

FOOTPRINTS OVER MOIRA



HISTORICAL STORIES TAKEN FROM ONE THOUSAND YEARS
OF LIFE IN MOIRA, COUNTY DOWN

DAVID MCFARLAND

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of life in Moira, County Down.

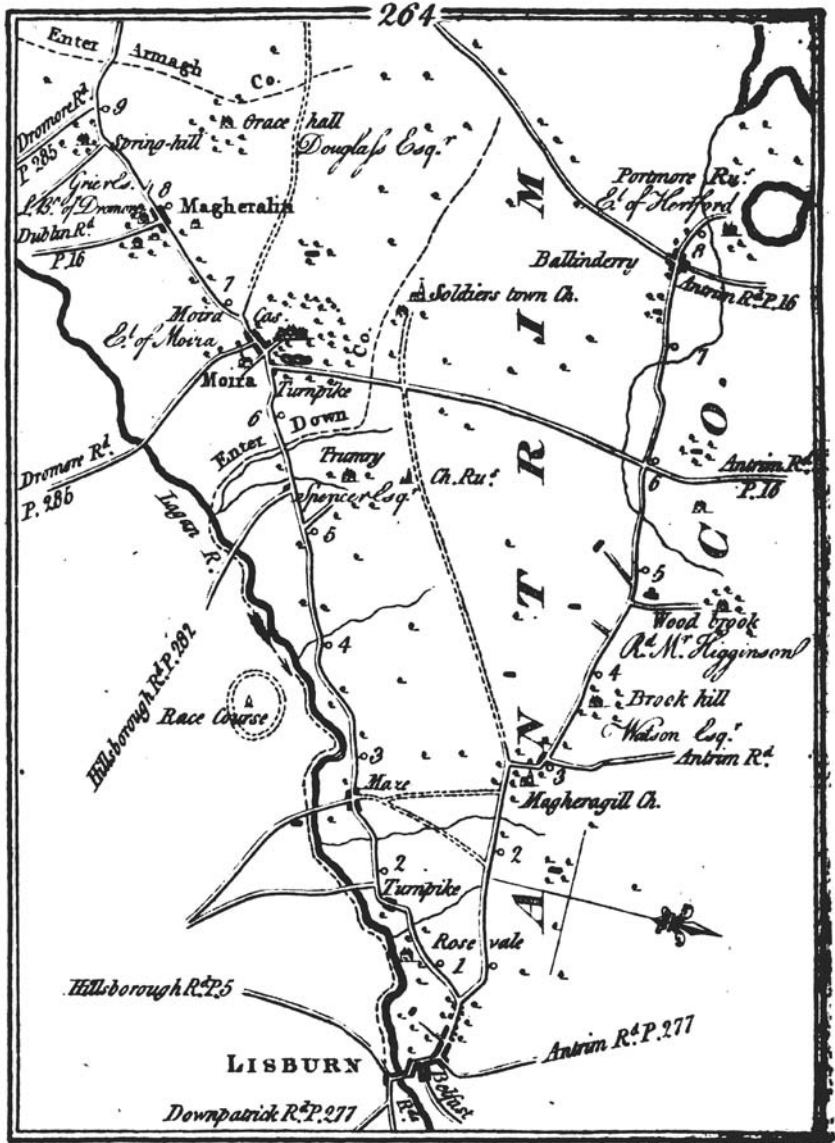
by
David McFarland

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6 Cottage Grange
Lurgan BT67 9LX
Northern Ireland
<http://2hearts.co.uk>
[email:moira@2hearts.org](mailto:moira@2hearts.org)

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Taylor and Skinner's maps of the roads of Ireland, surveyed 1777
 Published 1778 By George Taylor (geographer), Andrew Skinner
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FIRST STEPS

Storytelling to children has been an enormous part of my life but never stories quite like these. My old history teacher would be astounded if he knew his clueless pupil was now telling history stories. Someone has suggested that children are generally excited about history but often lose that excitement when they get to school. I wonder if that happened to me? Coming to Moira in 1995 awakened an interest in the past. History was no longer about remembering the dates of battles and endless lists of Kings, but about places I could visit, things I could touch and real people who had walked in Moira.

For the past few years I have researched and recorded the history of this village and had some opportunities to share this in public meetings and in the local primary school. Some friends suggested I should put it in print but I thought most people would find history books boring. However, as I learned more of Moira through the ages, I found stories jumping off the dusty pages and I wanted to tell those stories. That is where this little book was born.

Footprints over Moira is a book of short stories, either relating to real historical characters or using imaginary characters to tell real historical stories. All of them are placed in or close to Moira. Most stories are written in chronological order but each one stands alone, allowing stories to be read individually. Every care has been taken to ensure the stories are as historically accurate as possible.

I am grateful to all who have inspired, advised and helped with the production of this small volume. It was through reading ***A Historical Handbook*** by **Rev. Canon C.R.J. Rudd**, former Rector

of Moira, that my interest in the local history of Moira was first aroused. I have had good advice from Mr Horace Reid from Ballynahinch, a gifted amateur historian with a great knowledge of the Rawdon family history. Friends have been very helpful: Margaret advised from a community perspective: Philip and Gillian checked the manuscript for errors and readability. My family has been of enormous help: Brian has painstakingly and skilfully prepared the manuscript and cover for printing and Gordon and his wife Gillian have provided the beautiful line drawings. Christian Fellowship Trust has been encouraging and generous in making this booklet a reality and in allowing me to share it as a gift to Moira. And then there are those volunteers who have offered to help me distribute it in the community. To everyone I offer my heartfelt thanks and I hope that as you read these stories, you will be enlightened and enthused about those who walked this way before us.

My love of storytelling began with the greatest story of all - the story of Jesus and His love for us. So, woven within these pages, you will find His story. As we follow footprints, I pray that you will meet Him who made all things. He left His own footprints on this earth and calls us to follow Him, saying:

*"I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full."
John 10v10.*



David McFarland
Moira 2011

Wall stone on 90 Main Street

FOOTPRINTS

I sat lazily in the coffee shop watching passers-by. Someone had spilled water outside the shop next door. Wet footprints began to form on the dry pavement. Some people left large prints and some left small; some passed quickly leaving few prints and some stopped for a time leaving multiple marks. I noticed that as time passed the marks merged, becoming practically indistinguishable; yet everyone who walked through the puddle had left his individual imprint, even if those prints were now hidden.

I thought how life was like that. We all tread this earth and leave footprints; some are sizeable prints and some small; a few prints remain for a long time and others disappear so fast. We spend our lives treading on the footprints of others and easily forget the imprint made by those who have gone before us.

Over the years, a great many footprints have been left over Moira. The small County Down village has had a remarkable impact on social, political, economic, religious and military life in Ireland, the United Kingdom and across the world; it is an impact that has almost been hidden under centuries of footprints.

This little volume is an attempt to follow the footprints of some who walked here in bygone days. Some were residents and others were visitors; some came to destroy life and some came to improve it; a few were extremely wealthy aristocrats but many laboured in extreme poverty; some lie today in impressive vaults but thousands lie in unmarked graves. All walked over Moira and have gone, but we will learn much from them as we follow their footprints.

THE NATIVE

The crimson sun was slowly setting over Loch Echach. An ethereal mist gathered in the valley of the Lagáin. Áedán hurried his goats and his children along. In this dense, shadowy forest, it was important to be home before dark.

Home was a small man-made settlement on the high ground. Earthen embankments, painstakingly dug, were strongly fortified with wooden palisades. Only inside the rath or fort was it safe for humans and their livestock to sleep.

This hill area, with the loch on the west and the river on the east, became known as Magh-Rath, the plain of the ring forts. It would later be called Moirath, Moyrah and Moyra. Today we call this place Moira, lying between Lough Neagh and the River Lagan.

Growth in population and the ensuing development of the land over the years has left little to remind us of early life in this area. Archaeologists have discovered a ruined primitive dwelling-place in the townland of Drumbane. It is a crannog; a man made island or dwelling built on stilts, usually in a lake or bog.

However, some signs of our early ancestors still remain. We are familiar with the numerous earthen raths or ring-forts around Moira. The best preserved example and perhaps most visible is the Rough Fort on the Old Kilmore Road. The mound on the green at Claremont is all that is left of another of these ring forts. One close to the quarry on the Lurgan Road has long since been levelled. The rath in the town-land of Aughnafosker, just behind Glebe Gardens, is called Pretty Mary's Fort. It is

a good specimen of a multi-vallate ring-fort or a fort with many ditches. As many as twenty-four forts have long since been levelled, including a large one on the highest ground of Ballymackeonan.

Centuries ago this place was inhabited by people more like us than we imagine. Áedán and his fellow natives have left their footprints all over this land. Right here where they lived and worked is the place where they are buried. They remind us that life is transient; that we are not here forever. Like the ethereal mist over the Lagan, we too will fade away and will leave little but footprints in Moira.

“What is your life? You are a mist that appears for a little while and then vanishes.” James 4:14.

*“We are here for only a moment, visitors and strangers in the land as our ancestors were before us. Our days on earth are like a passing shadow, gone so soon without a trace.”
1 Chronicles 29:15. (NLT)*

“When Adam sinned, sin entered the world. Adam’s sin brought death, so death spread to everyone, for everyone sinned.” Romans 5:12. (NLT)



Aerial view of Rough Fort

THE WARRIOR

Artagan was far from his home in the Hebrides in Argyle. His stomach still ached from the seasickness he suffered on the voyage to Dunseverick. Now his limbs ached as he marched with thousands of others through the Ulster Scottish Kingdom of Dalriada in the North East corner of Ulster. He was following Congal Cláen, their one-eyed leader, on the royal road that led from Dunseverick to Tara and there was a long way still to go. It was 637 AD.

Ten years earlier Congal Cláen of the Cruthin had become over-King of all Ulster. But after killing the Uí Néill high King Suibne Menn of the Clan Owen and then being defeated by Domnall, the new high king, Congal had fled to Scotland, vowing to return. Artagan was one of Congal's recruits, along with a host of other Scots, Anglo-Saxons and Britons, returning to get revenge.

It was now Monday 23rd June 637. Domnall advanced from Tara and was camped at a ford on the Lagan just outside Moira. It is said that there were fifty thousand men on either side. The night before battle, Artagan sat on the hillside and stared across at the hordes on the other side. Would he ever see his beloved Hebrides again?

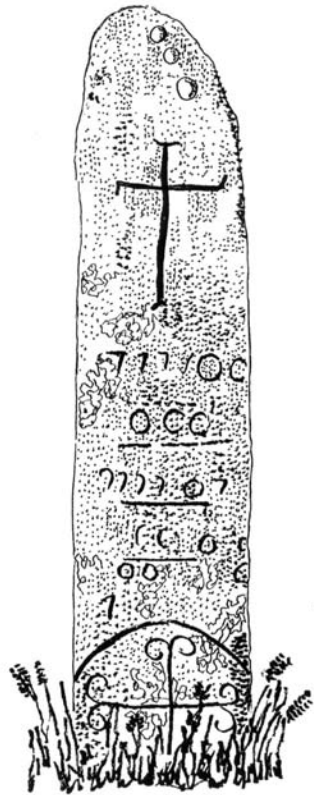
What happened over the next six days has been described as one of the most blood-thirsty battles in early Irish History. Congal and most of his army were killed. Those that could still run fled over the Ford Ath-ornagh (Thornbrook), up the ascent of Trummery, and in the direction of the Killultagh Woods, near Ballinderry.

An eighteenth century report states, “just below the kilns, exactly where it was possible to ford the Lagan River there stood a mound which a few years ago was discovered to consist almost entirely of human remains, bearing marks of calcination, evidently of those who had been slain in some great battle.” When the Ulster Railway was being constructed in 1841, great quantities of bones were discovered, particularly in the cutting just below Trummery old graveyard. All these bones may well have been the remains of men and horses killed in the battle.

The battle has left marks on Moira to this day in the names of the townlands. Aughnafosker means the ‘field of slaughter’ and Carnalbanagh means the ‘Scotsman’s grave.’ A pillar stone with a crude cross and some circles on it once stood on the rath in Claremont, signifying the graves of Scottish Princes killed at Moira but vandals destroyed it two hundred years ago.

Sir Samuel Ferguson wrote an epic poem in 1872 called “Congal: A Poem in Five Books.” In one verse he depicts Congal staring at defeat and death –

*‘Mysins, said Congal, and my deeds
of strike and bloodshed seem
No longer mine, but as the shapes
and shadows of a dream
And I myself, as one oppressed
with life’s deceptive shows,
Awaking only now to life, when life
is at its close.’*



Artist's impression of Carnalbanagh pillar stone

Life was at its close for Congal and for many of his followers but did any one of them know that this life is not the end for all of us?

And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment: so Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation.

Hebrews 9:27-28. (KJV)

For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. John 3:16.

Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting? The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. But thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. 1 Corinthians 15:55-57.

THE GAELIC CHIEFTAIN

Hugh O'Neill was a man who was both loved and loathed. He and his followers were a mighty force across Ireland in the sixteenth century. He was looked upon by many as king of Ireland and as one who wanted to unite Ireland. The English gave him the title Earl of Tyrone but it was always difficult for Elizabeth I to understand whether O'Neill was on her side or against her. One of her deputies reported after meeting him, *"Ye captain was proud and insolent; he would not leave his castle to see me, nor had I apt reason to visit him as I would. He shall be paid for this before long. I will not remain long in his debt."*

O'Neill would pledge that he and his tenants would submit to English rule, but before long he would break his promise and rebel again.

In 1599 the Queen sent the Earl of Essex for a "parley" with Tyrone. A truce was agreed, but over the next couple of years O'Neill continued the pressure on the English and eventually a large reward was offered for his capture, dead or alive.

In the battles that followed, O'Neill lost his stronghold in Dungannon. He had many other forts including three close to Moira. One was at the tiny village of Lisnagarvagh (now Lisburn), another at Portmore on the shores of Lough Neagh and one at Innisluighlin.

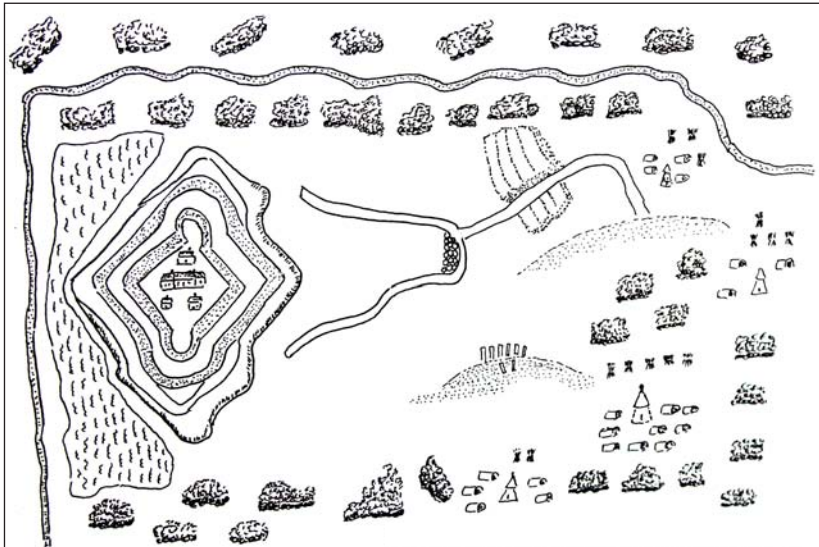
The latter was a stronghold of considerable significance. (The place had many different spellings and was also known as the fort of Killultagh). It was set on higher ground above the Lagan, close to where Spencer's Bridge is on the Hillsborough Road today. Records from the seventeenth century portray an

impressive stronghold. It was *“situated in the midst of a great bog and no way accessible, but through thick woods and barely passable.”* It consisted of *“two deep ditches, both comprised with strong palisades, a very high and broad rampart of earth and timber, and well flanked with bulwarks.”*

Sir Arthur Chichester described *“Eneslaghane”*, as *“the chief entrance into the spoil of these parts ... a place of great strength and exceeding importance.”* Lord Deputy Mountjoy called it *“one of the strongest places I have heard of in Ireland.”*

O'Neill knew the strategic importance of Innisloughlin and sent his nephew, Brian MacAirt O'Neill, to ensure that the fort was defended. He was given a large number of troops with muskets. It seems O'Neill was so sure of its impregnability that he also deposited much of his treasure there.

The English, under Lord Mountjoy, besieged the fort in the summer of 1602. Despite the fact that it was heavily fortified and almost inaccessible through the trees and the bog, it



Drawing from an original by Richard Bartlett 1602

eventually fell when O'Neill's army surrendered. Hugh O'Neill's power was gone. Within a few more years he had left Ireland never to return.

Following the fall of Inisloughlin to the English, the fort was granted to Sir Fulke Conway, who repaired and strengthened it. The fort was forty yards square with corner bastions and was surrounded by a moat and parapet. It stood proudly above the Lagan for many years but was levelled in 1803 by the landowner who *"filled up its entrenchments, and left only a small fragment of the castle standing."* By 1837 the moat had completely disappeared and only a skeleton of the parapet on the northeast and southeast side survived.

Strongholds become weak; towers tumble and disappear from view; chieftains and conquerors likewise fall and ultimately leave nothing but footprints.

All day long I have held out my hands to an obstinate people, who walk in ways not good, pursuing their own imaginations - a people who continually provoke me to my very face. Isaiah 65:2-3.

"Come now, let us reason together," says the Lord. "Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red as crimson, they shall be like wool. If you are willing and obedient, you will eat the best from the land; but if you resist and rebel, you will be devoured by the sword. For the mouth of the Lord has spoken." Isaiah 1:18-20.

THE GARDENER

Arthur had a dream; he wanted to create something unique in Ireland. Not that he needed something more in his life. He was born in the big house on the hill in Moira, had a very wealthy family and all the benefits of a child of noble birth. He could ride on horseback through the fields and forests that surrounded his home. He loved nature and was fascinated by his father's passion for growing things. His father, George Rawdon had successfully imported and grafted apple cultivars from England and raised a substantial orchard at his home. As a boy Arthur wandered beneath those trees and dreamed of making a beautiful garden of his own.

Arthur suffered from very poor health. His family were advised to send him to France where he spent years studying and longing for home. But home was never to be the same again. In one sad year his two older brothers and mother died. Eventually he was able to return to Moira to be with his ageing father. On the death of his father, he inherited the Baronetcy and the estate. The young man set about achieving his dream.

Over the next few years, as his garden was taking shape, progress was interrupted by perilous times in Ireland. In 1685 James II had become king. Arthur sided with Prince William of Orange and was appointed Colonel of a regiment of dragoons. Despite his determined leadership at the "Break of Dromore," the Protestant armies were driven further north and eventually retreated to Londonderry. Rawdon became dangerously sick and was forced by his friends and physicians to leave the stricken city before the siege began. He spent

quite a while recovering in England and putting plans in place for his garden.

For several years he had enjoyed a close friendship with Sir Hans Sloane, doctor to royalty and famed for his natural history collection. While Rawdon was convalescing, Sloane returned from an extended trip to Jamaica with wonderful plant specimens and some seeds. He shared some of these seeds with Arthur and enthused him with accounts of the exotic plant life there.

Arthur's dream intensified. He was determined to try importing not just seeds but living plants from Jamaica. He had a hot-house built in Moira. His health prevented him travelling abroad, but in 1689 he engaged James Harlow to go to Jamaica to bring back as many live plants as he could. It was an incredible venture. Would those plants survive an Atlantic crossing? Would they survive the climate in Ireland?

Arthur returned to Moira in 1690. The Battle of the Boyne was just weeks away. His battle-field career was over though he was still heavily involved in the support of the rebellion. Now called Sir Arthur, he also continued to develop what he hoped would be the greatest garden in the land. Eventually, in April 1692, Harlow arrived with an amazing cargo of one thousand exotic plants and remained in Moira for almost twenty years caring for those plants in the hot-house. Nothing in Europe compared with Arthur's garden, but he unselfishly shared his plants with gardeners in these islands and beyond. His dream had been realized. Moira demesne became a very special place indeed.

Sadly, Sir Arthur lived only a short time to enjoy the garden he created and loved, for he died in 1695 at the early age of thirty-four. Thankfully the gardeners and the family maintained his wonderful garden for many years and enjoyed showing off

the splendour of their home and demesne. We owe a debt of gratitude to those who visited the Castle, for without their diaries and journals and illustrations we would have very little knowledge of Moira demesne's glorious past.

Rev. John Wesley was a welcome visitor to Moira Castle on his travels through Ireland. He records one visit in May 1760 and tells how he preached *"just opposite to the Earl of Moira's house It stands on a hill with a large avenue in front, bounded by the Church on the opposite hill. The other three sides are covered with orchards, gardens and woods, in which are walks of various kinds."*

Another writer speaks of *"a handsome, well-planted and full grown avenue leading to the superb and beautiful seat of the Earl of Moira."*

A later visitor was Gabriel Beranger. He reveals more detail as he describes the mansion: *"a commodious habitation, surrounded by a wood, which affords beautiful walks, a large lawn extends in front, where sheep feed, and is terminated by trees, and a small lough eastwards; the rear of the castle grounds contains a wood, with large opening fronting the castle, which forms a fine perspective."* He continued, *"On each side of this extensive lawn are shady walks through the wood, terminated to the east by a long oblong piece of water, surrounded by gravel walks where one may enjoy the sun in cold weather. And to the west lies the pleasure and three large kitchen gardens."*

This visit took place when the Sharman family rented the property, over one hundred years after the garden was begun. The residents still took a great pride in the place. Beranger went on to describe a *"large abandoned quarry on the west of the demesne which Miss Sharman got planted and improved and has called it the Pelew. It forms at present a delightful shrubbery with ups and downs, either by steps or slopes and*

has so many turns and windings, that it appears a labyrinth and contains shady walks and close recesses in which little rural buildings and seats are judiciously placed, with a little wooden bridge to pass a small rill of water. Jasmine, woodbine and many flowering shrubs adorn this charming place." The quarry was known as McKinley's quarry but was filled in during housing development near Oldfort. Some who have lived in Moira all their lives recall the unusual flowers that bloomed around it.

The gardener from Moira has been widely recognised as the father of Irish gardening. His dream had become reality, though he never lived to see it mature. Sadly today the dream too has died, leaving only a reasonably attractive and functional park. That is the trouble with gardens; neglect them and they die. George Bernard Shaw describes neglect as the *"laziest and commonest of the vices."* But the Bible sounds a much more solemn warning.

*How shall we escape if we neglect such a great salvation?
Hebrews 2:3. (ESV)*

As for man, his days are like grass, he flourishes like a flower of the field; the wind blows over it and it is gone, and its place remembers it no more. But from everlasting to everlasting the Lord's love is with those who fear him. Psalm 103:15-17.

THE QUIET BUILDER

John rose and walked slowly across the expensively furnished bedroom on the first floor of Moira Castle. He coughed heavily at the open window and inhaled the autumn morning air. His tuberculosis was really troubling him today but he wanted to see how his special project was progressing. The sunrise over the Lagan valley silhouetted the new church building on the opposite hill; the sounds of labourers already starting work echoed across to the castle. It was exciting to see the elegant tower with its slate steeple taking shape. He could hardly wait to attend church in his new building. It was the year of 1722.

John was the son of Sir Arthur Rawdon and grandson of Sir George. He was born in 1690, just months before the decisive Battle of the Boyne but all his life he suffered from illness. He never knew his grandfather and he barely remembered his father. Arthur Rawdon had spent every moment either obsessed with military affairs or gardening. Then within a short space of time both his mother and father died. John was just five years old.

Despite such a start, John made every effort to lead a fulfilling life. He eventually followed his grandfather and father into politics and became a Member of Parliament for County Down but he always lived in the shadow of their achievements.

The gardens his father created continued to adorn the Castle, though many of the exotic plants had withered and died. John blamed their loss on the carelessness of the servants and the death of Mr. Harlow, the gardener. He demolished the crumbling glass-house his father had built but did all he

could to keep the beauty of the demesne. However he had plans of his own; plans that would benefit others in Moira.

Sir John was a well-loved landlord in Moira; everyone spoke highly of the young man on whom they depended for their livelihood. He was a person of *“great integrity, religion and charity.”*

The village of Moira grew as more people came to live in it. Many of them were linen dealers. John determined the time was right to develop the village and provide better properties for his tenants. He built houses and businesses in local blackstone with narrow carriage archways leading to quiet court-yards. Some houses were grand and some suitable for the poorer families. It would take years of work but Sir John had a vision of what he wanted to leave for posterity.

But his greatest longing was to see a Church in the village for the community. Moira was always part of Magheralin Parish but John was delighted that a decision had been taken to form the Parish of Moira. Initially services were held in the Charity School but John promised to help erect a beautiful place of worship. The Hill family from Hillsborough owned land on the hill opposite the Castle and kindly gave an acre to the Parish. In return the Hills were given their choice of burial plot in the grounds.

A later resident of Moira would describe the setting. *“Just where the houses terminated, at the lower end of town, were two gates exactly opposite. Each gate opened into a long avenue of tall trees; each avenue led to a noble edifice. One was the Parish Church, the other the Castle of the Earl of Moira; so that from one majestic pile to the other seemed but one continued avenue, with a lovely lawn of green at either end of it.”* It was just what John had planned.

John was shaken out of his reverie that morning by a commotion on the landing. The noise came from his over-

excited two-year-old son, also called John, being chased by a rather frazzled nurse. *"It is so good to have a lively boy,"* thought John. Yet he still worried. His first son had died at the same age and his third son, who would celebrate his first birthday that very day, was a sickly child; and his wife was expecting a fourth child next summer. All of this, on top of his own health problems, made life very difficult.

John often contemplated the future for he knew his life might be short. *"What would happen if he died? Would he leave an heir? And what about his people and his village?"* He hoped young John would grow up to be a really good landlord and in his will he made sure John would succeed him. He also wanted his tenants to benefit after he was gone. He willed the poor of Moira parish the sum of twelve shillings each. He also made provision for the Church building if it was not completed at the time of his death and left a legacy to continue a school until his son became of age.

As autumn turned to winter, John watched the erection of the church from his window. His health was rapidly deteriorating. Six days a week, the sounds of hammer on stone and wood penetrated the castle windows but on 1st February 1723, John no longer heard them. His fight for life was over and his third son followed him to the grave a month later. His second son and heir was just three years old.

It seemed as though the house of Rawdon could be ending. However the Rawdon name would become famous at home and across the world but none of them would leave a more lasting footprint upon the village of Moira than the quiet builder, Sir John Rawdon.

John was never able to worship within the walls of the beautiful St. John's church but the building was consecrated later in the year and has been used for the worship of God ever

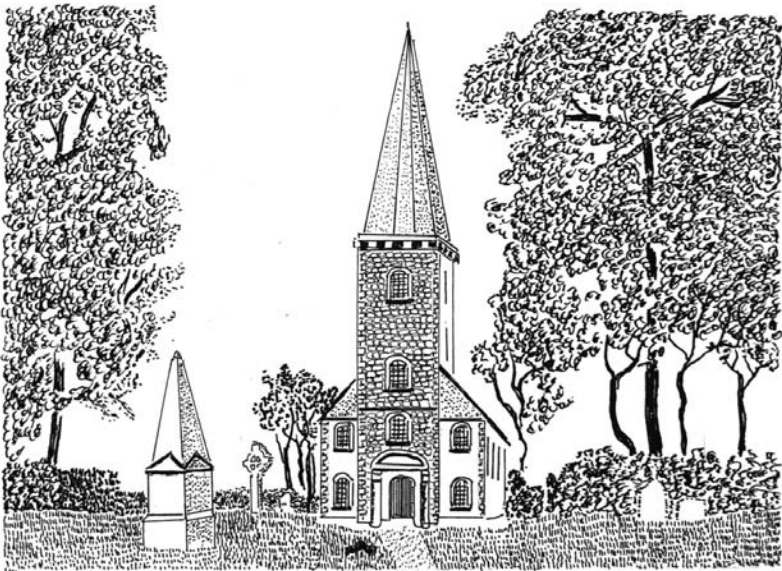
since. And the quiet builder still lies in the quiet vault under the place he so lovingly built.

John's short life, ending at thirty-three years, so closely mirrored his father's life. Arthur had died on his thirty-fourth birthday. Both lives were shortened by health problems. But a greater life was violently ended at a similar age.

Jesus Christ said He came "to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many." Mark 10:45

Jesus of Nazareth ... was handed over to you by God's set purpose and foreknowledge; and you, with the help of wicked men, put him to death by nailing him to the cross. Acts 2:22-23.

This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. 1 John 3:16.



St. John's Parish Church

THE LADY

Lady Elizabeth smiled contentedly in her carriage as she travelled along the Lagan valley to Hillsborough. She was slowly becoming familiar with the flat countryside around her and was very content with her situation in life. She had recently left behind one of the grandest aristocratic homes in England to marry the extremely wealthy Lord Rawdon and set up home in Ireland. Here she had the resources and the opportunity to make an impact on society.

She was happy for another reason; she was away from her mother's influence. The Countess of Huntingdon, a very notable Lady in English high society, had royal blood in her veins. However the Countess had caused a great stir in English society by becoming an evangelical Christian and befriending a host of preachers, most notably John Wesley and George Whitefield. Elizabeth had grown up knowing these men personally and often listened to them and to other famous preachers who were invited to preach in her home.

Elizabeth confessed to her brother that she had married Sir John Rawdon to get away from home and escape her mother's religious influence. She said *"my situation in Ireland is happy – extremely so, in separating us so far asunder."*

Elizabeth refused all contact with her mother, though one of her mother's preaching friends kept calling when he was passing through Ireland. John Wesley received a welcome from Lady Elizabeth's husband each time he came and he was obviously greatly impressed with Elizabeth's exquisite taste. He wrote of that home as *"the best finished of any I have seen in Ireland."*

Lady Elizabeth was a very able and decisive lady and used her position of authority to benefit others, even her tenants. During a revolt by farm tenants caused by high rent levels, evictions and local taxation, the village of Moira was under threat. The warning, later believed by Elizabeth to be malicious, was that the Hearts of Flint had *“vowed to hang every Moira person at their own door”* unless they joined the protest. Lady Rawdon was in residence and she wrote in haste to ask for soldiers to come to their aid. Her concern was not that her village people might attack her, for she said she was *“perfectly persuaded the infatuated people who surround me are incapable of doing me an injury.”* She wanted military support to prevent intimidation of her villagers.

In later years in Dublin, Elizabeth was known for her great hospitality. Her home was constantly used to entertain; she was the leading Dublin Whig hostess. It was said that *“Lord Moira had certainly one advantage above most men, for he had every assistance that true magnificence, the nobleness of manners peculiar to exalted birth, and talents for society the most cultivated could give him, in his illustrious Countess.”*

Elizabeth had many abilities; she managed her family properties but also managed the estate belonging to friends who were abroad for a number of years. She even had time to manage an election campaign.

When she died in 1808, her obituary said her home was *“the favourite seat of taste and splendour,”* and describes her as *“a most liberal patroness... her great income was spent in acts of charity and unbounded liberality Her Ladyship’s death is an irreparable loss to the poor of Dublin, as well as those who daily participated of her splendid board.”* She died at seventy-eight years of age, having achieved more than most women in Ireland but did she die happy?

John Wesley seems sure that earlier in life Elizabeth had professed faith in Christ. He wrote a letter to her on 18th March, 1760, some of which follows.

My Lady, it was impossible to see the distress into which your Ladyship was thrown by the late unhappy affair without bearing a part of it, without sympathizing with you. But may we not see God therein?

(Wesley was referring to a tragic event in the family circle.)

He speaks sometimes in the whirlwind. Permit me to speak to your Ladyship with all freedom; not as to a person of quality, but as to a creature whom the Almighty made for Himself.

You were not only a nominal but a real Christian. You tasted of the powers of the world to come. You knew God the Father had accepted you through His eternal Son, and God the Spirit bore witness with your spirit that you were a child of God.

But you fell among thieves... They by little and little sapped the foundation of your faith.

Where are you now? Full of faith?... Is it now not high time that you should awake out of sleep? Now God calls aloud! My dear Lady, now hear the voice of the Son of God, and live!

*I am, my Lady,
Yours,
John Wesley.*

Two months after writing that letter, John Wesley visited Moira twice in the space of a few days to see Lady Elizabeth and to preach. Nowhere does he record Elizabeth's reaction to his letter; only God knows the secrets of the heart.

He knows the secrets of your heart and mine right now. Nothing is hidden from Him.

Examine yourselves to see if your faith is genuine. Test yourselves. Surely you know that Jesus Christ is among you; if not, you have failed the test of genuine faith.

2 Corinthians 13:5. (NLT)

Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. Matthew 7:21.

Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; let him return to the Lord, that he may have compassion on him, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon. Isaiah 55:7. (ESV)

THE REVEREND

As the horse ambled steadily along the Lagan valley, the small man in the saddle spent most of his time reading. It was a pleasant July day in 1756; gone were the thunderstorms that drenched him the previous week between Scarva and Lisburn. Occasionally he lifted his eyes and admired the surrounding countryside. It was different from much of what he had seen across Ireland and reminded him of his homeland; "*much like Berkshire,*" he said. He noted the fruitful vales on each side of the road and the well-wooded hills. This was his first visit to Ulster and the horseman was impressed.

He was a travelling preacher; his name was Rev. John Wesley. His destination was Lurgan but he planned to stop in Moira, for he knew the Lady in the Castle. Wesley had been very friendly with her mother, the Countess of Huntingdon and had often met Elizabeth in her home in England, before she had married Sir John Rawdon four years earlier. Now would be an opportunity to meet her again and see her little eighteen month-old son Francis for the first time.

Elizabeth's husband gave the visitor a very warm welcome and prevailed upon him to preach to his tenants. Wesley agreed and Sir John, who was the Churchwarden, sent a servant to the clergyman to request the key of the Church, so that the visitor might preach to the people. Despite Sir John's stature in the church and society, the clergyman declined, saying he would never tolerate Methodists.

Sir John was greatly annoyed by the Rector's refusal but was determined that nothing should prevent Mr. Wesley from preaching. He sent the bellman through the town to summon

all the people to the lawn in front of the Castle. There Mr. Wesley stood on the top of a long flight of steps before the grand entrance hall and preached to the people.

Four years after Wesley's first visit, he returned. This time he came to visit the residents of Moira House and to seek to get an opportunity to speak to Elizabeth. She was in considerable distress since her cousin Earl Ferrers had murdered his land steward just a few months earlier. Wesley had written her a letter a few weeks previously.

The date was Thursday 1st May 1760. Wesley once again took the opportunity to preach once more, as well as spend time with Lady Elizabeth. *"I rode to Moira. Soon after twelve, standing on a tombstone near the Church, I called a considerable number of people to know God and Jesus Christ whom He had sent."*

Just over one week later, on Monday, 12th May, he determined to return to Moira. It was unusual for Wesley to return to a small village on such a preaching tour, for he liked to preach in the



Rev John Wesley preaching at Moira in May 1760

larger communities where he could reach more people with the Good News of Jesus Christ. That Monday morning he had preached in the Market House in Ballymena to a large number of people and recorded, *"God was there of a truth. I found no such spirit in any congregation since I left Dublin."*

Perhaps Wesley knew that Ferrers had been hanged the previous Monday and so determined to return to Lady Elizabeth. It was afternoon when he rode into Moira. Almost certainly he went to the Castle and then once more preached outside St. John's Church. This time he wrote down what he thought of the reception he received from his hearers in Moira. *"I preached to a very civil congregation but there is no life in them."* These were to be Wesley's last words about the people of Moira - but not his last thoughts. Sir John and Lady Rawdon were very much upon his heart.

Wesley, who was now fifty seven years old, was still remarkably active. The next day he rode to Cootehill in Cavan. He says, *"My horse was thoroughly tired. However with much difficulty, partly riding, and partly walking, about eight in the evening I reached Coot-hill."* No mention was made of how tired the preacher was! He preached when he arrived and the next morning, at five o'clock and again at eleven o'clock, in the Market house. Then with a fresh horse he rode to Belturbet! By the end of the week he was in Sligo. There he sat down to write to Sir John and to share his thoughts and concerns. He spoke of the spiritual conversations he had with Lady Rawdon the week before.

"My Lord, I have taken the liberty to speak to Lady Rawdon all that was in my heart, and doubt not that your Lordship will second it on every proper occasion. The late awful providence I trust will not pass over without a suitable improvement. God has spoken aloud, and happy are they that hear and understand His voice."

Wesley was convinced that Elizabeth once believed on Jesus Christ but he had great concerns now for her spiritual condition. His words in the letter to her a few weeks earlier included this challenge:

“Did not your love of God grow cold? Did not your love of the world revive? ... Where are you now? Full of faith? Looking into the holiest, and seeing Him that is invisible? Does your heart now glow with love to Him who is daily pouring His benefits upon you? ... Are not you a lover of pleasure more than a lover of God? ... And oh what pleasure! What is the pleasure of visiting? Of modern conversation? Is there any more reason than religion in it? I wonder what rational appetite does it gratify?”

Wesley was desperately concerned that Lady Rawdon’s love of pleasures and social standing were taking her away from God.

But he also had some concerns to share with Sir John himself. The letter continues:

“In one respect I have been under some apprehension on your Lordship’s account also. I have been afraid lest you should exchange the simplicity of the gospel for a philosophical religion. O my Lord, why should we go one step farther than this, ‘We love Him because He first loved us’? I am Your Lordship’s most obedient servant.”

Wesley returned to the Moira area on several occasions during the following years, no doubt to continue to urge those in the Castle to seek after God. He passed this way in June 1762 and June 1773 en-route between Lisburn and Lurgan. By then Sir John had become the Earl of Moira. On 6th July 1771 he *“spent two hours very agreeably in Mayra”* on his journey between Ballinderry and Newry. But there is no record of his ever again preaching in Moira and no account of spiritual conversations or letters between him and the Earl and Countess. Surely he

continued to care for their souls and pray for them. It seems he was still accepted by them, for Wesley was a welcome visitor in later years at their exceedingly grand home in Dublin.

The man who preached to tens of thousands all over the world, still had a love for the souls of individuals and passionately desired to see them saved. That is the desire behind this booklet: that you might know Jesus Christ as your Lord and Saviour. The Apostle Paul had a great passion for his people and wrote:

Brothers, my heart's desire and prayer to God for the Israelites is that they may be saved.

The word of faith we are proclaiming: If you confess with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved.

As the Scripture says, "Anyone who trusts in him will never be put to shame." For there is no difference between Jew and Gentile - the same Lord is Lord of all and richly blesses all who call on him, for, "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved." Romans 10:1,8-10,13.

THE SINNER

Abigail made her way up the drive beneath the trees to St. John's Parish Church in Moira. It was a Sunday evening in the mid 18th Century and the sun was setting behind the Castle. She cast a long shadow on the drive ahead as she walked alone and reluctantly to the impressive Georgian building that had been built in the village when she was a child.

This was the church where she and her husband worshipped. But today was different. She was here by order.

The churchwarden at the door looked condescendingly and solemnly at her as she entered and then without a word led her inside. Glancing left, she saw Sir John Rawdon, recently appointed Earl of Moira, sitting with his family and servants in their pew. On the right sat the Waring family. Then her eyes went to the front where the Reverend Thomas Waring stood waiting below the three-decker pulpit. He had demanded that she appear before him and the congregation but she had to wait until the end of Evening Prayer.

Eventually the moment came when she was led up the aisle to stand where all could see. There before the parishioners, Abigail had to make a public confession. What was her crime? Had she stolen something? Had she been drunk in the street? The curious congregation strained to hear her, as in a trembling voice she said: *"I am sorry for the abusive words I used about Sarah, calling her a ***."* (Historical records do not show the word)

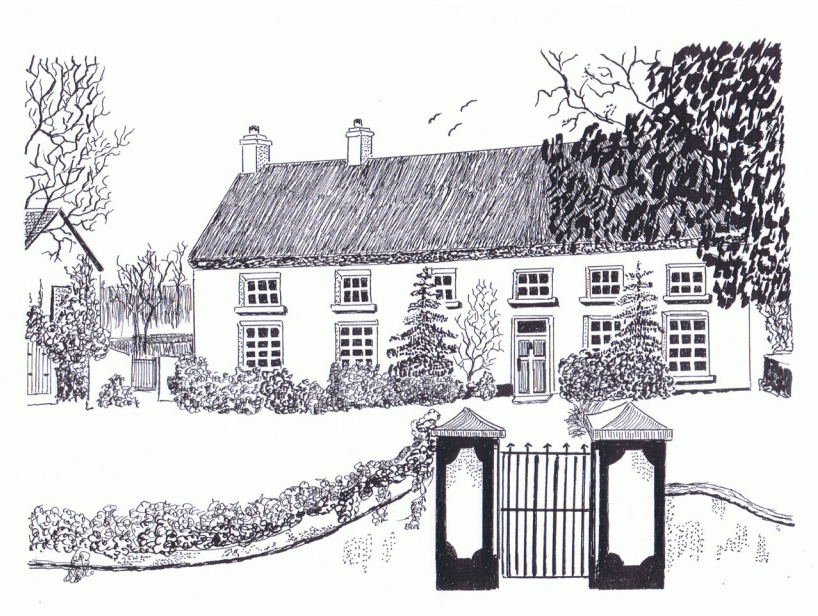
Such was the nature of Church discipline in those times. No record is given of any penalty Abigail may have had to pay. Neither is there any account of her relationship with her

husband from then on, for the one who heard her use the words and reported them to the church, was her own husband!

Jesus said to them, "If any one of you is without sin, let him be the first to throw a stone at her." John 8:7

*All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.
Romans 3:23.*

If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. 1John 1:8-9.



Berwick Hall c.1700

THE DYING METHODIST

Thomas felt terribly ill. He was a young man with barely a friend, with no money and acutely aware that he was dying. He was alone in Ireland, far from his home in Cornwall.

Thomas Seccomb might have been wealthy, for his father was a man of some considerable means. However, when Thomas became a Christian, his father disapproved strongly and particularly resented him becoming a preacher with the Methodists.

Thomas was a powerful preacher. Charles Dixon records the impact of his sermons. *"His preaching was such as I never heard before, for his word was with power. It made me cry out in bitterness of soul - what must I do to be saved?"*

When Thomas' father died, Thomas was not included in the will and was left with no means of support. Despite this and despite being deeply upset in spirit, he followed the call of God to come to Ireland as one of Wesley's preachers. He forsook everything for Christ and the Gospel's sake, for he knew the Lord promised that those who do so *"shall receive a hundredfold now, houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, with persecutions; and in the world to come eternal life."* All Methodist preachers suffered a lot of persecution and Thomas was no exception.

However the situation in which Thomas now found himself was critical for he was suffering from consumption. In such a state, far from home and penniless, all he could rely on was the promises of God. And God used an unlikely source of help.

The Lord moved the hearts of Lord and Lady Moira to receive

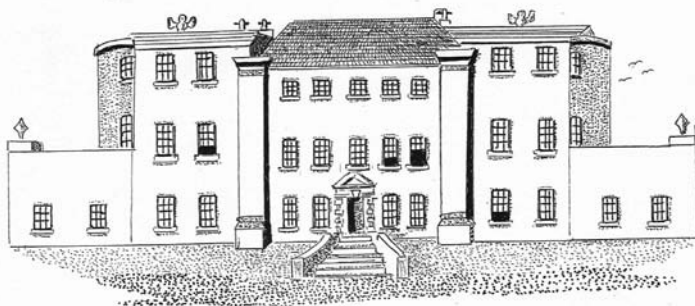
Thomas into their own grand home. They treated him as though he was their own child.

When a week passed without improvement, Thomas requested that His Lordship would permit the poor members of the Methodist Society to visit him that he might give them some advice and give his dying benediction. Lord Moira readily consented on one condition; that he might be permitted to be present.

The Society came. Thomas sat upon his bed and exhorted them from the Scriptures for about half an hour before praying a most moving prayer. His Methodist friends left. Thomas turned to Lord and Lady Moira, thanking them profusely for all they had done for him and then prayed for them and for their family. Once finished, he lay back on the bed and in a few minutes had slipped quietly into the presence of Jesus.

Lord Moira wrote to a friend giving the account of Thomas Seccomb's death, and making this request: *"Now, my Lord, find me if you can a man that will die like a Methodist!"*

Thomas went without fear into the arms of the Lord. Those arms had often surrounded him in life; comforting him in his



Copy of an original by Gabriel Beranger

depression and loneliness, carrying him through many dark and painful days of ministry and assuring him that he would never be left alone. And certainly not when he was facing death - the greatest enemy of all.

Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me. Psalm 23:4.

The eternal God is your refuge and his everlasting arms are under you. Deuteronomy 33:27. (NLT)

The same Lord on whom Thomas rested says to all who are weary with life and questioning its purpose:

"Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest." Matthew 11:28.

Let the one who is thirsty come; let the one who desires take the water of life without price. Revelation 22:17. (ESV)

I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full. John 10:10.

THE HOMECOMING EARL

Moira had never before seen such a day and maybe never has since. Work had stopped and everyone was dressed in their Sunday clothes for the Earl was coming home.

Twenty years earlier, the Earl of Moira had moved his seat to Montalto, Ballynahinch but he was still remembered with fondness by many in the community as a gentle, polite and unassuming man. John Rawdon was born in the castle. Many recalled their parents talking about being present when John's father was buried; they told of little three-year-old John following his father's horse-drawn hearse up the drive to the partly finished parish church. John was reared by an aunt after his mother remarried and he had grown up to become a highly intelligent man, appointed a Fellow of the Royal Society and made a Doctor of Law. To the ordinary people of Moira, he was a fair and esteemed landlord.

He was also respected for his hospitality to all sections of the community. When an ancient relic belonging to the Catholic Church in Magheralin was under threat, he gave it safe keeping in the castle. He extended hospitality to Magheralin priests, even though the Penal laws forbade it; one priest was even known as an *"intimate friend of Lord Moira's."*

John Wesley was always welcomed and the Earl showed great concern for his safety in Ireland by providing him with a letter that ensured his right to travel where he wanted. For a while the Earl and Countess even opened the great hall of their mansion for weekly public services conducted by Methodist preachers. At the same time, the Earl was committed to his own church and served as Churchwarden in St. John's for a record thirteen years.

It was Wesley who told of the Earl's hospitality to French invaders. During his visit to Moira Castle in 1760, Wesley met Major Brajelon, a wounded French officer who along with his Commander, General Flobert, had recuperated in the comfort of Moira Castle. They had been officers in the French invasion of Carrickfergus Castle but had been wounded and were left behind when the French attempted to flee.

So on that momentous homecoming day, people from all sections of the local community gathered in Moira but it was not a joyful gathering. The Earl of Moira was dead. News of his passing on 20th June had reached the village a week ago. He died at his Dublin mansion, also called Moira House, but he was to be buried in his home village of Moira. It was 3rd July 1793.

The night before had seen a succession of travellers seeking accommodation at the inn. It is likely the immediate family found accommodation in their old home where William Sharman was known as a man of the greatest hospitality. As the day went on, Moira was almost overwhelmed with people. Visitors from Ballynahinch, Dublin, across Ireland and even from England arrived in their carriages, dressed in their mourning finery.

Someone had obtained a newspaper and read the Earl's obituary to a crowd gathered under the four trees. *(The Earl of Moira) "acted on every occasion and every question as an honest independent peer of Ireland. His house will not easily be forgotten. It was always the residence of the most unaffected hospitality, the most perfect ease, and active, efficient benevolence. His cultivated understanding, aided by that of his most excellent lady, and now illustrious (widow) and his peculiar and charming urbanity of manners, will make Moira-house and Montalto live long, very long, in the memories of those who partook with him in his hours of social or lettered retirement."*

As the time of the service drew near, villagers strained to catch a glimpse of the Countess and her son Francis. Francis had left the village as a lad and now he was one of the most famous soldiers in England and Ireland. It was not easy to see anyone, for the funeral was described as the largest ever seen in Ireland. Someone tried to count the carriages and people; there were almost eight hundred carriages of various kinds, and a train of four thousand people. Three thousand hatbands and scarves were distributed to mourners.

The funeral service was conducted by the Earl's good friend, the Rev James Forde from Magheragall. The Earl's remains were laid in the family vault beside his father and brother, both of whom had died seventy years before him. That day marked the last Rawdon footprints ever in Moira. What an impact that family made and what a legacy they have left! But eventually all footprints fade.

We live our lives beneath your wrath, ending our years with a groan.

Seventy years are given to us! Some even live to eighty. But even the best years are filled with pain and trouble; soon they disappear, and we fly away.

Who can comprehend the power of your anger? Your wrath is as awesome as the fear you deserve.

Teach us to realize the brevity of life, so that we may grow in wisdom. Psalm 90:9-12. (NLT)

Our God is a God who saves; from the Sovereign LORD comes escape from death. Psalm 68:20.

THE SOLDIER-STATESMAN

Francis was a typical boy who loved the outdoors. His playground was the enormous demesne surrounding his home in Moira; among the trees was the perfect place for war games. But war games can make boys cry and particularly when the weapons use real gunpowder! When Francis was ten years old, a gun exploded injuring him in the leg. He survived to become the most famous son from the village of Moira.

Francis Rawdon was the son of the 1st Earl of Moira. He was educated in Harrow and later enrolled in University College, Oxford but discontinued his studies to serve his country. From his earliest days in the demesne, Francis had wanted to be a soldier.

His first experience of war was in the American War of Independence as a Lieutenant of the 5th Foot. He was just nineteen years old but quickly distinguished himself, though once he came very close to being killed when two bullets passed through his hat. He later became Adjutant General of the British Army in North America and is said to have been one of the best and most courageous Generals in the whole war. He became known as Lord Rawdon.

After eight years of almost incessant fighting in America, Francis' health broke down and he was obliged to leave America. The vessel in which he had sailed for England was captured by the French and taken to Brest. Thankfully an exchange of prisoners soon afterwards brought about his release and he returned to England.

In 1782 Lord Rawdon was made a Colonel and was appointed aide-de-camp to George III. He also entered political life, first in the Irish Parliament and eventually in England. As a parliamentarian, Francis was extremely critical of English repression in Ireland.

Wolf Tone sometimes visited Moira House, Dublin where Francis' mother constantly entertained. Tone actually contemplated a leading political role for Rawdon in Ireland. In October 1792 he wrote, *"I fear after all Lord Rawdon will not have the sense to see what a great game he might play here. He would rather dangle at the tail of an English party, when, I think, he might be everything but king of Ireland."* But Tone's proposal had no hope of succeeding.



Francis Rawdon - a copy of an original drawing

Francis' uncle died and decreed in his will that his nephew should take his name; so he became Francis Rawdon-Hastings. After his father's death, Francis became the 2nd Earl of Moira and served in the Irish House of Lords. He was commonly referred to as Lord Moira.

But he always saw himself as a soldier. When France declared war on Great Britain, Francis was appointed Major General and fought the French Revolutionary Armies in the Low Countries.

On one of his visits in 1795 to his home in Montalto, he tried his best to prevent the horrors of the United Irishmen Rebellion in his own town of Ballynahinch. He held a meeting in his newly-built Market House and persuaded his tenants to pass a resolution of loyalty to the Crown. But in 1798 some of those same tenants joined the rebellion and fought within the demesne surrounding his mansion.

In 1800 he sold both Montalto and Moira estates. In 1808 he inherited his mother's titles along with much of the estates belonging to the Huntingdon dynasty but sold his House in Dublin and ended nearly two centuries of family associations with Ireland.

In the early 19th Century, while the country was at War with France, an attempt was made to form the strongest possible British government. Past differences were put aside for the sake of national unity. A Cabinet was formed and Lord Moira was appointed Master General of Ordnance in charge of military affairs. The Government fell the following year but one notable achievement was the abolition of the Slave Trade.

Lord Moira was a very close friend of the Prince Regent in London and indeed was extremely generous to him. In 1812 the Prince gave him an opportunity to be Prime Minister

in London. Unfortunately he was unable to form a coalition government and so, as a consolation, he was sent to India in 1813 to act as Governor General of Bengal. Francis was largely responsible for the incorporation of Central India and Singapore as part of the British Empire.

Rawdon-Hastings, or Lord Hastings as he came to be known, was often engaged in wars in India and Nepal. During his time there, he also built roads and bridges and dug canals. He encouraged education among the Indians, founded the Hindu College at Calcutta and encouraged the setting up of a printing press and a college by missionaries in Serampore.

A missionary in Serampore at that time was William Carey, the great Baptist Missionary known as the *"father of modern missions."* Carey had very close associations with Lord Hastings, who even became a patron of Carey's College.

Lord Hastings was later appointed the first Commander-in-Chief of Malta, probably because his great debts meant he could no longer live in Britain. He died in 1826 but had left clear instructions that he was to be buried where he fell, if his *"adored wife had no objections."* Also, in a quixotic demonstration of his love, he left instructions *"that his right hand be cut off and preserved, so that it may be put with her body into the coffin when it please the Almighty to decree the reunion of our spirits."* This *"last earthly token"* of his and his wife's *"attachment"*, he declared, *"shall not be an idle lesson for our precious children, to whom I now give my fondest blessing."*

He was buried in Malta. His sarcophagus stands in Hastings Garden, Valetta, overlooking the Grand Harbour. His hand was eventually buried with his wife fourteen years later!

During his life, Francis held many aristocratic titles and moved in the highest of circles. He was extravagantly wealthy and

foolishly extravagant. His memory lives on in so many of his achievements in these islands and across the world. But like all mankind, he was a mere mortal. We, who walk on the lands on which he walked, also leave footprints on this earth for a time but we all have an eternal soul.

What good is it for a man to gain the whole world, yet forfeit his soul? Or what can a man give in exchange for his soul? If anyone is ashamed of me and my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of Man will be ashamed of him when he comes in his Father's glory with the holy angels. Mark 8:36-38.

Not many of you were wise by human standards; not many were influential; not many were of noble birth. But God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise; God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong. He chose the lowly things of this world and the despised things - and the things that are not - to nullify the things that are, so that no one may boast before him. 1 Corinthians 1:26-29.

For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith - and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God - not by works, so that no one can boast. Ephesians 2:8-9.

THE HERO

The lad wrapped his threadbare coat around him against the chilly east wind. He took the path through the newly cultivated fields down by the river and paused to watch the workers digging the new canal that was supposed to open up access to Lough Neagh. As he walked on, immersed in an idle daydream, he was suddenly arrested by the sound of a horse and carriage on its way to Hillsborough. He stood still with his cap in his hand to show respect but there was no respect in his heart. The Lady ignored him.

"How different life might have been," he mused as he continued his aimless walk. All this land could have been his. His great grandfather, Murtagh O'Lavery, had been given this land by King James I but now Dennis O'Lavery had nothing. He was condemned to poverty. Living in his area of *"The Bogs"* or *"marshy Moira"* was hardly to be called a life. Now he was supposed to respect those who had robbed him of his life! He spat on the ground.

A few years later, Dennis saw an opportunity to get away from the pit in which he lived. Like thousands of Irishmen, he joined the Army and was soon far from the home and land he knew well. He was shipped off to fight for the British in the American War of Independence.

Dennis determined to be a successful soldier and was soon made a corporal. He quickly realised what a small world he lived in. His commanding officer was Francis Rawdon, son of the Earl who lived in the big house at the top of the hill in Moira; the son of the Lady who passed by in her carriage and never acknowledged him. He smiled weakly at the thought.

Respect for officers was demanded in the army and Dennis gave it, not just out of fear or duty, but also out of a growing regard for a great Commander.

In 1781 Corporal O'Lavery volunteered for the task of carrying an important dispatch through a dangerous wooded area. He knew that at all costs he must guard the document from enemy hands. En-route Dennis was seriously wounded. He crawled to a hollow tree stump but was afraid his secret would be found. Then he had an idea. To avoid the secret message falling into enemy hands he hid the dispatch inside his wound. The message was saved but the consequences of his action were fatal for Dennis expired soon after he was found. Some time later a poet recorded Dennis' actions:

*"Within his wound the fatal paper placed,
Which proved his death, nor by that death disgraced.
A smile, benignant, on his countenance shone,
Pleased that his secret had remained unknown:
So was he found."*

Dennis O'Lavery was eulogised in the House of Commons. Francis Rawdon never forgot him. Although Rawdon never returned to live in Moira, it is recorded that he built a monument here to pay his respects to a real hero. A military letter of the time describes O'Lavery, *"... in rank a corporal, he was in mind a hero; his country Ireland and his parish Moira in which a chaste monument records at once his fame and the gratitude of his illustrious commander and countryman Lord Rawdon."* The location of the monument here has never been established and his sacrifice almost forgotten.

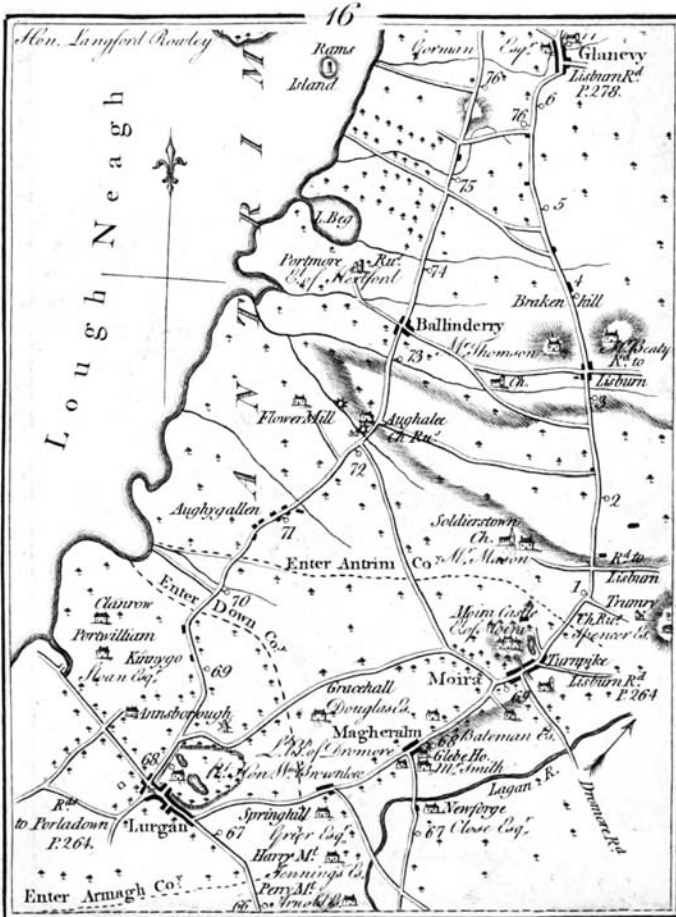
It is not the only sacrifice to be overlooked and even despised. Jesus Christ made one sacrifice for sin forever.

He was despised and rejected by men, ... but he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the

punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed. We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all. Isaiah 53:3,5,6.

Don't despise or reject Him. Place your trust in Him and say:

I know the one in whom I trust, and I am sure that he is able to guard what I have entrusted to him until the day of his return. 2 Timothy 1:12. (NLT)



Taylor and Skinner's maps of the roads of Ireland, surveyed 1777

THE FARM LABOURER

Thomas Gallagher and his workmates ran for shelter. They had spent the morning in the fields in the parish of Magheramesk. It had been a calm, sunny day, perfect for digging potatoes. The unexpected cloud-burst looked like it would last a while so the farm labourers headed for the tower beside the church just up the hill.

Trummery Tower had once been one of the magnificent round towers of Ireland. Thought to have been built around the thirteenth century, it stood sixty feet tall and was fifteen feet in diameter all the way to the top - a rather unique feature in Irish round towers.

However, the shelter was far from ideal for Thomas and his fellow labourers. The rain still beat in through the great hole in one side. The damage had been caused long ago by the English garrison at Innisluoughlin who used the tower for cannon practice! Over the years it had gradually fallen apart but ivy spreading up the walls had somehow held much of it together and gave it a rather romantic appearance. Then local builders decided the fallen stones were perfect for their purposes and so, piece by piece, the tower was weakened.

As the rain shower continued to beat down, some of the labourers started discussing the safety of their shelter but since it had stood as long as any of their families could remember, they had no real fears. After half an hour, the rain stopped as suddenly as it had started and the men headed back to their task in the field.

Within a few minutes they were startled by a loud rumble; the ground seemed to shake as though in an earthquake. The labourers turned in time to see the dust settling over a heap

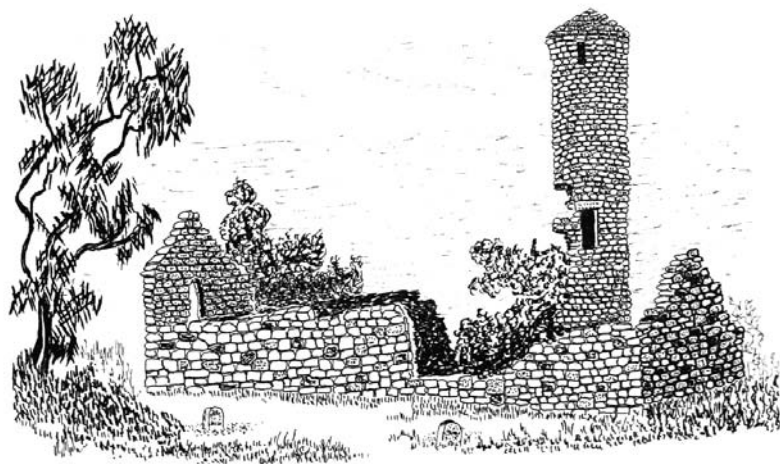
of rubble that had been their shelter until a short time ago. It was a very narrow escape.

Today only a few fallen stones remain to mark the spot in the old graveyard where Trummery Tower once proudly stood. The refuges of man endure for a while and then decay or get destroyed; but our souls need a refuge that lasts forever.

“God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble.” Psalm 46:1.

He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High will rest in the shadow of the Almighty. I will say of the LORD, “He is my refuge and my fortress, my God, in whom I trust.”

Psalm 91:1,2.



Trummery Tower

THE WOMAN PREACHER

Little more than leaves stirred on that quiet, pleasant Sunday afternoon in Moira at the end of the 17th century. Several children from one family sat lazily in the shade of the four trees outside their door, waiting hungrily for dinner to be ready. The sound of hooves caused them to look behind them and they observed a stranger in unusual clothes ride up to the Inn door. As he dismounted, the children ran into the house, eager to describe the stranger to their father.

Ralph Lutton was a wealthy man and his home was one of the three-storey houses on Main Street. He was nearly blind but he and his wife were both unusually intelligent. Ralph listened to his children and immediately concluded the stranger was likely to be a Methodist preacher.

Although he was an Anglican, Mr. Lutton was sympathetic towards Methodist preachers. When he was just a boy, John Wesley preached in the churchyard in Moira and it is quite possible that Ralph was in the crowds listening to the travelling preacher. So much did he admire Wesley that he even named one of his sons John Wesley Lutton. Ralph Lutton knew that travelling preachers were generally very poor, so he generously invited the stranger to dinner. His early conclusions were right. The gentleman introduced himself as John Grace and confirmed that he was a Methodist preacher.

That Sunday afternoon Mr. Grace made quite an impact on the Lutton family. Much later Anne, the youngest member of the family, wrote about it: *"That memorable Sabbath, when my father invited the Methodist preacher to come in and eat bread with him, was the beginning of days to a household which*

hitherto 'sat in darkness'. The little circle sat wondering, and delighted to find that religion was not clad in sable, repulsive and exacting. From that day the Methodist preachers were regularly entertained at my father's house; ... his parlour and hall were the places where sat the congregation, whilst the laborious and pious men of God sought to save the souls of them that heard them."

The Luttons attended the Parish church in the morning and Wesleyan preaching on Sunday evening, probably in their own home, for there was no Methodist church in the village at that time.

Ralph Lutton's family became a great witness for Christ in the village. The Moira curate was one of many invited into the Lutton home to hear the humble Wesleyan ministers. He was *"blessed, and made a blessing, finding Christ crucified for himself, and zealously proclaiming Him to others, in the church, in barns, in cottages."*

Strange as it may seem, Anne's spiritual interest decreased and her desire to acquire knowledge increased. The hunger to learn



65 Main Street, birthplace of Anne Lutton

was incredible, considering she had no formal education. The first attempt to make her attend school had failed miserably, so the youngest child was spoilt and indulged. The only formal education she ever had was at seventeen when she attended a Moravian school to learn a little grammar, geography and embroidery. Her father was a scholar and the house was full of books. Anne was entranced with these books and as soon as she learned to read, she devoured every book she could get her hands on. She studied Latin, Greek and Hebrew, followed by a range of European and Asian languages. She could understand more than fifty languages and speak fifteen accurately. In addition, she became an able metaphysician, mathematician and musician.

What was the point of all this study? Here was a retiring young woman living in the backwaters of society acquiring the most wonderful education that was of little apparent use in Moira or in Donaghcloney to which the family moved for a time. Only later did Anne see the purpose. *"It was a training process for higher and more hallowed duties,"* she said.

As she grew into a young woman, Anne at first felt no need of a Saviour, despite the powerful Gospel witness all around her. She believed herself to be upright and holy and encouraged others to live pure lives but was not converted and did not seek to be.

God, however, was seeking her. One day, a great conviction of sin came upon her. The burden of her sin became intolerable and she longed to find freedom from it in Christ. Anne began to think of nothing else. She sought incessantly for peace over a period of weeks. She was almost hopeless, until one day her father pointed her simply to Christ as the only Saviour of sinners and assured her that by faith in Him she would be saved. With childlike faith the young woman knelt before God

and cast herself at His feet. Here is her own account of her conversion:

'Mother!' I exclaimed, 'if I do not get my sins pardoned, I shall perish everlastingly!' I went to my own room, knelt down at the bedside, clasped my hands most imploringly, and with streaming eyes said, 'O Lord God, I here most solemnly and heartily, with all the faith I know how to use, cast my whole soul at Thy feet, and take the Lord Jesus Christ as my Saviour from this moment, and my Master and portion for time and for eternity, and will henceforth believe I am forgiven for His sake.' As I abandoned myself to Him, so He gave Himself to me. There was an immediate sense of acceptance. Oh, such a love as never, never had I before conceived!

The date was 14th April 1815 and Anne Lutton called that day the commencement of *"her happy existence."* She was twenty-four years old. *"I praised the Lord with a loud voice; I was too happy to keep silence,"* she said.

Anne began to have a growing conviction that she should be *"proclaiming to her fellow-countrywomen the love of the Saviour."* Despite her great learning, Anne was a shy, retiring woman. Yet she resolved to preach the Gospel to women.

She preached in Moira and beyond, always excluding men from her meetings. Anne believed that as a woman she should preach to only women.

By the 1830s, male followers of Anne Lutton even went so far as to dress in women's clothing in an attempt to hear her preach! The attempts were in vain, because Miss Lutton posted keen-eyed gentlemen at the chapel door while she was conducting a service.

Yet one young man, whose disguise was obviously very good, escaped detection. He was moved under her preaching to turn to God in repentance and follow Him. The man later owned

up and told how he was converted. Anne was encouraged to relax the rule she had laid down but even this event would not make her change her conviction that she was called to preach to women only.

God used Anne Lutton greatly in Moira and her ministry widened, preaching as far as Belfast, Banbridge, Scarva, Tullymore and Bryansford. She loved most of all to preach the Word of God in the village where, as a little girl, she first heard the Gospel from John Grace. She is regarded by many as the founder of Methodism in Moira. Anne died at ninety years of age but her message to Moira echoes through its streets and homes to this day.

Where is the wise man? Where is the scholar? Where is the philosopher of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? For since in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom did not know him, God was pleased through the foolishness of what was preached to save those who believe. 1 Corinthians 1:20-21.

Faith comes from hearing the message, and the message is heard through the word of Christ. Romans 10:17.

The kingdom of God is near. Repent and believe the good news. Mark 1:15.

THE JEW

The north wind blew up Main Street in Moira. It was a cold Wednesday in March 1834. Trading was drawing to a close and most people were ready for home. Tethered horses whinnied softly as they waited impatiently to be free. A few children played hop-scotch in the shelter of the new Market house and a lad swung lazily on the rope that hung from a branch of one of the lime trees in the middle of the street. It was just like any other Wednesday in Moira until the stranger appeared.

He was a venerable old man and he was carrying a chair on his shoulder. Who was he and where did he come from? Nobody knew but everybody was curious. He was dressed in sober clothing and had a long beard that reached to the middle button on his waistcoat. Was he a trader? He appeared to have nothing but a chair. He could hardly be a travelling musician for he carried no instrument. The old man came up the street and turned the corner of the Market House where the children were playing. Some stopped their game to stare and some ran home nervously to tell about the strange visitor. Men having a drink in the Inn came out to watch. Women peered out of their doors to see what their children were talking about.

The old man had achieved what he wanted - a curious group of onlookers. He planted his chair firmly and carefully climbed upon it, inviting everyone to gather round. Soon he had a group of inquisitive listeners and he began to speak. His strange accent showed he was not from this part of the world.

Across the street in the Inn, a man lay dozing on his bed from exhaustion. He travelled through Ireland on behalf of the Ordnance Survey authorities. Perhaps it was the sound of the

old man's voice that disturbed his slumber. He wakened with a start and went down to the door. He recorded what he saw.

"I started up, walked out, and being attracted by a semi circle of people standing at the sheltry side of Moira market house, I went down to them. Standing on chair, I saw a venerable old man repeating aloud one of the psalms of David. His long bushy beard, his Abrahamic countenance, and his thick pronunciation of consonants characterized him a Jew. I gazed on him with wonder, thinking I would have an opportunity of hearing him preach the Law of Moses, but I soon learned that he had abandoned the old cause of his tribe, and is now going about preaching the morality and doctrine of Jesus of Nazareth.

*Yours truly,
John O'Donovan"*

Nearly two hundred years later that same doctrine, that Jesus Christ is the Messiah come to save sinners, is still being preached in the streets and churches of Moira.

The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth. ... For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. John 1:14, 17.

Jews demand miraculous signs and Greeks look for wisdom, but we preach Christ crucified: a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles, but to those whom God has called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. 1 Corinthians 1:22-24.

THE ORANGE MAN

Gabriel winced as he climbed aboard the post chaise outside the Inn in Banbridge. Yesterday had been a long, tiring journey from Dublin and his back was sore. Fifteen hours cramped in a mail coach would have exhausted anybody but he was seventy years old now. As the yellow post chaise rattled out of Banbridge and through Waringstown, Gabriel forgot his aches. He was enjoying the warmth of that July morning and looking forward to arriving soon at his destination. His fellow passenger observed him taking an avid interest in everything they passed, continually making notes or sketching.

Gabriel Beranger was, among other things, an accomplished artist. Born in the Netherlands, he had settled in Dublin nearly fifty years previously. Many of those years were spent making watercolour paintings of old buildings and sites of interest in the Dublin area. Those were perilous times in Ireland but Beranger seemed untroubled by danger. He lived to paint and somehow he was accepted and indeed protected by whatever group controlled that region.

Counties Down and Armagh were dangerous areas for any traveller. The region had witnessed the violence of the Protestant Peep o' Day Boys against Catholic neighbours. The Catholics had formed an armed group named the Defenders, who retaliated in kind. A major clash between the two factions near Loughgall, at what became known as the Battle of the Diamond, led to the formation of the Orange Order in 1795.

Just a year before Beranger's visit, County Down had been in turmoil because of the United Irishmen Rebellion. The bloody Battle of Ballynahinch had taken place; some of it in the

grounds of Lord Moira's estate there. Now Gabriel was on his way to the birthplace of Lord Moira, to meet the new residents of the Castle. It was 2nd July 1799.

Beranger was very warmly received by Colonel William Sharman and his wife and by their twenty-six year-old daughter. Their home was a wonderful place. He spent days either in the library or viewing Mr. Sharman's collection of curiosities. Hours were spent in stimulating conversation, or exploring the acres of the demesne gardens.

Miss Sharman was also an artist and most probably a pupil of his, for some of her paintings appear in a book he later published. She took him on a tour of the wonderful garden she had created in a disused quarry on the demesne and also to see the magnificent garden at nearby Waringfield House.

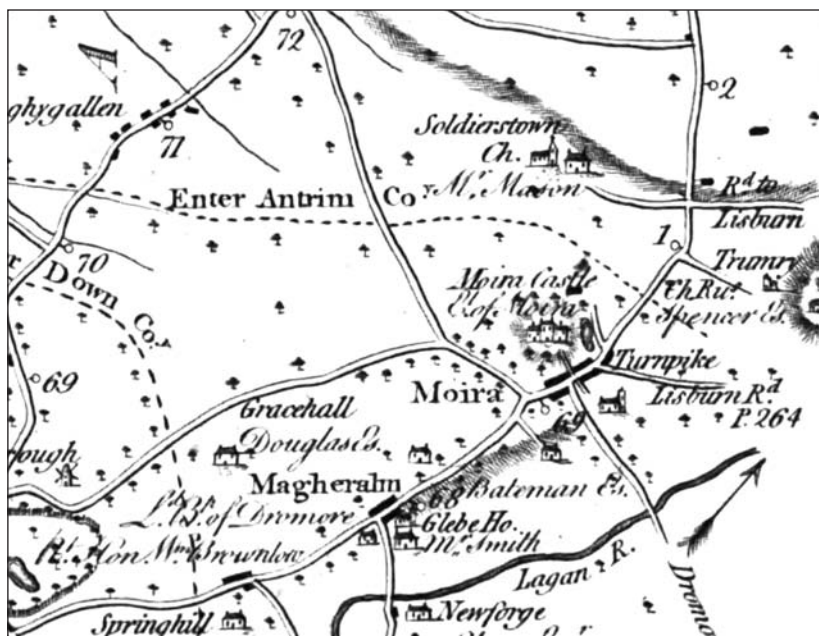
The main purpose of his visit seems to have been to confirm Miss Sharman's sketch of Moira Castle and then produce his own copy. His paintings and drawings show great detail and are the best illustrations we have of Moira Castle.

Time passed quickly and soon it was the day of his departure. He was booked to travel on the mail coach to Dublin, leaving Banbridge at ten o'clock on the evening of 12th July. In the last few years, the Orange Order had celebrated their first ever "Twelfth" marches to mark the victory over King James. Those parades had taken place in nearby Lurgan, Waringstown and Portadown. In 1799, a march was planned for Moira. Typical of Beranger and his fascination with detail, he wanted to observe the annual celebrations before he left. Consequently he has recorded for us a captivating insight into one of the earliest 12th July celebrations.

"I spended [sic] time here in a most delightful manner until the 12th July anniversary of the Battle of Aughrim, when the various

yeomanry of the country, divided in different bodies, each with their proper ensigns, males and females, adorned with orange lilies and ribbands, marched up the avenues. We went adorned in the same way upon the steps of the castle, to see them all pass before us; from whence they were to march to the various churches in the environs, to hear a sermon on the occasion, and then adjourn to the public houses, to spend the remainder of the day in merriment; and as all of them were strict Orangemen, and might, when in liquor, insult anyone not adorned like themselves, I was dressed out with orange lilies and ribbons, and having taken leave of this amiable family, entered in a post chaise at twelve o'clock, and set out on my return for Banbridge to meet the mail coach from Belfast to Dublin."

The return journey to Banbridge was eventful. He described passing through an un-named village and found the way



Section of a Taylor and Skinner's map 1777

blocked by "two corps of Orangemen. I exposed to their sight my orange ornaments, and received their salutations, which I returned, and arrived at Banbridge between three and four o'clock."

The "Orange man" made it safely across the Boyne, travelling through the night on a sixteen-hour coach journey to Dublin.

How deceptive appearances can be! Sharman had given every appearance of support to the Orange men; he welcomed them to his demesne and reviewed their parade in his Orange regalia and yet he was well-disposed to Catholics, and in the next generation his son would support Catholic Emancipation. Beranger had facilitated his safe passage home by what he wore. How easy it is to deceive others and even ourselves! But we may be sure it is impossible to deceive God.

The Lord doesn't see things the way you see them. People judge by outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart. 1 Samuel 16:7. (NLT)

Nothing in all creation is hidden from God's sight. Everything is uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of him to whom we must give account. Hebrews 4:13.

Jesus said: "You like to appear righteous in public, but God knows your hearts. What this world honours is detestable in the sight of God." Luke 16:15. (NLT)

THE MOLLYCODDLED BOY

Young William looked thoroughly bored as he sat in the arbour. He idly tossed pebbles into the shining water of the round pond and watched the fish that aimlessly circled in its depths. He felt as trapped as those fish and longed to be free to swim in the big world described in his father's books. The winter breaks in Dublin, during the Parliamentary session, at least helped distract from the confines of Moira but now he was back home and thoroughly bored. *"Now that my father is no longer in Parliament, will we be stuck here even more?"* he thought. He was startled out of his reverie by a servant telling him his father was waiting in the library. He longed to be away from home and attend school like most young noblemen's sons but he rose reluctantly and headed for lessons.

William was born on 3rd September, 1780 to Colonel William Sharman MP and his new wife. Some few years earlier, the Sharmans moved from Lisburn to rent the Castle and demesne from the elderly Lord Moira. Sharman had a daughter from a previous marriage; she was seven years older than William and he was ten years older than his new baby brother. So life was boring and lonely.

Stepping through the library door, he was first greeted by Nurse with a spoonful of foul tasting medicine. She reprimanded him for being outdoors for so long on an overcast day. *"You'll get your death of cold,"* she scolded. His mother had thought him a delicate child and tried to shield him from harm. *"At least now I have a baby brother,"* he thought, *"she might allow me some freedom to live as a real boy instead of making me a crock and a pet."* But just now a Latin lesson called.

William had pleaded again the previous day to be allowed to go to school, but his mother said he would die if he did and his father said his morals would be corrupted. He was not even allowed a tutor like other children in noble families because his father had an abhorrence of tutors. Instead he was forced to learn at home. His father had taught him to read and write and now he was teaching him arithmetic, Latin and some Greek. These studies were set to increase now that his father was no longer a Member of Parliament.

The years rolled on and William gradually took a deeper interest in the books his father owned and began to educate himself. He studied mathematics, mechanics, geography and astronomy. Politics must have dominated life in the Sharman home. Not only was William's father a Member of the Irish Parliament but he was also Lieutenant Colonel of the Union Regiment of Irish Volunteers and took a leading part in all the proceedings of their meetings and conventions. But later he had to disassociate himself from those planning rebellion and so he embodied the Moyrah Yeomen in 1797. At first young William was disinterested in political matters but as he grew in awareness of the issues being discussed, he began to pay attention and even to consider getting involved.

Suddenly, one day when William was only nineteen, his father was paralysed by a stroke. Though he slowly recovered, William was left to manage the family's financial affairs. Three years later his father tragically died and William inherited his father's estates.

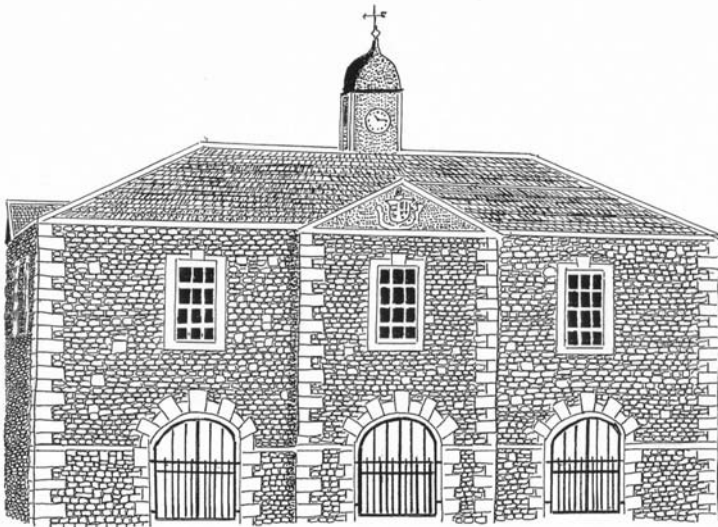
William now had the freedom to order his own life and within another couple of years he married. His wife was Mabel Crawford of Crawfordsburn and a few years later he added her surname to his own to become William Sharman-Crawford. He also became Captain of the Moira Corp of Yeomen. Shortly after his marriage the family lease on Moira Castle ended and

it was sold. William moved to Crawfordsburn to develop the estate there and elsewhere in County Down.

For many years Sharman-Crawford took no prominent part in politics but eventually he became Member of Parliament for Dundalk and later for Rochdale and was known as a rather radical politician, whose oratory was *“solid, unadorned and argumentative.”* He constantly tried to improve the conditions of the tenants on his large Ulster estates. He fully supported the Ulster custom of Tenant-Right and fought for it to be adopted by the whole of Ireland.

The boy who never went to school became the vice-president of the Royal Belfast Academical Institution! A monument to his memory near Crossgar reads:

“A keen supporter of Catholic Emancipation and later a federalist solution to the Irish Question, he is chiefly renowned for his work in support of the tenant farmers of Ireland and, in



The Bateson Market house built in 1810 showing the original tower.

particular securing the legal recognition of the Ulster custom of Tenant Right."

In his latter years William left the established church and became a Unitarian. It was quite a denial of the faith for one who had spent all his life, since boyhood days in St. John's, Moira, repeating the Apostles creed:

*"I believe in Jesus Christ his only Son our Lord,
Who was conceived by the Holy Ghost,
Born of the Virgin Mary,
Suffered under Pontius Pilate,
Was crucified, dead, and buried:
He descended into hell;
The third day he rose again from the dead;
He ascended into heaven,
And sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty;
From thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead."*

Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, ... made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, ... made in human likeness ... found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death - even death on a cross!

Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. Philippians 2:6-11.

WHEN FOOTPRINTS FADE

The afternoon wore on and my coffee cup was nearly empty. I picked up my unread magazine and enjoyed the last mouthful of the Cappuccino. I was ready to leave the table when I noticed the pavement again. The sun had come out from behind the clouds and warmed the street, and the footprints were rapidly fading. A soft mist rose into the air; then vanished forever. By the time I had paid at the counter and left the shop, all trace of footprints and mist had gone.

Is life as meaningless as footprints that get lost in the crowd and eventually fade in the mists of time? Do we make our mark in life and then vanish forever? Surely there is more to life than passing footprints?

Jesus Christ gives us the answer. He left footprints on the Sea of Galilee for he was truly God; He left footprints in the dust of the desert for he was truly man; He left bloody footprints on the rocky hillside outside the walls of Jerusalem for He had come to give His life as the Good Shepherd.

These are His words in John's Gospel chapter 10:

".... I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full." v10.

"I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep." v11.

"My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one will snatch them out of my hand." v27, 28.

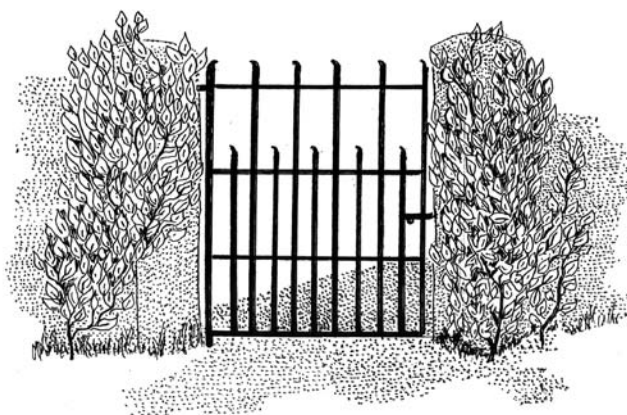
Those who hear the voice of Jesus and follow Him, will know the intimacy of His personal care and protection now and

forever; not only in this life while our footprints are fresh, but when they have vanished in the mists of time.

This new life of true joy and real peace and meaningful purposefulness begun on earth will continue with Him and be perfected in Him forever and ever and ever; long after footprints fade.

Jesus invites you to come now in all your need and enter into that life with Him. He says:

"I am the gate; whoever enters through me will be saved." v9.



Gate to Trummery old graveyard

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FRONT COVER IMAGES

Moira Castle by Gabriel Beranger

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Aerial view of Moira by Adam McFarland

BACK COVER IMAGES

Moira Castle 2nd drawing by Gabriel Beranger

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View of Moira street from an old postcard
supplied by McCartneys of Moira

<http://mccartneysofmoira.co.uk>

Aerial view of Moira Demesne by Adam McFarland

Moira in bloom by 2ireland.org

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MAPS

From Taylor and Skinner's Maps of the Roads of Ireland
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OTHER HISTORICAL MATERIAL

BY 2HEARTS MINISTRIES

MOIRA – A FINE PERSPECTIVE

'A History of Moira' by David McFarland

Available online:

<http://2hearts.co.uk/moira>

Please note these pages are not for publication. This history is a work in progress. While care has been taken to credit sources and to check facts, there is still much editorial work to be done. The pages may be printed for personal use only

VIDEO

'Under the trees - a history of Moira'

A 14-minute presentation on the history of Moira produced for "Reach Out" in 2008

Available online:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aXCjIwoZAn4>

<http://vimeo.com/9907464>

LOCAL HISTORY FOR KEY STAGE 1 & 2

'History for kids'

The Potty Professor makes learning local history fun

Available online:

http://moirabaptist.org/moirahistory_Primary.htm

The quiet, romantic hamlet of Moira has grown into a bustling commuter village. It struggles to some extent to retain its charming character and at the same time provide the infrastructure and resources for a 21st century community. The pace of progress has almost erased the memory of those who founded this village. Their footprints have been trampled underfoot by this generation and we have lost sight of the huge impact this village has had on life in Ireland and far beyond.

This little volume is an attempt to find some of Moira's hidden footprints by telling stories from the past; stories that inform but also stories that make us think.



Is life as meaningless as footprints that get trampled in the muddy paths of time?
Do we make our mark in life and then vanish forever?
Surely there is more to life than passing footprints?
A wise king once said, *"Ponder the path of your feet; then all your ways will be sure."*
Proverbs 4:26