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# **INTRODUCTION**

# **ERNE PAPERS**

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# Erne Papers (D1939)

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## Summary



*Crom Castle*

The Erne papers comprise c.11,750 documents and volumes, 1611-1981, some of them relating to the family and personal affairs of the Creighton family of Crom Castle, Newtownbutler, Co. Fermanagh, Earls Erne, but most of them relating to the administration of their various estates: at Crom, Callowhill, Derrylin, Killynick, Lisnaskea, Knockballymore and Enniskillen, Co. Fermanagh; at Lifford, Co. Donegal; and in Dublin City, Co. Sligo and Co. Mayo.

Most of the material relates to the period 1830-1950, with comparatively few documents for the 17th and 18th centuries. This uneven survival of material is probably due to the destruction of the original Crom Castle by an accidental fire in 1764, and to the subsequent absences from Crom of the family until the 1830s, although they did at the very least maintain a summer residence on Inisherkin from c.1780 onwards. The main exception, in terms of early archival survivals, are the papers relating to the Balfour estate at Lisnaskea and elsewhere in Co. Fermanagh. This was not purchased by Lord Erne until 1821, so the documents relating to it were not destroyed in 1764, and in fact provide important information about early 17th century settlement. The Erne papers comprise such material as title deeds, settlements, wills, leases, rentals, accounts, maps, surveys, architectural drawings and Land Commission sale papers relating to the various properties, together with correspondence about estate, political and family affairs, 1727-1728 and c.1775-1945. Some family and estate correspondence has found its way into the National Library in Dublin (e.g. MS 15360).

The Creightons were created Earls Erne in 1789, but, from the succession of the 3rd Earl in 1842, seem to have styled themselves Earls of Erne. A further complication is that in 1872 they changed the spelling of their family name from Creighton to Crichton. The different renderings at different times have been observed in the text which follows.



## Family history

In Parliamentary Memoirs of Fermanagh and Tyrone from 1613 to 1885 (Dublin, 1887), the 4th Earl of Belmore writes: '... [The Creightons] claimed descent from a branch of the Crichtons, Viscounts Fren draught in Scotland, which titled ceased in 1698. ...' In a two-part article on Crom Castle, published in Country Life, 26 May and 2 June 1988, Gervase Jackson-Stops states that the Creightons were '... descended from an old family with a castle at Brunston near Edinburgh ...'.

The best, single source of information about the history of the family and estate, with an obvious preoccupation with the demesne, is T.J.C. Reeves-Smyth's 'Crom Castle Demesne' (National Trust, 1989), which unfortunately is unpublished, although it is available for consultation in the Environment and Heritage Service (DOE NI's) Northern Ireland Monuments and Buildings Record, Hill Street, Belfast. According to Reeves-Smyth, the name which originally spelt neither Creighton nor Crichton, but 'Creichtoun', '... derives from the barony of that name in the ancient county of Edinburgh, and its lineage can be traced back to the 12th century .... In the early 15th century, a branch of the family acquired land at Brunston ..., and ... for the next eight generations the head of this branch was the Laird of Brunston. In 1597 John, the 9th Laird, sold his lands there ...', and his eldest son, James, his younger son, Abraham, and his grandson, Thomas (son of James), were all eager to participate in the plantation of Co. Fermanagh.

The Creightons of Crom, however, were not among the original patentees in Plantation Fermanagh, and in fact did not come into possession of Crom until 1655. In 1613, James and/or Thomas Creighton (the evidence is conflicting) bought the proportion of Aghalane, a short distance from Crom on the others side of the lough, from its original patentee, Thomas Money penny, Laird of Tinkell, very soon after the date of the passing of the tatter's patent in 1611. In c. 1615, James and or Thomas Creighton built Aghalane Castle (John Johnston, 'The Scotch Settlement of Co. Fermanagh, 1610-1630', in Clogher Record, ix, 1978, pp. 367-373). In 1616, Thomas Creighton leased to his uncle, Abraham, the lands of Derry canon, etc, part of the manor of Aghalane. On these lands, Abraham Creighton built himself a house at Dromboory (which survived until c. 1840-1845, when it was burnt down) and thereafter was styled 'of Dromboory'. He died c.1630, and was succeeded by his son, another Abraham, subsequently known as Colonel Abraham Creighton. At this stage, and until 1655, Abraham Creighton was still a poorer relation and tenant of his Aghalane cousins. In 1661, Thomas Creighton of Aghalane died and was succeeded by his younger brother, the Rev. George Creighton, who in that year made a fee farm grant of Dromboory to Abraham Creighton, which in effect gave ownership of it to Abraham.

In the early 18th century, according to Reeves-Smyth, the then head of the Aghalane branch of the family, John Creighton, moved out of Aghalane Castle into a newly built small mansion at Killynick. Although he was by now a rather distant cousin, he features prominently in the family settlements of the Creightons of Crom (and vice versa). John Creighton died in 1738, without a son, and in his will directed that his estate should be sold and the proceeds divided among his six daughters. The

purchaser was Samuel Cooke, later Sir Samuel, Alderman of the City of Dublin. Cooke's daughter, Anne, married Walter Weldon, a member of the Weldon family of Rahenderry, Queen's County, and by 1784 Aghalane was owned jointly by Mrs Anne Weldon, now a widow, and her son by Walter Weldon, Samuel Cooke Weldon. Then, by an extraordinary coincidence, one of the Weldons' two daughters, Jane, married in 1797 Colonel the Hon. John Creighton, second son of the 1st Earl Erne and father of the 3rd Earl of Erne.

At this stage, Jane Weldon was simply a well-portioned wife (she brought the large sum of £17,000 to John Creighton as her dowry). But soon afterwards, her only brother, Samuel Cooke Weldon, died, leaving as his co-heiresses Jane and his other sister. In 1816, the Weldon estates (of which only Aghalane was in Co. Fermanagh) were partitioned between the co-heiresses, the Aghalane estate going to Jane Creighton. From 1829, it became part of what was called in mid-19th-century Erne estate records 'the Killynick estate'. Following a purchase of additional land to the value of £19,382 in the period 1842-1852, this combined Killynick estate had a total acreage of 1,798 (Irish).



## Plantation proportions

With the exception of the Killynick (and Knockballymore and Enniskillen) estates, the future Co. Fermanagh estates of the Earls of Erne were formed, in whole or in part, out of the Plantation proportions described by the Rev. George Hill in *An Historical Account of the Plantation in Ulster ... 1608-1620* (Belfast, 1877) as the proportions of Carowshee (alias Cornashee), Legan, Dristernan and Kilspinan. Carowshee equates with Castle Balfour or Lisnaskea, Kilspinan equates with Crom, and Legan and Dristernan, incorporating Callowhill, were on the other, barony of Knockninny side of the lough, in and around modern Derrylin. The original patentees were the Balfour family, who in some instances sold out early to Sir Stephen Butler (ancestor of the Earls of Lanesborough).

Hill states that Sir James Balfour, kt, had in 1619 3,000 acres called Carowshee, etc, in the precinct of Knockninny allotted to Scottish undertakers. '... This Sir James Balfour, created Lord Glenawley, was second son of Michael Balfour, Lord Burleigh. The latter was undertaker of 2,000 acres, and his eldest son, Michael, Lord Mountwhanny, was undertaker for 1,000 acres, but James, the second son above-mentioned, appears to have become owner of the 2,000 acres owned by his father and to have added another 1,000 acres to this estate. His elder brother, Michael, on getting his patent, let the lands of his proportion, called Kilspinan [alias Crom], to Irish tenants by the year, and eventually [1616] sold out his interest, which approximate very roughly to the Crom demesne in the 20th century which, according to Reeves Smyth, comprised '... 1,590 [statute] acres in some twelve townlands straddling both shores of the lough' to Sir Stephen Butler, [who had 1,300 acres there in 1619, which approximate very roughly to the Crom demesne in the 20th century which, according to Reeves-Smyth, comprised '... 1,590 (statute) acres in some twelve townlands straddling both shores of the lough']. ...

On the 6th of October 1626, a grant to James, Lord Balfour, [was made] of the small proportion of Carrowshee and other lands in the baronies of Magherastephana, Knockninny, Magheraboy and Coole, with free fishing in the lake or river of Lough Erne, the lands to be called the manor of Carrowshee; also to the said Lord Balfour and Dame Anne, his wife, the great proportion of Legan ..., with two fairs yearly at Castle Balfour in Carrowshee and two at the town of Legan in the manor so called. The other lands mentioned in the grant of Carrowshee were the proportions of Dristernan, Laytrim and Kilspinan.

[Laytrim, or Leitrim, is not relevant to the Creighton estate, because part of it is in fact the site of the modern Castle Coole, outside Enniskillen, the seat of the Earls of Belmore. The sale of Kilspinan, alias Crom, by the Balfours has already been recorded. The history of Dristernan is a good deal more complicated.] ... For a consideration of £3,328, Sir James Balfour, Lord Glenawley, demised ... [Dristernan] to Sir William Balfour for the term of 1,000 years from July 1634 at the rent of a peppercorn. ... Previously, however, James Trayle, the original patentee, [had] demised it to Sir Stephen Butler on the



*Sir William Balfour*

4th of August 1615, when it was extensively occupied by yearly tenants from the native population. [It was still in Butler's possession in 1637, although the ownership of it had passed by then to Sir William Balfour, Lieutenant of the Tower of London. It included 'Callaghill', the future Callowhill of the Erne estate records, which was earmarked as a suitable place for a weekly market and three annual fairs.] ...'

Because of the early date of some of the Balfour documents, particularly the rentals for the 1630s, they are of considerable importance to the study of Plantation Fermanagh. John Johnston in 'Settlement Patterns in Co. Fermanagh, 1610-1660' in *Clogher Record*, x, No. 2 (1980), draws on them as follows: '... It has been assumed that the Irish were driven on to the more mountainous lands after 1660 as a result of economic pressure, but it is clear that in Fermanagh at least the Irish were being displaced by British settlers as early as 1620. There was a clear demarcation between those areas settled by the British and those areas settled by the Irish on the Balfour estate near Lisnaskea, and land did not pass from one group to the other, despite a considerable turnover of population between 1630 and 1636. Whether the causes of this separation were social or economic, is difficult to determine. ...

It has already been noted that the Irish held their land by the year, but on the Balfour estate the British tenants had their land for three years. Sir William Balfour's agent, Elezeur Middleton, noted in one case that the only way he could let a particularly unwanted townland let was to allow its Irish tenant to have a three-year lease, which was most unusual ... . Even the British tenants seem to have taken short leases, but as the inhabitants of Lisnaskea were busily rebuilding their houses at this time, it cannot have been fears for the future which caused this desire for short leases. It is possible that this arrangement gave a tenant more freedom of movement than he might otherwise enjoy, but the way in which Middleton let the land must also be taken into account, because it would seem that he let the land to the best tender at an auction. Such a method could account for the Irish drift to the uplands. ...'





## **The piecemeal build-up of the Erne estate in Fermanagh**

It was Abraham Creighton of Drumboory, cousin and tenant of the Aghalane Creightons, who, in the words of Jackson-Stops, '... acquired, first the leasehold, and then ... the freehold of Crom, marrying [in 1655] ... [Mary, the third] daughter of its previous tenant, [James Spottiswoode,] Bishop of Clogher [from 1621 to his death in 1645]. ...' In 1665, Francis Butler of Belturbet, Co. Cavan, conveyed to Abraham Creighton 'of Crom' the freehold of the estate, subject only to a head rent of £15 per annum. This head rent was purchased by the 1st Earl Erne from Butler's descendant, the 4th Earl of Lanesborough, in 1810. In 1862, the Crom estate comprised 3,158 Irish acres.

This slow and piecemeal acquisition of land, often by a gradually more favourable tenure, was characteristic of the build-up of the Creighton/Erne estate in Co. Fermanagh. Another example is 'the great tate of Dristernan'. Abraham Creighton obtained a 31-year lease of it from the Rev. Theophilus Teate, Fellow of Trinity College, Dublin, in 1671 (which is why a copy of Teate's will, dated 1672, is present in the archive). Teate himself must have been some sort of tenant of the Balfour family. In 1674, Teate's heir sold the Teate interest in this part of Dristernan to Abraham Creighton. Creighton then sub-let it, probably in perpetuity, to the Green family of Derryvore in 1700, and his descendant, the 2nd Earl Erne (or, rather the 2nd Earl's trustees) reacquired it with the rest of 'the Green estate' in 1829.

The principal reason for this piecemeal pattern of acquisition was the progressive fragmentation of the estate of the Balfour family of Castle Balfour, Lisnaskea. The confused sales and perpetuity-leasing of the 17th century have already been referred to. In 1723, Legan, Dristernan, Callowhill, etc (all in and around Derrylin), contained 5,583 profitable Irish acres and 2,614 acres of bog at a rental of £798, and Carowshee/Lisnaskea had had a rental of £634 in the previous year. By 1726, the rental of Legan, etc, had been reduced to £393 as a result of sales, mainly to Colonel Alexander Montgomery of Ballyconnell, Co. Cavan (and Convoy, Co. Donegal), in 1724, and to John Eney of Bawnboy, Co. Cavan, in 1724 and 1726. By 1791, c.20 townlands in Legan, corresponding wholly or mainly to the Montgomery and Eney purchases, had passed into the ownership of the 1st Earl of Enniskillen and constituted his barony of Knockninny estate (see the description of the Enniskillen papers on the PRONI website).

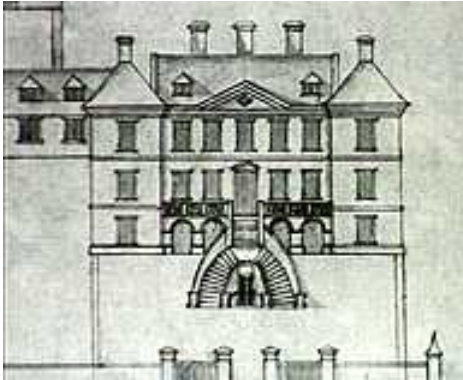
Meanwhile, in 1738, the Balfour family had died out in the male line. It was kept going by two nephews in the female line called Townley who successively, in 1738 and again in 1759, changed their names to Balfour. The Townleys, however, had landed interests in their own right, and two seats, Piedmont and Townley Hall, in Co. Louth. In the 1770s, the respective rentals of these estates were £2,239 for Louth (and Meath) and £1,780 for Fermanagh. In the late 1790s, a new Townley Hall was built for Blayney Balfour by Francis Johnston, which clearly signalled a preference for Louth over Fermanagh: Castle Balfour must by this stage have been old-fashioned, if not ruinous, by comparison. Compared to the Louth, the Fermanagh estate had also been greatly eroded, not just by sales but by perpetuity leasing. Its acreage in 1815 was 5,071 (Irish), at a rental of £3,157. In spite of the presence of 22 perpetuity

leases, the valuation was considerably higher – £6,734. Most of the surviving estate was by this stage round Lisnaskea, although Legan, Dristernan, etc, were still represented. This was presumably broadly the situation in 1821, when Blayney Balfour, under pressure of mounting debt, decided to cut his Fermanagh losses and sell the whole estate to the 1st Earl Erne for the still very considerable sum of £82,500.



## The first Crom Castle and its putative successor

Jackson-Stops's account resumes: '... Though Crom is rich in prehistoric and Celtic remains, its modern history goes back to the castle on the lake shore, built in 1610 by ... Michael Balfour [and extended by Sir Stephen Butler (from 1616) and by Bishop Spottiswoode (from c.1630)]. Pynnar, the commissioner who inspected it in 1619, described "a bawn of lime and stone", 60 ft square and 12 ft high, with two flankers, and with "a house of lime and stone" inside. ...



*Design for unbuilt house at Crom,  
c.1720s*

The castle, which withstood two sieges by the Jacobites in 1689, was always thought to have remained the family seat until 1764, when another Abraham Creighton (later 1st Lord Erne), attending the housewarming party at Florence Court, noticed an ominous glow in the sky to the south, and galloped back to find ... that [the castle] had been burnt down. However, a drawing [still at Crom] made in his father's day [c.1725] shows a substantial early-18th-century house, ... [which may never have been built, as no mention is made of it in Dean William Henry's description of Crom in 1739, and which] has some very interesting

Franco-Scottish features such as the central horseshoe staircase and arcaded terrace ... . A large landscape painting of Crom [which Ann Crookshank and the Knight of Glin attribute to James Mannin, the French-Italian teacher of landscape painting in the Dublin Society School], made in about 1760, also appears to show a new house behind the old castle, so it is possible that this was the ... [family seat when the castle] burnt down soon afterwards. Archaeological evidence for its existence is still slim, but there is a possible site in the present deer park ... . A rusticated doorcase set into the old castle ruins might also come from the early 18th-century house. ..."

Whether the old castle was or was not the family seat in 1764, it cannot have served that purpose thereafter. Reeves-Smyth quotes the Ordnance Survey Memoir of October 1835 as authority for the fact that the surviving '... building consisted only of the two round towers and connecting wall'. A sketch of the c.1770s by Gabriel Beranger depicting 'The Castle of Enniskillen, county of Fermanagh' (by which Crom is probably meant) shows a substantial and still livable-in building; but Reeves-Smyth thinks that this derives from the c.1760 painting and that Beranger did not realise that the original had been burnt. Most of the present building actually dates from 1831-1832, when the ruins were repaired and extended in order to constitute a 'gothick' eye-catcher for the new Crom Castle which was about to be built on a nearby but more elevated site. But the ruins of the old castle can still clearly be distinguished from the 'improvements' of the early 1830s. They are also depicted in a sketch of c.1800 at Crom Castle.

If not the family seat in 1764, the old castle probably acted as an essential adjunct to whatever house then existed at Crom. Therefore, its destruction presumably necessitated at least a temporary re-location of the Creighton family. They are supposed to have taken up residence at Knockballymore, Magheraveely, Co. Fermanagh (just over the county boundary from Clones, Co. Monaghan). In 1770, Abraham Creighton, 1st Lord Erne, received a letter addressed to 'Crom Lodge, near Clones, Co. Monaghan'. Either this was a temporary re-naming of Knockballymore, or it was a house on or near the Knockballymore estate. The owner of Knockballymore was Lord Erne's nephew, Bernard Smith Ward, who had died in that year (1770). Alistair Rowan is incorrect in stating in *The Buildings of Ireland: North-West Ulster* (London, 1979) that Knockballymore had been built as an agent's house for Crom. It is a smallish house of c.1740, but of considerable architectural distinction, and too grand, surely, to have been built as an agent's house at that date? In any case, it was not an agent's house, but the seat of the Ward family. Ward's mother was Creighton's sister, Meliora (1706-1792), who had married Nicholas Ward of Knockballymore in 1742. Nicholas Ward died in 1751, and the Bernard Smith Ward who died in 1770 was their only child. As Meliora Ward seems to have lived in Dublin, Knockballymore would have been available for renting during her widowhood. She died in 1792, when it passed under the terms of Bernard Smith Ward's will to her nephew, the 1st Earl Erne.

Had there then been no house at Crom suitable as the seat of a peerage family, Lord Erne would surely have taken up permanent residence at Knockballymore? Instead, he let it for 3 lives at a rent of £90 per annum to James King, the husband of his daughter, Elizabeth, and also a connection of the family through the second marriage of the 1st Earl's father. Lady Elizabeth King died in 1794, but King lived until 1833, and there is no evidence that he surrendered the lease. Thus, from 1793 to 1833, Knockballymore was not available for occupation by the Erne family. Jackson-Stops notes that, at some point, probably in c.1780, '... the [1st] Earl did build a small lodge or summer residence on the island of Inisherker, where the present walled garden [at Crom] is ...'. Reeves-Smyth describes it as an attractive, one-storey building in its own landscaped parkland. But, attractive or otherwise, Inisherker Lodge must surely have been suitable only for occasional residence, presumably in the summer.

There is the further consideration that, when the 1st Earl Erne married in 1775, as his second wife, Lady Mary Hervey, daughter of the architecture-obsessed, 'edifying' Bishop of Derry, the Bishop noted as one of the points in his prospective son-in-law's favour that he 'possesses a very beautiful seat in our neighbourhood' (quoted in William S. Childe-Pemberton, *The Earl-Bishop ...* [2 vols, London, 1924], i, 150). It seems improbable that someone like the Earl-Bishop would have used the word 'seat' to denote a demesne rather than a house; and Knockballymore would have been too small and old-fashioned, and not sufficiently well situated, to have drawn such praise from him. Thus, it would appear that there was an 18th-century house of some distinction at Crom, either built or enlarged after the destruction of the old castle in 1764, and that Knockballymore was used only as a stopgap. In 1772, the 1st Lord Erne was described for legal purposes as being 'of Crom Castle', as were the 1st Earl Erne in 1796 and 1808 and Colonel the Hon. John Creighton (1772-1833), second son of the 1st Earl Erne, in 1811 and 1820.

The 1st Earl himself always had substantial Dublin townhouses in which to live, first in Sackville Street (inherited from his father in 1772), then in Dominick Street, and finally (from 1776) in a house on his own city estate in Great Denmark Street. After the Union, he must have spent a good deal of time attending parliament in London. Something as small as Inisherik Lodge might well have suited his lifestyle in the years after c.1785. But his second son, Colonel the Hon. John Creighton, who had a fairly large family, owned Aghalane in right of his wife and (as will be seen) was father of the heir to the Erne estates and titles, would surely have needed to reside in a 'Crom Castle'. Nevertheless, there is no evidence beyond such supposition for the building of one in the years between 1764 and 1830.



## **Colonel Abraham Creighton (d.1706) and General David Creighton (1671-1728)**

This is considerably to anticipate events; so it is now necessary to return to the Creightons of the late 17th century. Colonel Abraham Creighton was given command of an Inniskilling Regiment of Foot in 1689, at the head of which he fought at the battle of Aughrim in 1691. He died in 1706. His fifth son, David, then only eighteen, was celebrated for his two defences of Crom Castle in 1689 against a large body of King James's army under the command of, first Lord Galmoy and then of General the MacCarthy Mor. David Creighton was MP for Augher, Co. Tyrone, in 1695, and for Lifford borough, Co. Donegal, in the parliaments of 1703, 1713, 1715 and 1727.

David Creighton was promoted Major-General, commanded Lord Charlemont's Regiment in Spain during the War of the Spanish Succession and, later, in 1719, was appointed Master of the Royal Hospital, Kilmainham. Although he was only a younger son, he must have had resources of his own deriving from his army pay, and more important, prize money. Ultimately, he outlived all his older brothers, and also his nephew, John Creighton, who succeeded to Crom in 1706 and died without issue in 1715, when General David Creighton succeeded to Crom. The General could not have been uninfluenced by the architectural splendours of the Royal Hospital. He commissioned plans for a new house at Crom and (from Sir Edward Lovett Pearce) for a gazebo on Gad Island in Lough Erne. These projects seem to have come to nothing (although the c.1760 painting of Crom does show a gazebo-like building (long disappeared) on the lough-shore south of the old castle.

General David Creighton had married, pre-1695, Catherine Southwell, sister of the 1st Lord Southwell of Castle Mattress, Co. Limerick. He died in 1728 and she in 1759. Their only surviving son was Abraham Creighton, later 1st Lord Erne.



## **The Lifford estate and Lifford borough**

In 1670, Colonel Abraham Crighton's sister had married one Hugh Hamill of Strabane, Co. Tyrone. Eight years later, Hamill purchased Lifford (for £3,450) from Richard Hansard of Ballindrait, Co. Donegal, whose forebear, Sir Richard Hansard, Kt, had been granted it in 1611. Hamill's purchase was paid for with money largely borrowed from Creighton, and following the purchase, Hamill fell into increasingly serious financial difficulties. Creighton, as has been seen, died in 1706, and presumably left his claims against Hamill and on the Lifford estate (allegedly amounting to £10,000-£12,000) to General David Creighton, as the son who was best-resourced to prosecute the necessary legal proceedings. By 1707, General David Creighton had obtained all or most of the Lifford estate as a result of foreclosure or other action to recover the money owed by Hamill.

At this stage, the Lifford estate must have seemed to have more potential than the Crom (to which he succeeded in 1715), because Lifford was a parliamentary borough sending two MPs to the Irish House of Commons. Up to 1760, the Creightons shared the parliamentary patronage of Lifford with Colonel Alexander Montgomery of Ballyconnell, Co. Cavan, and Convoy Co. Donegal. Among the Erne papers is an agreement of 1727 between Montgomery and General David Creighton about the details of the sharing of the corporation and the representation of the borough. One of the articles of agreement was that, if Montgomery should die without a son, his interest in the borough should pass to the Creightons. Montgomery was elected for Co. Donegal at the general election later that year, so both David Creighton and his son and heir, Abraham, later 1st Lord Erne, were returned for Lifford. David Creighton died in 1728, and Montgomery's nephew, Thomas, was returned for Lifford in his place, presumably as a matter of courtesy rather than of obligation. Montgomery himself died in the following year, 1729, leaving no son. So, when Thomas Montgomery died in 1760, full control of the borough passed to Abraham Creighton.

In 1692, and then late in the 19th century (in the course of which their landownership in Co. Fermanagh enormously increased), the Creightons sat in parliament for Fermanagh. In the 18th century, by contrast, they never represented that county, so Lifford borough was their only means of access to parliament. Moreover, because they were generally in support of the government, and sometimes allowed the government to nominate to one of their seats, Lifford borough was a major factor in their elevation to and promotion in the peerage. They were created Barons Erne in 1768, Viscounts Erne in 1781 and Earls Erne in 1789.



## Rogerson's Quay

In 1729, Abraham Creighton married Elizabeth, eldest daughter of Sir John Rogerson, with whom he received a substantial marriage portion of £5,000 (with much more to follow).

According to F. Elrington Ball, *The Judges in Ireland, 1221-1921* (London, 1926), Rogerson was regarded by the anti-Irish Primate Boulter as '... a most presumptuous person, although the Primate was forced to admit that the English had no cause, apart from his Irish birth, to complain of him, and some of them regarded him possibly as not unworthy of office on account of his being a wealthy man. His wealth Rogerson ... knew probably how to use for his own advancement. As a son of a great merchant, [another] Sir John Rogerson, known in Lombard Street [London] as well as in the Dublin tholsel [i.e. exchange], he had every advantage in education, and was a member of the English as well as the Irish bar. He had always practised, however, in the latter country, where he had married at an early age [1607] a daughter of a rich legal official, Stephen Ludlow ..., and he had served from the time of George I's accession as an Irish Law Officer, holding as well the Recordership of Dublin and representing that city in parliament [both from 1715]. ...'

In the 1720s, Rogerson aspired to the Lord Chancellorship of Ireland. In the end, however, he had to content himself with appointment as Lord Chief Justice of the King's Bench, which office he held from 1727 to his death (apparently from a fever contracted on assize) in 1741. He lived in a house in Henry Street, Dublin, and also had a villa outside the city. The share of his obviously considerable wealth which passed to his daughter, Elizabeth Creighton, was Rogerson's Quay, near Ringsend, Dublin, and property in Great Denmark Street. The 1st Earl Erne had his Dublin town house in Great Denmark Street, and died there in 1828, after which it was sold. These Dublin properties or the remnant of them continued to be in the possession of the Erne family, and continue to be recorded in the papers, until the 1940s.





## Knockballymore

Even more important, in terms of the future augmentation of the Erne estates, was the already-mentioned marriage in 1742 of Meliora Creighton and Nicholas Ward of Knockballymore.

Nicholas Ward's parents were Bernard Ward, great-uncle of Judge Michael Ward of Castle Ward, Strangford, Co. Down (father of the 1st Viscount Bangor), and Jane, née Davys, heiress of her brother, Edward Davys of Knockballymore, who died without issue at some date post-1697. Nicholas Ward had succeeded to Knockballymore by 1718; so he must have been considerably older than Meliora Creighton, his wife. There must also have been some connection with a family called Smith, who were 'of Knockballymore' in the early 18th century; possibly a Davys co-heiress had married a Smith. From the Smiths came the Ward estates in Connaught (comprising in 1750, 1,300 Irish acres in Co. Mayo and 1,200 in Co. Sligo), possibly under the will (1728) of William Smith of Knockneshamer, alias Clover Hill, Co. Sligo, who died in 1741. Nicholas Ward died in 1751 and Bernard Smith Ward in 1770. Under the latter's will, the Ward estates were to belong to his widowed mother, Meliora, for her life and then to pass to the 1st Earl Erne. The bequest took effect at her death in 1792.

Years later, from 1874 to the early 1880s, the 3rd Earl of Erne was to employ Capt. Charles Cunningham Boycott as his agent for the Mayo estate, at Lough Mask, near Cong, with consequences which added a word to the English language.



*Capt. Charles  
Cunningham Boycott*



## **Abraham Creighton, 1st Lord Erne (1703-1772)**

Abraham Creighton, the husband of the Rogerson co-heiress, was a freeman of the City of Dublin (1737), a Trustee of the Linen Manufacture, a Governor of Co. Fermanagh and MP for Lifford, 1727-1768. In the latter year, he was raised to the peerage as Baron Erne. His first wife died in 1761, and in 1763 he married Jane Acheson, a widow, daughter of John King of Charlestown, Co. Roscommon. She died in 1800.



## **John Creighton, 2nd Lord Erne, 1st Viscount Erne and 1st Earl Erne (c.1731-1828)**

John Creighton, a captain in the Royal Irish Dragoons, was MP for Lifford, 1761-1772. He was raised to the viscountcy in 1781 and to the earldom in 1789, and was elected one of the original 28 Irish Representatives Peers to serve in the post-Union House of Lords in Westminster in 1801. He was a Governor of Co. Fermanagh, 1772-1828, and was made an Irish Privy Councillor in 1804. He married firstly, in 1761, Catherine Howard, sister of the 1st Viscount Wicklow. She died in 1775. He married secondly, in 1776, as has already been mentioned, Mary Caroline, first daughter of Frederick Hervey, Bishop of Derry (1768-1803) and, from 1779, 4th Earl of Bristol.

It is mainly in the correspondence of his second wife's family that glimpses of the 1st Earl Erne are to be had. In an already-quoted letter at the time of his courtship in late 1775, he was described by the Earl-Bishop as '... a most unexceptionable man, who will have about £9,000 a year, possesses a very beautiful seat in our neighbourhood and is in love with her to the eyes. Unfortunately, he is a widower and has children. This staggers her; and, though I expect a conclusion before Christmas, yet perhaps after all it may go off. ...' This is the last complimentary reference to Lord Erne. Not only the Earl-Bishop's papers but a two-volume book on his daughter, Caroline, entitled *The First Lady Wharnccliffe and her Family (1779-1856)* ... (London, 1927), are full of references of a contrary nature. '... Writing from Rome, March 1778,... [the Bishop's wife] says:"... Lord Erne keeps his usual restlessness and discontent and, though he requires society more than anybody, is constantly running away from it, and yet is without a fund in himself to supply its place." And, again, the Bishop writes that Lady Erne "is exhausted, worn out and can no more. He tires her to atoms by his silly difficulties and his endless irresolution. Great God! how ill she is matched."...'

In 1779, a daughter, Caroline, later Lady Wharnccliffe, was born to the ill-matched couple. Lady Erne and Caroline were abroad, mainly in Italy, from 1785 to 1790, when she became intimate with the Prince and Princess of Piedmont, later King and Queen of Sardinia. '... From ... letters of the Bishop's [of 1785] we learn that Lady Erne had been ill, unhappy and in want of money. The following is written to her at Nice, February 22, 1785: "... The relief to your finances is probably some to your spirits. ... I communicated to the Viscount a scheme of adding to your income £100 apiece, but he answered me drily, when you was as good as wife as you was a daughter, he would listen to the proposal. ...' From 1790 to 1797 Lady Erne and Caroline lived either in London or elsewhere in England. Lady Caroline Creighton, as she had become with her father's promotion to the earldom, married the future Lord Wharnccliffe in 1799.

The editors of Lady Wharnccliffe's Letters describe the 1st Earl Erne, as '... that mysterious personage who, while professing the deepest affection for his wife and daughter [and on one occasion, in 1822, his reluctance to visit them because of the pain of parting!], yet lived entirely separate from them and very rarely saw them. ... After Caroline's marriage, Lady Erne was given, through the influence of her brother-in-law, Lord Liverpool [who had married her sister, Louisa, in 1793, was in the

Cabinet from 1801 and was Prime Minister, 1812-1827], an apartment at Hampton Court, while her son-in-law fitted up for her the Lodge at Wharnccliffe [in the West Riding of Yorkshire]. ... For the last years before her death she ... remained at Hampton Court entirely,... [subsisting on] the very restricted income allowed her by her husband. ...' Nevertheless, for all his meanness to Lady Erne, her brother, the 5th Earl and 1st Marquess of Bristol, paid tribute at the time of his death in 1828 to his 'kind, affectionate, steady heart'. Lady Erne long outlived her long-lived husband, dying in 1842.

In terms of the status and landed wealth of his family, the 1st Earl's long innings (1772-1828) was crucial. Under him, the family attained its highest rank in the peerage, although the UK barony he sought in 1825 eluded him and was not obtained until 1876, late in his grandson's day. It was pure good fortune that he inherited the Knockballymore and Sligo and Mayo estates in 1792. But only good management, not to say meanness, on his part made possible the two major purchases of land which were achieved in his time - the Cole-Hamilton estate in and north of Enniskillen in c.1810 and the surviving Balfour estate in and around Lisnaskea and Derrylin in 1821 (which together must have cost well over £100,000). The 1st Earl, as will be seen, also left specific and ample financial provision for the building of the new Crom Castle.



## **Insanity in the family: the 2nd Earl Erne (1765-1842)**

The Hon. Abraham Creighton, from 1789 styled Viscount Creighton, and from 1828 2nd Earl Erne, was MP for Lifford, 1790-1797, and served in the 14th Light Dragoon and in the Fermanagh Militia (embodied in 1793). He was of sound mind at this stage, but soon afterwards, in December 1798, was declared insane. He never married and died in confinement, at Brooke House, Clapton, near London, aged about 80.

A letter describing the negotiations in 1799 over the marriage of Lady Caroline Creighton, his half-sister, to the future Lord Wharnccliffe, provides a plausible explanation for his insanity: 'Lady Caroline Creighton's marriage is declared with S. Wortley ... . He will have a property of £18,000 a year from his father, besides Mackenzie's [his great-uncle]. He is highly spoken of, and they are much attached. There has been a difficulty, owing to old Wortley's [his father] fears about Lord Creighton, her half-brother, who is confined [i.e. insane]. But Lord Erne, who is in England, cleared it up to the family, as Lord Creighton's illness was owing to cold bathing in a course of mercury, which disordered his head. ...'

Since the insanity was apparently not of an hereditary kind, it had the advantage to the Creighton family that, during the period 1828-1842 when the 2nd Earl held the title, his financial requirements were extremely modest (a maintenance allowance of c. £780 per annum in the 1830s), as indeed the 1st Earl's must also have been in the period 1785-1828. Because of the 2nd Earl's incapacity, a whole generation of marriage settlement charges was skipped. The money saved was used for purchases of land which were made from 1810 onwards and, eventually, for the building of the new Crom Castle. Somewhat surprisingly, the 2nd Earl died worth over £52,500 and was allowed to dispose of this large sum of money by will, which he did by leaving almost all of it to junior branches of his family. Earlier, his heir, the future 3rd Earl, had tried unsuccessfully to apply it to Crom Castle.



## 19th-century purchases of land

In general, existing landed magnates were more active than is commonly supposed in buying yet more land. This is particularly true of the period from the late 18th century onwards, by which time the return on investment in land had become more than economic, provided only that the purchase money was not borrowed. The 1st Earl Erne seems in the 1810s and 1820s to have added, by purchase, 8,700 Irish acres to his inherited 5,759 in Co. Fermanagh; and his grandson, the 3rd Earl, continued the process by spending between 1842 and 1872 £93,108 on Fermanagh land with a rental of £4,601 by 1875. The Erne estate in that county seems to have been roughly trebled by purchases made from 1810 onwards. These conclusions are based on the following parts of the Erne papers: D1939/2/3A and C, estate surveys, 1862, D1939/2/17, Lisnaskea estate rental, 1815, and D1939/21/7/3, a memorandum book about family finances, [c.1878].

In 1883 the family estates were quantified as followed: 21,389 acres in Co. Fermanagh, 4,826 in Co. Donegal, 2,184 in Co. Mayo and 1,966 in Co. Sligo. This makes a total of 40,365 acres, valued at £23,850 p.a.

In 1885, when the Fermanagh rental stood at £14,000 p.a., the following townlands constituted the Fermanagh estate. By that stage, the rentals and account books were organised according to four categories/component estates: the Crom, the Knockballymore, the Lisnaskea and the Enniskillen. In other words, some of the previous categories/components had disappeared ('Killynick', for example, having been absorbed in Crom). It should be noted that 'Enniskillen' denoted the whole purchase from the Cole-Hamilton family – rural townlands in the barony of Magheraboy as well as urban property in Enniskillen. The townlands have been arranged alphabetically within estate:



**Crom estate**

Aghakillymand	Derryvore	Killymackan
Aghalane	Dirnagore	Killynick
Aghnacloymore	Doon Lower	Kilnabrack
Aghnish	Doon Upper	Kiltycrose
Aghuidaragh	Drumany Beg & Drumany More	Kingarrow North
Barr	Drumboory	Kingarrow South
Cacknish	Drumbomenig	Kinmeen
Callowhill	Drumconnor	Kinnoughtra
Carrowcarlan	Drumderg	Kinrush
Cloghan & Cornahoule	DrumdoneyKnockareevan	
Clonturkle	Drumetta	Knockninny
Coolkill	Drumhervin	Milltown
Cornaclare	Drumeeshil	Molly
Cornakill	Druminiskill	Mullahinshogah
Cornalick	Drumkillon	Mullan
Corratrassna	Drumlught	Mulluahub
Cornaweel	Drumroosk	Mullylun
Corracoash	Drumshimuck	Mullynacragh
Corrakelly	Drumshimuck	Mullyneeny
Corramonaghan	Faurkagh	Redly
Corravehy	Formil	Sheehinny
Corry	Geaglum	Sheitrim
Dernagore	Glassmullagh	Stonepark
Derrycanon	Gole	Stonepark or Camletter
Derrychorran	Gorteen	Teemore
Derrychree	Gortgorgan	Tonnacroob
Derryconda	Gortgorgan	Tonymore
Derryguidry	Greaghmore	Tonyvarnog
Derryhooley	Inisfendra	Tonywall
Derrylaney	Inislenuw	Toralt
Derrylea	Killycloghan	Tully
Derrylin	Killycramph	



**Knockballymore estate**

Aghaboy	Drumady	Knocks
Belmount	Drumbinsk	Linsashilleda
Carrigans	Drumcru	Lislea
Clahernagh	Drumharriff	Loughkillygreen
Clinacor (part)	Druminusky	Magheramore
Clonatty	Drumrainy	Magherareagh
Cloncor	Galbally	Magheraveeley
Cloneara	Gorteen	Mullygrennan
Clonfeale	Gortgarvan	Oakfield
Clonumphry	Gortinure	Ruigvella
Conckera	Killylackig	Stralustrin
Cornaclare	Kilroot	Tireeval
Corraghy	Kilturk	Uttony
Derrycree		





**Lisnaskea estate**

Attybaron	Drumbadbeg	Keenaghy
Ballymakenny	Drumbadmore	Killygullan
Barnhill	Drumbrughas North	Killynamph
Carrickahunan	Drumbrughas South	Killypaddy
Carrickaurick	Drumcunny	Kingstown
Carrickmacosker	Drumginff	Leraw
Carrowgarra	Drumhaw	Lisnagole
Carrowshony	Drumlone (part)	Lisnaskea Corn and Butter Stores
Castle Balfour	Drumlught	Lisnaskea Town
Cleenriss	Drumroosk	Lisoneill
Conachrow	Edragole	Moneymakinn
Coolaran	Eihnascreen	Mooreparke
Cornashee	Eshbane	Mullaghwheel and Ballymackilroy
Corradillar	Eshcarcoge	Rabbit Island
Croaghan	Eshmeen	Rossbeg
Crockaness	Eshnagorn	Rossgad
Crocknanane	Forfey	Rossmacole
Currogo	Glassdrumman	Shanaghy
Cushwash	Gortaharn	Shushill
Derryasna	Hollybrook	Sraharory
Derrychulla	Inisgriffin	Tattievaugh
Derryhinden	Inishcollan	Toney
Derrymaney	Inishcorkisk	Toolin
Derryree	Inishroosk	Trannish Island
Doon	Inishturk	Tullyneevin
Drumbad		



**Enniskillen estate**

Aghanagh	Dornogagh	Legnagay Beg
Aghnaglack	Drimsroohil	Lesky
Ardgart	Drumarvillan	Lurgandarragh
Ashwood, Woodymellagherie	alias Drumconlan	Moylehid
Bodarra	Drumgamp	Mullagherin
Cappogue	Enniskillen: house property in Castle Street, Wellington Street and Townhall Place	Mullyconet
Cleggan	Gortahurk	Mullymesker
Coolarkan	Gortdonaghey	Tobradan
Cooleymermer	Gortwader	Toniel
Crevantuoduff		



## **The building of Crom Castle**

Jackson-Stops continues: '... On his death in 1828,... [the 1st Earl Erne had] left the bulk of his estate, including £20,000 "in Consols to build Crom Castle", [and "replace the ancient castle there which was consumed in an accidental fire in 1764"] to his eldest grandson, John Creighton ... [son of the 2nd Earl's younger brother, Colonel the Hon. John Creighton. John Creighton Junior], who was eventually to inherit the title in 1842, lost no time in carrying out his grandfather's wishes. In 1829 he was already negotiating with the architect Edward Blore, whose designs for Weston House in Warwickshire he had probably admired at the Royal Academy in the previous year. A perspective view of Weston (which, sadly, was demolished in the 1930s) exists among the huge collection of Blore drawings ... [in the Erne papers], and shows that the planning of the two houses was virtually identical. ...



## A 'cheap' architect

[Blore has a] somewhat unfortunate reputation .... In 1832, when he was chosen to complete Nash's Buckingham Palace, after offering the lowest tender, the Duchess of Sutherland branded him "the cheap architect" - and subsequent critics have found the ennuï implied by his name all too apparent in his buildings. Even so kind a commentator as Howard Colvin has written that "a dull competence pervades all his work". On the other hand, Mark Girouard has demonstrated that Blore was the perfect architect for the Tory gentry, designing houses for them in the good Old English style, as opposed to the Italianate palazzi which Barry built for Whig grandees like the Sutherlands. "Gently picturesque and gently Elizabethan", his buildings never exceeded their estimates (unlike Barry's), and if they are more traditional than his great rival's - looking back to Nash rather than forward to Scott and Waterhouse - they summon up a mood of nostalgia characteristic of the 1830s and '40s. ...'

It would perhaps be more appropriate to call Blore the conscientious architect: Reeves-Smyth calculates that between 1831 and 1838 he visited Crom at least twelve times, which involved a round trip of 860 miles, costing £32 5s. 0d a time, each visit lasting eight days. This was a far cry, indeed, from the 'mail order' architecture of James Wyatt's Castle Coole.



## The building and the landscape



*Presentation to John Creighton,  
August 1838*

'... The foundations were dug in 1832, though the principal contractor, James Henry of [Harrington Street,] Dublin, was soon replaced [after a legal dispute fully documented in the archive] by the Edinburgh builder, Charles McGibbon, [who at the time was working for the Edinburgh-based architect, William Playfair, on Brownlow House, Lurgan]. The structural work was finished (at a cost of £29,600) by the end of 1837, and the presentation of a piece of silver plate to John Creighton by his tenantry, recorded in a charming watercolour of the following year, probably marked its ... completion. ...

Built of massive, rough-hewn, limestone blocks from a quarry above Lisnaskea, Crom is a forbidding building at close range: a bolder and more "primitive" version of Blore's later masterpiece, Merevale (again in Warwickshire), whose smooth ashlar finish must have been thought more suitable for the domesticated Midlands. However, its great strength is as a picturesque incident in the landscape, its turrets and gables, deep bay windows and oriels regrouping at every different viewpoint. "Towers and battlements I see, bosom'd high in tufted trees", the Victorians' favourite quotation from Milton, was never more apposite.

As a young man Blore had trained as a topographical draughtsman, and learnt the principles of "Romantic architecture", helping Sir Walter Scott with sketches for Abbotsford. But his success at Crom in creating such a remarkable synthesis between the house and its setting, must also have been due to his partnership here with the watercolourist and garden-designer, William Sawrey Gilpin ... [whose] Irish commissions included Caledon (in 1829), Castle Blayney in Co. Monaghan, and possibly also Florence Court. ... Gilpin could well have been consulted about the siting of the new house and the principal vistas to and from it ..., [although his detailed involvement seems to be confined to the period 1834-1835].



## **Destruction and reconstruction**

[On 12 January 1841], only three years ... [after its completion], the castle was almost burnt to the ground ... . The decision [to rebuild it] cannot have been taken ... lightly by [John Creighton, who succeeded as 3rd Earl in ... [1842], for the work of rebuilding and refurbishing amounted to just under £16,000 [and the fire insurance money to only £10,000]. Although Blore tendered for the work himself, the contract was given to [a Dublin architect], George Sudden, probably because he could visit the site more often and at less cost. The original specifications were used, however, so that few important changes are likely to have been made.

The Edinburgh builder, Charles McGibbon, returned to superintend the carvers and masons, while the chief supplier of furniture and upholstery was once again the Edinburgh firm of Trotters, now run by George Potts, William Trotter's heir, and operating from 9 Prince's Street. ... Blore himself had originally designed some of the principal pieces ... . Other pieces came from the London firm of Miles Edwards and the Dublin maker, Arthur Jones of St Stephen's Green, while "French silks, paper, blocks etc" were acquired for £223. Trotters' bills for the first phase, in 1837-1838, amounted to over £4,500, and a large number of Potts's drawings for curtains, seat furniture, mirrors and tables at Crom date from this period. But the second time round they charged only £1,500, so it is unlikely that all the contents of main rooms were completely destroyed. The west wing is ... known to have survived intact. ... [The total cost of furnishing Crom twice was £9,100.]



## Later building work

Most of the small buildings, which act as eyecatchers seen across the water, placed on distant promontories or standing out against dark belts of trees, date from after ... [the rebuilding of the main house]. The church on the Derryvore peninsula was begun in 1840 [and finished in 1842], though its tower was added only in the 1880s. The schoolhouse at Corlatt, probably opened in the 1820s, was remodelled in 1848, and the Creighton Tower on Gad Island – a half-submerged rock in the centre of the lough, visible from all over the demesne – was built in the same year. ... Unfortunately, none of the original designs exist, and its architect remains a mystery. Perhaps the finest of all these buildings is the boathouse to the south-west of the castle, thought to have been built in 1840-1842 and probably designed by Blore himself - with the lower terrace and slipway added by George Sudden in 1843. The upper room was used as the headquarters for the Lough Erne Yacht Club, to which almost all the local gentry then belonged. ...'

Reeves-Smyth writes: '... In 1861, the architect, William George Murray, was employed to add a storey on to the north side of the east wing and to alter the ground floor below. The architect's plans for this work survive ... . [He had probably come] to the notice of the Earl of Erne because of his work in 1859-1860 in building the new railway station at Newtownbutler. ... In 1873 an additional storey was added to the north wing, to accommodate four new bedrooms, a small bathroom and a connecting corridor running the length of the wing ... . The architect was William Hague, a Cavan-born architect, who became well known for his Roman Catholic church architecture ... . Later, William Hague was employed to create new maids' bedrooms in the attic space in the main block behind the south facade, while around 1880 ... [he] was again employed to create the present billiard room ..., [with its] splendid, ribbed barrel-vault ..., out of his earlier first-floor addition to the north range. ...'

[Blore's original objective had been] to create a building composed of a series of gradually receding, smaller units from the south to the north. The south tower was thus the highest point in this stepped composition, while the north range, which was only a single storey high, was the lowest. Unfortunately, the additions of 1861 and 1873-1880 ... have largely destroyed this effect and have given the east front a more solid and institutional appearance than Blore would have intended. ...'



## **The impact of Crom Castle**

Jackson-Stops concludes: '... In its towers and battlements, in the faces of family portraits looking down from the walls, in the lines of wooden yacht hulls lining the corridor, or the paintings of races and regattas held on the lough, one can sense the vitality of 19th-century Ireland even after the disasters of famine and emigration. As Shan Bullock, brought up on the estate at Crom in the 1870s, wrote of the big house, it was a world of "lavish magnificence, of endless goings and comings and doings ..., a civilisation, a little state, splendid, stirring with life". ...'





## **John Creighton, 3rd Earl of Erne (1802-1885)**

John Creighton was the elder son of Colonel the Hon. John Creighton, younger brother of the 'mad' 2nd Earl Erne, and Jane, née Weldon, the heiress to Aghalane.

Colonel the Hon. John Creighton was a professional soldier, serving successively in the 12th and 17th Light Dragoons, of which latter regiment he became colonel. He was also Governor of Hurst Castle, Hampshire (one of Henry VIII's south coast defences against the French, which presumably reacquired military significance during the French invasion scare of 1803-1805). He died in 1833, so there is no possibility of confusing him with his elder son and namesake, who became Colonel of the Fermanagh Militia five years later and was called 'Colonel Creighton' from then until his succession to the earldom in 1842. Jane Creighton, Colonel the Hon. John Creighton's widow, did not die until 1849, and John Creighton, 3rd Earl of Erne, probably did not come into the Aghalane estate until that date.

In 1835 John Creighton was described, almost with surprise, by his aunt, Lady Wharncliffe, formerly Lady Caroline Creighton, as 'a very pleasing, gentlemanlike man'. He was sheriff of Co. Fermanagh in 1827, sheriff of Co. Donegal in 1831, Colonel of the Fermanagh Militia from 1838, and Lieutenant of Co. Fermanagh from 1840 until his death. He was a Conservative in politics, but like many other Irish Conservatives broke with Peel over the Maynooth grant and the National System of Education in 1845. However, he did not sit in parliament prior to that date, although in 1834 he had considered standing for Co. Fermanagh at a by-election, mainly with a view to strengthening his future claims to a seat in the House of Lords. He was elected an Irish Representative Peer in 1845, and in 1876 he was given a UK peerage as Baron Fermanagh of Lisnaskea. This meant that he had an hereditary seat in the House of Lords as well as continuing to sit as an Irish Representative Peer until his death in 1885. In 1868 he was created a Knight of St Patrick

Reeves-Smyth writes: 'The 3rd Earl of Erne was a keen agriculturalist, not for its own sake, but because he was a progressive and enterprising landlord who sought to improve the conditions of his tenants as well as the income from his estates. On inheriting the Creighton properties, he found them generally backward ... . [His] first act was to bring over from Scotland two agricultural advisers, Andrew Mair and William Milne. ...' His efforts were interrupted by the Famine, but in spite of this the Devon Commission spoke well in its report of the Erne estates, among other things mentioning that Lady Erne gave premiums for the odd combination of 'the best butter, knitted socks and poultry', and that the 3rd Earl had established (in 1839) 'an agricultural museum in Lisnaskea'. After the Famine, he set out to create a 'model farm' and between 1847 and 1851 enormously enlarged the farmyard at Crom (which had been built as recently as 1835-1838). '... By the end of the 1850s, the farm complex at Crom must have been the best equipped in the country. Few other landlords in the post-Famine years could afford to invest such large sums of money on such a comprehensive farm-modernisation scheme. ...' One of the 3rd Earl's last acts, in 1884, was the building of a silo at Crom, which was probably 'the first recorded example in Ireland'.

In 1854, he became the first Chairman of the Dundalk and Enniskillen Railway Company, in which he invested the enormous sum of £100,000. When the Company decided to open a branch line to the 3rd Earl's town of Lisnaskea, a shareholder in the company and neighbouring landowner, J.G.V. Porter, who had been advancing the rival claims of Lisbellaw, objected strenuously and libellously. Eventually, the 3rd Earl had to bring a successful libel action against him, which must have been the talk of Co. Fermanagh and the Four Courts. In his last years he also became unavoidably involved in the controversy surrounding Capt. Boycott on the Mayo estate.

The 3rd Earl was at the heart of all the sailing activities for which Lough Erne was famous in the 19th and early 20th centuries. Reeves-Smyth writes: 'The great days of Crom as a social centre are ... [those of] the famous Lough Erne Yacht Club. Royalty, viceroys and many of the leading people of the realm partook of the activities of the club in its heyday. Its centre was the boathouse at Crom and its regatta season was mid-August. ... Sailing records begin in 1837, which makes it one of the oldest clubs in the British Isles. Its formation starts with the completion of the new castle and ends with the watershed in Crom's history brought about by the Great War.

The membership was drawn from the landed families around the lake, with the Crichtons at Crom forming the social and geographical centre. ... Great rivalry developed among these families and with it a constant pressure to win. ... This rivalry expressed itself in faster and better boats and innovative designs, which were followed by the rest of the yachting world. In the early period of the yachting era on the upper lake, the boats were larger and followed a progressive scaling-down, especially after the drainage works began on the lake after 1884 ... [and] the lake level began to fall ... . New club rules were introduced in 1885 specifying that a boat should have a water-line length of 18 feet, sail area of 250 square feet and a draught limited to two feet without centre-board. Boats with centre-boards were not evidently affected by these rules, but from ... [then] on would be much smaller than those previously built on the lake. ...

The keen competition among the yachting families of the lake [in the earlier period] was given a boost in 1862 when Edward Saunderson inherited his family seat, Castle Saunderson, and took up residence there. He immediately devoted his attention to building a boat ..., the "Imp" which duly defeated all rivals. The Crichtons' response to this was the "Elf", a centre-board craft built at Crom in 1864 by [the 3rd Earl's carpenter] Robert Craig and [Lt-Commander] Gartside-Tipping [of Rossferry], and the following year Craig built at Crom the yacht "Sybil", which had no centre-board. Edward Saunderson designed and built the yacht "Sprite" to compete with these, and later, in 1867, built the "Witch" a 20-ton yacht. Not to be outdone, the Crichtons ... built a new yacht "Breeze" in 1867 for £397, designed by Mr J. Samuel White, and in 1868 built the "Zephyr" for £485, which was also designed by ... White. ... Despite the fierce competition among the lake families, there appears to have been some co-operation in designing and building boats. ... In the 1870s, the Crichtons seemed to turn to American-designed boats ..., [including] the largest of all the Crichton yachts. ...

The most majestic form of transport on the lake during the 19th century were the great steam launches. Most of the county families around the lake had their own coal-burning steamers, and these were used to bring families to church at Crom on

Sundays, for house parties or to entertain guests on great occasions such as the boat club regattas. Occasionally they served as tugs pulling cots full of coal or turf. The earliest known steam boat at Crom was the "Firefly", which is recorded as having brought the Viceroy, Lord Clarendon, from Crom to Lanesborough Lodge [Belturbet] on his visit of 1850. Ten years later, when the Viceroy, Lord Carlisle, visited Crom, the Crichtons had a "fine paddle steam yacht of 50 tons" called the "Eglantine". ... To repair his steamers, the [3rd] Earl ... built in 1869 a floating dock, which was moored close to the old boathouse. This was made by Harland & Wolff [of Belfast] and cost £539. ... Like the racing yachts, these steamers were always painted in the family colours, the Saundersons' being green and the Crichtons' being blue. ...'

As a committed Evangelical, the 3rd Earl was concerned in numerous religious and educational organizations and foundations, both locally and nationally. One such venture, the building (at a cost of £7,200) of Trinity Church, Derryvore (known colloquially as 'Crom Church'), in 1840-1842, may have been inspired by pique as much as piety. Tradition has it that the 3rd Earl had quarrelled with the Bishop of Clogher and therefore deliberately sited the new church across a narrow stretch of lough and just inside the diocese of Kilmore. As a result of this choice of site, the Erne family and household, together with the neighbouring gentry who worshipped in Crom Church, had to be conveyed to it by water procession. The architect, in Reeves-Smyth's view, was Blore, Sudden or, less probably, John Shipton Mulvany. In 1867-1868, a new chancel was built, and the Creighton family burial place was transferred to Crom Church. The first member of the family to be buried there was the 3rd Earl's only daughter, Lady Louisa, who died in 1868. In 1884-1888 a tower was added as a memorial to the 3rd Earl's wife, Selina, who died in 1884, followed in 1885 by the 3rd Earl himself.

His most inexplicable building venture at Crom was the 'riding school'. The 3rd Earl (as Reeves-Smyth points out) '... did not hunt, did not have racehorses and does not appear to have been particularly in the animals other than as a mode of transport. It could have been built for the benefit of his three sons, ... all of whom did have equestrian interests, but it does seem an uncharacteristically munificent gesture from a man who was so notably parsimonious in most of his dealings ... .' (In any case, the riding school was in practice mainly used for tenants' dances and dinners.)

Pursuing the theme of the 3rd Earl's parsimony, Reeves-Smyth points out that '... all through the building of Crom in the 1830s, he questioned every bill right down to the last farthing and always attempted to get a deduction, regardless of whether he was entitled to it or not. ...' However, the same authority also concedes that the original contractor, James Henry, had deliberately set out to cheat Lord Erne. Even when announcing economies, the 3rd Earl displayed the saving grace of a sense of humour. In a letter to Blore of 26 May [1836?], quoted by Reeves-Smyth, he wrote: '... I found when I returned home from London that in these hard times ... I had done quite enough of building for the year, having just put up a steam engine which does everything but speak. I therefore will not do anything on the conservatory ... this year, but hope next spring to do it. ...'

As has been seen, his 'penny-pinching' did not stand in the way of his more than grand financial designs; and the man who meticulously checked all accounts submitted to him, did not hesitate to build and rebuild, furnish and re-furnish, Crom Castle, to spend nearly £100,000 on purchases of land in Fermanagh, and to invest another £100,000 in a railway which bade fair to raise the value of his property.



## John Henry, 4th Earl of Erne (1839-1914)

Viscount Crichton, as he was styled by courtesy, was the eldest son of the 3rd Earl by the latter's wife, Selina (1804-1884), second daughter of the Rev. Charles Cobbe Beresford, Rector of Termonmaguirk, Co. Tyrone. Lord Crichton was born in 1839 and in 1870 married Lady Florence Cole, second daughter of the 3rd Earl of Enniskillen.



*John Henry Crichton,  
4<sup>th</sup> Earl of Erne*

He was the first member of his family to sit in the 19th-century Parliament of the United Kingdom, being returned for the borough of Enniskillen, Co. Fermanagh, in 1868 and representing it until 1880. His initial return for Enniskillen was probably a recognition of the Erne family's now great stake in the county, and a quid pro quo for their support of Lord Enniskillen's son and heir, Viscount Cole, as a candidate for Co. Fermanagh. From 1870, of course, the Coles had a family reason for supporting the return of Lord Crichton for Enniskillen. He was appointed a Lord of the Treasury (i.e. Conservative Junior Whip) in Disraeli's second ministry in 1876 and held office until 1880 (continuing to fulfil the role of whip in opposition, 1880-1885). In 1880, he became the first member of his family to represent Co. Fermanagh and continued to do so until his succession to the earldom in 1885. During these years, according to a contemporary verdict quoted by Reeves-Smyth, he '... earned the reputation of being a clear thinker, a polished speaker and a keen debater', as also 'a staunch and unswerving' Conservative.

Some useful information about the 4th Earl, then still Lord Crichton, is to be found in A.B. Cooke (ed.), 'A Conservative Party Leader in Ulster: Sir Stafford Northcote's Diary of a Visit to the Province, October 1883' in Proc. RIA, vol. 75, sec. C, no. 4 (1975). Lord Crichton was something of a protégé of Northcote's, with whom he kept up a correspondence of some degree of political intimacy, 1879-1885. During the visit to Ulster, Northcote used Crichton's influence in the Orange Order to keep Northcote out of situations which would be damaging to him in the eyes of the British public. For example, Lady Crichton laid the foundation stone of Belfast's fifth Orange Hall, in Clifton Street, when Northcote declined to do so. (Returning from this ceremony by train, Lady Crichton was hit and injured by a stone thrown by a nationalist near Pomeroy, Co. Tyrone.) Her husband was an ardent Orangeman, who (in Cooke's words) 'encouraged Orange militancy, 1883-1885, taking a leading part in several riotous demonstrations'. Of these, the most important took place later in October 1883, when Lord Crichton led 8,000 Orangemen to confront Tim Healy's nationalist contingent of 3,000, in what became celebrated as the Rosslea incident, on the Fermanagh-Monaghan border. This was the incident which caused Lord Rossmore to be dismissed as a magistrate for Co. Monaghan - an issue which features in Crichton's correspondence with Northcote (who thoroughly approved of both Crichton's and Rossmore's conduct).

When he succeeded to the earldom, Crichton became head of the Orange Order in Ireland (following in the footsteps of his father-in-law, Lord Enniskillen, who had also been head of the Order throughout the Empire). He acted as chief spokesman for the Ulster Unionists in the House of Lords, where he sat as 2nd Baron Fermanagh, from 1886. He was Lieutenant of Co. Fermanagh, 1885-1914, was created a KP in 1889, and was appointed an Irish Privy Councillor in 1897. He was three times elected Chairman of the Fermanagh County Council, in 1899, 1902 and 1903.



*Blue Drawing Room*

The 4th Earl and his wife, Lady Florence, also played a significant part – not necessarily for the better – in the evolution of Crom Castle. Having been brought up in Georgian Florence Court, Lady Florence was probably out of sympathy with the concepts of Blore and his successors at Crom. Reeves-Smyth writes: '... Between 1885 and 1886 they [Lord and Lady Erne] moved the library, complete with all its bookcases, to the drawing room, and converted the old library into the "Blue Drawing Room". At the same time, the old saloon was classicised and transformed into the "Yellow

Drawing Room" [it then became the dining room in the 1950s]. It was given new, classical doors and window architraves to replace the old Blore woodwork, while a classical frieze was added around the room. The Peter Bossi mantelpiece, which comes from a house in Dublin, was apparently installed at this time. ... Presumably to remind Lady Florence ... of her childhood home, a vista was cut through Crom Wood in the direction of Florence Court, which lies thirteen miles distant. The vista opening has a width of 15-18 metres, and was aligned from the west window of the Blue Drawing Room. ...'

The 4th Earl was never as rich a man as his father. This was partly because his father had provided extremely generously, and in cash, for the 4th Earl's two younger brothers. However, the more important reason was that the 4th Earl's reign at Crom coincided with the Land Acts and the Land Courts. The latter appreciably reduced the rents payable to the landlord in most of the land cases which were brought judicially before it, with the result that land purchase, when it came, was calculated on the basis of these new and lower 'judicial' rents. Reeves-Smyth writes: '... The large bulk of the Erne estates were sold by the 4th Earl between 1904 and 1909 under the ... Land Act of 1903. ... By April 1908 ..., [most] of the Fermanagh estates had been sold to their tenants for £240,440. Only 49 holdings remained unsold, valued at £12,770. ...' When the amounts already received for the Sligo and Donegal estates are added, £25,000 and £83,427 respectively, both sold in October 1905, the grand total comes to £348,867. Reeves-Smyth does not mention Mayo, part of which was still unsold in 1912. It also looks as if a further c.£70,000 remained to be realised, post-1908, out of the Donegal estate, and a further £26,000 out of the Sligo. The Dublin estate, being entirely urban, was unaffected by the Land Acts.

'... From 1900 onwards, building activities at Crom appear to have come to a halt, save only for the erection of a hay barn in the farmyard in 1902. Financial difficulties may be the explanation. Certainly this was the case by 1910, when the [4th] Earl started to carry out extensive felling. These timber sales, however, did not generate

more than £1,000 – still a comparatively small sum by contrast to the [4th] Earl's income. From estate documents, his gross annual income in 1913-1914 was £17,835, less charges of £3,394, giving him a real income of £14,000. Of this sum, £9,600 had to be expended on the castle and demesne. With his death in 1914, this spending would be drastically reduced. ...'

The 4th Earl's era also coincided with the high water mark (so to speak) of the Lough Erne Yacht Club, and its sudden fall. In 1903, the Viceroy, the immensely wealthy 2nd Earl of Dudley, whose younger brother had rented a property on the lough, decided to become a member of the club. '... By 1904, Dudley's new boat, "Vanessa", which reputedly cost £3,000 to build, had joined the fleet at Crom in August for the regatta. ... In the same year, another special regatta was held for a visit by the Duke of Connaught, who was keen on racing and a commodore of the club. ... New large boats introduced on to the lake in the early part of the century to compete with "The Vanessa" included the new yacht "Breeze" introduced by the Crichtons in 1905. ... The arena of activity for races was Crom Bay and beyond, while before each race the boats assembled in Trial Bay. ... Racing between the lakeside families went on all summer, but the great week was the annual regatta held in August and September each year. Crom and its satellite houses were packed with guests from all over the United Kingdom, many [of them] keen yachtsmen anxious to race on the lough. ...

This whole social world was to come to an abrupt end at the outbreak of the Great War in 1914. It was a glorious summer that year, one of the best on record, and just as the final preparations were being made ready for the next regatta in August, war was declared. In four years of war, a whole generation of the landed families around the lough lost their lives, including Viscount ... Crichton, heir to the earldom. ... Lanesborough Lodge was burnt, Castle Saunderson was abandoned ... and in the years that followed ... Crom Castle itself was empty for most of the year. An epoch was over and never to return. ...'

One other remarkable event marked the last years of the 4th Earl. In 1910, his chaplain, the Rev. J. Houghton Steele, had published privately in Edinburgh a Genealogy of the Earls of Erne - a book which has been considerably drawn upon in this introduction, because it contains birth dates and other information which are not present in Burke's Peerage or even The Complete Peerage. Soon afterwards, in the words of Reeves-Smyth (letter of 9 February 1998) Steele, who had '... served for many years as the chaplain to the Earls of Erne ..., "saw the light" and announced that he wished to become a Roman Catholic. The Earl of Erne, then head of the Orange Order, was furious and had the unfortunate man locked up for days in one of the towers of the castle, threatened the removal of his pensions (all these threats he later put into practice) and in the end, after much ado, had to allow poor Steele to leave Crom. Steele later went to Rome and became a priest ...'.



## **John Henry, 5th Earl of Erne (1907-1940)**

The 4th Earl was succeeded at his death in 1914 by his grandson, having been narrowly predeceased by his son and heir, Lord Crichton (1872-1914), the 5th Earl's father. Lord Crichton served on the staff in South Africa during the Boer War, 1899-1900, was besieged in Ladysmith, and was awarded the DSO. He was an equerry in ordinary to the Prince of Wales (later George V), 1901-1908. In 1903 he married Mary, fifth daughter of the 1st Duke of Westminster. He served in the First World War as a major in the Royal Horse Guards, and was killed in action in Belgium in October 1914.


Reeves-Smyth writes: '... For six months after his grandfather's death, ... [the 5th Earl] continued to be known as the Hon. John Henry Crichton, owing to an erroneous report that his father was a prisoner in Germany. He was educated at Eton and from 1921 to 1924 he was a page of honour to King George V, his godfather. ... Between 1914 and 1928, during the minority of Lord Erne, the demesne was controlled by a board of trustees. During this time, there were major changes at Crom, with staff reductions taking place on a wide scale. The loss of the supporting estates forced the demesne to be run more like a farm which was expected to show a profit, or at least pay for itself. ... In this period, the sale of the estates under the ... Land Acts was completed, and all charges on the estate were paid off, with the exception of the young Earl's mother's jointure. ... What happened at Crom following the Land Acts also happened elsewhere in Ireland, but there is no doubt that Crom was affected comparatively lightly. Nonetheless, the changes were dramatic. ...

[They] ... were presided over by Geoffrey Corbett, who was appointed the agent for the Crom estate in late 1914 [or perhaps as assistant-agent under the long-serving agent, Arthur Trench, until 1921?]. ... He served the castle and demesne well for the next thirty-five years, proving to be a loyal and trustworthy servant to the trustees and family. Indeed, the survival of Crom, intact, to the present day owes much to his services. Corbett, however, was a businessman with little sentimental attachment to Crom. He saw the castle, in particular, as a white elephant which the estate could not afford. ... However, he did succeed in drastically reducing its running costs. In 1913-1914 the castle cost £3,800 annually to maintain, but between 1919 and 1924 inclusive the cost varied from £550 to £759, including wages. ... After Lord Erne married in 1931, the cost remained at around £1,100 to £1,300 to his death in 1940. ...

In 1928 Lord Erne came of age, and in November returned to Crom to great ceremony. ... In 1931, Lord Erne married Lady Davidema (Davina) Bulwer-Lytton, younger daughter of the [2nd] Earl and Countess of Lytton. He had one son, Henry George, the 6th and present Earl, and two daughters ... . In 1932 [he] formed the "Crom Estates Company" and three investment companies to help cover the mounting costs of the demesne. ... During the 1930s, Lord Erne and his family occupied the castle for about six months each year, though after 1936, the length of his stays at Crom started to get longer. During his occupation of the castle in this period, considerable improvements were made ... . [He was appointed a deputy-lieutenant and J.P. for Co. Fermanagh in 1936.] From 1936 until 1939 he was a Lord-



in-Waiting to the King and a Government Whip frequently speaking in the House of Lords, where he sat as Baron Fermanagh. He resigned because he wanted to devote more time to the management of his remaining family estates in Fermanagh.

For a time he served as lieutenant in the Royal Horse Guards, his father's old regiment. Soon after the outbreak of war in 1939, he raised the North Irish Horse, which was based in Enniskillen between November 1939 and February 1940. ... In 1940 Lord Erne was killed near Dunkirk, and the castle and the demesne once again passed into the control of trustees ..., [whose most immediate problem was to protect the castle and demesne from the depredations of, first the British and next the American soldiers for whose use it was requisitioned at the beginning of the war]'.  
  


## **Henry George, 6th Earl of Erne (1936-)**

Reeves-Smyth writes: '... From 1940 ... to 1958, the castle and demesne were controlled by a board of trustees. During the war the demesne actually made a profit, but the trustees throughout this period were considering leasing or selling the property to the Ministry of Agriculture. During the war and later in the 1950s the trustees undertook a number of tree fellings in the demesne woods to raise capital for the estate. When the 6th and present Earl inherited in 1958, he attempted to create a dairy farm out of the farm lands, and later a toy factory in the farm yard, but neither enterprise was totally successful. Eventually part of the demesne was sold to the Department of the Environment in 1980 and subsequently, in 1987, the National Trust acquired the rest of the demesne, in part as a gift, while the castle itself has been retained by Lord Erne. ...'

The estate now held inalienably by the National Trust includes crucial rights to islands in, and parts of, Lough Erne. If its sale or lease to the Ministry of Agriculture had gone ahead, its '... great wealth of wildlife would have completely vanished under a monoculture of spruce' (Reeves-Smyth), and Crom Castle would have been turned into a hotel or perhaps demolished. Under the 6th Earl, many changes have been made and continue to be made to render the castle suitable for present-day living.



## The archive

The arrangement of the Erne papers is not as 'user-friendly' as might be wished. Partly, this is the inevitable consequence of an estate archive relating to an estate which was put together over the centuries in an exceedingly piecemeal fashion. The Creightons, as has been seen, were not original Plantation patentees nor - with the probable exception of Kilspinan/Crom – did they acquire the entire grant of any one original patentee. As often as not, they acquired the leasehold interest of tenants rather than the fee simple interest of landlords. In general, their Fermanagh estate, in particular, was a confused and confusing mixture of the two.

Partly, however, the present intractability of the archive derives from the state in which it was received by PRONI in the 1960s. It came in deed boxes, all of which purported to derive from an original Estate Office arrangement, and which were treated as units and catalogued accordingly. With hindsight, it is clear that the contents of some of the boxes had been considerably shuffled and in some cases partially destroyed, lost or handed over to the Land Commission. Fortunately, some of the boxes (e.g. that relating to the Rogerson/Dublin City estates) are sound and intact. Every effort has been made, by dint of cross-referencing, to eliminate the worst inconsistencies in other parts of the archive; and the entries in the PRONI list are in general very detailed.



## The Crom estate

The records relating to the Crom estate include: 22 title deeds to parts of the estate, c.1616-1698, including a 1658 covenant to keep English or Scottish servants, protestant and armed; leases from the late 17th century; surveys of the Crom (and Lifford) estates by William Starratt, 1719-1722; rentals of the Crom estate and the adjoining manor of Highgate, Co. Fermanagh, 1747 and 1749; a rental and survey of 1815; a Crom demesne and estate map of 1832 by Alexander and John Fleming; surveys of 1836 and c. 1860; and rentals and accounts, 1815 and 1837-1931 (the rental in 1815 was £1,425 p.a.). Thereafter, there is a run of 12 Crom Estate Company ledgers, 1934-1952.

Commenting on the two major surveys of the Crom estate, those by Starratt and the Flemings, Reeves-Smyth writes: '... In 1719 and 1721, [General] David Creighton commissioned William Starrat, 'Philomath', to carry out a map survey of his estates, including his demesne at Crom [D1939/2/19]. The area covered by Starrat included the whole of the present demesne excluding the townlands of Derrybeg West, Derryvore and Corraharra. Unfortunately the maps accompanying this survey have been lost, but the terrier survives and provides invaluable information on the land-use of each townland. It distinguishes between arable, pasture, wood, scrub and bog, and gives acreages in both Irish Plantation and English or statute measure. At the end of each townland entry there are comments on the quality of the land. ... [Starratt's figures for woodland], ... allowing for [his] less sophisticated surveying techniques, ... demonstrate that the modern woods at Crom show a remarkable continuity from the early 18th century, and strongly suggest survival from the pre-Plantation era. ...

The next survey of the demesne does not take place until 1832, when Alexander and John Fleming were commissioned to map both the estate and demesne of Crom, covering a total area of 6,367 acres. Their map of the demesne was drawn at a scale of 40 perches to the inch and included all townlands, except for Derrybeg and Derryvore (D1939/2/11). Coming at such a crucial time in the development of the demesne, when work on building the new castle had just started, this map provides some invaluable information, especially when closely compared with the first edition of the Ordnance Survey map of 1834. For the rest of the 19th century, and for the present century, the major cartographic source for the demesne is the Ordnance Survey. ...'



## The Killynick estate

The records relating to the original, Aghalane part of the Killynick estate include: leases, 1616 and 1658-1698, of parts of Aghalane, including a perpetuity lease of 1658 with a covenant (most unusual at this late date) against subletting to the Irish, and the fee farm grant of Dromboory to Abraham Creighton of Crom, 1661; title deeds to the Creighton, Weldon and Erne estate, including papers relating to fishery rights in Lough Erne, 1631 and 1710-c.1850; maps of Mrs Anne Weldon's estate, 1775, and a copy of a recovery suffered by her son, Samuel Cooke Weldon, and her of Aghalane, 1784; the settlement on the marriage of Jane Weldon (who proved to be a co-heiress) and Colonel the Hon. John Creighton, 1797; a conveyance of Aghalane, following a partition of the Weldon estates, to the Creightons, 1816; and an abstract of title of the 3rd Earl of Erne (with recitals from 1784) to the manor of Castletown (i.e. the Aghalane estate), barony of Knockninny, 1876.

Records relating to purchases of additional lands include: title deeds to the Green estate at Derryvore from c.1765, purchased by the 2nd Earl Erne's trustees in 1829, including a statement of Major-General Henry Green Barry and William Henry Armstrong's title to Derryvore, 1829; title deeds, etc, relating to an exchange of land at Derrybeg, 1831-1846; and title deeds, etc, relating to the Morton estate at Mullynacoagh, etc, from 1658 till its purchase by the 2nd Earl Erne's trustees for £4,000 in 1829, with a rental of 1729 and a map of 1754. Mullynacoagh had been leased forever to the Mortons in 1658 by the Creightons of Aghalane; and 'the Green estate' at Derryvore was the part of 'Dristernan' which Adam Creighton had leased to the Green family, also it seems in perpetuity, in 1700. So in both instances the purchases of 1829 represented a reacquisition.

There are also: surveys of the Creighton/Erne estate as it stood in 1814, 1836 and c.1860; leases, 1741-1826; rentals and accounts, 1829-1931; and title deeds, etc, c.1850-1877.

In addition, the Weldon title deeds, deeds of settlement, etc, relating to Aghalane also bring in their wake some similar material relating to the estates and affairs of the 'southern' Weldons and their connections, 1726, 1776, 1797 and 1801-1802. These latter include: the Atkinsons of Cangort, King's County; the Burdetts, baronets, of Dunmore and Garahill, Co. Carlow; the Cookes (relations of Sir Samuel Cooke, alderman and baronet of Dublin); and the Trenches of Cangort Park (a different house from Cangort), King's County, and Sopwell Hall, Co. Tipperary. Among the properties documented are Mrs Anne Weldon of Dawson Street, Dublin's, estate at St Catherine's, Leixlip, Co. Kildare, 1776 and 1797, and her leasehold tenement in Gloucester Street, Dublin, 1794.

The Killynick estate had a rental of c.£1,200 in c.1870.



## **The Callowhill and Eyles Irwin estates, Derrylin**

The records of these estates include: title deeds and leases, 1742-1838; abstracts of leases, c.1680-1702; surveys of 1836 and c.1860; and rentals and accounts, 1837-1931. The Callowhill estate, containing 1,499 acres, was bought for £17,500, and the Eyles Irwin, containing 1,075, for £23,100, both apparently in the period 1842-1847. The only clues to the identity of Eyles Irwin is that he was 'of Belle Vale, Co. Fermanagh' in 1792 and 'of Bedford Place, London', in 1805. Both the Callowhill and the Eyles Irwin estates seem to have been part of John Enery of Bawnboy's purchase from the Balfours, so in buying them the 3rd Earl of Erne was, again, reacquiring parts of the much-truncated manors of Legan and Dristernan.



## **The Balfour estate in and around Lisnaskea and Derrylin**

The records relating to the Balfour estate purchased in 1821 (although the transaction seems not to have been completed until 1825) by the 1st Earl Erne, include: title deeds, 1616-1854, of which c.30 are title deeds relating to the manors of Dristernan, Carrowshee and Legan in the 17th century, among them a fee farm grant of 5 July 1634 for 1,000 years of lands in the manor of Dristernan from Sir James Balfour of Clanawley to Sir William Balfour, Lieutenant of The Tower, reciting an original patent from James I to Sir John Meldrum, 24 April 1618, granting him among other things 'free fishing' in the water or pond called Lough Erne; an unusually early and detailed series of 40 rentals and valuations of the same manors, 1695-c.1733, with isolated rentals for 1630, 1632 and 1636-1637; leases, 1707-1854 and 1919; a survey of Castle Balfour demesne in 1766; a valuation, etc, of Blayney Balfour's estate in 1815; surveys of 1836 and c.1860; and rentals and accounts, 1837-1931.

More miscellaneous documents include a grant of the office of 'steward or seneschal of the manors of Legan and Dristernan' from the 1st Earl Erne to Richard Surplus of Derrichree, Co. Fermanagh, 1826, and building and other agreements in relation to: the linen hall at Lisnaskea, 1837; the school house at Derrylin, 1837; John Creighton's agricultural museum in Lisnaskea, 1839; cottages 'in the mountains' at Carrickawick, 1839; a factory and loan fund bank in Lisnaskea, 1839; a church at Maguiresbridge, 1840; and a ferry on Lough Erne between Derrylin and Lisnaskea workhouse, 1841.



## **The Knockballymore estate**

The records relating to the Knockballymore estate include: title deeds and leases to the estate (Ward and Creighton families) from 1701; the settlement on the marriage of Nicholas Ward of Knockballymore and Meliora Creighton, 1742; a map of Nicholas Ward's estate at Uttony and Drumbinnisk, surveyed by James Leonard in 1749; surveys of 1837 and c.1860; and rentals and accounts, 1815 and 1837-1931. The rental in 1815 was £1,225 p.a., and the acreage in 1862 2,601 (Irish).





## **The Enniskillen estate**

The records relating to the estate in and north of Enniskillen which the 1st Earl Erne bought in c.1810, following the death of its owner, the Hon. Arthur Cole Hamilton of Skea, Co. Fermanagh, and Beltrim, Co. Tyrone, include: title deeds and leases, 1746-1874, among them leases of the Crawford estate at Drumgamph (an additional purchase of land north of Enniskillen made by the 3rd Earl of Erne for £14,200 from John M. Crawford of Oakley Park, Co. Meath, possibly in 1834), 1828-1830; a printed sale rental and survey of the entire Cole-Hamilton estate in Fermanagh (not all of which was bought by Lord Erne), 28 November 1810; a rental and survey of 1815; surveys of 1836 and c.1860; rentals and accounts, 1815 and 1836-1931; and an agreement with William Stinson of Carngreen, Co. Fermanagh, builder, to erect a schoolhouse at Drumgamph, 1877.

The acreage of the entire Cole-Hamilton estate in 1810 was 6,743 Irish, less than half of it good land, and 1,391 acres of it let in perpetuity. The rental was £1,252, but the valuation was £3,146 (i.e. there was considerable room for improvement). The estate comprised c.45 townlands, plus the urban property in Enniskillen, and it included some land in the barony of Clanawley as well as in the barony of Magheraboy. In 1815, the rental of what Lord Erne bought was almost £1,000 p.a. In 1862 the acreage was 3,673 (Irish), but this was not all ex-Cole-Hamilton land, because by that stage Drumgamph had been added.



## **The Lifford estate and Lifford borough**

The records relating to Lifford include: a copy of letters patent granting Lifford to Sir Richard Hansard in 1611; extracts from the charter of 1614, and the 'new charter' of 1689; an abstract of Hansard's will of 1628; title deeds, 1668-1877; leases, 1679-1682, 1693, 1723 and 1732-1864; the Lifford corporation book, 1716-1783 (the next volume, 1784-1800, appears to be missing); surveys of the Lifford (and Crom) estates, by William Starratt, 1719-1722; the agreement between General David Creighton and Colonel Alexander Montgomery over the sharing of the municipal and parliamentary patronage of Lifford, 1727, and subsequent letters of 1728 from Montgomery to Creighton's son and successor, Abraham, later 1st Lord Erne; a letter about the filling of a vacancy in the Lifford corporation, 1733; a letter of 1748 detailing the members of the Lifford corporation in 1727; a survey of the Lifford estate by Samuel, William and Cunningham McCrea, 1768-1769, which refers to the earlier Starratt survey; 3 letters, 1768-1770, from George Nisbitt, the agent at Lifford, with detailed comments on rent proposals, the value of land and the relative accuracy of the surveys by Starratt and the McCreas, etc; a valuation of the Lifford estate, c.1770; instructions for bog-lettings, 1770; and a George III patent granting the 1st Lord Erne a weekly market at Lifford, 1777.

The 19th-century material includes: rentals and accounts, 1810, 1814, 1819-1829, 1833-1883 and fragmentary thereafter (1903, 1907-1912, 1916-1933 and 1940-1941); 'Observations' on the Lifford estate in 1820, giving details of the character of tenants, crop failures, emigration, etc; correspondence relating to fishery rights, etc, 1819-1825; legal opinions on the right of Lifford Corporation to make leases, c.1830; a list of documents and books relating to the manor of Lifford, 'obtained this day at Colonel [the Hon. John] Creighton's house, Granby Row, [Dublin]', 1830; papers relating to Lifford school house in 1830 and school management in 1840; and counsel's opinions and letters from Edward Litton, [Dublin], concerning Lord Erne's right and title to the manors which were formerly in the possession of the burgesses of the corporation of Lifford, 1832-1833.

The Lifford estate comprised 4,000 Irish acres in 1719-1722, and 4,900 'Scotch' (or Cunningham) acres in 1768-1769, and it had a rental of £3,700 p.a. in 1810, £3,766 in 1814 and £3,706 in 1826.



## **The Dublin City estate**

The records relating to the Dublin estate include: title deeds, etc, to property at Rogerson's Quay, St John's Quay, Great Denmark Street, St Bride's Street, Lazy Hill, The Strand, St Francis Street, 'New street ... intended to be called Lime Street', Lime Street, Golden Lane, Big Ship Street, Erne Street, etc, 1612-1938; leases, 1674-1938; a map of The Strand, 1713; a map of the Rogerson's Quay property, 1829; and rentals and accounts, 1829-1885 and 1907-1933.



## **The Co. Sligo estate**

The records relating to the Clover Hill estate, parish of Kilmaquone, barony of Carbury, Co. Sligo, include: title deeds to Clover Hill, etc, 1712-1897; a survey of 1750 and maps (by George Hillas) of 1791 and 1793; leases, 1702-1861; a statement of title of Robert Mansfield of Scardanmore, Co. Sligo, 1872, with leases of Scardanmore to the Mansfields back to 1723; and rentals and accounts, 1829-1884, 1908-1909 and 1914-1921. The rental was £1,362 p.a. in 1875. The estate was originally held under a perpetuity lease of 1713 from Alderman Benjamin Burton of Dublin; the 1st Earl Erne acquired the fee simple in 1797, five years after inheriting the perpetuity lease from his aunt.



## The Co. Mayo estate and Capt. Boycott

The records relating to the Lough Mask estate, near Cong, in the barony of Kilmaine, Co. Mayo, include: title deeds to Lough Mask, 1700-1883, with a few mid-18th century accounts; a survey of 1750 and map of 1833; leases, 1797; a quantity of detailed estate correspondence, 1844-1868 and 1897, including some Famine period reports, letters from the agent, Ormsby Elwood, writing from Lough Mask, 1845-1852, and from his successor, James Rutledge (whom the 3rd Earl of Erne sacked in 1869 and with whom he went to law in 1870-1873 over arrears in Rutledge's own rent and defalcations in his accounts to the total amount of £3,320), 1858 and 1868; and rentals and accounts, 1829-1884 and 1907-1910. The rental was £324 p.a. in 1750 and £897 in c.1843. Some 275 of the 1,300 Irish acres, the lands of Kilkenny, were situated elsewhere than Lough Mask, in the barony of Carra, Co. Mayo.

For the Capt. C.C. Boycott era, the archival survivals are disappointing. There is a lease from the 3rd Earl of Erne to him of Lough Mask House, 1874, a couple of rentals and accounts involving Boycott, and 2 perhaps suspiciously articulate protests to Lord Erne against Boycott from the Mayo tenantry, 1879 and 1881. One of these is possibly in the handwriting of the local parish priest, the Rev. John O'Malley, who was a great antagonist of Boycott and is generally credited as his 'neologist' (i.e. the first person to use his name as a noun and a verb). Elsewhere among PRONI's holdings are other documents relating to Boycott: 27 letters to W.A. Day, the London-based secretary to the 'Boycott Appeal', December 1880-March 1881, from Lords Erne, Brabazon, Shaftesbury, etc (D3681); and some papers of 1880-1881 (described by a recent researcher as 'heavily culled and rather disappointing') of Thomas Hamilton, R.M., Ballinrobe, relating mainly to the Boycott 'relief expedition' comprising 50 Orange labourers sent to his assistance from Cos Cavan and Monaghan in December 1880 (D901).

*Longman*  
July 18<sup>th</sup>

To the Right Honorable  
The Earl of Erne

May it please your Lordship

*In the tenantry*  
on your Lordship's estate, most respectfully  
beg to inform you that we have not  
intentionally withheld of paying your rent  
to Captain Boycott, who is acting  
for them. But at the same time we  
have not the slightest objection to paying  
it to any other person whom your Lordship  
best judgment may recommend: which  
we now sign and shall do.

Captain Boycott in terms prohibited  
our feelings in every possible way, as  
your Lordship might already have  
understood. For instance, he never  
spoke of us in better terms than  
"his tenants" and for this and many  
reasons we hold him in utter detestation.

Protest against C. Boycott,  
May 1881



## **Marriage and other deeds of settlement**

There are also: a quantity of Creighton/Erne family settlements and mortgages, 1680-1946, including deeds and correspondence in relation to settlements and trusts, 1842-1843 and 1911-1946, among them correspondence about the proposed sale by the trustees of the 6th (and present) Earl of Erne, then a minor, of Crom Castle and demesne to the Northern Ireland Ministry of Agriculture, 1945-1946.



## **Pre-1858 wills**

Testamentary material was grouped under the old Estate Office system into one section (now D1939/25). But in addition to this, many wills (only some of them duplicates) will be found among the documents of title relating to particular estates and even townlands and houses.

The 17th and 18th century material comprises the wills or probates of the following: Sir Richard Hansard of Lifford, 1619 (in addition to the already-mentioned abstract of 1628); Thomas Parry of Dublin, 1668; the Rev. Theophilus Teate, F.T.C.D., 1672; Patrick Tallent of Dublin, 1680; Marmaduke Green of Drumnisklin, Co. Fermanagh, 1681; John Burniston of Dublin, 1691; William Chambers of Kilboyne, Co. Mayo, 1714, and Thomas Chambers of Kilboyne, 1737; John Creighton of Crom, 1715; Ferdinando Leonard of Carrowhony, Co. Fermanagh, 1717; Lord Chief Justice Sir John Rogerson, 1724 (will), and 1741 (probate); William Smith of Knockneshamer, Co. Sligo, 1728; General David Creighton of the Royal Hospital, Kilmainham, 1728; John Creighton of Aghalane, 1738; William Balfour of Castle Balfour, 1738; Mrs Ann Balfour, formerly Townley, 1742; [Miss?] Isabella Balfour, 1742; Nicholas Ward of Knockballymore, 1751, and Bernard Smith Ward of Knockballymore, 1770 (under the terms of whose will Knockballymore and his other estates passed ultimately to the 1st Earl Erne and his 'best violin' to his friend, John Neal, 'chirurgion'); John Eney of Bawnboy, Co. Cavan, 1756; John French of Rogerson's Quay, Dublin, ship carpenter, 1766; John, Earl of Wandesford, 1772; Blayney Balfour of Townley Hall, Co. Louth, 1779; Andrew King of Dublin, 1786; Thomas Pigott of Knapton [Abbeyleix], Queen's County, 1787; William Southwell of Glen, Co. Dublin, 1789; John Armstrong of Mount Heaton, King's County, 1791; Mrs Meliora Ward, widow, of Dublin, 1792; Miss Gertrude Morton of Belturbet, Co. Cavan, 1792; Hon. Miss Meliora Creighton of Temple Street, Dublin, 1795 and 1801; Isaac Armstrong of Lifford, 'Innholder', 1796; and John Auchinleck of Strangford, Co. Down, 1799.

The 1800-1858 material comprises the wills or probates of the following: Robert Fowler, Archbishop of Dublin, 1800; John Foley of Kellystown, barony of Ballyadams, Queen's County, 1801; Colonel the Hon. John Creighton, 1811; Mrs Mary Cooke of Dublin, 1812; Hugh Reilly of Cavan, 1816; Martha Armstrong of Lifford, 1817; Hon. Charlotte King of Spring Grove, Co. Fermanagh, 1819; the 1st Earl Erne, 1820 (will) and 1828 (probate); Isaac Simpson of Lifford, 1821; Rosamund Flood of Ashgrove, Co. Cavan, 1829; the Hon. Mrs Jane Creighton (widow of Colonel the Hon. John Creighton) of Rutland Square, Dublin, 1835; and Francis Edie of Strabane, 1840.



## **Formal documents**

These include a bundle of 12 commissions of the peace, etc, 1737-1885, described as 'old and curious'. Among them are: a memorandum of Abraham Creighton, 'taylor's', admission 'into the franchises and liberties of the City of Dublin by grace especial', midsummer 1737; a patent appointing John Creighton (later 3rd Earl of Erne), Lieutenant of Co. Fermanagh, 30 April 1840; and patents appointing John Henry, Earl of Erne, Lieutenant and Custos Rotulorum of Co. Fermanagh (with seals), 7 November 1885.

Elsewhere in the archive are a certificate of John Creighton's initiation into Orange Lodge No. 362 held in Florence Court, Co. Fermanagh, 21 January 1834; a diploma of John Henry, Viscount Crichton's, Knighthood of the Primrose League, May 1885; military commissions of Viscount Crichton and other Crichtons, c. 1890-1910; and grants to Viscount Crichton of the Royal Victorian Order, 1906, and of the Legion d'Honneur, 1913.

Relating to the formal documents are 5 accounts for payments of fees, 1773-1804, with the following endorsements: 'Account of fees paid upon taking my seat in the House of Peers' (£13 17 9.), 12 October 1773; 'Lord Viscount Erne: bill and receipt for fees on the Viscount's patent (£318 14 10½.), 12 December 1780; 'Fees paid on taking my seat as Viscount in the House of Peers' (£28 0 6.), 15 November 1781; 'Account of fees paid in passing the Earl's patent through the different offices' (£436 1 1.), 31 August 1789; and 'Charge of office on being appointed a Privy Councillor' in Ireland (£27 6 8.), 1804-1805.





## **Crom Castle and demesne**

The Crom Castle and demesne material includes: some household accounts from 1764 relating to whatever house there then was at Crom or to Knockballymore, including 2 servants' wages books, 1764-1828 and 1774-1828; an agreement, legal case papers in the lawsuit against the builder, and building accounts, 1832-1834, Edward Blore of Welbeck Street, London, architect, and James Henry of Harrington Street, Dublin, builder; correspondence and accounts, 1833-1835, relating to the building of Blore's stableyard, by John Clarke of Clones, Co. Monaghan, at a cost of £2,230; correspondence with William Trotter and George Potts of Edinburgh about furniture and fittings, with Thomas Willement about the stained glass window in the hall, with William Cooper, stained glass designers and manufacturers, also of Edinburgh, etc, etc, 1836-1838; other letters and papers, including some from Blore, concerning building work, repairs, decoration, maintenance, machinery, etc, on or for Crom Castle and out-buildings, plus various buildings on the demesne and outer estate, 1835-1962; and a Crom Castle building accounts book, 1847-1876, which documents the cost of all the buildings in the demesne as well as building work on the castle itself.

Later and rather more miscellaneous material includes: 21 farm account books, 1850-1877, and castle, demesne and farm accounts, 1886, 1900-1919, 1926-1947, 1959 and 1966-1967; a volume containing monthly reports on trespass and damage to the Crom woods and plantations, 1853-1876, by successive head foresters, including James Boyd and James Bayne; kitchen accounts and game books, 1856-1932; inventories, etc, of Crom Castle, 1857-1942, including a dinner guest book, 1857-1869, a cellar book, 1892-1897, inventories of plate, 1892, c.1900, 1914 and 1934-1935, printed library catalogues, 1896-1897, and an outsize volume containing an inventory of Crom compiled by Bennett & Son of Dublin, 1916; vouchers, correspondence and other papers bearing on employees in the household or on the demesne at Crom, 1859-1957, including 3 household account ledgers for both Crom and the London house, 1886-1911; cash books, 1895-1931; papers about additions to the farmyard, 1902 and 1911-1913, built by A. & J. Main & Co. and 'Mr Warren', mostly to the designs of Edwin Bradbury, architect, Dublin; an analysis of estate workers' wages, 1922-1926, and 14 workmen's time books, 1922-1928, 1938-1947 and 1952-1955; letters and papers of Geoffrey Corbett, the agent, about Crom's occupation by British and American troops, c.1939-1946; correspondence and related papers, some of them about the Crom tapestries, some about the contents of the late (5th) Earl of Erne's town house in London moved to Crom in 1940; and a folder of letters and papers about the plantations and about tree-telling at Crom, 1944-1945.

Commenting on all this material, with particular reference to the demesne, Reeves-Smyth writes: '... Prominent in the papers relating to the demesne are the farm account books, which ... allow a detailed picture of the demesne farming during this period to be built up. Information that can be gleaned, and changes observed, relate to the number of workmen employed, land-use practices, animals kept and agricultural prices and wages. Items such as the gravelling of roadways, filling the ice

house, manuring fields, haymaking and so forth, provide invaluable information on the demesne, ... particularly ... for the period 1860-1870.

The timber memoranda relates mostly to the present century. There is only one useful 19th century document and this contains a series of brief monthly inspection reports from the foresters managing the various woods on the demesne. It covers the period from 1853 to 1876 and is mostly concerned with instances of timber being stolen from the woods or with cases of animals breaking fences and grazing in the forests. The major felling episodes of the present century, in 1911-1913, 1935-1945 and 1956-1958 are fairly well documented, particularly for the 1911-1913 and 1939-1945 periods, with lists of tree numbers and species felled and in some cases with information on the actual quantity/size and quality of timber sold.

Virtually none of the garden records for Crom appear to have survived. These would have been kept, separately from the other estate and demesne material, in the hands of the head gardener. The last man to occupy the position of head gardener, Ian Hyslop, retired in the early 1950s and is now dead ... .

Information on the construction of the walled garden and its various hothouses does however survive, amongst other material relating to various building works carried out in the demesne in the period from 1830 to 1870. ... Quite a few documents concerned with the building of the castle in 1831-1839 and its rebuilding in 1841-1844 have survived ... .

Documents dealing with estate management have survived in particularly large quantities for the period covering 1920 to 1950. During this time Geoffrey Corbett was the agent for the Crichton family and trustees. He appears to have kept absolutely everything, even very minor receipts, and never to have thrown anything away. As a result we have a very complete record of the running of the demesne during this time, with detailed information on such matters as the installation of new engines in the turf house, the army occupation during the war or the many financial troubles which beset the house and demesne during the period. ...'

However, the most important papers relating to Crom are the c.125 architectural drawings for the exterior and interior of the castle by Edward Blore, 1830-1838, including his designs for panelling and ceilings in the main rooms (Jackson-Stops comments: '... the delicate colouring of his ceiling drawings, with the plaster mouldings picked out in reds, browns and greys, show that they were not as solemn as they now look, painted white ...'). In addition, there are another 32 drawings by different architects (post-Blore), 1841-1981; 104 drawings for furniture and fittings, 1836-1842 - i.e. before and after the fire in 1841; 20 drawings for other buildings in Crom townland, c.1850-1965; 12 for buildings in Knocknabragh, c.1833-1901; 8 for buildings in Inisherkin, c.1830s-1870s; 16 for buildings in Mullynacogh, N.D. and 1885-1886; 5 for buildings in Corraharra, c.1889; and 12 for buildings in Derryvore, c.1866-1869. All this material was found in Crom by Reeves-Smyth in the very recent past (1987), much of it lying on wet basement floors, and has been expertly and painstakingly catalogued for PRONI by him.



## **Churches, schools and charities**

The papers on these topics (in addition to those mentioned in connection with specific estates) include: a mysterious, tattered, vellum-bound French church register, 1757-1767; a draft deed of endowment by the 3rd Earl of Erne of Trinity Church, Derryvore, 1842; correspondence and other papers, 1879-1915, relating to schools on the Erne estates - Lifford Endowed, Magheraveely National, and the Countess of Erne's School, Derrylin; correspondence, account books and papers, 1879-1945, relating to Crom Church (i.e. Trinity Church, Derryvore) and Derryvore Almshouses, including a church account book, 1887-1918, a MS history of the church and almshouses, c.1908, papers about expenditure from the Beresford Fund on Crom Church, 1917-1920, income tax papers about the almshouses, 1919-1922, etc; and 2 letters about a site for Lisnaskea Presbyterian Church, 1899.



## Lough Erne

Most of the papers impinge, like the estate, in some way on the lough. But there is one specific group of c.50 maps, charts, ledgers, blue-books, correspondence, etc, 1891-1941, relating to Lough Erne drainage, fishing, water-level (lowered by some 10 feet in the late 19th century), etc.



## **Personal and political letters and papers**

These include, among many other things: an alphabetical register of Co. Fermanagh freeholders, c.1788; letters about subscriptions to the Lough Erne and Ballyshannon canal in 1792; a personal diary and memorandum book of the 1st Earl Erne, continued by another member of the Creighton family, 1794-1832; letters from the 5th Earl of Bristol, etc, relating to the Act of Union, the papers of his late father, the Earl-Bishop of Derry (d.1803), at Downhill, and the will and financial affairs of the Earl-Bishop generally, 1799-1804; letters from Lady Caroline Stuart-Wortley (née Creighton), later Lady Wharncliffe, 1813-1814; a diary of Continental tours in France, Switzerland and Italy, 1824-1829; correspondence with the 1st Earl Erne's brother-in-law, the Prime Minister, Lord Liverpool, about Lord Erne's aspirations to a UK peerage, 1825; and letters about the Co. Fermanagh by-election of 1834.

In general, there is a quantity of 19th and 20th century correspondence, dairies, photographs and other papers about family affairs, politics, Orangeism, the Lieutenancy of Co. Fermanagh, local government and law and order, and the Boer and First and Second World Wars. These include: letters about repeal agitation in Co. Fermanagh, 1840-1849; a protest in 1841 by the gentry of Co. Fermanagh against 'the insult to the feelings of the Roman Catholics ... [given by the high sheriff at] the recent return of our county members'; letters about the election of Irish Representative Peers, 1842-1845, particularly that of the 3rd Earl of Erne in 1845; details of plans to 'crush the Fenians' in 1847, discussed again in 1866; other letters and papers of the 3rd Earl about law and order and local disturbances in the mid-1840s; and letters about the Co. Fermanagh elections of 1852 and 1854.

Forming a discrete group are the c.40 letters received by Viscount Crichton, MP, 1877-c.1885, mostly from the Conservative leader, Sir Stafford Northcote. These letters discuss: the Irish Board of Works; the Orange Order and Northcote's (unsuccessful) attempts to distance himself from it during his visit to Ulster in 1883; the Parnellite movement; the Speakership; the Rossmore case; the Boundary Commission; Capt. Charles Wynne and his unsuitability for the Fermanagh Militia; and the Lieutenancy of Co. Fermanagh.

The more general correspondence, etc, resumes with 3 letters expressing the misgivings of the Archbishop of Armagh about the separation of the sees of Armagh and Clogher, 1877 and 1884; a photograph of a Unionist meeting at Mount Stewart, Co. Down, 1893; Vere Foster's apology for confusion over the illustrations in his book *The Two Duchesses*, 1898; a Boer War diary kept by Lord Crichton, 1899-1900; letters, 1902-1908, from agents and solicitors and from Hugh de F. Montgomery of Blessingbourne, Fivemiletown, Co. Tyrone, about Land Purchase, many of them about major issues of general relevance (including a reference to lobbying the Chief Secretary, George Wyndham, about the operation of his 1903 Act); correspondence, printed matter, genealogical and other notes, page-proofs, etc, all in connection with the Rev. J. H. Steele's *Genealogy of the Earls of Erne* (privately printed, Edinburgh, 1910); notes on French cavalry manoeuvres, 1913; Ulster Defence Fund accounts, with details of purchases of £10,000 worth of Ulster Volunteer Force rifles in 1914; letters of condolence on Lord Crichton's death in action in 1914; family and personal

correspondence of the 5th Earl and his wife, 1930s; and reports, etc, of the Crom District Nursing Association, 1933-1943.



## **Miscellaneous papers**

The following are among the more miscellaneous papers: a deed of covenant relating to premises in Leadenhall Street, London, owned by Charles Balfour of Westminster, 1662; a Charles II patent to Nicholas Mahon [of Strokestown, Co. Roscommon], 1668, a Smith of Knockneshamer/Cloverhill title deed, 1710, a recovery suffered by Theobald Dillon, 1762, a c.1790 pedigree of the transplanted Dillon family, 1644-1688, etc, all apparently relating to an estate in the baronies of Ballintubber and Roscommon, Co. Roscommon, which had belonged to the Smiths; deeds relating to property in the barony of Loughrea, Co. Galway (originally part of the Clanricarde estate, then the property of Judge Thomas Kelly and by 1796 probably something to do with the Weldons), 1716, 1767, 1769, 1776, c.1790, 1793, 1797 and c.1800; a lease from Edward Dillon of Dublin of lands in the barony of Ballyboy, King's County, 1727; a release of premises in the City of Cork, under the will of Thomas Pigott of Knapton, Queen's County, 1794; a lease of the prebendial tithes of Yago, Co. Kildare, 1796; a declaration of trust relating to the Grand Orange Hall of Ireland in Cavendish Street, Dublin, 1886; and reports, correspondence and other papers, 1894-1896, concerning the estate of the late (3rd) Marquess of Headfort (Kells, Co. Meath, and Virginia, Co. Cavan), and reflecting the 4th Earl of Erne's role as co-executor to Lord Headfort.



## **Material at Crom Castle**

Reference has been made to drawings and a painting at Crom which are very important to an understanding of family and architectural history. These are the design for a mansion house with Franco-Scottish features for General David Creighton, c.1725, the panoramic painting of the demesne and the old castle, c.1760, and a drawing of the ruins of the old castle, c.1800. In addition to these, there are other important sources at Crom, described as follows by Reeves-Smyth: '... In 1850 the old castle gardens were the subject of a very informative water-colour, depicting a garden party held to celebrate the arrival at Crom of the Viceroy. A yacht race in Crom Bay is the subject of another historically important picture painted in oils in 1853, while there are a number of interesting pictures depicting the new castle, including some by Blore himself.

The photographic collection in the possession of the Earl of Erne is one of the best 19th century family collections in the country and contains many high-quality pictures set in albums. The period 1870 to 1890 is particularly well covered and includes many photographs of yacht racing, house parties, sporting activities, buildings and interiors, [and] park scenes, as well as many very interesting shots of demesne employees. There are no family photographs covering the post-1914 period. ...'

Also at Crom are a number of large albums containing photographs of 19th-century India, which Reeves-Smyth thinks derive from Lord Erne's first wife, Camilla Roberts, eldest daughter of Wing-Commander Owen Endicott Roberts.

