather who had previously sat in the Lords. The effort required to be part of this exclusive group was not a straight forward matter and it was apparent that one had to wait one's turn when seeking an appointment. Within two months of his death in April 1892, Lord Castlemaine's seat in the House of Lords passed to Hamilton Dean-Morgan, 4th baron Muskerry. On 13 November 1894, a week after the death of Lord Carbury, Lord Castlemaine's son Albert, 5th baronet, began his quest to become a representative peer. On that date he wrote to the marquess of Dufferin outlining his political pedigree and seeking his support in future selections, stating:

In consequence of the sad death of Lord Carbury there is a vacancy among the representative peers of Ireland and I do not intend to offer myself for selection on the present occasion as I understand there are one or two names before mine. I venture to ask for your vote and support after they have been elected. I am a Conservative in politics and my father and grandfather were for many years representative peers. If by your kindness I succeed in obtaining a seat I shall endeavour to justify your repose in me.¹⁰²

The following day he wrote an almost identical letter to Lord Belmore, a senior representative peer expressing the exact same sentiments.¹⁰³ In January 1895 Luke Dillon, 4th baron Clonbrock was chosen to replace Lord Carbury. However, another vacancy arose a year later, on 13 January 1896, following the death of the 8th earl of Kingston. On 21 January 1896, a week after the death, Lord Castlemaine wrote to

¹⁰² Lord Castlemaine to Marquess of Dufferin, 13 Nov 1894 (P.R.O.N.I., Dufferin and Ava papers, D1071/H/B/H/139).

¹⁰³ Lord Castlemaine to Lord Belmore, 14 Nov 1894, (P.R.O.N.I., Belmore papers, D3007/J/106). Somerset Richard Lowry-Corry, 4th Earl Belmore (1835-1913) was a Conservative politician. He was educated at Eton and Trinity College, Cambridge. He was elected a representative peer in 1857. He was a member of the earl of Derby's government from 1866/7, and was governor of New South Wales from 1868 until 1872. He owned 19,429 acres at Castle Coole, Co. Fermanagh. See also G. E. Cokayne, *The complete peerage*, ii (London, 1912), p. 112, and John Bateman, *The great landowners of Great Britain and Ireland* (London, 1883), p. 36.

Lord Belmore reminding him that he (Castlemaine) had been selected for the second vacancy at the last peers meeting and requesting his support for the next vacancy.¹⁰⁴ The vacancy caused by the death of the 8th earl of Kingston in January 1896 was filled in March that year by the 5th earl of Portarlington.

The next suitable vacancy for Lord Castlemaine did not occur until the death of Eyre Massey, 4th Baron Clarina on 16 December 1897. Lord Castlemaine was clearly feeling very insecure and felt compelled once again to contact Lord Belmore to secure his support. On 18 January 1898 he asked Belmore to propose him at the next peers meeting stating: 'I am exceedingly sorry to have to again trouble you in this matter, but the Irish peers seem to have ignored my previous selection'.¹⁰⁵ The following week, on 25 January, he again contacted Belmore to thank him for his efforts in the matter and expressed concerns that having selected him to fill the next vacancy the Irish peers would now go back on their word.¹⁰⁶ On 9 February 1898 Castlemaine wrote to Belmore for the third time in a month informing him that he had been selected to fill the next vacancy. He also asked Belmore for his vote.¹⁰⁷ Lord Castlemaine was correct to be concerned as to his selection to fill the next vacancy. On 30 January 1898 the duke of Abercorn contacted Lord Belmore questioning Lord Castlemaine's suitability, while at the same time giving an insight into the selection process. He informed Belmore:

These peers elections are always more or less difficult. If Castlemaine was actually promised the next vacancy at the last meeting I do not see how we can draw back. But so far as my knowledge goes no pledge was ever given tho' the peer elected is generally the one chosen for the next vacancy. I think Farnham far and away the best man that we could have and shall certainly vote for him unless it can be proved that I am under strict obligation to Castlemaine.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁴ Lord Castlemaine to Lord Belmore, 21 Jan 1896 (P.R.O.N.I., Belmore papers, D3007/J/112).

¹⁰⁵ Lord Castlemaine to Lord Belmore, 18 Jan 1898, (P.R.O.N.I., Belmore papers, D3007/J/122).

¹⁰⁶ Lord Castlemaine to Lord Belmore, 25 January 1898, (P.R.O.N.I., Belmore papers, D3007/J/125).

¹⁰⁷ Lord Castlemaine to Lord Belmore, 9 February 1898, (P.R.O.N.I., Belmore papers, D3007/J/130).

¹⁰⁸ Duke of Abercorn to Lord Belmore, 30 January 1898, (P.R.O.N.I., Belmore papers, D3007/J/127).

It is possible that the duke of Abercorn was displaying some political favouritism toward a fellow Ulster peer. Despite Abercorn's reservations Lord Castlemaine was elected as a representative peer for Ireland on 7 March 1898.¹⁰⁹ In May 1899 he was appointed lord lieutenant for County Westmeath succeeding another substantial landowner, Francis Travers Dames-Longworth.¹¹⁰ The duke of Abercorn's favoured candidate, Lord Farnham, was elected a representative peer four months later in July 1898, replacing the 4th earl of Caledon.

12. Taxation and Financial relations between Britain and Ireland

The question of taxation and the financial treatment of Ireland by the Parliament at Westminster was an issue that had only been considered for the first time in 1864, despite the fact that the two exchequers had been amalgamated since 1817. A select committee had been set up in 1864 to look at the matter but its report recommended that no changes be made to the existing system of taxation. The subject came to the fore again during the Home Rule debate of 1893, and as a consequence a Royal Commission was appointed on 26 May 1894, to enquire into financial relations between Britain and Ireland.¹¹¹

Between the establishment of the commission in 1894 and the publication of its findings in 1896 a general election took place in July 1895. The result saw the Conservative party, led by Lord Salisbury, along with their Liberal Unionist allies secure 411 seats, defeating the Liberal party which obtained 177 seats, while eighty-

¹⁰⁹ *The Times*, 10 Mar. 1898.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid*, 15 May 1899.

¹¹¹ O'Day, *Irish Home Rule 1867-1921*, p. 165. See also *Royal Commission on the financial relations between Great Britain and Ireland. Final report by Her Majesty's Commissioners appointed to inquire into the financial relations between Great Britain and Ireland [C.8008] [C.8262], HC 1896, xxxiii.59, 291, 1.*

two Home Rule MPs were returned.¹¹² Among the candidates who stood in the election was the Hon. Ronald Greville, Lord Greville's eldest son, who ran in Barnsley, Yorkshire. Despite putting up a good fight in a constituency described in the *Irish Times* as being 'that stronghold of Radicalism and Trades Unionism'.¹¹³ Ronald failed in his bid and was defeated by Earl Compton, the outgoing Liberal MP, by 6,820 votes to 4,653, a majority of 2,167.¹¹⁴ However, defeat did not end Ronald's parliamentary ambitions and he was successfully returned the following year as the Conservative candidate in a by-election in East Bradford caused by the death of Henry Reed, the sitting MP. In a hard-fought contest he obtained 4,921 votes, defeating his nearest opponent Alfred Billson of the Liberal party who received 4,526 votes, with James Keir Hardie, a co-founder of the Labour party, a distant third on 1,953 votes.¹¹⁵ Stewart claimed that the contest, like every other election in which Hardie participated, was conducted with exceeding acrimony on the part of his opponents.¹¹⁶ Ronald Greville successfully held the East Bradford seat until his retirement from parliament in 1906. He was appointed high sheriff of Westmeath in 1899 and came to the fore again during events at Mullingar which will be outlined later in this chapter.

The Royal Commission on the financial relations between Britain and Ireland made its final report on 5 September 1896. A majority of the commissioners were satisfied that Ireland was overtaxed although they disagreed to what extent this occurred. The commission recommended four measures that if implemented might give Ireland some taxation relief.¹¹⁷ However, as Dubois has pointed out, a complete

¹¹² O'Day, *Irish Home Rule 1867-1921*, p. 179.

¹¹³ *Irish Times*, 23 Oct. 1896.

¹¹⁴ F. W.S. Craig, *British Parliamentary election results 1885-1918* (London, 1974), p. 432.

¹¹⁵ *Ballinrobe Chronicle*, 14 Nov. 1896.

¹¹⁶ William Stewart, *J. Keir Hardie, a biography* (London, 1921), p. 128.

¹¹⁷ Alice Effie Murray, *A history of the commercial and financial relations between England and*

alteration of the system of taxation in the United Kingdom was out of the question.¹¹⁸

The publication of the report divided opinions among the landowners and aristocracy of Westmeath. Lord Longford, a member of the Conservative party, then in government, was not going to support a campaign that might undermine the government's position. In December 1896, in his capacity as lord lieutenant for County Longford, he refused a request from the Longford and Ballymahon boards of guardians to hold a public meeting to consider the report stating:

I regret that I cannot comply with the request of the Guardians of the Longford Union, conveyed to me in their resolution of the 19th inst. I do not think that intricate questions of Imperial finance can be fairly and calmly considered by a crowded, and (possibly) excited, public meeting, wherein rhetoric usually gets the better of logic. Nor do I desire to associate myself with those persons who are demanding a complete re-settlement of the financial relations of Ireland and England.¹¹⁹

Lord Longford's refusal to call a meeting elicited a sharp rebuke from Antonio Edgeworth, a nephew of Maria Edgeworth, who was disappointed that Lord Longford had not called the meeting to protest against the past and present over-taxation of Ireland.¹²⁰ On 9 January 1897, at a meeting of the Delvin board of guardians, Sir Montagu Chapman, while not objecting to a resolution requesting Lord Castlemaine to call a public meeting on the matter, would not second the resolution, as he could not see how Ireland was over-taxed. He further stated that he did not concur with the report of the Royal Commission.¹²¹ On 15 February 1897 a meeting was held in the Market House, Mullingar with Lord Greville in the chair to consider the report. The

Ireland from the period of the restoration (London, 1907), pp 394-400. See also *Royal Commission on the financial relations between Great Britain and Ireland. Final report by Her Majesty's Commissioners appointed to inquire into the financial relations between Great Britain and Ireland [C.8008] [C.8262], HC 1896, xxxiii.59, 291,1.*

¹¹⁸ L. Paul-Dubois, *Contemporary Ireland* (Dublin, 1908), p. 348. In *Contemporary Ireland* Dubois provides a comprehensive background to the financial and economic relationship between Britain and Ireland; see pp 336-49 and 525-6.

¹¹⁹ *Irish Examiner*, 30 Dec. 1896.

¹²⁰ *Freeman's Journal*, 11 Jan. 1897.

¹²¹ *Ibid*, 11 Jan. 1897.

meeting decided to ask Lord Castlemaine, as deputy-lieutenant of the county to convene and preside at a meeting to discuss the matter to be held in Mullingar on 2 March 1897.¹²² However, Lord Castlemaine declined the offer and refused to convene the meeting on the grounds that the report was under consideration by parliament, and a central committee had already been formed in Dublin to monitor developments. The committee then invited Lord Greville, who accepted the offer to take the chair.¹²³ The meeting went ahead as arranged with Lord Greville presiding. Lord Longford was invited to attend but declined stating:

You and your secretaries will not be surprised to hear that I cannot possibly attend the meeting to be held under Lord Greville's presidency on the 2nd of March at Mullingar, as I have no sympathy with the movement which, I presume, that meeting is intended to support.

The meeting continued with speeches condemning the inequality and increased level of taxation being endured by Ireland when compared to Britain, and also with the level of taxation pertaining in Ireland at the time of the Union, when the population of the country was broadly similar. The meeting also called for an abatement, and redress in the level of taxation to bring Ireland into line with the rest of the United Kingdom.¹²⁴ The taxation issue lingered into 1898, and on 21 January another meeting was held at Mullingar, again chaired by Lord Greville. Letters of apology for their non-attendance were received from Lord Castletown and The O'Connor Don. In his speech to the large attendance Greville stated that the question of taxation affected the whole of Ireland and unless the issue was taken seriously and earnestly with everyone working in unity, they would not get any reduction in taxation from the government. He claimed that the purpose of the meeting was to explain to the people of England that Ireland had been unfairly treated for the past forty or fifty years and

¹²² *Connaught Telegraph*, 20 Feb. 1897.

¹²³ *Westmeath Examiner*, 27 Feb. 1897.

¹²⁴ *Ibid*, 6 Mar. 1897.

they were asking for a reduction in taxation. Sir Walter Nugent, 4th baronet, who was at the meeting displayed his nationalist leanings in supporting the proposed resolution when he emphasised the necessity of unity and stated when all Ireland was united on this great question, the people would unite in the future on other questions which concerned the government of Ireland.¹²⁵

In reality, the government did very little to reduce the burden of taxation and Dubois is somewhat disingenuous in his claim that the government disarmed the landowners in 1898 by giving them a grant of money, which freed them from all local taxation on tenanted land.¹²⁶ However, Clancy claims that one of the principal objectives of the act was to remove the landlord's liability to local rates. The terms of the Local Government (Ireland) Act, 1898 did abolish, with two exceptions, a landlord's liability to local rates, with the poor-rate being levied thereafter on the occupier and not the landowner.¹²⁷ The two cases where a landlord was liable to pay rates were; where the landlord was the immediate landlord of a house let in separate tenements or lodgings and: under section 63 of the Poor Relief (Ireland) Act, 1838, and section 10 of the Poor Relief (Ireland) Act, 1849, where a person was in receipt of rent from a property which was exempt from taxation because it was of a public or charitable nature.¹²⁸

13. Changes in Local Government

The Local Government Bill introduced in parliament on 21 February 1898 as part of the Conservative reform policies for Ireland passed into law on 12 August that year.¹²⁹

¹²⁵ *Westmeath Examiner*, 22 Jan. 1898.

¹²⁶ Paul-Dubois, *Contemporary Ireland*, p. 349. See also H. D. Gribbon, 'Economic and social history 1850-1921' in W. E. Vaughan (ed.), *A new history of Ireland*, vi (Oxford, 1996), pp 327-31.

¹²⁷ John J. Clancy, *A handbook of local government in Ireland* (Dublin, 1899), p. 59.

¹²⁸ *Ibid*, p. 59.

¹²⁹ O'Day, *Irish Home Rule 1867-1921*, p. 185.

The act made provision for the establishment of a county council for Westmeath to replace the grand jury which had previously been responsible for the administration of local government in the county. The grand jury which was comprised of some of the leading property owners was appointed by the high sheriff of the county. These landowning families which included members from the aristocratic families in the county controlled local government in Westmeath, and their deliberations and decisions served to consolidate and protect their interests.¹³⁰ The new local government body consisting of thirty-four members would be elected on four different classes of suffrage: twenty-three members would be elected by the people, three would be nominated by the old grand jury, six would come from the local district councils consisting of the three chairmen along with three other members, with the final two councillors being co-opted by the other thirty-two members.¹³¹

As in most other counties the electorate supported one of two political ideologies, Unionism or Nationalism, and candidates from both sides of the political divide contested the election. As Nelson observed:

The county council elections provided the opportunity for people to articulate for themselves and for others their political beliefs and to test the meaning of the nationalism or unionism as they spoke of it.¹³²

Among the candidates nominated to run for seats on the new council were members of the aristocracy and landed gentry class of the county, which included Sir Montagu Chapman, 5th baronet, and the Hon. Patrick Greville-Nugent in the Delvin electoral division, Charles O'Donoghue, Ballinahown Court, nephew of Sir John Ennis, 2nd

¹³⁰ For an outline of grand jury system see Thomas P. Nelson, 'Kildare County Council, 1899-1926' (PhD thesis, NUI Maynooth, 2007), pp 33-40.

¹³¹ *Westmeath Examiner*, 29 Apr. 1899.

¹³² Thomas P. Nelson, 'Kildare County Council, 1899-1926' (PhD thesis, NUI Maynooth, 2007), p. 60.

baronet in the Moate division, Lord Castlemaine in the Moydrum division, Lord Greville in the Owel division and Sir Walter Nugent in the Rathowen division.¹³³

The contrasting methods adopted by Protestant Unionist and Catholic Nationalist politicians in order to gain support among the electorate was apparent in the contest. In an effort to gain support among the majority Catholic Nationalist voters Lord Greville, in a lengthy address, undertook to secure economic expenditure of the public rates. He promised to try and improve the social condition of the people of the county, particularly the labouring classes and undertook to support the campaign for a Catholic University in Ireland. He also reaffirmed his support for Irish Home Rule stating:

In 1893 I gave my vote in the House of Lords in favour of Home Rule. I have in no way since changed that opinion, believing that the day is not far distant when the Irish people will obtain their long cherished hopes.¹³⁴

Similarly, Lord Greville's younger brother, the Hon. Patrick Greville-Nugent informed the voters in the Delvin area that he was in favour of a Catholic University for Ireland and conditions for tenants to purchase their holdings on a fair basis. At local level he promised to work for better housing and employment for the labouring classes. In seeking the support of Catholic voters he referred to his father's donation of the site for the church in Delvin as well as a large sum towards its construction. On the other hand Greville-Nugent's rival for the seat in the Delvin area, Sir Montagu Chapman vaguely and half-heartedly promised the voters that if elected: 'I shall give my best attention to promote your interests'.¹³⁵ Sir Walter Nugent, a Roman Catholic Nationalist could outline his position on local and national politics in a less circumspect manner. He began his address by stating:

¹³³ *Westmeath Examiner*, 11 Mar. 1899.

¹³⁴ *Ibid*, 25 Mar. 1899.

¹³⁵ *Ibid*, 4 Feb. 1899.

As regards my political opinions, I believe there can be no solution of the Irish Question which does not include absolute Home Rule for Ireland.

He went on to criticise the level of Irish taxation which he believed was preventing prosperity and claimed that the free trade laws had benefited England and impoverished Ireland. Despite being a substantial landowner Sir Walter expressed the opinion that the Irish land question would be quickly settled by an Irish parliament with tenant proprietorship being the only possible solution. He also supported improved conditions for labourers and a Catholic University for Ireland.¹³⁶ It is apparent that Lord Greville, Patrick Greville-Nugent and Sir Walter Nugent, as former members of the grand jury, were anxious to retain their positions as decision makers in the administration of local government.

The election took place on 6 April 1899. When the ballots were counted the following day, four members of the aristocracy were successfully returned, while another failed in his bid to win a seat. The successful aristocrats were Lord Greville, who topped the poll in his division; his brother the Hon. Patrick Greville-Nugent who defeated Sir Montagu Chapman, 5th baronet, by a margin of sixteen votes in the Delvin area; Lord Castlemaine who won his division by a margin of 123 votes; and Sir Walter Nugent, 4th baronet, who defeated his nearest challenger Colonel John Malone by 130 votes in the Rathowen area.¹³⁷ The composition of the new council reflected the demographic profile of the electorate which was mostly Roman Catholic and Nationalist. The majority of council members were Nationalist middle class businessmen and farmers, with the Protestant landlord representation being very much reduced in comparison to the grand jury.

¹³⁶ *Westmeath Examiner*, 4 Feb. 1899.

¹³⁷ *Ibid*, 8 Apr. 1899.

On 10 April 1899 a committee appointed by the grand jury gathered to nominate three members to the new council. The initial nominees were Captain Thomas Smyth, Ballinagall House, Charles Marlay, Belvedere House and Colonel John Malone, Baronstown House, all substantial landowners. Captain Smyth declined the nomination whereupon Sir Montagu Chapman was proposed. Despite having attempted, and failed to win a seat in the election. Chapman for some unknown reason informed the committee that if elected to the Delvin rural district council, he would not be in a position to sit on the county council, but if unsuccessful would be happy to accept their nomination.

The Hon. Robert Handcock, brother of Lord Castlemaine, was then proposed and together with the previous two nominees, Mr. Marlay and Colonel Malone, were nominated to sit on the county council.¹³⁸ This brought to five the number of aristocrats on the new council.¹³⁹ The number of aristocratic members on Westmeath county council was exceptional as none were elected to Cavan, Longford, Meath, King's County or Leitrim county councils.¹⁴⁰ County Wicklow was the closest to Westmeath with two aristocrats elected to its county council.¹⁴¹

The first meeting of Westmeath County Council took place at Mullingar Courthouse on 22 April 1899. All the new councillors attended except Colonel Malone and Charles Marley (grand jury nominees) and Charles O'Donoghue who was ill.¹⁴² A most remarkable event occurred in the vote for the position for chairman of the new council. Lord Greville, a Protestant aristocrat and landlord, was proposed by James Tuite, MP for North Westmeath. Another councillor, Charles O'Donoghue, (1860-1903) a Roman Catholic landowner, was proposed by Andrew Moore, a district

¹³⁸ *Westmeath Examiner*, 15 Apr. 1899.

¹³⁹ *Ibid*, 4 Feb., 4 Mar. and 29 Apr. 1899.

¹⁴⁰ *Anglo Celt*, 15 Apr. 1899 and *Freeman's Journal*, 8 Apr. 1899.

¹⁴¹ *Freeman's Journal*, 8 Apr. 1899.

¹⁴² *Westmeath Examiner*, 29 Apr. 1899.

councillor. In what appeared to have been a north/south Westmeath divide, each candidate received fourteen votes. The final decision, therefore, came down to the casting vote of the acting chairman, James King, who stated: 'I will give my vote for Lord Greville, and I have great pleasure in declaring him elected'.¹⁴³ Lord Greville therefore became the first chairman of Westmeath County Council as well as the only aristocrat and Unionist elected to this position in the three southern provinces.¹⁴⁴ He was acceptable to the Nationalist members of the council as in 1893 he had voted in favour of Gladstone's second Home Rule Bill in the House of Lords.¹⁴⁵ Another member of the aristocracy, Lord Castlemaine ran for the position of vice-chairman, but was defeated by twenty votes to eight.¹⁴⁶ The newly elected county council changed the dynamics of local politics. It was now more democratic. Instead of a patronage system whereby persons were nominated to the grand jury without any consideration for their suitability by the high sheriff, the council candidates now had to place themselves before the electorate who ultimately decided if they would represent their position on local and national matters.

Sir Montagu Chapman's decision to decline a nomination to sit on the county council might have been influenced by an ongoing family issue that had just become public. On 13 April 1898 the Registrar in Lunacy sat with a jury in the Four Courts, Dublin to enquire into the mental condition of Benjamin Chapman, Sir Montagu's only brother. The implications of the registrar's decision for the family would be immense. Benjamin Chapman, then aged thirty-five, was alleged to be of unsound mind, and in the event of Sir Montagu not having any children, Benjamin would succeed to the baronetcy and the family estate. In addition, he would also be entitled

¹⁴³ *Westmeath Examiner*, 29 Apr. 1899.

¹⁴⁴ *Freeman's Journal*, 8 Apr. 1899.

¹⁴⁵ *Westmeath Examiner*, 29 Apr. 1899.

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid*, 29 Apr. 1899.

to £20,000 chargeable on the estate, a condition of his father's will. Furthermore, in the event of Benjamin being declared a lunatic and Sir Montagu not having issue, the estates would then pass to their only sister, Dora Chapman, and failing issue by her, to Lady Caroline Chapman's brother, Mr. Thomas Tighe Chapman (father of Lawrence of Arabia). Following consultation between the legal representatives for both parties, the matter was adjourned pending an application to the Lord Chancellor to sanction a trust settling certain family matters, and if approved, the petition would be withdrawn.¹⁴⁷ The matter was resolved without further embarrassment and the terms of the settlement were never disclosed.

On 1 June 1899 Lord Greville found himself at odds with the Catholic members of the county council over remarks allegedly made by him in the House of Lords on 8 May, concerning ritualistic practices in St Martin's Church, Brighton, in which he was reported to have used language offensive to Catholics.¹⁴⁸ The matter arose from a question by Lord Greville to the secretary of state for war, the marquess of Landsdowne enquiring whether soldiers stationed at Brighton, who were members of the Church of England, were marched each Sunday to St Martin's Church, the pastor of which was a member of the English Church Union, an Anglo-Catholic advocacy group within the Church of England. In the course of his question Greville was reported to have referred to a statue of the Virgin and Child in the church as an idolatrous image.¹⁴⁹

At a meeting of the council on 13 June 1899 Lord Greville refuted the accusations. He stated that he was deeply aggrieved and hurt that it could be believed that he had deliberately insulted Catholics. He said that he had resided among Catholics and had never showed any bigotry or intolerance towards them. He further

¹⁴⁷ *Irish Times*, 14 Apr. 1898.

¹⁴⁸ *Freeman's Journal*, 2 Jun. 1899.

¹⁴⁹ *The Times*, 9 May 1899.

stated that he had Catholic servants, a Catholic steward and manager, a Catholic land agent, was advised by a Catholic solicitor, and he had never shown any prejudice against his Catholic tenants. He went on to say that his remarks in the House of Lords were not directed against Catholics and were solely in relation to practices at a particular Protestant church in Brighton. Lord Greville's explanation was accepted without question by the members of the council.¹⁵⁰ However, the matter did not end there as Dr. Matthew Gaffney, the incoming Roman Catholic Bishop of Meath, declared that he found Lord Greville's explanation unsatisfactory. While accepting his assurance that he had not intended to insult Catholics, Gaffney noted that Lord Greville had not denied making the remarks and had not withdrawn them.¹⁵¹

The council members, for whatever reason, failed to mention that Lord Greville had attended the annual general meeting of the Church Association in London on 1 May 1899 to which 'all Protestants' had been invited, according to the report, 'to demand from the Government the suppression of the Mass and the Confessional'. At the meeting the Protestant clergy and hierarchy had been strongly criticised for committing themselves 'to closer communion with churches which held nearly all the false doctrines of Rome'. Lord Greville had seconded a motion proposed by the Archdeacon William Taylor of Liverpool who stated that 'the real issue was the right of the nation to determine by her lawfully appointed judges whether the ministers of the National Church had fulfilled their duties and kept their contract'.¹⁵²

Another notable event which made national headlines took place during Lord Greville's tenure as chairman of Westmeath County Council. On 13 September 1899

¹⁵⁰ *Irish Times*, 14 Jun. 1899.

¹⁵¹ *Meath Chronicle*, 17 Jun. 1899.

¹⁵² *The Times*, 3 May 1899.

the council, by an almost unanimous vote, including that of the chairman Lord Greville, passed a motion which stated:

That the County Surveyor be directed to erect a flag staff on a prominent and central part of the Courthouse and that the national flag of green, with the harp, be floated therefrom.

At this time Lord Greville's eldest son Ronald (1864-1908) a Unionist, was high sheriff of the county (See Fig.1). Ronald Greville issued instructions to Mr Barnes, the sub-sheriff that the hoisting of the flag should not be permitted under any circumstances. On 21 September 1899 an extraordinary and unusual event took place in Mullingar, that of a son leading Crown forces to prevent a popular act by his father. The sub-sheriff in compliance with Ronald Greville's orders locked the gates to the courthouse and a large force of police under the command of the county inspector of the RIC took up position inside them. The councillors, headed by Lord Greville, and including Sir Walter Nugent, 4th baronet, accompanied by a large crowd brought the flag to the gates and demanded that they be opened. When the request was refused the crowd burst through the gates and considerable disorder ensued. A melee developed between the police and those intent on raising the flag in which several persons were injured. However, after a long struggle the flag was carried upstairs and flown from the window of the council chamber for a short time to the delight of the crowd, before it was recovered by the sub-sheriff.¹⁵³

The two episodes involving Lord Greville would later provoke the indignation of the anti-clerical author and lawyer Michael McCarthy. While praising the reforms in local government, McCarthy sarcastically commented:

The correspondence between the present bishop, Dr. Gaffney and Lord Greville about the Blessed Virgin, would supply Mark Twain with material for a volume. What manner of green flag can it have been that the father and the

¹⁵³ *Irish Times*, 22 Sept. 1899.

county councillors wished to fly over the courthouse, and that the son and the constabulary objected to? Was it like the green flag which proudly waved over the residence of the Provost of Trinity in Grafton Street during the Queen's visit, or over the Mansion House, whose occupant received a baronetcy from the Queen?¹⁵⁴

The cumulative effect of the events that occurred during the previous month were more than likely the motivating factor in Lord Greville's decision to tender his resignation as chairman of the county council by letter on 19 October 1899. By way of excuse Greville cited prior commitments, which had not allowed him sufficient time to attend to the duties of chairman. He informed the councillors of his willingness to continue as an ordinary member of the local authority. Lord Greville was at that time was campaigning for the construction of a rail link from Mountmellick to Mullingar to complete a railway network through the Irish midlands from Waterford to Cavan.¹⁵⁵ He had also proposed the construction of a rail link from Mullingar to Drogheda to facilitate the movement and export of cattle, but both efforts would ultimately end in failure.

14. United Irish League

Against the background of the ongoing taxation debate and increasing economic difficulties being experienced by tenant farmers, the United Irish League was launched in Westport on 23 January 1898 by William O'Brien. According to Lyons the organisation had two main objectives, one economic and the other political. The economic objective was to break up the large grazing farms known as ranches, while

¹⁵⁴ Michael J. F. McCarthy, *Five years in Ireland 1895-1900* (Dublin, 1903), p. 389. Michael McCarthy (1862-1928) was born in Middleton, Co Cork. He was educated at Trinity College, Dublin and called to the bar in 1889. He became a Unionist over personal experiences with the Land League, his father had been boycotted in 1881. His writings were anti-clerical and he later converted to Protestantism. He had a large following in Ulster and was blamed by many Catholics for turning Protestants against Home Rule. See also James McGuire and James Quinn (eds) 'Michael J. F. McCarthy', in *Dictionary of Irish Biography, Volume 5* (Cambridge, 2009), pp 813-4.

¹⁵⁵ *Freeman's Journal*, 20 Oct. 1899.

the political object was to create unity among Nationalists.¹⁵⁶ The Irish Parliamentary Party had split into a number of factions in the aftermath of Parnell's death, and the impetus for Home Rule had diminished as a result. The UIL grew slowly and steadily establishing branches in Mayo, so that by the end of 1898, it had 94 branches with a membership of 8,853.¹⁵⁷ It gradually spread to the other counties of Connacht, then to other parts of Ireland, including County Westmeath. The new organisation which attracted support from tenant farmers in its growing membership was seen as a threat by middle-class Catholic Nationalist businessmen and shopkeepers, among whom there were many graziers, as well as by the landlord and Unionist classes. Its policy on land distribution was similar to that of the Land League.

The UIL was not sufficiently organised in Westmeath in 1899 to field candidates for election to the newly constituted county council. On 28 October 1899 the high sheriff of Westmeath the Hon. Ronald Greville MP, in a repeat of events surrounding the flying of the green flag the previous September, refused to allow the quarterly meeting of the Mullingar Rural District Council to be held in Mullingar courthouse, on the grounds that the members might use the occasion to set up a branch of the UIL.¹⁵⁸ Following Greville's refusal the councillors adjourned to the local workhouse where they formally established a branch of the league.¹⁵⁹ Branches of the UIL sprang up all over Westmeath and many of these meetings were also used as platforms to express support for the South African Boers in their struggle against the British Empire.¹⁶⁰ On 12 November 1899 a public meeting in support of the UIL and attended by representatives from every branch in the county was held in

¹⁵⁶ F. S. L. Lyons, 'The aftermath of Parnell 1891-1903' in W. E. Vaughan (ed.) *A new history of Ireland*, vi (Oxford, 1996), p. 92.

¹⁵⁷ Paul Bew, *Conflict and conciliation in Ireland 1890-1910* (Oxford, 1987), p. 57.

¹⁵⁸ *Westmeath Examiner*, 4 Nov. 1899.

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid*, 4 Nov. 1899.

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid*, 11 Nov. 1899

Mullingar. The gathering was addressed by John P. Hayden, MP for South Roscommon, Michael Davitt, William O'Brien and James J. O'Kelly, MP for North Roscommon, all of whom spoke of the necessity for land reform, rent reductions, and an end to the practice of renting grass on the 'eleven month system'. The speakers also availed of the opportunity to offer their support to the Boers.¹⁶¹

15. The Boer War

The outbreak of the Anglo-Boer War on 11 October 1899 presented the first opportunity since the Crimean war of 1854-56 for the Unionists of Westmeath to demonstrate their loyalty and support of the crown in a tangible way. Three members of the Westmeath aristocracy fought in the war. Sir Thomas Pakenham (1864-1915), 5th earl of Longford, his brother the Hon. Edward Pakenham (1866-1937) and Richard Levinge (later 10th baronet). The Hon. Edward Pakenham served as a captain with the Coldstream Guards from 1899-1902 and fought at Belmont, Graspan and Magersfontein.¹⁶² He distinguished himself in battle, was mentioned in dispatches, and received the Queen's medal with five clasps, and the King's medal with two clasps.¹⁶³ Richard Levinge (1878-1914), a lieutenant in the 8th King's Royal Irish Hussars transferred to the South Irish Horse, otherwise known as the 'South of Ireland Imperial Yeomanry', and served with that regiment in the war. He took part in engagements east of Pretoria between July and November 1900, as well as in other parts of the Transvaal from December 1900 to January 1901. He was decorated with

¹⁶¹ *Westmeath Examiner*, 18 Nov. 1899. For the life and career of James O'Kelly (1845-1916) as a soldier, member of the IRB, journalist, and politician, see James McGuire and James Quinn (eds), 'James Joseph O'Kelly', in *Dictionary of Irish Biography, Volume 7* (Cambridge, 2009), pp 601-3, and T. P. O'Connor, *The Parnell movement* (London, 1887), pp 188-93.

¹⁶² *Irish Times*, 25 Oct. 1902.

¹⁶³ *Burke's peerage*, p. 1649.

the Queen's medal and three clasps and retired from the army upon his return from South Africa in early 1901.¹⁶⁴

Prior to his departure Sir Thomas Pakenham was commissioned by the War Office to organise all of the yeomanry in Ireland. The troops he enrolled came from the ranks of Irish hunting men.¹⁶⁵ It was originally intended that only one company of 115 men would travel but such was the response that a second company was formed.¹⁶⁶ Thomas Pakenham held the rank of captain and was commander of the 45th Company, known as the 'Irish Hunt Company', one of four that comprised the 13th Battalion of Irish Imperial Yeomanry under the command of Lieutenant-Colonel Basil Spragg.

On 27 May 1900 at Lindley in the Orange Free State the 13th Battalion engaged a much larger force of Boers under General Piet De Wet which had occupied the town. On 31 May in an attempt to dislodge the enemy Thomas Pakenham led a bayonet charge which succeeded in pushing the Boers from their position, but at a high cost, with five men killed and four wounded, including Pakenham himself who was badly injured.¹⁶⁷ A reporter later stated that 'Lord Longford was the most conspicuous figure in the defence, his resourcefulness and splendid gallantry ranking with anything done by any man through the war'.¹⁶⁸ Later that day the 13th Battalion of the Imperial Yeomanry were forced to surrender having sustained heavy casualties, as reinforcements had failed to arrive due to a breakdown in communications. It was reported that 461 men from the battalion were taken prisoner by the Boers, who left

¹⁶⁴ The Marquis De Ruigny, *The roll of honour, a biographical record of all member of his Majesty's naval and military forces who have fallen in the war* (5 vols, London, 1916), i, p. 225.

¹⁶⁵ *Irish Times*, 13 Jan. 1900.

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid*, 20 Jan. 1900.

¹⁶⁷ *Ibid*, 30 Jul. 1900.

¹⁶⁸ *Ibid*, 8 Jan. 1901.

the wounded officers, including Pakenham, in Lindley.¹⁶⁹ He was later awarded the Queen's Medal with four clasps.

On 26 January 1901, having recovered from his wounds, Lord Longford returned to Pakenham Hall where he was greeted by a crowd of 200 estate tenants and local citizens. In May 1901 Lord Longford was presented with an address by the tenants on his Killucan estate congratulating him on his safe return from South Africa. In the address the tenants expressed their feelings of gladness that he was once more amongst them, in good health, notwithstanding all the perils and dangers he had encountered while serving at the front. A desire was expressed that the long standing and friendly relations between the Longford family and their tenantry would continue into the future.¹⁷⁰ On 10 June 1901, as an acknowledgement of his war service, Lord Longford received a knighthood and was invested with the Order of St Patrick by King Edward VII.¹⁷¹ In December 1901 Lord Longford was promoted to lieutenant-colonel and given command of a newly-created regiment called the 29th Battalion Imperial Yeomanry otherwise known as the 'Irish Horse'. It consisted of four companies, with five officers and one hundred and twenty men in each.¹⁷² The regiment left for South Africa on 10 May 1902,¹⁷³ and remained there until the surrender of the Boers on 31 May the same year. After the war Lord Longford remained in the army as a career officer.

Another member of the British forces that had connections to the aristocracy in Westmeath was Major-General Richard Steele Fetherstonhaugh (1848-1932) of Rockview House, Delvin. Fetherstonhaugh, a veteran of the Zulu War of 1879, and

¹⁶⁹ *Irish Times*, 25 Jun. 1900. See A. Conan Doyle, *The great Boer war* (London, 1900), pp 457- 60.

¹⁷⁰ *Ibid*, 17 May 1901.

¹⁷¹ *Ibid*, 12 Jun. 1901. See also Peter Galloway, *The most illustrious order of St. Patrick 1783-1983* (Chichester, 1983), p. 126.

¹⁷² *Irish Times*, 22 Jan. 1902.

¹⁷³ *Ibid*, 12 May 1902.

the Sudan campaign of 1885,¹⁷⁴ was related to the Chapman baronets through the marriage in 1849 of his aunt Maria Fetherstonhaugh to Sir Benjamin Chapman, 4th baronet, (1810-1888).¹⁷⁵ General Fetherstonhaugh also had an Irish estate of 3,148 acres located between Mullingar and Delvin.¹⁷⁶ On 23 November 1899 Fetherstonhaugh saw action and was wounded while in command of the 9th Brigade at the Battle of Belmont in the Orange Free State, during the campaign to relieve the siege at Kimberley.¹⁷⁷ In July 1900, as part of the campaign against the Boers Fetherstonhaugh commanded a column of troops that went on a ‘sweeping and scouring expedition’ through part of the Western Transvaal.¹⁷⁸ In April 1901 he was given command of two columns of troops in south-eastern Transvaal as part of Lieutenant-General Sir Bindon Blood’s drive against Boer commandos who were operating in that area. There were six columns of troops involved in the operation and they succeeded in taking over 1,000 Boer prisoners, as well as capturing large quantities of arms and ammunition, horses, wagons and carts.¹⁷⁹ Another member of the Westmeath landed class with connections to the Chapman family that served in the Boer War was Harold Boyd-Rochfort (1882-1960), Middleton Park, who fought with the Scottish Rifles.¹⁸⁰ Boyd-Rochfort was a nephew of Edith Boyd-Rochfort (1853-1930), wife of Sir Thomas Tighe Chapman, 7th baronet.¹⁸¹

The conduct of the war in South Africa divided public opinion in Westmeath. While the Unionists supported the war and had members of their group fighting in the British forces, Nationalists generally held the opposite view and sympathised with the

¹⁷⁴ Bernard Burke, *A genealogical and heraldic history of the landed gentry of Ireland* (London, 1912), p. 221.

¹⁷⁵ Hugh Montgomery-Massingberd (ed.), *Burke’s Irish family records* (London, 1976), p. 408.

¹⁷⁶ John Bateman, *The great landowners of Great Britain and Ireland* (London, 1883), p. 163.

¹⁷⁷ *The Times*, 25 Nov. 1899.

¹⁷⁸ *Ibid*, 2 Aug. 1901.

¹⁷⁹ *The Times*, 11 Jul. 1901.

¹⁸⁰ *Westmeath Examiner*, 17 Apr. 1900.

¹⁸¹ Bernard Burke, *A genealogical and heraldic history of the landed gentry of Ireland* (London, 1912), p. 602.

Boers, whose situation they equated with their own struggle for self-government. At a public meeting held at Ballymore in February 1902 James Lynam, a local politician, stated that ‘the Boers are a brave and united people, fighting for home and fatherland and if the Irish were as united as they are, the landlords would not trample on them’.¹⁸² Sir Walter Nugent, 4th baronet, a large Catholic landlord and member of the Irish Parliamentary Party, while expressing sympathy for the plight of the Boers, was circumspect in his support as he did not wish to alienate himself from his Unionist peers. Nugent stated that:

They had proved themselves a brave and warlike people, who were making a splendid struggle for their independence and who were worthy of the admiration of both friend and foe.¹⁸³

While aristocratic soldiers from Westmeath were doing what they regarded as their patriotic duty, a general election took place against the backdrop of the war. The election which was held between 29 September and 11 October 1900 saw no Westmeath aristocrat offer himself as a candidate, another indication that the political power of the Irish aristocracy had all but disappeared. This continued a sequence whereby no Protestant aristocrat had stood for election in Westmeath since the landslide victory of the Home Rule League in 1874 when the Hon. Algernon Greville-Nugent (later Lord Greville) had been defeated, and Sir Richard Levinge, 7th baronet, had failed to take a seat.¹⁸⁴ The only exceptions to the pattern of non-participation by aristocrats in the election process had been by Catholic aristocrats with two members experiencing electoral success, Lord Robert Montagu (1825-1902), elected Home Rule MP for Westmeath from 1874 until 1880, and as already detailed, Sir John J. Ennis, 2nd baronet, who sat as the Liberal MP for Athlone from 1880 until his death in

¹⁸² *Westmeath Examiner*, 22 Feb. 1902.

¹⁸³ *The Times*, 1 Apr. 1902.

¹⁸⁴ Walker (ed.) *Parliamentary election results in Ireland, 1801-1922*, p. 119.

1884.¹⁸⁵ O'Day has noted that until the Irish Party split of December 1890 it was impossible for anyone but a Parnellite to be successful in a constituency that had a majority of Catholic voters.¹⁸⁶ The failure by the aristocracy of Westmeath to win a parliamentary seat would continue until 1907, when Sir Walter Nugent, a Catholic Nationalist, succeeded in winning a by-election in the South Westmeath constituency.¹⁸⁷ (See Appendices 1-5).

16. Local Elections 1902

As already outlined in this chapter, the rise in the support for the United Irish League among the general population was causing concern among local politicians in Westmeath. In May 1902, during the lead up to the local elections, Sir Walter Nugent, 4th baronet, was forced to write to the *Westmeath Examiner* to refute claims that he was a member of the United Irish League.¹⁸⁸ Lord Greville also came in for criticism from a correspondent who questioned why Nationalists and Catholics had voted for him in the previous election, and having obtained the chair on a casting vote, had proceeded to insult the very same Catholic voters in a speech in the House of Lords. The correspondent rejected the accusation of having introduced a sectarian colour to the election claiming that Lord Greville had brought it upon himself.¹⁸⁹ Greville's younger brother Patrick, another outgoing councillor, in the cut and thrust of political discourse did not escape the sharp critique of another contributor to the newspaper who remarked that in the previous election Patrick Greville-Nugent had 'taken off his coat', canvassed vigorously, and 'promised everything under Heaven to the electors'.

¹⁸⁵ Walker (ed.) *Parliamentary election results in Ireland, 1801-1922*, p. 119, 122 and 129. See also Robert Henry Mair (ed.), *Debrett's illustrated House of Commons* (London, 1870), p. 201.

¹⁸⁶ O'Day, *Irish Home Rule 1867-1921*, p. 82.

¹⁸⁷ Walker (ed.) *Parliamentary election results in Ireland, 1801-1922*, pp 119-70.

¹⁸⁸ *Westmeath Examiner*, 17 May 1902.

¹⁸⁹ *Ibid*, 17 May 1902.

But when elected, he had put back on his coat, and unfortunately for the people, had kept it on since. The reality, according to the reporter, was that he had subsided into a non-entity. The writer summed up the general feelings towards certain candidates, stating that ‘during the contests of an election of course all candidates are, like the hurler in the ditch, capable of doing wonders’.¹⁹⁰

The improving fortunes of the UIL had a serious impact on the number of aristocrats returned to Westmeath County Council following the 1902 local council elections. Of the twenty-three councillors returned, only ten were outgoing members, the other thirteen were not returned by reason of death, resignation or defeat.¹⁹¹ Aristocratic representation on the council was much reduced. Lord Castlemaine was returned unopposed in his area, as was Charles O’Donoghue, nephew of Sir John Ennis, 2nd baronet, in the Moate division. The other successful aristocrat was the Hon. Patrick Greville-Nugent who defeated his rival by 260 votes to 125.¹⁹² However, in the Rathowen area Sir Walter Nugent was defeated by a UIL candidate by 205 votes to Nugent’s 199 and in the Owel division Lord Greville also lost his seat to another UIL candidate, this time by 161 votes to 137.¹⁹³ Greville’s defeat elicited an insightful comment from the *Westmeath Examiner* which captured the changing disposition of voters towards the Unionist landowning class:

In Owel another demonstration of National public opinion was made. Mr John O’Brien the League candidate won a victory over Lord Greville by a sound majority. There is no use in going into detail, but there can be no doubt that the people are growing more determined in the National fight each year.¹⁹⁴

The result of the 1902 local government election reflected the continuing downward spiral of the aristocracy as their grip on power and their influence in political

¹⁹⁰ *Westmeath Examiner*, 17 May 1902.

¹⁹¹ *Ibid*, 31 May 1902.

¹⁹² *Ibid*, 31 May 1902.

¹⁹³ *Freeman’s Journal*, 29 May 1902.

¹⁹⁴ *Westmeath Examiner*, 31 May 1902

decision-making disappeared. Having been banished from national political representation in the House of Commons since the death of Sir John Ennis in 1884, aristocrats and their fellow Unionists had now been rejected by the voters at grassroots level in Westmeath. Local politics from now on would be dominated by Catholic Nationalist middle-class, businessmen, professionals, shopkeepers, and farmers. The last bastion of political refuge for the aristocracy in Westmeath was the House of Lords. It is abundantly clear that by 1902 the aristocrats and Unionists of Westmeath had come to the conclusion that it was pointless contesting any election, either at national or local level, as they had no hope of success due to a deficit of potential voters. It is not surprising therefore, that no aristocrat contested the rural district council elections in 1902. At the first meeting of the newly-elected county council no aristocrat was appointed to a position of authority.¹⁹⁵ The representation of the aristocracy on Westmeath County Council declined to such an extent that by 1912 Lord Castlemaine was the only Unionist, aristocrat and landlord on it.

The increased threat posed by the UIL was apparent to the landlords of Ireland. The league had grown steadily and by April 1902 there were upwards of 1,400 branches throughout the country.¹⁹⁶ In early April the executive of the Irish Landowner's Convention formed an organisation called the Irish Land Trust. The aim of the Trust was to resist combinations of tenants trying to compel the landlords to sell their estates under threats of non-payment of rents, and to take any legal proceedings necessary to defend themselves, to assist in stocking or cultivating evicted or boycotted lands, and generally to give effective assistance to any persons attacked or threatened in the exercise of the liberty or legal rights by the UIL, or any other political or agrarian combination in Ireland. Ultimately, the objective of the

¹⁹⁵ *Westmeath Examiner*, 14 Jun. 1902.

¹⁹⁶ *Irish Examiner*, 23 Jul. 1902.

trustees was to crush the UIL and to do this effectively it was agreed that £100,000 would have to be raised. Among the shareholders of the trust, many of whom were leading aristocratic landlords, were Lord Longford and Sir Montagu Chapman.¹⁹⁷

On 10 October 1902 a convention of the Irish Landowner's Association gathered in Dublin to consider the Irish land question. The meeting was held in private under the presidency of the duke of Abercorn. The Westmeath delegates present were Sir Montagu Chapman and Lord Castlemaine. A third delegate from the county, Major-General William Devenish Meares, was unable to attend.¹⁹⁸ The government's lack of response to the land question was severely criticised by a number of delegates. The earl of Mayo proposed that a conference between representatives of landlords and tenants be held to deal with the Irish land question. While accepting the resolution, the majority of delegates were sceptical of its chances of achieving a positive outcome, and passed an amendment which stated that in their opinion no good would result from the conference.¹⁹⁹

On 20 December 1902 the land conference consisting of representatives of landlords and tenants convened in Dublin in an attempt to reach agreement on a purchase scheme acceptable to both landlords and tenants, with such a scheme to be included in the upcoming land purchase act. The landlords were represented by the earl of Mayo, the earl of Dunraven, Sir Nugent Everard and Sir Hutchinson Poë while the tenants were represented by John Redmond, William O'Brien, Timothy Harrington and Thomas W. Russell. Agreement was reached on 3 January 1903 and the conference published its report the following day. The report included a

¹⁹⁷ *Irish Examiner*, 23 Jul. 1902. According to Dooley The Irish Landowners Convention was a landlord organisation established in 1886 to protect their interests and property from the National League, the plan of campaign and government legislation see, Dooley, *The decline of the big house in Ireland*, p. 304.

¹⁹⁸ *Kildare Observer*, 18 Oct. 1902.

¹⁹⁹ *Connacht Telegraph*, 18 Oct. 1902. The report contains a full account of the convention.

declaration that dual ownership should be replaced by proprietary ownership. In this regard, to assist in the transfer of land from landlord to tenant, a land purchase scheme was recommended, to be financed by the exchequer, with repayment by the tenants over a specified number of years.²⁰⁰ The report was widely praised by politicians in Britain and Ireland, as well as by the Catholic hierarchy.²⁰¹ However, one of the most strident and disparaging critics of the land conference was the Westmeath born lawyer and land agitator, Laurence Ginnell, whose politics will be described in the next chapter. Ginnell, who advocated compulsory sale, claimed that the outcome of the conference was a foregone conclusion, and that the main object was ‘to enable tenants to pay big prices’. He further declared that the land conference had undone the previous twenty-three years of Irish land agitation, and was the most valuable victory ever achieved by the landlords.²⁰² Ginnell regarded the terms of the proposed land act to be a financial bail out for the landowners at the expense of the tenants.

Arising from the land conference, George Wyndham, Irish chief secretary, introduced his Land Purchase (Ireland) Bill on 25 March 1903, a critical piece of legislation which would totally revolutionise the system of land ownership in Ireland. The bill, enacted into law on 14 August 1903, had major implications for the future of landlordism in Ireland.

17. Conclusion.

The period from 1870 to 1903 saw a major decline in the political power of the aristocracy in Westmeath. This had occurred chiefly as a result of electoral reforms implemented by the British government. The widening of the franchise effectively ended the presence of the aristocracy in the House of Commons as the majority of

²⁰⁰ Anon, *Land War 1879-1903* (Dublin, 1976), p. 19.

²⁰¹ Michael MacDonagh, *The life of William O'Brien* (London, 1928), p. 161.

²⁰² Laurence Ginnell, *Land and liberty* (Dublin, 1908), pp 89-90.

newly enfranchised voters were Roman Catholic and were unlikely to support a Protestant aristocratic landowner. The only remaining political forum for Westmeath aristocrats was now the House of Lords, where they could sit as Irish representative peers or in the case of Lord Longford, as the holder of a British courtesy title.

The chief political consequence for the aristocratic landowners of the Land Law (Ireland) Act 1881, which established the concept of joint ownership between landlord and tenants, was an increased political awareness among the tenantry. This presented the possibility of another campaign for sole ownership. The reform of local government as part of the Conservative policy for Ireland had significant consequences for the aristocracy in Westmeath, bringing about the establishment of a county council to replace the discredited grand jury, which had been dominated by the aristocratic families for generations. Despite the candidates being elected by suffrage, rather than by appointment, the people of Westmeath returned five aristocrats to sit on the council, more than any other county in the three southern provinces, with Lord Greville being elected chairman. However, successive elections would see a decline in the number of aristocratic representatives.

The reforms and changing political circumstances of the period took place against the background of the most important political issue of the period, which was the question of Home Rule for Ireland. The participation of the Westmeath aristocracy in organisations that opposed Home Rule was vindicated by the defeat of the Home Rule Bills of 1886 and 1893, with Lord Greville being the only Irish peer to vote in favour of the second bill. The aristocracy in Westmeath affirmed their loyalty to the crown during the royal visit to Westmeath in 1897, and by their participation in the Anglo-Boer War. While they were loyal supporters of the union between Great Britain and Ireland, aristocratic politicians were divided on the issue of taxation and

financial relations between Britain and Ireland. Lord Longford and Sir Montagu Chapman did not consider Ireland to be overtaxed, while Lord Greville held the opposing view.

The position of the Protestant Unionist landowners, of which the aristocratic families were a component part, was becoming more tenuous as radical land legislation was about to be enacted, while at the same time the question of Home Rule for Ireland was once more emerging as a political issue. The impact of the Wyndham Land Act, the ensuing Ranch War, and the political implications for the aristocracy in Westmeath between 1903 and 1914, will be examined in detail in the following chapters.

Chapter 4

The Wyndham Land Act, the Ranch War, and the Westmeath aristocracy, 1903-1914

1. Introduction

The amount of land owned by the Westmeath aristocracy reflected their power as a class. On 14 August 1903 the Irish Land Act, otherwise known as the Wyndham Land Act, after George Wyndham, the chief secretary for Ireland who was instrumental in its inception, passed into law. The act was the most radical and innovative of all the Irish land acts and its role in transforming the social, economic and political landscape of Ireland should not be underestimated. Dooley states that it was not until the passage of the act that a revolutionary transfer of landownership began.¹

This chapter will examine the significance of the Wyndham Land Act from the perspective of the aristocracy by exploring how the terms of the act affected the lives of the families. In order to carry out an in-depth examination of the Wyndham Land Act it is essential to analyse some critical questions. What were the consequences of the act for the aristocratic families in Westmeath? The terms of the act encouraged the aristocratic landowners to dispose of estate land. What incentives contained in the act persuaded landowners to sell their estate land? How much land did the aristocratic families sell under the terms of the act and what was the Nationalist response to the passing of the act?

The Wyndham Land Act also had implications for agricultural tenants, which will also be explored. How were agricultural rents affected by the act? Why were adjustments and abatement in rent sought by tenants who had not purchased their

¹ Terence Dooley, *The decline of the big house in Ireland* (Dublin, 2001), p. 111.

holdings? What were the consequences of granting rebates for aristocratic families? Why did some aristocrats grant rent abatements while others refused? The ensuing discussion in addition to addressing the act from the perspective of the aristocracy, will seek to answer these questions, and will, in addition, investigate the issue of evictions.

The passing of the Wyndham Land Act was a significant factor in the outbreak of the Ranch War in 1906, a major event which must also be analysed and contextualised. How did changes in agricultural practices by aristocratic landowners contribute to the outbreak of agrarian agitation? Who were the leaders of the agitation? What were their aims and objective and what was the nature and extent of the agitation? The main method of agitation was that of cattle driving which commenced in 1907. How extensive was this practice and did it involve the maiming of animals? How, moreover, did it affect the aristocratic landowners and what was the response by the authorities and aristocratic politicians? The answers to these questions will illustrate how the aristocratic landowners and their tenants were affected by the passing of the Wyndham land Act and how it contributed to the decline of the aristocracy as a class in Westmeath. It will also demonstrate that while the act resulted in a massive transfer in land ownership it failed to end the problem of agrarian agitation.

2. Wyndham Land Act, 1903

The passing of the Wyndham Act 1903 by the British government was in response to the recommendations of the Land Conference. As the owners of large estates, the Wyndham Land Act had major implications for the aristocracy in Westmeath. The terms of the act were attractive for both landlord and tenant. It encouraged landlords

to sell both tenanted and untenanted land and offered them a twelve percent bonus payable in cash, in addition to the selling price, as an incentive towards the disposal of their entire estates.² The Wyndham Act made it easier for tenants to acquire their holdings, the purchase money being advanced by the government. The purchasing tenants gained on two fronts: firstly they became the sole owners of their holdings, and secondly their annuity repayments were substantially less than their previous rent. This new situation would create the reality of peasant proprietorship, an ambition longed dreamed of by agrarian activists. Prices for holdings varied from eighteen and a half to twenty-four and a half years on rents fixed by the land courts under the 1881 act, or twenty-one and a half to twenty-seven years on rents fixed in or after the 1896 act, the whole amount to be advanced at three and a quarter per cent, repayable over sixty-eight and a half years.³ Consequently, the former landlord in retaining his demesne lands would remain in-situ as a farmer rather than a landlord, whose financial future would be secure with the earnings gained from the remaining land, together with the income realised from investing the proceeds from the sale of the former estate land. The act also allowed landlords to sell their demesne land to the estate commissioners and buy it back again on the same annuity terms as the tenants.⁴ However, there was no provision in the act for compulsory purchase, which had been sought by agrarian campaigners that included Laurence Ginnell from Westmeath, David Sheehy from Meath and J. P. Farrell of Longford.⁵

The act was both widely praised and roundly criticised, depending on the perspective of the commentator. It was generally seen as a positive and necessary

² F. S. L. Lyons, 'The aftermath of Parnell, 1891-1903', in W. E. Vaughan (ed.) *A new history of Ireland vi* (Oxford, 1996), p. 96.

³ D.J Hickey and J.E. Doherty, *A new dictionary of Irish history from 1800* (Dublin, 2003), pp 259-60.

⁴ *Ibid*, pp 259-60.

⁵ Laurence Ginnell, *Land and liberty* (Dublin, 1908), p. 96. Ginnell was MP for North Westmeath, Sheehy (1844-1932) was MP for South Meath and Farrell (1865-1921) was MP for North Longford. See also examination of the Ranch War later in this chapter.

development by the political parties at Westminster, despite some members having reservations regarding particular financial provisions.⁶ It was lauded by people such as Samuel Hussey, land agent to Lord Kenmare who remarked: ‘Mr. Wyndham’s Act is a great one for Ireland, because where a tenant previously paid £100 a year rent, all he will have to pay-even at twenty- four years purchase-is £80 a year, and at that rate with the bonus the landlord obtains twenty-seven years purchase’.⁷ Hussey went on to declare:

I cannot say that I think many landlords will leave Ireland in consequence of the Wyndham Act. The few who will go are those who are glad to be quit at any price, and to be free to pack out of the country. But many a landlord will be far more comfortable on his own estate, when he has rid himself of all his tenants.⁸

Hussey was not to know of the events that would wreck his prophecy, as many landlords felt compelled to give up their holdings in the turbulent period after 1918. These events will be examined in chapters seven and eight of this thesis. T. D. Sullivan (1827-1914), MP for Westmeath from 1880 to 1885, believed that the act would not abolish landlordism but would ‘reduce the number of landlords, and clear out many of the most embarrassed, and consequently the most exact and most merciless of their class’.⁹ At the annual meeting of the Irish Landowners Convention on 1 May 1903, attended by Sir Montagu Chapman and Lord Castlemaine as two of the three representatives from County Westmeath, the president of the convention, the duke of Abercorn, described the act as:

A great and generous measure recently introduced by His Majesty’s Government with the object of greatly and widely extending the system of land purchase upon the voluntarily lines, in the hope of thereby ending

⁶ For a detailed outline of the response to the Wyndham land act, See Patrick John Cosgrove, *The Wyndham Land Act, 1903: The final solution to the Irish land question?* (PhD thesis, NUI Maynooth, 2008), pp 136-46.

⁷ Home Gordon, *The reminiscences of an Irish land agent* (London, 1904), p. 187.

⁸ Gordon, *The reminiscences of an Irish land agent*, p. 192.

⁹ T. D. Sullivan, *Recollections of trouble times in Irish politics* (Dublin, 1905), p. 369.

agrarian strife and enabling both classes to work together for the greater welfare of the country to which we all belong.¹⁰

While praising the act the duke cautioned that it fell down in the area of money, claiming that if the inducements to sell were insufficient then the willingness on the part of the tenant to purchase would be absent. He stated that there were many owners of valuable estates who could not afford a further reduction in income which a sale under the act would bring.¹¹

Those opposed to the Wyndham Act castigated it as being pro-landlord. Agitators such as Michael Davitt believed that landlords were getting well in excess of the market value of their estates,¹² while Laurence Ginnell described the act as ‘the greatest Landlord Relief Act ever passed, the most extensive and successful raid ever made upon the pockets of the Irish people, and its zones relating to tenanted land the greatest instrument of extortion ever invented’.¹³

George Wyndham was convinced that the land act was vital for the future of Ireland and he was deeply concerned that the continued criticism of the act would undermine his efforts to meet the needs of all parties. He expressed these sentiments in a letter to a friend, Moreton Frewen:

I cannot (1) get Imperial credit; (2) make and keep savings for Ireland if every action taken by the Government on the advice, and with the assent of Irishmen, is used only to attack the fortunes and insult the feelings of those classes in Ireland whom the great majority of people in England feel bound to protect.¹⁴

¹⁰ *Irish Times*, 2 May 1903. For an Ulster perspective on the Wyndham Land Act see Olwen Purdue, *The big house in the North of Ireland* (Dublin, 2009), pp 79-91.

¹¹ *Ibid*, 2 May 1903.

¹² Laurence Marley, *Michael Davitt, freelance radical and frondeur* (Dublin, 2007), p. 275.

¹³ Laurence Ginnell, *Land and liberty* (Dublin, 1908), p. 96. Ginnell provides a detailed critique of his opposition to the Land Act of 1903 in his book *Land and liberty* (Dublin, 1908), pp 96-137. Laurence Ginnell (1852-1923) was born in Delvin, Co. Westmeath. He qualified as a Barrister, had been personal secretary to John Dillon, and had also served as national secretary of the UIL. He first stood for election in 1900 unsuccessfully, before winning the North Westmeath in 1906 for the IPP. He was expelled from the IPP in 1909 and sat in the House of Commons as an Independent Nationalist until 1917 when he joined Sinn Féin. He was the author of several books.

¹⁴ George Wyndham to Moreton Frewen, 14 November 1903, in Guy Wyndham (ed.), *Letters of George Wyndham*, ii (Edinburgh, 1915), p. 84.

Wyndham believed that John Dillon, who he described as ‘a pure Agrarian sore-head’, and Michael Davitt, ‘a pure Revolutionary Socialist’, had joined with Thomas Sexton, chairman of the *Freeman’s Journal* in order to spike conciliation.¹⁵

The success of the Wyndham Act can be gauged by the response of both landlords and tenants. In August 1903 the *Westmeath Examiner* in supporting the act stated that it presented an opportunity for landlords to put an end to land agitation and under the terms of the act they could get good prices for themselves while at the same time give reasonable terms to their tenants.¹⁶ The newspaper’s first prediction was proved correct as there was an immediate reduction in agrarian related crime in the wake of the act.¹⁷ In November 1903 the newspaper defined the process of land acquisition, casting a cold eye on the vendor, while at the same time urging caution on the part of the purchaser. The article stated:

Land purchase is a business transaction devoid of all sentiment except that which is the complement of the right of the Irish farmer to the land he lives on. It is a business transaction pure and simple, with much of the profit to the vendor and the landlords who say ‘you must buy before such and such date’ are only trying to rush high prices and handle exorbitant purchase money.¹⁸

Between 1 November 1903 and 31 March 1906, 85,638 agreements for the direct transfer of land from landlord to tenant were made.¹⁹ While many landowners sold their estates at the first opportunity to benefit from the financial incentives contained in the act there were many others who stubbornly refused to divest themselves of any

¹⁵ George Wyndham to Percy Wyndham, 21 November 1903, in Guy Wyndham (ed.), *Letters of George Wyndham, ii* (Edinburgh, 1915), p. 85. See also F. S. L. Lyons, ‘The aftermath of Parnell, 1891-1903’, in W. E. Vaughan (ed.) *A new history of Ireland vi* (Oxford, 1996), p. 97.

¹⁶ *Westmeath Examiner*, 22 Aug. 1903. For a detailed analysis of the financial provisions contained in the Wyndham Land Act, see *Westmeath Examiner*, 15 Aug. 1903.

¹⁷ Alan O’Day, *Irish Home Rule 1867-1921* (Manchester, 1998), p. 197.

¹⁸ *Westmeath Examiner*, 21 Nov. 1903.

¹⁹ Paul Dubois, *Contemporary Ireland* (Dublin, 1908), p. 289. In *Contemporary Ireland*, pp 282-95 Dubois gives a comprehensive assessment of the Wyndham Land Act. See also Terence Dooley, *The decline of the big house in Ireland* (Dublin, 2001), pp 112-8.

estate lands.²⁰ During the period from 1 November 1903 to 31 March 1911 it was estimated by the Estate Commissioners that 2,348 estates comprising a total 2,924,229 acres would be acquired by 82,385 purchasers at a cost of £25,727,996.²¹(see Table 1)

Table 1. Purchase of estates by Land Commission from 1.11.1903 to 31.3.1911.

	No. of Estates	No. of Proposed Purchasers	Area of Land (Acres)	Purchase Price (£)
Estates into which enquiries have been made by Commissioners	599	23,391	783,102	6,743,301
Estates for which offers of purchase have been made by Land Commission	474	17,356	587,286	5,093,282
Estates for which offers to purchase have been accepted by owners.	458	16,641	570,405	4,876,951
Estates for which agreements to purchase have been made.	423	15,665	529,765	4,574,476
Estates purchased	394	15,332	513,581	4,439,986
Total	2,348	82,385	2,924,229	25,727,996

Irish Land Acts, 1903-9. Report of the Estate Commissioners for the year ending 31st March 1911 and for the period from 1st November, 1903 to 31st March, [C.5888], HC 1911, xxix.511, 8.

In his analysis of the Nationalist response to the land act of 1903 Bull commented that ‘the land act heralded the end of the most substantial cause of dispute between the nationalist population of Ireland and the landlord class’.²² Despite the large change in land ownership, the Wyndham Land Act did not end landlordism in Ireland, nor did it resolve the land question. However, it did change the dynamic of estate ownership by the landed classes. This is borne out by Terence Dooley’s research which reveals that the money received from the sale of estate land in many instances actually rejuvenated big house life, in that many of the economic burdens associated with estate ownership no longer applied, thereby stabilising their financial position.²³ Many landlords saw the act as a mechanism for alleviating their financial difficulties and

²⁰ Hickey and Doherty, *A new dictionary of Irish history from 1800*, p. 260.

²¹ *Irish Land Acts, 1903-9. Report of the Estate Commissioners for the year ending 31st March 1911 and for the period from 1st November, 1903 to 31st March, [C.5888], HC 1911, xxix.511, 8.*

²² Philip Bull, ‘The significance of the nationalist response to the Irish land act of 1903’, in *Irish Historical Studies, Vol. 28, No. 111* (Dublin, 1993), p. 288 available at <http://www.jstor.org/stable/30007493> [1 November 2015].

²³ Dooley, *The decline of the big house in Ireland*, p. 274.

while the act can be criticised as being more than favourable to the landlord class it is doubtful whether landowners would have disposed of their holdings in such numbers had the necessary incentives not been put in place.

3. Aristocratic land sales, 1903-1914

The passing of the Wyndham Land Act in 1903 saw a dramatic increase in land sales by the Westmeath aristocracy, who were encouraged to sell both by the financial incentives contained within the act, and by the eagerness of many tenants to purchase their holdings. In examining the pattern of land sales it is apparent that some families sold a greater proportion of their estates than others. Prior to the enactment of the Wyndham Land Act the sale of aristocratic estate lands had been sporadic. However, between 1903 and 1914 the number of sales increased dramatically. The aristocratic landowners of Westmeath sold 42,359 acres of land to 1,380 purchasers and received £574,223 (See Table. 1).

The amount of aristocratic land sold between 1903 and 1914 was almost a five-fold increase on the 9,635 acres of land that the families had sold in the period from 1879 to 1902. In what follows, the particular circumstances surrounding this substantial transfer in land ownership will be outlined in brief. Following this, the procedures involved in the sale of estate land will be analysed in more detail by utilising two case studies relating to the estates of Lord Longford and the Greville family. These specific case studies were chosen as they clearly represent the process and difficulties involved in land sales, highlighting in particular the detailed negotiations required to successfully conclude land settlements. The significance of the sale of aristocratic estate land in Westmeath will also be examined in the context of similar aristocratic sales in other Irish counties.

Table 1. Estate land sold by Westmeath aristocrats, 1 Jan 1903- 31 Dec 1914.

Name	Year Sold	No of Buyers	Where Sold (County)	Amount Sold (Acres)	Amount Received (£)	Interest %	Years Purchase (Average)
Lord Castlemaine	1906	24	Roscommon	636	3,869		
	1910	7	Westmeath	87	1,201	3¼	21.7
	1911	59	Westmeath	1,205	14,300	3¼	22.5
	1912	40	Roscommon	475	4,323	3¼	20.5
	1912	133	Westmeath	2,877	33,423	3¼, 3½	21.8, 22.5
	1913	114	Westmeath	2,835	31,199	3¼	22.0
	1914	2	Westmeath	1,465*	20,011	3¼	22.0
		378		6,650	68,304		
Lord Greville	1913	57	Roscommon	1,336	14,177	3¼, 3½	22.5
	1913	10	Cork	377	5,567	3½	20.2
	1914	5	Cork	59	1,011	3½	16.5
		72		1,772	20,755		
Mildred de la Bedoyere (nee Greville)	1903	7	Westmeath	235	2,289		
	1904	6	Longford	77	998		
		13		312	3,287		
Lady Caroline Chapman & Francis V. Chapman Lady Chapman	1905	55	Kilkenny	1,488	19,456		
	1912	96	Westmeath	3,361	42,326	3¼	21.8
		151		4,849	61,782		
Assignees of Sir Walter Nugent (Donore)	1903	25	Longford	592	6,020		
	1903	72	Westmeath	1,369	16,836		
	1904	13	Longford	493	6,574		
	1904	16	Meath	381	4,098		
	1904	13	Westmeath	676	9,354		
	1907	2	Longford	121	1,568		
	1907	3	Meath	317	1,217		
	1907	5	Westmeath	269	3,086		
	1908	1	Westmeath	308	1,900		
	1908	1	Westmeath	390	975		
	1908	1	Westmeath	571	100		
	1908	1	Westmeath	32	8		
	1908	1	Westmeath	151	12		
	1908	1	Westmeath	64	10		
	1912	2	Westmeath	204	2,640	3½	22.1
	1914	6	Westmeath	115	1,458	3½	16.7, 19.3
1914	11	Meath	240	2,716	3½	18.0	
		174		6,293	58,572		
Assignees of Sir Charles Nugent (Ballinlough)	1911	52	Westmeath	1,478	21,885	3¼	22.0
	1911	3	Meath	399	4,689	3¼	21.2
	1911	2	Westmeath	207	4,488	3½	23.8
	1912	7	Westmeath	513	8,962	3¼	23.6
	1912	2	Meath	279	4,727	3¼	23.9
		66		2,876	44,661		
Sir Thomas Pakenham (5 th earl)	1905	263	Westmeath	8,422	143,695		23.0
	1908	19	Westmeath	456	6,536		
	1911	1	Westmeath	64	938	3½	21.9
	1912	124	Longford	3,237	51,957	3¼, 3½	21.9
	1913	34	Westmeath	1,897	31,514	3¼	21.6
	1913	9	Longford	290	7,350	3¼	18.7
		450		14,366	241,990		
Hon. Edward Pakenham	1912	42	Westmeath	1,757	23,393	3¼	19.8
		42		1,757	23,393		
Sir Richard Levinge	1911	59	Westmeath	2,217	30,882	3¼	21.5
	1912	17	Westmeath	1,267	20,607	3¼, 3½	21.3
		76		3,484	51,489		
Total		1,380		42,359	574,233		

Source: *Return of advances under the Purchase of Land (Ireland) Act 1891, the Irish Land Act 1903.*

*: Denotes the re-purchase of demesne lands.

It is intended to provide a brief overview of land sales by outlining a number of cases involving Westmeath aristocrats and their families. As will become clear, while some agreements were made without undue difficulty, other cases were more fractious and problematic. The first of the Westmeath aristocrats to reach an agreement with their tenants to purchase their holdings was Sir Walter Nugent. The process commenced in March 1902 (prior to the passage of the act in August 1903) when an agreement for purchase was reached between the trustees of Nugent's estate and the tenants. At a hearing of the Land Court on 15 July 1903 the owners and petitioners made an application to have the ongoing sales to the tenants carried-out as eighty tenants had already purchased their holdings. However, the National Bank who had encumbrances on the estate sought to have any additional sales deferred until after the Wyndham Land Act had been passed, as the difference between payment by land stock and payment in cash would be about £2,000. The judge deferred the case and stated that as the purchase price would remain the same the tenants would benefit as they would only have to pay three and a quarter per cent interest instead of four per cent on their purchase money.²⁴ Once these matters had been resolved the sale of estate land proceeded as outlined in Table 1.²⁵

In December 1903 the tenants on the Knockdrin estate of Sir Richard Levinge held a meeting to consider the terms on which he was prepared to sell. The tenants

²⁴ *Irish Times*, 16 Jul. 1903. An encumbrance is a mortgage or other claim against a property or asset by a party that is not the owner. An assignee is a person to whom property is transferred, either in perpetuity or in trust. See, Leonard H. West and F. G. Neave, *Mozley and Whiteley's law dictionary* (London, 1904), p. 24.

²⁵ *Return of advances under the Purchase of Land (Ireland) Act 1891*,(335), *HC 1903*, lvii.31, 88-9. *Return of advances under the Purchase of Land (Ireland) Act 1891*,(335), *HC 1903*, lvii.31, 97-100. *Return of advances under the Purchase of Land (Ireland) Act 1891*, (329), *HC 1904*, lxxx, 45-6. *Return of advances made under the Irish Land Act 1903 and Irish Land Act 1909*, [Cd. 3238], *HC 1906*, c, 257-8. *Return of advances made under the Irish Land Purchase Acts*, [Cd. 3815],[Cd.3921], [Cd.4012],[Cd.4035],[Cd.4048],[Cd.4113][Cd.4159],[Cd.4163],[Cd.4172],[Cd.4273],[Cd .4296], *HC 1908*, xc.131, 141-2.

declined the proposal and made a counter-offer to Sir Richard.²⁶ A sense of how both parties regarded the other's offer can be gauged from a report in the *Westmeath Examiner* which remarked that 'the landlord's proposition was considered by the tenants so outlandish that negotiations were immediately nipped in the bud'.²⁷ In 1909 Sir Richard Levinge inherited the Bunny Hall estate near the city of Nottingham in England through his grandfather Sir Richard Levinge, 6th baronet, whose wife Elizabeth was the eldest daughter of the original owner Thomas Parkyns, 1st baron Rancliffe.²⁸ The estate which consisted of a house containing valuable furnishings and 4,000 acres of land was sold the following year by Sir Richard to Mr. Albert Bell, Major of Nottingham for the sum of £100,000.²⁹ The contents of the house, which were sold separately, also yielded a considerable sum of money.³⁰ During 1911 Sir Richard also sold estate land in Westmeath.³¹

In December 1904 the tenants on the O'Donoghue estate formerly owned by the Ennis baronets met the land agent W. P. Kelly with a view to purchasing their holdings. The tenants considered Mr Kelly's terms too high and decided to hold a meeting to consider the landlord's offer.³² In 1906 Lord Castlemaine sold his County Roscommon estates west of Athlone to the forty tenants,³³ and in May 1908 he concluded the sale of his Westmeath estates.³⁴ In the autumn of 1908 Sir Charles

²⁶ *Irish Times*, 28 Dec. 1903.

²⁷ *Westmeath Examiner*, 26 Mar. 1904.

²⁸ *Burke's Peerage and baronetage* (London, 1976), p. 1599. Note, *Irish Times*, 25 Dec. 1909, and *Irish Times*, 21 Dec. 1909 inaccurately state that the estate was inherited through his grandfather Sir James Levinge.

²⁹ Nottingham Central library, Doubleday scrapbook, IV, pp 183-4.

³⁰ Nottingham Central library, Doubleday scrapbook, III, pp 110-11. See also *Irish Independent*, 25 Feb. 1910 which provides details on prices achieved for some paintings and furniture.

³¹ *Return of advances made under the Irish Land Act 1903 and Irish Land Act 1909*, [Cd. 6028], [Cd. 6029], [Cd. 6096], [Cd. 6137], [Cd. 6187], [Cd. 6263], [Cd. 6330], [Cd. 6393], [Cd. 6403], [Cd. 6420], [Cd. 6424], [Cd. 6443], HC 1912-13, lxx.747, lxx, 298-9.

³² *Freeman's Journal*, 26 Dec. 1904

³³ *Irish Times*, 29 May 1906. *Return of advances made under the Irish Land Act 1903 and Irish Land Act 1909*, [Cd. 3310], [Cd. 3424], [Cd. 3532], [Cd. 3535], [Cd. 3557], HC 1907, lxx, 13-14.

³⁴ *Ibid*, 16 May 1908. *Return of advances made under the Irish Land Act 1903 and Irish Land Act 1909*, [Cd. 6028], [Cd. 6029], [Cd. 6096], [Cd. 6137], [Cd. 6187], [Cd. 6263], [Cd. 6330], [Cd.

Nugent agreed purchase terms with the tenants on his Ballinlough and Killough estates,³⁵ and in December 1911 he sold most of his remaining estate lands in Meath and Westmeath.³⁶

In July 1904 Lady Caroline Chapman and her brother Francis Chapman agreed to sell their 1,488 acre Conahy estate in County Kilkenny to the sixty-nine tenants who were all small holders,³⁷ and in November that year negotiations opened between Sir Montagu Chapman and the tenants on his Clonmellon estate.³⁸ However, on 23 January 1907 Sir Montagu Chapman died of pneumonia aged fifty-three, and his wife, Lady Caroline, inherited the majority of her late husband's estate.³⁹ On 12 February 1907 at Clonmellon Petty Sessions Mr. Robert F. Olphert RM paid tribute to Sir Montagu Chapman. However, his remarks immediately elicited a critical response from an anonymous correspondent to the editor of the *Meath Chronicle* whose comments reflected the regard in which the writer believed the Chapman family was held in the local area. The letter stated:

Last Tuesday at Clonmellon Petty Sessions Mr Olphert referred at some length to the death of Sir M. Chapman, Bart. Such remarks were not out of place because of the old adage 'Of the dead say nothing but what is good'. But with his reference to the Chapman family as landlords I cannot agree. Mr. Olphert has been stationed in this county only since 1892, and has no knowledge and no memory of the Chapman family as landlords, but I direct his attention to one thing which I am sure cannot have escaped his notice. In walking to Clonmellon on court days across the field did he ever ask himself why this broad expanse of grass land is untenanted. Because in the famine year Sir

6393], [Cd. 6403], [Cd. 6420], [Cd. 6424], [Cd. 6443], HC 1912-13, lxix, lxx, 567-8, 692,

³⁵ *Irish Times*, 3 Oct. 1908.

³⁶ *Return of advances made under the Irish Land Act 1903 and Irish Land Act 1909*, [Cd. 6028], [Cd. 6029], [Cd. 6096], [Cd. 6137], [Cd. 6187], [Cd. 6263], [Cd. 6330], [Cd. 6393], [Cd. 6403], [Cd. 6420], [Cd. 6424], [Cd. 6443], HC 1912-13, lxix, lxx, 929-31.

³⁷ *Irish Times*, 16 Jul. 1904. *Return of advances made under the Irish Land Act 1903*, [Cd.3238], HC 1906, c.625, 10-1. The estate was acquired by the Chapman family sometime after 1876. According to the *Return of owners of land of one acre and upwards in the several counties, counties of cities and county of towns in Ireland [C.1492] HC 1876*, lxxx.61, 36. The estate was listed as being in the Court of Chancery.

³⁸ *Meath Chronicle*, 26 Nov. 1904.

³⁹ *Irish Times*, 14 Mar. 1908. Sir Montagu left a personal estate of £17,783 14s 11d of which £4,708 10s was in England. The remainder of the estate was left to Richard Fetherstonhaugh, the eldest son of his cousin Major-General Richard Steele Fetherstonhaugh, Rockview House, Delvin and Gwydyr, Isle of Wight

Montagu Chapman cleared out the whole country side in Kilrush and sent them away to Australia in rotten ships to be lost, and left the whole country side to be turned into fruitful mother of flocks and herds. He made a solitude and called it peace-a peace which is never disturbed save by the jubilant tally-ho of the foxhunter or the lowing of the landsharks cattle. Did Mr Olphert ever think to himself why human beings should be turned out to make room for the bullock and then stand up in 60 years and speak in glowing language of the generosity of the Chapman family as landlords-a thing he has no experience of, or even the faintest memory-Yours truly, KILRUSH.⁴⁰

There are several reasons to suspect that the anonymous correspondent was Laurence Ginnell. He was born in the nearby townland of Crowenstown, which adjoined Francis Chapman's South Hill demesne. Moreover, the tone, style and content of the letter indicates that the writer was a person of status and education, as well as being possessed of a sharp intellect and who held strong views on agrarian matters. It is apparent that the writer objected to Mr. Olphert's portrayal of Sir Montagu, 5th baronet and the Chapman family as being benevolent landlords. He was highly critical of the forced clearance of the estate for ranch farming during the Famine by Sir Montagu Chapman, 3rd baronet, who compelled the former occupants to migrate to Australia in unseaworthy ships. The writer also wished to highlight Mr. Olphert's apparent lack of knowledge of the Chapman family as well as the local area by asking him to ponder why human beings were turned out 'to make room for the bullock' sixty years earlier; yet he had stood up and spoke of the generosity of the Chapman family in glowing terms.

On 10 December 1907 the seventy tenants on the Chapman estate in the Kilbeggan and Castletowngeoghegan parishes met the land agent, Major Hamilton, and following negotiations agreed purchase terms.⁴¹ In April 1908 the tenants on Lady Caroline Chapman's estates at Ballinakill and The Pigeons near Athlone agreed

⁴⁰ *Meath Chronicle*, 16 Feb. 1907.

⁴¹ *Westmeath Examiner*, 14 Dec. 1907

to purchase their holdings,⁴² while in November the same year purchase terms were agreed on Lady Chapman's estate lands at Knockion, Float, Knightswood, and Ballinafid, and on the Springfield and Ballagh holdings outside Mullingar.⁴³

In December 1911, under powers conferred by the 1909 Land Act, the Congested District Board informed Daniel Boyle (1859-1925), MP for North Mayo that they intended making enquiries into the purchase of Lady Chapman and Francis Chapman's estates in that county.⁴⁴ Lady Chapman's Mayo estate consisted of 3,600 acres with a rateable valuation of only thirty-six pounds, indicating that the land was of very poor quality, while Francis Chapman's property was comprised of 2,664 acres with a rateable valuation of eighty-eight pounds per year.⁴⁵

Lady Caroline Chapman, unlike most aristocratic landlords, was not inclined to sell estate land and she appeared reluctant to deal directly with her tenants. When the detail outlined in Table 1 is examined it is evident that Lady Caroline sold a smaller proportion of her estates than the other aristocratic landowners in Westmeath. The reason for this unclear, her late husband and his brother had not always enjoyed good relations with their tenants, and this may have influenced her position.

In the period from 1903 to 1914 all of the aristocratic landowners in Westmeath engaged to varying degrees in the process of selling estate lands and while some sales took longer than others to reach a satisfactory conclusion, all resulted in

⁴² *Irish Times*, 9 Apr. 1908.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 7 Nov. 1908.

⁴⁴ *Western People*, 23 Dec. 1911. The Congested Board was established under the Purchase of Land (Ireland) Act 1891 to provide assistance to the poor 'congested' areas of the west of Ireland. A congested district was one where the rateable valuation was less than 30 shillings. In 1903 the board was given the authority to purchase estate land for redistribution and in 1909 it was granted compulsory purchase powers and it redistributed over 1,000 estates. See Hickey and Doherty, *A new dictionary of Irish history since 1800*, p. 81.

⁴⁵ U. H. Hussey de Burgh, *The landowners of Ireland* (Dublin, 1878), pp 78-9. In February 1914 in the House of Commons Augustine Birrell, chief-secretary in reply to a question informed MPs that the Killua estate was not being sold by the owner Lady Caroline Chapman directly to the tenants. Lady Chapman had instituted proceedings for the sale of the property, consisting of 8,900 acres (of which over 600 acres were untenanted lands), to the estate commissioners under Section 6 of the 1903 Land Act. The estate commissioners had made an offer to purchase which was under consideration by the Owner, see *Meath Chronicle*, 7 Mar. 1914.

the transfer of a significant amount of estate land to new owners. The process of negotiations between landowners and tenants to progress the sale of estate lands together with the involvement of outside parties and intermediaries will be examined in greater detail in the case studies that follow.

3.1. Lord Longford's estate

On 7 October 1903 more than one hundred tenants on Lord Longford's Killucan estate met under the chairmanship of Rev Fr. Dooley P.P, Killucan to discuss the possibility of negotiating the terms for the purchase of their holdings. Lord Longford received a rental income of £7,000 per annum from his Killucan estate.⁴⁶ There were three types of tenant on the estate; tenants who had never got their rents adjusted in the land courts, known as non-judicial tenants; tenants who had got their rents adjusted between 1881 and 1896 but were still paying first term rents; and tenants who were paying second term rents.⁴⁷ 'First term tenants' were tenants whose rents had been fixed by the land courts under the Land Law (Ireland) Act, 1881, while 'second term tenants' were tenants whose rents had been fixed in and after 1896. Non-judicial tenants were tenants whose rents had not been fixed by the land courts.

Between 1893 and 1903 the number of tenants on Lord Longford's Westmeath estates had remained unchanged as only sale of estate land had been in County Longford in 1888.⁴⁸ (see Table 2).

⁴⁶ *The Times*, 8 Dec. 1903.

⁴⁷ *Westmeath Examiner*, 10 Oct. 1903. See also F. S. L. Lyons, 'The aftermath of Parnell, 1891-1903' in W. E. Vaughan (ed.) *A new history of Ireland*, vi (Oxford, 1996), p. 96.

⁴⁸ *Return giving the names of landowners the purchase of whose properties under the land Purchase (Ireland) Act 1885 has been sanctioned by the Irish Land Commission, (81), HC 1889, lxi.865, 13.*

Table 2. Number and size of Holdings on Lord Longford's Westmeath Estates, 1893.

Pakenham Hall Estate		Killucan Estate	
Acreage	Number of Holdings	Acreage	Number of Holdings
Less than 25	12	Less than 25	200
25-50	7	25-50	70
50-100	2	50-100	24
Over 100	5	Over 100	17

Source: *Royal Commission on Labour. The agricultural labourer. Vol. IV. Ireland. Reports by Mr. Arthur Wilson Fox (assistant commissioner), upon certain selected districts in the counties of Cork, Mayo, Roscommon and Westmeath; with summary report prefixed. HC 1893-4[C.6894-XXI] xxxvii, Pt. I. 341, 125.*

The meeting was told that between 1881 and 1896 the average rent in Westmeath had declined by 18.3 per cent, and from 1896 to the passing of the Wyndham Act, it had been reduced by a further 18.6 per cent. In total, that there had been a reduction of 32.7 per cent in rents in the county since 1881.⁴⁹ The meeting decided to enquire from Lord Longford if he was willing to sell to the tenants, and if so on what terms. A petition was prepared and signed by the tenants present and a committee was appointed to confer with Lord Longford.⁵⁰

Lord Longford responded to the petition by offering to sell at twenty-three years purchase. On 6 November the tenants held a meeting where they agreed to Lord Longford's terms on the condition that all rent and arrears be cancelled to 1 November 1903 with sporting and bog rights reserved to the tenants.⁵¹ Lord Longford, in response, agreed to allow sporting rights in the 'general sense', but reserved them in forestry plantations and bogs. He also retained ownership of the bogs, but the tenants would continue to hold turbarry rights as before. He refused the demand for the cancellation of rents insisting that half-year rents due on 1 May be paid, but he did

⁴⁹ *Westmeath Examiner*, 10 Oct. 1903.

⁵⁰ *Western People*, 24 Oct. 1903.

⁵¹ *Westmeath Examiner*, 7 Nov. 1903.

agree to cancel the half-year rent due in November and stated that all other arrears were to be added to the purchase money.⁵²

On 25 November the tenants again wrote to the landlord setting out their terms, and four days later they received a written reply from his representatives informing them that Lord Longford was not prepared to alter the terms already offered. The tenants were given a deadline of the end of the week to come to a decision. On 4 December 1903 the tenants reassembled in Killucan with Rev Fr. Dooley presiding, to consider the terms offered by the landlord. The tenants overwhelmingly decided to accept the landlord's offer. There were four dissenting tenants, but they withdrew their objections in deference to the majority.⁵³ The reason for their objections was not stated. The tenants committee in accepting the offer were conscious of the value of the buildings that Lord Longford had erected for them, which they valued at three and a half years purchase, which in addition to the remission of the hanging gale (rent owed to the landlord from the previous May), meant that the price agreed did not in reality exceed nineteen and a half years purchase.⁵⁴ All the necessary prerequisites were then put in motion to allow the tenants to purchase their holdings.

In October 1903 when the tenants on his County Longford estates made enquiries regarding the possibility of purchasing their holdings Lord Longford replied that he was willing to sell the agricultural portion of the estate but not the townparks or the town of Longford.⁵⁵ The matter remained unresolved as the terms of sale were considered exorbitant by the tenants. In October 1905 a meeting of the tenants took place to decide what action should be taken. They were advised by the local MP, J. P.

⁵² *Westmeath Examiner*, 21 Nov. 1903.

⁵³ *Ibid*, 5 Dec. 1903.

⁵⁴ *Ibid*, 12 Dec. 1903.

⁵⁵ *Irish Times*, 4 Nov. 1903.

Farrell, to withhold their rents should they not be allowed to purchase their holdings on fair terms.⁵⁶ On 23 November 1905 when Lord Longford's agent Mr. Stewart attended at the rent office in Longford he was met by a deputation of tenants including J. P. Farrell. They requested a reduction on the half years rent due since 1 November 1905. When Mr Stewart refused to grant a rent reduction the tenants departed without paying any rent.⁵⁷

In April 1908 Lord Longford reached an agreement with the agricultural tenants on his Longford estate to sell at seven shillings in the pound reduction for first term tenants and five shillings reduction in the pound for second term tenants with the sporting and turbary rights vested in the tenants. He continued with his refusal to sell the townparks.⁵⁸ In July 1904 the tenants on Lord Longford's estate at Gneevebaun, near Tyrrellspass agreed to purchase their holdings from the landlord at twenty-three years purchase for non-judicial tenants with all arrears forgiven. The sporting and turbary rights were vested in the tenants.⁵⁹ In November 1908 Lord Longford agreed purchase terms with the tenants on the Pakenham Hall estate of seven shillings in the pound reduction for first term tenants and five shillings reduction in the pound for second term tenants with the rate of interest set at three and a half per cent from 1 November until the completion of the sale.⁶⁰ Between 1905 and 1911 Lord Longford sold 8,942 acres, almost half of his Westmeath estate, for £151,169.⁶¹ (see Table 1).

⁵⁶ *Irish Times*, 31 Oct. 1905.

⁵⁷ *Freeman's Journal*, 24 Nov. 1905.

⁵⁸ *Longford Leader*, 2 May 1908. For the equivalent in years purchase see Table 3.

⁵⁹ *Irish Times*, 18 Jul. 1904.

⁶⁰ *Ibid*, 28 Nov. 1908. For a comparison between reduction of rents and equivalent years purchase see Table 3.

⁶¹ *Return of advances made under the Irish Land Act 1903 and Irish Land Act 1909*, [Cd. 3447], [Cd. 3590], [Cd. 3547], HC 1907, lxx, 168-174; *Return of advances made under the Irish Land Act 1903 and Irish Land Act 1909*, [Cd. 6028], [Cd. 6029], [Cd. 6096], [Cd. 6137], [Cd. 6187], [Cd. 6263], [Cd. 6330], [Cd. 6393], [Cd. 6403], [Cd. 6420], [Cd. 6424], [Cd. 6443], HC 1912-13, lxix, lxx, 609.

Table 3. Comparison between reduction of rents and equivalent years purchase.

Reductions of Rent per £.	Years' Purchase
2s. 0d., or 10 per cent.	27½
2s. 6d., " 12½ "	27
3s. 0d., " 15 "	26½
3s. 6d., " 17½ "	25½
4s. 0d., " 20 "	24½
4s. 6d., " 22½ "	23½
5s. 0d., " 25 "	23
5s. 6d., " 27½ "	22½
6s. 0d., " 30 "	21½
6s. 6d., " 32½ "	20½
7s. 0d., " 35 "	20
7s. 6d., " 37½ "	19½
8s. 0d., " 40 "	18½
8s. 6d., " 42½ "	17½
9s. 0d., " 45 "	17
9s. 6d., " 47½ "	16½
10s. 0d., " 50 "	15½
10s. 6d., " 52½ "	14½
11s. 0d., " 55 "	14
11s. 6d., " 57½ "	13
12s. 0d., " 60 "	12½
12s. 6d., " 62½ "	11½
13s. 0d., " 65 "	10½

Source: *Freeman's Journal*, 23 March 1904.

On 8 November 1903 the tenants on the Hon. Edward Pakenham's, estates at Cookesboro and Porterstown, near Mullingar, held a meeting at Turin schoolhouse. The meeting presided by Rev. P. O'Connell PP unanimously decided to ask their landlord for an abatement of thirty-eight percent (six shillings in the pound) on their current rents. It was also decided to approach the landlord on the question of purchase and enquire as to proposed terms in the event of him being willing to sell.⁶² On 1 December the Cookesboro tenants met the land agent, Philip O'Reilly, following the refusal of the Hon. Edward Pakenham to grant an abatement of forty per cent on their rents. They informed Mr. O'Reilly that they were prepared to pay their rent then due provided they got a fair offer for purchase. The tenants offered twenty years purchase but when the land agent declined their terms the tenants left without paying any rent.⁶³ The landlord, while not offering any reductions in current rents, was willing to sell at

⁶² *Westmeath Examiner*, 14 Nov. 1903.

⁶³ *Ibid*, 5 Dec. 1903.

twenty-three years purchase which the tenants found unacceptable as the landlord had not carried out any improvements on the estate.⁶⁴

In August 1906 the estate was offered for sale but no offer was made by the estate commissioners. In March 1907 the land was inspected by the commissioners but again no offer appeared to have been made to the owner.⁶⁵ On 19 May 1907 Laurence Ginnell visited the area and took the names of applicants seeking allotments of lands on the Cookesboro and Macetown ranches, which at that time consisted of about 2,700 acres of untenanted land.⁶⁶ When by March 1908 the sale had not been finalised, it prompted a recommendation from an anonymous correspondent to the *Westmeath Examiner* to the effect that:

There is, then, only one remedy if the land is to be got for the people-viz, a rousing agitation within all legitimate bounds. Graziers must stand aside. The agitation must go ahead, regulated only by the amount of pressure necessary to be put on.⁶⁷

Whether the newspaper report had any impact on the case is unclear. However, on 6 April 1908 the tenants on the estate accepted an offer to purchase their holdings made by Mr O'Reilly on behalf of the landlord.⁶⁸ In September 1908 an inspector from the estate commissioners visited the area and interviewed applicants for portions of the Cookesboro estate which at that time comprised about 800 acres, with the expectation that the applicants would be in-situ by that Christmas.⁶⁹ On 9 December 1908 George Campbell, Inspector of the Estate Commissioners, attended at the Glackstown section

⁶⁴ *Westmeath Examiner*, 26 Dec. 1903.

⁶⁵ *Ibid*, 14 Mar. 1908. The estates commission was established under the Wyndham Land Act, 1903 as a body within the Land Commission. The role of the commissioners, who were three in number, was to administer the operation of the land act. See Patrick John Cosgrove, 'The Wyndham Land Act, 1903: The final solution to the Irish land question?' (PhD thesis, National University of Ireland Maynooth, 2008), pp 87-90.

⁶⁶ *Anglo Celt*, 25 May 1907.

⁶⁷ *Westmeath Examiner*, 14 Mar. 1908. A cattle or sheep farmer who engaged in the commercial activity involving the grazing of a large number of cattle and sheep was known as a grazier. See David Seth Jones, *Graziers, land reform and political conflict in Ireland* (Washington, 1995), p. 1.

⁶⁸ *Westmeath Examiner*, 11 Apr. 1908.

⁶⁹ *Irish Times*, 19 Sept. 1908.

of Lord Longford's estate where he allocated a number of holdings to their new owners.⁷⁰ (See Appendix 24).

3.2. The Greville estate

Prior to her death in 1904, the marquise de la Bedoyere, sister of Lord Greville, disposed of estate land in Westmeath,⁷¹ and Longford.⁷² In December 1905 her brother, the Hon. Patrick Greville-Nugent was in financial difficulties, which resulted in his appearance in the Land Judge's Court. There were two applications before the court regarding his estate; the first application was by the legal trustees under the marriage settlement, who sought that the petition that had been filed by the marquise de la Bedoyere for the sale of the estate should be dismissed. Patrick Greville-Nugent held Clonyn estate in 'tail male'. As 'tail male' was the male ancestral line this determined the limitation on the succession of the property to male descendants. As Patrick Greville-Nugent had only one daughter, his sister, the marquise de la Bedoyere, was entitled on the terms of his 'life estate' to the ownership of the Clonyn estate provided her brother had no male issue. The term 'life estate' meant ownership of the estate for the duration of a person's life. She also had a charge of £16,352 under a mortgage on the property.⁷³

The second application was on the part of the receiver as the estate was in financial difficulties. The court was informed that in 1890 a judgement mortgage had been registered which resulted in Patrick Greville-Nugent's interest being forfeited. The estate had become vested in the trustees who under a discretionary power paid Greville-Nugent £750 a year out of surplus rents. Nearly all the agricultural holdings

⁷⁰ *Westmeath Examiner*, 12 Dec. 1908.

⁷¹ *Return of advances made under Purchase of Land (Ireland) Act 1891, (329), HC 1904, lxxx, 53.*

⁷² *Return of advances made under the Irish Land Act 1903 and Irish Land Act 1909, [Cd. 3447], [Cd. 3590], [Cd. 3547], HC 1907, lxx, 56.*

⁷³ *Irish Times*, 9 Dec. 1905.

on the estate had been sold to the tenants, but grazing lands which yielded £1,200 a year remained unsold. The grazing lands which had been let by the receiver on 'the eleven month system', was comprised mainly of demesne land which on expiry of the lease gave the occupiers no rights as tenants under the land acts.

The marquise de la Bedoyere had filed the petition on the grounds that her interests would be prejudiced if the practice of letting the land was allowed to continue where the receiver leased the lands to the same persons from year to year without putting the holdings for auction with the consequential loss of income. These persons had not been put out at the end of each term but were allowed to remain for the following year. The marquise had previously obtained an order from the court instructing the receiver to put the lettings up for auction, but he had failed to comply with it. The court was informed that efforts were being made to have this land sold to landless people. There were one hundred applicants for land and an application had been made to the estate commissioners along with a request under Section 7 of the 1903 Land Act.⁷⁴ The Judge, having heard the evidence, ruled that the application of the trustees be granted, as there were no incumbrances to be paid off except for that of the marquise de la Bedoyere, who was not in favour of any further land being sold. He dismissed the case and ordered that the receiver should be discharged after all matters had been finalised.⁷⁵

On 13 November 1909, the gale day on the estate of the Hon. Patrick Greville-Nugent, Mr White, the land agent, visited Delvin to receive the rents then due. While a greater part of the estate had been sold under the terms of the Ashbourne Land Act, 1885 which permitted a tenant to borrow the full amount of the purchase price, repayable over forty-nine years at four percent, some of the tenants on the Mabestown

⁷⁴ *Irish Times*, 9 Dec. 1905. Section 7 of the Wyndham Act, 1903 made provision for the sale of estates in the court of the land judge under certain conditions.

⁷⁵ *Ibid*, 9 Dec. 1905.

section of the estate had refused to purchase their holdings in the expectation of improved terms being offered at a later time. The tenants on the estate which was divided into a number of townlands, namely Kiladoran, Mulacroy, Mabestown, Caddagh, Moyleroe and Delvin held a meeting to discuss the possibility of purchasing their holdings. They resolved that if the offer of purchase was refused no rent would be forthcoming. A deputation met the land agent who informed them that land purchase was at a standstill but he expected that it would be settled legislatively before the next gale day in May 1910, when he hoped terms could be agreed. The tenants were informed that Mr. Greville-Nugent was not willing to sell until the proposed new land act passed into law. The tenants then paid their rents, subject to the terms indicated by the agent.⁷⁶ It would appear that the tenants concerns were allayed in the expectation of improved purchase terms in the proposed act. However, their hopes and expectations would be dashed by the time their rent fell due the following summer.

The May gale day on the Greville-Nugent estate fell on 14 May 1910. This was the day that the first half years rent was due for payment by the tenants. On that day tenants from the townlands of Mabestown, Caddagh and Delvin who attended to pay their rents were met by Mr. Greville-Nugent, Mr. White, his agent, and Mr. Ryan, his bailiff. In the days prior to the meeting Ryan had warned the tenants of the consequences of offending the 'Master' by not paying their rents. On the day the tenants enquired if the commitment made to them the previous November regarding the sale of estate land would be honoured. The agent in response claimed that the 1909 Land Act had stopped land purchase. He further stated that if they wished to purchase they would have to pay three and a half per cent interest instead of three and

⁷⁶ *Westmeath Examiner*, 20 Nov. 1909.

a quarter per cent as heretofore. When the tenants were not forthcoming with their rents the agent threatened that ‘he would see whether they or the law were the stronger’, and ‘if they did not pay he would writ them’. The tenants withdrew and decided to contact John Hayden MP for advice on the best course of action to take in the matter.⁷⁷ It is apparent that land sales had slowed in anticipation of improved terms in the proposed land act and Greville-Nugent was not willing to sell in the expectation of these improved terms.

The provisions contained in the land act, which passed into law on 3 December 1909, were not as attractive as those contained in the 1903 Land Act, and the impact of the new legislation on both landlord and tenant was felt immediately. The sale of estate land slumped as landlords found the new financial arrangements unattractive, with a bonus of three per cent land stock instead of a cash payment a major disappointment. Dooley has analysed the reasons for the decline in land sales following the passing of the act and has attributed the main cause as being the inability of the government to deal with the number of applications it had received from landowners under the 1903 Land Act.⁷⁸

In March 1907 the sixty-seven tenants on Lord Greville’s estate in the townlands of Rathconnell, Curraghmore, Marlinstown and Clongowney, east of Mullingar signed preliminary agreements to purchase their holdings,⁷⁹ and in October 1908 another group of Lord Greville’s tenants signed similar purchase agreements.⁸⁰

In May 1909 agreement was reached for the purchase of Lord Greville’s estate

⁷⁷ *Westmeath Examiner*, 21 May 1910. The Irish Land Act, 1909 introduced by Birrell contained a provision whereby landlords were paid a minimum of three per cent land stock as a bonus. There was no provision in the act for a cash bonus payment. Consequently, the sale of estate land declined. In addition, the landlord had to sell if the majority of his tenants sought purchase. See Hickey and Doherty, *A new dictionary of Irish history since 1800*, p. 260.

⁷⁸ Dooley, *The decline of the big house in Ireland*, p. 115. Dooley also examines additional contributory factors to the decline in land sales after 1909 such as lack of sufficient funding by the British government.

⁷⁹ *Westmeath Examiner*, 9 Mar. 1907, *Irish Times*, 9 Mar. 1907.

⁸⁰ *Westmeath Examiner*, 31 Oct. 1908.

lands near Kilmore, County Roscommon by the sixty-two tenants.⁸¹ On 29 July 1910 the tenants, employees and well-wishers presented an address to Lord Greville on the occasion of his first homecoming to Clonhugh following his marriage, which stated:

We hasten to assure you that the friendly relations which always existed between the tenantry and landlord of your estate will remain unaltered, and we sincerely hope you will follow in the footsteps of your worthy father, the late lamented Lord Greville, whose characteristics were clemency and charitableness; whose purse was always ready to assist in every benevolent object, and whose material aid did so much for the encouragement of sport in this county. It is the earnest wish of the people of this and surrounding districts that your Lordship and Lady Greville will be pleased to dwell often among them, and that you will enjoy very many years of wedded happiness and prosperity.⁸²

Lord Greville in reply acknowledged the changes that had taken place in Ireland following the passing of the 1903 Land Act. He accepted that the change in land ownership was a positive development remarking:

The people were now... in a better position than in former years. Land purchase had given encouragement and impetus to increased industry, for the homes they now had were their own, and they should make every effort to hold them and improve them.⁸³

While Lord Greville was correct in stating that people were now in a better position following the passing of the 1903 Land Act, it is also true to say that a high proportion of these holdings were small and uneconomic.

In October 1910 Lord Greville communicated through his agent Philip O'Reilly, his decision not to sell his holdings in the town of Mullingar following a request from the Mullingar Town Tenants Association. The association was informed that an act of parliament would be required to make provision for payment, as had happened with rural tenants under the land acts. There were 700 acres of townparks around Mullingar, all owned by Lord Greville, and town properties previously sold

⁸¹ *Leitrim Observer*, 15 May 1909.

⁸² *Irish Independent*, 30 Jul. 1910.

⁸³ *Freeman's Journal*, 30 Jul. 1910.

had been completed by cash transactions.⁸⁴ In April 1912 Lord Greville offered to sell the Fair Green and tolls of Mullingar, together with the Market House to Westmeath County Council. The price of the tolls was to be fixed at twenty-five years purchase, which was the average of the previous three years net income. Lord Greville's offer was declined on the grounds that the price being demanded was excessively high. However, the commissioners served a notice under the Public Health Act on Lord Greville to compel him to carry out improvements to the area. The case was heard at a sitting of the Mullingar petty sessions on 6 July 1912, with the application being refused by the sitting magistrates.⁸⁵ In August 1913 a lease for ninety-one years at a yearly rent of £150 on the Fair Green, Market House and weighing machines was offered separately by Lord Greville, who informed the town commissioners that the yearly profit was £111 3s 3d. However, the offer was again considered excessive and declined.⁸⁶

It is clear, then, that extensive quantities of land exchanged hands in a process that was best characterised by a pragmatic realisation on the part of both the landowners and their tenants of the necessity to make the most of the favourable terms contained in the Wyndham Land Act, while they remained available. Furthermore, in an uncertain political and economic climate the financial incentives contained in the act were unlikely to be improved upon in any future land legislation. While the process of land sales was to slow considerably in the wake of the 1909 Land Act, it did not end completely. The reduction in funding from the British government was a major disincentive, with the cash payment being replaced by a bonus of three per cent in land stock. Nevertheless, despite the less favourable terms Lords Castlemaine,

⁸⁴ *Westmeath Examiner*, 8 Oct. 1910. See also Town Tenants (Ireland) Act, 1906 [6 Edw. VII, c. 54] (20 Dec 1906) and O'Day, *Irish Home Rule 1867-1921*, p. 210.

⁸⁵ *Ibid*, 13 Jul. 1912.

⁸⁶ *Irish Independent*, 7 Aug. 1913.

Longford, and Greville, Sir Richard Levinge, Sir Walter Nugent, Sir Charles Nugent, Lady Caroline Chapman and the Hon Edward Pakenham all sold estate land between April 1912 and December 1914.⁸⁷

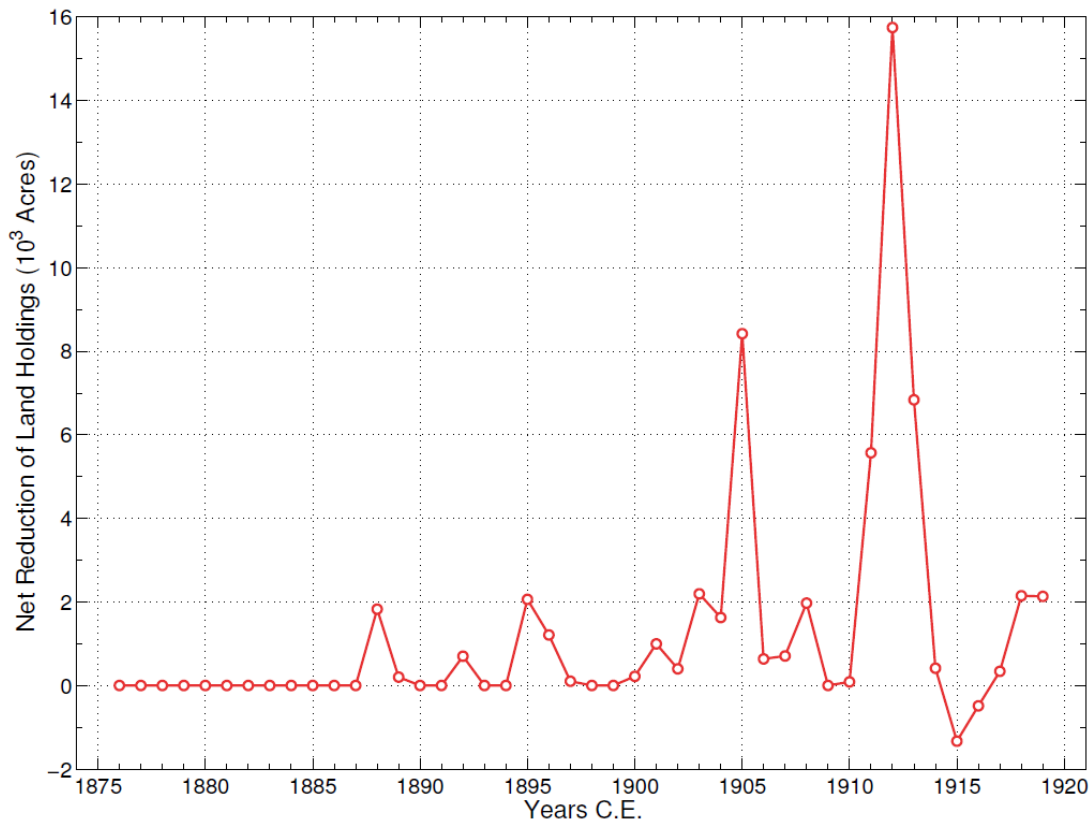
However, the political event that had the greatest influence on the sale of aristocratic estate land was the introduction of the third Home Rule Bill in April 1912. It was a pivotal event which clearly influenced the sale of the estate lands: tellingly, 1912 was the only year in which every aristocratic family in Westmeath disposed of land. Equally telling is the amount of land sold in 1912: the families, between them, disposed of 15,750 acres (See Table 4). Land sales remained high in 1913, with 6,838 acres being sold, but decreased sharply upon the outbreak of war in 1914. Lord Castlemaine did, however, successfully buy back his demesne lands of 1,465 acres in Westmeath under the terms of the Wyndham land act for £20,011 in 1914.⁸⁸

The extent of aristocratic sales made during the course of the war will be examined in a later chapter, but at this stage it is clear that by the end of 1914 all of the aristocratic families in Westmeath had sold large tracts of estate land for which they received substantial recompense.

⁸⁷ *Return of advances made under the Irish Land Purchase Acts*, [Cd. 6507], [Cd. 6592], [Cd. 6648], HC 1912-13, lxxxi.1, 198-200, 281, 282-4, 316-7. *Return of advances made under the Irish Land Purchase Acts*, [Cd. 6728], [Cd. 6744], [Cd. 6768], [Cd. 6812], [Cd. 6850], [Cd. 7004], [Cd. 7026], HC 1913, liii.55, 401, 447-8, 510, 567-8, 584, 596, 678- 9, 787, 821, 909. *Return of advances made under the Irish Land Purchase Acts*, [Cmd. 7114], [Cmd. 7143], [Cmd. 7162], [Cmd. 7222], [Cmd. 7231], [Cmd. 7288], [Cmd.7411], [Cmd. 7414], [Cmd. 7489], [Cmd. 7577], HC 1914, lxvi.1, 68, 493-7, 608, 620, 671-4, 694.

⁸⁸ *Return of advances made under the Irish Land Purchase Acts*, [Cmd. 7586], [Cmd. 7606], HC 1914, LXVI.849, 22, 146-7. *Return of advances made under the Irish Land Purchase Acts*, [Cmd. 7664], [Cmd. 7665], [Cmd. 7761], [Cmd. 7762], [Cmd. 7864], [Cmd. 7925], [Cmd. 8007], [Cmd. 8064], [Cmd. 8093], [Cmd. 8159], [Cmd. 8164,] HC 1914-16 liii.167, 348, 523. According to Cosgrove the purpose of allowing landlords to sell then repurchase their demesnes was to encourage them to remain in the country once they had sold their other estate land. Section 3 (2) of the 1903 Land Act made provision for a landowner to sell his demesne and other untenanted land to the Land Commission and then to repurchase the same land. An advance not exceeding one third of the aggregate amount of the purchase money or twenty thousand pounds, whichever was the lesser, was available to assist the landowner. See Patrick John Cosgrove, 'The Wyndham Land Act, 1903: The final solution to the Irish land question?' (PhD thesis, National University of Ireland Maynooth, 2008), pp 113-4 and Dooley, *The decline of the big house in Ireland*, p. 118, see also *Section 3(2) Irish Land Act, 1903*[3 Edw. VII. c.37] (14 August 1903).

Table 4. Annual Land Sales (Acres) by Westmeath aristocratic families in all counties between December 1870 and December 1920.



Source: *Return of advances under the Purchase of Land (Ireland) Act 1891, the Irish Land Act 1903 and Irish Land Act 1909.*

Despite this, they remained for the most part, substantial landowners (See Table 5). As already outlined the aristocratic families of Westmeath sold 42,359 acres of estate land to 1,380 purchasers between 1 January 1903 and 31 December 1914 for which they received £574,223.

Table 5. Land sold, advances received and land retained in ownership of Westmeath aristocracy between 1 January 1903 and 31 December 1914.

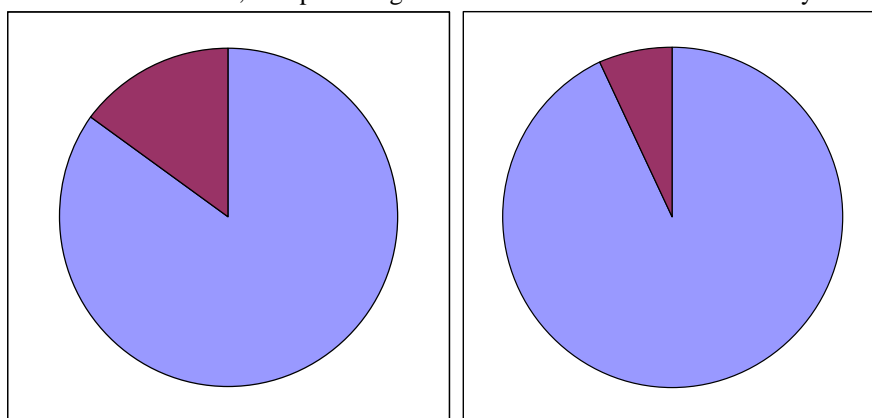
Family	Land Sold between 1/1/1903 & 31/12/1914 (Acres)	Total Sold (Acres)	Advance Received (£)	Land Retained in Ownership 31/12/1914 (Acres)	Total Acres Retained
Pakenham (Longford)	Westmeath 12,596	16,123	265,383	Westmeath 6,975	8,335
	Longford 3,527			Longford 940	
				Dublin 420	
Levinge	Westmeath 3,484	3,484	51,489	Westmeath 933	934
Nugent (Donore)	Westmeath 4,149	6,293	58,572	Westmeath 3,069	3,069
	Meath 938				
	Longford 1,206				
Chapman	Westmeath 3,361	4,849	61,782	Westmeath 6,155	

	Kilkenny	1,488			Meath	241	
					Mayo	3,600	9,996
Nugent (Ballinlough)	Westmeath	2,198	2,876	44,661	Westmeath	632	
	Meath	678			Meath	6	638
Handcock (Castlemaine)	Westmeath	5,539	6,650	68,304	Westmeath	5,605	
	R/common	1,111					5,605
Greville- Nugent	R/common	1,336	2,084	24,042	Westmeath	6,628	
	Cork	436			Longford	842	
	Westmeath	235			Cavan	598	
	Longford	77			Kent	1,178	
					Cork	15	
							9,261
Total		42,359	42,359	574,233		37,838	37,838

Source: *Return of advances under the Purchase of Land (Ireland) Act 1891, the Irish Land Act 1903 and Irish Land Act 1909.*

As a result of the ongoing sale of estates the total amount of land in the ownership of the Westmeath aristocracy was reduced from 97,841 acres in 1883 to 39,595 acres by the end of December 1914. The change in land ownership within the county was also dramatically declining from 76,020 acres in 1883 to 31,754 acres by December 1914. This change represents a reduction in land ownership by the aristocracy from 17.7% of the total land of Westmeath in 1883 to 7.4% at the end of 1914, a decline of more than fifty percent. (See Tables 6 & 7). Prior to 1903 the aristocratic families sold 9,635 acres of estate land under the land acts, whereas in the period between 1903 and 1914 they sold 42,359 acres, a fourfold increase.

Tables 6 & 7 Decline in land ownership by the aristocracy in Westmeath between 1883 and December 1914, as a percentage of the overall land area of the county.



Sources: John Bateman, *Great landowners of Great Britain and Ireland* (London, 1883); *Return of owners of land of one acre and upwards in the several counties, counties of cities and county of towns in Ireland [C.1492], HC 1876, lxxx*; *Return of advances made under the Irish Land Act 1903 and Irish Land Act 1909.*

The pattern of land sales by the aristocracy in County Westmeath reflected a broader profile of aristocratic land sales that took place throughout Ireland. Dubois notes that between 1 November 1903 and 31 March 1906 there were 85,638 agreements for the direct transfer of land from landlord to tenant.⁸⁹ In 1903 the Duke of Leinster sold 41,000 acres of estate land for £786,000, while Earl Fitzwilliam of Yorkshire, who had extensive estates in County Wicklow, sold over 53,000 acres for almost £470,000 between 1903 and 1909. The King-Harmans who had extensive estates in Longford and Roscommon disposed of 70,000 acres for £625,000.⁹⁰ In addition to Lord Castlemaine, aristocratic landowners availed of the provision that allowed them to repurchase their demesne lands, an example being Lord Wicklow, who repurchased his demesne of 1,960 acres.⁹¹

The situation was similar in the north of Ireland where Purdue states that landowners recognising the advantageous terms of the Wyndham act, moved at an early stage to sell land. Among the prominent northern aristocrats who disposed of estate lands were the duke of Abercorn who sold land in Donegal and Tyrone, Lord O'Neill who sold 24,882 of his 66,000 acres, and the earl of Antrim who sold 15,252 acres of his 34,292 acres. Other northern aristocrats who sold estate land were viscounts Templetown and Masereene and the earls of Erne and Enniskillen.⁹² Campbell states that by 1914 fifty-eight per cent of the tenanted land of Ireland had been sold by landlords to their tenants at a cost of £180 million to the British

⁸⁹ L. Paul-Dubois, *Contemporary Ireland* (Dublin, 1908), p. 289.

⁹⁰ Terence Dooley, *The decline of the big house in Ireland* (Dublin, 2001), pp 113-4.

⁹¹ *Ibid*, p. 118

⁹² Olwen Purdue, *The big house in the North of Ireland* (Dublin, 2009), pp 82-3. Purdue also provides details of other aristocratic land sales (see page 84)

exchequer.⁹³ He also remarks that in the period from 1903 to 1923 as a result of the land acts two-thirds of the land of Ireland was sold by the landlord to the tenant.⁹⁴

Fitzpatrick argues that while land purchase was a serious setback to Protestant landowners it did not leave them economically bereft as little attempt was made to distribute their untenanted grasslands. Furthermore, the retention of demesnes and grasslands caused the 'gentry' to retain sizable labour forces even after the loss of their tenanted estates.⁹⁵ In assessing the position of a Protestant landowner in the southern provinces following the sale of his estate lands McDowell remarked:

Land purchase could leave a landlord with his house, a fair acreage (demesne and home farm) and a chunk of liquid capital. He could still enjoy sporting and social life, and when he felt the urge to participate in public life he could be active in the Unionist Alliance or attend the General Synod.⁹⁶

McDowell also suggested that in the post-Wyndham era the land question emerged in a new guise which was a growing land hunger among landless labourers and poor farmers on uneconomic holdings. The desire for land could be satisfied if grazing ranches leased on the eleven month system were compulsorily acquired and divided amongst the landless class.⁹⁷ However, the result was further agrarian turmoil with cattle driving and other forms of intimidation being employed by agitators in what became known as the Ranch War. This agitation will be examined in greater detail later in this chapter. But at this point it can be concluded that the land sales completed by the aristocracy in Westmeath were mirrored throughout Ireland as aristocratic landowners disposed of vast tracts of estate lands. However, despite these sales the

⁹³ Fergus Campbell, *The Irish establishment 1879-1914* (Oxford, 2009), p. 298.

⁹⁴ *Ibid*, pp 15-6.

⁹⁵ David Fitzpatrick, *Politics and Irish life 1913-1921* (Cork, 1998), p. 42.

⁹⁶ R. B. Mc Dowell, *Crisis and decline, the fate of the southern unionists* (Dublin, 1997), p. 11.

⁹⁷ *Ibid*, p. 13.

Irish aristocratic families retained substantial estates which generated an income that left them far from economic impoverishment.⁹⁸

4. Rent adjustments and abatements

Despite the passing of the Wyndham Land Act in 1903 and the increased number of land sales, the issue of rents being demanded by landlords from their unpurchased tenants continued to be a problem. In the absence of agreed land purchase many tenants resorted to the land courts in an effort to have their rents lowered. (See Appendix 26). In November 1903 the tenants of Sir Richard Levinge's Knockdrin estate held a meeting where they decided to ask the landlord for a reduction in their rent 'in consequence of the exceptionally bad season and low prices,' while the terms of purchase under the land act was being discussed.⁹⁹ In 1903 the Hon. Mildred marquise de la Bedoyere granted an abatement of forty per cent (eight shillings in the pound) to the tenants on the rents due on her Rosmead estate located between Delvin and Clonmellon.¹⁰⁰ In 1905 the tenants on Lord Longford's Pakenham Hall estate also requested a reduction in their November rents due 'to the great fall in prices of all classes of stock'.¹⁰¹ In April 1911 Lord Longford, having refused to sell the townparks of Longford, found himself in a dispute with a number of commercial and residential tenants in the town. As stated earlier, the business owners had refused to pay the rents demanded which they considered to be excessive. On 18 April the sub-sheriff Denis Kerrigan accompanied by a body of police visited fourteen townpark tenants where in front of a large crowd he seized items such as chests of tea and bales of cloth on foot of decrees obtained by Lord Longford. A meeting which was held in

⁹⁸ Terence Dooley, *The decline of the big house in Ireland* (Dublin, 2001), pp 113-9.

⁹⁹ *Westmeath Examiner*, 7 Nov. 1903.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid*, 28 Nov. 1903.

¹⁰¹ *Anglo Celt*, 18 Nov. 1905.

the town the following day was addressed by James P. Farrell MP who proposed the following resolution:

Having regard to the fact that the Earl of Longford refused the petition from the tenants of the townparks to relieve them from the heavy rack rents, and also refused them the benefit of purchase under the Irish Land Act of 1909, we hereby condemn his action in the strongest terms.¹⁰²

On 21 April 1911 County Inspector Steadman, three district inspectors and sixty policemen were present while cattle and other goods seized from nine tenants for unpaid rents were sold at auction, with the price of the cattle being bid up to the amount of the decree previously granted by Judge Curran to Lord Longford's legal representatives.¹⁰³ However, the matter remained unresolved as in August 1911 six cattle, the property of a long standing local businessman, Robert Legge, were seized and later put up for auction for non-payment of rent.¹⁰⁴ On 3 January 1912 Mr Stewart, land agent for Lord Longford, attended at the rent office to collect the rent due since November 1911. He was met by J. P. Farrell MP who gave him a statement on behalf of the tenants. Stewart undertook to pass it to Lord Longford for his consideration. The deputation then withdrew without paying any rent pending his response.¹⁰⁵ Lord Longford was forced to obtain court orders to seize property in lieu of the rents, which were executed by the sub-sheriff.¹⁰⁶ During this time Lord Longford, as the largest ratepayer in the town, contributed to the cost of repairs to utilities such as the sewerage system,¹⁰⁷ as well as being the major funder in the construction of a handball alley in the town.

¹⁰² *Irish Times*, 20 Apr. 1911.

¹⁰³ *Longford Leader*, 22 Apr. 1911 & 29 Apr. 1911.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid*, 2 Sept. 1911.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid*, 6 Jan. 1912.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid*, 4 May 1912.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid*, 10 May 1913.

5. Evictions

While the number of evictions in Westmeath declined as an increasing number of tenants purchased their holdings, they did not end completely and when they occurred were the subject of local indignation and resentment. Many landlords continued to retain large holdings. Evictions, as in the past, occurred as a result of several factors: failure to make rental payments due to a reduction in prices for agricultural produce; and failure to reach an agreement with the landlord over the question of rent arrears.¹⁰⁸

A high profile eviction took place at Hightown, between Mullingar and Kinnegad, where the representatives of Lord Longford were the subject of public indignation. On 30 May 1902, the tenant Peter Heeney and his elderly sister were evicted from their small holding. The Nationalist *Westmeath Examiner* states that the reason was ‘they could no longer pay an impossible rent’.¹⁰⁹ In 1863 the annual rent on the Heeney farm had been raised from six pounds five shillings to eight pounds three shillings, so that at the time of eviction the tenant had paid £70 to £80 more than the land was worth. In 1898 Heeney paid one years rent and costs, and in 1900 he paid another years rent. In November 1901 he offered nine pounds which was refused by the agent. The total rent due over the previous four years was twenty-five pounds. The case was brought to the attention of the United Irish League who organised a public meeting to consider what action, if any, should be taken. A number of local persons were appointed as collectors, with the funds gathered to be used towards stocking Heeney’s holding, subject to his friends being able to reach a settlement with the landlord for his re-instatement.¹¹⁰ In February 1905 the Hon. Edward Pakenham

¹⁰⁸ For a detailed account of a similar eviction of three families from the estate of Lord de Freyne at Castlerea, Co. Roscommon. See *Freeman’s Journal*, 25 Aug. 1902.

¹⁰⁹ *Westmeath Examiner*, 28 Jun. 1902.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid*, 7 Jun. 1902 and 28 Jun. 1902.

served a notice of eviction on a tenant Patrick Coffey, who resided at Porterstown near Killucan, to deliver possession of the holding to the landlord.¹¹¹ (See Appendix 27).

Sir Montagu Chapman was not a man to be trifled with when it came to matters of finance. In June 1904 he sued John Donigan, of Killua for twelve pounds ten shillings, which was two and a half years interest at five per cent on £100 which he had advanced to Donigan. In court Donigan accepted that he owed one and a half years interest but not the figure stated. The judge granted a decree for seven pounds ten shillings.¹¹² On 1 September 1904 Mr. Fetherstonhaugh, sub-sheriff for Westmeath, accompanied by bailiffs and three police constables, travelled to the village of Clonmellon where he carried out five evictions on the estate of Sir Montagu Chapman. The cruellest of the evictions was that of James Gough, who had lost his wife and a child a short time previously. Gough, along with his seven remaining children, was forced to vacate the dwelling. The condition of houses in which the evicted persons had been living did not reflect favourably on Sir Montagu. A newspaper report stated that ‘the hovels from which the poor creatures were sent forth were of such a character that one would not think of putting a beast of any value to live in them’.¹¹³

6. The Ranch War, 1906

As already discussed in chapter 2, the origins of the agitation that took place during the Ranch War can be traced to wholesale changes that occurred in agricultural practices in the late nineteenth century where the industry moved from tillage to cattle rearing, particularly on untenanted land in areas of the west, midlands and north

¹¹¹ *Westmeath Examiner*, 18 Feb. 1905.

¹¹² *Ibid*, 11 Jun. 1904.

¹¹³ *Freeman's Journal*, 10 Sept. 1904.

Leinster, including County Westmeath. Between 1854 and 1901 the number of dry cattle in Ireland, that is cattle more than two weeks from calving, increased from 2 million to 3.1 million, a growth of sixty percent.¹¹⁴ The number of live cattle exported from Ireland to Great Britain increased from a yearly average of 365,000 in the period 1861-65 to 451,000 per year from 1866-70. Live cattle exports continued to grow annually until a yearly average of 837,000 was reached in the years 1906-1910.¹¹⁵

In his analysis of farming practices David Seth Jones notes that ranch farming became a major part of Irish agriculture in the period after the Famine. These farmers, known as graziers or ranchers, reared cattle and sheep on a commercial basis on grassland holdings usually in excess of two hundred acres. Jones suggests that there were two types of graziers, those that reared young store cattle during the middle stage of growth and those that fattened the cattle prior to slaughter or export. Many of the cattle reared on store ranches situated in Connacht were subsequently sold to fattening graziers who were mainly located in north Leinster.¹¹⁶ Cattle graziers rented large holdings of untenanted land in Westmeath, as the quality of the grazing land in the county was better, on average, than the land west of the Shannon. The poorer quality land in many parts of the west of Ireland, as well as the smaller size holdings, were unable to provide sufficient grass to bring cattle to a state where they were of sufficient quality to bring to market. The cattle were sold at fairs in the west or otherwise brought by their owners to the untenanted grasslands rented from landowners in Westmeath and Meath. On these large farms the cattle would be 'finished', and then brought the short journey to the Dublin markets where they would be shipped as live exports to Great Britain and Europe.

¹¹⁴ David Seth Jones, *Graziers, land reform and political conflict in Ireland* (Washington, 1995), p. 42.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 44.

¹¹⁶ David S. Jones, 'The transfer of land and the emergence of the graziers during the famine period', in Arthur Gribben (ed.), *The great famine and the Irish diaspora in America* (Boston, 1999), p. 85.

A major contributor to land agitation in Westmeath was the large amount of untenanted land that had been retained by landlords in the county, and in particular by the aristocratic families. Jones in his examination of the reasons landlords had enlarged their untenanted holdings concluded that they wished to expand their own farming interests through cattle and sheep rearing. As their untenanted acreage increased so did the size of their herds and flocks thereby taking advantage of the increased profitability of grazing, especially in the period between 1850 and 1880.¹¹⁷ This was clearly demonstrated in March 1883 when the executors of the late Lord Greville auctioned his 416 cattle, 155 sheep and 21 horses,¹¹⁸ with the sale realising in excess of £10,000.¹¹⁹ In 1893 on Lord Longford's Pakenham Hall estate it was reported that 'a great number of stock of every description are kept', which required the employment of ten cattlemen to tend to the stock.¹²⁰

In the period after the 1880s landlords changed to letting their untenanted land for terms of eleven months (Commonly referred to as Conacre), after which the holding reverted to the landlord who leased it again for a similar term to the highest bidder. This meant that the occupier held no rights under the land acts and the landlord retained ownership of the holding.¹²¹ The 1881 Land Act had made provision for land courts to fix fair rents on tenancies of twelve months or more. Following reductions in their rents in the fifteen year judicial reviews in 1881 and 1896 landlords found that by renting their untenanted land on what became known as the 'eleven month system' they were able to circumvent the 1881 act while at the same time

¹¹⁷ David Seth Jones, *Graziers, land reform and political conflict in Ireland* (Washington, 1995), pp. 122-3.

¹¹⁸ *Westmeath Examiner*, 3 Mar. 1883.

¹¹⁹ *Belfast Telegraph*, 23 Mar. 1883.

¹²⁰ *Royal Commission on labour. The agricultural labourer. Vol. IV. Ireland. Reports by Mr. Arthur Wilson Fox (assistant commissioner), upon certain selected districts in the counties of Cork, Mayo, Roscommon and Westmeath; with summary report prefixed. HC 1893-4 [C.6894-XXI] xxxvii Pt.I.341, 127.*

¹²¹ David Seth Jones, *Graziers, land reform and political conflict in Ireland* (Washington, 1995), pp. 122-3.

obtain higher rents than they would otherwise get. The practice became very widespread especially in grazing areas such as Westmeath with market forces and the laws of supply and demand dictating the obtainable rent. It was this system which would generate a great deal of agitation in the period from 1906 to 1909 as campaigners like Laurence Ginnell, MP for North Westmeath fought to have estate land divided and distributed among members of the landless classes.

A return submitted to the House of Commons in 1906 showed that there was a total of 83,869 acres of untenanted land in County Westmeath, equivalent to 19.5 per cent of the total area of the county. Of this, 25,301 acres was valued at less than two shillings and six pence per acre (poor land) while 58,568 acres was valued at two shillings and six pence or higher (the second highest in Leinster).¹²² The aristocratic families held 17,686 acres of this untenanted land or just over four per cent of the total area. In addition, the Westmeath aristocracy also retained 1,656 acres of untenanted land in a number of other counties.¹²³ (See Table 7).

Table 7. Untenanted land held by the Westmeath aristocracy in 1906.

Family	Where held (County)	Total Acreage	Size of Demesne (Acres)	Rateable Valuation (Land) £	Rateable Valuation (Buildings) £
Earl of Longford	Westmeath	5,729	482	303	200
	Longford	387			
Sir Richard Levinge	Westmeath	1,241	782	490	100
Sir Walter Nugent (Donore)	Westmeath	1,429	220	205 10/-	70
	Longford	15			
Sir Montagu Chapman	Westmeath	2,763	469	404 5/-	100 5/-
	Mayo	1,124			
Sir Charles Nugent (Ballinlough)	Westmeath	623	420	353 5/-	Not Stated
Lord Castlemaine	Westmeath	2,801	405	300	20
			523	145	70

¹²² Ibid, pp 113-4.

¹²³ *Untenanted lands (Ireland). Return to an order of the Honourable the House of Commons, dated 27th March, 1906;- for a return of untenanted lands in rural districts, distinguishing demesnes on which there is a mansion, showing (1) rural district and electoral division; (2) townland; (3) area in statute acres; (4) valuation (Poor Law); (5) names of occupiers as in valuation lists, 250 HC 1906, c, 182-92.*

Lord Greville	Westmeath 3,100 Roscommon 129 Cork 1	3,230	289	213 5/-	75
Total		19,342			

Source: *Return of untenanted lands in rural districts [250] HC 1906, c.*

The ownership of such a large amount of land which remained unsold following the 1903 Land Act left the aristocratic landowners of Westmeath open to further hostility from organisations such as the United Irish League as well as political agitators such as Ginnell, and contributed in no small way to the serious agrarian strife and lawlessness between 1906 and 1911 as efforts were made to have these large tracts of land broken up and redistributed amongst the landless classes.

Following the publishing of the 1906 return Ginnell wrote to the estate commissioners requesting that untenanted land, exclusive of demesnes, be provided for evicted tenants of the Land War era, migrated tenants, occupants of uneconomic holdings, labourers and farmer's sons. Ginnell claimed that 'to give these people means of living in the country by distributing these lands among them is the most urgently needed reform of our time'.¹²⁴ Ginnell identified large tracts of untenanted land in the county, much of which was owned by local aristocrats. (See Table 8).

Table 8. Aristocratic lands identified by Laurence Ginnell in his correspondence of 4 August 1906 to the Estate Commissioners.

Name	District	Townland	Size of Holding (Acres)
Sir Montagu Chapman	Coole Delvin	Boherquill.	1,400
		Cloran & Kilrush	400
Lord Longford	Coole Mullingar Delvin	Coolure.	1,060
		Heathstown.	1,150
		Ballynaskeagh.	900
Hon. Edward Pakenham	Mullingar	Cloghan. (Cookeborough)	1,340
Sir Walter Nugent	Mullingar	Clonava.	700
General Fetherstonhaugh	Delvin	Ballynacor, Killulagh & Faughalstown.	2,800
Francis V. Chapman	Delvin	Ballyhealy & Mitchelstown.	900
Total			10,650

Source: *Meath Chronicle*, 4 August 1906.

¹²⁴ *Meath Chronicle*, 4 Aug. 1906. For Ginnell's views on land ownership, see Laurence Ginnell, *Land and liberty* (Dublin, 1908), pp 6-16.

Unlike the land acts where provision was made for tenants to purchase their holdings directly from landlords, the sale of untenanted land was more complex and problematic as land purchases had to be completed by the estate commissioners. Cosgrove has detailed the practical difficulties that had to be overcome before a holding came into their possession whereby:

Livestock would have to be moved, graziers would have to give up their farms, the land would have to be surveyed, divided up and fenced and roads may have to be constructed. All of this had to be completed before the estate commissioners even decided on the recipients of parcels of land.¹²⁵

In addition, a lack of willingness on the part of many landlords to sell their untenanted land due to the profitability of the 'eleven month system' meant that the number of purchases by the estate commissioners were limited.

Laurence Ginnell was abhorred by the 'eleven month system' and campaigned vigorously for compulsory land purchase at public meetings throughout the county. He encouraged those who opposed the system to enter grazing farms, open gates and drive the cattle from these holdings onto the roads to compel the graziers into giving up their leases so that the lands could then be sold to the landless labourers and small holders in the localities. He was of the view that it was better to give small holdings to the less well off landless labourers, to enable them to till the land and become self sufficient, than give it to the big graziers.

On 13 November 1905 at a meeting of the divisional executives of the UIL of North and South Westmeath, held at Mullingar Ginnell stated:

At present the chief obstacle to the distribution of untenanted land was the eleven months' grazing system. The system was unquestionably the most deadly evil now operating for Ireland's destruction.¹²⁶

¹²⁵ Patrick John Cosgrove, *The Wyndham Land Act, 1903: The final solution to the Irish land question?* (PhD thesis, Maynooth University, 2008), p. 284.

¹²⁶ *Meath Chronicle*, 18 Nov. 1905.

He went on to say: ‘Landlordism was now on its last leg and that leg was the eleven months system. Smash the leg and both are gone’.¹²⁷ Among the attendance as a delegate for the Multyfarnham branch was Sir Walter Nugent, 4th baronet.¹²⁸ On 11 March 1906, in an address to the Multyfarnham branch of the UIL, Nugent stated:

I don’t believe we will get Local Government or Home Rule until the land question is settled and so long as this feeling of uncertainty exists on the part of the tenants we will never attain any great ends.¹²⁹

The campaign to end the ‘eleven month system’ and break-up grazing ranches was launched by Laurence Ginnell at a public meeting held at The Downs, near Mullingar on 14 October 1906. The meeting, organised by the UIL was addressed by Ginnell who denounced the eleven month ranching system as ‘the greatest curse of our country at the present date’. He further denounced ‘all who practiced the system as enemies of our race and nation’, thereby identifying the land question with the issue of national identity. In encouraging the practice of driving cattle Ginnell asked the crowd: ‘can your cámans strike nothing but balls’, and stated: ‘these cattle could run thirty or forty miles in a night’.¹³⁰

The practice of driving cattle off lands that were leased on the much despised ‘eleven month system’ became the preferred weapon of agitation. This entailed a large group of men entering a grazing farm, usually at night, and driving the cattle off the land onto the public roads, where they would be driven long distances, often suffering injuries, before being abandoned. The RIC were then compelled to search the countryside and return the exhausted animals to their owners. Cattle driving was

¹²⁷ *Meath Chronicle*, 18 Nov. 1905.

¹²⁸ *Westmeath Examiner*, 18 Nov. 1905.

¹²⁹ *Ibid*, 17 Mar. 1906.

¹³⁰ *Ibid*, 20 Oct. 1906. For a comprehensive account of Laurence Ginnell’s rise to prominence see Michael Wheatley, *Nationalism and the Irish Party* (Oxford, 2005), pp 117-31 and for a broader outline of the Ranch War see David Seth Jones, *Graziers, land reform and political conflict in Ireland* (Washington, 1995), pp 184-204.

promoted by Laurence Ginnell as the best means of persuading graziers, ranchers and owners of large tracts of untenanted holdings to surrender the land for division. Jones suggests that a major motivation for the anti-ranch movement was the Wyndham Land Act of 1903, as tenants who had purchased land under the act became aware of how inadequate their holdings were in providing a decent livelihood and they began to concentrate on the need to redistribute the large tracts of grassland held by ranchers.¹³¹

Large scale cattle driving commenced in early 1907 and within a short time was widespread throughout the country.¹³² It soon became a serious problem for landowners, graziers and the authorities in Westmeath. The initial success of mobilising the local people to engage in cattle driving can be attributed to the astuteness of Ginnell, whose local area of Delvin and Clonmellon experienced a particularly large number of drives. Ginnell's matter of fact advice to those people seeking land was 'to clear the ranches and to use the hazel'. The hazel being the preferred stick of the herdsman when driving his cattle.¹³³

Between 1 January 1907 and 30 September 1908 County Westmeath, with eighty-eight reported incidents of cattle driving, was the fourth highest in the country after East Galway, Meath and Clare.¹³⁴ (see Table 9 and Appendix 28). The table outlines the counties where cattle driving took place together with the number of incidents. Counties not listed on the table had no reported incidents during the period in question. The table also gives an indication of where agrarian agitation was

¹³¹ David Seth Jones, *Graziers, land reform and political conflict in Ireland* (Washington, 1995), pp 184-5.

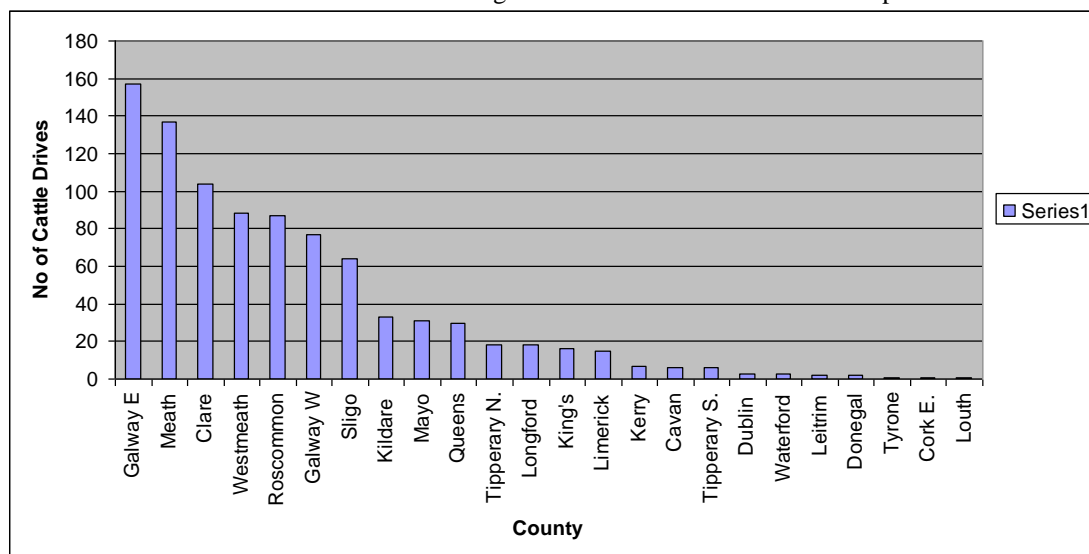
¹³² John Adye Curran, *Reminiscences of John Adye Curran KC* (London, 1915), p. 240.

¹³³ *Irish Independent*, 11 Nov. 1907.

¹³⁴ *Return by Counties and quarterly periods of the number of cattle drives reported to the Royal Irish Constabulary to have taken place in Ireland from 1 January 1907 to 30 September 1908, HC 1908 (310), xc, 2.*

greatest, namely the great grazing lands of Connacht, including County Clare, and the north Leinster grazing areas of Meath and Westmeath.

Table 9. Counties where cattle driving occurred from 1 Jan 1907 to 30 Sept 1908.



Source: *Return by Counties and quarterly periods of the number of cattle drives reported to the Royal Irish Constabulary to have taken place in Ireland from 1 January 1907 to 30 September 1908, HC 1908 (310), xc, 2.*

The first cattle drive in Westmeath occurred at 8 am on 21 October 1907 on the estate of Major-General Richard Steele Fetherstonhaugh, cousin of Lady Caroline Chapman, at Killulagh, between Mullingar and Delvin, when approximately fifty cattle owned by a local grazier were driven off the land. Arising from the drive seven men were arrested and brought before Mr. Robert Olphert, RM. The men refused the offer of bail conditioned on their good behaviour and were sentenced to two months imprisonment.¹³⁵ General Fetherstonhaugh, clearly frustrated by the event, wrote to *The Times* criticising a number of statements made by Augustine Birrell in relation to cattle driving in Ireland where he claimed the government were doing everything possible to put down the practice. Fetherstonhaugh stated:

I wish to tell you what happened on my property on October 22 last, at about 8 am, at Killulagh, county Westmeath. A mob of about 30 or 40 men drove over 200 head of cattle off my lands. Mr. Ginnell MP was in the road directing operations. The herds and men in charge of the cattle immediately communicated with the police, who joined in following them, and they were

¹³⁵ *Anglo Celt*, 26 Oct. 1907.

rescued from the mob about three or four miles away at 10 am. Mr. Ginnell, hearing the police coming, got into a trap and drove away. Eight men were arrested and sentenced by the magistrate in due course, but Mr. Ginnell and Mr. Sheehy MP are still going about county Meath advocating cattle-driving, which Mr. Birrell himself said at Southampton was illegal and unlawful. As long as these persons are allowed to advocate breaking the law with impunity, it is only natural that the dupes who act for them should imagine that the government are in favour of cattle-driving, whatever the Chief Secretary may say in England to the contrary.¹³⁶

Fetherstonhaugh does not state if he personally witnessed the events outlined. But from the tone of the letter he probably obtained the information from a third party.

On 19 December 1907 a second drive took place on his Killulagh estate when forty cattle were driven off the lands.¹³⁷ In May 1908 one hundred of the general's cattle were driven off his substantial ranch of several hundred acres at Whitehall, near Castlepollard.¹³⁸ In early December 1907 a large herd of cattle owned by a local grazier James Holmes, Ballinvally, Delvin were driven off lands at Ballyhealy, the property of Lady Caroline Chapman. They were driven apparently unnoticed through the village of Devlin to Mr. Holmes' residence.¹³⁹

On 27-28 October 1907 more than seventy cattle and forty sheep were driven from lands at Printinstown near Delvin the property of the Hon. Patrick Greville-Nugent. In November 1907, in an effort to deal with the ongoing problem of cattle driving, fifty police officers under the command of an assistant-inspector were temporarily drafted into Delvin.¹⁴⁰ On 18 January 1908 another sheep drive took place on lands of the Hon. Patrick Greville-Nugent, again at Printinstown. The animals were recovered three miles away by the police the following day.¹⁴¹ In April 1908

¹³⁶ *The Times*, 18 Nov. 1907. On 12 Nov. 1907 in a speech at Southampton Birrell had threatened to suspend land reform unless cattle driving ended. See also Paul Bew, *Conflict and conciliation in Ireland 1890-1910* (Oxford, 1987), p. 163.

¹³⁷ *Irish Independent*, 21 Dec. 1907.

¹³⁸ *Irish Examiner*, 19 May 1908.

¹³⁹ *Irish Independent*, 7 Dec. 1907.

¹⁴⁰ *Sunday Independent*, 3 Nov. 1907.

¹⁴¹ *Nenagh Guardian*, 22 Jan. 1908.

Greville-Nugent submitted a compensation claim of fifty-six pounds to Judge Curran for damage to a gate and injuries to some of the fifty-four sheep driven on the night in question. The judge awarded Greville-Nugent seventeen pounds ten shillings to be levied off the county rates.¹⁴²

The judge of the County Court, John Adye Curran KC, in an effort to curtail the practice, had encouraged cattle owners to submit claims for malicious injury to their animals arising from drives. He was of the view that jailing those involved in the practice was pointless as they ‘went in as martyrs and came out as heroes’.¹⁴³ The judge would levy payment against the rate payers of the county, some of whom were office holders in local branches of the United Irish League, as well as being county and district councillors, while other councillors owned cattle placed on land which they had leased on ‘the eleven month system’.¹⁴⁴

On 13 December 1907 Augustine Birrell MP, chief secretary for Ireland, met a deputation from the Irish Landowner’s Convention to discuss the ongoing problem of cattle driving and agrarian intimidation. Birrell was informed that cattle driving appeared to be directed against ‘ordinary occupiers of land who had incurred popular displeasure’, as well as against those who took land on the eleven month system’ and that ‘cattle driving would result in the ruin of the cattle raising industry’.¹⁴⁵ Mr. Birrell in reply denied that the government had underrated the serious nature of cattle driving and other practices which he claimed promoted a spirit of lawlessness. He pointed out that the number of police had been increased in affected areas, but in their efforts to

¹⁴² *Irish Times*, 3 Apr. 1908.

¹⁴³ John Adye Curran, *Reminiscences of John Adye Curran* KC (London, 1915), pp 240-1.

¹⁴⁴ *Freeman’s Journal*, 7 Jun. 1910. A cattle drive had occurred on the Lowerwood ranch on the Longwood estate near Athlone from which cattle owned by Patrick Macken, a member of the County Council, had been driven.

¹⁴⁵ *Irish Independent*, 14 Dec. 1907.

maintain the grazier's property, Birrell remarked that the police had received little or no assistance from the graziers themselves.¹⁴⁶

On 20 December 1907 Judge Ross ordered the arrest of Laurence Ginnell and directed that he be imprisoned for six months for contempt of court by interfering with lands at Johnstown and Galmoylestown in County Meath, which was under the control of the Court, and for interfering with the receiver by inciting others to interfere with the lands and the receiver. The charges arose from a speech made by Ginnell on 1 December at Kilskyre, near the lands in question.¹⁴⁷ On 23 December 1907 Ginnell was arrested by the police and lodged in Kilmainham Jail to serve the sentence imposed on him by Judge Ross.¹⁴⁸ On 24 April 1908 Ross ordered Ginnell's release after four months imprisonment having been advised that his further detention would probably cause permanent injury to his health.¹⁴⁹

On 3 May 1908 two hundred cattle were driven off the South Hill estate, near Delvin owned by Francis V. Chapman, (see Figure 4), brother of Lady Caroline Chapman. It was the fourth occasion in twelve months that the lands had been cleared.¹⁵⁰ The previous occasions being 27 October 1907 when an attempt to drive cattle was foiled by the police,¹⁵¹ 24 December 1907 when one hundred and fifty cattle were driven,¹⁵² and 1 March 1908 when one hundred cattle were driven off the estate.¹⁵³ On 24 May 1908 a fifth cattle drive occurred on Chapman's lands at Robinstown, Delvin.¹⁵⁴ On 17 May 1908 a number of cattle and sheep were driven off

¹⁴⁶ Ibid, 14 Dec. 1907.

¹⁴⁷ *Sunday Independent*, 22 Dec. 1907.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid, 29 Dec. 1907.

¹⁴⁹ *The Times*, 25 Apr. 1908. See also *Ulster Herald*, 2 May 1908 and Statement by Alice Ginnell (Bureau of Military History, WS 982).

¹⁵⁰ *The Times*, 7 May 1908.

¹⁵¹ *Sunday Independent*, 3 Nov. 1907.

¹⁵² *Freeman's Journal*, 30 Dec. 1907.

¹⁵³ Ibid, 9 Mar. 1908.

¹⁵⁴ *Meath Chronicle*, 30 May. 1908

untenanted lands on the adjoining Rosmead estate, the property of Count Charles de la Bedoyere, an absentee landlord, and nephew of Lord Greville.¹⁵⁵

The campaign initiated by Ginnell at The Downs was clearly having an effect. In early 1908, the strength of police in the village of Delvin was increased from seven to nineteen officers.¹⁵⁶ In June 1908 Westmeath was proclaimed as being in a state of disturbance which resulted in the rate payers of the county being levied with the cost of extra police.¹⁵⁷ On 11 January 1909 at a meeting of the Delvin branch of the UIL Ginnell was highly critical of Augustine Birrell and his proposed land act, as well as landlords who refused to sell their holdings. He concluded his speech with words of encouragement to those involved in land agitation:

Let them give no peace or ease to the bullock for the rest of their lives. Let the grass grow, and shelter the larks, and the hares, and the great statesmen who could not find money to purchase the land but could find it for the Boer War, would be soon influenced by the condition of things to open John Bull's purse strings.¹⁵⁸

On 5 February 1909 a daylight cattle drive took place at Strattanstown, west of Mullingar on land held by a former British Army officer, Major Charles Carr of Bryanstown House. The police arrested eleven men at the scene and brought them before a magistrate. When the evidence had been heard an adjournment was requested. Consultations then took place between Mr. Downes, solicitor for the accused men, Major Carr, John P. Hayden MP and Sir Walter Nugent MP in an effort to negotiate a settlement in the matter. Major Carr subsequently informed the local branch of the UIL that he would surrender the land once he had sold his horses in the bloodstock sales.¹⁵⁹

¹⁵⁵ *Meath Chronicle*, 23 May. 1908.

¹⁵⁶ *Irish Times*, 3 Apr. 1908.

¹⁵⁷ *Connaught Telegraph*, 11 Jul. 1908.

¹⁵⁸ *Irish Times*, 12 Jan. 1909.

¹⁵⁹ *The Times*, 6 Feb. 1909.

The motives behind cattle driving can be appreciated when examined from the perspective of the agrarian campaigners and landless labourers. Griffin has suggested that popular protest as acts of resistance assume broader political goals, and are thus linked either to a wider movement, or to a burgeoning political consciousness.¹⁶⁰ This is valid in the context of the Ranch War. The objective of agitators, such as Laurence Ginnell, was to have the vast tracts of untenanted grasslands divided and redistributed among the landless classes. The most effective way of attaining this goal was to mobilise the people of a particular locality into clearing the land of any grazing animals in order to make it unproductive, and therefore unprofitable, for owners and graziers.

While clearing these lands, the actions of cattle drivers resulted in numerous compensation claims before the courts by graziers and land owners. They alleged that the sale value of their cattle had been reduced as a result of injuries sustained during the course of drives. They further claimed that the injuries were caused by the animals being driven long distances, on occasions in excess of ten miles, at a higher tempo than was tolerable. If cattle were beaten excessively or violently during drives then exhaustion, lameness and increased anxiety was the likely outcome. Another type of injury that occurred was 'horning', whereby cattle having been located and confined in a yard pending restoration, would strike other animals with their horns causing injury.

The deliberate maiming of cattle during the course of drives was an infrequent occurrence, and there is no evidence to suggest that there was a systematic, organised or conscious decision to maim animals. Griffin in his study of animal maiming has argued that the motives for so doing were difficult to determine, but in the majority of

¹⁶⁰ Carl J. Griffin, 'Cut down by some cowardly miscreants': plant maiming, or the malicious cutting of flora, as an act of protest in 18th and 19th century rural England, in *Rural History*, Vol. 19, Issue 1 (Cambridge, 2008), p. 30.

cases the purpose of maiming was to intimidate, or as part of an inter class dispute, as an act of personal revenge, as a form of psychological terror, or, as in the case of the Ranch War, as a shared popular protest.¹⁶¹ The worst cases of maiming that occurred in Westmeath were of cattle having their tails cut off, which was not fatal for the animal.¹⁶² The majority of drives saw the animals recovered unharmed. This is supported by evidence of a drive that took place in March 1908 when 100 cattle were cleared off the estate of Francis Chapman at South Hill, Delvin but the sheep on the lands were not disturbed as most of the ewes were carrying lambs.¹⁶³

When the number of incidents of maiming and killing of cattle reported to the RIC in the period from 1901 to 1911 are examined (see Table 10), it is clear that maiming was not a common occurrence. During 1901 and 1902, the two years prior to the passing of the Wyndham Land Act, there were no reported incidents in County Westmeath.

Table 10. Number of reported incidents of maiming and killing of cattle 1901-1911

Year	Westmeath	Longford	Meath	King's County
1901	0	0	1	2
1902	0	0	0	4
1903	1	0	2	3
1904	1	0	2	1
1905	2	0	3	2
1906	1	1	0	2
1907	3	2	3	6
1908	1	1	2	1
1909	2	3	1	1
1910	0	1	2	1
1911	1	2	2	1
Total	12	10	18	24

Source: *Judicial statistics, Ireland 1901-1911*.

Indeed, in 1907 at the height of the Ranch War there were only three incidents of maiming and killing of cattle, while in the same period there had been twenty-three

¹⁶¹ Carl J. Griffin, 'Some inhuman wretch': Animal maiming and the ambivalent relationship between rural workers and animals, in *Rural History*, Vol. 25, Issue 2 (Cambridge, 2014), pp 143-4.

¹⁶² *Westmeath Examiner*, 24 October 1908.

¹⁶³ *Freeman's Journal*, 9 March 1908.

reported incidents of cattle driving. In 1908 there was only one case of maiming reported in Westmeath, despite sixty-five cattle drives having taken place.

In the period from 1901 and 1911 there were twelve reported incidents of maiming and killing of cattle in County Westmeath. These figures are broadly in line with the adjoining counties of King's County, Meath and Longford. King's County had the highest number of reported incidents during the period with twenty-four cases, while Westmeath had the second lowest with twelve. The year with the highest number of incidents was 1907, when agricultural agitation was most pronounced. On the other hand 1908, which had the highest number of cattle drives, had few cattle maimed or killed. The figures provided clearly demonstrate that there was no intent by those involved in cattle driving to maim animals and there was no problem of cattle maiming in Westmeath. In considering the tactics employed by those involved in cattle driving, the maiming of animals would only have served to undermine and taint the campaign, as well as exacerbate hostilities between owners and activists and at no time did political leaders encourage, promote or condone the maiming of animals. Furthermore, in many instances cattle owners lived locally and were therefore neighbours of those involved in cattle driving.

Sir Walter Nugent was critical of the extensive use by the police of legislation passed during the reign of King Edward III, to deal with persons involved in cattle driving. If the arrested drivers failed or refused to enter a bond to be of good behaviour they were charged with a breach of the peace, and if convicted sentenced to a term of imprisonment.¹⁶⁴ On 2 March 1909, in a speech to the House of Commons, Sir Walter proposed:

¹⁶⁴ *Justices of the Peace Act, 1361 [34 Edw. III. c.1]*. Edward III was king of England from 1327 to 1377. See also Laurence Ginnell, *Land and liberty* (Dublin, 1908), p. 148.

That this house regards with disapproval the action of the Irish Executive in enforcing the Act of Edward III against persons in Ireland charged with offences of an agrarian and political character.¹⁶⁵

On 12 September 1909 Sir Walter Nugent, in his capacity as the local MP and to emphasise his Nationalist credentials, was present in Moate at a parade of over 10,000 Nationalists who had assembled to mark the release of two local men who had been imprisoned for agrarian offences, and to welcome Captain Edward O’Meagher-Condon and John O’Callaghan who were on a tour of Ireland.¹⁶⁶

On 3 April 1910, near the village of Clonmellon, Ginnell addressed a meeting organised by the UIL. The gathering was attended by tenants of the nearby Killua estate, property of Lady Caroline Chapman. The objective of the meeting was stated in notices posted in the locality: ‘For the purpose of having this large tract of evicted land now in the hands of the estates commissioners, divided amongst the landless people, and rescued from the hands of the grazier clique’.¹⁶⁷ This was the tract of land from which the tenants had been relocated to Australia in 1847 during the Great Famine. Ginnell in his address to the attendance stated:

The people had waited long enough for the land, and now they wanted it at once. If the ranchers proved their professions of friendship by giving up their accursed trade and clearing off without more ado, if they showed peaceful method by which they could be coaxed off the land, the people were willing to adapt that method and then cattle-driving would cease, and the extra police could be withdrawn. But the ranchers must go, and the sooner the better for all concerned.¹⁶⁸

¹⁶⁵ *The Times*, 3 Mar. 1909 and *Irish Times*, 3 Mar. 1909. The idea of prosecuting persons involved in cattle driving under this legislation is attributed to John Naish (1842-1890) solicitor-general and later lord chancellor of Ireland. See H. C. G. Matthew and Brian Harrison (eds) ‘John Naish’, in *Oxford dictionary of national biography, volume 40* (Oxford, 2004), p, 128.

¹⁶⁶ *Westmeath Examiner*, 18 Sept. 1909. Edward O’Meagher-Condon (1841-1915) had been convicted in 1867 along with Allen, Larkin & O’Brien the ‘Manchester Martyrs’ of the murder of Sgt. Charles Brett, but his death sentence was commuted to imprisonment for life following an intervention by the United States government. He served twelve years and was released in 1879. John O’Callaghan was a leading American Fenian.

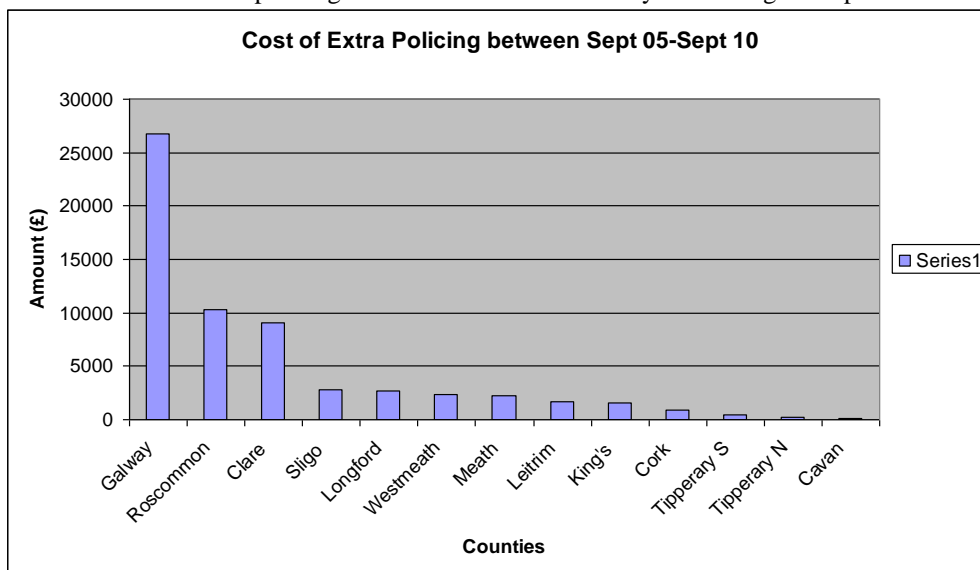
¹⁶⁷ *Irish Times*, 9 Apr. 1910. See also Eugene Sheridan, *A history of the parish of Clonmellon/Killallon* (Unknown, 2001), pp 51-64.

¹⁶⁸ *Ibid*, 9 Apr. 1910.

On 15 June 1910 Ginnell was charged with incitement to the offence of unlawful assembly by cattle driving, and incitement to the offence of unlawful conspiracy by cattle driving.¹⁶⁹ The charges arose from a speech he made on 22 May 1910 at Turin between Mullingar and Delvin in which he encouraged the practice of cattle driving, closing his speech with the comment: ‘Let them scatter the cattle in whatever direction the coast was clear, and as far as they could be driven’.¹⁷⁰

In November 1910 Birrell outlined to the members of the House of Commons the amount that extra policing had cost in dealing with cattle driving and other issues, such as boycotting, during the five years ending 30 September 1910.¹⁷¹ The figures revealed that Westmeath had the sixth highest costs in Ireland after Galway, Roscommon, Clare, Sligo and Longford (see Table 11). This corresponded to a large extent with the counties that had showed the highest number of cattle drives and clearly demonstrated that the extra police were in most cases allocated to areas where the problem of cattle driving had been greatest.

Table 11. Cost of extra policing in various counties for five years ending 30 September 1910.



Source: *Skibbereen Eagle*, 26 November 1910.

¹⁶⁹ *Westmeath Examiner*, 18 Jun. 1910.

¹⁷⁰ *Irish Times*, 24 May 1910.

¹⁷¹ *Skibbereen Eagle*, 26 Nov. 1910.

While cattle driving gradually declined after 1909 the practice did not end completely. In April 1911 Judge Curran informed the members of the grand jury that in the period since the previous Mullingar Quarter Sessions there had been fifteen cattle drives in Westmeath, as well as thirty-seven cases of minor boycotting.¹⁷² On 16 November 1911 nine men were arrested for driving cattle owned by George Gaynor who had a six months lease on a grazing ranch of one hundred and eighty-two acres at Tullywood near Athlone from Robert J. Handcock, first cousin of Lord Castlemaine. Handcock was the owner of the adjoining 300 acre farm which was rented out to nineteen tenants. The stated purpose of the cattle drive was to pressurise Gaynor into giving up the lease as well as to embarrass Handcock. The judge having heard the evidence, and following a guilty verdict being returned by the jury, bound the defendants to the peace.¹⁷³

Jones attributes the decline in cattle driving and the end of the ‘Ranch War’ to a number of factors, stating that:

Aside from the ambivalence over the methods of agitation, it also became apparent after about 1907, that the ranching question no longer commanded the same attention at both the national directory and the local branch levels of the League.¹⁷⁴

The Ranch War had created divisions in the IPP over the extent to which the party should support the actions of its more militant members. In addition, the enactment of the Land Act in 1909 with the inclusion of a form of compulsory purchase, created the impression that victory had been achieved.

¹⁷² *Freeman's Journal*, 11 Apr. 1911.

¹⁷³ *Irish Times*, 6 Dec. 1911.

¹⁷⁴ David Seth Jones, *Graziers, land reform and political conflict in Ireland* (Washington, 1995), p.198.

7. Conclusion

The passing of the Wyndham Land Act had major implications for the aristocracy in Westmeath. The financial incentives contained in the act accelerated the sale of land with the aristocratic families of Westmeath selling large sections of their estate lands. The Nationalist response to the passing of the Wyndham Land Act was one of outright hostility. The act played a major part in the outbreak of the Ranch War as agrarian campaigners regarded it as being very pro-landlord. Agrarian campaigners, such as Laurence Ginnell, sought to have the large tracts of untenanted land, of which the aristocratic were substantial owners, divided among the local populace. Agricultural tenants also sought to enlarge their holdings, which were, in many instances, uneconomic. The changes in agricultural practices adopted by aristocratic landowners were also a factor in the outbreak of hostilities. The decision by landlords to let their untenanted grasslands on the eleven month system, which circumvented the terms of the 1881 land act, caused widespread dissent.

The principal means of agrarian agitation during the Ranch War was cattle driving, which was extensive throughout County Westmeath. While some animals did sustain injury during the course of drives there was no deliberate intent to maim or kill them. The Ranch War disrupted the economic profitability of the aristocratic landowners and forced the British government into passing the Birrell Land Act in 1909. While the terms of the act were less attractive than the Wyndham Land Act, it contained a provision for compulsory land purchase. As already outlined, the passing of the Wyndham and Birrell Land Acts resulted in a massive transfer in land ownership, which played a significant part in the decline of the aristocracy in Westmeath. While the aristocratic families sold large tracts of their estates, the land acts failed to end agitation and the desire for land remained unabated. Moreover, the

debate over Home Rule for Ireland was increasingly capturing the attention of Nationalist politicians and this impending political crisis will be examined in detail in the next chapter.

Chapter 5

The Westmeath aristocracy and Politics, 1903-1914

1. Introduction

In 1903 the political fortunes of the aristocracy in Westmeath had declined to such an extent that their local influence was undermined. This was the culmination of a process that had begun during the 1870s. Aristocratic involvement in national politics as members of the House of Commons had also ended in the 1870s. The loss of political power, which coincided with the reduction in their estates, due to land purchase, was inevitably distressing for the aristocracy in Westmeath.

In this chapter, the political demise of the aristocratic families arising from legislative changes enacted at this time will be examined, paying particular attention to the impact of the Local Government (Ireland) Act 1898. This act was to have serious implications for the aristocracy in Westmeath. In the years following its passage Westmeath County Council, like all councils outside the province of Ulster, became increasingly dominated by nationalist businessmen, merchants and farmers. Unionist and aristocratic involvement waned as their numbers were reduced in successive local elections, leaving Lord Castlemaine as the only aristocrat and Unionist member on the council by 1914.

Another topic that will be explored is aristocratic involvement in national politics. No Protestant Unionist had been elected to the House of Commons for Westmeath since Lord Greville in 1865 (see appendix 14). Protestant aristocratic politicians who desired a seat in the House of Commons had no option but to withdraw from Ireland and contest parliamentary seats in Great Britain, and the election of Sir Walter Nugent (a Roman Catholic) to the House of Commons in 1907

was the first time an aristocrat had been elected in Westmeath since Sir John James Ennis in 1880 (See appendix 13). As the possibility of election to the House of Commons had all but ceased, the House of Lords was the only political forum where the Westmeath aristocracy, with three members holding seats, could defend its position.

In addition, the re-emergence of Irish Home Rule as a political issue will be looked at in the context of the renewed desire among nationalist politicians for Irish self-government. The response by aristocratic Unionist politicians in Westmeath to the prospect of Home Rule was crucial in understanding their reservations concerning their future existence in Ireland. The aristocracy in Westmeath held diverse views on Home Rule. Protestant aristocrats opposed the measure while Roman Catholic aristocrats supported the policy of Home Rule for Ireland within the British Empire. The political turmoil that erupted following the introduction of the third Home Rule Bill in April 1912, the reaction of Ulster Unionists, and the fear among aristocratic families in Westmeath of a Catholic Nationalist controlled parliament in Dublin will be analysed. Addressing these topics will demonstrate that the political demise of the aristocracy in Westmeath contributed to the loss of their power and influence at local level, and endangered their status in Ireland, as the prospect of war increased in Europe.

2. Local Politics

As already discussed in chapter 3, the Local Government (Ireland) Act 1898, which established the county councils, was one of the most significant pieces of legislation relating to Ireland that was passed by the British Government. At local level the act abolished the grand jury system which had been responsible for administration of local government in Westmeath. The grand jury had been dominated for generations

by the same property owning families which included the aristocratic families of the county.¹ The landowning class viewed the establishment of the county councils with a degree of uncertainty and one landowner, Colonel Edward Saunderson, MP of County Cavan and leader of the Irish Unionist Party, suggested that the act proposed to ‘give a man who paid no rates power to elect another man who paid no rates, to spend money’.² George Birmingham also commented on the changes to local government remarking that:

Along with the loss of political power and the loss of landed property must be reckoned another loss still, and perhaps the most galling of the three. The Irish gentleman has lost his influence in local affairs.³

From the time of its establishment members of the Westmeath aristocracy had been returned to sit on the county council. However, as time passed their commitment to that body appeared to diminish as their attendance at council meetings became mediocre at best. Between June 1903 and June 1904, out of ten council meetings held during the period, the Hon. Patrick Greville-Nugent attended five, while Lord Castlemaine was present at only three.⁴

Elections to Westmeath County Council took place in early 1905.⁵ The aristocratic and Unionist representation on the council was much reduced by this time. Despite this, Lord Castlemaine, the Hon. Patrick Greville-Nugent, and Lord Greville

¹ For details of grand jury members in County Westmeath, from 1727-1853, see John Charles Lyons, *The grand juries of the County of Westmeath, i* (Mullingar, 1853), pp 15-269. For a critique of the grand jury system, see Michael J. F. McCarthy, *Five years in Ireland, 1895-1900* (Dublin, 1903), pp 377- 82. How the outgoing members of the grand jury regarded the impending changes in local government can be gauged by the reaction in County Kildare where according to Nelson there was no evidence of any great social or class antagonism in the changeover to the new form of local administration, see Thomas P. Nelson, ‘Kildare County Council, 1899-1926’ (PhD thesis, NUI, Maynooth, 2007), p. 48.

² Reginald Lucas, *Colonel Saunderson MP, a memoir* (London, 1908), p. 280.

³ G. A. Birmingham, *Irishmen all* (London, 1914), p. 109.

⁴ *Westmeath Examiner*, 11 Jun. 1904.

⁵ Section 2 (2) of the Local Government (Ireland) Act, 1898 directed that elections be held every three years. [61 & 62 Vict. c. 37] (12 August 1898).

were returned unopposed in their divisions.⁶ In the same local elections Lord Greville's sister, the Hon. Mildred Marquese de la Bedoyere, was elected to the Delvin Rural District Council.⁷ The first meeting of the newly elected county council took place on 10 June that year. Among those in attendance were Lord Castlemaine and the Hon. Patrick Greville-Nugent. Procedure dictated that the councillors co-opt two new members and Sir Walter Nugent was nominated to fill one of the vacancies. However, he was unsuccessful in the subsequent vote.⁸ In a politically expedient move to enhance his electoral prospects Sir Walter had become a member of the UIL in May 1905.⁹

In March 1907 Lord Greville resigned his seat on Westmeath County Council on age and health grounds. He was replaced by Sir Walter Nugent, who despite his failed attempts to contest parliamentary seats had continued with his political activities at local level.¹⁰ In the 1908 local elections three members of the aristocracy sought seats on the county council. Charles Greville who had succeeded his father as 3rd baronet on 2 December 1909, did not contest the election.¹¹ Similarly, Lord Castlemaine had not intended seeking re-election to the council. However, he changed his mind following a meeting with a deputation of electors from the Moydrum division and was returned unopposed to sit as the only Unionist member.¹² In the Coole division Sir Walter Nugent was successful, overcoming his rival by 187 votes

⁶ *Westmeath Examiner*, 3 Jun. and 29 Apr. 1905.

⁷ *Meath Chronicle*, 10 Jun. 1905. Under the provisions of the Local Government (Ireland) Act, 1898 women could become members of rural and urban district councils but not county councils. See D. J. Hickey and J.E. Doherty, *A new dictionary of Irish history from 1800* (Dublin, 2003), p. 276.

⁸ *Westmeath Examiner*, 17 Jun. 1905.

⁹ *Irish Independent*, 19 May 1905.

¹⁰ *Irish Times*, 23 Mar. 1907.

¹¹ *The Times*, 3 Dec. 1910.

¹² *Irish Times*, 27 Apr. 1908.

to 62.¹³ But the Hon. Patrick Greville-Nugent was defeated in the Delvin area by 246 votes to 184.¹⁴

An incident that occurred in Delvin a short time prior to the vote undoubtedly cost him his seat. On 23 May a party of Royal Fusiliers who were camped on the Greville-Nugent demesne, while on manoeuvres in the area, behaved in such a disorderly manner while walking through the village as to attract the attention of the local priest Rev. Fr. Tuite. In response to his remonstrations the soldiers verbally insulted the priest and threw stones at him. This in turn incensed a number of local citizens who physically assaulted the soldiers, breaking one man's jaw and another man's nose. Fr. Tuite was forced to intervene to save the soldiers from further punishment. The conduct of the soldiers was roundly condemned the following day at a meeting of the local branch of the UIL, as was Patrick Greville-Nugent for providing the regiment with accommodation. The meeting was reminded that the same gentleman was now seeking the support of Nationalist voters, and so he was warned that on polling day he would discover what the local people thought of him.¹⁵

The election result was predicable in that the overwhelming composition of the new council was Roman Catholic and Nationalist, its members consisting of five merchants, sixteen farmers, two aristocrats, and one solicitor.¹⁶ In the lead-up to the 1911 local election Sir Walter Nugent decided to stand down as a member of Westmeath County Council. On 26 April he wrote to his local parish priest, Fr. Murphy of Multyfarnham informing him that he had withdrawn his name as a candidate for the Coole area as he could not attend to his parliamentary duties while at

¹³ *Freeman's Journal*, 3 Jun. 1908.

¹⁴ *Meath Chronicle*, 6 Jun. 1908.

¹⁵ *Ibid*, 30 May 1908.

¹⁶ *Freeman's Journal*, 4 May 1908 and *Westmeath Examiner*, 6 Jun. 1908

the same time give the council business the attention it required.¹⁷ In the 1911 election to the council Lord Castlemaine was returned unopposed for the Moydrum area, the only aristocratic and Unionist candidate that contested either the county council or rural district council elections.¹⁸

In the midst of the crisis surrounding the Home Rule issue elections to Westmeath County Council were scheduled for June 1914. The only member of the aristocracy that stood for election was Lord Castlemaine and he was returned unopposed yet again and, as already stated, remained the only aristocrat and Unionist member of the council.¹⁹ The election result confirmed the political demise of the Protestant landed class at local level and consolidated the grip of Nationalist farmers and businessmen on local government in County Westmeath.

3. National Politics

Since 1885 Westmeath had been divided for electoral purposes into two constituencies, each of which returned one member to the House of Commons. With the general election of 1906 imminent, Patrick J. Kennedy, the outgoing Nationalist MP for North Westmeath, decided not to seek re-nomination to contest the seat.²⁰ At the North Westmeath constituency convention of the UIL, held on 2 January 1906, Laurence Ginnell was selected as the Nationalist candidate, defeating Sir Walter Nugent by ninety-nine votes to seventy-two.²¹ Arising from this political setback Sir Walter considered seeking the nomination to contest the neighbouring seat of North Meath and travelled to that constituency to consult with a number of prominent

¹⁷ *Freeman's Journal*, 28 Apr. 1911.

¹⁸ *Westmeath Examiner*, 3 Jun. 1911.

¹⁹ *Ibid*, 2 Mar. 1914. Lord Castlemaine had been returned unopposed at every county council election apart from the first election in 1899.

²⁰ *Meath Chronicle*, 16 Dec. 1905.

²¹ *Irish Independent*, 3 Jan. 1906. Kennedy, a Healyite clericalist had been MP since 1900. See also Michael Wheatley, *Nationalism and the Irish party* (Oxford, 2005), p. 119.

activists. However, following a telegram from John Redmond he withdrew his candidature on the day of the election.²² In North Westmeath Ginnell was returned unopposed, while Donal Sullivan, a member of the Irish Parliamentary Party was elected unopposed in South Westmeath.²³ Ginnell, a maverick politician, remained a member of the IPP until 1909, when he was expelled from the party for persistently challenging the workings of the IPP's parliamentary fund.²⁴ He then sat in the House of Commons as an Independent Nationalist.

On 3 April 1907, at Moate, Sir Walter Nugent's work at local level was finally rewarded when he was selected as the Nationalist candidate at the South Westmeath UIL convention to contest the vacant seat in the House of Commons for the South Westmeath constituency at an upcoming by-election. The vacancy had arisen following the death of the sitting MP Donal Sullivan. In a three way contest Sir Walter received the support of ninety-seven of the 160 delegates present with his rivals receiving thirty-six and twenty-seven votes respectively. The close ties between Sir Walter and the Roman Catholic clergy were clearly apparent, as out of the twenty-nine priests in attendance Sir Walter secured all but two of their votes.²⁵ On 13 April 1907 Nugent was elected unopposed to fill the South Westmeath parliamentary seat.²⁶ Speaking at a UIL demonstration at Mount Temple near Moate on 18 August 1907 Sir Walter stated that he wanted Ireland to be placed in the same position as Canada or Australia, 'to have the right to make her own laws and control her own customs'.²⁷

²² *Meath Chronicle*, 20 Jan. 1906.

²³ Brian M. Walker (ed.) *Parliamentary election results in Ireland, 1801-1922* (Dublin, 1978), p. 169. See also *Westmeath Examiner*, 21 Jan. 1906.

²⁴ Michael Wheatley, *Nationalism and the Irish party* (Oxford, 2005), p. 121, see also *Westmeath Examiner*, 25 Dec. 1909.

²⁵ *Westmeath Examiner*, 6 Apr. 1907.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 20 Apr. 1907. See also Brian M. Walker (ed.) *Parliamentary election results in Ireland, 1801-1922* (Dublin, 1978), p. 170.

²⁷ *Irish Times*, 19 Aug. 1907.

The political opinions of the two Westmeath MPs, Sir Walter Nugent and Laurence Ginnell differed greatly and were most apparent in their views on the best course of action required to resolve agrarian issues such as land reform, cattle ranching and cattle driving.

At a public meeting at Moyvore in the west of the county on 15 December 1907 Sir Walter informed those in attendance that he ‘deplored class warfare, had always done and would do his utmost to prevent it, but nevertheless he was not in the least surprised at the crisis which had arisen’. He went on to claim that people out of desperation and driven by increasing poverty and emigration had taken the law into their own hands. Sir Walter, conscious of his own position as a large landowner, described the ranching system as ‘bad and economically unsound’ and cited an example of abuse where an absentee landlord let three hundred acres to which the lessee was prohibited from tilling. The latter stocked the land with cattle and employed a herd. Sir Walter stated that the wages received by the herd represented the entire local expenditure from the proceeds of that land and stated it was no wonder that the people rebelled against such a system. Laurence Ginnell on the other-hand held a much more militant view of matters and urged the clearing of the grazing ranches. He remarked that ‘if they laid down their hazel, they might lay down their hope, and march to the nearest port for America’. Sir Walter Nugent closed the meeting stating that ‘no one could say he was a coward, but he would be one if he did not say that he did not agree with most of the advice Mr. Ginnell had given them’.²⁸

²⁸ *Longford Leader*, 21 Dec. 1907. See also Paul Bew, *Conflict and conciliation in Ireland 1890-1910* (Oxford, 1987), p. 162.

4. Home Rule, 1908-1912

The campaign for Home Rule experienced resurgence in the period from 1908. In March of that year Unionists began to organise their campaign of opposition to Home Rule by appealing for funds to aid a proposed three year challenge against Nationalism in British parliamentary constituencies and combined donations in excess of £10,000 were promised by leading Unionists. Lord Longford, the earl of Pembroke and Viscount Iveagh each undertook to contribute £500, Lord Ardilaun promised £1,500, while the marquis of Londonderry and the marquis of Waterford pledged £300 each. Other aristocrats who gave commitments to support the fund were the marquis of Ormond and the earls of Drogheda, Carysfort and Courtown, as well as Lords Clonbrock and Cloncurry.²⁹ Lord Longford's donation of £500 to what was known as the 'Carrion Crow Fund' made him the subject of hostile criticism. The Carrion Crows were a group of Irish Unionists who solicited donations from within their class to a fund named the Carrion Crow Fund for the stated purpose of bringing the affairs of Ireland to the notice of the electorate of Great Britain.

At a meeting of the Longford branch of the United Irish League held on 15 March 1908 his action was condemned by James P. Farrell, MP for North Longford who stated:

Lord Longford may be no doubt a very strong Conservative, and I find no fault with him for that, but I rather give him credit for his views; but Lord Longford has no right to use the money contributed out of the hard earnings of the people of Longford for his luxury and ease and idleness to slander the people before the British electorate in the House of Commons.³⁰

²⁹ *Freeman's Journal*, 12 Mar. 1908.

³⁰ *Longford Leader*, 21 Mar. 1908. J. P. Farrell (1865-1921) was Nationalist MP for West Cavan from 1895 to 1900 and for North Longford from 1900 to 1918. He was in favour of land reform and was also the owner and editor of the *Longford Leader* newspaper. See also Brian M. Walker (ed.) *Parliamentary election results in Ireland, 1801-1922* (Dublin, 1978), p. 156, 161 & 189. The Farrell family had rented a four acre holding from Lord Longford since 1828. The annual rent had increased from £1 10s in 1828 to £9 in 1870. See *Longford Leader*, 29 Jun. 1912.

On 30 March 1909 Lloyd George introduced his controversial 'People's Budget' in the House of Commons. The finance required to fund its social provisions necessitated extra taxation on incomes and land, increased death duties as well as duties on liquor licences, spirits and tobacco.³¹ In July 1909, in a speech to the executive of the South Westmeath UIL, Sir Walter Nugent criticised the budget, remarking:

Like every Finance Bill since the Union, it was unfair to Ireland-more so than many, inasmuch as it pressed unfairly on one essential Irish trade, and indeed practically the only industry which one hundred years of the Union had left them.³²

On 30 November 1909 the House of Lords acted outside previous conventions in rejecting a finance bill. The action of the peers in voting down the 'People's Budget' triggered a political crisis that resulted in two general elections being held in 1910, one in January, followed by another in December.³³ In the January election Sir Walter Nugent was returned unopposed in South Westmeath, while in North Westmeath Laurence Ginnell, standing as an Independent Nationalist, defeated Patrick McKenna, the IPP candidate by 1,996 votes to 1,379.³⁴ The Liberal party retained power with the help of the IPP and the finance bill introduced by Lloyd George was passed in April 1910 by both houses of parliament. In the December election both outgoing MPs, Ginnell and Nugent, were returned unopposed.³⁵ The result of the December 1910 election saw 274 Liberals 271 Conservatives and seventy-four IPP members returned. This resulted in the Irish Parliamentary Party holding the balance of power and in

³¹ F. S. L. Lyons, 'The developing crisis, 1907-14', in W. E. Vaughan (ed.) *A new history of Ireland*, vi (Oxford, 1996), p. 126.

³² *Irish Independent*, 8 Jul. 1909.

³³ David Cannadine, *The decline and fall of the British aristocracy* (London, 1990), pp 49-50.

³⁴ Brian M. Walker (ed.) *Parliamentary election results in Ireland, 1801-1922* (Dublin, 1978), p. 176.

³⁵ *Ibid*, p. 182. See also *Freeman's Journal*, 8 Dec. 1910.

return for their support a third Home Rule Bill for Ireland was agreed with the Liberals.

The Irish Parliamentary Party were determined that the third campaign for Irish Home Rule, would not end in failure as the two previous campaigns had done and members of the party began to speak in support of Home Rule at meetings in the United Kingdom and Ireland. Sir Walter Nugent was an active campaigner. On 17 March 1909, accompanied by John Cullinan IPP MP for South Tipperary, Nugent addressed a UIL meeting at Merthyr Tydfil in South Wales.³⁶ On 3 April 1910, at a UIL meeting held at Athlone, Nugent stated that ‘in their fight with the House of Lords it must be remembered that not only Home Rule for Ireland, but every other social reform, depended on their victory’.³⁷ On 18 December 1910 Sir Walter was one of a number of Irish Parliamentary Party MPs that spoke in support of Matthew Keating, the party candidate for South Kilkenny, addressing meetings at Glenmore and Slieverue.³⁸ On the eve of the December election Sir Walter addressed a meeting at South Molton, Devon in support of the long standing Liberal MP George Lambert (1866-1958). He informed the gathering that:

It was a sorry thing that people cannot oppose Home Rule without accusing Home Rulers of being murderers and dynamiters, and representing that under Irish local government every Protestant would be impaled on a toasting-fork and boiled alive or some such thing.³⁹

In response to Conservative claims that support for Home Rule was against the wishes of the late King Edward VII Nugent stated: ‘I refute that: I know it is a lie’.⁴⁰

³⁶ *The Times*, 17 Mar. 1909.

³⁷ *Westmeath Examiner*, 9 Apr. 1910.

³⁸ *Freeman's Journal*, 17 Dec. 1910.

³⁹ *Westmeath Examiner*, 17 Dec. 1910. See also F. W. S. Craig, *British Parliamentary election results, 1885-1918* (London, 1974), p. 258.

⁴⁰ *Ibid*, 17 Dec. 1910.

In the midst of agrarian strife as well as the ongoing political turmoil that surrounded the introduction of the ‘People’s Budget’, Augustine Birrell introduced his land act for Ireland. It was an attempt by Birrell to rectify deficiencies in the 1903 act. The act, which received Royal ascent on 3 December 1909,⁴¹ limited the cost of the Wyndham Act with the introduction of land bonds. While it reduced the number of land transactions the act attempted to appease radical agrarian agitators Laurence Ginnell, David Sheehy and J. P. Farrell by including a form of compulsory acquisition, where a landlord had to sell if the majority of tenants sought to purchase their holdings. Cosgrove states that the revisions to the Wyndham Act contained in the 1909 Land Act were seen as a betrayal by many Irish landowners.⁴² The landlords were particularly offended by the provisions relating to compulsory purchase where the provisions of the act could be invoked to compel them to sell their lands, as well as the financial adjustments contained in the act, where they would no longer receive a cash bonus payment upon the sale of estate land.

The failure of the peers to approve the ‘Peoples Budget’ presented the Liberal Government with the opportunity to restrict the future powers of the House of Lords, The government was determined that the Parliament Bill, which it introduced on 22 February 1911, would be passed by the House of Lords, despite it having a Conservative majority. The government made its position clear, that if the bill was rejected, it was prepared to appoint a sufficient number of new Liberal peers to ensure its successful passage into law. It was suggested that the government chief whip had a

⁴¹ *Irish Land Act, 1909 [9 Edw. VII, c.42] (3 December 1909).*

⁴² Patrick John Cosgrove, ‘The Wyndham Land Act, 1903: The final solution to the Irish land Question?’ (PhD thesis, NUI Maynooth, 2008), pp 210-11. For a detailed analysis and examination by George Wyndham of the land acts from 1881 to 1909, see George Wyndham, ‘The completion of land purchase’, in S. Rosenbaum (ed.) *Against Home Rule, the case for the Union* (London, 1912), pp 249-70.

list containing five hundred names of possible peers.⁴³ On 15 May 1911 the Parliamentary Bill was approved by the House of Commons.⁴⁴

On 11 January 1911 Lord Longford retired as commanding officer of the 2nd Life Guards Regiment of the British Army with the rank of colonel after twenty-four years service,⁴⁵ and was now in a position to devote himself to political matters. On 13 May 1911 two days prior to the Parliament Bill being approved by the House of Commons, Longford presided at the formation of a Unionist Club for the districts of Longford and Newtownforbes. He informed the gathering that:

They had a right to voice their opinions and let the world at large know that they held them. People said that there were no Unionists in Ireland except in Ulster, but the meeting that day proved that that was not so.⁴⁶

On 6 July 1911 Lord Longford and his wife had left London by train along with a host of other aristocrats in order to be present at Kingstown for the visit of King George V and Queen Mary to Ireland.⁴⁷ The Royal visit went largely unnoticed in County Westmeath and received no coverage in the local Nationalist press.

On 20 July 1911 Lord Longford chaired a meeting held at Longford under the auspices of the Unionist clubs of the county to protest against the introduction of Home Rule for Ireland. In his introduction he told the meeting:

We all know why we are here. We have just the same feelings now as we had in 1893 we consider the Union the only true and safe form of Government under which we can live in security and in the interests of the Empire and our own interests.⁴⁸

⁴³ *The Times*, 11 Aug. 1911. See also Peter Clarke, *Hope and glory* (London, 1996), pp 60-6 and Alan Sharp, *David Lloyd George: Great Britain* (London, 2008), pp 17- 9. For an Irish perspective see F. S. L. Lyons, 'The developing crisis 1907-14', in W. E. Vaughan (ed.) *A new history of Ireland*, vi (Oxford, 1996), pp 126-8.

⁴⁴ Alan O'Day, *Irish Home Rule 1867-1921* (Manchester, 1998), p. 242.

⁴⁵ *The Times*, 5 Jan. 1911. Shortly after his retirement from the army in 1911, Lord Longford acquired North Aston Hall, Deddington, Oxfordshire. See *The Times*, 20 Oct. 1911.

⁴⁶ *Irish Times*, 15 May 1911.

⁴⁷ *The Times*, 6 Jul. 1911 and *Irish Independent*, 10 Jul. 1911.

⁴⁸ *Longford Leader*, 22 Jul. 1911. This was the only Unionist club in County Longford.

Captain Bryan Cooper, a former MP, who was the main speaker, informed the gathering that while a Home Rule Bill would be introduced the following year it would not, in his opinion, become law. Cooper wondered what practical advantages would the people of Ireland gain by Home Rule, economically or politically. The meeting passed a resolution urging the leaders of the opposition in the House of Lords not to relax their objection to the passing of any Home Rule measures.⁴⁹

During 1911, in an effort to gather support for the proposed Home Rule legislation, members of the Irish Parliamentary Party spoke at 308 meetings in the United Kingdom. However, despite his previous active campaigning on the issue Sir Walter Nugent MP addressed only two of these meetings.⁵⁰ The first occasion was in April 1911 at Steyning, Sussex, the village where in 1891 C. S. Parnell had married Kitty O'Shea, where he stated:

On behalf of Nationalist Ireland I say we want every portion of Ireland and every class and creed to get fair representation in the Home Rule Parliament. If I did not believe that absolutely and unreservedly, there would be no more bitter opponent of Irish Home Rule than I would be.⁵¹

The other meeting was held the following September in Manchester.⁵² On 10 August 1911 Lord Longford was one of the 131 peers that voted in favour of the Parliament Bill, defeating the 114 'Die-hards' voting against the measure.⁵³ On 18 August 1911 the Parliament Act received Royal assent. The act restricted the power of the peers. The House of Lords could only delay a bill from becoming law for a maximum of two years. If a bill passed through the House of Commons in three successive sessions it would become law. Furthermore, the House of Lords could no longer block the

⁴⁹ *Irish Independent*, 21 Jul. 1911.

⁵⁰ *Donegal News*, 30 Dec. 1911.

⁵¹ *Freeman's Journal*, 19 May 1911.

⁵² *Irish Independent*, 19 Sept. 1911.

⁵³ *Irish Times*, 11 Aug. 1911. See also David Cannadine, *The decline and fall of the British aristocracy* (London, 1990), pp 51-3.

passage of finance bills.⁵⁴ These changes to the authority of the House of Lords would play an important part in the crisis that surrounded the introduction of the third Home Rule Bill a matter of months later in April 1912.

5. The Home Rule crisis in Westmeath 1912-1914

After the second general election of 1910 the Liberal party needed the support of John Redmond and the Irish Parliamentary Party to retain a parliamentary majority. In return for their support Redmond demanded a third Home Rule bill for Ireland. In April 1912 the Home Rule bill was introduced by Asquith and as a result of the Parliament Act of 1911 the Unionists and their Conservatives allies in the House of Lords were powerless to prevent it from becoming law by 1914 at the latest. The Ulster Unionists under Edward Carson were horrified by the thought of Home Rule and began a campaign of resistance. On 28 September 1912 they signed the Solemn League and Covenant to symbolise this opposition and in January 1913 formed the Ulster Volunteers.⁵⁵

The same day as the covenant was launched in Belfast, rooms were made available in the offices of the Irish Unionist Alliance at Grafton Street in Dublin to facilitate people from Ulster who happened to be in Dublin, and who wished to sign it. Bryan Cooper, one of the organisers of the event later claimed that approximately 2,000 people signed the document.⁵⁶ It was not expected that southern Unionists such as the aristocratic families in Westmeath should sign the Ulster Covenant as it was primarily intended to demonstrate the objections of Ulster people to Home Rule. Many southern aristocrats were already members of the Irish Unionist Alliance, an

⁵⁴ Alan O'Day, *Irish Home Rule 1867-1921* (Manchester, 1998), p. 242.

⁵⁵ F. S. L. Lyons, 'The developing crisis, 1907-14', in W. E. Vaughan (ed.), *A new history of Ireland*, vi (Oxford, 1996), p. 135.

⁵⁶ *Irish Independent*, 30 Sept. 1912.

organisation which represented the interests of unionists outside the province of Ulster. While one southern aristocrat, the earl of Arran, who lived at Ravensdale Park, County Louth on the border with County Armagh did sign the covenant, most other leading unionists such as Bryan Cooper and the earl of Midleton, despite their opposition to Home Rule, did not do so.

The political uncertainty over the impending introduction of the third Home Rule bill was causing disquiet among the aristocracy in Westmeath. Buckland suggests that the two main reasons southern Unionists opposed Home Rule was that they were content with the status quo, being part of the Protestant majority of the United Kingdom, as well as the belief that Ireland had done well under the union. As already outlined, southern Unionists had lost power at local level with the establishment of the county councils and they feared for their future in the event of Home Rule coming to Ireland with the possibility of a Catholic dominated parliament.⁵⁷ As with local government, southern Unionists were well aware of the political reality in that they would have little possibility of successfully contesting an election to an Irish parliament due to a deficit of potential voters.

Arising from their political, religious and cultural backgrounds, members of the various aristocratic families in Westmeath held differing views on the question of Irish Home Rule: the Protestant Lords Castlemaine, Greville and Longford along with Sir Richard Levinge were solid in their opposition to Home Rule, while the Catholic Sir Walter Nugent, Irish Parliamentary MP for South Westmeath was robustly in its favour. The remaining aristocrats, Sir Benjamin Chapman and Sir Charles Nugent, one Protestant and the other Roman Catholic, appeared to distance themselves from the controversy. Sir Benjamin, a single man, who had succeeded to the title in 1907

⁵⁷ Patrick Buckland, *Irish Unionism 1885-1922* (London, 1973), p. 8. See also Richard Bagwell, 'The southern minorities', in S. Rosenbaum (ed.) *Against Home Rule: The case for the Union* (London, 1912), pp 182-8.

on the death of his brother, lived a quiet life in his residences at 3 Royal Marine Road, Kingstown and The Manor House, Delgany, Co. Wicklow, while Sir Charles, who spent most of his time in England, appeared more interested in training horses in his racing stable, as well as attending race meetings and bloodstock sales, than involving himself in the Home Rule debate.⁵⁸

Charles Greville, 3rd baronet held the opposite view to his late father on the Home Rule issue. Algernon Greville, 2nd baronet, a Liberal politician, had supported Home Rule.⁵⁹ Greville elected in February 1912 to London County Council for the West Marylebone area,⁶⁰ reaffirmed his opposition to Home Rule in March 1914 by signing the British Covenant, a document similar to the Ulster Covenant of 1912.⁶¹

As the possibility of Home Rule was becoming more likely southern Unionists began to organise and form clubs to campaign against its introduction in Ireland. On 6 February 1912 a meeting was held at Knockdrin Castle, with Lady Irene Levinge in the chair, where thirty-five ladies formed a branch of the Women's Unionist Alliance in Westmeath. The countess of Longford and Lady Castlemaine, who were unable to attend the gathering, sent letters of apology and support. The meeting passed a resolution proposed by Mrs Tottenham which stated:

⁵⁸ *Freeman's Journal*, 29 Aug. 1913.

⁵⁹ Charles, his second son, had given service to the British Empire as a captain in the 7th Hussars, then as A. D. C. to the Lord Lieutenant from 1892 to 1893, secretary to the Governor of Bombay from 1900 to 1904 and military secretary to the Governor-General of Australia from 1904 to 1908. Consequently he had spent very little time in Ireland. Charles had succeeded to the title of 3rd baronet in 1909, his elder brother Ronald having died of pneumonia in April 1908 following an operation. See *Irish Independent*, 1 Jan. 1908. In 1909 Algernon Greville, 2nd baronet presented a fountain to the town of Mullingar in memory of his son Ronald. On 24 November 1909 Charles Greville married an Irish-American widow Olivia Kerr in London, among the guests at the reception were the earl and countess of Longford. See *Westmeath Examiner*, 27 Nov. 1909.

⁶⁰ *The Times*, 8 Feb. 1912. In addition to his political roles he was president of St. George's Hospital, London. See *The Times*, 16 May 1952. He also chaired the London Children's Gardens and Recreation Fund. See *The Times*, 4 Aug. 1913.

⁶¹ *Irish Times*, 13 Mar. 1914. The British Covenant was established at a rally at Hyde Park, London on 4 April 1914.

That we condemn in the most emphatic manner the introduction of any Home Rule Bill believing as we do, that any such measure would bring financial and social disaster not only to Ireland, but also to Great Britain and the Empire.⁶²

On 20 February 1912 a follow-up meeting was held in the Greville Arms Hotel, Mullingar for the purpose of forming a Westmeath branch of the Unionists Clubs of Ireland. Among those present was Sir Richard Levinge. A letter of apology was sent by Lord Longford who stated:

As they knew, he already belonged and he had every sympathy with the movement, as it enabled the scattered Unionists of the Southern provinces to hold together, to express their opinions and to carry on their lawful business without molestation.⁶³

Letters promising their co-operation were received from Lords Castlemaine and Greville. At the election of officers Lord Castlemaine was proposed and elected president of the club with Sir Richard Levinge elected as one of two vice-presidents.

At the meeting Charles Tottenham, Tudenham House, Mullingar proposed:

That a Unionist club be started and maintained in Westmeath in defence of the legislative union between Great Britain and Ireland, and for rendering assistance to its members and others in carrying out this policy, and further that all those holding Unionist principles are eligible as members, irrespective of creed or party, and whether voters or non voters.⁶⁴

The Nationalist response to these meetings was immediate and scathing in its criticism of the Unionist agenda. The *Westmeath Examiner* described the meeting in the Greville Arms Hotel as being ‘a very small, select and invited audience from Westmeath’. The article claimed the purpose of the Unionist club was:

To leave no stone unturned to still hold back from the people of Ireland their national and natural rights to self-government, to deny the nation all the privileges of freedom, and keep it still in the grip of the little ascendancy clique.⁶⁵

⁶² *Irish Times*, 9 Feb. 1912.

⁶³ *Westmeath Examiner*, 24 Feb. 1912.

⁶⁴ *Ibid*, 24 Feb. 1912.

⁶⁵ *Ibid*, 2 Mar. 1912.

On 12 June 1912 Lord Longford presided over a meeting of the Irish Unionist Alliance held in Longford town to protest against Home Rule. The sense of isolation and abandonment being felt by many southern Unionists was apparent in his address to those present when he stated:

The real reason for holding these meetings was to impress the people of England that in the other three provinces outside Ulster there was a minority, perhaps not very large in each county, but very respectable in number, who utterly disliked and detested the idea of Home Rule.

Bryan Cooper, who also addressed the meeting, expressed the opinion that the Unionists in the south of Ireland had been betrayed by their northern cousins as they had not spoken against an amendment to the Home Rule Bill which proposed leaving out four Ulster counties from the terms of the bill, and that the Unionists in the south would have to look out for themselves.⁶⁶ The amendment referred to by Cooper had been proposed in the House of Commons the previous day by Liberal MP Thomas Agar-Robartes (1880-1915). According to Smith the amendment showed the level of discontent on the Liberal backbenches over Home Rule. The amendment was supported by the Tories and the Ulster Unionists. This caused a split to emerge between the Ulster and southern Unionists who were outraged by their proposal of partition. However, on 19 June 1912 the amendment was rejected in a vote by the House of Commons.⁶⁷

On 25 July 1912 a meeting of anti-Home Rule Unionists held in the Greville Arms Hotel, Mullingar and presided over by Lord Longford adapted a resolution part of which stated:

We, Irishmen of County Westmeath, representing many separate interests and sharing a common desire for the welfare of our country, hereby declare our

⁶⁶ *Irish Times*, 13 Jun. 1912.

⁶⁷ Jeremy Smith, *The Tories and Ireland, 1910-1914* (Dublin, 2000), pp 56-8.

unalterable determination to uphold the legislative Union between Great Britain and Ireland.

Lord Longford then spoke at length, articulating the fears and concerns of many Unionists should Home Rule be introduced in Ireland. He began by recalling the defeat of the second Home Rule Bill in 1893 and stated many people found it difficult to believe that it was as live an issue now, and perhaps even more dangerous, than it had been in 1893. Thanks to the Unionist Party, Ireland was more prosperous and the introduction of Home Rule would be as bad a measure at the present time, as it would have been twenty years previously. The earl remarked that Ireland under Home Rule would not be a source of strength to the empire. He continued on the theme of local government stating that there was a big difference between a county council which was a limited form of administration with a department in Dublin to prevent it exceeding its powers, and a real parliament sitting in Dublin with the judiciary and police and every official in the country dependant on it.

Lord Longford was also concerned about financial arrangements with the possibility of a Dublin parliament establishing a customs and excise arrangement which would be contrary to free trade with Britain. He remarked that there were currently good relations between neighbours of every political creed but that this had not always been the position and there was a fear that with the settling of old scores and a tradition of strife and disorder going back a thousand years, an Irish executive could not be trusted to act in a fair manner towards Unionists, leading to further agitation.⁶⁸ In addition to being prominent in the campaign against Home Rule in Longford and Westmeath, Lord Longford was also a leading campaigner in the Dublin area in his capacity as president of the Kingstown Central Unionist Club.⁶⁹

⁶⁸ *Westmeath Examiner*, 3 Aug. 1912.

⁶⁹ *Irish Times*, 27 Sept. 1912. Lord Longford was involved in a number of philanthropic organisations

The leading member of aristocracy in Westmeath who favoured Irish Home Rule was Sir Walter Nugent, 4th baronet. In his role as Irish Parliamentary Party MP for South Westmeath Nugent travelled around the county attending meetings and making speeches supporting the introduction of Home Rule. Nugent was very critical of Unionist opposition to Home Rule and did not appear to appreciate their concerns. He also disapproved of their methods and use of inaccurate information to stir up emotions, as exemplified by the use of religious doctrine, such as the Papal Decree of 'Ne Temere', which played on the fears of Protestant Unionists. The terms of the decree of 'Ne Temere' issued in 1907 by Pope Pius X to regulate marriage by Roman Catholics were considered offensive by members of the Protestant churches. The decree directed that in order to be valid a marriage must be witnessed by a priest of the parish, and that it be registered. In the event of divorce, a Catholic spouse was regarded as being married in the eyes of the church and therefore could not remarry in a Catholic church. That priests could refuse to perform mixed marriages and insist that the children of mixed marriages be raised as Roman Catholics, were particularly abhorred by Protestants. Nugent expressed this concern at a meeting in Athlone on 1 January 1912 when he said:

We have had an illustration of the desperate straits to which our opponents are reduced in their anti-Home Rule campaign. They have seized upon the old Papal Decree without waiting even to see if it is intended to apply to the United Kingdom or not.

in Ireland and Great Britain. He was a vice-patron and vice-president of the Hibernian Church Missionary Society along with Lord Clonbrock and the Earl of Meath. The purpose of the society was to support Church of Ireland missionaries who were working abroad. He was chairman of the Longford Protestant Orphan Society, president of the Kingstown Horticultural Society and a member of the Horticultural Society of Ireland. In Britain Lord Longford was involved in the Benevolent Society of St Patrick in London, an organisation which controlled a number of schools in the London area. See *Irish Times*, 2 May, 21 Jul. and 19 Jul. 1914, 20 Dec. and 22 Mar. 1913.

He continued: ‘they have proceeded to twist and interpret it into a fresh reason against granting Ireland self-government’.⁷⁰ Many of the meetings attended by Nugent were held under the auspices of the UIL which was still very strong in Westmeath with active branches in every area of the county. These meetings had a dual purpose, which were the campaign for land reform as well as the fight for Home Rule. Both of these agendas were highlighted at a meeting of the UIL attended by Nugent at Castletowngeoghegan on 4 February 1912 when a resolution was adopted stating:

That as a great many estates in this district are still unpurchased owing to the exorbitant prices asked by landlords, we respectfully ask the Irish Party to use their influence with the Government to introduce a compulsory Purchase Bill giving Commissioners power to fix a price.

The resolution on Home Rule renewed the confidence of the attendance in the Irish Parliamentary Party under the leadership of John Redmond to protect Irish interests. Nugent criticised Sir Edward Carson and Lord Londonderry in particular, for attempting to divide the Irish people using various excuses such as customs and excise concerns and ‘Home Rule means Rome Rule’, and he also accused them of inciting Protestant riots in Belfast.⁷¹

Sir Walter Nugent differed in his perceived sense of Irish identity from those aristocrats who opposed Home Rule. He was a staunch Roman Catholic whose family ties to Westmeath could be traced back to the Norman invasion of Ireland. He had received his college education at University College, Dublin, was married to a daughter of a County Mayo landowner, and was deeply involved in Irish commercial life. As an Irish Parliamentary Party MP, Nugent supported the policy of Home Rule for Ireland within the British Empire. Unlike Sir Walter Nugent, Lords Greville, Longford, Castlemaine and Sir Richard Levinge had been educated in Britain. All had

⁷⁰ *Irish Times*, 2 Jan. 1912. See also, Edward Carson, ‘Introduction’, in S. Rosenbaum (ed.) *Against Home Rule: The case for the Union* (London, 1912), pp 27-8.

⁷¹ *Westmeath Examiner*, 10 Feb. 1912.

served in the British Army, with Longford and Levinge having fought in the Boer War. These gentlemen had spent long periods abroad as administrators in the service of the Empire, and having led a colonial lifestyle they regarded Ireland as an integral part of the United Kingdom.

In following a tradition among those that had obtained land during the Cromwellian conquests, these aristocrats married daughters of leading English families. As members of the House of Lords, Castlemaine and Greville interacted closely with their English counterparts and were no doubt influenced by them. While they had received ample recompense for the sale of large parts of their Irish estates under the provisions of the various land acts, they were fearful of losing their status, position and civil rights should Home Rule be granted to Ireland. As most of their family network was not resident in Ireland they were more British than Irish in their outlook and consequently wished to maintain the status quo which was the governance of Ireland by Westminster.

For some months prior to the third Home Rule Bill being introduced in the House of Commons Nationalist politicians travelled to the United Kingdom to campaign in support of Home Rule for Ireland. Most of the meetings were held in locations sympathetic to the Nationalist cause, such as in constituencies that were represented by Liberal party MPs. The purpose of having such meetings in Britain was to try and counteract the strong campaign being mounted by Unionists and their hard-line Conservatives supporters. At a meeting in Hereford Town Hall on 29 February 1912 Sir Walter Nugent, who had attended another meeting held earlier that day in the local Liberal club, stated that Home Rule did not mean separation, what Ireland wanted was a separate but not an independent legislature. He went on to say that the opposition was now confined to a small minority who had for so long enjoyed

a monopoly of place and power. Nugent claimed that the names of the members of the newly formed Unionist Clubs did not have the support of a single old-Irish or Anglo-Norman family, and that the clubs were composed entirely of men who owed their positions or titles to the Act of Union.⁷² Nugent was making the point that the old-Irish and Anglo-Norman families were not against Home Rule and that the main objectors were the families that had been elevated to the aristocracy or otherwise rewarded for supporting the Act of Union.

At a meeting of the Young Ireland branch of the UIL at Athlone on 6 October 1912 Nugent claimed that no campaign had made so many converts to Home Rule as the Carson campaign and he cited the Dease family of Turbotstown House, Coole who were loyal to the empire but who could not suffer the antics of the Ulster Covenanters.⁷³ Nugent also spoke at an Independent Labour party meeting at Blackburn, Lancashire on 13 October 1912 and suggested that Home Rule would have passed 'but for the organised bogey of religious oppression'.⁷⁴ In January 1913, in a letter to the Tang branch of the Gaelic League, Sir Walter Nugent expressed an optimistic view of Home Rule which he believed would benefit Ireland stating:

I have no hesitating in saying that the Home Rule Bill now before Parliament should receive the utmost support we can give it...It is of course greatly to be regretted that the representatives of the Irish Unionist Party in the House of Commons persist in their efforts to wreck the measure instead of trying to improve it...I believe Home Rule will create a prosperous and industrious Ireland and make it a loyal part of the United Kingdom and a valuable asset to the Empire.⁷⁵

⁷² *Westmeath Examiner*, 9 Mar. 1912. As with his political opponents, Sir Walter Nugent, in his capacity as an MP, was not adverse to foreign travel on parliamentary matters. On 18 September 1912 he attended the annual conference of the Inter-Parliamentary Union in Geneva. The role of this group was to foster good relations between parliaments in various countries around the world. See, *The Times*, 23 Aug. 1914.

⁷³ *Ibid*, 12 Oct. 1912.

⁷⁴ *Irish Times*, 19 Oct. 1912.

⁷⁵ *Freeman's Journal*, 7 Jan. 1913.

On 29 September 1913 Sir Walter addressed a crowd estimated in excess of one thousand people at a Home Rule demonstration held at Tang on the border between Westmeath and Longford. In the course of his speech Nugent stated that ‘Home Rule stands for Justice to Ireland, integrity of the United Kingdom, maintenance of the Empire and loyalty to the Crown’.⁷⁶ He concluded that ‘the Irish majority did not desire to triumph over their opponents. All they asked for was equality of treatment, and the end of ascendancy’.⁷⁷ Sir Walter was an aristocratic Nationalist who favoured Home Rule but believed Ireland could still remain loyal to the Crown and empire.

An untimely distraction to the Home Rule campaign was a major outbreak in the autumn of 1912 of foot and mouth disease in Counties Dublin, Fermanagh, Kildare, and Wicklow, as well as in parts of Westmeath, Longford and King’s County, which caused severe hardship for Unionist and Nationalist farmers alike. Sir Walter Nugent’s business interests were badly affected by a restriction in the movement of cattle, sheep and lambs, which had a knock on effect for the railway companies. The Midland Great Western Railway Company of which Nugent was a director reported that between August 1912 and January 1913 the company transported 110,535 fewer head of livestock than in the previous six months, with a resulting decrease of £10,283 in receipts. The largest decreases were in fattened cattle, store cattle and lambs. The railway company transported 11,592 fattened cattle, a reduction of 30 per cent; 29,283 store cattle a reduction of 31 per cent; and 36,494 lambs; a reduction of 63 per cent.⁷⁸ While compensation was paid for cattle slaughtered, the outbreak of the disease meant that fairs in the affected areas were cancelled by the authorities with consequences for the town traders.⁷⁹ Furthermore,

⁷⁶ *Westmeath Examiner*, 4 Oct. 1913.

⁷⁷ *Irish Times*, 29 Sept. 1913.

⁷⁸ *Ibid*, 20 Feb. 1913.

⁷⁹ *Ibid*, 25 Jan. 1913. Foot and mouth disease had spread from England with the first outbreak in

David Sheehy, MP for South Meath and long-standing land agitator, claimed there was a silver lining to the outbreak of the disease in that it would put an end to ranching and have consequences for local landlords. Sheehy stated:

The grazier and the rancher will have to pay the banks and settle their other obligations in respect of their ranches and how in the world are they going to sell their cattle to do it? The question of the foot and mouth disease touches the grabber and grazier even more than the farmers generally. The farmers generally will have to sacrifice and lose this year but think of Lord Longford with all his broad acres in Meath! I know he is hit well in the breeches pocket.⁸⁰

On 12 December 1912 most of the restrictions on the movement of cattle were lifted,⁸¹ with the final order being given on 27 January 1913.⁸²

On 30 January 1913 the House of Lords rejected the third Home Rule bill by 326 votes to 69. Lords Longford, Greville and Castlemaine voted against the bill and were heavily criticised for so doing by Nationalist politicians.⁸³ Owen J. Dolan, a member of the Athlone Board of Guardians accused Lords Greville and Castlemaine of misrepresenting the feelings of the people of County Westmeath and claimed that they represented no one but themselves in rejecting the bill. Dolan continued:

We wish, however, to let it be clearly made known that notwithstanding the adverse vote of these two Westmeath landlords, the representatives of Westmeath and the ratepaying public are, without exception, for Home Rule.⁸⁴

On 21 February 1913 at a meeting of the Westmeath Nationalist executive of the Independent United Irish League chaired by Laurence Ginnell a resolution was adopted criticising the House of Lords for rejecting the Home Rule Bill which was

Ireland at Swords in June 1912. In August 1912 there were further outbreaks in Fermanagh, Kildare and Wicklow. The most serious outbreak occurred at Mullingar in October 1912 with 37 cases. See *Department of Agriculture and Technical Instruction for Ireland: Report on Foot and mouth disease in Ireland in the year 1912 [Cd.7103] HC 1914, xii.793, 30-2, 53.*

⁸⁰ *Skibbereen Eagle*, 14 Sept. 1912.

⁸¹ *Irish Independent*, 13 Dec. 1914.

⁸² *The Times*, 25 Jan. 1913.

⁸³ *Belfast Newsletter*, 31 Jan. 1913.

⁸⁴ *Freeman's Journal*, 10 Feb. 1913. Ratepayers had as many votes as the number of rate paying properties they owned.

stated to have been: ‘in keeping with their record of antagonism to every Irish aspiration’. The resolution condemned the action:

Of the two Westmeath lords, one of whom bears a title given by Gladstone, while the other is an elected member of Westmeath County Council for voting against the Home Rule Bill.⁸⁵

On 5 November 1913 at about 7.30pm an unknown person discharged a firearm through a window of the drawing room of Lord Castlemaine’s mansion, Moydrum Castle. The pellets shattered the glass and destroyed valuable china, with grains of shot embedded in the furniture at the opposite end of the room.⁸⁶ A house maid who was in the room at the time narrowly escaped injury. Two possible motives were suggested for the incident, the first by the police who believed it was carried out by poachers who got close to the castle,⁸⁷ and the second motive put forward by the local print media, was that whoever fired the shot was an enemy of Home Rule.⁸⁸ The reason being that whoever fired the shot wanted to discredit and tarnish the campaign for Home Rule by associating it with intolerance and violence towards prominent anti-Home Rule supporters.

The incident was roundly condemned by members of Westmeath County Council who expressed support for Lord Castlemaine.⁸⁹ The subsequent police investigation failed to apprehend a culprit for the crime. Lord Castlemaine, who was

⁸⁵ *Irish Times*, 1 Mar. 1913. The Independent United Irish League was set up by Ginnell following his expulsion from the UIL in December 1909. See Michael Wheatley, *Nationalism and the Irish party* (Oxford, 2005), p. 128.

⁸⁶ This incident occurred while Lord Castlemaine on a visit to the Commonwealth during the parliamentary recess at the invitation of Branch of Empire Association in Australia. On 16 July 1913 Castlemaine, along with three members of the House of Lords and eighteen from the House of Commons travelled via Canada, Vancouver, Honolulu, Fiji and New Zealand to Sydney. They returned to London via South Africa in the middle November 1913. No member of the Irish Parliamentary Party went on the trip as members who wished to travel were asked to submit their names for selection and many refused to enter a competition of that nature. See *Freeman’s Journal*, 8 Nov. 1913.

⁸⁷ *Irish Independent*, 8 Nov. 1913.

⁸⁸ *Westmeath Examiner*, 15 Nov. 1913

⁸⁹ *Ibid*, 2 Nov. 1913.

involved in local and national politics, was generally well regarded in the Athlone area despite his opposition to Home Rule. In addition to his roles as lord lieutenant for Westmeath and an Irish representative peer in the House of Lords, he was involved in many other organisations.⁹⁰

Sir Richard Levinge, while being a Unionist and opponent of Home Rule, appeared to hold federalist and devolutionary opinions similar to those promoted by leading Tories such as Earl Grey during the latter half of 1911.⁹¹ In a letter to the *Irish Times* in December 1913 he quoted from a speech made by Sir Edward Carson in Dublin on 29 November, who stated:

True it is that in its proper sense we are proud of Ireland as a nation in the same sense as England is a nation and Scotland is a nation- three nations in one harmonious whole.⁹²

Levinge proposed that the United Kingdom have one united parliament which would hold three sessions a year, one in each of the capitals, namely London, Dublin and Edinburgh. This arrangement, he claimed, would be beneficial to the Imperial parliament as it would enable members to get into closer touch with and thereby gain a greater knowledge of the other countries of the United Kingdom as well as bringing increased trade and business to Ireland and Scotland.⁹³

On the eve of a Home Rule demonstration arranged for the town of Moate in February 1914 Fr. James Murphy, Parish Priest in Multyfarnham, the home area of Sir Walter Nugent, wrote to the secretary of the South Westmeath executive of the United

⁹⁰ Lord Castlemaine was vice-president of the Irish Unionist Alliance, a member the Royal Zoological Society, the executive committee of the Irish Game Protection Association, and the board of governors of the Incorporated Society for Promoting Protestant Schools in Ireland. See *Irish Times*, 17 Apr. 1914. *Freeman's Journal*, 24 Mar. 1913, 19 Mar. 1913 and *Irish Times*, 24 Jun. 1912. He was also a member of Royal Yacht Squadron, Cowes and Royal St. George Yacht Club, Kingstown. See, Edward Walford (ed.) *Walford's county families of the United Kingdom* (London, 1909), p. 192.

⁹¹ Jeremy Smith, *The Tories and Ireland, 1910-1914* (Dublin, 2000), pp 28-30.

⁹² *Irish Times*, 3 Dec. 1913

⁹³ *Ibid*, 3 Dec. 1913. Levinge, a patron of the turf was also a member of the Royal St. George Yacht Club and a vice-president of Mullingar Golf Club. See *Westmeath Guardian*, 27 Feb. 1914.

Irish League, praising the work of Sir Walter Nugent on behalf of the people of that constituency. Fr. Murphy stated: 'What we have lost in North Westmeath you have gained in the South, the unpurchasable services of Sir Walter Nugent. The people of this his native parish are proud of him'. Murphy further stated his desire that the meeting would be the last in Nugent's constituency before the advent of Home Rule.⁹⁴ The huge Home Rule demonstration which took place at Moate on 2 February 1914 was attended by leading Nationalist politicians Joseph Devlin, Sir Walter Nugent and John P. Hayden, MP for South Roscommon and editor of the *Westmeath Examiner*. At the meeting resolutions were passed in support of Home Rule and land reform. Sir Walter Nugent informed the gathering that in order for the proposed land act to work successfully to the benefit of both the landlords and the tenants, there would have to be give and take on both sides. In his address Nugent displayed a degree of political naivety. While re-affirming his support for Home Rule he remarked that

the Irish majority was ready to make any reasonable sacrifice for a settlement which would re-assure the Ulster minority, and secure their co-operation in the future government of the country'.⁹⁵

It should have been apparent to Nugent that by this time the Ulster Unionists under Carson and Craig had no intention of participating in a Nationalist and Catholic dominated Parliament in Dublin. In his speech to the crowd John P. Hayden sarcastically commented that while it was a good many years since Carson had been to Moate he was familiar with the area having acted as a prosecutor of the Coercion Acts. Carson's first case as a barrister happened to be the first prosecuted under the act at a local court in the nearby village of Glasson.⁹⁶

⁹⁴ *Westmeath Examiner*, 14 Feb. 1914.

⁹⁵ *Irish Times*, 2 Feb. 1914.

⁹⁶ *Westmeath Examiner*, 7 Feb. 1914. Hayden was previously acquainted with Carson arising from his arrest along with twenty-seven others on 17 August 1887 when he was charged with obstruction of the sheriff at an eviction under the Perpetual Crimes Act otherwise known as the Coercion Act.

Sir Walter Nugent's remarks at the meeting concerning land reform received a prompt response from George Mansfield, Morrinstown Lattin, Co. Kildare, himself a landlord, who claimed that universal compulsion was unnecessary stating:

I think landlords will quite understand that amongst themselves there are, as there have always been, some obstinate and wrong-headed men who do not want to sell on any terms and for them there must be compulsion, accompanied by such safeguards as are required to prevent abuse.⁹⁷

It is clear that southern Unionists, who included leading members of the aristocracy, were deeply concerned for their own safety should hostilities break out in Ireland. In May 1914 the Irish Unionist Alliance held a meeting in Dublin. The organisation, which claimed to represent the interests of the Unionists in the three southern provinces, in what could be considered an act of desperation and confirmation of the sense of isolation and abandonment being felt by their members, approved a petition, which was forwarded to the home-secretary for presentation to King George V. The purpose of the petition was to warn the King of the danger of civil war in Ireland should the Government of Ireland Bill be passed into law, without having being submitted to the electorate of the United Kingdom. The petition claimed that should war break out the lives and property of Unionists living in isolated areas would be exposed to danger and appealed to the King not to ratify the act. Among the leading members of the aristocracy that signed the petition were Lords Longford and Castlemaine with another notable signatory being Sir Roger Casement.⁹⁸

The debate over Home Rule for Ireland continued at Westminster with political manoeuvrings by all-parties in an effort to gain the upper-hand over their

The prosecuting counsel in the case was Edward Carson. Hayden was convicted and sentenced to three months imprisonment under its provisions. See A.C. Murray, 'Nationality and local politics in late nineteenth-century Ireland: The case of County Westmeath', in *Irish Historical Studies*, Vol. 25, No. 98 (Dublin, 1986), p. 148 available at <http://www.jstor.org/stable/30008526> [8 October 2013].

⁹⁷ *Irish Times*, 4 Feb. 1914.

⁹⁸ *The Times*, 12 May 1914.

opponents. In 1913 the Home Rule Bill was reintroduced and passed by the House of Commons only to be rejected a second time by the House of Lords. On 25 May 1914 the third reading of the bill was passed by the House of Commons and on 23 June an amending bill was introduced by the government in the House of Lords. However, on 2 July the peers included a clause excluding the nine counties of Ulster without a vote on the matter which caused a standoff between the government and Unionists. As part of the Home Rule campaign Mullingar was visited on 6 and 7 July 1914 by a deputation from England comprised of Radicals, Unionists and Liberals. This group were touring Ireland with the stated intention of ascertaining the true feelings of the people regarding Home Rule. In addition to meeting members of the public, the group also held private interviews with local representatives.⁹⁹

The political debate regarding Home Rule continued with the ever increasing fear of civil war in Ireland following the landing of guns at Larne in April and Howth in July 1914. An all-party conference failed to resolve the crisis which only ended with the outbreak of war in August. As the Home Rule Bill had been rejected three times by the House of Lords the provisions of the Parliament Act 1911 came into effect which meant that following Royal assent the act would come into law by 1914 at the latest. However, the outbreak of war in August caused the suspension of Home Rule, and the possibility of civil war in Ireland was averted. On 18 September 1914 Royal assent was pronounced and on the same day an act suspending Home Rule for the duration of the war was approved by parliament.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁹ *Westmeath Guardian*, 10 Jul. 1914.

¹⁰⁰ Alan O'Day, *Irish Home Rule 1867-1921* (Manchester, 1998), pp 260-1. See also F. S. L. Lyons, 'The developing crisis', in W. E. Vaughan (ed.), *A new history of Ireland*, vi (Oxford, 1989), p. 144.

6. Conclusion

The political reforms introduced by the British government in the late nineteenth century in an effort to placate the Nationalist majority only served to reduce the power and influence of the aristocratic landowners, their most loyal supporters. The changes to local administration contained in the Local Government (Ireland) Act 1898 effectively ended the power of the aristocracy at county level. This was confirmed in local elections held after 1903, which saw aristocratic representation on Westmeath County Council reduced to only one member in 1914. The loss of political power ended aristocratic dominance at county level and ultimately contributed to their overall decline as a class. At national level, one member of the Westmeath aristocracy was elected to the House of Commons during this period, Sir Walter Nugent in 1907, and, while other members of the Westmeath aristocracy had been elected as MPs for British constituencies, this form of representation ended with the death of the Hon. Ronald Greville in 1908.

The greatest threat to the future well-being of the aristocracy in Westmeath was perceived as being Irish Home Rule and aristocratic Unionists did everything in their power to forestall its introduction. Westmeath aristocrats contributed to the opposition through their presence in the House of Lords where they voted against its introduction, to the dismay of Nationalists. The anti-Home Rule campaign resulted in a division between the Unionists in Ulster and those in the three southern provinces, who felt that they had been abandoned by their northern brethren. The rising tensions between Unionists and Nationalists led southern Unionists to fear for the future should hostility descend into open conflict. This fear was only averted by the outbreak of war in 1914. The war in Europe would have unforeseen consequences for the aristocracy in County Westmeath. It would cause a considerable transformation in

their lives that would forever change their status and place in society. The war, which will be examined in the following chapter, would bring death and sadness, not just to the aristocracy and higher orders but to every class of society in Ireland.

Chapter 6

The aristocracy of County Westmeath and the Great War, 1914-1918

1. Introduction

The assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand of Austria-Hungary by Serb nationalist Gavrilo Princip at Sarajevo on 28 June 1914 was the spark that ignited war in Europe. It was an event that would have major repercussions for the aristocracy in County Westmeath, as the war would play a crucial role in determining their future life in Ireland. Following the outbreak of war the aristocratic families in Westmeath, as loyal subjects, responded to the call to arms and following the traditions of their forefathers enlisted in the various branches of the British armed forces. The involvement of members of the aristocratic families of County Westmeath, as soldiers, sailors and airmen, as well as the contribution of the aristocracy to the war effort at local level will be examined in this chapter by investigating a number of key topics, including, the initial response of the aristocracy in Westmeath to the outbreak of war and the number of men from the aristocratic families that enlisted in the crown forces.

During the course of the war members of the aristocracy were killed and injured while serving at the front. The circumstances surrounding these events will also be explored. Other important aspects of the war that will be addressed include the impact of the war on society in Westmeath which was observed at first hand with the arrival of Belgian refugees into the county. Members of the aristocracy worked tirelessly at local level to ease the suffering of refugees, entertain troops bound for frontline service, and raise funds to aid soldiers from the Leinster Regiment then

serving abroad. Furthermore, the establishment of auxiliary hospitals near Mullingar also served to ease the suffering and aid the recovery of wounded officers and men.

The Easter rebellion of 1916 and the response to the rising by the British authorities will be assessed against the backdrop of growing political tensions in Ireland. The rise of Sinn Féin in the aftermath of the rebellion with electoral successes in 1917 and 1918 demonstrated increased support for militant Nationalism which threatened political stability. The change in public opinion imperilled the future prospects of aristocratic politicians and jeopardised the future well-being of Unionists in the three southern provinces.

The events of the Great War brought death, trauma and desolation to the aristocratic families and the examination of these topics will reveal the extent to which their lives were changed by the experiences of war, which together with the changes taking place at home, had major implications for their continued existence in Ireland.

2. The outbreak of war

The declaration of war by Great Britain on Germany on 4 August 1914 saw the suspension of Home Rule for Ireland and the possibility of civil war between Unionists and Nationalists was averted. The outbreak of war in Europe was greeted in County Westmeath with a degree of exhilaration, as well as apprehension and uncertainty. The *Westmeath Examiner* proclaimed that ‘great excitement prevails on all sides, and scarce any topic is discussed but the war’,¹ and prophetically expressed the belief that ‘a great European war which may prove one of the most extensive and

¹ *Westmeath Examiner*, 8 Aug. 1914.

important in the history of the world has opened'.² The Unionist *Westmeath Guardian* remarked that the war was a righteous one and that all Irishmen were united in defence of the empire to crush aggression and tyranny.³ The county inspector of the Royal Irish Constabulary in Westmeath reported that:

War is the sole topic of interest. Subscriptions to various relief funds generous and people in all conditions of life are engaged in providing comforts for the troops.⁴

The leaders of Unionism and Nationalism in Ireland, Sir Edward Carson and John Redmond, both made speeches in which they urged their supporters to enlist in the British forces. They each had a different reason for doing so, the Unionists to validate their desire to remain an integral part of the United Kingdom while Nationalists wished to show their loyalty to the crown and demonstrate that by fighting well for Britain, they were worthy of Home Rule. In Westmeath preparations for war began almost immediately with army reservists being mobilised. Approximately two hundred men were called up in the Mullingar area and their departure was naturally greeted with sadness by their wives and families.⁵

In response to mobilisation orders railway stations in the major towns of Athlone and Mullingar experienced a dramatic increase in passenger numbers as troops headed for various regimental depots such as Birr (Leinster Regiment) and Galway (Connacht Rangers).⁶ The military authorities began purchasing horses for use in the war with the power to commandeer them where necessary.⁷ A certain level of war paranoia was apparent as demonstrated by the positioning of armed police at

² Ibid, 8 Aug. 1914.

³ *Westmeath Guardian*, 7 Aug. 1914.

⁴ County Inspector's report, August 1914 (T.N.A. CO904/94) (Consulted on microfilm at Maynooth University).

⁵ *Westmeath Guardian*, 7 Aug. 1914.

⁶ Ibid, 7 Aug. 1914.

⁷ *Westmeath Examiner*, 8 Aug. 1914.

various points on the railway line to prevent attempts at sabotage by ‘German spies’.⁸ In addition, the arrest in Mullingar of two foreign looking men on 12 August 1914 on suspicion of being spies only served to heighten this fear. It subsequently transpired that the gentlemen in question, Bernard Leventhal and Abram Wienberg were, in fact Russian Jewish pedlars.⁹

With the country on a war footing the price of consumer goods began to rise which created difficulties for the less well off. As early as September 1914 the county inspector reported that prices had risen for provisions and the price for stock was high.¹⁰ Between August 1913 and December 1914 the average prices of most Irish agricultural products increased, particularly the price of wheat which went from seven shillings five pence and a farthing per hundredweight in August 1913 to nine shillings five pence and a farthing per hundredweight in December 1914. In the same period the price of a hundredweight of butter increased from one hundred and four shillings to one hundred and fifteen shillings and three pence, while the cost of ten dozen eggs went from twelve shillings and three farthings to thirteen shillings five pence and a farthing (See Table 1).¹¹ Despite the price of flour and wheat being fixed by the authorities there were concerns that panic buying and hoarding of food would lead to a possible scarcity of important commodities.

Table 1. Average price of Irish Agricultural products for the first seven months and last five months of 1913 and 1914.

Product	January to July		August to December	
	1913	1914	1913	1914
Wheat per 112lbs	S d 7 6½	s d 7 6	s d 7 5¼	s d 9 5¼
Potatoes “	4 3¾	3 5	3 1¾	3 4
Beef	64 9	61 9	59 6	64 9
Mutton	7 6	74 6	64 9	66 6

⁸ *Westmeath Guardian*, 14 Aug. 1914.

⁹ *Westmeath Examiner*, 15 Aug. 1914.

¹⁰ County Inspector’s report, September 1914 (T.N.A. CO904/94) (Consulted on microfilm at Maynooth University).

¹¹ *Department of Agriculture and Technical Instruction for Ireland: Agricultural Statistics, Ireland, 1914. Return of prices of crops, livestock and other agricultural products [Cd.7980] HC 1915, lxxix.883, 26.*

Pork	64 6	59 9	62 6	59 9
Butter	102 3	102 6	104 0	115 3
Eggs per 120	8 6	8 9½	12 0¾	13 5¼
	£ s d	£ s d	£ s d	£ s d
Store Cattle over 3 yrs	13 6 3	13 11 9	13 2 0	13 6 3
Fat Cattle “	17 4 9	16 11 9	16 12 3	17 3 0
Lambs under 1 yr	1 8 6	1 9 3	1 8 3	1 10 3
Sheep over 2 yrs	1 12 0	1 15 0	1 16 9	1 18 9
Fat Pigs	4 14 9	4 16 0	5 9 0	4 17 9

Source: Department of Agriculture and Technical Instruction for Ireland: *Agricultural Statistics, Ireland, 1914. Return of prices of crops, livestock and other agricultural products [Cd.7980] HC 1915, lxxix.883, 26.*

3. Initial response of aristocratic and landed classes

The response of the aristocracy and landed class in Westmeath to the outbreak of war was immediate. Many of the leading families in the county had strong military traditions going back generations and considered it their patriotic duty to support King and country. McDowell states: ‘for Southern Unionists this was their finest hour. They were able to throw themselves wholeheartedly into serving the empire in a time of peril’.¹² In July 1914 of the twenty-three members that were sworn on the grand jury at the Westmeath Summer Assizes, fifteen were former army officers and many of their sons subsequently enlisted (See Table 2).¹³

Table 2. Grand Jury for County Westmeath, July 1914.

Name	Address	If former officer	If son(s) enlisted	Remarks
Hon. R. A. Handcock (Brother of Lord Castlemaine)	Garnafailagh House Athlone	Yes	Only son died in 1909.	Nephew killed in 1917.
Sir Richard Levinge, baronet	Knockdrin Castle Mullingar	Yes	No	Killed at Ypres in October 1914
Edward Purdon	Lisnabin Castle Killucan	Yes	Yes, three out of four	One son killed in 1917
Cecil Fetherstonhaugh	Bracklyn Castle Raharney	Yes	Yes	
Arthur Harris Temple	Waterston House Athlone	Yes	No	
Gerald Dease	Turbotstown House Coole	Yes	No	Nephew Maurice Dease VC killed in 1914.
Gustavus Rochfort-Hyde	Lynnbury Mullingar	No		

¹² R. B. McDowell, *Crisis and decline, the fate of the southern unionists* (Dublin, 1997), p. 53.

¹³ *Westmeath Examiner*, 11 Jul. 1914.

Robert Wolfe Smith	Portlick Castle Glasson	No		
Henry Maurice Tuite	Sonna House Mullingar	No	No	
John Fetherstonhaugh	Rockview House Delvin	Yes	Yes	Killed in November 1914.
Thomas Hawksworth Smith	Ballinagall House Mullingar	Yes		
Henry Upton	Coolatore House Moate	No		
John Granville Wilson	Daramona House Streete	No		Cousin of Sir Henry Wilson
Percy O'Reilly	Coolamber House Streete	Yes		
Gilbert Nugent	Jamestown Court Dysart	Yes		
John C. Hall	Ballinacor House Moyvore	Yes		
William T. Murray	Mount Murray Bunbrosna	Yes		
Robert Smyth	Gaybrook House Mullingar			
Dudley Palmer	Clonlost House Killucan	Yes		
Fred W. Russell	Lisanode House Moate	No		
R. W. W. Bayley	Ballinderry House Moate	Yes		
Patrick O'Hara	Mornington House Crookedwood	Yes	Yes	Killed in 1918
Henry Maxwell Smyth	Drumcree House Collinstown	No		

Source: *Westmeath Examiner*, 11 July 1914.

Upon the outbreak of war Westmeath aristocrats who had previously served in the British Army returned to the colours. Sir Richard Levinge, 10th baronet, formerly of the 8th Hussars had retired from the army on succession to his title in 1900. Members of aristocratic families such as Levinge generally joined elite cavalry regiments such as the Life Guards and 8th (King's Royal Irish) Hussars. On 19 August 1914 Sir Richard rejoined the army and was posted to the 1st Life Guards with the rank of lieutenant. On 4 October 1914 he departed for France.¹⁴ Other members of the Levinge family responded to the call for volunteers with four of Sir Richard's five brothers enlisting. Thomas (1880-1949) became a major in the Northumberland

¹⁴ The Marquis De Ruvigny, *The roll of honour, a biographical record of all member of his Majesty's naval and military forces who have fallen in the war* (5 vols, London, 1916), i, p. 225.

Fusiliers. Reginald (1883-1953) became a captain in the 24th Ammunition Column, Royal Artillery. Charles, (1884-1952) who had emigrated to Australia, became a private in the 17th New South Wales Infantry as did Gerald, (1889-1918), the youngest member of the family, who became a private in the 47th Battalion, 1st Australian Imperial Force. The only brother that did not join the army was Bernard (1887-1953), who had also moved to Australia.

Sir Richard's cousin, Henry Levinge, joined the Norfolk Regiment with the rank of major. He was later promoted to lieutenant-colonel and transferred to the Loyal North Lancashire Regiment.¹⁵ Sir Richard's sister Dorothy Levinge (1882-1954) was married to George Heigham (1866-1934) who served as a 2nd lieutenant in the 3rd (Reserve) Battalion, East Yorkshire Regiment,¹⁶ while Beatrice (1886-1961) was married to Captain (later brigadier), Henry Chambré Ponsonby (1883-1953), Kings Royal Rifle Corps, of Kilcooley Abbey, Thurles, Co. Tipperary in 1923.¹⁷

Sir Thomas Pakenham, 5th earl of Longford had retired from the 2nd Life Guards in 1911 with the rank of lieutenant-colonel. Upon his return to the army in 1914 he was given command of the 2nd (South Midland) Brigade of the British 2nd Mounted Division, with the rank of brigadier-general. His younger brother the Hon. Edward Pakenham (1866-1937), a veteran of the Boer War rejoined the Coldstream Guards, his former regiment, with the rank of major. At this time Lord Longford's cousin Admiral Sir William Pakenham (1861-1933) was already commander of 3rd Battle Cruiser Squadron, Royal Navy.¹⁸ Lord Greville who was forty-three years old at the outbreak of war was commissioned a temporary major in the 2nd Lovat's Scouts

¹⁵ *Burke's peerage and baronetage* (London, 1976), p. 1599.

¹⁶ *London Gazette*, 31 May 1919.

¹⁷ *Burke's peerage*, p. 1599. In 1883 the Ponsonby family were the owners of 10,870 acres in counties Tipperary, Limerick and Kilkenny. See also *Bateman, Great Landowners of Great Britain* (London, 1883), p. 363.

¹⁸ *Burke's peerage*, p. 1649. For a list of British peers serving in the armed forces, see *Irish Times*, 23 Jan. 1915.

and later in the 3rd Reserve of Cavalry.¹⁹ The reserve was responsible for training units for front line service.

Many younger members of the Westmeath aristocratic families enlisted for the first time, with most joining their father's former regiment. This included members of the extended Chapman family. George and Richard Fetherstonhaugh, sons of General Richard Steele Fetherstonhaugh (1848-1932), a cousin of Lady Caroline Chapman, became lieutenants in the Royal Fusiliers and the King's Royal Rifle Corps respectively.²⁰ Their cousin John Lennox Fetherstonhaugh, son of Colonel John D. Fetherstonhaugh (1850-1936), Rockview House, Delvin, became a lieutenant in the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders. Another landed family that had connections to the Chapman Baronets through their aunt Edith who had married Sir Thomas Chapman, 7th baronet was the Boyd-Rochfort family of Middleton Park, Castletowngeoghegan. George Arthur Boyd-Rochfort joined the army in 1915 and became a lieutenant in the Scots Guards having initially been turned down on health grounds (he had a problem with varicose veins). His brother Harold (1882-1960) joined the army attaining the rank of major, while youngest brother Cecil (1887-1983), enlisted as a captain also in the Scots Guards. Henry Grace Kerr, Lady Olivia Greville's eldest son from her marriage to Henry Kerr (1865-1907), and Lord Greville's step-son enlisted in November 1915 as a lieutenant in the 9th Lancers.²¹

In March 1914 Sir Benjamin Chapman 6th baronet died at Kingstown without issue and the aristocratic title passed to his cousin, Thomas Robert Tighe Chapman,

¹⁹ *Walford's county families of the United Kingdom* (London, 1919), p. 577. Lord Greville was also appointed chairman of St. George's Hospital, London, a position he held until 1943. See *Burke's peerage*, p. 1174.

²⁰ Report of death: Richard Fetherstonhaugh, 1 June 1915 (T.N.A., WO 339/8265) and Report of death: George Fetherstonhaugh, 6 January 1916 (T.N.A., WO 339/16612). In 1878 the general's father owned 2,709 acres in Westmeath and a further 439 acres in County Meath. See U. H. Hussey de Burgh, *The landowners of Ireland* (Dublin, 1878), p. 156.

²¹ Report of death: Henry Grace Kerr, 5 July 1917 (T.N.A., WO 339/66974).

who became 7th baronet.²² However, Thomas Chapman had left his wife and four daughters in 1885 and relocated to Great Britain with the children's governess Sarah Junner-Lawrence and their son Montagu. Chapman changed his name to Thomas Lawrence and had four more sons with Ms. Junner-Lawrence.²³ In the United Kingdom three of Sir Thomas Chapman's five sons enlisted in the British army. Thomas E. Lawrence became a captain in British Military Intelligence in Egypt, Frank who enlisted in August 1914 became a lieutenant in the Gloucestershire Regiment,²⁴ while William who enlisted the following year became a lieutenant in the Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Light Infantry before later transferring to the Royal Flying Corps.²⁵ Lord Castlemaine's brother the Hon. Robert Handcock (1864-1954), became a temporary lieutenant in the Royal Army Service Corps.²⁶ No member from either of the two Roman Catholic aristocratic families in Westmeath the Nugents of Ballinlough and Donore enlisted in the Crown forces served in the war simply because they had no male members of fighting age. In the case of the Ballinlough Nugents, Sir Charles Nugent's brother, Hugh, had died in a shooting accident in 1863, while his only son, Charles, had been killed in a riding accident in 1903.²⁷ The Nugents of Donore were in a similar position following the deaths of Sir Percy Nugent, 3rd baronet in 1896, his younger brothers Laval in 1895, George, a monk, in 1896, and Cecil in 1914, all of whom were unmarried, thereby leaving Sir Walter, 4th baronet as the only living male member of the family at the outbreak of war.²⁸

²² *Meath Chronicle*, 4 Apr. 1914. Chapman left a personal estate of £20,437. In his will he left £300 to his nurse and £100 equally between her four children. All his remaining property passed to his sister Dora Chapman (1850-1921).

²³ Jeremy Wilson, *Lawrence of Arabia: the authorised biography of T. E. Lawrence* (London, 1989), pp 941-4.

²⁴ Report of death: Frank Helier Lawrence, 19 May 1915 (T.N.A., WO 339/30123).

²⁵ Report of death: William George Lawrence, 18 January 1916 (T.N.A., WO 339/36583).

²⁶ *Burke's peerage*, p. 495.

²⁷ *Ibid*, p. 2006.

²⁸ *Ibid*, p. 2007. While serving as a member of the House of Commons Sir Walter sat on the Summertime Committee of the United Kingdom in 1916, the Irish Wage Board in 1917, the Royal

In order to maintain and encourage recruitment to the army Charles Tottenham of Tudenham House, Mullingar was appointed recruitment officer for Westmeath with the rank of captain. Among his duties was attending and making speeches at recruitment meetings held at various locations around the county. On 11 August 1914 a meeting was held in the Greville Arms Hotel, Mullingar, with Lady Greville in the chair, where a branch of the Soldiers and Sailors' Families Association was established. Among those present were Lady Castlemaine, Lord Greville, Sir Richard and Lady Levinge.²⁹ County Westmeath was part of the recruitment area for the Leinster Regiment, although men from Westmeath joined other regiments, such as the Connacht Rangers, the Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers, the Royal Dublin Fusiliers, or indeed whatever regiment happened to be based at Victoria Barracks, Athlone or Wellington Barracks, Mullingar at a particular time.

In November 1914, in an effort to help the war effort, Lord Longford offered Pakenham Hall to the War Office as a base for training army recruits.³⁰ His offer was accepted and the following week a number of recruits arrived at the house. However, the response to the appeal for recruits was poor especially from the sons of farmers,³¹ and by December 1914 the level of recruitment for the army and navy in Westmeath was reported to be practically non-existent.³²

While supporters of both the Unionist and Nationalist position were departing for the front, the Irish National Volunteers were actively engaged in drilling and parading. In July 1914 there were forty-three branches of the organisation in County

Commission to regulate the importation of paper, and the Government War Savings Committee (Ireland). See also *Walford's county families of the United Kingdom* (London, 1919), p. 1004.

²⁹ *Westmeath Examiner*, 15 Aug. 1914.

³⁰ *Westmeath Guardian*, 20 Nov. 1914.

³¹ County Inspector's report, November 1914 (T.N.A. CO904/95) (Consulted on microfilm at Maynooth University).

³² *Ibid*, December 1914 (T.N.A. CO904/95) (Consulted on microfilm at Maynooth University).

Westmeath with a membership of 4,152.³³ On 15 August 1914 a parade of all units of the Irish Volunteers in Westmeath was held at Mullingar where in excess of 3,000 men were inspected by Colonel Maurice Moore (1854-1939), Inspector-General of the Irish Volunteers and Major Gerald Dease (1854-1934), commander of the Westmeath Battalions. The volunteers paraded before local Unionist and Nationalist dignitaries that included Sir Walter Nugent, Lord and Lady Greville and Lady Levinge. Also in attendance were Charles Tottenham and Laurence Ginnell.³⁴

In September 1914 a split occurred in the Irish Volunteers because of John Redmond's support for the war. In Westmeath a majority thirty-seven branches with 3,090 men, now renamed the National Volunteers backed Redmond, while a minority of 194 supported a more republican and anti-war agenda.³⁵ In November 1914 a branch of the Irish Volunteers was formed in Athlone with about forty members and another in Drumraney with fourteen members.³⁶ In May 1915 an attempt to form a branch of the Irish Volunteers in Mullingar ended in failure when only twelve persons attended the meeting.³⁷ However, in June 1915 a branch of the Irish Volunteers was successfully formed in Tyrrellspass with forty-six members enrolling.³⁸ It would soon become evident that districts in Westmeath that split from the National Volunteers and established new branches would later be the areas of the county that experienced the greatest levels of agrarian agitation, political dissent and civil disturbance in the period to 1923.

³³ Inspector General's report, July 1914 (T.N.A. CO904/94) (Consulted on microfilm at Maynooth University).

³⁴ *Westmeath Examiner*, 22 Aug. 1914.

³⁵ Brendan Mac Giolla Choille (ed.), *Intelligence notes 1913-16* (Dublin, 1966), p. 110.

³⁶ Inspector General's report, November 1914 (T.N.A. CO904/95) (Consulted on microfilm at Maynooth University).

³⁷ *Ibid*, May 1915 (T.N.A. CO904/97) (Consulted on microfilm at Maynooth University).

³⁸ *Ibid*, June 1915 (T.N.A. CO904/97) (Consulted on microfilm at Maynooth University).

Due to the continuous high numbers of casualties, and in order to replenish the ranks, the campaign for recruits continued into 1915 and during the year meetings were organised at various locations in the county. On 15 March a public meeting in support of recruiting was held at Mullingar with 1,500 in attendance. Another such meeting took place two days later at Killucan with about 200 persons present.³⁹ In April a number of workers on Lord Longford's estate enlisted.⁴⁰ There is no evidence of their being compelled to do so.

4. The front, 1914

The initial euphoria and enthusiasm exhibited at the outbreak of war was soon replaced by a more sombre outlook as people became more aware of the harsh conditions being endured by their loved ones serving at the front. The increasing numbers of casualties arriving back in the county contributed to the general mood of despondency and brought home to people the harsh reality of war. While outwardly exhibiting strong support, inwardly they hoped that the war would soon be over and that their loved ones would return home unscathed. The editor of the *Westmeath Examiner* reflected this view stating:

When the fight is over, and all good men pray that that may be at some very early moment-the cost will have been great indeed, beyond reckoning, but yet cannot be said to have been in vain.⁴¹

It was not long after the outbreak of fighting that soldiers from the Westmeath began losing their lives. The aristocratic families of the county would also suffer the trauma of war with the loss of many cherished sons (see Table 3).

³⁹ County Inspector's report, April 1915 (T.N.A. CO904/96) (Consulted on microfilm at Maynooth University).

⁴⁰ *Westmeath Guardian*, 30 Apr. 1915.

⁴¹ *Westmeath Examiner*, 29 Aug. 1914.

Table 3. Members of the Westmeath aristocracy killed and wounded during the Great War, 1914-18.

Name of Family	Name of Casualty	Age	Rank & Regiment	When & Where Killed/Wounded	Remarks
Levinge	Sir Richard Levinge	36	Lieutenant, 1 st Life Guards	Killed at Ypres on 24.10.1914	
	Thomas Levinge	35	Major, Northumberland Regiment	Wounded in France in October 1915	Brother of Sir Richard Levinge
	Gerald Levinge	29	Private, 1 st Australian Imperial Force	Killed at Dernancourt on 5.4.1918	Brother of Sir Richard Levinge
	Charles Levinge	32	Private, New South Wales Infantry	Wounded at the Somme on 9.11.1916	Brother of Sir Richard Levinge
	Henry Levinge	51	Lieut-Colonel, Norfolk Regiment and later Loyal North Lancashire Regiment	Killed at Gallipoli on 10.8.1915	Cousin of Sir Richard Levinge
Pakenham	Sir Thomas Pakenham (Lord Longford)	51	Brigadier General, 2nd Mounted Division	Killed at Gallipoli on 21.8.1915	
Chapman	Frank Lawrence	22	Lieutenant, Gloucestershire Regiment	Killed at Richebourg l'Avoue, Calais on 9.5.1915	Son of Sir Thomas Chapman, 7 th Bart, (Thomas Lawrence)
	William Lawrence	26	Lieutenant, Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Light Infantry and later Royal Flying Corps	Killed near St. Quentin on 23.10.1915	Son of Sir Thomas Chapman, 7 th Bart, (Thomas Lawrence)
	George Fetherstonhaugh	20	Lieutenant, Royal Fusiliers	Killed at Neuve Chapelle on 27.10.1914	Cousin of Sir Thomas Chapman, 7 th Bart, (Thomas Lawrence)
	Richard Fetherstonhaugh	22	Lieutenant, King's Royal Rifle Corps	Died of wounds at Ypres on 14.5.1915	Cousin of Sir Thomas Chapman, 7 th Bart, (Thomas Lawrence)
	John Lennox Fetherstonhaugh	22	Lieutenant, Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders	Missing presumed killed at Ypres on 10.11.1914	Cousin of Sir Thomas Chapman, 7 th Bart, (Thomas Lawrence)
Greville	Henry Grace Kerr	21	Lieutenant, 9 th Lancers	Died of wounds in France on 1.7.1917	Stepson of Charles Greville, 3 rd Bart
Castlemaine	Hon. Hercules Robinson	20	Lieutenant, East Kent Regiment	Killed at Loos on 26.9.1915	Son of Lady Rosmead and nephew of Lord Castlemaine

Sources: *The National Archives, Newspapers, Rolls of Honour.*

While the information outlined in Table 3 is useful in summarising the number of casualties suffered by the aristocratic families, it is essential that the circumstances

surrounding the deaths of aristocratic soldiers be examined in greater detail, in this and the following section, as well the effect that these deaths had on the families concerned.

Among the first casualties from County Westmeath was Lieutenant Maurice Dease, Levington Park, Mullingar, nephew of Major Gerald Dease, commander of the Irish Volunteers in Westmeath. Dease was killed in the Battle of Mons on 23 August 1914 attempting to prevent a collapse of the front in his area in the face of an overwhelming German assault. The British army was in the process of an unorganised withdrawal while at the same time attempting to halt a concerted German advance at Mons. Dease was posthumously awarded the Victoria Cross, the first of the war, for his actions during the battle. His citation in the *London Gazette* read:

Though two or three times badly wounded he continued to control the fire of his machine guns at Mons on 23rd August until all his men were shot. He died of his wounds.⁴²

Within a matter of weeks the aristocracy in Westmeath was rocked to the core with the death of Sir Richard Levinge who was killed on 24 October at Ypres. It would be the first of many such deaths suffered by the aristocratic families in the county (see Table 3). The circumstances surrounding his death were outlined by his commanding officer Colonel Stanley in a letter to Lady Levinge which stated:

The trenches were very small, and your husband was passing from one to another when he was shot dead by a bullet in the neck. I need hardly tell you the awful shock it has given the squadron officers and men, and the loss of one to whom we were devoted will remain with us forever. Your husband knew no fear and was always so ready and willing to help me in any way he could with the squadron.

The Levinge family were devastated by the news of the death of Sir Richard, who left a wife and a three year old son. Bence-Jones refers to a remark overheard by Lord

⁴² *London Gazette*, 17 Nov. 1914. For details of the battle at Mons see H. C. O'Neill, *The Royal Fusiliers in the Great War* (London, 1922), pp 35-41.

Dunsany, Sir Richard's cousin, that, 'Sure when Sir Richard was killed, the old people around Knockdrin all cried themselves sick'.⁴³ Undoubtedly it was an exaggerated claim but it probably fairly reflected the esteem in which he was held locally. Shortly after the memorial service for Sir Richard Levinge, his widow Irene (1884-1975) returned to London with their son Richard, 11th baronet. The running of Knockdrin estate was assumed by a number of trustees including Sir Richard's cousin Sir Edward Levinge (1867-1954), brother of Lieutenant-Colonel Henry Levinge, with an Englishman, Mr. H. W. Sharman acting as steward.⁴⁴ On 31 August 1916 Lady Irene Levinge married captain (later lieut-colonel) Robin Buxton.⁴⁵ Buxton was subsequently transferred to Palestine where in 1918 he commanded 2nd Battalion Imperial Camel Corps fighting alongside Thomas E. Lawrence (Lawrence of Arabia) second son of Sir Thomas Chapman.⁴⁶

Another aristocratic family that experienced the trauma of fatalities at the front was the extended Chapman family, and General Richard Steele Fetherstonhaugh, cousin of Lady Caroline Chapman, suffered more than most with the death of both his sons. On 27 October 1914 his younger son George was wounded at Neuve Chapelle during a bayonet charge to retake a trench from the Germans. He was initially reported missing. It was then assumed that he had been taken prisoner. When enquiries with the German authorities through the United States embassy in Berlin produced no results a case for presumption of death was put forward. In 1917 the Army Council concluded that George Fetherstonhaugh was dead due to the length of time that had elapsed since he had been reported missing and the fact that no further

⁴³ Mark Bence-Jones, *Twilight of the ascendancy* (London, 1987), p. 168.

⁴⁴ *Irish Times*, 26 Mar. 1929

⁴⁵ *The Times*, 4 Sept. 1916.

⁴⁶ Jeremy Wilson, *Lawrence of Arabia: the authorised biography of T. E. Lawrence* (London, 1989), pp 535-8. After the war Buxton became Lawrence's bank manager and assisted in the financing and publication of Lawrence's war experiences, *Seven Pillars of Wisdom*. See Wilson, pp 727-8.

information had been received of him as his name had not appeared on any list of prisoners of war received from the German government.⁴⁷ On 29 April 1915 at Ypres Richard Fetherstonhaugh received gunshot wounds to the arm, leg, thigh and knee. He was admitted to the No. 7 Stationary Hospital at Boulogne where he died from his wounds on 14 May.⁴⁸ Richard had been a beneficiary in the will of Sir Montagu Chapman's 5th baronet in 1908.⁴⁹ The deaths of the Fetherstonhaugh's triggered an outpouring of sympathy for the family. In expressing its condolences the *Westmeath Guardian* remarked: 'Certainly their gallant and worthy father has had his cup of poignant sorrow full'.⁵⁰ On 10 November further tragedy befell the family when Lieutenant John Lennox Fetherstonhaugh, Rockview House, Delvin, a nephew of General Fetherstonhaugh, was reported wounded and missing, presumed dead during the first battle of Ypres.⁵¹

The deaths sustained by the Westmeath aristocracy in the Great War reflected a similar pattern of distress experienced by aristocratic families throughout Ireland. Among other aristocratic families to lose members was the Fitzgerald family (Dukes of Leinster),⁵² and the Bellingham baronets of County Louth,⁵³ who each lost a son, and the de Freyne baronets of Frenchpark, County Roscommon lost two sons on the same day in 1915,⁵⁴ another in 1917,⁵⁵ and a fourth in 1918.⁵⁶ The loss of so many members undoubtedly contributed to the decline of the aristocracy as a class and the

⁴⁷ Report of death: George Fetherstonhaugh, 6 January 1916 (T.N.A., WO 339/16612). George Fetherstonhaugh probably died in the engagements outlined on pages 56 and 57. See H. C. O'Neill, *The Royal Fusiliers in the Great War* (London, 1922), pp 56-7.

⁴⁸ *Westmeath Guardian*, 21 May 1915.

⁴⁹ Report of death: Richard Fetherstonhaugh, 6 January 1916 (T.N.A., WO 339/8265). See also *Irish Times*, 14 Mar. 1908.

⁵⁰ *Westmeath Guardian*, 21 May 1915.

⁵¹ *The Times* 14 Nov. 1914.

⁵² *Irish Independent*, 7 Mar. 1916.

⁵³ Donal Hall, 'The Bellingham family of Castlebellingham, Co. Louth, 1914-24' in, Terence Dooley and Christopher Ridgway (eds) *The Country House and the Great War* (Dublin, 2016) , pp 100-12

⁵⁴ Terence Dooley , *The decline of the big house in Ireland* (Dublin, 2001), p. 124 and *Irish Independent* 15 May 1915.

⁵⁵ *Freeman's Journal*, 28 Aug.1917.

⁵⁶ *Irish Independent*, 10 Dec. 1918.

impact of these deaths clearly affected the ability of some families to adjust to the changes that occurred in Ireland after 1918.⁵⁷

5. The impact of war

As 1915 dawned the effects of war were being felt at every level of society. As a consequence of the German invasion of Belgium a large number of refugees from that country were evacuated to Great Britain and Ireland. On 5 January a family of refugees arrived at Mullingar railway station. They were met by Mrs. Charles Tottenham who brought them to Tudenham House where accommodation had been prepared for them.⁵⁸ A number of refugees stated to have been members of Belgian aristocratic families were also hosted by Lord Longford on his estate at Castlepollard.⁵⁹ It is not known how long the refugees remained at Tudenham and Pakenham Hall or where they went after their departure from Westmeath.

At this time a committee which included Lord Castlemaine was established under the chairmanship of Colonel Edward Purdon, Lisnabin Castle, Killucan to raise funds to purchase and equip ambulances for service on the Western Front. The sum of £1,871 14s 1d was collected, enough to purchase and equip two Hotchkiss ambulances which were subsequently transported to France. An additional £400 was donated to the British Red Cross Society to cover their running expenses. One ambulance was employed carrying wounded from the front to field hospitals while the other driven by Astley Rotheram, Fore, Co. Westmeath was retained at Boulogne.⁶⁰

While their husbands and brothers were away at the front many upper class women such as Dorothea and Aileen Tottenham, volunteered as nurses and organised

⁵⁷ For an analysis of the significance of casualty rates suffered by the landed classes see, Terence Dooley, *The decline of the big house in Ireland* (Dublin, 2001), pp 124-7.

⁵⁸ *Freeman's Journal*, 8 Jan. 1915.

⁵⁹ *Westmeath Guardian*, 5 Feb. 1915.

⁶⁰ *Irish Times*, 8 Dec. 1915.

concerts to entertain troops such as the 11th and 12th Battalions of the Hampshire Regiment prior to their departure from Mullingar for the western front in March 1915.⁶¹ Lady Castlemaine and her daughter the Hon. Evelyn Handcock also organised concerts and entertained troops attached to Athlone barracks.⁶²

In November 1915 Lord Castlemaine summoned the deputy-lieutenants of County Westmeath to a meeting for the purpose of organising a committee to oversee the collection of comforts for the Leinster Regiment. Among those in attendance were Sir Walter Nugent, the Hon. Robert Handcock, as well as Colonel John D. Fetherstonhaugh, Captain Cecil Fetherstonhaugh and Major Gerald Dease.⁶³

In January 1916 a committee was established to raise funds for necessary items for the soldiers of Leinster Regiment. Dances and concerts were held at various locations in the county where female members of landed families entertained those assembled. On 22 January 1916 a large sale of donations made by the upper class as well as the general public, many of whom had sons at the front, was held in Mullingar. The aristocracy in Westmeath were generous in their contributions to the event. Lord Castlemaine gave £5, Lord Greville donated a bullock which raised £16 14s, Sir Walter Nugent donated a brood mare which raised £10 10s, Lady Longford gave £10 while the trustees of the Pakenham Hall estate donated a further £25.⁶⁴ The Levinge family contributed via an extended family member C. E. Levinge, Violetstown House, who donated a sheep.⁶⁵ The sale raised over £700, which along with other events increased the amount gathered to £811 2s 10d by February 1917.⁶⁶ These funds were used to provide items such as gloves, socks, pants, cigarettes, soap

⁶¹ *Westmeath Examiner*, 14 Nov. 1914.

⁶² *Irish Times*, 8 Jan. 1916.

⁶³ *Ibid*, 30 Nov. 1915.

⁶⁴ *Westmeath Examiner*, 29 Jan. 1916.

⁶⁵ *Ibid*, 22 Jan. 1916

⁶⁶ *Ibid*, 19 Feb. 1917.

and other essential personal items to soldiers attached to the Leinster Regiment who were fighting in the Balkans and on the Western Front. No donations were received from either Sir Thomas Chapman or Sir Charles Nugent as both were resident in England at this time. Chapman was living in Britain under an assumed name, while Nugent, a horse trainer was in no position to donate to the fund. In April 1915 he had appeared for public examination of his bankruptcy at Banbury, Oxfordshire. It was stated that he had assets of £50, but liabilities of £7,000. Nugent conveniently attributed his losses to the war, rather than acknowledge that he had a gambling problem.⁶⁷

Due to the continuous high numbers of casualties, and in order to replenish the ranks, the campaign for recruits continued during 1915 and meetings were organised at various locations in the county. On 15 March a public meeting in support of recruiting was held at Mullingar with 1,500 in attendance. Another such meeting took place two days later at Killucan with about 200 persons present.⁶⁸ In March 1915 recruiting in Mullingar was reported as being brisk.⁶⁹ In April a number of workers on Lord Longford's estate enlisted.⁷⁰ There is no evidence of their being compelled to do so.

On 9 May 1915 Sir Thomas Chapman, 7th baronet, suffered a family bereavement with the death of his youngest brother, Francis Vansittart Chapman, South Hill, Delvin.⁷¹ It is unlikely that Sir Thomas who had left Ireland under dishonourable circumstances in 1885, returned for the funeral.⁷² Francis Chapman

⁶⁷ *Freeman's Journal*, 16 Apr. 1915.

⁶⁸ County Inspector's report, April 1915 (T.N.A. CO904/96) (Consulted on microfilm at Maynooth University).

⁶⁹ County Inspector's report, April 1915.

⁷⁰ *Westmeath Guardian*, 30 Apr. 1915.

⁷¹ *Ibid*, 14 May 1915.

⁷² Jeremy Wilson, *Lawrence of Arabia: the authorised biography of T. E. Lawrence* (London, 1989), pp 941-4.

who was unmarried left a personal estate in the United Kingdom of £120,296 5s 2d. In his will Francis Chapman left £25,000 to Sir Thomas, another £25,000 to be divided among his four nieces (Sir Thomas' daughters) Eva, Rose, Florence and Mabel, £1,000 to his man servant and £11,000 to three other ladies. He left £10,000 to the Adelaide Hospital, Dublin and his household and personal effects to his niece Eva. His interests in properties in Royal Avenue, Belfast were left to his cousins Colonel John Fetherstonhaugh, Rockview and Captain Cecil Fetherstonhaugh, Bracklyn with the remainder of his estate properties divided in equal shares between his four nieces.⁷³ Francis Chapman's view of his brother Thomas' behaviour can be gauged from the fact that he made no provision in his will for Sir Thomas' five sons, Montagu, Thomas, Frank, William and Arnold.

On the same day as his brother Francis died, Sir Thomas' fourth son, Frank was killed in action at Richebourg l'Avoue near Calais.⁷⁴ Before joining the army on 6 August 1914 Frank, unmarried, had been a student at Jesus College, Oxford.⁷⁵ Later that year Sir Thomas had to endure further tragedy with the death of his third son William. Prior to joining the army William had attended St John's College, a constituent college of Oxford University. He was initially appointed to the Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Light Infantry but was sent on attachment to the Royal Flying Corps. On 23 October 1915 William Lawrence failed to return from patrol over northern France. On that date German wireless reported that an English biplane had been brought down south of the town of St. Quentin and that the pilot and observer were both dead. In seeking to establish the fate of the airmen the British authorities made enquiries with the Germans through the American Embassy in Berlin. A reply was received in August 1916 stating that Lieutenant Lawrence had

⁷³ *Irish Times*, 2 Sept. 1915.

⁷⁴ Wilson, *Lawrence of Arabia: the authorised biography of T. E. Lawrence*, p. 190.

⁷⁵ Report of death: Frank Helier Lawrence, 19 May 1915 (T.N.A., WO 339/30123).

been killed by machine gun fire when his aeroplane had been shot down on 25 October 1915 near the village of Vaux, ten kilometres west of St. Quentin.⁷⁶

However, conflicting accounts arose in the manner of his death. In February 1919 the town clerk of St Quentin made a statement to the local commissioner of police that in 1915 following the burial of two English airmen he had ascertained that these officers after landing between the villages of Savy and Etreillers (Aisne) had been killed by the Germans. The declaration stated that bodies of the airmen were riddled with bullets and that their clothes were soiled with mud which showed that there had been a struggle on the ground. On 10 March 1919 a further declaration was made by the same witness who stated the Germans had informed him that the men had died in an air battle, but the state of the corpses made their version improbable. Prior to his death William Lawrence had made a will leaving his possessions to his brother Thomas E. Lawrence.⁷⁷ When registering William's birth, Thomas Chapman ever mindful of the need to conceal the truth of his family circumstances informed the registrar that he (Thomas Lawrence) was a 'Retired Merchant' who had married Sarah Lawrence (nee Junner) on 6 September 1883 at St Peter's Church, Dublin.⁷⁸ If he did marry Sarah as stated on William's birth certificate then Thomas Chapman would have committed the crime of bigamy, as he was still legally married to Edith Chapman (nee Boyd-Rochfort) at that time.

At the front members of the Westmeath aristocratic families continued to lose their lives in the cause of Empire. In August 1915 the Levinge family received news that Lieutenant-Colonel Henry Levinge, O/C 6th Battalion, Loyal North Lancashire Regiment, and cousin of Sir Richard Levinge had been killed in action at Gallipoli on

⁷⁶ Report of death: William George Lawrence, 18 January 1916 (T.N.A., WO 339/36583).

⁷⁷ Report of death: William George Lawrence, 18 January 1916 (T.N.A., WO 339/36583). See also Jeremy Wilson, *Lawrence of Arabia: the authorised biography of T. E. Lawrence* (London, 1989), p. 226.

⁷⁸ Report of death: William George Lawrence, 18 January 1916 (T.N.A., WO 339/36583).

10 August when the trench he was defending was attacked by a vastly superior force of Turks.⁷⁹

On 21 August 1915 the highest ranking member of the aristocracy in Westmeath, Brigadier-General Sir Thomas Pakenham, 5th earl of Longford was reported missing, believed killed, while leading his troops into battle at Gallipoli.⁸⁰ While awaiting news of her husband's fate the countess of Longford returned to England with her young family (two sons and four daughters), making only occasional visits to Ireland. On one such visit at Easter 1916, the family were forced to remain at Pakenham Hall, due to the rebellion in Dublin.⁸¹ Lord Longford's body was never recovered, and his wife did not receive official confirmation of his death until June 1916.⁸² Thomas, the present earl, believes his grandfather was killed by an exploding artillery shell.⁸³ He was succeeded to the title by his son Edward (b. 1902). Despite the loss of her husband Lady Longford and her family continued to visit her Westmeath estates, undertaking trips to Pakenham Hall in July 1917,⁸⁴ and again for several months during the summer of 1918.⁸⁵

In September 1915 the Handcock family received news of the death of the Hon. Hercules Robinson of the East Kent Regiment. Robinson had died on 26 September in the 6th London Field Ambulance in France or Flanders of wounds sustained in action. He was the only son of Hercules Arthur Robinson, 2nd baron Rosmead and his wife the Hon. Edith Handcock, a sister of Lord Castlemaine.⁸⁶ A

⁷⁹ Philip Lee Warner, *Harrow memorials of the Great War* (6 vols, Harrow, 1918), ii, 112.

⁸⁰ Lord Pakenham, *Born to believe* (London, 1953), pp 16-8.

⁸¹ Mark Bence-Jones, *Life in an Irish country house* (London, 1996), p. 245.

⁸² *Westmeath Examiner*, 17 Jun. 1916.

⁸³ Conversation with author, 11 March 2014.

⁸⁴ *Westmeath Guardian*, 3 Aug. 1917.

⁸⁵ *Ibid*, 26 Jul. 1918.

⁸⁶ Report of death: The Hon. Hercules E. Robinson, 12 October 1915 (T.N.A., WO 339/3203). The Robinson family had sold the Rosmead estate near Delvin, Co. Westmeath through the Encumbered Estates Court in 1852 to Lord Vaux of Harrowden who in turn sold it to Lord Greville in the early 1880s. See Hannah Fitzsimons, *The great Delvin* (Dublin, 1975), p. 109.

month later Major Thomas Levinge, brother of Sir Richard Levinge was seriously wounded in France, receiving a bad compound fracture to one of his legs which was subsequently amputated.⁸⁷ However, there was on occasion some good news to report from the front, such as the awarding of the Victoria Cross to George Arthur Boyd-Rochfort, a lieutenant in the Scots Guards and nephew of Sir Thomas Chapman (his aunt Edith was married to Chapman). The medal citation stated:

For most conspicuous bravery in the trenches between [Cambrin](#) and [La Bassée](#) on 3rd August 1915. At 2am a German trench-mortar bomb landed on the side of the parapet of the communication trench in which he stood, close to a small working party of his battalion. He might easily have stepped back a few paces round the corner into perfect safety but shouting to his men to look out, he rushed at the bomb, seized it and hurled it over the parapet where it at once exploded. There is no doubt that this splendid combination of presence of mind and courage saved the lives of many of the working party.⁸⁸

6. Easter rebellion, 1916

On 24 April 1916 an armed rebellion broke out in Dublin with minor incidents in Ashbourne, Wexford and Galway. Martial Law was declared throughout Ireland and freedom of movement was restricted. The rising which lasted until 29 April when the rebel leader Padraig Pearse surrendered to the British forces, caused serious damage to the centre of Dublin. John P. Hayden, editor of the *Westmeath Examiner* and Irish Parliamentary Party MP for South Roscommon was very critical of the leaders of the rebellion stating:

Had they devoted their brains, and their education, and their energies to support those who by constitutional means (the only means and the best) have brought this country to the threshold of freedom, they could have doubtless given good and welcome help, which would have earned the gratitude of the men and women of today, and the blessings of generations to come.⁸⁹

⁸⁷ *Westmeath Examiner*, 16 Oct. 1915.

⁸⁸ *Edinburgh Gazette*, 3 Sept. 1915.

⁸⁹ *Westmeath Examiner*, 13 May 1916.

General John Maxwell's decision to execute the leaders of the rebellion generated widespread sympathy for the rebels and changed public attitudes. The county inspector of the RIC reported some arrests at Athlone and Tyrrellspass but noted that no persons resident in the county had taken part in the rebellion.⁹⁰ While there was a certain amount of sympathy with the rebels it was reported there was noticeable unrest among the shop-assistant, clerk and labouring classes while the rebellion lasted. This occurred mainly in Athlone and to a lesser extent in Mullingar.⁹¹ The evolving change in attitude towards the British administration was apparent in May 1916 when Westmeath County Council passed a resolution, part of which stated:

That we the members of the Westmeath County Council, whilst admitting that the recent Dublin rebellion was foolish and hopeless, maintain that the punishment meted out to the rebels was excessive.

The resolution went on to demand that investigations be carried out into the deaths of Owen Sheehy-Skeffington, P.J. McIntyre and the shooting of a Westmeath man Thomas Hickey and his fifteen year old son Christopher at North King Street.⁹²

The events of Easter 1916 disrupted the lives of the aristocracy in Westmeath. During the rising Lord Castlemaine remained in-situ at his residence outside Athlone, having arrived back from Britain in early March.⁹³ He stayed there until 16 May when he travelled to Dublin.⁹⁴ Lord and Lady Greville were in England at this time, having attended the funeral of British diplomat Sir Gerard Lowther on 8 April.⁹⁵ They did not visit Clonhugh until August 1916.⁹⁶ In June 1916 Greville disposed of some estate

⁹⁰ County Inspector's report, May 1916 (T.N.A. CO904/100) (Consulted on microfilm at Maynooth University).

⁹¹ Ibid, June 1916 (T.N.A. CO904/100) (Consulted on microfilm at Maynooth University).

⁹² *Westmeath Examiner*, 27 May 1916.

⁹³ *Irish Times*, 3 Mar. 1916.

⁹⁴ Ibid, 17 May 1916.

⁹⁵ *The Times*, 10 Apr. 1916.

⁹⁶ Ibid, 1 Aug. 1916.

land at Rathconnell near Mullingar.⁹⁷ In June 1917 he sold by auction the entire contents of his house at Clonhugh, as well as the farm machinery,⁹⁸ before selling the house and estate to Mr. E. W. Hope – Johnstone, master of the Westmeath hounds.⁹⁹

On the other hand, 15 June 1916 was a joyous day for the Nugent family of Donore with the marriage in London of Sir Walter Nugent to Aileen, daughter of Middleton More O'Malley of Ross House, Westport.¹⁰⁰ Large crowds assembled to greet the first visit of the happy couple to Mullingar and his home village of Multyfarnham in July 1916.¹⁰¹ On 20 November a function was held at Donore House where Sir Walter and his wife were presented with a case of silver cutlery and other gifts by his tenantry and the people of Multyfarnham to mark their marriage.¹⁰² The excellent relations between Sir Walter and the local population were consolidated by his gesture during the extremely harsh winter of 1916, when he instructed his land agent to allow the people of the locality to remove any fallen trees from his estate at Donore free of charge.¹⁰³

In June 1916 the *Westmeath Guardian* in sympathising with the family of Charles Tottenham of Tudenham House, Mullingar, the recruitment officer for County Westmeath, following the loss of his younger son Sub-Lieutenant Desmond Tottenham at the Battle of Jutland, expressed the feelings of many people regarding the loss of so many young men when it stated:

⁹⁷ *Westmeath Examiner*, 3 Jun. 1916.

⁹⁸ *Freeman's Journal*, 21 Jul. 1917.

⁹⁹ *Irish Times*, 30 Jun. 1917. In March 1920 Lord Greville sold the ground rents for the town of Mullingar to the tenants. See Indenture between Lord Greville and Hibernian Bank, Mullingar, 16 March 1920 (MS in possession of Mark Gavin, Dalystown, Mullingar).

¹⁰⁰ *Dod's Peerage, Baronetage, Knightage, etc. of Great Britain and Ireland for 1920*, ii (London, 1920), p. 639.

¹⁰¹ *Westmeath Examiner*, 22 Jul. 1916.

¹⁰² *Westmeath Guardian*, 24 Nov. 1916.

¹⁰³ *Westmeath Examiner*, 5 Aug. 1916.

His early and untimely end is but one of the many heart breaking and grief stricken incidents that are being brought home to us during the progress of the present great and cruel war.¹⁰⁴

As the war descended into bloody stalemate neither side appeared able to make a successful break-through and end the carnage. The most important Allied military offensive of 1916 took place in July of that year at the Somme during which thousands of lives were lost. Men from the Westmeath aristocracy participated in the offensive which continued until November that year.

On 9 November 1916 Charles Levinge, brother of Sir Richard Levinge was wounded in the leg at the Somme. He was evacuated to England where upon recovery he was repatriated to Australia. In November 1917 he was discharged from the army on medical grounds.¹⁰⁵ Another member of the Westmeath aristocracy Lieutenant Henry Grace Kerr, elder son of Lady Olivia Greville from her marriage to Henry Kerr, and stepson of Lord Greville was killed in France in 1917. Kerr died of wounds received on action on 1 July.¹⁰⁶ While on 5 April 1918, the final day of the German Spring offensive, Private Gerald Henry Levinge, youngest brother of Sir Richard Levinge was killed at Dernancourt while fighting with 47th Battalion, Australian Imperial Force. He was one of eight officers and two hundred and sixty-one men from the 47th battalion killed in the battle.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁴ *Westmeath Guardian*, 9 Jun. 1916.

¹⁰⁵ Australian Imperial Force: Charles Horace Levinge (N.A.A. A36229) available at <http://recordsearch.naa.gov.au/SearchNRRetrieve/Interface/ViewImage.aspx?B=8195516> [18 August 2016].

¹⁰⁶ Report of death: Henry Grace Kerr, 5 July 1917 (T.N.A. WO 339/66974). Lady Greville's second son Hamilton Kerr (1903-1974) would later become Conservative MP for Oldham from 1931 to 1945 and MP for Cambridge from 1950 to 1966, becoming a baronet in 1957. In 1970 he bequeathed his residence to Cambridge University as the Hamilton Kerr Institute, part of the Fitzwilliam Museum. See *Who's Who, 1975* (London, 1975), p. 1737.

¹⁰⁷ Australian Imperial Force: Gerald Henry Levinge (N.A.A. D53284) available at <http://recordsearch.naa.gov.au/SearchNRRetrieve/Interface/ViewImage.aspx?B=8198479> [18 August 2016]. See also C. E. W. Bean, *The Australian Imperial force in France during the main German offensive, 1918, Vol. V* (Sydney, 1941), p. 412.

7. Auxiliary hospitals, Mullingar

While the war continued unabated, concerted attempts were being made in County Westmeath to support the war effort and ease the suffering of wounded soldiers. In February 1917 plans were put in place to open an Auxiliary Red Cross Hospital in the Mullingar area to cater for wounded soldiers. A suitable building located on the shores of Lough Ennell between Mullingar and Tudenham was donated by Lieutenant-Colonel Charles Howard-Bury (see Figure 15) of Belvedere House.¹⁰⁸ On 1 March a meeting was held in the Greville Arms Hotel, Mullingar to organise and equip the hospital. The meeting, attended by leading members of local society, many of whom had lost sons in the war, was informed of the urgent necessity of establishing such a hospital as the Dublin hospitals were full to capacity. They were also informed that it would be necessary to raise £1,500 to put the hospital in working order. The gathering was made aware that the head of the Dublin hospitals had been put on notice to make provision for a million wounded during the coming two months and that hospitals such as the one proposed should be established in every county in Ireland. The meeting was also addressed by Sir Walter Nugent, Major Gerald Dease and members of the Fetherstonhaugh family.¹⁰⁹

Later that month the hospital situated at Bloomfield (now Bloomfield House Hotel) opened its doors. It could cater for fifty non-commissioned officers and men and was funded by local donations as well as a subsistence grant from the War Office of three shillings per soldier, per day.¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁸ *Westmeath Examiner*, 26 Feb. 1917. Colonel Bury fought with the King's Royal Rifle Corps at Arras, the Somme, Passchendaele and Ypres and was awarded the Distinguished Service Order. See *Edinburgh Gazette*, 2 Jan. 1918. He was taken prisoner during the German offensive of 1918 and not released until 1919. Bury would later achieve fame for leading the first reconnaissance mission to Mount Everest in 1921. See also Ruth Illingworth, *Mullingar, history and guide* (Dublin, 2007), p. 105 and C. K. Howard-Bury, *Mount Everest, the reconnaissance 1921* (London, 1922), pp 1-20.

¹⁰⁹ *Westmeath Guardian*, 2 Mar. 1917.

¹¹⁰ *Westmeath Examiner*, 24 Feb. 1917.

On 18 July 1917 the hospital was officially opened by Lieutenant-General Sir Bryan Mahon, (1862-1930) Commander-in-Chief of the British Forces in Ireland. The commandant of the hospital was a former VAD nurse, Mrs Mary Locke, who had worked in military hospitals in France.¹¹¹ As part of the recovery process outings were organised for patients to attend race meetings at Mullingar racecourse and visit locations such as Lord Greville's Clonhugh estate which took place in June 1917.¹¹²

In 1917 the Tottenham family made the grand gesture of offering Tudenham House as an auxiliary home for injured soldiers. In July that year Surgeon-General Sir Richard Forde inspected the house and gave permission for part of it to be converted into a convalescent home for wounded army officers. Mrs Georgina Tottenham was appointed commandant.¹¹³ In September 1918 a war hero, Sergeant (later Lieutenant) Michael O'Leary VC spent some time convalescing there.¹¹⁴ O'Leary had been due to attend a recruitment meeting in Mullingar but had not been well enough to do so. In November 1918 Mrs Tottenham requested the War Office to close Tudenham Hospital citing private reasons. Perhaps the death of her son at Jutland had been a contributory factor. The house which could accommodate sixteen officers at a time shut its doors on 30 November 1918.¹¹⁵

In early 1919 the Auxiliary Red Cross hospital at Bloomfield closed its doors. Its contents were sold by auction on 10 June the same year.¹¹⁶ The surplus funds of £1,450 were used to provide a motor ambulance for Mullingar Hospital, fund a

¹¹¹ Ray Metters, *Who answered the bugle call?* (Kilbeggan, 2011), pp 69-70. In May 1915 Captain John Beardmore Batten, Manchester Regiment, husband of Mary Locke, Lynn Lodge, Mullingar had been invalided home suffering from the effects of gas. Upon recovery from his injuries he returned to the front. See *Westmeath Guardian*, 14 May 1915. Batten had been gassed at the battle of Neuve Chapelle. He won a DSO at the battle of the Somme. See *Edinburgh Gazette*, 1 Jan. 1917.

¹¹² *Westmeath Guardian*, 15 Jun. 1917.

¹¹³ *Irish Times*, 1 Sept. 1917.

¹¹⁴ *Irish Independent*, 26 Sept. 1918.

¹¹⁵ *Irish Times*, 2 Nov. 1918.

¹¹⁶ *Westmeath Examiner*, 24 May 1919.

soldiers club in Mullingar and give a donation to the St. Vincent de Paul Society to help soldiers and their dependents.¹¹⁷

8. Political changes, 1917-1918

The rise in support for Sinn Féin in the period after the rising was apparent and could be measured by its electoral success. Between February 1917 and July 1918 the party contested nine by-elections. In 1917 the party won seats in North Roscommon, South Longford, East Clare and Kilkenny City and in 1918 in King's County and East Cavan. However, it was unsuccessful in South Armagh, Waterford and East Tyrone.¹¹⁸ The electoral successes confirmed increased support for militant republicanism and this shift in public opinion would ultimately lead to the demise of the Irish Parliamentary Party. James Mackay Wilson, a prominent Longford landowner, Unionist, and brother of Field Marshal Sir Henry Wilson, prophetically remarked that 'the return of a Sinn Féiner is a direct menace to England'.¹¹⁹

The Sinn Féin organisation in South Westmeath was growing more confident and began to exert political pressure on Sir Walter Nugent. It was becoming apparent that Nugent's tenure as MP for South Westmeath was becoming increasingly objectionable to the Nationalist voters of the area due to his position on conscription and his support for Irish Home Rule within the empire. A strong indication that the tide of public opinion had turned against the Irish Parliamentary Party in Westmeath following the events of 1916 was demonstrated on 8 August 1917 when a meeting of Sinn Féin clubs in the Kilbride and Drumraney areas of South Westmeath passed a resolution expressing the opinion that Sir Walter Nugent did not represent the views

¹¹⁷ *Westmeath Examiner*, 6 Sept. 1919.

¹¹⁸ Brian M. Walker, *Parliamentary election results in Ireland, 1801-1922* (Dublin, 1978), pp 184-5.

¹¹⁹ Marie Coleman, *County Longford and the Irish revolution 1910-1923* (Dublin, 2003), p. 67.

of nationalists in the constituency and that a meeting of all nationalist bodies in the division should be held to call for his resignation.¹²⁰

As the fourth year of war progressed the British army desperately needed additional recruits to fill the gaps left by the deaths of thousands of troops and even more urgently as a result of the German spring offensive on the western front launched in March 1918. The government's plan to introduce conscription in Ireland was fiercely opposed by the Irish Parliamentary Party. On 10 April 1918 in the House of Commons during the debate on the second reading of the Military Service Bill, Sir Walter stated that Ireland should not stand idly by and leave the bulk of the fighting to the English and Scots, but he also acknowledged that compulsion would never get Irishmen into the army. He believed that if Irishmen had the opportunity through their own parliament of further assisting in the war, the result would surprise the Empire.¹²¹ Sir Walter was criticised and his position further undermined when he failed to appear at an anti-conscription meeting held at Moate at the end of April. In response, he stated that he strongly opposed conscription as proposed by the government, and suggested that the issue could have been dealt with by an Irish Parliament. He suggested that subscribing to an anti-conscription covenant was not the correct way of meeting the situation.¹²² In July 1918 Sir Walter wrote to the secretary of the Irish recruiting committee outlining in full his position on recruitment in Ireland. He stated:

I have always taken the view that Ireland's interests, as well as her honour, bind her to the side of Great Britain and the Allies, and I cannot see how the shortcomings or mistakes of successive British Ministries in any way release us from the fulfilment of our honourable obligations. To take the line that,

¹²⁰ *Westmeath Guardian*, 10 Aug. 1917. See also John Burke, *Athlone 1900-1923, politics, revolution and civil war* (Dublin, 2015), pp 146-7.

¹²¹ *Ibid*, 12 Apr. 1918. See also *Hansard 5, civ, 1475-1606 (10 Apr. 1918)*.

¹²² *Ibid*, 3 May 1918. In April 1918 a nine member anti-conscription committee was established in Dublin to resist conscription nationally. There were representatives from each of the Nationalist parties on it. The committee proposed an anti-conscription pledge which stated that conscription was to be resisted by the most effective means at their disposal. For further information concerning Sir Walter and the conscription crisis, see John Burke, *Athlone, 1900-1923, politics, revolution and war* (Dublin, 2015), pp 161-4.

though opposed to conscription, we still want to help to win the war, and then to decline to assist in any way voluntary enlistment, seems to me an impossible attitude-and at any rate it is one to which I personally will never subscribe.¹²³

He expressed a similar opinion at the end of July in correspondence to the editor of the *Irish Times* regarding the difference between Sinn Féin's position and that of the Irish Parliamentary Party. He suggested that:

The policies of Sinn Féin and constitutionalism are as wide apart as the Poles...The time has certainly come when everyone must decide for himself which side he is on. Personally I strongly hold the view that those who stand for a constitutional settlement of the Irish question inside the Empire, and want Ireland to help win the war, should get together and irrespective of former party ties, clearly define their aims and objects.¹²⁴

Sir Walter appeared to have lost touch with popular Nationalist opinion which was now moving steadily in favour of Sinn Féin. He continued to hold to the position that Ireland's best option for the foreseeable future was Home Rule within the Empire. On 27 September 1918 Sir Walter presided at a recruitment meeting at the county hall, Mullingar, although he did not speak to the assembly. The meeting was informed by Alexander M. Sullivan KC, that 'there was in their midst a miserable gang who were trying to tie this country to the tail of Germany. Conscription was inevitable should the voluntary system cease'.¹²⁵ The sentiments expressed by Sullivan clearly referred to the 1916 Proclamation and the activities of Sinn Féin and the Irish Volunteers.

¹²³ *Westmeath Guardian*, 12 Jul. 1918.

¹²⁴ *Westmeath Examiner*, 27 Jul. 1918.

¹²⁵ *Westmeath Guardian*, 27 Sept. 1918. Alexander Sullivan (1871-1959) Serjeant-at-law, was a prominent barrister who defended Sir Roger Casement at his trial for treason. He was the last barrister to hold the title of Serjeant. He supported the IPP and was a recruitment campaigner in Ireland. He opposed Sinn Féin and prosecuted members during the War of Independence. He moved to England in 1921 following an attempt on his life. See also Ronan Keane, 'Sullivan. Alexander, Martin in, H.C.G. Matthew & Brian Harrison (eds), *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography Vol 53* (Oxford, 2004), p. 297.

9. Conclusion

The First World War took a terrible toll on the aristocratic families of Westmeath and was a major contributor to the change in circumstances of five of the seven families. The aristocratic families in Westmeath supported the war effort without question and saw it as their duty as loyal subjects to do all in their power to serve the Empire in its time of need. They sent their young men to fight and die at the front. At home they entertained troops, supported war charities, raised funds to purchase essential items for soldiers, worked as voluntary nurses, opened their homes to refugees and offered them as auxiliary hospitals for the care of wounded soldiers. As Keogh remarked:

The southern Protestants were at once the war's most enthusiastic supporters, and in the end its greatest casualties. Southern Unionists responded to the war as their war; the menfolk joined up without question, and those that stayed at home worked tirelessly for the war effort.¹²⁶

William Magan, a member of a Westmeath landed family who attained the rank of brigadier in the British Army, and who died in 2010 at the age of 101, lamented the end of the ascendancy which he believed occurred in the period from 1912 to Irish independence, due in the main to the large number of members from that class who died in the First World War. Magan remarked:

The world would be struck on the 4th August 1914 by a greater disaster than anything known for seven centuries...The whole pattern of the last phase of the Irish ascendancy's existence...would be swept entirely away. It was farewell to the ascendancy.¹²⁷

The events of 1914 to 1918 were a watershed in the lives of the Westmeath aristocracy. The changing political climate in Ireland in the aftermath of the Easter rebellion with the rise in support for Sinn Féin and militant Nationalism, and the increased desire for independence in the three southern provinces saw the aristocratic

¹²⁶ D. George Boyce, *Nineteenth century Ireland, the search for stability* (Dublin, 2005), p. 285.

¹²⁷ William Magan, *Umma-More: The story of an Irish family* (Shaftesbury, 1983), p. 376.

families, as southern Unionists, at their weakest position politically, for more than two centuries.

As already stated, the aristocratic families in Westmeath were not just part of the Irish aristocracy, but were also a significant component of the greater British aristocracy with substantial links to the Empire, with a tradition of service over many generations as parliamentarians, soldiers and administrators at the highest level. The aristocratic families of Westmeath had demonstrated their immense loyalty to the king and the Empire by the sacrifices and suffering they had endured during in the Great War and the hope and desire that Ireland would remain an integral part of the United Kingdom would disintegrate in the revolutionary turmoil that was about to devastate the aristocratic and Unionist families in the southern provinces.

As later chapters will reveal the aristocracy were overtaken by events at national level and any hope of political compromise ended with the resounding defeat of the Irish Parliamentary Party in the 1918 general election. The problem was further compounded by the outbreak of the Irish War of Independence in January 1919. The aristocratic families in County Westmeath would be subjected to life changing experiences in the unfolding Irish revolution and these events will be examined in the forthcoming chapters.

Chapter 7

The War of Independence, and the aristocracy in Westmeath, 1918-1922

1. Introduction

As the Great War came to an end with the armistice of November 1918 families on all sides of the conflict had to come to terms with the devastating loss of loved ones. The aristocratic families of Westmeath were no exception in this regard and they now had to re-adjust to normal peacetime living. This would prove difficult for the families as the political situation in Ireland had changed dramatically in the period since 1914, and especially in the wake of the execution of the leaders of the failed rebellion of 1916. When the British authorities executed the rebel leaders they also executed the constitutional political aspirations and future relevance of the Irish Parliamentary Party, thereby ending the possibility of Irish Home Rule within the Empire.¹ The executions had the effect of making martyrs of the leaders of the rising and changed public opinion in Ireland towards the British administration.

In this chapter the implications of the political changes and the 1918 election result which saw the defeat of Sir Walter Nugent, the sitting MP, will be analysed, together with the actions that led to the outbreak of the War of Independence in January 1919. Additional topics that will be examined include the campaign of violence and intimidation by the IRA against the RIC which left Westmeath Unionists feeling defenceless with their homes subjected to raids for arms. In the absence of police protection agrarian agitation increased with the resumption of cattle drives in the county. One of the most controversial aspects of the War of Independence was the burning of big houses. The destruction of these houses will be analysed and illustrated

¹ F. S. L. Lyons, 'The rising and after', in W. E. Vaughan (ed.), *A new history of Ireland*, vi (Oxford, 1996), pp 219-20.

with a case study of the destruction of Lord Castlemaine's home, Moydrum Castle, and the organised campaign of vandalism and intimidation which compelled Castlemaine to leave the county. Politically, Sinn Féin consolidated its pre-eminent position as the aristocratic mansions were sold and family dynasties ended. Examining these topics will demonstrate how the distressing experiences of the aristocratic families during the conflict caused them to question their presence in Ireland and resulted in some families leaving Westmeath to permanently relocate in Britain.

2. General Election, 1918

The armistice of November 1918 was followed by a general election in December, the first to be held since 1910. County Westmeath reverted to a single constituency for the first time since 1885, with one member to be returned to parliament. The number of persons entitled to vote had increased from just over half of the male population in 1910 to a position where adult male suffrage was almost universal, those aged over twenty-one being allowed to vote. About one third of adult women, those over thirty years with some property related qualifications, were also eligible to vote.²

The Irish Parliamentary Party selected Mullingar businessman Patrick J. Weymes as their candidate in the election. Michael McCoy claimed that Weymes was 'the biggest businessman in Mullingar' and had close links to the British authorities who had appointed him fellmonger for the greater part of Ireland.³ Michael Murray, a member of Sinn Féin stated that the Irish Parliamentary Party had a strong following among the many British ex-servicemen and their families living in the county, which

² David Fitzpatrick, 'The geography of Irish nationalism 1910-1921', in *Past & Present*, No.78 (Oxford, 1978), p. 122, available at <http://www.jstor.org/stable/650375> [19 March 2016].

³ Statement by Michael McCoy (BMH, WS1610). A Fellmonger is a person who deals in animal hides and skins, such as sheepskins.

along with the RIC were considered hostile to Sinn Féin.⁴ Sinn Féin selected as their candidate the veteran agrarian campaigner Laurence Ginnell, who had joined the party in 1917. Ginnell was the outgoing MP for North Westmeath and was well known nationally, particularly in the wake of his speech in the House of Commons on 11 May 1916 where he severely criticised the British authorities for executing the leaders of the Easter Rebellion.⁵

The third candidate was Sir Walter Nugent, outgoing MP for South Westmeath who stood as an Independent Nationalist. In outlining his reasons for running as an independent, Nugent claimed it was due to disagreements with the Irish Parliamentary Party on issues of national importance, which he failed to specify. In an address to the electorate Nugent stated that he supported settlement of the Irish question on the lines promoted by O'Connell, Parnell, and John Redmond, which was the Irish Parliamentary Party policy of Home Rule for Ireland inside the Empire. He maintained that he was opposed to the partition of Ireland and supported the protection of Irish farmers from unfair foreign competition, so that they would be able to pay agricultural labourers a living wage. Sir Walter announced that he would not be taking the party pledge which required him to sit, act and vote as a pledge bound member. He further stated that he would not be making a personal canvass as he did not have the necessary organisation.⁶

The election campaign proved difficult for Nugent as he was subjected to continuous political attacks from Sinn Féin. On 8 December 1918 at Moate when Sir Walter, accompanied by Lady Nugent, attempted to address a meeting outside the church, he was met with a hostile reception. When his appeal for the opportunity to

⁴ Statement by Michael Murray (BMH, WS1498).

⁵ *Hansard* 5, lxxxii, 935-70 (11 May 1916).

⁶ *Westmeath Examiner*, 23 Nov. 1918 and *Westmeath Guardian*, 29 Nov 1918.

explain his political position was unsuccessful, he was forced to withdraw.⁷ When returning to his hotel Nugent found that placards with the slogan ‘Vote for Larry Ginnell, the man in jail for Ireland’, had been placed on his car.⁸ On the same day, supported by the local Catholic clergy and Ginnell’s wife Alice, Michael Collins addressed a number of Sinn Féin meetings in the area, including Moate, where he outlined the party position stating: ‘they were pledged to establish an Irish Republic, pledged to defeat English rule in Ireland and pledged to assert before the nations of the world Ireland’s claim to complete independence’.⁹ The Irish Volunteers played an active part in the election campaign canvassing and fundraising. Murray states that election work was usually the responsibility of the Sinn Féin organisation but in Westmeath the greater bulk of it was done by the Volunteers as most of those involved were members of both organisations.¹⁰ In 1917 the IRB had reformed the Irish Volunteers and Sinn Féin became its political wing. Under the leadership of Éamon de Valera, Arthur Griffith and Michael Collins the movement grew rapidly.¹¹

Voting took place on 14 December and the RIC county inspector reported that ‘there was no disorder and very little excitement on polling day’ or on 28 December when the vote was declared.¹² The result saw Laurence Ginnell top the poll with 12,435 votes, followed by Patrick J. Weymes who received 3,458 votes. Sir Walter Nugent finished a distant third gaining only 603 votes, the lowest of any outgoing MP

⁷ *Irish Times*, 9 Dec. 1918. There appears to have been an organised campaign of disruption of IPP candidates as John P. Hayden, outgoing IPP MP for South Roscommon had a similar experience at Moore, Co. Roscommon at the end of November 1918. Hayden was running against Harry Boland of Sinn Féin. See *Irish Times*, 2 Dec. 1918.

⁸ *Irish Independent*, 11 Dec. 1918.

⁹ *Irish Times*, 9 Dec. 1918.

¹⁰ Statement by Michael Mc Cormack. (BMH, WS1503).

¹¹ For information on the reorganisation of the Irish Volunteers, see Charles Townshend, *The republic, the fight for Irish independence* (London, 2013), pp 36-41, also F. S. L. Lyons, ‘The new Nationalism, 1916-18’, in W. E. Vaughan (ed.), *A new history of Ireland*, vi (Oxford, 1996), p. 231 and Dairmaid Ferriter, *The transformation of Ireland* (London, 2005), pp 179-81.

¹² County Inspector’s report, January 1919 (T.N.A. CO904/108) (Consulted on microfilm at Maynooth University) also, Brian M. Walker, *Parliamentary election results in Ireland, 1801-1922* (Dublin, 1978), p. 185.

in Ireland.¹³ Michael McCormack and Seamus O'Meara claimed that personating of voters in support of the Sinn Féin candidate had been committed by some of their supporters on polling day.¹⁴

The national election result saw an overwhelming victory for Sinn Féin who won seventy-three seats defeating the Irish Parliamentary Party which took only six seats, while the Unionists won the remaining twenty-three. The result confirmed the rise of Sinn Féin who could now claim to represent the majority of the Irish people.¹⁵ The possibility of Irish Home Rule as envisioned by Butt, Parnell and Redmond was over. The defeat of Sir Walter Nugent and Patrick Weymes signified that Irish independence was now top of the political agenda in County Westmeath, reflecting the desire of the majority of voters in the county. While he may have been expecting to lose his seat Sir Walter clearly felt that he had to uphold his political principles as two days after polling day he attended a dinner hosted by Irish Recruiting Council, where the principal guest was the lord lieutenant, Field-Marshal Viscount French.¹⁶

On 16 January 1919 a meeting called by Lord Castlemaine, lord lieutenant for the county, was held at the Greville Arms Hotel, Mullingar. Castlemaine wanted a public meeting arranged for Mullingar to discuss the question of creating a suitable memorial to the officers and men of County Westmeath who had lost their lives in the Great War. Among those in attendance at the January meeting were Sir Walter Nugent and Colonel John D. Fetherstonhaugh of Rockview House, Delvin, a cousin

¹³ *Freeman's Journal*, 30 Dec. 1918. See also Brian M. Walker (ed.) *Parliamentary election results in Ireland, 1801-1922* (Dublin, 1978), p. 191.

¹⁴ See statements by Michael McCormack (BMH, WS1503) and Seamus O'Meara (BMH, WS1504).

¹⁵ Dairmaid Ferriter, *The transformation of Ireland* (London, 2005), pp 183-4.

¹⁶ *Irish Times*, 17 Dec. 1918. At this time Sir Walter was a director of the Bank of Ireland and deputy-chairman of the Midland Great Western Railway. He was also a member of the Agricultural Wages Board which determined the level of wages paid to agricultural workers. In December 1921 Sir Walter was appointed high sheriff for Westmeath, the last person to hold that office. See *Tuam Herald*, 16 Dec. 1922, *Skibbereen Eagle*, 24 Jul. 1920 and *Irish Independent*, 6 Dec. 1921 and *Irish Times*, 27 Jan. 1923. The office of high sheriff was abolished in 1922 by the Free State government and replaced by the office of county sheriff.

of Lady Caroline Chapman. Fetherstonhaugh had lost a son and two nephews in the war.¹⁷ Also present was George A. Boyd-Rochfort, VC of Middleton Park.¹⁸

This was not the first occasion that the erection of a war memorial had been proposed for the county. As early as 1916 Tenison F. Levinge of Enniscoffey House had called for a war memorial in memory of the soldiers from Westmeath. It was decided at that time to defer matters until the war had ended.¹⁹ In November 1918 fundraising efforts involving Mrs Mary Locke, matron of the Auxiliary Red Cross Hospital, recommenced,²⁰ and by the end of November 1919 a total of £127 10s 6d had been subscribed towards the memorial. This included donations of £25 from Lord Castlemaine, £5 from Lady Chapman as well as donations from members of the Fetherstonhaugh family.²¹ However, for some unexplained reason Lord Castlemaine decided at that stage to abandon further fundraising activities and the sums already gathered were forwarded to the Irish National War Memorial.²²

Perhaps in a climate of political uncertainty Castlemaine had concluded that the erection of such a memorial would not be welcome in Westmeath. Unlike County Longford, where a monument was subsequently erected in 1925,²³ the memorial planned for Mullingar never came to fruition possibly because some of the prime movers behind the project, Lord Castlemaine among them, were later compelled to leave the county. The reasons for their departure will be examined later in this chapter.

¹⁷ *Irish Times*, 17 Jan. 1919. See Sir Bernard Burke, *Landed gentry of Ireland* (London, 1912), p. 221.

¹⁸ *Ibid*, 25 Jan. 1919.

¹⁹ *Westmeath Examiner*, 19 Aug. 1916.

²⁰ *Ibid*, 23 Nov. 1918.

²¹ *Ibid*, 22 Nov. 1919.

²² *Ibid*, 22 Nov. 1919.

²³ *Irish Independent*, 28 Aug. 1925.

3. War of Independence

Within two months of the November armistice the first shots in the War of Independence were fired on 21 January 1919 at Soloheadbeg in County Tipperary and those Sinn Féin MPs not in prison, ill or on the run assembled that same day and established the first Dáil at Dublin's Mansion House. The decision making process and the response by the British government to events in Ireland was hampered by Prime Minister Lloyd George's absence at the peace conference in Versailles. The aristocracy and landed gentry in Westmeath, as supporters of the British government, now found themselves in the eye of the revolutionary storm unfolding in Ireland. As this group favoured the continued maintenance of the union with Britain, their position was regarded by republicans as an impediment to the progress of Irish independence and they would have to be silenced, suppressed or compelled to leave by whatever means necessary. An added incentive was that the estate land still in their possession would eventually become available for division among the local populace.

The first sign of resistance to authority in Westmeath occurred on 14 January 1919 at Dalystown Cross between Mullingar and Kilbeggan, when a group of forty Sinn Féin supporters protesting against the internment of political prisoners stopped the Westmeath Hunt.²⁴ On 27 April 1919 at a meeting organised by the Gaelic League at Delvin Rev. Fr. O'Flanagan and Laurence Ginnell urged a crowd of 500 people to boycott the RIC and have nothing to do with them.²⁵ The sale of estate land, which had almost ceased during the Great War, now emerged as a political issue. Despite the aristocratic landowners in County Westmeath having sold the vast majority of their estates they still retained large swathes of demesne lands. Agrarian agitation increased

²⁴ Inspector General's monthly report, January 1919 (T.N.A. CO904/108) (Consulted on microfilm at Maynooth University)

²⁵ County Inspector's report, May 1919 (T.N.A. CO904/109) (Consulted on microfilm at Maynooth University)

substantially following the end of the war and became a serious problem in Westmeath for the authorities as well as Sinn Féin, as in many cases their members were involved in these incidents. A desire among the mainly younger members of Irish society for the remaining estate lands to be divided and distributed among the local population was reflected in increased levels of lawlessness as evidenced by an upsurge in cattle driving, intimidation and coercion to compel people to give up recently purchased land for division among local small farmers.²⁶ On 12 July 1919 three cocks of hay (approximately 2 tons), property of Thomas Murphy, Coolvuck, Glasson were burned. The motive was agrarian as Murphy had recently purchased a land holding from Lord Castlemaine for £3,200, outbidding the surrounding tenants who had offered £1,600 for the same property.²⁷ Further outbreaks of agrarian agitation took place in various areas of the county, but particularly in the Athlone, Drumraney, Tyrrellspass and Delvin areas. These incidents would eventually culminate in the destruction of nine big houses in the county. (See Appendix 29).

At the end of 1919 Seamus O'Meara, O/C, Athlone Brigade, IRA attended a meeting at GHQ in Dublin. He was told that it was time for the Volunteers to become more active and from February 1920 they were to start attacking police barracks.²⁸ In addition, a general raid for arms was ordered. The aristocratic landowners of Westmeath soon became the focus of this hostility. Their homes were subjected to raids for arms and their tenants and landed neighbours would also feel the force of local aggression. In early 1920 the RIC in Westmeath withdrew from many of the

²⁶ County Inspector's report for March, April, June 1919 (T.N.A. CO904/108, 109) (Consulted on microfilm at Maynooth University) see, Terence Dooley, *The land for the people, the land question in independent Ireland* (Dublin, 2004), pp 38-42.

²⁷ County Inspector's report, August 1919 (T.N.A. CO904/109) (Consulted on microfilm at Maynooth University)

²⁸ Seamus O'Meara, 'Some activities in Westmeath-1920', in Fr Henry (ed.) *the Capuchin annual 1970* (Dublin, 1970), p.548.

smaller barracks located in isolated areas into bigger centres of population.²⁹ Townshend states that the retreat of the RIC from vulnerable rural barracks was due to numerical weaknesses, they were completely overstretched trying to maintain 1,332 barracks and huts without adequate military protection.³⁰ This decision left many Unionists feeling vulnerable and at the mercy of the IRA as exemplified by a raid that took place at the home of Loftus Walker who lived with his widowed mother and sister on a seventy-six acre farm near Finea in the north of Westmeath. On 1 January 1920 a party of twenty-five men called to the house. Walker, a former lieutenant in British army who had been invalided home from the trenches later claimed that:

a revolver was pushed half way down my throat and after and before this I was asked to help them to beat out of Ireland all that was British. My reply was no, I would not. Then our house was robbed and damaged.

The house was ransacked by the raiders and among the items taken was a shotgun, a British army officer's suit and Sam Browne belt.³¹ These types of raids became commonplace throughout Westmeath. In 1919 there had been sixty-four crimes reported to the police, placing Westmeath ninth highest out of the twelve counties in Leinster. There were no reported cases of murder or attempted murder that year. However, there were six reported housebreakings and four incidents of burglary. During the same period there were five cases of arson and two incidents of killing and maiming of animals.³²

During the winter of 1919 there had been no reported incidents of cattle driving in Westmeath. However, in April 1920 there was a sudden increase in

²⁹ Statement by Thomas Costello (BMH, WS 1296).

³⁰ Charles Townshend, *The British Campaign in Ireland, 1919-1921* (Oxford, 1975), p.28

³¹ Irish Grants Committee: Loftus William Walker, 20 December 1926 (T.N.A., CO762/65/16). The Walker holding was rented from Robert A. Gradwell, Dowth Hall, Drogheda who owned estates in Co.'s Meath and Westmeath. See Irish Grants Committee: Robert Ashurst Gradwell, 20 January 1927 (T.N.A., CO762/97/9) and U. H. Hussey de Burgh, *The landowners of Ireland* (Dublin, 1878), p. 188.

³² *Judicial Statistics, Ireland, 1919, [Cmd.1431], HC 1921, xli.591, 50, 52, 56.*

agitation. On 10 April 1920 an extensive cattle drive took place at Hiskinstown and Killuagh near Delvin when 200 cattle were driven. The cattle were the property of Colonel John D. Fetherstonhaugh, brother of General Richard Steele Fetherstonhaugh.³³ This new militancy in the county was noted by the Athlone correspondent of the *Irish Times* who remarked:

The imprisonment of the first batch of Westmeath cattle-drivers has awakened a very aggressive spirit among their sympathisers, and threats of more vigorous action have been indicated by the events of the past twenty-four hours.³⁴

The same correspondent reported the following day that ‘an epidemic of cattle driving has broken out in south Westmeath, and a large force of military left Athlone for disturbed districts’.³⁵ In March 1920 an order was issued by GHQ that all evacuated RIC barracks were to be burned on Easter Saturday night 3-4 April 1920. That night Creggan and Brawny barracks located close to Moydrum Castle and Creggan House were destroyed.³⁶ In early 1920 the government attempted to rectify and improve a deteriorating situation by drafting the Black and Tans into Ireland.³⁷ However, because of their poor discipline and bad behaviour the Black and Tans succeeded in turning most of the remaining population that had previously supported the police, against them.

The local election of 1920 saw Sinn Féin take control of the Westmeath County Council winning nineteen of the twenty-three seats with Independents taking the remaining four.³⁸ Lord Castlemaine, elected unopposed in 1914, and the only sitting aristocrat and Unionist member on the council, was not on the list of those

³³ *Irish Times*, 17 Apr. 1920.

³⁴ *Ibid*, 30 Apr. 1920.

³⁵ *Ibid*, 1 May 1920.

³⁶ Statement by Thomas Costello (BMH, WS1296).

³⁷ F. S. L. Lyons, ‘The war of independence 1919-21’, in W. E. Vaughan (ed.) *A new history of Ireland, Vol. VI* (Oxford, 2005), pp 244-5.

³⁸ *Anglo Celt*, 5 Jun. 1920.

returned.³⁹ Michael McCormack, adjutant of Drumraney IRA, was successfully elected.⁴⁰ At a meeting of the council held on 17 June the chairman proposed a resolution pledging allegiance to Dáil Éireann and undertaking to give effect to its decrees. The resolution was passed, with one only member, Patrick J. Weymes, dissenting.⁴¹ One of the first actions of the newly elected council was to rescind the resolution of condemnation of the 1916 Rising passed by the previous council. McCormack's proposal that the relevant minutes recording the condemnation be removed from the minute book and destroyed was passed unanimously.⁴² The minute book also allegedly contained a resolution calling for the 'blood' of Roger Casement but when it was examined the resolution could not be found.⁴³

The sense of lawlessness pervading the country following the outbreak of hostilities was clearly impacting upon the lives of Unionists in the three southern provinces. On 13 August 1920 a meeting of southern Unionists under the guise of the Unionist Anti-Partition League was held in Dublin. Lord Castlemaine was among those in attendance. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss the increasing movement in favour of a settlement which was gaining momentum in the south and west of the country. The Unionists were conscious that the British government's policy towards Ireland had failed and were now of the view that self-government with control over local matters, while maintaining Ireland's position within the empire,

³⁹ Statement by Michael McCormack (BMH, WS1503). See also Gretta Connell, 'Westmeath County Council and the struggle for independence 1916-1922', in Seamus O'Brien (ed.) *A town in transition, post-famine Mullingar* (Athlone, 2007), p. 56.

⁴⁰ Statement by Michael McCormack (BMH, WS1503).

⁴¹ *Westmeath Examiner*, 19 Jun. 1920. See also County Inspector's report, July 1920 (T.N.A. CO904/112).

⁴² Statement by Michael McCormack (BMH, WS1503). The *Westmeath Examiner* of 19 Jun. 1920 reported that the resolution to remove the pages condemning the 1916 Rising was proposed by Lorcan Robbins, not Michael McCormack. For a study of Westmeath County Council from 1916-1922, see Gretta Connell, 'Westmeath County Council and the struggle for independence 1916-1922', in Seamus O'Brien (ed.) *A town in transition, post-famine Mullingar* (Athlone, 2007), pp 55-76.

⁴³ *Westmeath Examiner*, 19 Jun. 1920.

offered the best solution to the current situation. The meeting passed a resolution which stated:

We...hereby resolve that, while still believing that the legislative union properly administered, is the best form of government for Ireland, we realize that in recent years the British Government has failed to secure the observance of law, and lost the confidence of all classes...We are of opinion that an immediate effort should be made to settle the question by provisions which, while preserving Ireland within the Empire and safe-guarding the security of Great Britain, will give effect to the desire of the majority of the Irish people for self-government with an adequate control of all local affairs, including taxation. We urge His Majesty's government that every month of delay in adopting this course renders the situation more dangerous and the chance for agreement more remote.⁴⁴

The southern Unionists, demonstrating a great deal of political naivety, did not appear to understand or grasp the reality that the possibility of Home Rule had ended, with some form of mechanism for Irish independence now being the only realistic hope for an acceptable settlement.⁴⁵ The level of agitation in the county was such that in June 1920 the *Irish Times* reported that an unnamed but well known Westmeath landowner had put his property for auction and moved to England. The report went on to relate that other extensive sales and departures would soon be announced.⁴⁶ In July 1920 the inspector general of the RIC reported that lawlessness was widespread in County Westmeath. He also stated there was a considerable amount of agrarian unrest and that 'the large grazier and small farmer were alike intimidated and in several cases gave way rather than face the risks'.⁴⁷ But many agrarian incidents went unreported due to intimidation. The county inspector of the RIC reported in August 1920 that:

⁴⁴ *The Times*, 14 Aug. 1920. The Unionist Anti-Partition League had been established in 1917 following a split within the Irish Unionist Alliance. See also Terence Dooley, *The decline of the big house in Ireland* (Dublin, 2001), p. 232.

⁴⁵ For an account of the experiences of individual members of the Irish nobility in the period 1919-1923 see Peter Martin, 'Unionism: the Irish nobility and revolution, 1919-23', in Joost Augusteijn (ed.) *The Irish revolution, 1913-1923* (Basingstoke, 2002), pp. 151-64.

⁴⁶ *Irish Times*, 1 Jun. 1920.

⁴⁷ Inspector General's monthly report, July 1920 (T.N.A. CO904/112) (Consulted on microfilm at Maynooth University)

Law abiding subjects looked upon the evacuation of Barracks recently in this county with the gravest alarm. Yet nobody will give any information even when outrages are committed on their property.⁴⁸

In September 1920 republican activists in Westmeath received orders from GHQ to raid any houses in which they considered arms could be found as it was believed the military authorities were going to take possession of them. Among the houses raided in the Athlone area was Moydrum Castle. Lord Castlemaine was not in residence at the time.⁴⁹ The home of his brother Robert was also raided for arms. It was not stated if any weapons were taken in either raid.⁵⁰ However, at Baronston House, the residence of Colonel John Malone, a valuable gun was seized. According to Michael Murray, a member of the Ballynacargy Volunteers, Malone wrote to the local IRA commander seeking the return of the weapon which he claimed was worth eighty pounds. The gun was later returned and Murray makes the unsubstantiated claim that Malone was so grateful for its return that he subscribed to Sinn Féin collections.⁵¹

During October and November 1920 there was little agrarian agitation in Westmeath which could be attributed to the arrests of many leading republicans in the county.⁵² This continued into 1921, when the number of agrarian related incidents declined as republicans concentrated their efforts on attacking and disrupting the movement of Crown forces.⁵³ However, the campaign for independence nationally was having a significant impact as can be seen from a return of serious outrages committed during 1920 (see Table 1).

⁴⁸ County Inspector's report, August 1920 (T.N.A. CO904/112) (Consulted on microfilm at Maynooth University)

⁴⁹ *Irish Times*, 9 Sep. 1920.

⁵⁰ *Ibid*, 11 Sept. 1920.

⁵¹ Statement of Michael Murray (BMH, WS1498).

⁵² Inspector General's monthly report, December 1920 (T.N.A. CO904/113) (Consulted on microfilm at Maynooth University), also County Inspector's report, November and December 1920 (T.N.A. CO904/113) (Consulted on microfilm at Maynooth University)

⁵³ Inspector General's monthly report, May 1921 (T.N.A. CO904/115) (Consulted on microfilm at Maynooth University)

Table 1. Return of serious outrages 1 January to 31 December 1920

Type of Outrage	Number
Courthouses Destroyed	69
RIC Barracks destroyed	533
RIC Barracks damaged	173
Raids on Mails	998
Police killed	182
Police Wounded	263
Military killed	54
Military wounded	122

Source: *Irish Times*, 8 January 1921.

The sense of isolation and vulnerability being felt by the southern Unionists was only heightened by the campaign of their Ulster counterparts to remain part of the United Kingdom. This resulted in the enactment of the Government of Ireland Act, 1920 which received royal assent on 23 December. The act, which proposed to partition Ireland, was to come into force on 3 May 1921.⁵⁴

The election to the 2nd Dáil, due to be held on 24 May 1921 for what was described in the Government of Ireland Act 1920 as the ‘House of Commons of Southern Ireland’, did not proceed as all 128 candidates (124 Sinn Féin and four Unionists) were returned opposed.⁵⁵ Returned for the Longford-Westmeath constituency were the veteran agitator and former MP Laurence Ginnell, Sean McKeon, commander of the IRA in Longford, Joseph McGuinness, first elected for Sinn Féin in the 1918 Longford by-election, and Lorcan Robbins, a Sinn Féin activist from Moate.⁵⁶ On 14 April 1921, a month before the general election, the annual general meeting of the Unionist Anti-Partition League was held in Dublin. A number of members of the league from Westmeath attended, including Lord Castlemaine, Gustavus Rochfort Hyde of Lynnbury, Mullingar and Charles Tottenham of Tudenham House. The Government of Ireland Act dominated the agenda with the meeting passing the following resolution unanimously:

⁵⁴ Alan O’Day, *Irish Home Rule 1867-1921* (Manchester, 1998), p. 299.

⁵⁵ Brian M. Walker (ed.) *Parliamentary election results in Ireland, 1918-92* (Dublin, 1992), pp 101-3.

⁵⁶ *Ibid*, p. 103.

That this league strongly deprecates any attempt to bring the Government of Ireland Act into operation in the South of Ireland in the present condition of the country, as such a course would accentuate present trouble and retard a permanent settlement.⁵⁷

On 8 December 1919 the end of a Westmeath aristocratic dynasty occurred with the death of Lady Caroline Chapman at Queenstown.⁵⁸ Lady Chapman was the last holder of the Chapman aristocratic title. In her will, which was made prior to the outbreak of war in 1914, and not subsequently updated, she left an estate of £69,622. Lady Chapman bequeathed £20,000 to her brother Thomas and £2,000 between her nieces Eva, Rose, Florence and Mabel Chapman. The plate, pictures and furniture of Killua Castle, her interests in the lands of Moygrehan and Kilkeelan, and monies payable under the Irish land acts were left to her husband's cousin George Fetherstonhaugh. Certain settled lands and securities were left in trust for Eva, Rose and Florence Chapman, £100 to Arthur Alexander, and the residue to Francis V. Chapman for life, and then for Eva, Rose, Florence and Mabel Chapman, as may be living, equally.⁵⁹

Unfortunately, George Fetherstonhaugh had been killed in October 1914 while serving with the Royal Fusiliers on the Western Front, while Francis V. Chapman died unmarried in 1915. Lady Caroline Chapman was also predeceased by her closest relative, her brother Thomas 7th baronet, who died in Britain on 8 April 1919. These deaths meant that George Fetherstonhaugh's father, General Richard Steele Fetherstonhaugh inherited Killua Castle, its contents and lands, while the four Chapman girls inherited their uncle Francis' provision. As Sir Thomas Chapman had died before his sister, Lady Caroline, T. E. Lawrence and his two surviving brothers did not benefit from her will. Had he outlived her, Thomas Chapman in addition to

⁵⁷ *Freeman's Journal*, 15 Apr. 1921.

⁵⁸ *Irish Times*, 20 Dec. 1920. For an account of Thomas Chapman, 7th baronet and his immediate family background and circumstances see Jeremy Wilson, *Lawrence of Arabia, the authorised biography of T. E. Lawrence* (London, 1989), pp 941-4.

⁵⁹ *Westmeath Examiner*, 9 Apr. 1921.

inheriting the £20,000 outlined in the will, would probably have inherited Killua Castle, which then would have passed to his three surviving sons.⁶⁰ The £20,000 intended for Thomas Chapman ultimately passed to the four Chapman nieces.⁶¹

On 2 June 1920 Killua Castle and its considerable contents were sold at a four day auction by General Fetherstonhaugh.⁶² A further sale of furniture and out-door effects took place on 13 and 14 July 1920.⁶³ Killua Castle and some land were purchased by Mr W. F. Hackett of Castletown, Ballycumber, King's County.⁶⁴ In 1922 Hackett converted part of the estate into a golf course which was opened by the marquis of Headfort on 31 May that year.⁶⁵

4. House Burnings

A striking aspect of the War of Independence and later the Civil War in Ireland was the burning of big houses. A number of motivations have been put forward as to the reason for these burnings, such as their intended occupation by Crown forces, in reprisal for burnings and other acts carried out by the RIC, Black and Tans or Auxiliaries, and in the case of the Civil War by anti-Treaty forces to punish the owners for supporting the Free State government. However, the overriding motive for the vast majority of house burnings was agrarian related, which Dooley has validated with strong supporting evidence.⁶⁶ As already outlined the hunger and desire for land necessitated that landlords be driven from their holdings and the destruction of their houses reduced the likelihood of them ever returning to their estates, which could then

⁶⁰ Wilson, *Lawrence of Arabia, the authorised biography of T. E. Lawrence*, p. 944.

⁶¹ *Ibid*, p. 944.

⁶² Catalogue of auction at Killua Castle, 2 June 1920, (NLI Ir 018 b 2).

⁶³ *Westmeath Examiner*, 10 Jul. 1920.

⁶⁴ *Irish Times*, 19 Jul. 1921.

⁶⁵ *Ibid*, 1 Jun. and 3 Jun. 1922.

⁶⁶ Terence Dooley, *The decline of the big house in Ireland* (Dublin, 2001), pp 176-8.

be divided among the local population.⁶⁷ The Westmeath aristocracy as owners of big houses and large estates would be targeted in order to force them to leave their properties.

The only big house burned in County Westmeath during 1920 was Gaulston House, Rochfortbridge which was destroyed on 4 June. Gaulston, formerly the property of Lord Kilmaine had been vacant for the previous two years.⁶⁸ The house was attacked as it was feared it would be occupied by British troops.⁶⁹ Prior to the fire there had been some ill feeling surrounding the property. William Milliken, a former member of the RIC had been the land steward for Lord Kilmaine from 1905 until 1918 and then when the estate was purchased by R. F. Wilson of Stillorgan, Dublin. In May 1920 Wilson, conscious of increased political trouble in Ireland, sold his interest to what Milliken described as a ‘party of self appointed Sinn Féin trustees’ who divided the estate into farms and put them up for auction. During the transition period the ‘trustees’ appointed as steward a herd who had previously worked under Milliken. Milliken who clearly did not approve of the appointment claimed that the man was a drunkard.⁷⁰

In March 1920 the house, including farm stock and equipment, along with 900 acres, was offered for sale in lots.⁷¹ Milliken’s offer to purchase the cottage he had occupied since taking up employment on the estate was refused by the ‘trustees’ and

⁶⁷ For an outline of the burning of big houses in Ireland during the period 1920-1923 see Dooley, *The decline of the big house in Ireland*, pp 171-207 and Ciarán J. Reilly, ‘The burning of country houses in Co. Offaly during the revolutionary period, 1920-3’, in Terence Dooley and Christopher Ridgway (eds) *The Irish country house, its past, present and future* (Dublin, 2011), pp 110-33. For wider perspectives on house burnings see Olwen Purdue, *The big house in the North of Ireland* (Dublin, 2009), pp 145-50 and J. S Donnelly, Jnr, *The land and the people of nineteenth century Cork* (London, 1975), pp, 377-84.

⁶⁸ *The Times*, 5 Jun. 1920.

⁶⁹ County Inspector’s report, July 1920 (T.N.A. CO904/112) (Consulted on microfilm at Maynooth University)

⁷⁰ Irish Grants Committee: William J. Milliken, 23 October 1926 (T.N.A., CO762/42/2).

⁷¹ *Westmeath Examiner*, 28 Feb. 1920.

he found himself without home or job.⁷² The house along with the front and rear lawns and garden were purchased by a neighbouring landowner, stated to have been a wealthy American,⁷³ who intended retaining Milliken as the land steward. However, a few days later the new owner was subjected to intimidation and accused of being a ‘grabber’ whereupon he contacted the ‘trustees’ solicitor and withdrew from the purchase. When the property was re-auctioned in April 1920 the house was purchased for £1,500 by Westmeath County Council for use as a Tuberculosis Dispensary.⁷⁴ William Milliken purchased the garden and the gardener’s cottage for £300.⁷⁵ Following the destruction of Gaulston House the trustees of the property submitted a claim to Westmeath County Council seeking compensation of £6,000. However, when the clerk of the council informed the members that the council had bought the house some time previously the compensation notice was publically burned amid cheers from the members.⁷⁶

But that was not the end of the matter, on the night of 12 and 13 August 1920 William Milliken’s house was twice raided for arms. Either side of midnight a party of armed men called to his house and demanded his shotgun. On both occasions the raiders fired shots into the house. They informed Milliken that the house was surrounded by ‘forty of De Valera’s soldiers’. Milliken was also compelled to surrender a revolver and fifty to sixty rounds of ammunition. Police protection was not available to the family as the evacuated RIC barracks’ at Stoneyford, Killucan and Rhode had been burned. Due to the traumatic affect of the raids on his wife and

⁷² Irish Grants Committee: William J. Milliken, 23 October 1926 (T.N.A., CO762/42/2).

⁷³ *Westmeath Examiner*, 5 Jun. 1920.

⁷⁴ *Ibid*, 5 Jun. 1920.

⁷⁵ Irish Grants Committee: William J. Milliken, 23 October 1926 (T.N.A., CO762/42/2).

⁷⁶ *Westmeath Examiner*, 26 Jun. 1920.

family Milliken left the area and put his property up for sale. In November 1921 he sold his holding at auction and relocated to Bangor, Co. Down.⁷⁷

In February 1921 it was reported that Portloman House, situated on the western shore of Lough Owel, had been burned as it was vacant and about to be occupied by the military.⁷⁸ However, it was soon confirmed that the house had not been damaged. In March 1919 there had been a dispute between Sinn Féin and a number of local people in relation to the letting of seven acres of estate land. The dispute was resolved when the six plot holders undertook not to interfere with an adjoining twenty acre piece of estate land.⁷⁹ In October 1919 Portloman House and Clonyn Castle had been offered to Westmeath Council by their trustees as suitable buildings for the establishment of a Central Tuberculosis Dispensary.⁸⁰ The offer was declined. It was subsequently demolished in 1941.⁸¹

On 24 June 1921 Sonna House, the property of the late Henry Maurice Tuite, who had died on 7 February, was maliciously set on fire and destroyed by a party of about thirty IRA men.⁸² The house, which was unfurnished and unoccupied apart from a resident caretaker, had been put up for auction that April.⁸³ It was reported that the house contained valuable ceilings and mantelpieces of Italian workmanship.⁸⁴ An indication that the fire was agrarian related was that on 22 May 1920 three large

⁷⁷ Irish Grants Committee: William J. Milliken, 23 October 1926 (T.N.A., CO762/42/2). See also County Inspector's report, September 1920 (T.N.A. CO904/112) (Consulted on microfilm at Maynooth University). For an analysis of the policy and procedures involved in submitting a claim for compensation see Gemma Clark, *Everyday violence in the Irish Civil War* (Cambridge, 2014), pp 19-25.

⁷⁸ *Irish Times*, 11 Feb. 1921.

⁷⁹ *Westmeath Examiner*, 15 Mar. 1919.

⁸⁰ *Ibid*, 18 Oct. 1919.

⁸¹ *Irish Times*, 17 Jan. 1941.

⁸² *Freeman's Journal*, 27 Jun. 1921 also County Inspector's report, July 1921 and *Irish Times*, 8 Feb. 1921. At the time the authorities were concerned that Tuite's death had an element of suspicion as a court of enquiry in lieu of an inquest was ordered by T. S. Lambert, Colonel Commandant, 13th Infantry Brigade, Athlone. Its finding was 'there did not appear to be any question of foul play or political reasons'. See Court of enquiry in lieu of inquest: Henry M. Tuite, 14 February 1921 (T.N.A., WO35/160/25).

⁸³ *Irish Times*, 22 Apr. 1921 and *Freeman's Journal*, 27 Jun. 1921.

⁸⁴ *Irish Times*, 8 Feb. 1922.

breaches had been made in the demesne walls of the estate and the cattle driven out. They were later located and returned. There had also been two other cattle drives in the general area at that time.⁸⁵ Michael Murray, a lieutenant in the IRA stated that he had received orders to destroy a big mansion house at Sonna between Ballynacargy and Mullingar as he was informed that the military were going to occupy the building. This was a common pretext used by the IRA to justify such burnings. At no stage during the War of Independence was a big house in County Westmeath occupied by the military authorities. Murray mobilised the Ballynacargy volunteers who brought a half-barrel of paraffin with them to the house which they then proceeded to set on fire and totally destroy.⁸⁶ Walter Evans, the caretaker, confirmed the events at a sitting of Mullingar quarter sessions on 4 February 1922 where Mrs Constance Tuite had applied for compensation for the malicious burning of the house. Evidence was given that the cost of restoration was estimated at £34,000. However, with the reduced cost of materials and other costs this figure could be lowered to £27,000. As there was no representative from Westmeath County Council present in court to contest the claim on behalf of the ratepayers, Judge Fleming had no option but to award Mrs Tuite the sum of £25,000.⁸⁷

5. Lord Castlemaine and the destruction of Moydrum Castle

At 7.30pm on the evening of 20 June 1921 a motor car containing Colonel Thomas Stanton Lambert, commander of the 13th Brigade based at Victoria Barracks, Athlone, Mrs. Geraldine Lambert, Lieut-Colonel E. L. Challenor, his wife and Col. Challenor's niece, Miss Katherine Arthur, were returning from a tennis party at Glasson to their lodgings in Athlone. At a place called Harmony Hall near Glasson the IRA under

⁸⁵ *Irish Times*, 26 May. 1920.

⁸⁶ Statement of Michael Murray (BMH, WS1498).

⁸⁷ *Westmeath Examiner*, 11 Feb. 1922.

Captain Elliot of the Tubberclair volunteers set up a checkpoint. When Mrs Lambert who was driving the car failed to stop when requested by Captain Elliot a number of armed men opened fire, hitting Colonel Lambert in the neck and causing facial injuries to Mrs. Challenor. Mrs Lambert drove her husband to the Athlone Military Hospital where he died an hour and a half later.⁸⁸ At the compensation hearing held at Moate, Colonel Challenor informed the court that while travelling by motor car at Harmony Hall five or six armed and masked men emerged from behind a four foot wall and fired two shots, one of which wounded his wife in the head. Mrs Lambert, the driver, increased speed but the car had only gone fifteen yards when another party of men fired three or four shots one of which struck General Lambert in the neck. He collapsed, never regained consciousness and died shortly after the car reached Athlone. Mrs. Challenor subsequently lost the sight in her left eye.⁸⁹ A court of enquiry into Colonel Lambert's death was set up by the military authorities and its findings were:

that the cause of death at 21.00 hours on 20th June 1921 was due to shock and haemorrhage as a result of gunshot wounds inflicted by a person or persons unknown and that such person or persons are guilty of MURDER and that such persons being in a prepared ambush are rebels and belong to those forces that are acting against the Crown.⁹⁰

Major Hervey De Montmorency, Auxiliary intelligence officer based in Athlone claimed that the intended purpose of the raiders was to stop the car and massacre the occupants. He later identified one of the assassins, but the government had surrendered to Sinn Féin and proclaimed an armistice before he could move against

⁸⁸ Ibid, 25 Jun. 1921. See also *Irish Times*, 22 Jun. 1921. Mrs Lambert and her three children were awarded compensation of £9,000. See *Irish Independent*, 17 Oct. 1921. Mrs Challenor was awarded £1,500 compensation for her injuries. See *Irish Times*, 15 Oct. 1921. Colonel Lambert had served with distinction during the Great War. For details of his military service, see *Irish Times*, 21 Jun. 1921 and Court of enquiry in lieu of inquest: Colonel Commandant Thomas S. Lambert, 21 June 1921 (T.N.A., WO374/40517).

⁸⁹ *Westmeath Examiner*, 22 Oct. 1921.

⁹⁰ Court of enquiry in lieu of inquest: Colonel Commandant Thomas S. Lambert, 21 June 1921 (T.N.A., WO374/40517).

the suspect. In other words, the truce of 11 July came into effect. De Montmorency warned Lambert two days prior to the murder of an IRA flying column being active in the area, but that his words fell on deaf ears.⁹¹ In reprisal for Lambert's death, the Black & Tans burned fifteen houses in the village of Knockcroghery, Co. Roscommon on 21 June.⁹² The following day they burned a house at Mount Temple,⁹³ and on 2 July they went to Coosan outside Athlone, where they burned a further seven houses.⁹⁴

A few days after the burnings Thomas Costello, officer in charge of the Athlone Battalion IRA received orders from GHQ, Dublin to burn an equal number of houses of British supporters in response to the burnings at Coosan and Mount Temple. Costello decided not to comply with the order as he considered it unfair but decided instead to burn Moydrum Castle, the home of Lord and Lady Castlemaine, which he believed would be more effective as Lord Castlemaine was a member of the House of Lords.⁹⁵ Frank O'Connor makes the unsubstantiated allegation that Castlemaine had dismissed men from his employment for failing to join the British army.⁹⁶ Many like Thomas Costello and his two brothers had also been involved in agrarian agitation. Costello had been arrested for driving cattle from land owned by George Johnston, a Protestant farmer from Mount Temple. An element of intimidation was involved in that Johnston had purchased a farm the previous month for £1,500 and on 24 April

⁹¹ Hervey De Montmorency, *Sword and stirrup: Memories of an adventurous life* (London, 1936), pp 360-2.

⁹² *Irish Independent*, 22 Jun. 1921

⁹³ *Westmeath Examiner*, 9 Jul. 1921.

⁹⁴ *Irish Independent*, 9 Jul. 1921. See also Statement by Thomas Costello (BMH, WS1296).

⁹⁵ Statement by Thomas Costello (BMH, WS1296). John Burke claims that Lord Castlemaine was an unpopular landowner, although he offers no evidence to support this assertion. See John Burke, *Athlone 1900-1923 politics, revolution and civil war* (Dublin, 2015), p. 218. If he was that unpopular then why was he returned unopposed in every county council election between 1902 and 1920.

⁹⁶ Statement by Frank O'Connor (BMH, WS1309).

1920 was offered £2,000 for the same farm. On 11 April 1921 George Johnston was shot dead by the IRA as a spy.⁹⁷

At 3.30 am on 3 July 1921 a group of twenty to forty men led by Costello forced their way into the castle. Lady Castlemaine, her daughter Evelyn and eight servants were in residence. Lord Castlemaine was in Scotland at the time.⁹⁸ The raiders informed Lady Castlemaine that her house was being burned in reprisal for the burnings at Coosan and Mount Temple. Lady Castlemaine requested and was allowed time to remove some valuables and was provided with ten men from the raiding party for the purpose of so doing. Ten boxes of items were removed from the house.⁹⁹ The servants also managed to save the valuable silver plate collection. The raiders piled the furniture into the centre of every room which they sprinkled with petrol commandeered from Lady Castlemaine's chauffeur.¹⁰⁰ Having made holes in floors and ceilings to aid ventilation the house was set on fire and totally destroyed.¹⁰¹ One of the many treasures lost in the fire was a painting of an earlier Lady Castlemaine by Thomas Gainsborough.¹⁰² Lady Castlemaine and her daughter left Athlone for London the following week.¹⁰³ Costello claimed that despite recognizing three of the group, Lady Castlemaine did not disclose their identities to the authorities.¹⁰⁴ In July 1921 two employees of Lord Castlemaine, Patrick Delaney, a nineteen year old footman, and Michael Grady, a fifty-five year old butler were charged with the larceny of property belonging to Lord Castlemaine, which had been removed

⁹⁷ *Westmeath Examiner*, 1 May 1920. See also Statement by Henry O'Brien (BMH, WS1308).

⁹⁸ *The Times*, 5 Jul. 1921.

⁹⁹ Statement by Thomas Costello (BMH, WS1296).

¹⁰⁰ *Westmeath Examiner*, 9 Jul. 1921.

¹⁰¹ Statement by Henry O'Brien (BMH, WS1308).

¹⁰² *Westmeath Examiner*, 29 Oct. 1921.

¹⁰³ *Irish Times*, 9 Jul. 1921.

¹⁰⁴ Statement by Thomas Costello (BMH, WS1296).

following the fire. Both men pleaded guilty to the charges.¹⁰⁵ Grady was sentenced to six months imprisonment while Delaney received four months.¹⁰⁶

Following the destruction of Moydrum Lord Castlemaine relocated to London. In October 1921 he submitted a claim of £200,000 for the malicious destruction of Moydrum Castle, his furniture, effects and personal belongings. The case was listed for hearing at Moate quarter sessions on 8 October 1921. Frederick Denning KC, his council, informed the court that while Lord Castlemaine was his Majesty's lieutenant for the County of Westmeath he was not a politician and took no part in politics, a statement that conveniently overlooked the fact that Lord Castlemaine was a representative peer for Ireland in the House of Lords. Denning stated that there was no doubt that Crown forces had destroyed houses as a result of Brigadier Lambert's death and whether they were right or wrong Lord Castlemaine had nothing to do with it. He had sold all his estate to his tenants but had re-purchased the demesne of 800 acres. Mr. Denning further claimed that Lord Castlemaine was anxious to rebuild the castle and remarked that 'he would sooner live in Ireland than in any other country'. Lord Castlemaine in his evidence stated that he did not take an active part in politics and reiterated that he was anxious to rebuild Moydrum. A witness for Lord Castlemaine estimated that it would cost £84,759 to rebuild the castle. The failure of Westmeath County Council to contest the claim left the Judge with no option but to award a decree of £101,358.¹⁰⁷ The compensation award was later reduced by the Compensation (Ireland) Commission to £66,174.¹⁰⁸ The new award was considerably less than the amount required to re-build the castle.

¹⁰⁵ *Irish Examiner*, 21 Jul. 1921.

¹⁰⁶ *Irish Independent*, 4 Aug. 1921.

¹⁰⁷ *Westmeath Examiner*, 29 Oct. 1921.

¹⁰⁸ *Irish Independent*, 5 Mar. 1923.

While the truce of July 1921 ended the War of Independence it did not end the agrarian related antagonism which continued to trouble Lord Castlemaine. On 22 November 1921 his estate office, a stable and a garage at Court Devenish, Athlone were destroyed by fire. The purpose of the attack was to obliterate all books and records pertaining to the estate. The estate office was totally destroyed, including rentals, estate ledgers and other management related documents and records. A claim for compensation of £600 was submitted and a decree of £450 was awarded by the courts. Following negotiations with the Department of Finance a settlement of £300 was agreed upon.¹⁰⁹ At the same time as the fire that destroyed the estate office an adjoining house and out-offices owned by Mrs. Caroline Pester (nee Handcock), a recently deceased aunt of Lord Castlemaine was also burned. A claim for £981 compensation was lodged by a trustee of the deceased, Robert A. Handcock, brother of Lord Castlemaine. On 2 February 1922 a decree of £950 was awarded. However, on 4 February 1926, following negotiations with the Department of Finance, a final settlement of £750 was agreed.¹¹⁰

James Frizell, Lord Castlemaine's land steward, submitted a claim of £350 compensation arising out of a malicious fire which destroyed the keeper's cottage on the Moydrum estate as well as for the theft of gates and other damage to property that occurred between August 1921 and October 1922.¹¹¹ In May 1922 another agrarian dispute arose when Lord Castlemaine attempted to let 125 acres of demesne land for grazing. The surrounding tenants offered two pounds ten shillings an acre rent which

¹⁰⁹ The Compensation (Ireland) Commission: Albert Edward Baron Castlemaine, December 1922 (N.A.I., FIN/COMP/2/24/18). Also *Irish Independent*, 23 Nov 1921. This is the first time that these sources recently made available by the National Archives of Ireland relating to County Westmeath have been investigated.

¹¹⁰ The Compensation (Ireland) Commission: Caroline M. Handcock, January 1923 (N.A.I., FIN/COMP/2/24/247).

¹¹¹ The Compensation (Ireland) Commission: Albert Edward Baron Castlemaine, December 1922 (N.A.I., FIN/COMP/2/24/18).

was refused whereupon the tenants opened the gates and put more than fifty head of cattle onto the land. Negotiations were quickly arranged in an effort to settle the matter.¹¹²

On 20 April 1923 the Moydrum estate was attacked yet again when the steward's house was burned with all its contents. Other buildings destroyed in the same raid were the chauffeur's, carpenter's, herd's and yardman's houses, as well as the engine house and stables. James Frizell submitted a claim for compensation in respect of personal effects which were destroyed when he was put out of the steward's house and a claim for £4,038 was submitted in respect of all the buildings. Frizell was later awarded £200 compensation for the loss of his possessions with a decree of £600 awarded in respect of the buildings. At the time of the destruction notices were put up warning people not to take grazing on Lord Castlemaine's land, which consequently remained derelict for many months.¹¹³ In December 1923 nine bullocks on Lord Castlemaine's land at Moydrum had their tails cut.¹¹⁴ In 1925 Lord Castlemaine still owned 1,000 acres of estate land which was in the hands of fifty tenants, including a large part of Moate and a portion of Athlone.¹¹⁵ The land was subsequently acquired by the Irish Land Commission.

The night after Moydrum Castle was destroyed, Creggan House, the property of Travers Dames Longworth, (See Fig. 3) located about a mile from Moydrum, was also burned by the IRA.¹¹⁶ At the time, Creggan House was being leased by Mrs. Mabel L. Munn whose husband Major Frederick Munn had died during the Boer

¹¹² *Freeman's Journal*, 11 May 1922.

¹¹³ The Compensation (Ireland) Commission: Albert Edward Baron Castlemaine, December 1922 (N.A.I., FIN/COMP/2/24/18).

¹¹⁴ *Irish Times*, 15 Dec. 1923.

¹¹⁵ The Compensation (Ireland) Commission: Albert Edward Baron Castlemaine, December 1922 (N.A.I., FIN/COMP/2/24/18).

¹¹⁶ *Westmeath Examiner*, 9 Jul. 1921.

War.¹¹⁷ Mrs Munn and her son-in-law Captain L. F. Davin were in London,¹¹⁸ leaving only servants in the house when the raiders called.¹¹⁹ Prior to the fire, Travers Dames Longworth had been making plans to leave the area. In September 1920 he had placed his entire prize winning ‘Glynwood’ herd of sixty-eight Hereford cattle for auction.¹²⁰ The herd which had been established in 1883 had won numerous cups and over £1,000 prize money.¹²¹ In February 1921 the Glynwood Home Farm consisting of 221 acres and the agent’s house was also put up for auction, but the sale had fallen through.¹²² Later that year the ruined house was sold privately for £800 to the Derwin family, local horse trainers from Athlone.¹²³ Travers Dames Longworth submitted a compensation claim of £15,000 for the destruction of the house. Mrs Munn sought compensation of £7,000 for furniture destroyed in the fire as did Captain Davin who claimed £1,700.¹²⁴ A total of £9,311 compensation was awarded for Creggan House and its contents.¹²⁵ This was later adjusted by the Compensation (Ireland) Commission with Captain Davin receiving £1,150, Travers Dames Longworth, £950 and Mrs Munn £6,075.¹²⁶

At the opening of the Westmeath Assizes on 4 July 1921 Mr Justice Dodd, in an address to the grand jury, referred to house burnings. He remarked: ‘there seemed to be an idea in some people’s minds that these beautiful residences throughout the land were to be used for military occupation’. He stated that he had made enquiries in

¹¹⁷ Major Frederick Munn. b.1857, Moy, Co. Tyrone commanded 1st Battalion Royal Irish Fusiliers at the Battle of Witpoort on 16 July 1900. A veteran of the Sudan campaign he died of measles and pneumonia at Springfontein on 31 August 1901.

¹¹⁸ *Irish Times*, 22 Oct. 1921.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid*, 5 Jul. 1921.

¹²⁰ *Ibid*, 25 Sept. 1920. See also Jeremiah Sheehan, *South Westmeath farm and folk* (Dublin, 1978), p. 52.

¹²¹ *Irish Times*, 9 Oct. 1920.

¹²² *Ibid*, 28 Feb. 1921 and *Irish Independent*, 5 Jul. 1921.

¹²³ *Ibid*, 22 Oct. 1921.

¹²⁴ *Freeman’s Journal*, 16 Aug. 1921.

¹²⁵ *Irish Independent*, 17 Oct. 1921.

¹²⁶ *Ibid*, 9 Nov. 1923.

this respect and believed that the idea was a delusion. So far as he could ascertain none of these buildings had been taken over for military occupation, nor was it the intention to do so.¹²⁷

When analysing the motives behind the burning of big houses it is important to take a number of matters into consideration: for example, was there a pattern of agitation, such as cattle driving, cattle maiming, cutting of fences or other forms of intimidation on the estate in the weeks, months and even years prior to the fire? Had any other incidents taken place in the same area on the night of the fire, or on the nights preceding or following the fire? If so was there any action perpetrated by the owner that could have instigated such a response? While the desire for revenge was strong following the burning of houses in the Athlone area by Crown forces, it was also a convenient pretext for the destruction of Moydrum Castle and Creggan House by the IRA. The motivation for the burning of these houses could be classed as agrarian for a number of reasons: firstly, Thomas Costello, O/C, Athlone Brigade, IRA had a history of involvement in agrarian agitation and cattle driving; secondly he had disobeyed orders from GHQ to burn an equal number of houses of supporters of the British administration in reprisal for the burnings at Knockcroghery, Coosan and Mount Temple, as he considered it unfair to burn houses for something that was not the fault of their owners. It may have made more sense to him to burn a house that still had a substantial estate attached to it.

While Lord Castlemaine was a member of the House of Lords and lord lieutenant for Westmeath there is no evidence, other than voting against Irish Home Rule, that he worked actively against the interests of the local population, while Travers Dames Longworth had no involvement whatsoever in politics. In addition to

¹²⁷ *Irish Times*, 6 Jul. 1921.

the comments of Justice Dodd, another significant indicator that the burning of these country houses was driven primarily by agrarian considerations, was that on a number of occasions in the months following the burning of Moydrum Castle, the raiders returned and burned the estate offices, gate lodges, staff houses, stables, sheds and other outbuildings. In the case of Lord Castlemaine, in particular, there appears to have been an orchestrated and systematic campaign of vandalism and intimidation to force him to leave the Athlone area.

The truce which came into effect at noon on 11 July 1921 officially ended hostilities. However, the level of violence in Westmeath during the conflict had been significant. Six members of the Crown forces had been killed and a further fourteen wounded, some seriously. Five IRA volunteers, one civilian, and six alleged informers also died. There were at least fifteen other incidents in which Crown forces were fired upon. The amount of damage caused to public and private property was substantial, in excess of twenty-six RIC barracks were attacked with the majority being destroyed. In addition, courthouses at Ballymore, Ballynacargy, Castlepollard and Kilbeggan were burned. The IRA raided mail cars, cut telegraph wires, trenched roads and carried out attacks on military property at Athlone and Mullingar railway stations. The Crown forces in their turn inflicted hardship on the local population, burning at least fifty houses in response to IRA outrages.¹²⁸

6. Conclusion

In recent years the historiography relating to the Irish revolutionary period of 1919 to 1923 has grown significantly.¹²⁹ Despite this, the aristocratic experience of violence

¹²⁸ See County Inspector's report, January 1919 to July 1921 and Inspector General's reports, January 1919 to July 1921 (T.N.A. CO904/108-16) (Consulted on microfilm at Maynooth University)

¹²⁹ See, for example, David Fitzpatrick, *Descendancy: Irish Protestant histories since 1795* (Cambridge, 2014); Peter Hart, *The IRA and its enemies* (Oxford, 1998); Dairmaid Ferriter, *The*

remains little studied. This study is one of the first to do so at county level. David Fitzpatrick's pioneering work on Irish life and politics between 1913 and 1921 does however, dedicate a chapter to the impact of the revolutionary years on the Protestant landowners of County Clare. He points out that the Clare Protestants because of their small number, experienced the Irish revolution more intensely than in other counties.¹³⁰ In 1914 Protestants still retained some of their old economic importance as landlords, employers, consumers and rate payers, the reason being that while land purchase had been a setback for Protestants it had not left them economically bereft.¹³¹ Fitzpatrick states that landownership was the main factor that determined the social as well as economic status of Protestants and he provides evidence in outlining case studies of specific Protestant landowners in the county.

In 1914 the Protestant men of virtually every Irish county went to war leaving a lop-sided community of women, the old and the young.¹³² Between 1917 and 1919 southern Unionists were divided over the issues of Home Rule and partition both of which could not be averted.¹³³ During the War of Independence the Protestants of County Clare, as was the case throughout the southern provinces, were subjected to arms raids, agrarian agitation and various forms of intimidation. However, by 1923 Protestants in the southern provinces, having been threatened economically, socially and physically, lost heart and hope following the actions of their Ulster counterparts in opting for partition; they adjusted to life in the newly established Irish Free State, which according to Fitzpatrick was quiet, peaceful and dull.¹³⁴ The evidence proffered

transformation of Ireland 1900-2000 (London, 2005); Gemma Clark, *Everyday violence in the Irish Civil War* (Cambridge, 2014); Terence Dooley, *The decline of the big house in Ireland* (Dublin, 2001); and more recently Robin Bury, *Buried, the Protestants of southern Ireland* (Dublin, 2017).

¹³⁰ David Fitzpatrick, *Politics and Irish life 1913-1921* (Cork, 1977), p. 41.

¹³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 41 and 42.

¹³² *Ibid.*, p. 55.

¹³³ *Ibid.*, p. 57.

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 71.

in this chapter validates Fitzpatrick's findings in relation to the Protestants of County Clare, and confirms that the experiences of the aristocracy and wider Protestant landowning families in Westmeath during the War of Independence were similar in many ways to that of their co-religious in County Clare. The loss of economic and political power as their estates declined due to land sales, against the backdrop of revolutionary hostility, was experienced by Protestants in both counties.

Leaving aside work specifically relating to the aristocracy, the historiography of the revolutionary period has engaged with the issue of violence against the Protestant community more broadly. Foremost in this debate has been Peter Hart, whose work suggests there were quite deliberate attempts to murder Protestants in particular areas.¹³⁵ Terence Dooley's work on the plight of Monaghan Protestants, likewise, illustrates certain sectarian trends in the border county of Monaghan and Diarmaid Ferriter, while discussing the topic of informers during the War of Independence, has claimed that there was an element of sectarianism, with abusive political language employed against Protestants to identify them as enemies suitable for killing.¹³⁶ Pádraig Óg Ó Ruairc has also examined the extent to which members of the IRA exploited the intelligence war against the British during the War of Independence as a cover for anti-Protestant sectarianism. Ó Ruairc's research shows that 184 civilians were killed by the IRA as spies during the War of Independence. Excluding the nine persons whose religious denomination was unknown, forty-two (twenty-four per cent) of the remaining 175 were Protestant, while 133 (seventy-six per cent) were Roman Catholic. Ó Ruairc further states that there were no Protestants killed in twelve counties where spies were shot and no Protestants were shot as spies in a total of nineteen counties. In County Westmeath, as already stated, of the six men

¹³⁵ See Diarmaid Ferriter, *The transformation of Ireland 1900-2000* (London, 2005), p. 227.

¹³⁶ Ferriter, *The transformation of Ireland*, p. 229 and Terence Dooley, *The plight of the Monaghan Protestants 1912-26* (Dublin, 2000), pp 42-50.

shot as spies, only one was a Protestant. In County Cork where Hart claims there was deliberate killing of Protestants because of their religious beliefs,¹³⁷ Ó Ruairc shows that of sixty-six civilians executed as spies, twenty-one (thirty-two per cent) were Protestant while forty-five (sixty-eight per cent) were Roman Catholic. This would indicate that it was their support as loyal subjects for British forces in the area, rather than sectarianism, that was the prime motivation behind the killings of people in these areas.¹³⁸ The evidence gleaned in relation to Westmeath confirms that there was no organised campaign to murder or otherwise expel people from the county based on their religious beliefs. The reason that Protestant landowners, such as Lord Castlemaine, were forced to leave was to allow for the division of their remaining estates lands.

Overall then, this chapter concludes that the Westmeath aristocracy were affected by the War of Independence in a number of ways, including the destruction of their property, intimidation, vandalism and raids for arms, as well as politically due to their stance as loyal Unionists. It does not suggest that there were any attempts at ethnic cleansing but it does suggest that because the aristocracy continued to retain significant tracts of land there was an agrarian dimension. This dimension has already been identified by Dooley in *The Decline of the Big House in Ireland* which, as already stated, suggests that one of the main reasons for the destruction of country houses was to drive the owners off their estate lands.¹³⁹

While the truce of July 1921 ended the violence between the IRA and Crown forces it did not end the lawlessness and criminality that was gripping the county. In the aftermath of the IRA campaign the RIC had been rendered totally ineffective and despite their increased numbers were unable to restore order, due in part to a collapse

¹³⁷ Peter Hart, *The IRA and its enemies* (Oxford, 1998), p. 288.

¹³⁸ Pádraig Óg Ó Ruairc, *Truce* (Cork, 2016), pp 99-111.

¹³⁹ Terence Dooley, *The decline of the big house in Ireland* (Dublin, 2001), pp 177-8.

in morale and impending disbandment.¹⁴⁰ This left many large landowners, such as Lord Castlemaine, vulnerable to organised and concerted agitation designed to force them into abandoning their properties. Other such cases occurred in County Westmeath during the impending Civil War and these will be examined in the next chapter.

¹⁴⁰ Charles Townshend, *The British campaign in Ireland, 1919-1921* (Oxford, 1975), p. 142 and 211.

Chapter 8

The Aristocracy and the Civil War, 1922-1923

1. Introduction

The Civil War was one of the most tragic events in Irish history. It pitted brother against brother, and friend against friend, and for the aristocratic families in Westmeath it was a time of great uncertainty and apprehension as pro and anti-treaty forces fought to decide the future of the new state. This chapter will examine the experiences of the aristocratic families of Westmeath during the Civil War with particular emphasis on a number of important topics. The outbreak of war saw a marked increase in lawlessness, including crimes committed against the aristocracy and their employees, which occurred against the backdrop of the disbandment of the RIC. Increased agrarian agitation with intimidation and vandalism against members of the aristocratic families and Protestant landowners took place and this will be investigated with case studies being cited as examples. Further agitation took the form of the burning of big houses which continued to torment the landed class in Westmeath. The events surrounding these burnings will also be examined.

The aristocratic families in Ireland generally backed the pro-treaty side and in some cases paid a high price for their support. The appointment of members of the aristocracy to the Free State Senate resulted in the destruction of their houses by the anti-treaty IRA, and Sir Walter Nugent, who was initially nominated to sit in the Senate, was fortunate to avoid this calamity. The sale of aristocratic land that took place between 1918 and 1923 will also be investigated. The increased lawlessness resulted in some land sales being conducted outside official agencies as aristocratic landowners felt obliged to engage with local ad-hoc groups. Addressing the topics

outlined will confirm that the events of the Civil War concluded a process that had began four decades earlier, and heralded the end of the aristocratic power in County Westmeath.

2. Outbreak of Civil War, 1922

The Dáil's approval of the Anglo-Irish Treaty on 7 January 1922 by sixty-four votes to fifty-seven caused a split in Sinn Féin and the IRA which led to the outbreak of Civil War in Ireland. The occupation of the Four Courts in Dublin by anti-Treaty forces on 22 April 1922 was the first manifestation of the conflict. In the election to the 3rd Dail held on 16 June 1922, Longford-Westmeath returned four members: two pro-Treaty Sinn Féin members, Sean McKeon and Frank Mc Guinness; one anti-Treaty TD, Laurence Ginnell, and one Labour, John Lyons.¹ In total the pro-Treaty side won fifty-eight seats, the anti-Treaty faction took thirty-six seats, the Labour party got seventeen seats while the Farmers Party and others took eight seats.² On 28 June 1922 full scale hostilities commenced between the provisional government and anti-Treaty forces with the shelling of the Four Courts in Dublin.

With the disbandment of the RIC between January and April 1922 and the delay before the establishment of the Civic Guards there was a complete breakdown in law and order in County Westmeath and criminal activity became widespread. The aristocracy were among the many victims of this criminality. In May 1922 a messenger returning from the Ulster Bank, Castlepollard with the wages for the earl of Longford's employees at Pakenham Hall was held up inside the front gates of the demesne by armed men and robbed of between sixty and seventy pounds. The robbers

¹ *Irish Times*, 24 Jun. 1922.

² *Ibid*, 24 Jun. 1922.

fired a number of shots before leaving the scene.³ On 29 August 1922 three men armed with revolvers called to the house of Samuel Heaslip, agent for Lord Longford and Lord Vesci, at Northumberland Avenue, Kingstown [Dún Laoghaire] and ordered him to hand over eight pounds fifteen shillings.⁴ In November 1922 the rent office of Colonel Fetherstonhaugh, a cousin of the Chapmans, at Rockview Delvin was entered by armed men who stole in excess of £100.⁵

Land agitation and intimidation continued unabated particularly in the areas of the county where the Irish Volunteers and Sinn Féin had enjoyed the greatest support during the War of Independence. In these areas, which were mainly located in the south of the county, it is clear that there was an organised and systematic campaign of agitation designed to force particular landowners into leaving their homes and ultimately surrendering their properties. If the initial campaign of intimidation and disruption failed to dislodge the owner then the agitators were quite prepared to resort to arson to achieve their goals. A number of Westmeath landowners were victims of this agitation.

In the Drumraney area of south Westmeath Arthur Harris-Temple of Waterton House was the victim of such a campaign of hostility. From 1920 to 1922 his house and lands were subjected to constant trespass and raids. Harris-Temple, a first cousin of Lord Castlemaine, was a former officer who had close ties to the military and police. Initially the agitation focused on his tenants who were boycotted and as a result were afraid to stock their land. The agitation then escalated with his steward, a former British soldier, being threatened and beaten unconscious on two occasions. Waterton House was broken into and property worth £500 taken and Harris Temple's

³ *Nenagh Guardian*, 27 May 1922. The RIC were stood down in April 1922. See also Donal J. O'Sullivan, *The Irish Constabularies, 1822-1922* (Dingle, 1999), pp 365-73.

⁴ *Freeman's Journal*, 1 Sept. 1922.

⁵ *Irish Times*, 25 Nov. 1922.

cattle were continuously driven off his lands. Conditions deteriorated to such an extent that in August 1922 he was forced to leave the area and move to England. As a result of the campaign Harris Temple was forced to sell the house contents and farm implements at a greatly reduced price, including a library of some 3,000 books for only fifty pounds. During the Civil War the house was occupied by Free State soldiers who caused considerable damage to the interior of the residence. In addition, a gun battle between pro and anti-Treaty forces had caused further damage to the house. Harris-Temple submitted a claim for compensation to the Free State government and was awarded £395, the government then for no apparent reason deducted £209 as income tax, leaving him with only £186. In April 1926 Waterton house and 1,600 acre estate was acquired by the Irish Land Commission for £12,958 payable in four and a half per cent land bonds. Harris-Temple considered that the property was worth £30,000 but was reduced in value due to the damage and depreciation caused during the Civil War. In November 1926 Arthur Harris-Temple submitted a claim to the Irish Grants Committee for £15,655 for the loss and destruction of his house and property, and received an ex-gratia payment of £300 from the committee. He died on 29 October 1928, a short time before an award of £5,000 was approved the following March.⁶

Captain Richard W. Bayley of Ballinderry House, Moate suffered similarly. Bayley had fought in the Great War from 1915, and returned to Westmeath in May 1919. He was the owner of 952 acres of which 196 acres was leased as conacre, 135 acres tenanted, and 321 acres stocked by himself with cattle, sheep and horses. The remaining 300 acres was unproductive bog. As he was friendly with the officers

⁶ Irish Grants Committee: Arthur Harris Temple, 6 November 1926 (T.N.A., CO762/5/2). In 1878 the Harris Temple estate consisted of 4,863 acres in County Westmeath, see U. H. Hussey De Burgh, *The landowners of Ireland* (Dublin, 1878), p. 440. For family history see Sir Bernard Burke, *The landed gentry of Ireland* (London, 1912), p. 685.

attached to Victoria Barracks, Athlone, who regularly visited, Bayley soon became a target for local agitation and on 10 January 1920 his stables and outhouses were burned. Bayley submitted a claim for compensation amounting to £8,000 and in April 1920 he was awarded £6,000 in the courts which was paid by the Free State government in October 1922. In August 1922, sixty-eight cattle owned by local people were driven into his meadow and a notice put up stating that the lands were for grass and not meadow. On 7 September 1922 Bayley and his steward received threatening notices that the steward, who was reported to be an Orangeman, should leave the area immediately as he was unpopular with the tenants. The same month when Bayley attempted to sell seventy-eight acres the sale was boycotted allegedly by order of the IRA. On 19 October his house was raided by armed men who took all his clothes. On 24 November the house was again raided and all the food stolen. On 11 January 1923 armed men again called to the house and took a saw which they used to fell a number of trees which were placed across a roadway. They then proceeded to knock down 165 yards of demesne stone wall onto the road. Bayley submitted a claim for damage to the wall and three ash trees and was awarded £137. On 26 January 1923 three armed men called to the house and stole all the cash from the estate office.⁷

As a result of the repeated raids normal life was impossible for Bayley and his family and he had no choice but to move his wife and two daughters to England while he attempted to sell the property. In May 1924 the Land Commission compulsorily acquired 152 acres for £2,294 payable in four and a half per cent land bonds. In

⁷ Irish Grants Committee: Richard W. Bayley, 28 December 1926 (T.N.A., CO762/77/7).

December 1926 Bayley submitted a claim for compensation of £22,270 to the Irish Grants Committee and in March 1929 he was awarded a payment of £6,100.⁸

In the north of the county John Granville Wilson of Daramona House, Streete was also targeted by agitators. However, the campaign against Wilson and his family also had a possible political dimension as he was a cousin of Field-Marshal Sir Henry Wilson. Keith Jeffrey claims that Henry Wilson, because of his role in the Curragh incident in 1914 and his position as chief of the Imperial General Staff from 1918 to 1922, was regarded by Irish Nationalists as ‘a Unionist arch-bogey-man’.⁹ Wilson’s support for Ulster Unionists reinforced this opinion.

John Granville Wilson’s estate, which consisted of 1,700 acres near the boundary with County Longford, had been inherited from his father in 1908.¹⁰ On 12 June 1921, while Wilson was attending the races at Ascot, Daramona was raided by a large party of armed men who imprisoned the servants in the stable yard and proceeded to ransack the house, looting and causing damage to the contents. On his return home the following day, Wilson was met by the police who informed him that it was too dangerous to remain and that he should leave Ireland immediately. A party of Auxiliaries guarded Wilson until a van arrived on 23 June and transported his furniture to Dublin. On 24 June, Wilson was escorted by the police to the Hibernian Hotel and while waiting for the boat to England three men, believed to be IRA gunmen, came into the hotel and asked the hall porter for Wilson’s whereabouts. When the men entered the room and saw Wilson in the company of the police they withdrew at once. Whether they intended to assassinate Wilson or merely threaten

⁸ Ibid. See also County Inspector’s report, February 1920. Bayley was high sheriff for County Westmeath in 1902, and *Walford’s county families of the United Kingdom* (London, 1919), p. 85.

⁹ Keith Jeffrey, *Field Marshal Sir Henry Wilson, a political soldier* (Oxford, 2006), p. viii.

¹⁰ Irish Grants Committee: John G. Wilson, 27 January 1927 (T.N.A., CO762/124/4). Wilson was the son of the astronomer William Wilson (1851-1908) for family history see Sir Bernard Burke, *The landed gentry of Ireland* (London, 1912), pp 772-3. In 1878 the Wilson family owned 3,720 acres in County Westmeath see U. H. Hussey De Burgh, *The landowners of Ireland* (Dublin, 1878), p. 479.

him is unclear. Wilson moved to Britain and remained there until 17 March 1922 when he returned to Daramona with his wife. However, immediately after their return hostilities recommenced. On the first night some game covers were set on fire. The stream that supplied the house with water and generated electricity were frequently tampered with and the sluice gates smashed. The gardens were raided and maliciously damaged on several occasions, and animals maimed. On another occasion armed men called to the house and threatened to burn it down unless Wilson handed over his shotgun. He was also subjected to boycotting and was unable to lease the land for grazing.¹¹ As a result of the continuous harassment Wilson and his family were compelled to leave Daramona in September 1923 and move to England, leaving an aunt to look after the property. As boycotting prevented him from selling the house, Wilson handed it over to trustees for his son in the hope that it could be sold at a later time. He was still the owner of the estate in 1926.¹² Wilson submitted a claim for compensation to the Irish Grants Committee and in 1929 was awarded £7,465.¹³

3. Burning of houses

During this period of the civil war the burning of big houses resumed and a further five houses were burned bringing the total to nine houses. On 11 June 1922 Tore House, Tyrrellspass property of the Pilkington family was burned.¹⁴ As with previous burnings the motive seems to have been agrarian and the culmination of a long running dispute between local agitators and the land holder. As early as November 1914 the county inspector of the RIC reported that ‘agrarian agitation had arisen in

¹¹ Irish Grants Committee: John G. Wilson, 27 January 1927 (T.N.A., CO762/124/4). On 22 June 1922 Sir Henry Wilson was assassinated in London by two Irish republicans. See Keith Jeffrey, *Field Marshal Sir Henry Wilson, a political soldier* (Oxford, 2006), p. 281.

¹² Irish Grants Committee: John G. Wilson, 27 January 1927 (T.N.A., CO762/124/4).

¹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴ *Westmeath Examiner*, 17 Jun. 1922.

connection with the Pilkington property'.¹⁵ At that time some of the estate had been purchased by the estate commissioners with the remaining 500-600 acres let to local graziers. In 1909 the house and about 170 acres had been leased by Henry J. McKenna, initially for a ten year period. On 1 November 1914, the date for annual lettings, the graziers were directed to remove their cattle from the land but they refused. When the landlord attempted to remove the cattle he was prevented by a crowd armed with sticks. On 14 November 1914 he succeeded in doing so with the protection of twenty police. On 27 November fourteen local men assembled and drove thirty-six head of McKenna's cattle off the land.¹⁶ The men were arrested, convicted of unlawful assembly, and sentenced to one month's imprisonment. On 11 December 1914 McKenna's cattle were driven off his land for the third time in two months.¹⁷

The level of agitation and threats against the McKenna family was such that the police had to establish a protection post, comprised of one sergeant and three constables.¹⁸ The family were the subject of a boycott as was the local grocer who supplied them with provisions.¹⁹ In July 1915 350 yards of fencing was cut down and cattle and horses were driven onto McKenna's land.²⁰ On 2 September 1916 a quantity of his turf on a nearby bog was maliciously burned.²¹ On 11 July 1920 fifty yards of fencing was pulled down and a large number of McKenna's cattle were

¹⁵ County Inspector's report, November 1914 (T.N.A. CO904/95) (Consulted on microfilm at Maynooth University)

¹⁶ County Inspector's report, November 1914 (T.N.A. CO904/95) (Consulted on microfilm at Maynooth University) In 1878 the Pilkington estate consisted of 1,683 acres in Westmeath and a further 89 acres in King's County. See U. H. Hussey De Burgh, *The landowners of Ireland* (Dublin, 1878), p. 368. For history of Pilkington family see Sir Bernard Burke, *The landed gentry of Ireland* (London, 1912), pp 565-6.

¹⁷ County Inspector's report, December 1914 (T.N.A. CO904/95) (Consulted on microfilm at Maynooth University)

¹⁸ *Ibid*, December 1914 and September 1915 (T.N.A. CO904/95, 98) (Consulted on microfilm at Maynooth University)

¹⁹ *Ibid*, January 1915 (T.N.A. CO904/96) (Consulted on microfilm at Maynooth University)

²⁰ *Ibid*, July 1915 (T.N.A. CO904/97) (Consulted on microfilm at Maynooth University)

²¹ *Ibid*, September 1916 (T.N.A. CO904/101) (Consulted on microfilm at Maynooth University)

driven off the lands. One animal had a notice attached to its horns with 'Up the rebels' on it.²²

At 3.30 am on 22 April 1922, a few days prior to the house being burned a number of men had called and ill-treated McKenna and his family. They had also threatened to shoot him. His son William was blindfolded and beaten for three hours. William had served in the British army during the Great War and had been a prisoner of war.²³ On 4 August 1923 a claim for compensation of £14,397 was submitted by the landlord, Alexander Pilkington of Parkmore, Antrim who subsequently submitted an increased claim amounting to £30,000 on 11 September 1923.²⁴ At the court hearing on 13 October 1923 McKenna stated that on the day of the fire armed men had come to the house and ordered everyone to leave and when they returned the house was in ruins. It transpired in evidence that the initial visit by armed men had been on 22 April 1922 and that the house had been guarded by Free State soldiers. At the time of the fire the soldiers were in the nearby village of Tyrrellspass and not at the house.²⁵ The claim of £31,000 was later withdrawn or dismissed at a compensation claims session at Mullingar on 1 March 1924.²⁶ Henry McKenna's son, William, later submitted a claim to the Irish Grants Committee for cutting and stealing of trees from the estate during May, June, July and August 1922 and was awarded compensation of £100.²⁷

On 12 June 1922, the day after the destruction at Tore, Littleton House located between Athlone and Ballymahon was burned.²⁸ Littleton had initially been leased by

²² Ibid, August 1920 (T.N.A. CO904/112) (Consulted on microfilm at Maynooth University)

²³ Irish Grants Committee: William Graham McKenna, 25 October 1926 (T.N.A., CO762/42/2).

²⁴ The Compensation (Ireland) Commission: Alexander John McDonnell Pilkington, 4 August 1923 (N.A.I., FIN/COMP/2/24/218). The National Archives of Ireland file in relation to Tore House is incomplete.

²⁵ *Westmeath Examiner*, 1 Mar. 1924.

²⁶ Ibid, 8 Mar. 1924.

²⁷ Irish Grants Committee: William Graham McKenna, 25 October 1926 (T.N.A., CO762/42/2).

²⁸ *Westmeath Examiner*, 17 Jun. 1922.

Michael Kelly of Ballybrack, Dublin from the owner, Henry Napier Magill. A short time before the fire Kelly sold his interests in the property to Michael Killian, Athlone. An agrarian motive was suspected for the fire as the sale had been resented in the locality. In early June Killian's cattle were driven off the land. They were located and returned to the farm by Free State soldiers who placed an armed guard on the property. However, on 12 June a hundred armed men, believed to be anti-Treaty forces, arrived in motor cars, and having exchanged fire with the soldiers, overpowered them, and sent them back to barracks, whereupon they sprinkled the rooms with an inflammable liquid and set the house on fire.²⁹ On 18 December 1922 Walter Kelly, the original lessee, submitted a claim for compensation of £5,000 in respect of the fire on 12 June. He also claimed £506 for the furniture and £137 in respect of other contents.³⁰ On 15 August 1922 there was a second malicious fire at Littleton. On this occasion the outhouses, sheds and stables were destroyed. On 23 December 1922 a claim in respect of this fire, amounting to £10,000 for the house and contents was submitted by the landlord, Henry Napier Magill, Long Burton, Dorset.³¹

On 1 February 1926 Walter Kelly was awarded £135 compensation,³² and on 3 February 1926 Henry Magill accepted an award of £700 in respect of the out-offices, sheds and stables, and £300 in respect of the contents.³³ In July 1922 Rosmead House between Delvin and Clonmellon, formerly owned by Fulke Greville-Nugent, 1st baronet, was occupied by anti-Treaty forces. A contingent of Free State troops dispatched from Mullingar came under fire in Delvin but after a sharp

²⁹ *Irish Times*, 17 Jun. 1922.

³⁰ *Westmeath Examiner*, 1 Jul. 1922.

³¹ The Compensation (Ireland) Commission: Henry Napier Magill, 23 December 1922 (N.A.I., FIN/COMP/2/24/190).

³² The Compensation (Ireland) Commission: Walter Kelly, 18 December 1922 (N.A.I., FIN/COMP/2/24/126).

³³ The Compensation (Ireland) Commission: Henry Napier Magill, 23 December 1922 (N.A.I., FIN/COMP/2/24/190).

exchange the irregulars surrendered. The troops then proceeded the three miles to Rosmead where they re-took the house, which was intact, arresting a number of irregulars in the process.³⁴

On 30 November 1922 Liam Lynch, commander of the anti-Treaty forces issued what was known as ‘Orders of frightfulness’, which listed fourteen categories of persons who were to be shot on sight.³⁵ The order also authorised the destruction of their homes. Lynch’s order gave republican sanction to a sequence of house burnings that had been ongoing since the outbreak of hostilities in June. The order to burn houses was executed by anti-Treaty units countrywide. Included in this order were representatives of southern Unionists who had taken their seats in the Irish Senate.³⁶ One of the roles of the senate had been to protect the interests of minorities in Ireland. However, as O’Halpin has remarked, ‘it was particularly disliked by republicans, who saw it as nothing more than an Anglo-Irish club and an undemocratic impediment to the popular will’.³⁷ The sixty members of the senate, which had been established on 7 December 1922, included seven peers and five baronets.³⁸ They were regarded by the republicans as being supporters of the Free State government.

The burning of aristocratic houses for agrarian reasons can only be understood within the wider context of agrarianism within the county. This was clearly illustrated by the burning of two further houses in Westmeath, again as a consequence of agrarianism, in the aftermath of Lynch’s order. The first of these, Lisanode House, Mount Temple, in the south of the county, was burned on 11 February 1923. The house, which was the property of Frederick W. Russell, a former high sheriff for the

³⁴ *Irish Times*, 8 Jul. 1922.

³⁵ D.J. Hickey and E. J. Doherty, *A new dictionary of Irish history from 1800* (Dublin, 2003), p. 284.

³⁶ Terence Dooley, *The decline of the big house in Ireland* (Dublin, 2001), pp 187-97.

³⁷ Eunan O’Halpin, ‘Politics and the state, 1922-32’, in J. R. Hill (ed.) *A new history of Ireland*, vii (Oxford, 2002), p. 90.

³⁸ Calton Younger, *Ireland’s civil war* (Glasgow, 1979), p. 493.

county was temporarily vacant at the time.³⁹ The caretaker and his wife who lived in the farmyard were confronted by twelve men who locked them in an outhouse. The men then entered the main house, filled the rooms with straw, which they soaked with petrol, and set it alight. A hundred tons of hay and some farm machinery were also burned. The arrival of some local people helped to save the stables from destruction.⁴⁰ The motive for the fire was clearly agrarian as a previous attempt had been made to burn the house, whereupon the owner had removed furniture and other valuables.⁴¹

On 19 June 1920 Russell had been the victim of agrarian agitation when seventy-five cattle were driven off his lands in the nearby townland of Ballysallagh, and again in August 1920 when a number of men entered his 170 acre grazing farm in Ballysallagh and drove the cattle from there to his home farm of 204 acres attached to the house. The men were in the act of removing a bridge to prevent the cattle being returned to the grazing farm when Russell arrived on the scene. He was asked by claimants to the farm to appear before a Sinn Féin court to resolve the matter, but he refused to do so stating that he had ‘nothing to arbitrate about’. Russell had been asked to surrender his farm for redistribution but had refused.⁴² Frederick W. Russell submitted a claim of £11,300 compensation for the destruction of his property. This included a hay barn, 300 tons of hay, China, furniture and a thrashing mill. Before the house was destroyed it had been searched for arms by the raiders. On 14 February 1925 at Moate Circuit Court Russell was awarded £6,766 10s 7d in cash and £550 stock. The award was appealed by the state on 12 May 1925, but was dismissed.

³⁹ *Westmeath Examiner*, 17 Feb. 1923. In the return of landowners 1878 Russell was listed as having 492 acres in Westmeath and 1,022 acres in King’s County, total acreage 1,514, with a valuation of £925. See U. H. Hussey De Burgh, *The landowners of Ireland* (Dublin, 1878), p. 397.

⁴⁰ *Irish Times*, 27 Feb. 1923.

⁴¹ *Ibid*, 27 Feb. 1923.

⁴² *Ibid*, 20 Aug. 1920.

Russell who had relocated to Bodorgan in Anglesey, North Wales eventually settled for the lesser sum of £1,685.⁴³

In March 1920 Mr Patrick J. Weymes, the defeated IPP candidate in the 1918 general election purchased Clonyn Castle the former residence of Lord Greville and later his youngest son Patrick Greville-Nugent.⁴⁴ Weymes, a wealthy businessman, paid £4,000 for the building and 135 acres of land.⁴⁵ It appears that Weymes wished to dispose of the property almost immediately and a rumour soon circulated in the area suggesting that he had sold the castle to the Benedictine nuns of Ypres for use as a boarding school.⁴⁶ On 6 May 1921 Weymes put the castle and 135 acres for sale but it failed to find a buyer.⁴⁷

On 8 March 1923 Clonyn Castle was attacked by a party of men who set the building on fire.⁴⁸ Fortunately, the damage was not as bad as first thought. The roof, floors, staircases, walls and windows were undamaged, except there was a lot of glass broken. However, the sanitary annex was completely burned along with seven oak panelled doors. The cost of repairs was estimated at £1,264 16s.⁴⁹ A claim for compensation of £2,000 was submitted on 5 November 1925 by Vincent Crowley, receiver over the estate of Patrick J. Weymes, who had been declared bankrupt on 27 July 1923.⁵⁰ The claim was less than the original purchase price as the castle was in poor repair, due to years of neglect. The flat roof of the corner towers were leaking which had caused damage to the ceilings and floorboards and a number of

⁴³ The Compensation (Ireland) Commission: Frederick W. Russell, 8 August 1923 (N.A.I., FIN/COMP/2/24/216).

⁴⁴ *Freeman's Journal*, 3 May 1920.

⁴⁵ The Compensation (Ireland) Commission: Vincent Crowley on behalf of Patrick Joseph Weymes, 5 November 1925 (N.A.I., FIN/COMP/2/24/350).

⁴⁶ *Westmeath Examiner*, 25 Sept. 1920.

⁴⁷ *Ibid*, 30 Apr. 1921.

⁴⁸ *Irish Times*, 17 Mar. 1923 and The Compensation (Ireland) Commission: Vincent Crowley on behalf of Patrick Joseph Weymes, 5 November 1925 (N.A.I., FIN/COMP/2/24/350).

⁴⁹ The Compensation (Ireland) Commission: Vincent Crowley on behalf of Patrick Joseph Weymes, 5 November 1925 (N.A.I., FIN/COMP/2/24/350).

⁵⁰ *Ibid*. Weymes was declared bankrupt with debts of £49,672. See *Irish Times*, 16 Nov. 1923.

mantelpieces and doors were missing, having been removed with the consent of Mr. Weymes. On 13 April 1926 at Mullingar Circuit Court a decree of £1,000 was awarded. However, at the time of the award Patrick Weymes owed revenue the sum of £2,379,11s 4d. The award was immediately paid to revenue in part settlement of the debt.⁵¹

The attack on the castle was one in a series of incidents that occurred in the Delvin area in early March 1923. On the same night as the Clonyn fire two wings of the Delvin workhouse, which was being occupied by the newly established Civic Guard, were also burned. In addition, three important bridges at Mooretown, Cummer and Rockview, near the residence of Colonel John D. Fetherstonhaugh, were blown up and blocked with timber, thereby severing the three main routes from Mullingar to Delvin.⁵²

At the end of January 1923 it was reported that Knockdrin Castle, the seat of the Levinge baronets had been burned down on the night of 29 January. The report was false. Two days earlier twenty-seven tons of hay, straw and carts, property of the estate had been burned at Rathconrath, seven miles west of Mullingar. It was speculated in the locality that the reason for the fire was agrarian.⁵³ On 13 March 1923 Thomas E. Gloster, agent for Lieutenant-Colonel Robin Buxton, step-father of Sir Richard Levinge submitted a claim for compensation of £629 in respect of damage to a large hayshed, twenty-nine tons of hay, eight tons of straw and two farm carts which had been maliciously destroyed by fire at Rathconrath, Mullingar. It was not

⁵¹ The Compensation (Ireland) Commission: Vincent Crowley on behalf of Patrick Joseph Weymes, 5 November 1925 (N.A.I., FIN/COMP/2/24/350).

⁵² *Irish Examiner*, 12 Mar. 1923, *Westmeath Examiner*, 17 Mar. 1923 and *Meath Chronicle*, 17 Mar. 1923.

⁵³ *Westmeath Examiner*, 3 Feb. 1923.

until 26 February 1924 that a decree of £395 10s was awarded to the trustees of the Knockdrin estate.⁵⁴

4. Politics

In November 1922, with the Civil War raging, Sir Walter Nugent spoke at the opening meeting of the Dublin University Philosophical Society where the topic of debate was ‘The prospects of industrial development in Ireland’. Nugent stated that ‘a period of tranquillity and security was what Ireland wanted most, and that they must have, before there could be any renewal of commercial activity’.⁵⁵ In December 1922 Sir Walter Nugent was proposed by W. T. Cosgrave, president of the executive council of the Irish Free State, and seconded by Mr. Joseph McGrath, to serve as a member of Seanad Éireann.⁵⁶ However, he was not among the names announced to the Dáil by President Cosgrave on 6 December 1922. It was fortunate for Sir Walter that he did not become a senator as it likely saved his home, Donore House, from destruction. The other former aristocratic Irish Parliamentary Party MP, Sir Thomas Esmonde did accept a nomination to the senate from Cosgrave. This decision was tantamount to Esmonde supporting the Free State Government and ultimately led to the destruction of Ballynastragh House, his ancestral home near Gorey, Co. Wexford by anti-Treaty forces in March 1923.⁵⁷

In February 1923 Sir Walter Nugent was appointed by the Minister of Industry and Commerce to sit on the Commission on Reconstruction and Development established by the Free State Government under the chairmanship of Lord Justice O’Connor. The commission’s terms of reference were: ‘1. To advise as to the

⁵⁴ The Compensation (Ireland) Commission: Thomas E. Gloster, 5 November 1925 (N.A.I., FIN/COMP/2/24/166).

⁵⁵ *Irish Independent*, 3 Nov. 1922.

⁵⁶ *Freeman’s Journal*, 7 Dec. 1922.

⁵⁷ Terence Dooley, *The decline of the big house in Ireland* (Dublin, 2001), p. 193.

principles on which works of reconstruction and of development should proceed, with due regard to the requirements of the country in the future. 2. To investigate and report on the prospects of trade and industry, and of employment therein, in the near future. 3. To make such recommendations for stimulating trade and industry and employment therein, as, in the opinion of the commission are best adapted to the national circumstances. 4. To advise as to the provision that should be made for the relief of unemployment, and as to the measures necessary to secure that such provision is administered with reasonable stringency, due economy and adequate co-ordination'.⁵⁸ The commission produced a report in May 1923 and its main recommendation urged the immediate improving of the roads as a first step to relieve unemployment. This it believed would take eight to ten years to accomplish and would be financed by county councils striking a road improvement rate with the state adding £2 for every £1 raised by the local authorities. The report detailed how these improvements could be achieved. The commission also recommended the establishment of an Irish Road Board.⁵⁹ Lee states that following the production of the interim report the commission appeared to dissolve thereafter.⁶⁰ Sir Walter subsequently sat in Seanad Éireann from 1928 to 1931.⁶¹

In the election to the 4th Dáil of 27 August 1923, just after the conclusion of the Civil War, Longford-Westmeath returned five members consisting of two Republicans, Conor Byrne and James Killane, one Cumann na nGaedheal, Patrick Shaw, one Independent Labour, Sean Lyons, and Patrick McKenna of the Farmers party.⁶² The overall result saw Cumann na nGaedheal win sixty-six seats, the Republicans under De Valera got forty-four seats, while the Farmers Party and

⁵⁸ *Freeman's Journal*, 9 Feb. 1923 and *Irish Times*, 14 Jun. 1923.

⁵⁹ *Irish Independent*, 14 Jun. 1923.

⁶⁰ J. J. Lee, *Ireland 1912-1985, politics and society* (Cambridge, 1989), p. 120.

⁶¹ *Irish Independent*, 2 Mar. 1928.

⁶² *Irish Times*, 3 Sept. 1923.

Labour obtained fifteen and fourteen seats respectively, with Independents and others getting the remaining fifteen seats. As the Republicans did not take their seats Cumann na nGaedheal formed a minority government. The composition and policies of the political parties in Ireland reflected the views of the majority of the people and confirmed the demise of the aristocracy as a force in politics at national level.

5. Sale of aristocratic land

The absence of detailed records makes it difficult to provide an accurate picture of land sales during the period 1918 to 1923. In addition to the problems of war and lawlessness the British government decided at the end of March 1920 to abolish the practice of providing advances to landowners to sell their estate land under the land acts. Aristocratic land sales reflected the disturbed situation in Ireland with few transactions taking place during the period. In March 1918 the Killua estate of Lady Caroline Chapman, consisting of 1,000 acres of grassland in Counties Westmeath and Meath, was purchased by the Estate Commissioners and divided into farms ranging from fourteen to thirty-one acres which were allocated to forty-eight new tenants.⁶³

Thomas Farrelly, secretary of the Clonmellon Branch of the UIL commenting on the development remarked:

This is a great change for the better in the condition of the people in this District around here; so long cursed by an evil system which kept the remnant of the population in the country, after being driven out of the good lands, living in rocks and swamps around the border of the Estates.⁶⁴

Another aristocratic estate that was sold during this period was the Rosmead estate located between Delvin and Clonmellon. In October 1919 it was announced that 200 acres of untenanted land, property of Viscount Charles de la Bedoyere, grandson of

⁶³ *Meath Chronicle*, 30 Mar. 1918.

⁶⁴ *Ibid*, 30 Mar. 1918.

Fulke Greville-Nugent, had been purchased by a committee with the intention of dividing it among the tenants. The purchase price was reported to be £7,700. Charles de la Bedoyere retained Rosmead House along with fifty acres.⁶⁵

During this chaotic period local people were taking the law into their own hands. Working outside the land commission that up to this stage was responsible for the transfer of tenanted land, local committees were established, money gathered and offers made to landowners for untenanted land to be redistributed. Unfortunately the sources are not available to inform on who composed these committees. Suffice to say the aristocratic landowners felt compelled to engage with these committees.

An example of this occurred in June 1919 when the Hon. Patrick Greville-Nugent put the Clonyn estate for auction with the sale being concluded two months later. The castle and 1,353 acres covered four townlands.⁶⁶ The land was purchased by four trustees, Messrs, J. Rooney, Hugh Macken, R. Halpin and E. Murphy who were acting on behalf of the local people as the Estate Commissioners had not been in a position to purchase the land. The purchase funds had been organised in two parts, half had been subscribed locally with the remaining fifty percent being furnished by the Hibernian Bank on the security of the land.⁶⁷ The terms of the sale were then completed with a purchase price of £25,000.⁶⁸ In March 1920 a meeting was held in St Patrick's Hall, Delvin for the purpose of dividing the former Clonyn Castle estate land among selected persons. The land amounting to 546 acres was divided into thirty-seven holdings. An allotment of thirty-three acres was set aside for labourers, as well as a site for a school. The purchase price of the land was £24,000, with an

⁶⁵ *Westmeath Guardian*, 31 Oct. 1919.

⁶⁶ *Irish Times*, 28 Jun. 1919.

⁶⁷ *Ibid*, 8 Aug. 1919. See also Hannah Fitzsimons, *The great Delvin* (Dublin, 1975), p. 141.

⁶⁸ *Westmeath Guardian*, 27 Jun and 8 Aug. 1919 and *Irish Times*, 28 Jun. 1919.

additional £4,000 being set aside for fencing which along with other expenses made a total outlay of £32,003.⁶⁹

As can be seen in Table 1 the sale of aristocratic lands had all but ceased by the end of 1920. The only sales were the former Greville-Nugent estates at Clonyn Castle and Rosmead House in 1919, and Killua Castle, former home of Lady Caroline Chapman in 1920. The lack of sales can be attributed to the disturbed state of the country. The chaos and strife between 1919 and 1923 necessitated the enactment of appropriate legislation to end land agitation. While the Westmeath aristocracy still retained a great deal of land it would be subject to compulsory acquisition under legislation enacted by the Free State government in 1923.⁷⁰

Table 1. Aristocratic land sales, 1.1.19-31.12.20

	Pakenham	Levinge	Nugent (Donore)	Chapman	Nugent (B/lough)	Castlemaine	Greville
Total 1.1.19	6,651	834	3,508	8,996	433	4,416	9,554
1919			748				1,385 200
1920				Killua Sold			
1921							800
1922							
1923							
Total 1923	6,651	834	2,760	8,996	433	4,416	7,169

During this time Lords Greville and Longford made efforts to dispose of their properties in Mullingar and Longford. In February and December 1919 Lord Greville invited offers from the tenants in Mullingar to purchase their holdings.⁷¹ In June 1920 a public meeting of property owners was held in Mullingar to discuss the purchase of the town from the landlord. Lord Greville sought purchase terms of seventeen to twenty-three years which those in attendance considered excessive. The meeting was

⁶⁹ *Meath Chronicle*, 27 Mar. 1920.

⁷⁰ Terence Dooley, *The land for the people, the land question in independent Ireland* (Dublin, 2004), pp 94-8.

⁷¹ *Connacht Telegraph*, 15 Feb. 1919, *The Times*, 12 Dec. 1919.

addressed by an expert in estate matters, who described the terms of purchase offered by Lord Greville as unreasonable and claimed that the average figure in the case of Mullingar should be fourteen and a half years purchase, twenty-three years purchase worked out at four and a half per cent while government stocks gave six per cent.⁷² In January 1921 Lord Greville again offered to sell his interests in Mullingar at reduced purchase terms, down from twenty-three to twenty, nineteen, eighteen and seventeen years purchase according to the different grades of property. The reduced offer was attributed to an unspecified alteration in the money market.⁷³ However, in March that year Lord Greville successfully disposed of his residential properties in Mullingar.⁷⁴

In August 1922 as ground landlord, Greville offered to sell his interests in the town commission's houses at Parnell Terrace, Mullingar at seventeen years purchase less public health charges.⁷⁵ The commissioners agreed to purchase these and other houses in that area of Mullingar from him.⁷⁶ In Dáil Éireann on 15 November 1922 in reply to Sean Lyons, Ernest Blythe said he had no information that Lord Greville, the owner of the town of Mullingar was about to sell the right of collection of tolls.⁷⁷ It was not until April 1927 that Lord Greville surrendered his right to the tolls and customs of Mullingar on conditions acceptable to the council.⁷⁸ The reason for Greville's decision to dispose of these properties was apparent in that he wished to withdraw completely from Ireland and was anxious to liquidise his Irish assets.

In the United Kingdom Lord Greville made preparations, in April 1922, to dispose of his London residence at 27 Belgrave Square, and in the summer of 1923 he

⁷² *Westmeath Examiner*, 19 Jun. 1920.

⁷³ *Ibid*, 22 Jan. 1921. For additional information on London money market in 1921, see William F. Spalding, *The London Money Market* (London, 1922), pp 54-177.

⁷⁴ *Irish Times*, 3 Mar. 1921.

⁷⁵ *Westmeath Examiner*, 12 Aug. 1922.

⁷⁶ *Ibid*, 22 Jul. 1922.

⁷⁷ *Freeman's Journal*, 16 Nov. 1922. Under Section 103 of the Public Health (Ireland) Act, 1878, Town Commissioners were enabled to purchase tolls, but only with the assent of the person from whom such rights were to be purchased.

⁷⁸ *Anglo Celt*, 7 May 1927 and *Meath Chronicle*, 29 Oct. 1927.

purchased 'The Manor House', Weston-on-the-Green, Oxfordshire from Captain David Margesson MP.⁷⁹

During this period Lord Longford commenced negotiations with his tenants with a view to agreeing purchase terms acceptable to both parties. In March 1923 his agents, informed the Longford Tenants Association that while Lord Longford was reluctant to sell the town, would do so if a series of conditions were adhered to. The conditions were that the purchase price, which had to be paid in cash, had to fairly represent the capital value of the property. The poorer class of houses had to be included in the purchase as his lordship should not be left with them on his hands when the better class of houses were sold. This was a point marked for special consideration, and in any cases where there were leases (other than very long leases) with a reversionary interest, the interest must be taken into consideration when fixing the purchase price.⁸⁰ The following month arrangements were made to hold a meeting of the Longford tenants in order to determine a basis for agreement for the sale of the estate directly to the tenants.⁸¹

Lord Longford's town tenants gathered on 4 May 1923 in the local courthouse to discuss possible negotiations with the landlord for the sale of his properties directly to the occupying tenants. The gathering was informed that the tenants association had contacted Lord Greville's solicitor to ascertain the terms for purchase that had been agreed between the landlord and his tenants in Mullingar. The meeting having heard these terms passed a resolution containing five counter proposals as a basis for arbitration with Lord Longford. The proposals were that in any price set for purchase, repayment should be spread over a period. That full account should be taken of the rents and improvements made by the tenants should be fully recognised, and that the

⁷⁹ *The Times*, 13 Jul. 1923.

⁸⁰ *Irish Times*, 26 Mar. 1923.

⁸¹ *Longford Leader*, 14 Apr. 1923.

arbitrator should be the Editor of the *Longford Leader* or his nominee. To ensure that there was no entanglement it should be observed that legal assistance in the arbitration was not necessarily a condition for terms to be agreed upon. Finally, the Bishop of Ardagh should be consulted by both sides prior to the arbitration. A committee was then appointed to negotiate with Lord Longford's representatives.⁸² However, negotiations failed to resolve the impasse between landlord and tenants despite the intervention of the Irish Land Commission. Matters still had not been resolved decades later, despite litigation in 1934,⁸³ and rent disputes in 1937.⁸⁴ It was March 1936 before Longford Urban District Council succeeding in purchasing the rights of the properties and tolls in Longford town from Lord Longford for £1,500,⁸⁵ and Lord Longford retained ownership of the lands into the 1950s.

According to Lee 'there was no longer a viable landlord system' after the War of Independence.⁸⁶ The circumstances surrounding the sale of aristocratic estates in Westmeath was reflected in land sales throughout Ireland. During the turbulent Civil War land sales ceased, land agitation increased, and many tenants and land holders availed of the chaos, which made it almost impossible for the land owners and the Land Commission, to collect rents and annuities. The aristocratic families as major landowners were subjected to intimidation, cattle driving and attacks on their property and many Protestant landowners were victims of agrarian related violence. This aggression towards Protestants will be examined in the conclusion to this chapter.

⁸² *Longford Leader*, 12 May 1923.

⁸³ *Ibid*, 5 May 1934 and 3 Nov. 1934. In April 1934 Lord Longford brought a case before the appeal tribunal of the commission claiming that the land commission did not have the authority to reduce the standard purchase annuity payable in respect of a holding from £13 to £7. The implications of the case were important as in excess of seventy tenancies were involved. In November 1934 the tribunal found in favour of Lord Longford.

⁸⁴ *Ibid*, 11 Dec. 1937. In December 1937, when G. K. Stewart attended the rent office to receive the rents then due to Lord Longford, he was met by a deputation of tenants seeking a reduction in rents due to the inclemency of the weather. When the request was refused, the tenants left without paying any rent.

⁸⁵ *Ibid*, 7 Mar. 1936.

⁸⁶ J. J. Lee, *Ireland 1912-1985, politics and society* (Cambridge, 1989), p. 71.

According to Dooley the involvement of the anti-treatyites in agrarianism from 1922 perturbed first the Provisional, and then the Free State governments, and merely exacerbated the existing situation.⁸⁷ This had an impact on aristocratic and Unionist landowners throughout Ireland and was exemplified by the experiences of Arthur Harris-Temple, Richard Bayley and John Granville Wilson, who because of violence and intimidation, were forced to leave Westmeath. It was an experience that subsequently befell many Protestant landowners in the southern provinces. The result was that the Irish Land Commission acquired estate lands at a much reduced price, which were then divided among the local populace.

6. End of civil war

Following the end of the Irish Civil War in May 1923, Lady Levinge who had moved to England following the death of her husband in the Great War, felt it safe enough to visit the family seat and gauge the mood of the local populace. In August 1923 Sir Richard Levinge, 11th baronet, then aged twelve years, accompanied by his mother visited his ancestral seat, Knockdrin Castle. It was reported that triumphal arches were erected on the avenues to the castle where local residents, servants, tenants and estate employees were present to welcome him.⁸⁸ As previously detailed, the decision by Sir Walter Nugent to return to business following the loss of his parliamentary seat probably saved his home from destruction, which was the experience of many of his contemporaries.

The countess of Longford, who had also moved to Britain following the death of her husband at Gallipoli in 1915, concentrated on raising her young family. They

⁸⁷ Terence Dooley, 'Land and politics in independent Ireland, 1923-48: the case for reappraisal', in *Irish Historical Studies, Vol.34, No. 134* (Cambridge, 2004), p. 178, available at <http://www.jstor.org/stable/30008710> [19 April 2017].

⁸⁸ *Irish Times*, 15 Aug. 1923.

visited Ireland in April 1919,⁸⁹ and again in April 1920,⁹⁰ spending time in Pakenham Hall before returning to North Aston Hall, Oxfordshire. On both occasions the countess was accompanied by her sons, the earl of Longford and Francis Pakenham.⁹¹ In the summer of 1923 the countess and the young earl returned again to Pakenham Hall. The countess obviously felt that it was safe to do so as hostilities had ended and her home had escaped the widespread destruction that had been visited upon many other landed families.⁹² The earl of Longford, a pupil at Eton, had, after the death of his father, spent a great deal of time in the company of his uncle Lord Dunsany, a poet and playwright, at which time he began to develop a keen interest in the literary and dramatic arts. On 29 December 1923 Lord Longford reached his twenty-first birthday and having attained his majority took his seat in the House of Lords as Baron Silchester, a British title which had been conferred on the 3rd baron in 1821.⁹³

As a member of the House of Lords, Lord Greville continued to participate in debates.⁹⁴ Greville had previously campaigned at the highest level for dental aid for ex-soldiers injured in the Great War through the Ivory Cross charity. At a meeting held at 10 Downing Street on 21 May 1919 he pointed out that discharged soldiers only received assistance from the War Office if they could prove that the condition of their teeth was due to the war. This was difficult to prove unless it could be shown that the teeth had been removed by shellfire. Lord Greville highlighted that the charity had helped 1,296 discharged soldiers in 1917 and 11,900 in 1918.⁹⁵ In 1920 the charity reported assisting almost 10,000 ex-soldiers with dental treatment.⁹⁶ In April

⁸⁹ *The Times*, 4 Apr. 1919.

⁹⁰ *Freeman's Journal*, 20 Apr. 1920.

⁹¹ *Irish Independent*, 16 Sept. 1920.

⁹² *Freeman's Journal*, 11 Aug. 1923.

⁹³ *Irish Times*, 28 Dec. 1923.

⁹⁴ *Ibid*, 23 Jun. 1921.

⁹⁵ *Ibid*, 22 May 1919.

⁹⁶ *The Times*, 20 Jun. 1921.

1920, Lord Greville, having disposed of his holdings in Ireland, and now resident at 27 Belgrave Square, London, visited Clonhugh.⁹⁷ Greville and his wife spent the winter of 1921 in the South of France returning to London in April 1922.⁹⁸ The Grevilles together with their son, Ronald, aged eleven and Lady Greville's surviving son, Hamilton Kerr, aged nineteen also travelled around Britain visiting places such as the New Forest, as well as touring the French Riviera.⁹⁹

As already outlined, the Chapman dynasty ended in 1919 with the deaths of Sir Thomas Chapman, 7th baronet and his sister Lady Caroline. Killua Castle, the ancestral home was sold in June 1920 and the pre-eminent position of the family in County Westmeath came to an end. The only surviving members of the family were Sir Thomas's four single daughters who were living in their father's former home, South Hill House, Delvin. Sir Charles Nugent had remained in Britain throughout the period in his capacity as a race horse trainer making only the occasional journey to Ireland such as in August 1920 when he visited Ballinlough Castle.¹⁰⁰ Lord Castlemaine had left Athlone following the burning of Moydrum Castle and relocated to 'The Old House', Church Road, Wimbledon, London. He made a return visit to Athlone in January 1922,¹⁰¹ as well as another to Dublin that April.¹⁰² He visited Athlone again in late 1923, and also his sister Alice who resided at Fortgranite House, Baltinglass, Co. Wicklow.¹⁰³ When in the Athlone area he usually stayed in his house

⁹⁷ *Ibid*, 19 Apr. 1920.

⁹⁸ *Irish Times*, 29 Apr. 1922.

⁹⁹ *Irish Independent*, 13 Nov. 1922 and *Irish Times*, 3 Mar. 1921. Hamilton Kerr (1903-1974) was Conservative MP for Oldham from 1931 to 1945 and MP for Cambridge from 1950 to 1966. He was created a Baronet in 1957. The Hamilton Kerr Institute at Cambridge University was established in his memory.

¹⁰⁰ *Freeman's Journal*, 7 Aug. 1920.

¹⁰¹ *Irish Times*, 23 Jan. 1922.

¹⁰² *Ibid*, 29 Apr. 1922.

¹⁰³ *Ibid*, 28 Apr. 1924 and 14 Aug. 1926. The Hon. Alice Handcock was married to Meade Dennis, see Sir Bernard Burks, *The landed gentry of Ireland* (London, 1912), pp 177-8.

on Hare Island in Lough Ree.¹⁰⁴ Of the aristocratic families resident in Westmeath during this period Lord Castlemaine suffered most, losing his home and having his estate buildings and offices destroyed, which prevented him from deriving an income from his remaining estate lands.

7. Conclusion

By the end of the Civil War in 1923 the lives of the aristocratic families of Westmeath had been changed beyond recognition. They had experienced nine years of continuous conflict which had resulted in the deaths of many loved ones, and which had also seen the systematic destruction their property, and the forced abandonment of their remaining land holdings through vandalism, raids, and other forms of intimidation. In seeking to examine the experiences of Protestant members of the aristocracy in County Westmeath during the War of Independence and Civil War, against the background of Protestant experiences in southern Ireland, it is clear that they were similar in almost every respect. This is confirmed by Gemma Clark in *Everyday violence in the Irish Civil War*. Clark examined the incidence of violence against civilians between 7 January 1922 and 24 May 1923 in Counties Limerick, Tipperary and Waterford. Her findings were that violence was targeted deliberately against particular groups of victims which were identified by their religious beliefs, political allegiances, economic status, and gender, and that it was designed to force out unwanted persons.¹⁰⁵ Clark states that while her book did not set out to recount the plight of Protestants or the decline of the big house in these counties, ‘the unavoidable trend that emerges is one of minority persecution’.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰⁴ *Irish Independent*, 16 Jun. 1923.

¹⁰⁵ Gemma Clark, *Everyday violence in the Irish Civil War* (Cambridge, 2014), p. 197.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 198.

While Ireland did not experience state sanctioned ethnic cleansing, more subtle intimidatory tactics such as cattle drives, threatening letters and boycotts drove Protestants out.¹⁰⁷ Lone Protestants living in rural areas were easy targets, while Protestant businesses in urban areas were subjected to boycotts to destroy their livelihoods. As was the case in County Westmeath, Protestant aristocrats throughout Ireland, especially those who supported the Free State Government, were targeted and their homes attacked, examples being, Sir John Fox Dillon of Lismullen, County Meath whose house was burned on 4 April 1923,¹⁰⁸ Sir John Keane whose house at Cappoquin, County Waterford was destroyed 19 February 1923,¹⁰⁹ and Lord Dunalley of Kilboy House, Nenagh, Co. Tipperary whose home was destroyed by anti-Treaty forces on 2 August 1922.¹¹⁰

In examining the decline of the Protestant population in southern Ireland Robin Bury in *Buried, the Protestants of Southern Ireland* claims that the disintegration of the Protestant population began in the late nineteenth century when their economic strength was eroded by the land acts which placed the lands of Protestant landlords in the hands of their tenants.¹¹¹ He remarks that the decline in population accelerated rapidly between 1919 and 1923 as Protestants came under attack from violent Nationalists. Land seizures, cattle driving, boycotting, and the burning of up to 300 Protestant owned big houses caused Protestants to leave southern Ireland.¹¹² Bury suggests that the exodus of Protestants from southern Ireland between 1919 and 1923, due to the troubles, completed the disintegration in three ways. They

¹⁰⁷ Ibid, p. 198. For further analysis of Protestant experiences in these counties see pages 198 to 203.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid, p. 191.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid, p. 70. For an analysis of big house burnings and the difficulties in obtaining compensation, see pages 73-85.

¹¹⁰ Teresa Byrne, 'The burning of Kilboy House, Nenagh, County Tipperary, 2 August 1922' (MA Thesis, National University of Ireland, Maynooth, 2006), pp 34-8.

¹¹¹ Robin Bury, *Buried, the Protestants of southern Ireland* (Dublin, 2017), pp 10-1.

¹¹² Ibid, p. 11.

were weakened numerically. It shattered the confidence of those that remained, and it undermined their desire to be involved in political activity.¹¹³

David Fitzpatrick in *Descendancy: Irish Protestant histories since 1795* accepts that while some historians have endorsed Peter Hart's claim that Protestants were murdered or expelled because of their religion, most historians argue that such attacks were driven by political or economic motivations rather than by sectarianism.¹¹⁴ Fitzpatrick agrees that little convincing evidence has emerged of systematic campaigns of murder, arson and intimidation based on religious beliefs, other than in Belfast between 1920 and 1922 and in the Bandon valley in April 1922, which some have interpreted as being reprisals for the Belfast deaths. He remarks that if ethnic cleansing occurred it was not envisaged by those involved.¹¹⁵ Fitzpatrick claims that despite the initial panic and hasty departures many west Cork Protestants refused to believe that their Catholic neighbours would tolerate a sectarian vendetta against them.¹¹⁶ He suggests that a number of factors contributed to the decline in the Protestant population in southern Ireland. These were falling birth rates, increased mortality, migration to Britain and Northern Ireland, as well as economic factors and family reasons, such as marriages.¹¹⁷ The decline varied from county to county and was related to the size of the Protestant population in each particular county.¹¹⁸

While no member of the Westmeath aristocracy took an active part in the War of Independence or Civil War in Ireland the aristocracy in the county were deeply affected by both conflicts. The establishment of the Irish Free State had left

¹¹³ Ibid, p. 13. For an in-depth examination of the Protestant exodus from southern Ireland between 1919 and 1923, see pages 13 to 33. For Personal accounts of individual Protestants, see pages 34 to 79.

¹¹⁴ David Fitzpatrick, *Descendancy: Irish Protestant histories since 1795*(Cambridge, 2014), p. 159.

¹¹⁵ Ibid, p. 161.

¹¹⁶ Ibid p. 195.

¹¹⁷ Ibid, p. 168.

¹¹⁸ Ibid, pp 165-8.

many southern Unionists with a feeling of having been betrayed and abandoned by their northern brothers, as well as by the British Government, despite having rallied to the assistance of the Empire in the Great War. Purdue correctly points out that ‘the economic and social decline of the big house in the Free State was undoubtedly hastened by attacks on houses during both the War of Independence and the Civil War in the years following 1919’.¹¹⁹ While multiple reasons have been cited for the burning of big houses during this period the prime motivation for such actions in County Westmeath, as demonstrated in this and in the previous chapter, was agrarian related. In the period after the end of the Civil War aristocratic families from Westmeath who had previously moved to England, such as the Levinge and Pakenham families, made tentative visits back to their Irish estates. They generally received a positive reception from the local people.

The 1923 Land Act completed the process of land purchase and reform in Ireland. Dooley states it was one of the most important pieces of legislation passed by the Free State government as it made provision for the compulsory acquisition of estate lands.¹²⁰ This revolutionary transfer in landownership, which occurred over a period of only forty years, ended the pre-eminent position of the aristocracy in Ireland. Never again would aristocratic authority be experienced by the people of County Westmeath.

¹¹⁹ Olwen Purdue, *The big house in the north of Ireland* (Dublin, 2009), p. 145.

¹²⁰ Terence Dooley, *The land for the people, the land question in independent Ireland* (Dublin, 2004), p. 18

Conclusion

This thesis has been a study of the Westmeath aristocracy during a period of extraordinary social, political and economic turmoil stretching from 1879 to 1923. It has built on survey histories on the big houses and landed estates by adopting a case study approach. The position of the aristocratic families of Westmeath in December 1923 concluded a process that began in 1879. This process had seen these families decline from a position of power and dominance in all aspects of political, economic and social life in the county to a situation where they had surrendered social and economic domination as a result of the breakup of their extensive estates. Their political supremacy had ended as a result of the growth in Irish Nationalist politics, at first constitutionalist and then separatist.

This thesis has shown that decline essentially began with the enactment of the 1870 Land Act followed by a succession of agrarian-related legislation and reforms until the passing of the 1909 Land Act. Two land acts in particular were of critical importance in ending the monopoly of landownership, namely the Land Law (Ireland) Act of 1881 and the Wyndham Land Act of 1903. The 1881 act established the Irish Land Commission with powers to set up land courts to fix rents. It also gave more security to tenants against eviction. The terms of the Wyndham Land Act made it easier for tenants to purchase their holdings, while its financial terms simultaneously made it more attractive to landlords to sell their estates.

There had been a long history of land agitation in Westmeath and the enactment of the Westmeath Act by the House of Commons in 1871 was an attempt to curtail the high level of crime and lawlessness in the county. The conduct and behaviour of the Westmeath aristocracy, as landlords, as well as their apparent

unwillingness to compromise during times of economic uncertainty created a fractious relationship with their tenants which on occasions descended into open hostility. This was particularly true in the case of Sir Montagu Chapman. However, there were other enlightened aristocrats, for example, Sir Fulke Greville-Nugent who saw the necessity for conciliation and reform in a time of change.

The most important external event that impacted economically on the aristocracy in Westmeath was the economic depression of the late nineteenth century, which saw a decline in agricultural prices with the subsequent fallout for landowners and their tenants. The change in the nature of agriculture practised in Westmeath with the transition from tillage to grazing in the post-Famine era had resulted in increased poverty, unemployment and emigration for the landless labouring classes in the county. As the economic depression deepened the dramatic increase in number of evictions created a situation which descended into agrarian related violence as desperate tenants sought relief from hard pressed landowners, including the Nugents of Ballinlough. The founding of the Land League in 1879 succeeded in linking the two main social and political agendas in Ireland, which were agrarian reform and the campaign for Home Rule.

Political reforms, such as the introduction of the Secret Ballot Act in 1872, along with the Representation of the People Act in 1884, which increased the Catholic Nationalist electorate, meant that powerful landowners in Westmeath could no longer influence the outcome of elections. It also ended the possibility of Protestant Unionist candidates being successful in any future parliamentary elections. Important political reforms, such as the Local Government (Ireland) Act 1898, which established county councils to replace the grand jury system, ended aristocratic and landed gentry control of local government in Westmeath, and throughout Ireland, as they were replaced by

Catholic Nationalist merchants and farmers. This transformation in national and local politics in Westmeath has been comprehensively investigated in this thesis.

The activities of Irish politicians and agitators such as Westmeath MP, Laurence Ginnell, in the campaign for land reform, as well as the role of the United Irish League, an agrarian protest group founded in 1898 to agitate for the redistribution of land, were pivotal in keeping the agrarian-related issues at the forefront of the Nationalist agenda in Westmeath. At the same time, the majority of the aristocracy in County Westmeath were opposed to the granting of any form of Home Rule out of fear of losing their power, status and position. In reality, the geographically isolated southern Unionists, of which the Westmeath aristocracy were a part, were faced with the prospect of some form of Home Rule. Hennessy suggests that if southern Unionists were going to reach an accommodation with Nationalists, it was only going to occur on the basis of allegiance to the crown and Nationalist acceptance of Ireland's place within the empire.¹

The decade from 1914 to 1923 saw war in Europe and then in Ireland and these events had repercussions for the aristocracy in Westmeath. The Great War provided the men of the aristocracy with an opportunity to serve the empire, while the women were involved locally in Westmeath doing all they could to further the war effort. Ultimately, the war proved a major catalyst in decline. It was then followed by a War of Independence and Civil War. While no member of the Westmeath aristocracy was murdered during this period of turbulence, there was a high level of lawlessness in the county with numerous raids on the homes of aristocratic and landed families by republicans which culminated in the burning of nine country houses between 1920 and 1923. Aristocratic families were targeted and subjected to a

¹ Patrick Buckland, *Irish Unionism, 1885-1922* (London, 1973), pp 34-42, see also Thomas Hennessy, *Dividing Ireland: World War 1 and partition* (London, 1998), p. 194, 232, and R. B. McDowell, *Crisis and decline, the fate of the southern Unionists* (Dublin, 1997).

widespread campaign of hostility and intimidation and some were compelled to leave Westmeath. The extent of these house burnings and the reasons behind them have been examined in this thesis.

Peter Hart has claimed that during the War of Independence and Civil War there was a systematic campaign of ethnic cleansing of Protestants in a number of counties including Westmeath.² This contentious assertion has divided historical discourse and generated a great deal of debate. While there may be a degree of veracity to his claims, it could also be argued that what occurred in the period from 1879 to 1923 was a ‘cleansing of the land’, rather than ethnic cleansing, in that there was a radical change in land ownership from the aristocratic and landed gentry class to a new class of proprietors. The religious persuasion of the former land owners was irrelevant as this cleansing involved Roman Catholic as well as Protestant landlords. It so happened that the majority of these landowners were Protestant. Land reform had been controlled and regulated by the British government with the co-operation of the landlord class from 1870 to roughly 1909. However, from 1917 to 1923 the land question was seized upon by revolutionaries who often took the law into their own hands when settling disputes regarding the redistribution of estate lands.

Of the eight aristocratic families that were resident in Westmeath in 1879 only one still remained in the county at the end of 1923, the Nugent family of Donore. The titles belonging to the Ennis family of Ballinahown Court and the Chapmans of Killua Castle had become extinct in 1884 and 1919 respectively, due to their failure to produce a legitimate male heir. The Levinge family of Knockdrin, and the Pakenham family had relocated to Britain arising from the death of Sir Richard Levinge and Sir Thomas Pakenham in the Great War, while Sir Charles Greville and his uncle, the

² Peter Hart, *The IRA at war 1916-1923* (Oxford, 2003), p. 237-8. For an analysis of Peter Hart’s theories and arguments see Charles Townshend, *The republic, the fight for Irish independence 1918-1923* (London, 2013), pp 370-4.

Hon. Patrick Greville-Nugent, had disposed of their property in Ireland and moved permanently to England. Sir Charles Nugent of Ballinlough was already resident in England for many years working as a race horse trainer, while Lord Castlemaine had been forced to leave his estate and move to London following the destruction of his home, Moydrum Castle in 1921. The Levinge, Pakenham and Nugent family of Ballinlough would later return to live in Ireland.

The political and social changes that occurred following Irish independence meant that the sacrifices made by the Irish aristocratic families during and after the First World War were largely ignored and generally forgotten by both the British and Irish governments. As Dooley has pointed out, the landowning class had a feeling ‘of not belonging to mainstream Irish life due to the growth of a new Nationalism that made them question their position and identity in Ireland’.³ The passing of the Hogan Land Act in 1923 saw the end of aristocratic landownership as the remaining estates were broken up.⁴ Consequently, the aristocratic presence in rural Ireland all but disappeared for the first time in hundreds of years. The Westmeath aristocracy had been destroyed by a storm of political, economic and social change. The experiences of the aristocratic families in County Westmeath were a reflection of the changes that occurred in Ireland as a whole during the period from 1879 to 1923.

During the preparation of his thesis a number of avenues worthy of further research were discovered for which there is sufficient source material available. The topics relate to events that occurred between 1879 and 1923, and if investigated to a satisfactory conclusion, would make a valuable contribution to Irish historical scholarship. An important feature in the context of the agrarian and political changes

³ Terence Dooley, *The decline of the big house in Ireland* (Dublin, 2001), p. 269.

⁴ Terence Dooley, *‘The land for the people’, the land question in independent Ireland* (Dublin, 2004), pp 57-98

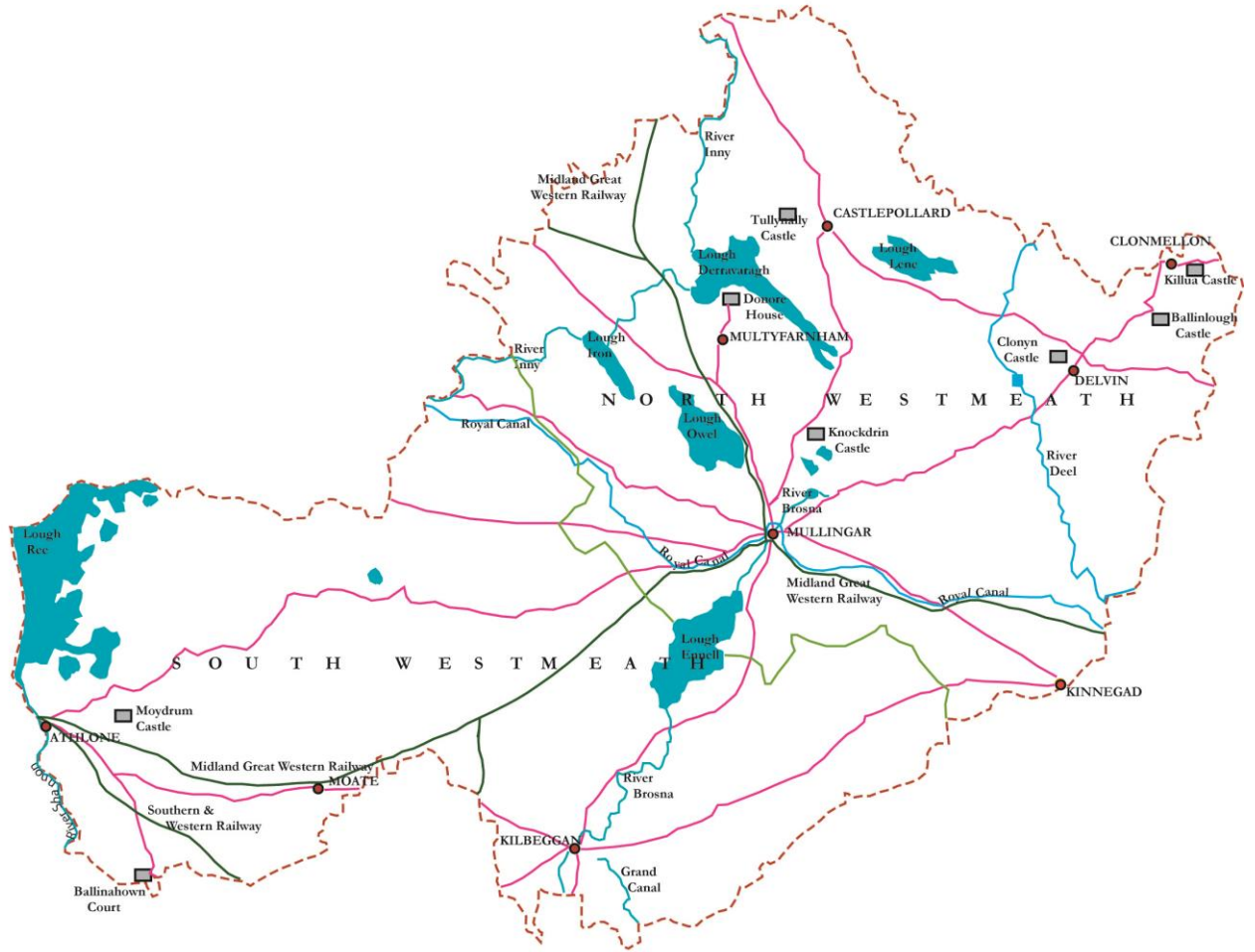
that occurred in Ireland was the rise to prominence of a more educated Catholic farming and merchant class in the late nineteenth century. This took place against the backdrop of a similar decline in the fortunes of the aristocratic and landed families.

Other viable topics worthy of investigation are the related themes of land sales by aristocratic and gentry families, and evictions from agricultural holdings during the same period, which would give a greater understanding of the economic and social conditions pertaining in Ireland at the time. A study of the aristocratic or landed gentry families in other Irish counties, or the study of a particular family during the same, or an earlier period are themes that merit examination, as would an investigation of all sales under the land acts in a particular Irish county in the period from 1870 and 1923. It is possible to complete such studies utilising the many sources and repositories that are currently available.

An aspect of Irish historical study that has received scant attention from historians that is worthy of examination were the day to day incidents of violence and agitation that occurred during the Irish War of Independence and Civil War. Intimidation, house burnings and other criminal acts, involving in particular the aristocratic and landed gentry families, made members from these classes question their position in Ireland. Many families felt that they had no option but to leave the southern provinces and relocate permanently to Great Britain or Northern Ireland. As already suggested a study of the topics outlined could be carried out at county level, or comparatively between counties in Ireland, or in conjunction with similar areas of Wales, Scotland or England.

Appendix 1.

County of WESTMEATH



George Philip & Son, London and Liverpool, 1885.

Map Legend

- Towns
- Aristocratic Seats
- Roads
- - - County Boundary
- Railways
- Canals, Rivers & Lakes
- Constituency Boundary

Statute Miles
0 ————— 1

Westmeath Aristocratic Family Seats

- | | |
|---|---|
| Ballinahown Court seat of Ennis Baronets | Killua Castle seat of Chapman Baronets |
| Moydrum Castle seat of Lord Castlemaine | Clonyn Castle seat of Lord Greville |
| Knockdrin Castle seat of Levinge Baronets | Ballinlough Castle seat of Nugent Baronets of Ballinlough |
| Tullyally Castle seat of Earl of Longford | Donore House seat of Nugent Baronets of Donore |

Castlemaine Family Tree

William- 1782 - Lady Florinda
Handcock, 1st Bt Trench
& Vt. (1761-1839) (1766-1851)
 (No Children)

Richard-1790-Anne
2nd Bt French
(1767-1840) (-1852)

Richard-1822-Margaret
3rd Bt Harris
(1791-1869) (-1867)

Arthur-1817- Margaret
 (1796-1826) La Poer
 Trench
 2 Daughters

John-1827-Frances
 (1799-1838) Flood
 (-1848)
 2 Sons 2 Daughters

George-1833 Elizabeth
 (1801-1867) French
 (-1890)
 2 Daughters

Henry-1854-Ellen
 (-1855) Williams
 (-1907)
 (No Children)

Charles-1845-Elizabeth
 (1808-1879) Kelly
 (-1878)
 1 Son 3 Daughters

Robert-1848-Isabella
 (-1871) Gordon
 (-1898)
 3 Sons

Richard -1857- Louisa
4th Bt Harris
(1826-1892) (1836-1892)

Robert-1856- Caroline
 (1830-1902) Pester
 (-1922)

Florinda-1854-Samuel
 (-1906) Bateson
 (-1879)

Annetta-1858- James
 (-1888) Caulfield
 (-1913)



Richard-1886-Katherine
 (1858-1891) Palmer
 (-1936)
 3 Daughters

Robert-1903-Eleanor
 (1860-1951) Staveley
 (-)
 5 Sons 2 Daughters

Henry-1892-Charlotte
 (1869-1917) Cole
 (-)
 Children

Emily-1896-Percy
 (-) Wright
 (-)
 Children

Alexandra-1892-John
 (-) Carden
 (-1912)

Edith-1900-Herbert
 (-1909) Smith
 (-1915)

Sydney
 (-)

Albert-1895-Annie
5th Bt Barrington
(1863-1937) (-1955)

Robert-1894-Ethel
6th Bt Bainbridge
(1864-1954) (-1934)

Agnes-1885-Conway
 (-1908) Higginson
 (1859-)

Florence- 1886-Hubert
 (1862-1934) Adderley
 (-1931)

Edith-1891- Baron
 (1865-1936) Rosmead
 (1866-1933)

Meta-1891-David
 (1867-1937) Rutledge
 (-)

Alice-1892- Meade
 (1868-1937) Denis
 (1865-1945)



1 Son, 2 Daughters

2 Sons 1 Daughter

Evelyn-1925-Charles
 (1897-1984) Gairdner
 (1898-1983)
 (-1941)

Violet-1919-Charles
 (-) Duncan
 (-1939)

John-1930-Rebecca
7th Bt Soady
(1904-1973) (-1978)

Leonie-1931-Thomas
 (1905-) Greer
 (-1941)



Roland-(1)1969-Pauline
8th Bt Bainbridge
(1943-) (-)
 (No Children)

Eileen-1959-Terence
 (1931-) Adams
 (-)
 2 Sons 1 Daughter

Edith-1957-Keith
 (1936-) Moss
 (-)
 1 Son

-(2)-1988-Lynn
 Gurney
 (-)

Ronan
 (1989-)

Chapman Family Tree

Benjamin- 1776 - Ann
Chapman, 1st Bt Lowther
 (1754-1810) (-1801) (No Children)

Thomas-1808- Margaret
2nd Bt Fetherstonhaugh
 (1756-1837) (1788-1871)



Montagu
3rd Bt
 (1808-1853)
 (Unmarried)

Benjamin -1849 - Maria
4th Bt Fetherstonhaugh
 (1810-1888) (1827-1898)



William -1841- Martha
 (1811-1889) Vansittart
 (1812-1899)

Dora
 (1850-1921)
 (Unmarried)

Benjamin
6th Bt
 (1865-1914)
 (Unmarried)



Montagu-1894-Caroline
5th Bt (1851-1919)
 (1853-1907) (No Children)



William
 (1844-1870)
 (Unmarried)

Thomas-(1)1873- Edith Rochfort
7th Bt Boyd
 (1846-1919) (1853-1930)

Francis
 (1850-1915)
 (Unmarried)



Eva Rose Florence Mabel
 (1874-1947) (1878-1962) (1880-) (1881-1948)

-(2)1884-Sarah
 Lawrence
 (1861-1959)



Title Extinct

Montagu **Thomas** **William** **Frank** **Arnold**
 (1885-1971) (1888-1935) (1889-1915) (1891-1915) (1900-1991)



Ennis Family Tree

John- 1833 - Anna Maria
Ennis, 1st Bt Henry
(1809-1878) (1808-)

John James Maria –1858 – Daniel
 Elizabeth –(1)1869- Joseph
2nd Bt (-1891) O’Donoghue
(1842-1884) (1833-1889)

(Unmarried)

Margaret –(1)1862- Edmund
 (-1879) Waterton
 (1830-1897)

Elizabeth –(1)1869- Joseph
 (-1879) O’Neill Power
 (1841-1897)

Geoffrey-1895-Maud Charles Daniel John Angus Florence
 (1859-) Charlton (1860-1903) (-1888) (-) (-1908) (1870-1919)
 (-)

2 Sons 4 Daughters

John Anna Maria
 (-1879) (-1899)

-(2)1881- Ellen
 Mercer
 (-1909)

-(2)1881- Marguerite
 Henry
 (-)

Geoffrey Maud Nora
 (1896-) (-) (1898-)

2 Daughters

Alexander Violet
 (1882-1888) (-)

Title Extinct

Greville Family Tree

Fulke - 1840 - Lady Rosa
Greville, 1st Bt Nugent
 (1821-1883) (1815-1883)

Algernon -1863- Lady Violet
2nd Bt Graham
 (1841-1909) (1842-1932)



George -1870- Cecil
 (1842-1897) Hankey
 (No children) (1840-1925)

Robert
 (1847-1912)
 (Unmarried)

Reginald -1871- Louise
 (1848-1878) Buller
 (No children) (1851-1882)



Mildred -1869- Marquis Alexis
 (1850-1906) de la Bédoyère
 (1839-)

Patrick -1882- Ermengarde
 (1852-1925) Ogilvy
 (1869-1949)



Ronald -1891- Margaret
 (1864-1908) Anderson
 (1863-1942)
 (No children)



Charles -1909- Olive
3rd Bt Kerr
 (1871-1952) (1876-1959)



Camilla - (1)1890- Alistair
 (1866-1938) Hay
 (1861-1929)



Veronique -1907- Cmdr Herbert
 (1869-1956) Creer
 (1881-1969)

Reginald
 Maugham
 (1866-1956)
 (Illegitimate)

Yvon -1900- Sybil
 (1871-) Thorold
 (1860-)

Charles-1895-Marie
 (1872-1942) Guibert
 (1865-)

Rosemary
 (1883-1922)
 (Unmarried)

35

-(2)1911- Comte
 Hervé
 De Bernis
 (1873-1918)
 (No children)

Victor -?- Nansi
 (-) ?
 (-2009)

Michael de la Bédoyère
 (1900-1973)

Charles de la Bédoyère
 (1896-)

Sally David Mark
 (-) (-) (-)

Auriol Hay -(1) 1917-Noel Barran
 (1893-1930) (1887-1919)
 (No Children)

Ronald Greville
4th Bt
 (1912-1987)
 (Unmarried)

-(2) -1924 Sir Allan Horne
 (1875-1944)

Sir Alistair Horne (Historian)



(1925-)

Title Extinct

Levinge Family Tree

Richard - (1)1680- Mary
Levinge, 1st Bt Corbyn
(1656-1724) (-1722)
 - (2)-?-Mary Johnson (-)



Richard -1718- Isabella
2nd Bt Rawdon
(-1748) (-1731)
 (No Children)

Charles -1722- Anne
3rd Bt Greene
(1693-1762) (-)

Mary-?- 2nd Earl
 (-1740) Ferrers
 (1677-1729)

Dorothea - (1)?- Sir John
 (-) Rawdon
 (1690-1723)

Grace-?- Edward
 (-) Kennedy
 (-)

Richard -?- Alice
 (-) Marlay
 (-)

Richard - (1)1744- Dorothea
4th Bt Kennedy
(1724-) (-)

- (2)?- Charles
 Cobbe
 (1686-1765)

Mary-?- James
 (-1817) Cuffe
 (-)

Charles-1779-Elizabeth
5th Bt Reynell
(1751-1796) (-1828)

Richard-1788-Anne
 (1760-) Taylor
 (-)

Richard-1810-Elizabeth
6th Bt Parkyns
(1765-1848) (-1853)

Charles-1825-Barbara
 (1796-1843) Johnson
 (-1838)

Anne-1817-William
 (-) Gregory
 (-1874)

Charles (-) Godfrey (-) Richard (-) Ellen (-) Fanny (-)



2 Sons 3 Daughters

Richard- (1)1849-Caroline
7th Bt Rolleson
(1811-1884) (-1858)

Vere
8th Bt
(1819-1885)
(Unmarried)

William-1848-Anna Maria
 (1821-1867) Henry
 (-1868)

Edward
 (1825-1865)

Harry Corbyn-1857-Ellen
 (1828-1896) Barnes
 (-1918)



- (2)-1870 Margaret Jones
 (No Children)

William -1876-Emily
9th Bt Sutton
(1849-1900) (-1921)

Richard (1852-) (Unmarried)

Reginald (1854-1882) (Unmarried)

Godfrey (1858-1898) (Unmarried)

George-1895-Elizabeth Wiley
 (1862-1926) (-)

Emily-1874-Ernest James
 (-1937) (-)

Gertrude (-1886) (Unmarried)

Mary-1880-Arthur
 (-) Clayton
 (Children) (-1933)

Harry (1864-1915)

Edward (1867-1954)

Florence (1861-1946)

Constance (1872-1960)



Richard- (1)1910-Irene
10th Bt Pix
(1878-1914) (1884-1975)

Thomas-1928-Dorothy
 (1880-1949) Ingman
 (-)

Reginald-1925-Evelyn
 (1883-1953) Robeson
 (-)

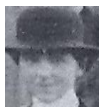
Charles-1918-May
 (1884-1952) Thomas
 (-)

Bernard-1912-Stella
 (1887-1953) Parsons
 (-)

Gerald (1889-1918) (Unmarried)

Dorothy-1904-George
 (1882-1954) Heigham
 (-1934)

Beatrice-1923-Henry
 (1886-1961) Ponsonby
 (-1953)
 (Children)



- (2)-1916-Robin

Richard

1 Son 2 Daughters

2 Sons

Buxton
(1883-1953)

11th Bt
(1911-1984)

Nugent (Ballinlough) Family Tree

Hugh-1781-Catherine
O'Reilly Nugent 1st Bt Matthew
(1741-1821) (-1827)



James-1811-Susan
2nd Bt D'Arabet
(-1843) (-1862)
(No Children)

John-1842-Letitia
3rd Bt Roche
(1800-1859) (-1895)



Lavallin
(-)
(Unmarried)

Eliza-?-William
(-) Conolly
(-)
2 Sons 1 Daughter

Barbara-?-John
(-) Everard
(-)
(No Children)

Isabella-?-Walter
(-) Blackney
(-)
2 Sons 3 Daughters

Hugh
4th Bt
(1845-1863)
(Unmarried)



Charles-1871-Emily
5th Bt Walker
(1847-1927) (-1929)



John-1899-Augusta
(1848-1901) Ridley
(1859-)
(No Children)

James-1874-Florence
(1849-1904) Hulme
(-1932)
8 Sons 3 Daughters



Andrew
(1852-1884)

Letitia-(1)1865-Richard
(-1918) Connolly
(-1871)
(No Children)

Kathleen-1875-Thomas
(-1911) Stoker
(1844-1889)
(Children)



Helena-1876-Richard
(-1946) Lynch
(-)

Charles-1902-Anna
(1878-1903) Adams
(-1964)



Hugh-1931-Margaret
6th Bt Puxley
(1904-1983) (1909-2004)



John-1959-Penelope
7th Bt Hanbury
(1933-2009) (1937-)



David-1960-Lady Elizabeth
(1935-2003) Guinness
(1937-) (-1939)



Nicholas
8th Bt
(1969-)

Grania
(1969-)

Charles (1962-)
Hugo (1963-)
Sheelin Rose (1967-1998)
Rory (1971-)

Nugent (Donore) Family Tree

Percy - 1823 - Elizabeth
Nugent, 1st Bt Sweetman
(1797-1874) (-1856)

Walter -1860- Maria More
2nd Bt O'Farrell
(1827-1893) (-1910)

Percy -1884- Mary
(1828-1900) Errington
(-1925)

James-1886-Julia
(1833-1922) Chaplin
(-1917)

Margaret -1882- Peter
(-1905) Fitzgerald
(-1893)

Anna Maria-1865- Philip
(-1930) O'Reilly
(Children) (-1912)



Percy
3rd Bt
(1861-1896)

Laval
(1863-1895)
(Unmarried)

Walter -1916- Aileen More
4th Bt O'Malley
(1865-1955) (-1957)



George
(1867-1896)
(Monk)

Edward
(b. d.1877)

Cecil
(1897-1914)
(Unmarried)

Matilda
(1862-1871)

Ellen
(1868-1949)
(Unmarried)

Mabel
(1869-1945)
(Nun)

Evelyn
(1872-1936)
(Unmarried)

Peter-1947- Anne
5th Bt Smyth
(1920-2002) (1924-2012)



Heather-(1)1937-Sir John
(1917-2010) Pritchard Jones
(1913-2007)



Gloria-(1)1946-Michael
(-2002) Carvill
(-)



Walter
6th Bt
(1947-)

Andrew
(1951-)

Fiona
(1949-)

Laura
(1954-)

David
(1943-)



-(2)1959-Helen
Liddy

Susan
(1959-)



Jack-(2)-1963
McGowran
(1918-1973)

Tara
(1964-)

-(2)-1962- Kathleen
Eustace Duckett

Lucy
(1963-)

Pakenham Family Tree

Thomas – 1739/40- Elizabeth
Pakenham, 1st Bt Cuffe , Countess of Longford 1785
 (1713-1766) (1720-1794)



Edward-1768-Catherine
2nd Bt Rowley (-1816) (Unmarried)
Robert (-1775) (Unmarried)
William (1756-1769) (Unmarried)
Thomas-1785-Louisa Staples (1757-1836) (-1833) (Unmarried)
Elizabeth (1742-1819) (Unmarried)
Frances-?-John (1744-) Vandeleur (-) (Children)
Helena-?-William (1745-1777) Sherlock (-) (Children)
Mary-1768-Thoams Fortesque (1749-1775) (1744-1779)
 5 Sons 3 Daughters 1 Son 2 Daughters



Thomas-1817-Georgiana
2nd Earl Lygon (1774-1835) (1800-1880) (Unmarried)
Edward (1778-1815) (Unmarried)
Hercules-1817-Emily Stapleton (1781-1850) (1798-1875) (Unmarried)
William (1782-1811) (Unmarried)
Henry-1822-Eliza Sandford (1787-1863) (-1867) (2 Sons 2 Daughters)
Elizabeth-1793-Henry Stewart (1769-1851) (1749-1840) (6 Children)
Catherine-1806-Duke of Wellington (1772-1831) (1769-1852) (2 Sons)
Helen-1799-James Hamilton (1775-1807) (1771-1805) (3 Children)
Caroline-1808-Henry Hamilton (-1850) (-1850)



Edward
3rd Earl (1817-1860) (Unmarried)
William-1862-Selina Rice-Trevor (1819-1887) (-1918) (3 Sons 4 Daughters)
Thomas-1853-Sophia Sykes (1820-1889) (-1898) (Unmarried)
Charles (1821-1857) (Unmarried)
Henry (1822-1856) (Unmarried)
Frederick (1823-1901) (Unmarried)
Georgina-1848-William Cecil (1828-1909) (1825-1895) (4 Sons 5 Daughters)
Francis-1879-Caroline Ward (1832-1905) (-1938) (No Children)
Katherine-1851-Fenton Evans-Freke (-1911) (-1889) (1 Daughter)



William (1864-1876) (Unmarried)
Thomas-1899-Lady Mary Villiers (1864-1915) (1877-1933)
Edward (1866-1937) (Unmarried)
Georgiana-1889-Hugh Gough (1863-1943) (1849-1919) (1 Son 2 Daughters)
Katharine-1904-William Vane (1868-1954) (1859-1920) (1 Son 2 Daughters)



Edward-1925-Christine Trew (1902-1961) (1900-1980) (No Children)
Margaret-1928-Henry Lamb (1904-1999) (1883-1960) (1 Son 2 Daughters)
Francis-1931-Elizabeth Harman (1905-2001) (1906-2002)
Mary-1939-Meysey Clive (1907-2010) (1907-1943) (1 Son 1 Daughter)
Violet-1934-Anthony Powell (1912-2002) (1905-2000) (2 Sons)
Julia-1938-Robert Mount (1913-1956) (1907-1969) (1 Son 1 Daughter)



**Thomas
8th Earl
(1933-)**

Patrick
(1937-2005)

Michael
(1943-)

Kevin
(1947-)

Antonia
(1932-)

Judith
(1940-)

Rachel
(1942-)

Catherine
(1946-1969)



Appendix 3. Marriage and nationality patterns of Westmeath aristocrats and their children from year of elevation to 1923.

To whom Married	Chapman (1782)		Ennis (1866)		Greville (1869)		Handcock (1812)		Levinge (1704)		Nugent (D) (1768)		Nugent (B) (1795)		Pakenham (1756)	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
Aristocrat					3	1	2	4	4	3			1		6	2
Landed Gentry	3			2	1		6	1	3	2	2	2	3	3	3	3
Relative	2															
Military					1	2	4	5	2	1			1	2		2
Business/Merchant			1		2				2		1		1			
Civil Service																
Barrister							1									
Solicitor											1					
Land Agent											1					
Clergy										1			1		1	
Thespian									1							
Antiquary				1												
Unmarried	2	5	1		1		3		3		5	4	3		10	
Unknown									2					1		
Total	7	5	2	3	8	3	16	10	17	7	10	6	10	6	20	7
Nationality of Spouse																
English				1	5		6	4	6	2	1		4	1	5	2
Irish	5		1	2	1	1	7	6	5	5	4	2	2	5	5	5
French						1										
Australian						1			2							
American					1											
Canadian									1							
Spanish													1			

. *2nd marriages excluded. [D = Donore][B = Ballinlough]

136 = number of Westmeath aristocrats and their children. (Male 89)(Female 47) 38 = number of females that married. 29 = number of males that married Irish women.

37 = number of persons who did not marry (male 28)(female 9) 27 = number of males that married English women. 5 = number of males that married women from other countries. 10 = number of females that married English women. 99 = number of persons that married. 61 = number of males that married. 26 = number of females that married Irish men. 2 = number of females that married men from other countries

Appendix 4. Education patterns of Westmeath aristocrats and their children from year of elevation to 1923.

School/University Attended	Chapman	Ennis	Greville	Handcock	Levinge	Nugent (Donore)	Nugent (Ballinlough)	Pakenham	Total
Eton	2			1					3
Winchester								2	2
Rugby			1		1				1
Royal School Armagh								2	2
Radley			1						1
Harrow				1					1
Downside						1			1
Stoneyhurst		2							2
Oscott & Ushaw Schools						1			1
Old Hall Green						1			1
Beaumont						2			2
Unknown	5		6	13	17	2	10	14	67
Total	7	2	8	15	18	7	10	18	85
Christ Church	1	1						1	3
Oriel					1			1	2
Trinity College	2					1			3
UCD						1			1
Royal Agricultural	1								1
Haileybury (East India College)					1				1
Military			4	7	7	1	5	10	34
Clergyman				1		1		2	4
Barrister					1				1
Civil Service/Diplomat					2			1	3
Unknown	3	1	4	7	6	3	5	3	31

Not recorded: Three cases where aristocrats having completed university education entered military and civil service.

Appendix 5. Principal career of sons of Westmeath aristocrats from year of elevation to 1923.

Principal Career	Chapman (1782)		Ennis (1866)		Greville (1869)		Handcock (1812)		Levinge (1704)		Nugent (D) (1768)		Nugent (B) (1795)		Pakenham (1756)	
	Eld.	Oth.	Eld.	Oth.	Eld.	Oth.	Eld.	Oth.	Eld.	Oth.	Eld.	Oth.	Eld.	Oth.	Eld.	Oth.
Military	(1)				1	1	(1)	4(1)	(2)	5	(1)	1		2 (1)	(3)	8 (1)
Militia					(1)	(1)			(1)				(1)		(1)	
Politician	(2)		(2)		(3)	1			(2)		(1)	(1)			(1)	(1)
Civil Service									(1)	3						1
Barrister								1								
Clergy								1				1				2
Land Owner	3	3	2		3	1	3	2	10	1	3	1	3	2	5	1
Unknown		1				1	1	1		3		4	1	2		3
Total	3	4	2	0	4	4	4	9	10	12	3	7	4	6	5	15
Rank																
General															(1)	2(1)
Admiral																2
Captain (Navy)															(1)	1
Lieutenant (Navy)													2			
Colonel																
Lieut-Colonel								2	(1)	1			(1)			
Major					(1)					1			(1)	(1)	(1)	2
Captain	(1)				1	1	(1)	1	(1)	1	(1)					1
Lieutenant						(1)		1 (1)	(1)			1			(1)	
N.C.O.										2						

* Eld. = Eldest son. Oth.= Other sons.

[D = Donore][B = Ballinlough]

() = Land owner who also served as a politician, civil service or in the military.

Total = 92 sons

Appendix 6. Rent Abatements granted by aristocratic landlords, 1879-1903.

Date	Landlord	Tenant	Remarks
17.10.1879	Lord Longford	County Longford Estate. ¹	10% reduction for agricultural tenants provided they were not in arrears.
23.10.1879	Sir John Ennis	All tenants. ²	Reduction offered-amount not stated.
25.10.1879	Lord Longford	All agricultural tenants. ³	10% reduction in rents if paid before end of year.
11.10.1880	Lord Longford	All agricultural tenants. ⁴	10% reduction in rents if paid before end of year.
8.3.1881	Sir Benjamin Chapman	Certain tenants only. ⁵	10% reduction offered to some tenants.
6.8.1881	Lord Castlemaine	All tenants. ⁶	10% reduction offered to tenants.
1881	Sir Richard Levinge	All tenants. ⁷	10 to 25 per cent reduction.
7.11.1885	Lord Longford	Cookesborough Estate. ⁸	25% reduction requested but refused by landlord.
6.11.1886	Lord Longford	All tenants ⁹	3s in the pound on rents due.
6.2.1886	Lord Castlemaine	All tenants ¹⁰	15% abatement in rents due.
21.5.1887	Lady Nugent	Delvin tenants ¹¹	Large tenants: 10% reduction. Small tenants and those under £60 per year: 15% reduction.

¹ *Freeman's Journal*, 17 Oct. 1879.

² *Irish Times*, 23 Oct. 1879.

³ *Irish Times*, 25 Oct. 1879.

⁴ *Irish Times*, 11 Oct. 1880.

⁵ *Irish Times*, 8 Mar. 1881.

⁶ *Nation*, 6 Aug. 1881.

⁷ Ann Murtagh, *Portrait of a Westmeath tenant community, 1879-85* (Dublin, 1999), pp 21-2.

⁸ *Westmeath Examiner*, 7 Nov. 1885

⁹ *Westmeath Examiner*, 6 Nov. 1886.

¹⁰ *Irish Times*, 6 Feb. 1886.

¹¹ *Westmeath Examiner*, 21 May 1887.

Appendix 7. Application to Sub-Commission for rent adjustments, 1879-1903.

Date	Landlord	Tenant	Remarks
9.2.1882	Lord Castlemaine	J Duggan. ¹² Thomas Ganly	Rent: £30 10s 2d. Farm: 48a 2r 20p. Valuation: £27 15s. Rent: £58 6s. Farm: 76a 1r 11p. Valuation: £47 15s.
14.2.1882	Sir Benjamin Chapman	Rev J. Higgins DD. ¹³ Rev J. Phillips CC	Old Rent: £147 14s 2d. Farm: 136a 2r 33p. Valuation: £65 10s. New Rent: £100.
27.2.1882	Lord Greville	J. McCord. ¹⁴	Old Rent: £6. Farm: 4a 3r 1p. Valuation: 15s. New Rent: £4.
15.3.1882	Lord Greville	B. Beahan. ¹⁵ J. Moore J. Mangan J. Mangan J. Simons	Old Rent: £86 4s. Farm: 48a 0r 17p. Valuation: £60. New Rent: £64 7s 6d. Old Rent: £54 11s 5d. Farm: 47a 1r 34p. Valuation: £40 15s. New Rent: £44 7s 2d. Old Rent: £73 15s. Farm: 92a 2r 30p. Valuation: £60. New Rent: £63 14s 4d. Old Rent: £22 6s 8d. Farm: 25a 1r 30p. Valuation: £19 5s. New Rent: £19 5s 2d. Old Rent: £12 7s 5d. Farm: 13a 1r 13p. Valuation: £10. New Rent: £11 2s 3d.
20.10.1882	Sir Benjamin Chapman	Cornelius Fagan. ¹⁶	Old Rent: £57 10s. New Rent: £45. Valuation: £30 10s.
25.11.1882	Assignees of Sir Walter Nugent	P. Kenna. ¹⁷ Peter Seery J. Mc Cormack M. Loughrey T. Loughrey	Old Rent: £8. New Rent: £5. Valuation: £6. Old Rent: £124 6s 11d. New Rent: £103. Valuation: £80 10s. Old Rent: £128 7s 10d. New Rent: £106. Valuation: £86. Old Rent: £45 13s 1d. New Rent: £31 15s. Valuation: £33. Old Rent: £45. New Rent: £36. Valuation: £33.

¹² *Freeman's Journal*, 9 Feb. 1882.

¹³ *Freeman's Journal*, 14 Feb. 1882.

¹⁴ *Freeman's Journal*, 27 Feb. 1882.

¹⁵ *Westmeath Examiner*, 15 Mar. 1882.

¹⁶ *Freeman's Journal*, 20 Oct. 1882.

¹⁷ *Dundalk Democrat*, 25 Nov. 1882.

Appendix 7. (Continued).

Date	Landlord	Tenant	Remarks
3.2.1883	Lord Longford	William Gelsingham. ¹⁸	Rent: £34 15s. Farm: 41a 1r 35p. Valuation: £28 15s.
3.2.1883	Sir Benjamin Chapman	Number not stated. ¹⁹	Applications to reduce rent
24.2.1883	Sir Richard Levinge	John Carroll. ²⁰	Application to reduce rent Farm valued: £106 8s. Buildings: £6.
24.2.1883	Sir Benjamin Chapman	Julia Nally. ²¹ Thomas L'Estrange	Rent: £39 3s 8d. Farm: 45a 0r 5p. Farm valuation: £34 15s. Buildings: £7 8s. Rent: £16 18s. Farm: 14a 2r 12p. Valuation: £7 5s.
24.2.1883	Assignees of Sir Walter Nugent	Thomas O' Neill. ²²	Rent: £80. Farm: 90a 2r 33p. Valuation: £68 5s.
24.2.1883	Lord Greville	Edward Donnelly. ²³ Stephen Cassidy George Williams Michael Hyland Thomas Boyhan Bryan Cavanagh Bryan Wallace James Duffy Patrick Nally William Donegan Patrick Donnelly John Donnelly	Rent: £31 14s 9d. Farm: 21a. Valuation: £18 5s. Rent: £18 12s 10d. Farm: 21a 0r 25p. Valuation: £15 15s. Rent: £6 16s 6d. Farm: 9a 2r 35p. Valuation: £5 5s. Rent: £6. Farm: 8a 3r 25p. Valuation: £4 15s. Rent: £7 15s. Farm: 6a. Valuation: £5 15s. Rent: £8 12s 7d. Farm: 6a 5r 3p. Valuation: £7 15s. Rent: £22 12s 6d. Farm: 28a 2r 35p. Valuation: £20 10s. Rent: £11 16s 7d. Farm: 16a 2r 10p. Valuation: £10. Rent: £7 13s 6d. Farm: 9a 1r 0p. Valuation: £5. Rent: £44 17s. Farm: 45a 2r 17p. Valuation: £26 10s. Rent: £40 10s. Farm: 51a 3r 8p. Valuation: £32 10s. Rent: £15 9s. Farm: 17a 2r 35p. Valuation: £10 10s

¹⁸ *Westmeath Examiner*, 3 Feb. 1883.

¹⁹ *Westmeath Examiner*, 3 Feb. 1883.

²⁰ *Westmeath Examiner*, 24 Feb. 1883.

²¹ *Westmeath Examiner*, 24 Feb. 1883.

²² *Westmeath Examiner*, 24 Feb. 1883.

²³ *Westmeath Examiner*, 24 Feb. 1883.

Appendix 7. (Continued).

Date	Landlord	Tenant	Remarks
22.3.1883	Assignees of Sir Walter Nugent	Peter Fitzgerald. ²⁴	Application to reduce rent from £175 to £138. Refused.
31.3.1883	Sir Benjamin Chapman	J. Nally. ²⁵ T. L'Estrange Mr. Carroll	Old Rent: £39 11s. New Rent: £33 12s. Old Rent: £10 13s. New Rent: £7 15s. Old Rent: £16 2 1d New Rent: £12.
31.3.1883	Lord Longford	Mr. Sharry. ²⁶ Mr. Judge	Old Rent: £64 New Rent: £64. Old Rent: £42. New Rent: £35 15s.
4.5.1883	Sir Benjamin Chapman	Cornelius Fagan. ²⁷	Old Rent: £44 New Rent: £45. Farm: 33a 2r 7p. Valuation: 31 8s.
12.5.1883	Sir Benjamin Chapman	Samuel Belton. ²⁸	Old Rent: £170. New Rent: £155.
1.8.1883	Sir John Ennis	J. Hynes	Rent: £13 18s 6d. Farm: 17a 3r 33p. Valuation: £12.
4.8.1883	Assignees of Sir Walter Nugent	P. Dogherty. ²⁹	Old Rent: £13 11s 10d. New Rent: £9 10s. Valuation: £10 10s.
4.8.1883	Lord Castlemaine	C. Shealey. ³⁰	Old Rent: £42 1s 6d. New Rent: £35. Valuation: £30.
13.10.1883	Lord Greville	Margaret Mulreedy. ³¹	Rent: £2 15s. Farm: 10a 0r 12p. Valuation: £2 10s.
13.10.1883	Sir Benjamin Chapman	Christopher Fleming. ³²	Rent: £85 17s 5d. Farm: 55a 0r 11p. Valuation: £36.
10.5. 1884	Sir Benjamin Chapman	Mary McCormick. ³³ Denis Finn	Rent: £18 18s 6d. Farm: 23a 2r 0p. Valuation: £17. Rent: £17 2s 2d. Farm: 21a 3r 0p. Valuation: £15 5s.
14.3.1885	Lord Greville	Joseph Smith. ³⁴ Bridget Daly Edward Ward	Rent: £144. Farm: 122a 1r 27p. Valuation: £105. Rent: £13 0s 9d. Farm: 15a 3r 12p. Valuation: £12 10s. Old Rent: £9 10s. New Rent: £8.

²⁴ *Freeman's Journal*, 22 Mar. 1883.

²⁵ *Westmeath Examiner*, 31 Mar. 1883

²⁶ *Westmeath Examiner*, 31 Mar. 1883.

²⁷ *Freeman's Journal*, 4 May 1883.

²⁸ *Westmeath Examiner*, 12 May 1883.

²⁹ *Westmeath Examiner*, 4 Aug. 1883.

³⁰ *Westmeath Examiner*, 4 Aug. 1883.

³¹ *Westmeath Examiner*, 13 Oct. 1883.

³² *Westmeath Examiner*, 13 Oct. 1883

³³ *Westmeath Examiner*, 10 May 1884.

³⁴ *Westmeath Examiner*, 14 Mar. 1885.

Appendix 7. (Continued).

Date	Landlord	Tenant	Remarks
14.3.1885	Assignees of Sir Walter Nugent	Ellen Shiel. ³⁵ Michael Glynn Mr. Tormey Mr. Blueman Bridget Cox	Rent: £6 10s. Farm: 7a. Valuation: £4 5s. Rent: Not stated. Farm: 1a 3r 30p. Valuation: £1. Rent: £2. Farm: 2a 0r 26p. Valuation: £1 5s 7d. Rent: £4 12s 6d. Farm: 5a 2r 11p. Valuation: £3 5s. Rent: £5. Farm: 5a 3r 25p. Valuation: £3.
21.4.1888.	Sir Benjamin Chapman	Andrew Sheridan. ³⁶ John Lynn James O'Hara Mary O' Donnell	Old Rent: £5 15s 10d. Judicial Rent: £4 10s. Old Rent: £10. Judicial Rent: £10. Old Rent: £4 13s 9d. Judicial Rent: £3. Old Rent: £4 13s 9d. Judicial Rent: £3.
14.7.1888	Lord Longford	Michael Dunne	Old Rent: £57 2s 6d. Judicial Rent: £36. New Rent: £40.
13.4.1889	Hon. Patrick Greville-Nugent	Christopher Gilsean. ³⁷	Old Rent: £25 4s 8d. Judicial Rent: £18.
13.4.1889	Lady Letita Nugent	Bartle Whelehan. ³⁸ -do.- James Rooney William Conlon James Murphy	Old Rent: £22 10s. Judicial Rent: £20. Old Rent: £75 8s. Judicial Rent: £58. Old Rent: £276 5s 4. Judicial Rent: £232. Old Rent: £319 17s. Judicial Rent: £270. Old Rent: £128. Judicial Rent: £105.
31.8.1889	Assignees of Sir Walter Nugent	C. D. Brennan. ³⁹ T. Kelly J. Gaffney T. Montgomery P. Killien	Valuation: Unact'd. Old Rent: £3 4s. Judicial Rent: £2 10s. Valuation: £15 5s. Old Rent: £16 16s. Judicial Rent: £14 14s. Valuation: £4. Old Rent: £4. Judicial Rent: £3 5s. Valuation: £8 10s. Old Rent: £10 10s. Judicial Rent: £8 5s. Valuation: £6 10s. Old Rent: £9 10s. Judicial Rent: £8.

³⁵ *Westmeath Examiner*, 14 Mar. 1885.

³⁶ *Ballinrobe Chronicle*, 21 Apr. 1888.

³⁷ *Westmeath Examiner*, 13 Apr. 1889.

³⁸ *Westmeath Examiner*, 13 Apr. 1889.

³⁹ *Westmeath Examiner*, 31 Aug. 1889.

Appendix 7. (Continued).

Date	Landlord	Tenant	Remarks
26.10.1889	Sir Montagu Chapman	Thomas Geoghegan. ⁴⁰	Old Rent: £22 10s. New Rent: £15 15s.
26.10.1889	Lady Letitia Nugent	William Brennan. ⁴¹	Old Rent: £19 13s 4d. New Rent: £2 2s.
28.12.1889	Henry Corbyn Levinge (Knockdrin Castle)	Mary Shaw. ⁴² James Crowley M. Gaynor	Old Rent: £56. Judicial Rent: £46. Old Rent: £182. Judicial Rent: £182. Old Rent: £20. Judicial Rent: £16 5s.
28.12.1889	Lord Greville	Patrick Hughes. ⁴³ Thomas Gaynor	Old Rent: £47 15s. Judicial Rent: £35. Old Rent: £97 1s 10d. Judicial Rent: £90.
28.12.1889	Assignees of Sir Walter Nugent	M. Gorman. ⁴⁴ Edward Fay Thomas Keogh Matt Nolan Bt. Gaffney E Dalton Mary Gilligan	Old Rent: £46 15s 10d. Judicial Rent: £38 10s. Old Rent: £8 6s 6d. Judicial Rent: £6 10s. Old Rent: £25 6s. Judicial Rent: £21. Old Rent: £15 15s. Judicial Rent: £11 10s. Old Rent: £6 14s 3d. Judicial Rent: £4 10s. Old Rent: £2. Judicial Rent: £1 10s. Old Rent: £33 6s 8d. Judicial Rent: £27 16.
28.12.1889	Hon. Patrick Greville- Nugent	L. Healy. ⁴⁵ Joseph Gibney William Daly	Old Rent: £24 9s. Judicial Rent: £21 5s. Old Rent: £8 8s 9d. Judicial Rent: £6. Old Rent: £22 10s 9d. Judicial Rent: £20.
28.12.1889	Lady Letitia Nugent	Mrs E. Ham. ⁴⁶	Old Rent: £38 1s 4d. Judicial Rent: £31.
28.12.1889	Sir Montagu Chapman	T. McLoughlin. ⁴⁷ Michael Carrigy -do.- Thomas O'Beirne	Old Rent: £138 5s 8d. Judicial Rent: £100. Old Rent: £1 10s. Judicial Rent: 10s. Old Rent: £25 19s 4d. Judicial Rent: £22 10s. Old Rent: £59 19s 2d. Judicial Rent: £42 15s.
28.12.1889	Lord Longford	Simon Neill. ⁴⁸	Old Rent: £45s. Judicial Rent: £37.

⁴⁰ *Westmeath Examiner*, 26 Oct. 1889.

⁴¹ *Westmeath Examiner*, 26 Oct. 1889.

⁴² *Westmeath Examiner*, 28 Dec. 1889.

⁴³ *Westmeath Examiner*, 28 Dec. 1889.

⁴⁴ *Westmeath Examiner*, 28 Dec. 1889.

⁴⁵ *Westmeath Examiner*, 28 Dec. 1889.

⁴⁶ *Westmeath Examiner*, 28 Dec. 1889.

⁴⁷ *Westmeath Examiner*, 28 Dec. 1889.

⁴⁸ *Westmeath Examiner*, 28 Dec. 1889.

Appendix 7. (Continued).

Date	Landlord	Tenant	Remarks
26.4.1890	Lord Longford	Andrew Caddell. ⁴⁹ Joseph Keating	Old Rent: £27. Farm: 32a 3r 7p. Valuation: £20 10s. Judicial Rent: £22 10s. Old Rent: £19. Farm: 25a 3r 6p. Valuation: £16 5s. Judicial Rent: £17 9s.
24.5.1890	Lord Longford	Bridget Corroons. ⁵⁰ J. Kelleghan Catherine Whyte James Cleary Margaret Coyne Bryan Flynn Jas Cleary	Farm: 17a 3r 10p. Rent: £10 10s. Valuation: £8 10s. Farm: 52a 1r 18p. Rent: £50 5s 8d. Valuation: £34. Farm: 32a 3 32p Rent: £96 14s 5d. Valuation: £97 10s. Farm: 114a 1r 6p. Rent: £73 8s. Valuation: £70. Farm: 32a 3r 7p. Rent: £25 18s 7d. Valuation: £23. Farm: 35a 0r 20p. Rent: £21 12s. Valuation: £23 10s. Farm: 25a 0r 25p Rent: £20 14s. Valuation: £16.

⁴⁹ *Westmeath Examiner*, 26 Apr. 1890.

⁵⁰ *Westmeath Examiner*, 24 May 1890.

Appendix 7. (Continued).

Date	Landlord	Tenant	Remarks
24.5.1890	Lord Castlemaine	P. Dunning. ⁵¹ M. Corrigan J. Fitzpatrick T. Connor J. Doyle T. Daly J. Berry T. Hynds J. Murray J. Nugent M. Flynn J. Moran K. Growney J. Claffey M. Runnell P. Murray	Old Rent: £19 11s 2d. New Rent: £19 11s 2d. Old Rent: £12 6s 2d. New Rent: £11. Old Rent: £16. New Rent: £16. Old Rent: £10 17s 6d. New Rent: £9 5s. Old Rent: £11 16s 3d. New Rent: £9 15s. Old Rent: £14 18s 3d. New Rent: £11 12s. Old Rent: £10 17s. New Rent: £9 10s. Old Rent: £28. New Rent: £25 5s. Old Rent: £66. New Rent: £60. Old Rent: £126. New Rent: £104. Old Rent: £13 1s 8d. New Rent: £9. Old Rent: £15. New Rent: £11 10s. Old Rent: £23 8s 10. New Rent: £21 10s. Old Rent: £31 16s. New Rent: £31 16s. Old Rent: £6 9s 3d. New Rent: £4 4s. Old Rent: £21 2s 2d. New Rent: £18 15s.
12.7.1890	Lord Longford	Mark Murray. ⁵²	Farm: 89a 0r 13p. Rent: £110. Valuation: £70.
12.7.1890	Lady Letitia Nugent	Thomas Connell. ⁵³	Farm: 107a 1r 10p. Rent: £209 18s 3d. Valuation: £181 3s.
30.8.1890	Assignees of Sir Walter Nugent	James West. ⁵⁴	Valuation: £45. Old Rent: £59 9s 5d. Judicial Rent: £45.

⁵¹ *Westmeath Examiner*, 24 May 1890.

⁵² *Westmeath Examiner*, 12 Jul. 1890.

⁵³ *Westmeath Examiner*, 12 Jul. 1890.

⁵⁴ *Westmeath Examiner*, 30 Aug. 1890.

Appendix 7. (Continued).

Date	Landlord	Tenant	Remarks
30.8.1890	Lord Longford	E. Gorren. ⁵⁵ B. Connors J. Kellaghan Luke White J. Cleary Hugh Coyne B Flynn Mark Murray	Valuation: £10 5s. Old Rent: £.12 12s. Judicial Rent: £12. Valuation: £8 10s. Old Rent: £10 10s. Judicial Rent: £10 10s. Valuation: £34. Old Rent: £50 5s 8d. Judicial Rent: £35. Valuation: £67 10s. Old Rent: £96 14s 5d. Judicial Rent: £72. Valuation: £70. Old Rent: £73 8s. Judicial Rent: £73 8s. Valuation: £22. Old Rent: £25 18 10d. Judicial Rent: £19. Valuation: £23 10s. Old Rent: £27 12s. Judicial Rent: £21 15s. Valuation: £70 10s. Old Rent: £108 19s. Judicial Rent: £84.
30.8.1890	Henry Corbyn Levinge (Knockdrin Castle)	W. B. Lee. ⁵⁶ E. Coghlan	Valuation: £104 5s. Old Rent: £126 4s 10d. Judicial Rent: £120. Valuation: £17 15s. Old Rent: £22 6s 4d. Judicial Rent: £18 5s.
30.8.1890	Lady Letitia Nugent	T. Connell. ⁵⁷	Valuation: £181 3s. Old Rent: £209 18s 3d. Judicial Rent: £174.
22.11.1890	Sir Montagu Chapman	Richard Malowney. ⁵⁸	Old Rent: £8. New Rent: £8 1s 3d.
27.3.1891	Lord Greville	Thomas Gaynor	Old Rent: £97 1s 10d. Judicial Rent: £90. New Rent: £83.
25.4.1891	Hon. Patrick Greville- Nugent	N. Monaghan -do.- John Taaffe	Old Rent: £8 18s 4d. Judicial Rent: £6. Old Rent: £39 7s 9d. Judicial Rent: £33. Old Rent: £33 15s. Judicial Rent: £23.
25.4.1891	Henry Corbyn Levinge (Knockdrin Castle)	J. Galvin. Anne Low M. Warburton	Old Rent: £. Judicial Rent: £. Old Rent: £. Judicial Rent: £. Old Rent: £. Judicial Rent: £.

⁵⁵ *Westmeath Examiner*, 30 Aug. 1890.

⁵⁶ *Westmeath Examiner*, 30 Aug. 1890.

⁵⁷ *Westmeath Examiner*, 30 Aug. 1890.

⁵⁸ *Westmeath Examiner*, 22 Nov. 1890.

Appendix 7. (Continued).

Date	Landlord	Tenant	Remarks
25.4.1891	Lord Castlemaine	Daniel Doyle. ⁵⁹ William Nolan Catherine Reddin Pat Malone Bernard Costello John Lynam Daniel Meehan Richard Talbot Margaret Carberry Adam Dillon Bridget Gehan	Old Rent: £14 10s. Judicial Rent: £11. Old Rent: £30. Judicial Rent: £30. Old Rent: £12 16s 8d. Judicial Rent: £12. Old Rent: £21 0s 10d. Judicial Rent: £19. Old Rent: £16 7s 6d. Judicial Rent: £12. Old Rent: £10. Judicial Rent: Dismissed. Old Rent: £42 12s 6d. Judicial Rent: £32 5s. Old Rent: £22 9s. Judicial Rent: £20. Old Rent: £16. Judicial Rent: £14 10s. Old Rent: £16 1s 4d. Judicial Rent: £16 1s 4d. Old Rent: £10 4s 8d. Judicial Rent: £9 10s.
6.6.1891	Lady Letitia Nugent	Thomas Weir. ⁶⁰ Anne Russell John Donoghue Ellen Ryan	Old Rent: £90. Judicial Rent: £80. Old Rent: £11. Judicial Rent: £7 10s. Old Rent: £24 12s 8d. Judicial Rent: £24 12s 8d. Old Rent: £16. Judicial Rent: £13.
6.6.1891	Lord Greville	B. Garry. ⁶¹	Old Rent: £28 10s 4d. Judicial Rent: £19 10s.
15.8.1891	Sir Montagu Chapman	Charles Fagan. ⁶² Charles Fagan Mary Murtagh	Old Rent: £6 3s. Judicial Rent: £4 10s. Old Rent: £25 14s 8d. Judicial Rent: £20 10s. Old Rent: £32 16s 1d. Judicial Rent: £26.
15.8.1891	Lady Letitia Nugent	Ellen Dunne Julia Connaughty James Nedley Bernard Connell	Old Rent: £47 7s 6d. Judicial Rent: £32. Old Rent: £17 3s 2d. Valuation: £11 10s. Old Rent: £55. Valuation: £45. Old Rent: £6. Valuation: £4.
15.8.1891	Lord Longford	James Gibson. ⁶³ James Mulligan Thomas Daly	Old Rent: £159 10s. Valuation: £140. Old Rent: £50. Valuation: £46. Old Rent: £16. Valuation: £14.

⁵⁹ *Westmeath Examiner*, 25 Apr. 1891.

⁶⁰ *Westmeath Examiner*, 6 Jun. 1891.

⁶¹ *Westmeath Examiner*, 6 Jun. 1891.

⁶² *Westmeath Examiner*, 15 Aug. 1891.

⁶³ *Westmeath Examiner*, 15 Aug. 1891.

Appendix 7. (Continued).

Date	Landlord	Tenant	Remarks
21.11.1891	Lord Greville	Hugh Fitzpatrick. ⁶⁴ Bernard Coyle	Old Rent: £7 0s 7d. Valuation: £5 7s. Judicial Rent: £5 5s. Old Rent: £11 19s 6d. Valuation: £12 15s. Judicial Rent: £10.
3.12.1892	Sir Benjamin Chapman	John Lynn. ⁶⁵	Old Rent: £10. Farm: 555a 2r 0p. Valuation: £8. Judicial rent: £10. New Rent: £8.
11.2.1893	Lady Letitia Nugent	J. Casey. ⁶⁶ Thomas Leavy William Murray A. Carroll James Buck James McNally John Buck Bryan Buck Anne Dunne P. Potterton John Casey	Landlady's Valuation £49 6s. £53 6s. £75 9s. £13 13s. £17 16s. £13 15s. £9 11s. £9 13s. £18 2s 6d. £4 16s. £14 14s.
30.9.1893	Assignees of Sir Walter Nugent Lady Letitia. Nugent. Lord Greville. Sir Montagu Chapman. Lord Longford. Lord Castlemaine.	Seven tenants. ⁶⁷ (Not identified) Four tenants. (Not identified) Two tenants. (Not identified) One tenant. (Not identified) One tenant. (Not identified) Three tenants. (Not identified)	
19.5.1894	Lord Longford	Hannah McKinley. ⁶⁸	Old Rent: £35. Farm: 13a 3r 34p. Valuation: Not stated. New Rent: Not stated.

⁶⁴ *Anglo-Celt*, 21 Nov. 1891.

⁶⁵ *Connaught Telegraph*, 3 Dec. 1892.

⁶⁶ *Westmeath Examiner*, 11 Feb. 1893.

⁶⁷ *Westmeath Examiner*, 30 Sept. 1893

⁶⁸ *Westmeath Examiner*, 19 May 1894.

Appendix 7. (Continued).

Date	Landlord	Tenant	Remarks
29.9.1894	Assignees of Sir Walter Nugent	James Moran. ⁶⁹ James West Edward Murray Mary Daly Ellen Flanagan	Old Rent: Not stated. Valuation: Not stated. New Rent: Not stated Landlord Valuation: £17 2s. Tenant Valuation: £41 0s 6d. Old Rent: £18. Farm: 33a 1r 31p. Valuation: £19 5s. Old Rent: £140 16s 3d. Farm: 147a 2r 34p. Valuation: £109. Old Rent: £7 16s 6d. Farm: 10a 1r 12p. Valuation: £5 10s. Old Rent: £7 16s 6d. Farm: 10a 0r 19p. Valuation: £5 10s.
29.9.1894	Henry Corbyn Levinge (Knockdrin Castle)	C. McGrath. ⁷⁰	Old Rent: £5. Farm: 6a 2r 35p. Valuation: £5.
20.10.1894	Lord Castlemaine	John Brien. ⁷¹	Old Rent: £20 3s 2d. Farm: 34a 3r 3p. Valuation: £17. New Rent: £15 10s.
1.6.1895	Lord Longford	John Kelly. ⁷² John Kelly	Old Rent: £22. Judicial Rent: £14 10s. Old Rent: £14 18s. Judicial Rent: £11.
1.6.1895	Sir Walter Nugent	Owen Kennedy. ⁷³	Old Rent: £29 3s 8d. Judicial Rent: £21.
19.10.1895	Lord Castlemaine	Laurence Harvey. ⁷⁴ John McGrath	Old Rent: £9 11s 2d. Farm: 19a 0r 15p. Valuation: £8 5s. New Rent: £6 10s. Old Rent: £7 4s 8d. Farm: 8a 0r 15p. Valuation: £6 5s. New Rent: £5 5s.
27.6.1896	Sir Walter Nugent	Christopher Taaffe. ⁷⁵ Charles Battersby	Old Rent: £50. Farm: 118a 0r 37p. Valuation: £101. Old Rent: Not stated. Farm: 56a 3r 34p. Valuation: £24.
23.1.1897	Lord Castlemaine	Geo J. Glanville ⁷⁶	Old Rent: £30. Farm: 12a 2r 34p. Valuation: £18 18s.

⁶⁹ *Westmeath Examiner*, 29 Sept. 1894.

⁷⁰ *Westmeath Examiner*, 29 Sept. 1894.

⁷¹ *Westmeath Examiner*, 20 Oct. 1894.

⁷² *Westmeath Examiner*, 1 Jun. 1895.

⁷³ *Westmeath Examiner*, 1 Jun. 1895.

⁷⁴ *Westmeath Examiner*, 19 Oct. 1895.

⁷⁵ *Westmeath Examiner*, 27 Jun. 1896.

⁷⁶ *Westmeath Examiner*, 23 Jan. 1897.

Appendix 7. (Continued).

Date	Landlord	Tenant	Remarks
20.3.1897	Lord Longford	Pat Clabby. ⁷⁷ Thomas Hegarty R. W. Raymond	Old Rent: £5 18s. Farm: 12a 1r 10p. Valuation: £4 15s. Old Rent: £40. Farm: 21a 3r 1p. Valuation: £15 15s. Old Rent: £214 1s. Farm: 209a. Valuation: £183 5s.
14.8.1897	Sir Montagu Chapman	Mary Miley. ⁷⁸ Catherine Gavagan W. Murtagh	Old Rent: £212. Farm: 178a 0r 39d. Judicial Rent: £155. Valuation: £150. Old Rent: £245 6s. Farm: 209a 2r 26p. Judicial Rent: £197. Valuation: £168 10s. Old Rent: £31 15s 6d. Farm: 34a. Judicial Rent: £28 12s 6d.
22.1.1898	Lord Castlemaine	Terence Sweeney. ⁷⁹ John Claffey Anne McDermott Michael Connor Michael Macken	Old Rent: £26 0s 10d. Farm: 28a 0r 25p. Valuation: £23. Old Rent: £16 4s 8d. Farm: 19a 1r 29p. Valuation: Not stated. Old Rent: £23 5s 6d. Farm: 38a 2r 14p. Valuation: £23. New Rent: £23. Old Rent: £24 10s. Farm: 38a 2r 14p. Valuation: £23 15s. New Rent: £17 15s. Old Rent: £11 10s. Farm: 19a 0r 36p. Valuation: £8 10s. New Rent: £9 15s.
28.5.1898	Lord Longford	Samuel Murphy. ⁸⁰ Eliza Maher	Old Rent: £105. Farm: 93a 1r 26p. Valuation: £78 5s. Old Rent: £35. Farm: 43a 0r 18p. Valuation: £31 10s. Judicial Rent: Not stated.
28.5.1898	Hon. George Greville & others	Francis Kearney. ⁸¹	Old Rent: £11 13s 8d. Farm: 17a 3r 10p. Valuation: £3. Judicial Rent: £

⁷⁷ *Westmeath Examiner*, 20 Mar. 1897.

⁷⁸ *Irish Times*, 14 Aug. 1897.

⁷⁹ *Westmeath Examiner*, 22 Jan. 1898.

⁸⁰ *Longford Leader*, 28 May 1898.

⁸¹ *Longford Leader*, 28 May 1898.

Appendix 7. (Continued).

Date	Landlord	Tenant	Remarks
3.12.1898	Lord Greville	Thomas Dibbs. ⁸² -do.-	Old Rent: £66 8s 5d. Farm: 50a 0r 3p. Valuation: £56. Old Rent: £41 11s 3d. Farm: 37a 1r 11p. Valuation: £30.
3.12.1898	Assignees of Sir Walter Nugent	James West. ⁸³ James Cox Christopher Brennan	Old Rent: £4. Farm: 6a 1r 36p. Valuation: £3. Old Rent: £47. Farm: 60a 0r 11p. Valuation: £37 10s. Old Rent: £4. Farm: 3a 0r 20p. Valuation: £2 15s.
5.11.1899	Hon. Patrick Greville-Nugent	John Lynch. ⁸⁴	Old Rent: £18. Judicial Rent: £12 15s. New Rent: £14.
5.11.1899	Sir Montagu Chapman	William Doran. ⁸⁵	Old Rent: £20 7s. Judicial Rent: £13. New Rent: £14 5s.
22.11.1899	Hon. Patrick Greville-Nugent	John Lynch. ⁸⁶	Old Rent: £16. Judicial Rent: £12 15s. New Rent: £14.
31.3.1900	Lord Longford	S. Murphy. ⁸⁷ M. A. Maher	Old Rent: £104 5s 6d. Judicial Rent: £79. New Rent: £79. Old Rent: £19. Judicial Rent: £16 13s. New Rent: £19.
11.5.1900	Lord Castlemaine	John Hughes. ⁸⁸ Thomas Macken	Old Rent: £7 6s. Judicial Rent: £5 10s. New Rent: £6. Old Rent: £5 9s 6d. Judicial Rent: £7. New Rent: £7.

⁸² *Westmeath Examiner*, 3 Dec. 1898.

⁸³ *Westmeath Examiner*, 3 Dec. 1898.

⁸⁴ *Westmeath Examiner*, 25 Nov. 1899

⁸⁵ *Westmeath Examiner*, 25 Nov. 1899.

⁸⁶ *Freeman's Journal*, 22 Nov. 1899.

⁸⁷ *Freeman's Journal*, 31 Mar. 1900.

⁸⁸ *Freeman's Journal*, 11 May 1900.

Appendix 7. (Continued).

Date	Landlord	Tenant	Remarks
19.5.1900	Sir Walter Nugent	Eliza Meehan. ⁸⁹ Denis Meehan Matthew Blake Eliza Murphy Patrick Murtagh Thomas O'Neill	Old Rent: £5 5s. Farm: 4a 8r 0p. Valuation: £7 10s. Old Rent: £18 15s. Farm: 28a 0r 3p. Valuation: £8 15s. Old Rent: £20. Farm: 44a 3r 9p. Valuation: £20 15s. Old Rent: £46 10s. Farm: 45a 1r 16p. Valuation: £41 15s. Old Rent: £40. Farm: 76a 3r 25p. Valuation: £44 15s. Old Rent: £71. Farm: 92a 9r 12p. Valuation: £64 10s.
19.5.1900	Lord Longford	Edward Holdwright. ⁹⁰	Old Rent: £74. Farm: 80a 3r 34p. Valuation: £55.
16.11.1901	Sir Walter Nugent	Thomas Meehan. ⁹¹	Old Rent: £28. Judicial Rent: £23 5s. New Rent: £23.
16.11.1901	Lord Castlemaine	Catherine Hughes. ⁹²	Old Rent: £12 4s 8d. Judicial Rent: £12 4s 8d. New Rent: £10 10s.
21.6.1902	Sir Walter Nugent	C. Boyce. ⁹³	Old Rent: £34. Judicial Rent: £24 8s.
21.6.1902	Lord Longford	J. Donlon. ⁹⁴	Old Rent: £4 15s. Judicial Rent: £4 15s.
21.6.1902	Sir Montagu Chapman	T. McAlarney. ⁹⁵ F. Fagan	Old Rent: £4 15s. Judicial Rent: £3 13s. Old Rent: £8 14s. Judicial Rent: £4 12s.
25.10.1902	Lord Longford	J. L'Estrange. ⁹⁶	Old Rent: £47 10s. Valuation: £43 10s. Judicial Rent: £38.
25.10.1902	Sir Richard Levinge	G. Mitchell. ⁹⁷	Old Rent: £113. Valuation: £113. Judicial Rent: £107 15s 6d.
29.8.1903	Hon. Edward Pakenham	Anne Shaw. ⁹⁸	Old Rent: £33 8s 6d. Judicial Rent: £36 13s 6d.
29.8.1903	Lord Greville	James Daly. ⁹⁹ James Connolly James Connolly	Old Rent: £20 5s. Judicial Rent: £15 14s. Old Rent: £6. Judicial Rent: £5 9s. Old Rent: £5 5s. Judicial Rent: £4 5s 6d.

⁸⁹ *Westmeath Examiner*, 19 May 1900.

⁹⁰ *Westmeath Examiner*, 19 May 1900.

⁹¹ *Irish Times*, 16 Nov. 1901.

⁹² *Irish Times*, 16 Nov. 1901.

⁹³ *Longford Leader*, 21 Jun. 1902.

⁹⁴ *Longford Leader*, 21 Jun. 1902.

⁹⁵ *Longford Leader*, 21 Jun. 1902.

⁹⁶ *Westmeath Examiner*, 25 Oct. 1902.

⁹⁷ *Westmeath Examiner*, 25 Oct. 1902.

⁹⁸ *Westmeath Examiner*, 29 Aug. 1903.

⁹⁹ *Westmeath Examiner*, 29 Aug. 1903.

Appendix 8. Eviction Notices served on aristocratic tenants, 1879-1903.

Date	Landlord	Tenants	Remarks
16.12.1882	Lord Greville	Thomas Dowdall, John Hope, Thomas Reynolds, Bernard Sexton, Peter Daly. (5) ¹⁰⁰	
30.6.1883	Sir John Ennis	Jane Sheerin. (1) ¹⁰¹	
15.3.1884	The assignees of Sir Walter Nugent	Hugh Brady, Matthew Loughrey. (2) ¹⁰²	
4.6.1885	Patrick Greville-Nugent	Two Tenants (Not identified). (2) ¹⁰³	
11.7.1885	Lord Greville	Bernard Reilly, Michael Clarke, Lawrence Boylan, Thomas Brophil, John Buckley, James Crenitch, John Gerety, Connor Kenny, P Mc Loughlin, Thomas Farrell, Maria Gillam, Anne Byrne, Margaret Murray, Thomas Keeran. (14) ¹⁰⁴	
21.3.1885	The assignees of Sir Walter Nugent	Matthew Blake, John Henry, Francis Mereghan, Patrick Shanley. (4) ¹⁰⁵	
28.2.1885	Lord Greville	Peter Nowlan, Christopher Nowlan. (2) ¹⁰⁶	
12.6.1886	The assignees of Sir Walter Nugent & others	Edward Mc Evoy, Rev. L. Gaughran PP. (2) ¹⁰⁷	
17.7.1886	Lord Greville	William D. Cleary. (1) ¹⁰⁸	
4.9.1886	Sir Benjamin Chapman	Thomas Black, Thomas Fay. (2) ¹⁰⁹	
10.3.1888	Lord Greville	Anne Murtagh, John Clarke, James Russell. (3) ¹¹⁰	
9.4.1898	Sir Montagu Chapman	Catherine Gavagan, Patrick Byrne, Jas Carey, Christopher Coogan. (4) ¹¹¹	
19.3.1898	Lord Greville	Mrs M. E. O'Beirne, P. O'Beirne and others. (2) ¹¹²	
7.6.1902	Lord Longford	Peter Heeney. Tenant owed 3½ years rent. Tenant offered £8 – refused by land agent. Tenant and sister evicted on 30.5.1902. ¹¹³	

¹⁰⁰ *Westmeath Examiner*, 16 Dec. 1882.

¹⁰¹ *Westmeath Examiner*, 30 Jun. 1883.

¹⁰² *Westmeath Examiner*, 15 Mar. 1884

¹⁰³ *Freeman's Journal*, 4 Jun. 1885.

¹⁰⁴ *Westmeath Examiner*, 11 Jul. 1885.

¹⁰⁵ *Westmeath Examiner*, 21 Mar. 1885.

¹⁰⁶ *Westmeath Examiner*, 28 Feb. 1885.

¹⁰⁷ *Westmeath Examiner*, 12 Jun. 1886.

¹⁰⁸ *Westmeath Examiner*, 17 Jul. 1886.

¹⁰⁹ *Westmeath Examiner*, 4 Sept. 1886

¹¹⁰ *Westmeath Examiner*, 10 Mar. 1886.

¹¹¹ *Westmeath Examiner*, 9 Apr. 1898.

¹¹² *Westmeath Examiner*, 19 Mar. 1898.

¹¹³ *Westmeath Examiner*, 7 Jun. 1902.

Appendix 9. Ejectment Decrees served on aristocratic tenants, 1879-1903.

Date	Landlord	Tenant	Remarks
28.10.1882	Sir John Ennis	Dan Curley.	Rent Due: £16. 9s 10d. Judge recommended tenant get benefit of Arrears Act. ¹¹⁴
20.1.1883	Lord Longford	Not stated. ¹¹⁵	
14.4.1883	Lord Longford	Margaret Glynn	Rent Due: £16. ¹¹⁶
14.4.1883	Sir Walter Nugent	Anne Blake	Rent Due: £13. ¹¹⁷
		Hugh Brady & Matthew Loughrey	Rent Due: £95 5s 7d.
		Thomas O Neill	Rent Due: £11 1s.
		James Mc Cabe	Rent Due: £10 10s.
		Michael Bryan	Rent Due: £18.
16.1.1886	Lord Castlemaine	William Ogle Caroline Feerin Brien Martin A. Moore G Bigley	Rent due: £13 8s 5d. ¹¹⁸ Rent due: £11. Rent due: £22. Rent due: £7. Rent Due:£19 19s 8d.
10.4.1886	Lord Castlemaine	Mr Harford B. Macken	Landlord obtained decree for possession by consent. ¹¹⁹ Landlord obtained decree against tenant for one year's rent of £11 10s.
15.1.1887	Hon. Patrick Greville-Nugent	Michael Plunkett	Landlord obtained decree by consent. ¹²⁰
15.1.1887	Sir Benjamin Chapman	Dominick & Francis Early. John Glynn & Edward Fagan James Gilsenan	Yearly rent: £55 17s. Rent due: £149 12s 6d. ¹²¹ Yearly rent: £24. Rent due: £60. Yearly rent: £57. Rent due: £85.
18.6.1887	Henry Corbyn Levinge (Knockdrin Castle)	William Mulligan	Yearly rent: £17 6s 4d. Two years rent due. ¹²²
18.6.1887	Assignees of Sir Walter Nugent	Margaret Monaghan & Ellen Monaghan. ¹²³ Pat Hanly	Yearly Rent: 14 13s 5d. Rent due: £29 14 10d. Rent due: £37 1s 4d.
21.4.1888	Lord Greville	Matthew Gillivan	Yearly rent: £8. Rent due: £7 10s. ¹²⁴
21.4.1888	Sir Benjamin Chapman	Edward Maguire	Rent due: £11 13s 1½ = 2½ years rent. ¹²⁵

¹¹⁴ *Westmeath Examiner*, 28 Oct. 1882.

¹¹⁵ *Westmeath Examiner*, 20 Jan. 1883.

¹¹⁶ *Westmeath Examiner*, 14 Mar. 1883.

¹¹⁷ *Westmeath Examiner*, 14 Mar. 1883.

¹¹⁸ *Westmeath Examiner*, 16 Jan. 1886.

¹¹⁹ *Westmeath Examiner*, 10 Apr. 1886.

¹²⁰ *Westmeath Examiner*, 15 Jan. 1887.

¹²¹ *Westmeath Examiner*, 15 Jan. 1887.

¹²² *Westmeath Examiner*, 18 Jun. 1887.

¹²³ *Westmeath Examiner*, 18 Jun. 1887.

¹²⁴ *Westmeath Examiner*, 21 Apr. 1888.

¹²⁵ *Westmeath Examiner*, 21 Apr. 1888.

Appendix 9. (Continued).

Date	Landlord	Tenant	Remarks
21.4.1888	Henry Corbyn Levinge (Knockdrin Castle)	Matthew Nooney & Maurice Hanlon P. Boyhan James Boyhan C. McLoughlin	Yearly rent: £38. Rent due: £93 12s 4d. ¹²⁶ Yearly rent: £68 10s. Rent due: £200 16s 10d. Yearly rent: £45 14s. Rent due: £194 4s. Yearly rent: £21. Rent due: £84.
21.4.1888	Lord Longford	Nicholas Sharry	Yearly rent: £61 Rent due: £128. ¹²⁷
12.1.1889	Assignees of Sir Walter Nugent	P. Keena	Rent due: £16 16s 1d. ¹²⁸ Decree for one year's rent and costs.
19.10.1889	Lady Letitia Nugent	Mary Walsh & James Sullivan Lawrence Keeffe	Yearly rent: £4 16s. Rent due: £16 16s Yearly rent: £68 15s. Rent due: £103 2s 6d. ¹²⁹
19.10.1889	Lord Longford	John Forde	Landlord sued tenant for possession of 1½ acres of bog. ¹³⁰
19.10.1889	Lord Castlemaine	Owen Tormey Thomas Kenny & W. Lynam Daniel Fitzpatrick	Yearly rent: £3 6s. Rent due: 13 4s. ¹³¹ House in Moate. Yearly rent: £8 10s. Rent due £31 5s 4½d. ¹³² Yearly rent: £31. Rent due: £68 10s 1d.
19.10.1889	Sir Montagu Chapman	John Rorke	Yearly Rent: £14 15s 5d. Rent due: £22 3s 1½d. ¹³³
25.1.1890	Sir Montagu Chapman	P. Farrell Laurence Madden	Six months rent due. ¹³⁴ Rent due: £9 1s 3d. Decree not to issue if a year's rent, less 10%, is paid in six weeks.
18.10.1890	Lord Castlemaine	Bridget Ganly, Robert English & Bradley	Yearly Rent: £17 7s 10d. Rent due: £51 15s 8d. ¹³⁵
15.4.1893	Lord Greville	11 Tenants (Not identified).	Up to four years rent due in some instances. ¹³⁶
28.10.1893	Lord Longford	Bridget Farrell	Yearly Rent: £7 10s. Rent due: £28 13s 2d. ¹³⁷
15.4.1899	Lord Greville	Bridget Sullivan Mary Ellen O'Beirne	Yearly Rent: £28. ¹³⁸ Rent due: £28. Yearly Rent: Not stated. Rent due: £12 12s.

¹²⁶ *Westmeath Examiner*, 21 Apr. 1888.

¹²⁷ *Westmeath Examiner*, 21 Apr. 1888.

¹²⁸ *Westmeath Examiner*, 12 Jan. 1889.

¹²⁹ *Westmeath Examiner*, 19 Oct. 1889.

¹³⁰ *Westmeath Examiner*, 19 Oct. 1889.

¹³¹ *Westmeath Examiner*, 19 Oct. 1889.

¹³² *Westmeath Examiner*, 19 Oct. 1889.

¹³³ *Westmeath Examiner*, 19 Oct. 1889.

¹³⁴ *Westmeath Examiner*, 25 Jan. 1890.

¹³⁵ *Westmeath Examiner*, 18 Oct. 1890.

¹³⁶ *Anglo-Celt*, 15 Apr. 1893.

¹³⁷ *Westmeath Examiner*, 28 Oct. 1893.

¹³⁸ *Westmeath Examiner*, 15 Apr. 1899.

Appendix 10. Evictions in County Westmeath 1870-1903.

Year	Number of Evictions (Families)	Number of Evictions (Persons)	Number re-admitted as tenants (Families)	Number re-admitted as tenants (Persons)	Number re-admitted as caretakers (Families)	Number re-admitted as caretakers (Persons)	No. of tenants converted into caretakers under S.7 1887 act
1870	20	81	-	-	-	-	-
1871	24	99	-	-	-	-	-
1872	9	50	-	-	-	-	-
1873	13	71	-	-	-	-	-
1874	10	31	-	-	-	-	-
1875	20	54	-	-	-	-	-
1876	20	79	-	-	-	-	-
1877	21	72	-	-	-	-	-
1878	18	55	-	-	-	-	-
1879	56	214	-	-	-	-	-
1880	36	162	-	-	-	-	-
1881	14	61	2	14	6	15	-
1882	127	528	31	116	55	235	-
1883*	58	122	-	-	28	141	-
1884	35	100	3	7	15	57	-
1885	47	174	-	-	27	112	-
1886	54	228	4	18	27	123	-
1887	47	195	-	-	24	119	-
1888	8	-	-	-	-	-	219
1889	16	-	2	-	-	-	112
1890	17	-	-	-	-	-	118
1891	22	-	1	-	2	-	126
1892	15	-	-	-	-	-	91
1893	14	-	1	-	-	-	75
1894	10	-	4	-	1	-	72
1895	9	-	-	-	-	-	64
1896	9	-	1	-	-	-	66
1897	10	-	-	-	1	-	50
1898	7	-	-	-	1	-	78
1899	13	-	-	-	-	-	71
1900	6	-	1	-	2	-	53
1901	5	-	-	-	3	-	44
1902	7	-	-	-	2	-	52
1903	10	-	1	-	-	-	44
Total	807	2,376	51	155	194	802	1,335

*To end of Sept. 1883

Sources: Evictions (Ireland). Return (compiled from returns made to the Inspector-General of the Royal Irish Constabulary) of cases of eviction which have come to the knowledge of the constabulary from 1870 to 1903, showing the number of families evicted, the number re-admitted as tenants and the number re-admitted as caretakers.

Appendix 11. Company Directors, Trustees or Patrons involving Westmeath aristocrats, 1879-1903.

Name	Company	Type of Business	Remarks
Sir John Ennis ¹³⁹	Bank of Ireland	Banking	Governor and Director
Lord Longford ¹⁴⁰	The Carriage Co-Operative Supply Association	Manufacture, repair and letting of carriages.	Patron
Lord Longford ¹⁴¹	The London and Provincial Traders Wholesale Stores Limited	The object of the company was to enable tradesmen to effectually compete with Co-operative stores.	Patron
Lord Longford ¹⁴²	The Conservative News Agency	The object of the company is to carry out on a sound commercial basis a combination by which provincial electors may be supplied with cheap Conservative newspapers.	Member of council
Lord Greville ¹⁴³	The Sonora Silver Mining Company (Mexico)	Silver mining	Trustee for Debenture holders
Lord Greville ¹⁴⁴	Minas and Rio Railway Company, (Brazil)	Railway Company	Director
Lord Greville ¹⁴⁵	The Cameron Freehold Land and Investment Company (London)	Sale of Land Mortgage Debentures to the public.	Chairman
Lord Greville ¹⁴⁶	Ophir Concessions (Limited) (Mozambique)	Mozambique trading company	Board Member
Lord Greville ¹⁴⁷	Eastmans Limited (USA)	Processors and exporters of refrigerated American meat.	Director
Lord Greville ¹⁴⁸	The Chicago Packing and Provision Company (USA)	Ham, bacon and pork curers and packers etc.	Director
Lord Greville ¹⁴⁹	The International Okonite Company (USA)	Manufacturers of insulators for electric wire and cables	Chairman
Lord Greville ¹⁵⁰	Westmeath (Mullingar) Race Company Limited	Owners and operators of Mullingar Race Course	Chairman
Lord Greville ¹⁵¹	Kilkenny Junction Railway Company	Railway Company, owners of the Kilkenny to Maryborough line.	Chairman
Lord Castlemaine ¹⁵²	The Atlantic Oyster Fisheries Company	Growth and sale of Oysters from Galway Bay.	Trustee for Debenture

¹³⁹ U. H. Hussey de Burgh, *The landowners of Ireland* (Dublin, 1878), p. 147.

¹⁴⁰ *The Times*, 2 Jun. 1880.

¹⁴¹ *Irish Times*, 20 Jul. 1880.

¹⁴² *The Times*, 3 Jul. 1885.

¹⁴³ *The Times*, 16 Sept. 1886.

¹⁴⁴ *Freeman's Journal*, 9 Jul. 1888.

¹⁴⁵ *The Times*, 10 Jul. 1888.

¹⁴⁶ *The Times*, 22 Feb. 1889.

¹⁴⁷ *The Times*, 12 Jul. 1890.

¹⁴⁸ *The Times*, 12 Jul. 1890.

¹⁴⁹ *The Times*, 10 Oct. 1890.

¹⁵⁰ *Irish Times*, 13 Jan. 1891.

¹⁵¹ *Irish Times*, 11 Dec. 1895.

¹⁵² *Irish Examiner*, 27 Jun. 1899.

	Limited		holders
Lord Greville ¹⁵³	Knott End Railway Company (UK)	Railway Company in Lancashire.	Director

Appendix 12. Aristocratic land sales, 1.1.1876-31.12.1902.

	Pakenham	Levinge	Nugent (Donore)	Chapman	Nugent (B/lough)	Castlemaine	Greville	Ennis
Total 1875	25,243	5,018	9,122	13,357	7,403	12,555	18,608	10,935
1876					2,033			
1877								
1878								
1879								
1880								
1881								209
1882								
1883								
1884								
1885								
1886								
1887								
1888	88						1,796	
1889							200	
1890								
1891								
1892		700*						
1893								
1894								
1895					2,061			
1896							1,211	
1897							103	
1898								
1899								
1900							220	
1901							996	
1902							400	
Total	25,155	4,318	9,122	13,357	3,309	12,555	13,682	10,726

Sources: *Return of the number of purchases and sales of lands pursuant to part V of the Land Law (Ireland) Act, 1881*; *Return of advances under the Purchase of Land (Ireland) Act 1891*; *John Bateman, Great landowners of Great Britain and Ireland (London, 1883)*.

¹⁵³ *The Times*, 18 Oct. 1898

Appendix 13. Members of the House of Commons for Athlone 1847-1885. (1 MP returned)

Name	Party	Year	Remarks
William Keogh	Liberal	1847-56	
William Handcock	Conservative	1856-7	
John Ennis	Independent	1857-65	
Denis Rearden	Liberal	1865-68	
Sir John J. Ennis, 2 nd Bt	Liberal	1868-74	
Edward Shiel	Home Rule League	1874-80	
Sir John J. Ennis, 2 nd Bt	Liberal	1880-84	Died 1884
Justin McCarthy	Home Rule League	1884-85	

Note: Constituency abolished 1885 and subsumed into South Westmeath.

Appendix 14. Members of the House of Commons for Westmeath 1847-1885. (2 MPs returned)

Name	Party	Year	Remarks
William Magan	Liberal	1847-59	
William Pollard-Urquhart	Whig	1852-57	
Sir Richard Levinge, 7 th Bt	Independent	1857-65	
William Pollard-Urquhart	Liberal	1859-71	
Algernon Greville-Nugent	Liberal	1865-74	
Patrick Smyth	Home Rule League	1871-80	
Lord Robert Montagu	Home Rule League	1874-80	
Timothy Sullivan	Home Rule League	1880-85	
Henry Gill	Home Rule League	1880-83	
Timothy Harrington	Home Rule League	1883-85	

Note: Constituency abolished 1885 and divided into North & South Westmeath.

Appendix 15. Members of the House of Commons for North Westmeath 1885-1918.

Name	Party	Year	Remarks
James Tuite	Nationalist (IPP-Anti Parnellite)	1885-1900	
Patrick Kennedy	Independent Nationalist	1900-06	
Laurence Ginnell	IPP, Independent Nationalist & Sinn Fein	1906-18	

Note: Westmeath returned to one constituency in 1918.

Appendix 16. Members of the House of Commons for South Westmeath 1885-1918.

Name	Party	Year	Remarks
Donal Sullivan	Nationalist (IPP-Anti Parnellite)	1885-1907	
Sir Walter Nugent	IPP-Nationalist	1907-18	

Note: Westmeath returned to one constituency in 1918.

Appendix 17. Other Irish constituencies represented by members of Westmeath aristocracy 1850-1903.

Name	Party	Year	Constituency	
Fulke Greville-Nugent	Liberal	1852-69	Longford	
Reginald Greville-Nugent	Liberal	1869	Longford	
George Greville-Nugent	Liberal	1870-74	Longford	

Appendix 18. United Kingdom constituencies represented by members of Westmeath aristocracy 1885-1906.

Name	Party	Year	Constituency	
Hon. Ronald Greville	Conservative	1896-1906	Bradford East	

Appendix 19. Westmeath members of the House of Lords 1800-1903

Name	Party	Year	Remarks
Sir Thomas Pakenham, 2 nd Earl of Longford	Conservative	1800-1835	Representative peer. Created Baron Silchester in 1821 which allowed him to sit in the House of Lords.
Sir Fulke Greville-Nugent, 1 st Baron Clonyn.	Liberal	1869-1883	Hereditary peer.
Sir William Pakenham, 4 th Earl of Longford	Conservative	1860-1887	Hereditary peer.
Sir Thomas Pakenham, 5 th Earl of Longford	Conservative	1887-1915	Hereditary peer.
Sir Richard Handcock, 3 rd Baron Castlemaine	Conservative	1841-1869	Representative peer.
Sir William Handcock, 4 th Baron Castlemaine	Conservative	1874 - 1892	Representative peer.
Sir Albert Handcock, 5 th Baron Castlemaine	Conservative	1892-1937	Representative peer.

Appendix 20. Lord Lieutenants of Westmeath 1831-1922. [Created 1831- Abolished 1922]

Name	Year	Remarks
George Nugent, 1 st Marquess of Westmeath	1831-1871	
Sir Fulke Greville-Nugent, 1 st Bt of Clonyn.	1871-1883	
Sir Benjamin Chapman, 4 th Baron Chapman.	1883-1888	
Sir William Handcock, 4 th Baron Castlemaine	1889-1892	
Francis Dames-Longworth.	1892-1898	
Sir Albert Handcock, 5 th Baron Castlemaine	1899-1922	

Appendix 21. Other Counties where Westmeath aristocracy were Lord Lieutenant 1831-1922. [Created 1831- Abolished 1922]

Name	Year	County	Remarks
William Pakenham, 4 th Earl of Longford	1874-1887	Longford	
Thomas Pakenham, 5 th Earl of Longford	1887-1915	Longford	

Appendix 22. Members of the aristocracy who served as High Sheriff for Westmeath 1844-1903.

Name	Year	Remarks
Sir Montagu Chapman, 3 rd Bt. Killua.	1844	
Sir John Nugent, 3 rd Bt, Ballinlough	1850	
Sir Richard Levinge, 7 th Bt, Knockdrin	1851	
John Ennis, Ballinahown	1855	Prior to his elevation to the peerage in 1866.
Sir Benjamin Chapman, 4 th Bt. Killua.	1856	
Sir John Ennis, 2 nd Bt. Ballinahown	1866	
Hon Patrick Greville-Nugent, Clonyn	1884	
Sir Montagu Chapman, 5 th Bt. Killua.	1889	
Hon. Ronald Greville, Clonhugh	1899	

Appendix 23. Members of the aristocracy who served as High Sheriff of other counties 1844-1903.

Name	County	Year	Remarks
Walter Nugent, Donore	Longford	1862	Prior to his succession to the peerage as 2 nd Bt, in 1874.

Appendix 24. Divisions of land allocated to tenants by Estate Commissioners.

Date	Landlord	Tenant	Remarks
9.12.1908	Lord Longford	Mary McGrath.	Division: Glackstown. Townland: Fennor. Farm: 20a 2r 22p Purchase Price: £485. Annuity: £15 15s 4d.
		Christopher Reilly	Division: Glackstown. Townland: Rickardstown. Farm: 21a 1r 24p Purchase Price: £434. Annuity: £14 2s 2d.
		Michael Gavagan.	Division: Glackstown. Townland: Glackstown. Farm: 19a 3r 2p Purchase Price: £513. Annuity: £17 18s.
		John Magrath.	Division: Glackstown. Townland: Rickardstown. Farm: 22a 1r 26p Purchase Price: £592. Annuity: £18 18s 4d.
		Michael Gavagan.	Division: Glackstown. Townland: Jigginstown. Farm: 25a 0r 24p Purchase Price: £535. Annuity: £17 7s 10d.
		Philip Lynch.	Division: Glackstown. Townland: Jigginstown. Farm: 28a 2r 2p Purchase Price: £489. Annuity: £15 17s 10d.
		Denis Comiskey.	Division: Glackstown. Townland: Glackstown. Farm: 21a 0r 27p Purchase Price: £609. Annuity: £19 15s 10d.
		Thomas Mulligan	Division: Glackstown. Townland: Kilpatrick. Farm: 20a 3r 7p Purchase Price: £464. Annuity: £15 1s 8d.
		Andrew Cosgrave	Division: Glackstown. Townland: Clondalever. Farm: 20a 3r 0p. Purchase Price: £472. Annuity: £15 6s 10d.
		Michael Carr.	Division: Glackstown. Townland: Rickardstown. Farm: 25a 1r 14p Purchase Price: £493. Annuity: £16 0s 9d.
		Catherine Boyhan	Division: Glackstown. Townland: Rickardstown. Farm: 21a 0r 0p Purchase Price: £559. Annuity: £18 3s 4d.
		William Duff.	Division: Glackstown. Townland: Mabestown. Farm: 20a 3r 0p

			Purchase Price: £557. Annuity: £18 2s 2d.
		Thomas McInerney.	Division: Glackstown. Townland: Fennor. Farm: 21a 2r 0p
		James Neill.	Purchase Price: £558. Annuity: £18 2s 8d. Division: Glackstown. Townland: Glackstown. Farm: 41a 1r 1p
		- Carroll.	Purchase Price: £1,200. Annuity: £39 0s 0d. Division: Glackstown. Townland: Fennor. Farm: 30a 1r 23p
		Bryan Comiskey.	Purchase Price: £603. Annuity: £19 12s. Division: Glackstown. Townland: Ballymacahill. Farm: 26a 0r 24p
		Anne Murray.	Purchase Price: £557. Annuity: £18 2s 2d. Division: Glackstown. Townland: Johnstown. Farm: 33a 2r 2p
		Margaret Nash.	Purchase Price: £472. Annuity: £15 6s 10d. Division: Glackstown. Townland: Drumcree. Farm: 18a 1r 18p
		Patrick Bartley.	Purchase Price: £300. Annuity: £9 15s. Division: Glackstown. Townland: Ballymacahill. Farm: 15a 1r 38p
			Purchase Price: £263. Annuity: £8 14s 2d.

Appendix 25. Application to Sub-Commission for rent adjustments, 1903-1912.

Date	Landlord	Tenant	Remarks
29.8.1903	Francis V. Chapman.	William Nolan. ¹⁵⁴	Former Rent: £32 10s. Judicial Rent: £30. Valuation: Not stated. Farm: Not stated.
29.8.1903	Hon Edward Pakenham	Anne Shaw. ¹⁵⁵	Former Rent: £38 8s 6d. Judicial Rent:£36 13s6d. Valuation: Not stated. Farm: Not stated.
29.8.1903	Lord Greville.	James Daly. James Connolly. James Connolly. ¹⁵⁶	Former Rent: £20 5s. Judicial Rent: £15 14s. Valuation: Not stated. Farm: Not stated. Former Rent: £6. Judicial Rent: £5 9s. Valuation: Not stated. Farm: Not stated. Former Rent: £5 5s. Judicial Rent: £4 5s 6d. Valuation: Not stated. Farm: Not stated.
23.3.1904	Francis V. Chapman.	James Reilly. ¹⁵⁷	Former Rent: £21 5s. Judicial Rent:£18 17s 6d Valuation: Not stated. Farm: Not stated.
26.3.1904	James O'Reilly Nugent (Ballinlough Castle)	Bernard Fox. Michael Hope. ¹⁵⁸	Former Rent: £3 17s 6d. Judicial Rent: £1. Valuation: 15s. Farm: 1a 3r 0p. Former Rent: £210. Judicial Rent: £180. Valuation: £203 10s Farm: 197a 1r 11p.
26.3.1904	Sir Charles Nugent.	Mary Doyle. Anne Dunne. ¹⁵⁹	Former Rent: £7 7s 6d. Judicial Rent: £5 17s 6d. Valuation: £7 5s Farm: 8a 2r 29p. Former Rent: £5. Judicial Rent: £3 14s. Valuation: £4 15s Farm: 8a 2r 37p.

¹⁵⁴ *Westmeath Examiner*, 29 Aug. 1903.

¹⁵⁵ *Westmeath Examiner*, 29 Aug. 1903.

¹⁵⁶ *Westmeath Examiner*, 29 Aug. 1903.

¹⁵⁷ *Freeman's Journal*, 23 Mar. 1904.

¹⁵⁸ *Westmeath Examiner*, 26 Mar. 1904.

¹⁵⁹ *Westmeath Examiner*, 26 Mar. 1904.

Appendix 25. (Continued).

Date	Landlord	Tenant	Remarks
26.3.1904	Sir Montagu Chapman.	Kate Lynch. William Briody. Patrick Molloy. S. B. Murray. Rose Earley. John Carrigy. ¹⁶⁰	Former Rent: £50. Judicial Rent: £41 18s. Valuation: £54 5s. Farm: 90a 8r 10p. Former Rent: £26 5s. Judicial Rent: £21 16s 6d Valuation: £33 10s. Farm: 47a 0r 8p. Former Rent: £21 10s. Judicial Rent: £17. Valuation: £17. Farm: 22a 1r 30p. Former Rent: £100. Judicial Rent: £87 8s. Valuation: £98. Farm: 147a 3r 30p. Former Rent: £18. Judicial Rent: £15 3s. Valuation: £20 5s Farm: 26a 1r 37p. Former Rent: £56. Judicial Rent: £50 12s. Valuation: £70. Farm: 83a 2r 7p.
26.3.1904	Lord Longford.	Patrick Monaghan. Mark Murray. Bridget Gilsenan. ¹⁶¹	Former Rent: £20. Judicial Rent: £17 4s. Valuation: £16. Farm: 31a 1r 25p. Former Rent: £84. Judicial Rent: £71 5s. Valuation: £70 10s. Farm: 92a. Former Rent: £28. Judicial Rent: £24 12s. Valuation: £28 15s. Farm: 41a 1r 23p.
26.3.1904	Lord Greville.	Patrick Donnelly. Andrew Daly. Michael Hyland. Anne Donnelly. Jas Donnelly. John Rally. ¹⁶²	Former Rent: £12 9s. Judicial Rent: £9 12s. Valuation: £13 10s Farm: 15a 2r 33p. Former Rent: £6 17s 6d. Judicial Rent: £5 10s. Valuation: £6 15s. Farm: 8a 1r 11p. Former Rent: £5 5s. Judicial Rent: £4 5s. Valuation: £4 15s Farm: 8a 0r 25p. Former Rent: £11. Judicial Rent: £7 14s. Valuation: £10 10s Farm: 17a 2r 35p. Former Rent: £36. Judicial Rent: £30 13. Valuation: £32 10s. Farm: 50a 2r 15p. Former Rent: £6 13s 6d.

¹⁶⁰ *Westmeath Examiner*, 26 Mar. 1904.

¹⁶¹ *Westmeath Examiner*, 26 Mar. 1904.

¹⁶² *Westmeath Examiner*, 26 Mar. 1904.

			Judicial Rent: £5 6s. Valuation: £5. Farm: 9a 0r 20p.
26.3.1904	Sir Richard Levinge	Christina Doolin. Laurence Shaw. John H. Taylor. John H. Taylor. ¹⁶³	Former Rent: £9 7s 6d. Judicial Rent: £7 17 6d. Valuation: £7 10s. Farm: 16a 3r 18p. Former Rent: £38. Judicial Rent: £35 15s. Valuation: £38 10s. Farm: 63a 3r 18p. Former Rent: £170. Judicial Rent: £138 10s. Valuation: £148 8s. Farm: 144a 0r 30p. Former Rent: £51. Judicial Rent: £42 4s. Valuation: £45 10s. Farm: 76a 2r 8p.
29.10.1904	Lord Greville.	Matt Cahill. Benjamin Trimble. ¹⁶⁴	Former Rent: £9 10s 5d. Judicial Rent: Not stated. Valuation: £8 15s. Farm: 13a 1r 37p. Former Rent: £65 12s. Judicial Rent: Not stated. Valuation: £73 5s. Farm: 199a 3r 11p.
29.10.1904	Francis V. Chapman.	Thomas Finlay. ¹⁶⁵	Former Rent: £17 17s. Judicial Rent: Not stated. Valuation: £16 15s. Farm: 34a 0r 26p.
29.10.1904	Sir Richard Levinge.	Ellen Kilduff. C. McLoughlin. ¹⁶⁶	Former Rent: £82. Judicial Rent: Not stated. Valuation: £33. Farm: 50a 2r 7p. Former Rent: £21 10s. Judicial Rent: Not stated. Valuation: £18 15s. Farm: 33a 0r 25p.
12.11.1904	Sir Richard Levinge.	Mary Crosbie. ¹⁶⁷	Former Rent: £18 8s 6d. Judicial Rent: £17 2s. Valuation: £18 15s. Farm: 33a 0r 22p.

¹⁶³ *Westmeath Examiner*, 26 Mar. 1904.

¹⁶⁴ *Westmeath Examiner*, 29 Oct. 1904.

¹⁶⁵ *Westmeath Examiner*, 29 Oct. 1904.

¹⁶⁶ *Westmeath Examiner*, 29 Oct. 1904.

¹⁶⁷ *Westmeath Examiner*, 12 Nov. 1904.

Appendix 25. (Continued).

Date	Landlord	Tenant	Remarks
12.11.1904	Sir Montagu Chapman.	Daniel Sharry. ¹⁶⁸ Hugh Maguire. Julia Carty. Denis Smyth.	Former Rent: £10 2s 6d. Judicial Rent: £8 12s. Valuation: £10 5s. Farm: 19a 2r 39p. Former Rent: £27 17s 6d Judicial Rent: £23 18s. Valuation: £30 5s. Farm: 39a 1r 21p. Former Rent: £7. Judicial Rent: £5 11s. Valuation: £6 15s. Farm: 13a 2r 20p. Former Rent: £144. Judicial Rent: Not stated. Valuation: £186 4s. Farm: 133a 1r 10p.
12.11.1904	Francis V. Chapman.	John Flynn. ¹⁶⁹	Former Rent: £31. Judicial Rent: £28 17s 8d Valuation: £33 10s. Farm: 48a 2r 15p.
12.11.1904	Lord Greville.	Ellen Delamer. ¹⁷⁰	Former Rent: £49 9s 8d. Judicial Rent: £45 5s. Valuation: £44 10s. Farm: 63a 1r 0p.
12.11.1904	Lord Longford.	Philip Dignam. ¹⁷¹	Former Rent: £17 6s. Judicial Rent: £12 2s 6d. Valuation: £24 15s. Farm: 14a 1r 3p.
12.11.1904	Sir Walter Nugent.	Harriett O'Neill.	Former Rent: £140. Judicial Rent: Not stated. Valuation: £138 5s. Farm: 207a 1r 17p.
12.11.1904	Hon. Patrick Greville-Nugent.	Nicholas Cooke. Laurence Cooke. ¹⁷²	Former Rent: £21 5s. Judicial Rent: Not stated. Valuation: £22 15s. Farm: 31a 2r 35p. Former Rent: £21 5s. Judicial Rent: Not stated. Valuation: £22 15s. Farm: 31a 2r 33p
25.11.1904	Sir Richard Levinge.	Mary Crosbie. ¹⁷³	Former Rent: £18 8s 6d. Judicial Rent: Not stated. New rent: £17 2s. Valuation: Not stated. Farm: Not stated.

¹⁶⁸ *Westmeath Examiner*, 12 Nov. 1904.

¹⁶⁹ *Westmeath Examiner*, 12 Nov. 1904.

¹⁷⁰ *Westmeath Examiner*, 12 Nov. 1904.

¹⁷¹ *Westmeath Examiner*, 12 Nov. 1904.

¹⁷² *Westmeath Examiner*, 12 Nov. 1904.

¹⁷³ *Freeman's Journal*, 25 Nov. 1904.

Appendix 25. (Continued).

Date	Landlord	Tenant	Remarks
25.11.1904	Sir Montagu Chapman.	Daniel Sharry. Hugh Maguire. Julia Carty. ¹⁷⁴	Former Rent: £10 2s 6d. Judicial Rent: Not stated. New rent: £8 12s. Valuation: Not stated. Farm: Not stated. Former Rent: £27 17 6d. Judicial Rent: Not stated. New rent: £23 18s. Valuation: Not stated. Farm: Not stated. Former Rent: £7. Judicial Rent: Not stated. New rent: £5 11s. Valuation: Not stated. Farm: Not stated.
25.11.1904	Francis V. Chapman.	John Flynn. ¹⁷⁵	Former Rent: £31. Judicial Rent: Not stated. New rent: £28 17s 8d. Valuation: Not stated. Farm: Not stated
25.11.1904	Lord Greville.	Ellen Delamere. ¹⁷⁶	Former Rent: £49 9s 8d. Judicial Rent: Not stated. New rent: £45 6s. Valuation: Not stated. Farm: Not stated.
25.11.1904	Lord Longford.	Phillip Dignam. ¹⁷⁷	Former Rent: £17 6s. Judicial Rent: Not stated. New rent: £12 2s 6d. Valuation: Not stated. Farm: Not stated
11.2.1905	Lord Greville.	Matthew Cahill. ¹⁷⁸	Former Rent: £9 10s 5d. Valuation: £15. New Rent: £7 7s 10d. Farm: 13a 1r 27p.
11.2.1905	Francis V. Chapman.	Laurence Carroll. Thomas Finlay. Thomas Finlay. Richard Finlay. Matthew Duffy. ¹⁷⁹	Former Rent: £10 9s. Valuation: £9 15s. New Rent: £7 18s. Farm: 18a 0r 30p. Former Rent: £17 17s. Valuation: £16 15s. New Rent: £13 8s 4d. Farm: 34a 0r 35p. Former Rent: £8 15s. Valuation: £8 15s. New Rent: £7 16s. Farm: 12a 2r 28p. Former Rent: £58. Valuation: £57. New Rent: £48 4s. Farm: 80a 0r 39p. Former Rent: £12 15s. Valuation: £14 5s. New Rent: £12 15s. Farm: 25a 2r 16p.

¹⁷⁴ *Freeman's Journal*, 25 Nov. 1904.

¹⁷⁵ *Freeman's Journal*, 25 Nov. 1904.

¹⁷⁶ *Freeman's Journal*, 25 Nov. 1904.

¹⁷⁷ *Freeman's Journal*, 25 Nov. 1904.

¹⁷⁸ *Westmeath Examiner*, 11 Feb. 1905.

¹⁷⁹ *Westmeath Examiner*, 11 Feb. 1905.

Appendix 25. (Continued).

Date	Landlord	Tenant	Remarks
11.2.1905	Sir Richard Levinge.	Mrs C. M. McLoughlin. John Flood. Ellen Kilduff. Mary Gaynor. ¹⁸⁰	Former Rent: £21 10s. Valuation: £18 15s. New Rent: £18 10s. Farm: 33a 0r 10p. Former Rent: £16 15s. Valuation: £14. New Rent: £12 18s 2d. Farm: 32a 2r 13p. Former Rent: £31 18s. Valuation: £33. New Rent: £28. Farm: 50a 2r 7p. Former Rent: £16 4s. Valuation: £14 15s. New Rent: £12 13s. Farm: 24a 3r 8p.
11.2.1905	Hon Edward Pakenham	Patrick Glennon. Michael & Elizabeth Dunne. ¹⁸¹	Former Rent: £18 15s. Valuation: £17. New Rent: £18 15s. Farm: 32a 0r 26p. Former Rent: £39 15s. Valuation: £43 5s. New Rent: £35 3s 8d. Farm: 63a 2r 12p.
8.4.1905	Sir Montagu Chapman.	P. Molloy. S. B. Murray. ¹⁸²	Former Rent: £21 16s. Judicial Rent: £17. New Rent: £17. Farm: Not stated. Former Rent: £100. Judicial Rent: £87 8s. New Rent: £92. Farm: Not stated.
8.4.1905	Sir Richard Levinge.	J. H. Taylor. J. H. Taylor. ¹⁸³	Former Rent: £170. Judicial Rent: £138 10s. New Rent: £138 10s. Farm: Not stated. Former Rent: £51. Judicial Rent: £42 4s. New Rent: £42 4s. Farm: Not stated.
8.4.1905	Lord Castlemaine.	T. Groarke. ¹⁸⁴	Former Rent: £104. Judicial Rent: £92 13s 6d New Rent: £92 13s 6d. Farm: Not stated.
22.7.1905	Lord Longford.	William Farrell. ¹⁸⁵	Former Rent: £45. Judicial Rent: £34 6s. Valuation: Not stated. Farm: Not stated.

¹⁸⁰ *Westmeath Examiner*, 11 Feb. 1905.

¹⁸¹ *Westmeath Examiner*, 11 Feb. 1905.

¹⁸² *Anglo Celt*, 8 Apr. 1905.

¹⁸³ *Westmeath Examiner*, 8 Apr. 1905.

¹⁸⁴ *Westmeath Examiner*, 8 Apr. 1905.

¹⁸⁵ *Freeman's Journal*, 22 Jul. 1905.

Appendix 25. (Continued).

Date	Landlord	Tenant	Remarks
24.7.1905	Lord Longford.	Patrick Corrigan. Mary Farrell. ¹⁸⁶	Former Rent: £10. Judicial Rent: £8 Valuation: Not stated. Farm: Not stated. Former Rent: £15. Judicial Rent: £12 10s. New rent: £13 17s. Valuation: Not stated. Farm: Not stated.
18.11.1905	Lord Greville.	John Reilly. Catherine Crowley. Bryan Kavanagh. Mary Wyse. Mary Wyse. ¹⁸⁷	Former Rent: £2 10s. Judicial Rent: £1 14s 6d. Valuation: Not stated. Farm: Not stated. Former Rent: £42 13s 6d. Judicial Rent: £36 19s. Valuation: Not stated. Farm: Not stated. Former Rent: £6 10s. Judicial Rent: £5 11s 6d. Valuation: Not stated. Farm: Not stated. Former Rent: £16 7s 6d. Judicial Rent: £13 15s. Valuation: Not stated. Farm: Not stated. Former Rent: £33 16s 7d Judicial Rent: £28 7s. Valuation: Not stated. Farm: Not stated.
18.11.1905	Sir Charles Nugent.	Edward Moore. ¹⁸⁸	Former Rent: £2. Judicial Rent: 15s. Valuation: Not stated. Farm: Not stated.
18.11.1905	Sir Montagu Chapman.	James Dunne. William Gilshinan. ¹⁸⁹	Former Rent: £3. Judicial Rent: £2 5s 4d. Valuation: Not stated. Farm: Not stated. Former Rent: £42. Judicial Rent: £29 9s. Valuation: Not stated. Farm: Not stated.
7.4.1906	Sir Montagu Chapman	P. Ballesty. ¹⁹⁰	Former Rent: £51 13s. Judicial Rent: Not stated. New Rent: £49 5s. Farm: Not stated.
7.4.1906	Francis V. Chapman.	Jas Larrigy. ¹⁹¹	Former Rent: £3. Judicial Rent: Not stated. New Rent: £2 12s. Farm: Not stated.

¹⁸⁶ *Freeman's Journal*, 24 Jul. 1905.

¹⁸⁷ *Westmeath Examiner*, 18 Nov. 1905.

¹⁸⁸ *Westmeath Examiner*, 18 Nov. 1905.

¹⁸⁹ *Westmeath Examiner*, 18 Nov. 1905.

¹⁹⁰ *Anglo Celt*, 7 Apr. 1906.

¹⁹¹ *Anglo Celt*, 7 Apr. 1906.

Appendix 25. (Continued).

Date	Landlord	Tenant	Remarks
2.6.1906	Lord Longford.	Eliza Griffith. John Barden. John Murray. ¹⁹²	Former Rent: £62 18s 6d Judicial Rent: Not stated. New Rent: £52 7s. Valuation: Not stated. Farm: Not stated. Former Rent: £9 10s. Judicial Rent: Not stated. New Rent: £7 15s. Valuation: Not stated. Farm: Not stated. Former Rent: £17 10s. Judicial Rent: Not stated. New Rent: £14 13s. Valuation: Not stated. Farm: Not stated
21.6.1906	Lord Longford	Charles Holmes. ¹⁹³	Former Rent: £250. Judicial Rent: £205 9s. New Rent: £205 9s Farm: Not stated.
21.6.1906	Sir Charles Nugent	Joseph Rooney. Joseph Nedley. Ellen Dunne. B. Whelehan. B. Whelehan. ¹⁹⁴	Former Rent:£231 11s6d Judicial Rent: £195 14s New Rent: £201 10s. Farm: Not stated. Former Rent: £45. Judicial Rent: £38 8s 4d. New Rent: £38 8s 4d. Farm: Not stated. Former Rent: £31 18s 6d Judicial Rent:£25 13s 4d New Rent: £25 13s 4d. Farm: Not stated. Former Rent: £20. Judicial Rent: £21 9s. New Rent: £20. Farm: Not stated. Former Rent: £57 15s 6d Judicial Rent: £52 4s 4d. New Rent: £49 17s. Farm: Not stated.
21.6.1906	Sir Richard Levinge	Ellen Kilduff. ¹⁹⁵	Former Rent: £31 18s. Judicial Rent: £28. New Rent: £28. Farm: Not stated.
24.11.1906	Francis V. Chapman	Mary Byrne. ¹⁹⁶	Former Rent: £28. Judicial Rent: £19. New Rent: Not stated. Farm: Not stated.
24.11.1906	Sir Montagu Chapman	Mary Drum. Patrick Keane. ¹⁹⁷	Former Rent: £52 2s 5d. Judicial Rent: £44 3s. New Rent: Not stated. Farm: Not stated. Former Rent: £3. Judicial Rent: £2 4s. New Rent: Not stated.

¹⁹² *Westmeath Examiner*, 2 Jun. 1906.

¹⁹³ *Freeman's Journal*, 21 Jun. 1906.

¹⁹⁴ *Freeman's Journal*, 21 Jun. 1906.

¹⁹⁵ *Freeman's Journal*, 21 Jun. 1906.

¹⁹⁶ *Meath Chronicle*, 24 Nov. 1906.

¹⁹⁷ *Meath Chronicle*, 24 Nov. 1906.

			Farm: Not stated.
Appendix 25. (Continued).			
Date	Landlord	Tenant	Remarks
11.12.1906	Lord Castlemaine.	John Fagan. Richard Murray. Rebecca Elliott. ¹⁹⁸	Former Rent: £33. Judicial Rent: £28 18s 6d New Rent: £28 18s 6d. Farm: Not stated. Former Rent: £25. Judicial Rent: £14 3s. New Rent: £20. Farm: Not stated. Former Rent: £54 5s 10d Judicial Rent: £43 15s. New Rent: £43 15s. Farm: Not stated.
11.12.1906	Sir Richard Levinge.	James Kiernan. Ellen Boyhan. ¹⁹⁹	Former Rent: £49 18s. Judicial Rent: £46 5s. New Rent: £46 5s. Farm: Not stated. Former Rent: £34 7s 6d. Judicial Rent: £33 11s. New Rent: £33 11s. Farm: Not stated.
16.2.1907	Lord Greville.	Peter Owens. ²⁰⁰	Former Rent: £12 10s. Judicial Rent: £9 7s. Valuation: Not stated. Farm: Not stated.
25.5.1907	Sir Montagu Chapman	Wm Gilshinan. ²⁰¹	Former Rent: £42. Judicial Rent: £29 9s New Rent: £28. Farm: Not stated.
17.10.1907.	Lord Longford.	William Farrell. ²⁰² James Kearney. ²⁰³ Henry Samuel Fee. ²⁰⁴ Maria Mernier. John Murray.	Former Rent: £45. Judicial Rent: £34 6s. New rent: £34. Valuation: £33. Farm: 44a 1r 19p. Former Rent: £59 18s 6d Judicial Rent: £50 13s 4d New Rent: £46. Valuation: £44 10s. Farm: 75a 0r 28p. Former Rent: £56. Judicial Rent: £51 17s. New Rent: £51 17s. Valuation: Not stated. Farm: 64a 2r. Former Rent: £16. Judicial Rent: £13 11s 8d New Rent: £13 10s. Valuation: Not stated. Farm: Not stated. Former Rent: £17 10s. Judicial Rent: £14 13s. New Rent: £14 13s. Valuation: Not stated.

¹⁹⁸ *Freeman's Journal*, 11 Dec. 1906.

¹⁹⁹ *Freeman's Journal*, 11 Dec. 1906.

²⁰⁰ *Leitrim Observer*, 16 Feb. 1907.

²⁰¹ *Meath Chronicle*, 25 May 1907.

²⁰² *Longford Leader*, 8 Jun. 1907 & *Freeman's Journal*, 17 Oct. 1907.

²⁰³ *Longford Leader*, 8 Jun. 1907 & *Freeman's Journal*, 17 Oct. 1907.

²⁰⁴ *Longford Leader*, 8 Jun. 1907 & *Freeman's Journal*, 17 Oct. 1907.

		John Barden. ²⁰⁵	Farm: Not stated. Former Rent: £9 10s. Judicial Rent: £7 15s. New Rent: £7 4s. Valuation: Not stated. Farm: Not stated.
Date	Landlord	Tenant	Remarks
4.4.1908	Lord Castlemaine.	Mary Flattery. John Cleary. John Cleary. James Clarke. ²⁰⁶	Former Rent: £10. Judicial Rent: £8 10s. Valuation: £10 10s. Farm: 33a 2r 36p. Former Rent: £2 10s 2d. Judicial Rent: £2 4s. Valuation: £2 5s. Farm: 4a 3r 30p. Former Rent: £5 16s 8d. Judicial Rent: £5. Valuation: £6 5s 0d. Farm: 11a 3r 25p. Former Rent: £4 12s 10d. Judicial Rent: £3 10s 0d. Valuation: £3 15s. Farm: 9a 0r 25p.
20.2.1909	Lady Caroline Chapman.	John Lynch. ²⁰⁷	Former Rent: £11 1s 6d. Judicial Rent: £7 2s. New Rent: £8 2s.
20.2.1909	Sir Walter Nugent.	Catherine Reilly. ²⁰⁸	Former Rent: £44 11s. Judicial Rent: £35 4s. New Rent: £39.

Appendix 26. Eviction Notices served on aristocratic tenants, 1903-1912.

Date	Landlord	Tenant	Remarks
18.2.1905	Hon. Edward Pakenham	Patrick Coffey. ²⁰⁹	Holding at Porterstown, Killucan.

²⁰⁵ *Freeman's Journal*, 17 Oct. 1907.

²⁰⁶ *Westmeath Examiner*, 4 Apr. 1908.

²⁰⁷ *Anglo Celt*, 20 Feb. 1909.

²⁰⁸ *Anglo Celt*, 20 Feb. 1909.

²⁰⁹ *Westmeath Examiner*, 18 Feb. 1905.

Appendix 27. Reported incidents of Cattle Driving from 1 Jan 1907 to 30 Sept 1908.

	Q/E 31 Mar 07	Q/E 30 Jun 07	Q/E 30 Sept 07	Q/E 31 Dec 07	Q/E 31 Mar 08	Q/E 30 Jun 08	Q/E 30 Sept 08	Total
Antrim	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Armagh	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Belfast	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Cavan	0	0	0	0	0	6	0	6
Donegal	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	2
Down	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Fermanagh	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Londonderry	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Monaghan	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Tyrone	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
Carlow	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Dublin	0	0	0	3	0	0	0	3
Kildare	0	0	0	22	11	0	0	33
Kilkenny	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
King's	0	8	1	2	1	2	2	16
Longford	0	0	4	5	1	8	0	18
Louth	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
Meath	0	0	27	64	14	19	13	137
Queens	0	3	0	1	3	21	2	30
Westmeath	0	0	1	22	28	24	13	88
Wexford	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Wicklow	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Galway E.	0	52	17	24	5	58	1	157
Galway W.	0	1	0	37	10	28	1	77
Leitrim	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	2
Mayo	0	2	0	6	13	10	0	31
Roscommon	0	8	1	46	7	23	2	87
Sligo	0	0	1	4	2	44	13	64
Clare	0	2	1	5	17	38	41	104
Cork E.	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
Cork W.	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Kerry	0	0	2	0	2	2	1	7
Limerick	0	0	1	2	5	7	0	15
Tipperary N.	0	4	0	1	3	3	7	18
Tipperary S.	0	0	1	1	1	2	1	6
Waterford	0	0	1	1	0	1	0	3
Total	0	81	61	248	123	297	97	907

Source: *Return by Counties and quarterly periods of the number of cattle drives reported to the Royal Irish Constabulary to have taken place in Ireland from 1 January 1907 to 30 September 1908, HC 1908 (310), xc.*

Appendix 28. Country houses reported as burned in Westmeath 1919-1923.

No	Name	Location	Date	Remarks
1	Gaulston House. ²¹⁰	Rochfortbridge	4 June 1920	
2	Ballintubber House. ²¹¹	Moate	8 August 1920	Owner claimed fire was accidental
3	Portloman House. ²¹²	Mullingar	9 February 1921	False report-House demolished in 1941
4	Sonna House. ²¹³	Mullingar	24 June 1921	
5	Moydrum Castle. ²¹⁴	Athlone	3 July 1921	
6	Creggan House. ²¹⁵	Athlone	4 July 1921	
7	Tore House. ²¹⁶	Tyrrellspass	11 June 1922	
8	Littleton House ²¹⁷	Glasson	11 June 1922	
9	Lisanode House ²¹⁸	Moate	11 February 1923	
10	Clonyn Castle ²¹⁹	Delvin	9 March 1923	

²¹⁰ County Inspector's Report, July 1920 (T.N.A. CO904/112) (Consulted on microfilm at Maynooth University)

²¹¹ *Westmeath Examiner*, 14 Aug. 1920

²¹² *Irish Times*, 11 Feb. 1921.

²¹³ County Inspector's Report, July 1921 (T.N.A. CO904/116) (Consulted on microfilm at Maynooth University) *Freeman's Journal*, 27 Jun. 1921.

²¹⁴ Statement by Thomas Costello (Bureau of Military History, WS 1,296). *Westmeath Examiner*, 9 Jul. 1921.

²¹⁵ *Westmeath Examiner*, 9 Jul. 1921.

²¹⁶ *Westmeath Examiner*, 17 Jun. 1922.

²¹⁷ *Westmeath Examiner*, 17 Jun. 1922

²¹⁸ *Westmeath Examiner*, 17 Feb. 1923

²¹⁹ *Irish Times*, 17 Mar. 1923.

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