

# **Bishopstown House**



# Bishopstown House

A Summer Residence  
for the Bishops of Cork and Ross  
during the 18th Century

By James P. McCarthy



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## Phantasm

In the Age of the Sand Panthers  
When seafroth milked the shore  
The Wisdom Wishers came to me  
Puffballed from the lacquer pearl of a  
Seashell door.

Take my hand  
As we step into this  
Coral sprung cavern  
Captured from beneath the sea.

On white water tussled cobbles we stand  
Amazed in maritime serenity  
Mesmerised by the infinity of these  
Treasure walls from the deep.  
This light-spinning cone of reflections  
Where a statue sleeps.

(James P. McCarthy, 2011a)

A poem inspired by the shell house at Bishopstown. Though not totally influenced by Bishopstown as it encapsulates elements from several other shell houses seen by the author over many years, this poem had its origins in the Bishopstown shell house. It sprang from attempts to imagine the shell house in its heyday, from trying to read the remaining impressions in the plasterwork and wanting to weave a little bit of fantasy into that imagining which, perhaps, may be what its grotto maker might have wished to do.

## **Dedication**

For my father John McCarthy of Benvoirlich Estate.

What a fortuitous day it was back in the early 1960s when you chose to buy a house in what was then a rural landscape at the end of the Number 8 bus route.

And to the memory of my uncle Edward (Ned) Cotter, Cork Quantity Surveyor, who taught me to believe in myself.

## Foreword

For the families, school-going children, and commuters who call the western suburbs of Cork city home, Bishopstown may not seem the richest of areas when it comes to heritage. Yet in the midst of mature housing estates, on the banks of the Curraheen River, in a community park known locally as Murphy's Farm, lies a little known treasure — the remains of the mansion house and demesne built by Church of Ireland Bishop Peter Browne and his successors in the early eighteenth century.

This is the third edition of a study of that house and the townland in which it is located, first published by J. P. McCarthy in 1976. This richly illustrated third edition is in three parts: part I is a historical account of the Bishopstown/Ballineaspig area; part II is a comprehensive guide to the demesne and house; and the third part collects miscellaneous notes on the area. While the importance of what survives may not be readily apparent, this book will raise awareness of the significance of the site, not least the water garden features which are of national heritage interest.

I congratulate J.P. McCarthy on his long-term commitment to the heritage of Bishopstown, and warmly acknowledge the painstaking new research which has made this edition possible. Cork City Libraries are delighted to publish *Bishopstown House: a summer residence for the Bishops of Cork and Ross during the eighteenth century*. I hope that the book spurs the local community to an awareness of a unique historical legacy that is there to be enjoyed.

Liam Ronayne  
Cork City Librarian

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

### Acknowledgements 3rd edition

For inviting me to prepare this third edition as part of their occasional publications series at Cork City Libraries, I wish to state my thanks and appreciation to Cork City Librarian Mr Liam Ronayne, and to Cork City Libraries staff: Mr Eamonn Kirwan, Senior Executive Librarian, Dr Stephen Leach, Assistant Librarian, and Mr David O'Brien, Executive Librarian at the Bishopstown Library, for their assistance in preparing the text. A special word of thanks to Dr John Mullins, Senior Executive Librarian, for his copy-editing, sourcing of illustrations, and unstinting help and advice.

My thanks to Mr John Fitzgerald, University Librarian and Vice-President for Information Services, UCC, for encouraging my interest in heritage collections over many years and a very warm and heartfelt thanks to my former colleague Mrs Mary Lombard of Special Collections, Boole Library, University College Cork, for material relating to the Cork Cuvierian and Archaeological Society along with Richard Caulfield's notes relating to the demolition of the Cathedral, as well as for tracing information concerning the early 19th-century sketch of the shell house and help with the Charles Vallancey map. Thanks to Mr T. Courtney for his 1976 photographs and to Mr Paul O'Flynn for his 1981 photographs: valuable records from times past.

Dr Joan Rockley of UCC, Mr Peter Murray, Director of the Crawford Art Gallery, Ms Anne Boddaert, Curator at the Crawford Art Gallery, Mr Richard Wood, Mr Gerald McSweeney, Mr Peter Murphy for assistance with my efforts to trace the artist who created the 19th-century shell house sketch, Mr Michael O'Sullivan, Creagh House, Doneraile, for permission to reproduce that sketch, and Mr Andrew Gough at the British Library for procuring a detail from Charles Vallancey's 18th-century manuscript map. Mr John Jeffery of the Whitegate Aghada Historical Society for his suggestion concerning the masonry work at the chapel. Ms Brigid Coady of Mealy's Rare Books Ltd for permission to reproduce the image of the shell house sketch from their 2004 catalogue.

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The Representative Church Body for permission to reproduce images of Bishop Peter Browne and of Bishop Isaac Mann, with thanks to Dr Raymond Refaussé, RCB

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As always, my thanks to my wife Rosemary for help and suggestions as well as endless patience!

My thanks to Professor Michael Olmert, University of Maryland, USA, for information regarding pineries (pine stoves) and privies.

And to Mr James Howley, of Howley Harrington Architects, for permission to quote from their report entitled 'Bishopstown Demesne, Bishopstown, Cork', prepared for Cork Corporation in 1999.

A copy of this book can be downloaded from the [www.corkcitylibraries.ie](http://www.corkcitylibraries.ie) website.

Access to the 2nd edition of this booklet is now available online at University College Cork's Institutional Repository CORA.

Lastly, I wish to acknowledge and pay tribute to the influence of the late Professor M.J. O'Kelly, Department of Archaeology, University College Cork, who encouraged my initial interest in Bishopstown Demesne when a student of his in the 1970s. I have a fond memory of him during a short visit there, instructing me to record the slate work at the stables and the limekiln as well as a discussion about that building which I now identify as a privy; though the conclusion at the time was that it was some form of grain drying kiln.

*James P. McCarthy,*  
*October 2011*

## **Acknowledgements 2nd edition**

Firstly, I wish to thank again all who were acknowledged in the first edition of this book which appeared in 1976. For material used in the course of preparing the second edition I am especially grateful to the librarians of University College, Cork — including Ms Valerie Fletcher for help in tracing the various Acts of Parliament affecting the demesne. The interest and advice of Mr C.J.F. MacCarthy were much appreciated. For permission to reproduce items in the custody of St Finbarre's Cathedral, Cork, and also portraits in the Bishop's Palace, Cork, I am grateful to the Most Rev. Dr Samuel Poyntz, Bishop of Cork, Cloyne and Ross, and to the Representative Church Body of Ireland. I am grateful to Rev. J.M. Carey, Dean of

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Finally, I must acknowledge my wife Rosemary who prepared the typescript and helped with the proofing.

*J.P. McCarthy*  
*April 1981.*

### **The editions of this book**

The title of this book has changed over the years as it evolved from a small pamphlet of 16 pages, which appeared in 1976 with the title *Bishopstown House*, to a more substantial second edition of 59 pages, with the title *Ballineaspigmore and Bishopstown House* published by the Bishopstown Community Association in 1981. Based on a considerable quantity of related scholarship which has appeared since that time, this new edition attempts to broaden the reader's understanding of how Bishopstown fits into the history of demesne landscapes in Ireland; as well as providing new interpretations of some of its features and their associations.

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## INTRODUCTION

Ballineaspig (Baile an Easpaig), anglicized Bishopstown, at one time a single townland but later subdivided, now consists of two townlands which are Ballineaspigmore and Ballineaspigbeg. Taken together, both townlands occupy an area identifiable in modern-day terms as lying approximately between the Glasheen Road Bridge on the east side and the University Technology Park, Curraheen Road, on the west. A townland is the smallest official administrative land division in Ireland. Historians and other scholars are, as yet, inconclusive about the origins of these divisions. They are certainly as old as the seventeenth century. For further research and discussion on this topic see Smyth (2006, p. 73 ff.).

The townland with which this book is concerned is known as Ballineaspigmore. It extends west from Cork University Hospital at Wilton and includes housing estates such as Firgrove, Melbourn, Uam-Var and Benvoirlich. The simplest translation of the townland name is *the large land division of the bishop*. To clarify a popular misconception, Bishopstown does not derive its name from the fact that in the early eighteenth century a bishop of Cork and Ross, Peter Browne, built his country residence there. The name is much older and can be found in sources dating back to the sixteenth century. I have referred to Bishop Browne's mansion house and demesne at Bishopstown as 'Bishopstown House' on the basis that it was the dominant residence in this townland at one time, its estate lands occupying a significant portion of that area of landscape from which the townland takes its name. The use of the words Bishopstown House can also be found on the early Ordnance Survey maps. In the following text the use of the word 'estate' is interchangeable with the word 'demesne', and the use of the words 'Bishopstown House' implies both the residence and its demesne. I have used the term House on the basis that it was sometimes the practice to refer to such demesnes and their residences in this way, e.g., Bishop Jemmett Browne's residence at Riverstown House.

A report prepared in 1999 by Howley Harrington Architects, Dublin, for Cork Corporation stresses the important heritage aspects of this early 18th-century demesne, the need for conservation work and for its preservation into the future as a local amenity both for Cork and for the Bishopstown community. It is to be noted that there is a national heritage perspective involved, particularly in terms of the remaining water garden features which still need archaeological investigation and recording. Similarly, the decorated cobbled courtyard needs to be uncovered and

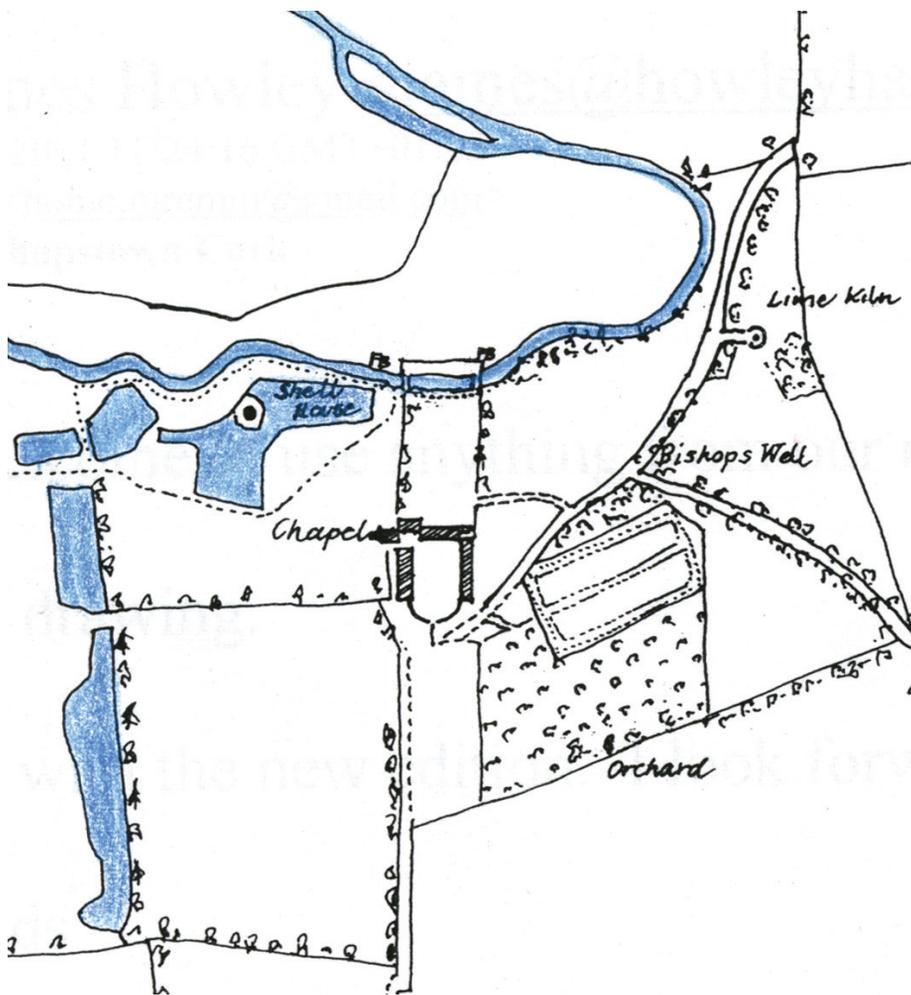
recorded, as this is now a rare example of such workmanship, and the shell house though much damaged by vandalism is still sufficiently intact to warrant restoration, as does the chapel. The very close association of Mrs Mary Delany with Bishop Robert Clayton (Laird, 2009), Browne's immediate successor, and the development of early shellwork decoration in Ireland is another matter which may prove the shell house at Bishopstown to be worthy of national heritage consideration. But what one notices most is a need for interpretive notices helping the visitor to identify and engage with the history of this landscape, with its tangible remains, the original design of Peter Browne, its tactile and visual presence still there, as one strolls about. Teagasc and the Heritage Council of Ireland recently co-produced a useful guidance report relating to the study of demesnes and estates in Co. Cork, entitled, *Guidance Notes for the Appraisal of Historic Gardens, Demesnes, Estates and their settings: An action of the County Cork Heritage Plan 2005-2010*.

It is widely accepted that community pride in, and understanding of, such heritage assets is the key to their preservation. Generally, it is community interest, initiative, and an appreciation of historic local amenities which give the impetus to sensitive preservation of designed landscapes of this nature. The Bishopstown community is fortunate to be the beneficiary of this remnant of 18th-century landscaping; a tangible piece of history on their doorstep, something to be protected and valued, something to be passed on to future generations with pride, something to enhance the daily lives of young and old. What survives at Bishopstown is a tribute to the imaginations of those early 18th-century landscapers, their clients, and those workers who created a poetry of landscape, one meant to be cherished and enjoyed as each season of the year unfolds; a place of peace and quiet, a place of mirth and beauty, a place for solitary walks beside the remnants of its river's serpentine flow, a place for reflection, a place for a community to share while talking about the passage of time, the ambience of the places of the past and the memories of lives now passed. If you have read the poetry of the English poet Alexander Pope, also a keen gardener and innovator of garden concepts, it is interesting to bear in mind that Mrs Delany's husband and his friend Jonathan Swift were visitors and guests at Pope's garden in Twickenham, and that Swift is said to have visited Browne at Bishopstown, and that a close relationship existed between Mrs Delany and the Claytons for whom it was a summer residence from 1735 to 1745.

Two reports by Cork City Council (2000 and 2007) indicated the need for a centerpoint for modern day Bishopstown. This aspiration finds expression in terms of a location directly associated with commercial activities. However, why should

this be? Bishopstown House/Demesne represents a place with strong literary and cultural associations. It was the centre and focal point of Ballineaspig for the best part of two hundred years. It is the centre of this locality's past and it is the remnants of an important piece of national heritage. Why place a statue of Peter Browne elsewhere? Why not place it at the present entrance to the estate giving it a more formal, welcoming character?

Surely, as a park, as a restored place of heritage, the cobbled courtyard, the chapel, the footbridges, the limekiln, the shell house and the ponds/water-garden features all add up to a location, which, once restored and explained by public notice boards, could make an attractive point of focus for the whole of the Bishopstown community, including that portion of the old medieval manor lands which we now know as Wilton. How might a 'village' concept work at Bishopstown House? Should it be a concept given to gardening, horticulture, leisure and sporting activities, boutique refreshments, park benches, exhibition gallery to promote local artists, a place for a weekly market, a place for annual heritage celebrations, a focus for community-delivered services and interaction? How might such a village be integrated, sensitively, as a platform to promote heritage awareness, preservation of the past and an appreciation of history? Awareness of what has already evolved at the Demesne since it was first used as a public park may partially have answered this last question already.



Bishopstown Demesne in 1841  
OSi permit no. MP 005311

## PART I

### HISTORICAL STATEMENT

#### The townland

Ballineaspigmore was at one time a portion of the medieval manor lands of St Finbarre's Cathedral. It is situated at the end of a large tract of land stretching west from the Cathedral. Some of the townland names within this area identify the fact that at one time they were church lands. In 1582, at the time of the death of Mathew Sheyne, the See of Cork had three ploughlands in 'Ballinaspick' (Bolster, 1972, p. 171). This is the earliest reference I can find to the townland. For the year 1641, Ballineaspigmore was described in the Books of Survey and Distribution as having 436 acres of profitable land. This is the earliest mention of the division of Ballineaspig into Ballineaspigmore and Ballineaspigbeg. The Civil Survey of 1654-6 (Simington, 1942, Vol. 4, p. 382) says of Ballineaspig and of some of the townlands surrounding it, 'the Great tythes of these lands belong to ye Church of Finbarry. The small tythes to ye Vicars'.

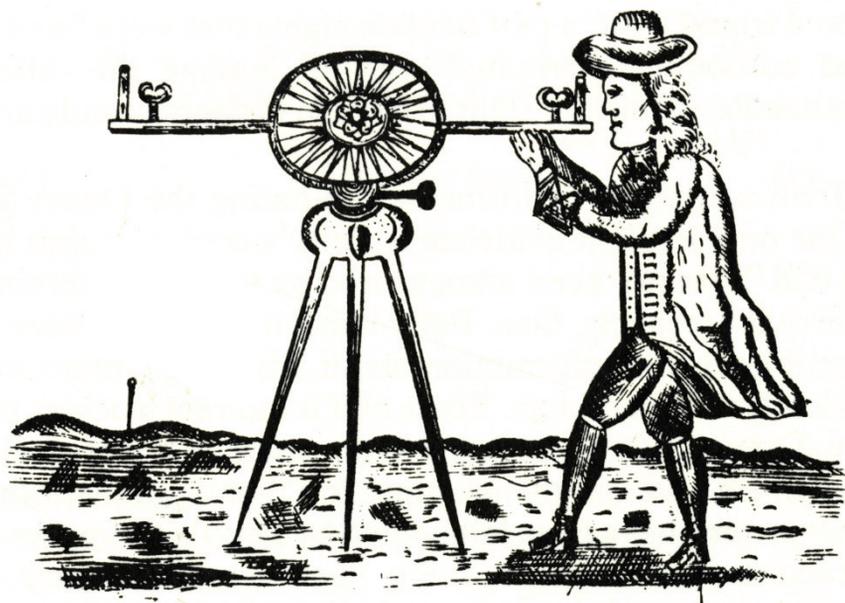
No subdivision of the townland is mentioned. A census of Ireland for 1659 (Pender, 1939, p.192) says of Ballineaspigmore that it had thirty-four occupants of which eight were English and twenty-six were Irish. The persons 'of quality' in the townland at this time were 'Daniell Gefferyes and Capt Thomas Harris gents'.

A document entitled Rent-Roll of the Diocese of Cork (Smith, 1893, Vol.1, p. 128), dated 1699, gives an insight into the activities of people occupying the townland at this time:

*Ballenaspugmore, two ploughlands, in lease to Mr Edward Syng, clerk, for 21 years, from Michelmas, 1692, payeth quarterly, £82.10s.0d. The tenant is obliged to fence and enclose the lands, and do suit and service at the manor court of St Finbarrys<sup>1</sup> and to grind at the mill. . . . During war the rent is to cease, and after the war the tenant may enjoy as long time as was unexpired when the war began.*

In its own right, a study of these medieval ecclesiastical manor lands and of their subsequent histories is an interesting topic for further historical and archaeological investigation. It should be interesting to investigate the extent to which the apportionment of the lands for rent — to provide income for clergy — and the sale

of portions of the manor lands to local merchants might have arisen from practices going back to the monastery of St Finbarre's. Reflecting such practices, Ballineaspig might have had portion of the manor lands specifically set aside to provide income for the bishop. Also, one wonders if the mill mentioned above was that at Ardarostig townland to the south of Ballineaspigmore, approached by what was known as Poll's Lane. Alternatively the mill might have been on the northern side at Inchigaggin, as the Cork Archaeological Survey recorded a vague folk memory of a mill at Inchigaggin — a townland which was designated in the Down Survey as bishop's land, along with Ballineaspigmore.



Dennis Carty, Cork land surveyor at work - from a land map of circa 1728. It is likely that Carty was a member of the family of Cork cartographer John Carty of Cockpit Lane, South Main Street, Cork, as early land surveying was often a family business.

By 1720 the lands of Ballineaspig were out of lease and the initial planning for the building of Bishopstown Demesne had begun. Bishop Browne reserved 118 acres for the demesne; an acre being defined originally as the amount of land a yoke of oxen could plough in one day.

## *Designing the landscape*

Who designed the House and its Demesne landscape? This question remains an open one. It is one which would repay investigation by those interested in landscape architecture in Ireland and in Britain as evidenced by recent scholarship such as Mark Laird's *The Flowering of the Landscape Garden: English Pleasure Grounds 1720-1800*. Bishopstown Demesne had its setting and much of its subsequent ecclesiastical history within this timeframe. Given the influences spreading from Britain to Ireland as the Age of the Great House — and that of those of the middle size (Craig, 2006) — began to experience a *floruit* in the early to mid-18th century, such studies provide a context for the activities at Bishopstown in the absence of more direct information.

One can imagine land surveyors (Andrews, 1985), landscape architects, or a builder being asked to select a suitable site for a country residence near the western boundary of the medieval manor lands of the Cathedral, discussion of the natural features of the landscape there such as the ridge on which Uam-Var estate is now built providing a viewing point westwards to the hills of Muskerry, the slope of the land down to the rivers, the wetland nature of the fields being of little use for agriculture and rental purposes, the gradients of slopes down to the river basin for the creation of the avenue, how to gradually reveal the residence while allowing the visitor to see its landscape setting when travelling along the avenue, discussion of the style and fashion for the residence to be built, the attributes befitting the lifestyle of a bishop and scholar, the fashionable and unique features the demesne was to have, the timeframe for the creation of the demesne (early 1720s) prior to the building of the residence (circa 1726) and its immediate surrounds, the choice of woodland types, the design of the water gardens and ponds, the walkways and vistas, the choice of suitable quarries for stone, the sourcing of other materials for construction and ornamentation, the acquisition of plants for the gardens; years of masons, carpenters, plasterers, gardeners labouring to change a piece of open farmland, bounded on the west and on the north by rivers, into a landscape of beauty, the remnants of which activity survive today nearly 300 years later.

The client for whom all this activity was carried out was Dr Peter Browne, a bishop who came to Cork at a time of rebuilding and reimagining of the city's landscape as the 18th century opened a new phase in the city's history after a very turbulent and siege-ridden 17th century (McCarthy, 2011). It was a place of cannons cooling.

### *Dr Peter Browne needs a summer residence*

In the year 1710 Dr Peter Browne, former Provost of Trinity College Dublin, became Bishop of the United Dioceses of Cork and Ross. Among other activities he devoted some of his energies to the matter of repairing and rebuilding churches in Cork city. The most notable surviving example is St Anne's Shandon.

At Ballineaspigmore Peter Browne reserved 118 acres of land for the purpose of building 'a good, substantial and convenient dwelling house and a chapel thereunto adjoining together with suitable offices'<sup>2</sup>. He also made several 'valuable improvements' there. The nature of these 'improvements', along with the activities of subsequent occupants, is explored in Part II of this book. The total cost, which was at his own expense, was over £2,000. He intended that Bishopstown should be "a fit and convenient residence for himself and his successors, the bishops of Cork and Ross".<sup>3</sup> The dwelling and demesne landscaping were probably finished about 1726 as recorded in the cobblestone courtyard, and the chapel was consecrated in 1730.



Bishop Peter Browne  
© Representative Church Body

Though Browne reserved the land for Bishopstown in 1720 it was not lawful to do so in practice until 1721. In this year an Act of Parliament<sup>4</sup> was passed which enabled a bishop to set apart any part of his lands which was out of lease, ‘as shall be convenient for demesne or mensal lands to him and his successors for ever’.

Little is known of Browne’s leisurely activities at Bishopstown. In 1861 Dr Richard Caulfield (Caulfield, 1861, p. 104) made the suggestion that one of Browne’s works, *The Procedure, Extent and Limits of Human Understanding*, was written in the shell house at Bishopstown. This building is a small ‘retreat’ (or study) situated to the north-west of the chapel. The essay was published in 1728. It is possible also that parts of a manuscript book of devotions<sup>5</sup>, which is now preserved at St Finbarre’s Cathedral, were written by Browne while at Bishopstown. Among other entries it contains some of his meditations. Compared with his successor Dr Clayton, Browne lived very simply and visitors said that he ‘trembled at a bumper’ and ‘rarely toasted’ (Malins, 1976, p. 127).

### ***Pinpointing the transition from Browne’s to Clayton’s residency: Clayton the Arbiter Elegantiarum***

The history of the shell house at Bishopstown may reflect a difference in styles of living between Peter Browne and his immediate successor Dr Robert Clayton. If, for example, the remaining evidence of shellwork inside the fireplace can be taken to represent a stage in the structure’s history when its use as an ‘office’ or quiet place for thoughtful, solitary retreat — a place for a celibate scholar to read, write, and meditate — was no longer of importance, then its conversion to a shell house may have taken place during the residency of Bishop Clayton and his wife Katherine. Writing about the concept of the ‘office’, Olmert (2009) discusses such ‘outbuildings’ in the context of 18th-century demesnes in colonial North America influenced doubtless by contemporary fashions in Europe.

One is curious about whether or not the porch and crenellations of the shell house are part of the original design or else later additions to enhance its appearance as a shell house rather than as a study; by giving it features which emphasized its repurposing as a garden folly. If so, then are the remaining shell impressions in the plasterwork the last tangible evidence of a distinction between Bishop Browne’s residency and that of Bishop Clayton at Bishopstown? Malins (1976, p. 127) gives some interesting insights in this regard: ‘through Mrs Delany we have details of Dr Clayton’s landscaping at

Killala in the five years he was bishop there' (1730-35). By the time he went to Cork and Ross as bishop, after Killala, he had a reputation as *arbiter elegantiarum*. According to Lord Orrery: "he ate, drank and slept in taste, for after travelling beyond the Alps [France and Italy], has brought home with him, to the amazement of our mercantile Fraternity, the Arts and Sciences that are the Ornament of Italy and the Admiration of the European World" (Malins, 1976). Clayton was a member of many learned societies and the author of several publications. He was a graduate of Trinity College Dublin. He was described as 'a munificent, learned and high spirited man'. One can only imagine how some of his experiences and tastes might have been reflected through improvements at Ballineaspig.



Double Portrait of Bishop Robert Clayton (1695-1758) and his wife Katherine (née Donnellan) (d.1766), by James Latham, c.1740, oil on canvas, National Gallery of Ireland Collection, Photo © National Gallery of Ireland

### *Enter the possibility of Mrs Delany: a digression in taste*

Mrs Mary Delany, wife of Rev. Dr Patrick Delany, was a friend of Mrs Clayton. The introduction of garden shellwork and shell houses to Ireland has been attributed to Mrs Delany. Her greatest claim to fame today is as an 18th-century diarist. In Dublin social circles, new ideas about a more free style of gardening than had previously been in fashion infused the imaginations of persons like Dean Jonathan Swift and Dr Patrick Delany, ideas then flourishing in England, such as the gardening concepts of the poet Alexander Pope at Twickenham whom they visited. Peter Browne, a Dubliner and formerly Provost of Trinity College Dublin before his arrival as Bishop of Cork in 1710, was part of those social circles. It is said that Swift visited Browne at Bishopstown, perhaps to see the nature of his landscape gardening and improvements there. Close friendships between the Delanys, Swift, and the Claytons should be borne in mind when considering decorative gardening at Bishopstown.

In 1731, after the death of her first husband, Mary Granville, then Mary Pendarves, went to Dublin to stay with her friend Mrs Katherine Clayton, wife of the then Bishop of Killala, Co. Mayo. While in Dublin she visited a garden at a place called Delville whose owner Dr Patrick Delany she would subsequently marry. In 1732 she began to travel outside Dublin and during a visit to Bishop Clayton, at the Bishop's Palace at Killala, it is claimed that she started her lifelong interest in shellwork and shell grottoes. Malins (1976, p. 41) gives the following account:

*Every morning at seven o'clock she would make her way to a natural grotto in the grounds where she would adorn the walls and roof with shells in elaborate and intricate patterns.... The Bishop, like many other landscapers, had a collection of shells, some from local beaches, others from the Mediterranean and the tropics.*

It is noteworthy that three years later Bishop Robert Clayton became Bishop of Cork and Ross, a position which was to last for a subsequent ten years. It is tempting to wonder if the shellwork at Bishopstown might have been a continuation of ideas begun at Killala either by Mary herself or by Mrs Katherine Clayton. Was it perhaps a case of saying that Peter Browne's simple, picturesque, study/retreat situated on a raised platform at the end of the Bishop's walk — with interior fireplace, wall niche (bookcase perhaps), window facing the slow swagger of the river, doorway facing to a paddock with stocked fishponds nearby or perhaps already with a small L-shaped 'lake' immediately in front — was ideal for repurposing as a folly, particularly if there

was no need in the lifestyle of Dr Clayton for it to serve its original purpose any longer? Further comment relevant to this interpretation can be found in Howley (1999, p. 15).

***1735: Browne dies and gradually things get a bit litigious***

But to return to Peter Browne, it was on 25 August 1735 that Browne died.<sup>6</sup> A few months previous to this he laid the foundation stone for a new cathedral in Cork city to replace the medieval building at that site.<sup>7</sup> This new 18th-century building was eventually taken down circa 1865 when the construction of the present St Finbarre's Cathedral began. In 1735 Browne's body was removed to Bishopstown for burial and was placed in the vault beneath the chapel. There are no details of his funeral available. His will, dated 22 July 1735 (Eustace, 1954-56, Vol.1, p. 223), was proved on 7 October of that year. He bequeathed the house and other buildings to his successors free of charge in the hope that 'it should always be a convenient country residence' for them. Furthermore, the will stated that for this reason he 'built a chapel for their perpetual use in good hopes that none of his successors would ever frustrate such his design'. According to an Act of Parliament concerning Bishopstown, passed in 1792<sup>8</sup>, Browne's successors between the years 1735 and 1772 'occupied and enjoyed' Bishopstown as a 'mensal house and demesne'. But two entries in the Register of Cashel (Brady, 1864, Vol. 3, p. 79) indicate that leasing arrangements were made during this time and that Browne's wishes may not have been fully complied with. The entries are as follows:

*1745 Nov. 1. Upon this day Robert, Bishop of Clogher, [Bp. Cork 1735-45] wrote unto the Archbishop of Cashel.*

*My Lord,*

*Enclosed herewith is the lease of Ballineaspeg, which the owner, Mr William Lindsay, resigns unto your Grace's hands, in trust for the use of the See, and entirely refers it to your Grace's consideration how that may most effectually be done. The Bishop of Cork proposed giving a bond of £1,000 not to get it for longer than during his own Incumbency, which is humbly submitted to your Grace . . .*

### ***Dr Jemmett Browne, a relative of Peter, enters the story***

Jemmett Browne was the son of Edward Browne, of Riverstown, Cork, who was Mayor of Cork in 1714. Jemmett was ordained by his relative Bishop Peter Browne.

*1745 Dec. 9. Dr Jemmett Browne, Bishop of Cork and Ross (1745-1772), passed his bond of this date to Arthur, Archbishop of Cashel, for £1,000, conditioned that if he should, during the time he should be Bishop of Cork, continue to keep in his own hands or otherwise to possess and enjoy the dwelling-house and lands of Ballineaspeg as the same had been enjoyed by the last two Bishops of Cork, without said present Bishop making any lease of same other than for any time during his continuing Bishop of Cork, said Bond to be void, or otherwise to remain in full force.*

It is said that Bishop Jemmett Browne preferred to use the family home at Riverstown House, Glanmire, as his country residence (rebuilt 1745); a building still standing today and a place of considerable beauty including its plaster stucco work by the Swiss Lafranchini brothers (deBreffny, 1988, pp. 212-221) undertaken sometime before 1750.

It is tempting to consider what the house at Bishopstown may have looked like both internally and externally. It was Peter Browne's intention that Bishopstown should be used only as a country residence for his successors. Therefore any leasing of the estate, for whatever purpose, was apparently contrary to the wishes expressed in Browne's will. Though the activities of Bishop Robert Clayton and of Bishop Jemmett Browne set a precedent for leasing the estate, or perhaps part of its lands, it was not until after the death of Bishop Isaac Mann in 1788 that anyone objected publicly to such leasing.

### ***Bishop Isaac Mann becomes a resident but ill health plays a part***

In 1772 Jemmett Browne was moved to the Diocese of Elphin and Dr Isaac Mann succeeded him. In a biographical sketch of Dr Mann written about 1840 (Mant, 1840, Vol. 2, p. 650-51) the following statement relates to his occupation of Bishopstown Demesne:



Bishop Isaac Mann

© Representative Church Body

*he provided for the personal superintendence of his successors by entirely rebuilding the palace at Cork, his own residence being, in the meantime, kept at the country seat of Ballineaspeg which he made the abode of innocent cheerfulness and decent but not expensive hospitality.*

By 1786 the new Bishop's Palace was completed and a commission (Brady, 1864, Vol.3, p.80) which went to see it reported that Mann was in Bath, England, 'for the recovery of his health', i.e., taking the waters. This is, perhaps, the reason why Mann leased the estate on 11 October 1785 to Nicholas Smyth.<sup>9</sup> The term of the lease was 21 years at a rent of £75 per annum and the chapel was not included. The rent was well below the average for a property of this kind at that time and Smyth was to hold the land 'in trust for the said Isaac . . . his executors, administrators and assigns'.

On 10 December 1788 Mann died at Bath and his remains were taken to Bristol. They were shipped from there to Cork where they were placed for a short time in the Cathedral. On 31 December they were taken to Bishopstown and deposited in the chapel vault beside the coffin of Peter Browne. In the *Dublin Chronicle* of 8 Jan. 1789,<sup>10</sup> a letter was published with details of this event:

*The funeral was superb; all the clergy in the city attended, with scarfs etc. and there was upwards of fifty carriages.*

Further details of the funeral come from the pen of Richard Caulfield (1861, p. 105) who wrote:

*I may add the testimony of a respectable old man who died some years ago. He told me he had a distinct recollection of Bishop Mann's funeral and that as it passed from the Palace by the Glasheen Road (where he resided) to Bishopstown, the choir of the cathedral which preceded the coffin were chanting dirges, followed by the prebendaries, both in surplices; and that the parochial clergy followed the coffin in academic costume with a numerous retinue of citizens.*

In the chapel at Bishopstown an inscribed monument to Bishop Mann was erected. Why ask for burial at Ballineaspig? Perhaps he had come to enjoy its quiet rural setting in those years when it was his main residence while the Palace at Cork was being rebuilt. Mann<sup>11</sup> was 77 years of age when he died. If Mann had lived until 1806, when the estate was again out of lease, it is probable that difficulties which eventually resulted from his leasing of the estate would not have occurred. It is likely, as was the case with Jemmett Browne, that he had the option of leasing for a term within his period as Bishop of Cork. In the short time between 1789 and 1790 two bishops were to succeed Dr Mann.

### ***Leasings, court battles, Acts of Parliament, and finally dereliction***

Those two bishops were Euseby Cleaver and William Foster. Neither bishop was prepared to 'ratify or confirm' the lease and they would not accept any rent. This was because both were entitled to the use of the estate for their own purposes but, as the term of the lease lasted until 1806, they were prevented from doing so. Bishop



Bishop's Palace, 2011

Foster was advised that the lease was not good and valid in law because of the conditions in Peter Browne's will. He therefore filed a high court bill against Charles Smyth, the administrator and son of Nicholas Smyth who was now deceased, for 'the discovery of evidence in support of title to be presented on the trial of the issue of ejectment'.<sup>12</sup> Foster was translated to the See of Kilmore before the matter could be tried in court. It thereby became the business of his successor William Bennet to continue with the trial. Bennet filed a bill against Charles Smyth and the executors of Dr Mann. Before the matter could be brought to trial however an agreement was reached between Bennet, Smyth, and Mann's executors for the purchase of the interest in the house, offices, and land. In pursuance of the agreement an indenture was drawn up dated 19 September 1791 between Mann's executors, i.e. Archdeacon Austin and Samuel Mann of the one part, and William Bennet of the other part.

It stated:

*in consideration of £500 sufficiently secured to the executors and also in consideration that Bennet had by this indenture indemnified and discharged the executors from the payment of all rent arrears then due out of the premises, the executors with the consent and approbation of Charles Smyth sold to Wm. Bennet the house, offices, and lands with all their interests in same.*

Therefore, the old lease was at an end.

Because of the problems caused by the 1785 leasing it was Bishop Bennet's wish that the same should not occur again and that the house, offices, and land 'should for ever remain as a mensal house, demesne and mensal lands for himself and his successors according to the design and intention of Peter Browne'. In order to ensure that this would happen, a statute titled the 32 *George III* was passed in the Irish Parliament in 1792. By that Act Bishopstown became solely 'a mansion-house for the country residence of the bishops of Cork' and it became illegal to lease the estate 'or dispose of it to any other use'.

Finally, all that remained to be done was the sorting out of the total costs accruing since Mann's death. Cleaver received £37.10s.0d., which was equal to the rent during his term of office. Foster received £75 for rent in arrears plus any money invested by him in bringing the case to court and in getting the Act passed. The purchase of the leasehold interest cost £500. Bennet was responsible for all these costs along with what it cost him to bring the matter to court and in getting the Act passed. It was therefore agreed that Bennet should be reimbursed. This was done by means of passing the debt to his successors who would pay by means of an installment system. Bennet's immediate successor was to reimburse Bennet with the full sum. Others were then to pay their predecessors reducing fractions of the original sum until a stage was reached where the cost to Bennet's fourth successor was minimal. Within three months after the passing of the Act Bennet had to prove before the Archbishop of Cashel the full sum of money expended for defeating the lease. When certified by the Archbishop copies were to be placed in the registries in Cork and in Cashel. In an entry for 24 May 1792 the Cashel Register gives the total sum as £777.17s.10d. (Brady, 1864, Vol.3, p. 82).

According to Malins (1976, p. 126-127), referring to Irish bishops, 'many of the bishops built palaces and improved their grounds, being in an enviable financial position for, by a Statute of 10 William III, they could legally charge their successors, after archiepiscopal permission, two-thirds of any sum spent on building or improving'. Also, under a statute of 12 George I for 1726, a reimbursement of three-quarters could be made against the next successor. Speaking of ecclesiastical gardening, Malins refers to a comment regarding Lord Primate Boyle's baroque garden at Blessington, Co. Wicklow which described it as an 'exceptional piece of ecclesiastical gardening'. It was, according to the writer Samuel Molyneux in 1709, 'a very handsome noble garden wilderness, green house, fishponds, a noble large park and Paddocks'. Malins states that very soon after this time 'the more free gardening styles of Dean Swift and Rev. Dr Patrick Delany [at Delville, Glasnevin, Co. Dublin] were copied by churchmen, and often on a grand scale'.

By 1792 the mansion house at Bishopstown was 'in a state of decay and totally unfit for the residence of the bishop'. It is strange that Bennet is not known to have made any repairs to the estate. The explanation for this is possibly that in 1794 he moved to the Cloyne Diocese. His successor did not make any repairs to the estate either, and Bishop Stopford did petition the Archbishop of Cashel to grant a commission of dilapidation in connection with Bishopstown. This was granted, and the return of the commission for 10 Nov. 1794 was for £75.9s.4½d. as the amount of dilapidation.

Stopford was succeeded by John George Beresford (1805-7) and by Thomas St Lawrence (1807-31). Presumably they did not occupy or repair the house and adjoining buildings. When St Lawrence became bishop the property was described as being 'in a state of ruin'. His successor was Samuel Kyle who became bishop in March 1831.

On 15 September 1831 a report in the *Cork Constitution* newspaper stated that an Act of Parliament<sup>13</sup>, in order to repeal the earlier Act dealing with Bishopstown, had been passed in the House of Lords and 'had been sent down to the Commons'. This enabled the Bishop to sell the estate under certain restrictions. Kyle's reasons for getting a repeal of the 1792 Act were:

- 1) There was now a good and substantial See house, with eleven acres, for the Bishop nearer to the city (the present Bishop's Palace). Bishopstown was located three miles from the city.
- 2) Since the 1792 Act the lands of Bishopstown House, being still 118 acres, had 'not been demised on leases but had been held either by the said Bishops as mensal lands or by Tenants at Will and the same had become greatly impoverished and deteriorated'.
- 3) Bishop Thomas St Lawrence was now dead and his executor, Rev. Edward St Lawrence, was entitled to receive the last installment as specified in the 1792 Act for the repayment of costs incurred in getting that Act passed. This amounted to a sum of £347.11s.11½d.
- 4) A commission found that 'dilapidations to the amount of £1,101.18s.2d. had been permitted on Ballinaspic'. The Act of 1831 enabled Kyle and his successors to lease the 'whole or any part of the said lands . . . for any term not exceeding 21 years'.

### *Selling off to the farmer: Becoming 'Murphy's Farm'*

In the early part of the nineteenth century, the Ecclesiastical Commissioners, a government body, was established. Their function was to investigate certain matters connected with the wealth of the Church of Ireland. In this regard they were responsible for the reorganization and sale of church lands. An entry in Richard Griffith's *Primary Valuation of Ireland* for 1851-2 shows that at this time Bishopstown House was occupied by John Lewis who had a lease of 21 years from the Ecclesiastical Commissioners. By 1876 Lewis was still in residence, as he is recorded in a government report on landowners in Ireland for this date. It was not until the 1870s that the Ecclesiastical Commissioners were finally in a position to dispose of certain categories of church land.

John Magner was a resident in the townland since before Griffith's *Valuation*. In 1878 Magner purchased Bishopstown Demesne from the Ecclesiastical Commissioners. By this time the property was a little over 122 acres in extent. The immediately previous occupant was James William Atkin, gentleman. The chapel which is described as 'now or formerly belonging to the Bishop of Cork', was not included in the sale. Also the patch of ground at the north side of the footbridges was excluded. It is probable that the reason behind this was because the ground was then in use as a graveyard. The chapel and patch of ground were in the possession of John Lewis through a

lease from the Ecclesiastical Commissioners dated 9 December 1868. In purchasing Bishopstown House, Magner took the place of the Commissioners in the agreement and was subject to the conditions of the lease which included rights of way.

A map of the estate accompanying Magner's deed shows some interesting details of the property for c. 1878. Briefly, these are:

- 1) A lane leading from the double gateway at the north side of the limekiln and connecting with Rossa Avenue.
- 2) A limestone quarry, in a field immediately to the north-east of the bridge on the Curraheen Road over the Twopot River.
- 3) The bends in the river have not yet been straightened .
- 4) Only one quarry is shown in the quarries field. This is the centre one of the three.

Magner gave the property to his daughter Mary who was married to Edward Neville. When she died it was left to her husband. After his death it passed to the family of Mr T. Neville, M.D. of Clonakilty. His record of memories of the estate as it was in the years 1916 to 1933 provided a valuable piece of folk history when writing.<sup>14</sup> From the Neville family the estate was bought by a Mr Forest who, shortly afterwards, sold it to the Murphy family. In the early 1970s the Murphys sold the property to Cork Corporation.

### ***19th-century farming and the deterioration of 18th-century concepts***

To return to the early 19th century, it is evident from contemporary reports that changes were taking place reflecting an emphasis on agriculture in the use of the property. The 'pleasure-grounds' features were allowed to decay, the mansion house was demolished, and the chapel was adapted to the needs of the farmer. This began to happen within a few months of the passing of the 1831 Act, judging by an account (Smith, 1893, Vol.1, p. 360) that is probably from the pen of Thomas Crofton Croker, the Cork antiquary:

*Ballinaspig is now gone to decay. The house is converted into a barn, the offices into a farmhouse, and the chapel which was attached to the house is roofless; the roof of the chapel fell in about ten or eleven years since.*

As this reference, and its associated date, is taken from the Caulfield and Croker notes added to the 1893 edition of Charles Smith's history of Cork, Thomas Crofton Croker had to be the author of this particular note as Caulfield would have been no more than eight years of age in 1831.

In 1848 the marble monument to Bishop Mann was removed to St Finbarre's Cathedral. When Richard Caulfield<sup>15</sup> visited Bishopstown House in 1861 the chapel was thatched with straw, and, of the estate in general, he remarked:

*The place was near being demolished some years ago when in the hands of an ignorant and unprincipled tenant.*

Caulfield's visit in 1861 was prompted by a rumour set about by a farm labourer that the chapel vault had been opened and that the bishops' coffins had been interfered with. This was found to be untrue. However it probably did lead to Caulfield obtaining permission in 1865<sup>16</sup> for the removal of the coffins to St Finbarre's Cathedral where they now rest. In doing this, the last tangible connection between St Finbarre's Cathedral and Bishopstown House was removed. From 1865 onwards the history of Bishopstown Demesne is solely one of farming.

Having followed the story of the demesne through the 18th and 19th centuries, this story would not be in context without knowing a little about what else was happening in the townland during these times. For the eighteenth century, the only information I have been able to find is on a manuscript map<sup>17</sup> now preserved in St Finbarre's Cathedral. It is dated 25 March 1779 and it is titled 'South Division of part of Ballineaspaignmore belonging to Robert Waller Esquire'. The map shows the boundaries of the Bishopstown House estate without details of the estate itself and it also shows field systems on the land occupied today by Benvoirlich and other housing estates to the south-east.

If it is reasonable to presume that the way of life for the farm labourer changed little between 1779 and the early nineteenth century, then a little knowledge of his lifestyle may be gleaned from the writing of the Rev. Horatio Townsend. He wrote a *Statistical survey of the County of Cork* which was first published by the Dublin Society in 1810. Townsend said that a typical Cork farm labourer earned on average about six pence per day, and had a cabin plus an acre of ground from the farmer. His wife procured extra money by knitting and by either dressing or spinning flax. In a few places wives engaged in occasional labour in the fields. Most labourers' houses were

single-storeyed and partitioned into two rooms with an open hearth at one end. A peculiarity of the location of labourers' houses was that, instead of a central location convenient to the several parts of the grounds, they were commonly placed on or very near the boundaries of the farm (Townsend, 1810, Vol.1, pp. 209-212). This may be a continuation of a tradition, noted by Bell (2009), of placing dwellings for domestic servants and farm workers at the peripheries of landed estates during the 18th century, when thinking was that a demesne house and parklands should not display evidence of the administrative utilities associated with the daily and seasonal maintenance of the estate. The first-edition six-inch Ordnance Survey map showing Bishopstown House, as surveyed in the period 1841-2, has two buildings situated at the boundaries of the estate. One of these, that on the eastern boundary, was the gate lodge in Cáit Sé's Lane (now Rossa Avenue). The other was beside the northern boundary of the estate which lay immediately to the south of the main campus of today's Cork Institute of Technology (CIT). On the opposite side of Cáit Sé's Lane were two other buildings which were probably cottages. In *Griffith's Valuation* of 1851-2 it can be seen that Mr Lewis who occupied the estate at this time was renting two houses. One of his tenants was Thomas Walsh and the other was Michael Healy. By this time Lewis had increased his total land holding in the townland to 123 acres. Excluding the gate lodge, it is possible that Lewis's farm labourers may have lived in the other three buildings adjacent to Cáit Sé's lane. Therefore Townsend's general observation is possibly true for Bishopstown House.

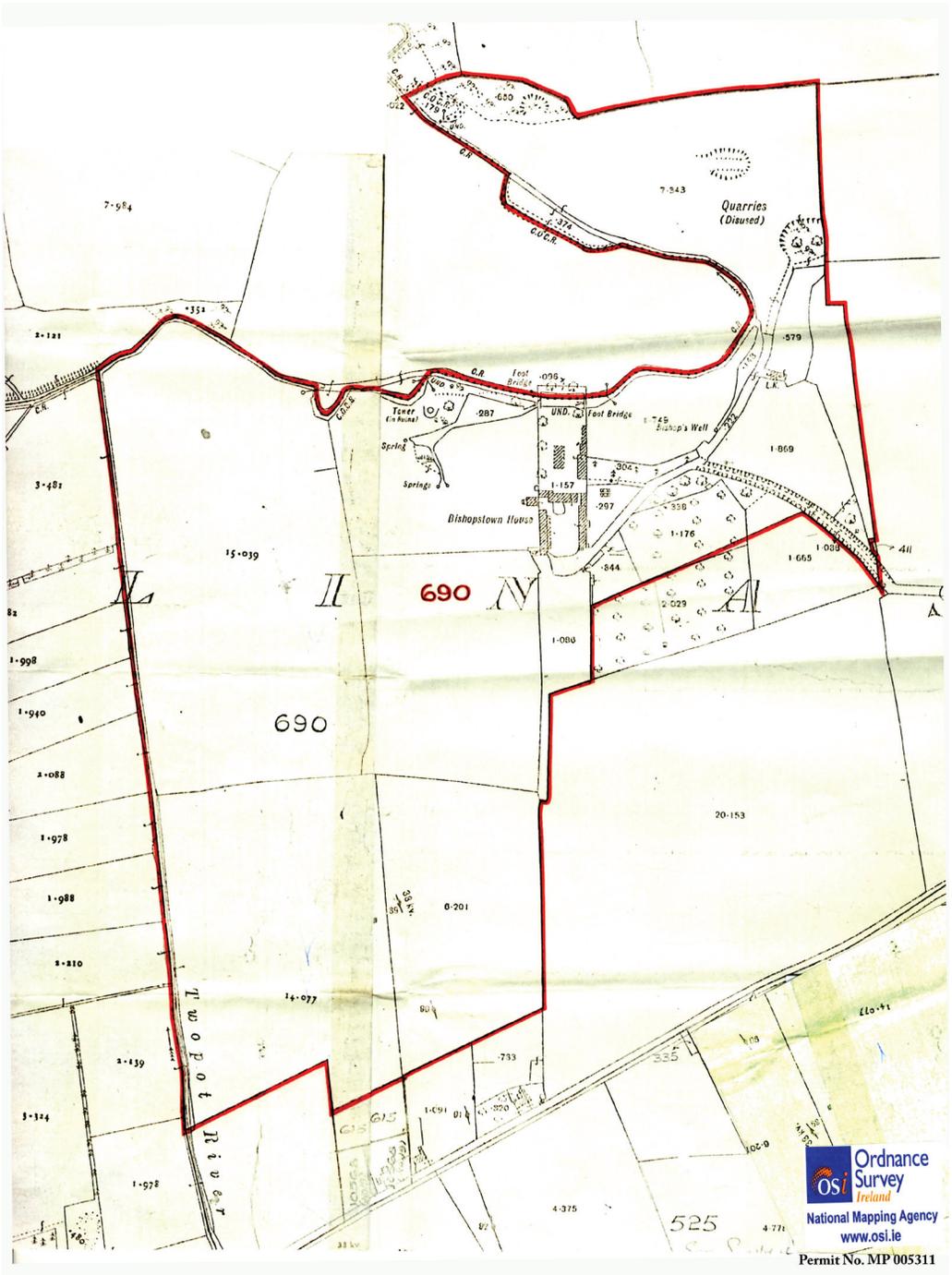
In the pre-famine period the surnames of people residing in the townland of Ballineaspigmore included the names Leslie, Egan, Ahern, Callaghan, Walsh, and Johnson.<sup>18</sup> In the early post-famine years<sup>19</sup> the surnames of property lessors were Wilmot, Horrigan, Mahoney, Purcell, Leslie, Regan, and Deasy. Most of these people probably resided in the townland and they would mostly have been farmers. People occupying property leased from them had the surnames Buckley, Sullivan, Walsh, Healy, English, Cary, Gordon, Sheehan, Caughlan, Connoly, Cronin, Keefe, Lynch, Cavanagh, Kenealy, Leahy, Finnegan, Cunningham, Barrett, Egan, Collins, Kelleher, Murphy, Looney, Flynn, Hogan, Goggins, Fahy, and Crowley. At least some of these persons, if not all, would have worked for the local farmers.

For the years 1851 to 1891, census returns<sup>20</sup> shows a considerable decrease in the population of the townland during this time. In 1851 the population was 318 persons. By 1891 this had, gradually, become 168 of whom 95 were males. Some of the possible explanations for this are emigration or a move to the city. The figures for the number of houses in the townland during this period also reflect this decrease.

Out of a total of 54 houses in 1851, there were only 34 surviving by 1891 and five of these were uninhabited.

### *Enter the 20th Century*

As well as their permanent labourers, farmers during the nineteenth and early twentieth century were also dependent on casual labour. In the years prior to 1923 Bishopstown House employed such a labour force. A bedroom which could accommodate up to four men was provided over the barn. By 1923 this labour force no longer existed. Dr Neville's recollections of the estate in the years 1916 to 1933 tell of another kind of seasonal help on the farm. Each year young women from Glasheen and from the area around St Finbarre's Cathedral came to pick fruit in the orchard and they also bound the corn after it was cut.



Bishopstown Demesne from 25-inch Ordnance Survey map, 1898-1900

## References and Notes for Part 1

1. *The Manor Court of St Finn Barr*, a government committee set up to investigate this archaic legal system and to consider its abolition, produced its report in 1837. Of the manor court of St Finbarre it states that its jurisdiction comprised the parishes of St Finbarre and St Nicholas as well as a large portion of Co. Cork including part of the town of Bandon. The types of cases tried were those of debt and trespass. It enforced its laws 'by summons in the first instance and execution against the goods of the party'. There was no prison, though there was 'an exclusive manor pound for securing goods taken under the execution of this court'. The judge was a person known as the Seneschal and in the St Finbarre's Court there was no jury. The decree of the court was carried out by the bailiff. The age or date of origin for this court was not established by the committee (See report appendix, pp. 356-7). Tenants of such manors were also required to raise the 'hue and cry' in the event of a crime being committed. Manor Courts in Ireland were abolished by Act of Parliament in 1859 and were replaced by the Petty Sessions courts.
2. Act of Parliament A.D. 1792 (32 George III).
3. As above.
4. Act of Parliament A.D. 1721 (8 George I).
5. Described in Winnet 1974, pp. 194-9.
6. *Peter Browne*: His date of birth is unknown (possibly 1664 or 65). He was born in Dublin. In 1682 he entered Trinity College, Dublin and was a Fellow of that College from 1692. He became Provost in 1699 and remained so until 1709. The following year he became Bishop of Cork and Ross. He was the author of several philosophical and other works, details of which are to be found in Winnet (1974). As a rebuff to his essay against drinking to the memory of the dead, he was often mock-celebrated in the taverns of Cork by a toast which ended with the words '... and a fig for the Bishop of Cork'. Samuel Lewis (1837, p. 421) says of Browne:

*Dr Brown Provost of Trinity College was promoted to this bishoprick in 1709 and held it till his death in 1735. By his encouragement several churches were rebuilt or repaired and glebe houses erected and a handsome public library with a large room for a charity school was built near the cathedral. He expended more than £2000 on a country house built in a demesne of 118 acres belonging to the see at Ballinaspick or Bishopstown near Cork which he occupied as a summer residence and left to his successors free from any charge. By will he left £300 contingently of which one third of the interest was to be paid to the librarian of the library recently erected*

*near the cathedral to which he also bequeathed some of his books, one third for the purchase of books for its use and the remainder for the widows and children of poor clergymen. He also left £20 to the poor of St Finbarr's parish and £100 for clothing and apprenticing poor children.*

The date 1709 is used by some authors to refer to Browne's appointment to Cork and Ross while others use the date 1710. The reason for the difference is that he was nominated in 1709 and consecrated in 1710. The many versions of the spelling of Ballineaspig — Ballineaspig, Ballineaspug, Ballineaspick, Ballineaspic — shows how the recording of a placename varied according to who heard it, when and how they think they heard it, and how they wrote it down. The Ordnance Survey of Ireland, during the first half of the 19th century introduced a standardization of these names and their spellings. See Andrews (2001).

The poet Jonathan Smedley in a poem dated 1730 titled *The Ode Maker: a Burlesque on the Dean of Killala's Ode to the Right Honourable the Earl of Cadogan* had the following uncomplimentary words to say of Peter Browne:

*Or if thou art for meaner work,  
Then skim thy thoughts away to Corke,  
Describe thy Bishop, learned and wise,  
Lab'ring at senseless niceties,  
Inventing sins, creating evil,  
And making new work for the Devil,  
Whereas the crimes already past are  
More than flesh and blood can master.  
However, that thy wonted Care  
Of Mother-church may full appear,  
Thy Bishop at his See disgrace,  
And drink THE MEMORY to his face.  
Tell him, that cure of souls, of late,  
Is deem'd unbred for priests of state,  
That no roof, or sacred wall,  
Adorns thy Parish, none e'er shall,  
And, if thy wish were truly known,  
'Tis That Killala Church were down.*

To put such writing, such paper wars, and verbal swipes in context one should read *Remarks upon the Religion, Trade, Governance, Police, Customs, Manners, and Maladys, of the City of Corke by the Free Plain, Impartial Hand of Alexander the Coppersmith* which was published in Cork by George Harrison in 1737 two years after Browne's death. One should also read the rebuff to this work entitled *Alexander Fed With His Own Spoon* by Rev. William Boles. No one still knows for certain who Alexander was but some would claim that he was the Rev. Boles wearing both hats — literary games perhaps. Castle Street in Cork city was a focal point for Cork's literary wits and wags during the 18<sup>th</sup> century; a place of coffee shops when the concept of a tea shop and associated gardens located at the west end of the Mardyke was something exotic, lawyers drinking coffee - their chatter joining with that of merchants and literary dilettanti - while waiting to attend court at the Queen's Old Castle, newspaper and pamphlet publishers at the Exchange Building at the junction of Castle Street with South Main Street, and booksellers acting as 'circulating libraries' (lending libraries) with the odd Cork dandy or popinjay standing in a doorway considering the latest theatricals or mechanical inventions on show at Cockpit Lane.

7. This was subsequently demolished to make way for today's St Finbarre's Cathedral. It was similar in appearance to St Anne's Shandon (1722) and Christ Church (1718), South Main Street. The steeple of the latter eventually leaned over too far towards the street due to underlying river gravels. It became unsafe and was removed, before it was replaced with a new façade in classical style designed by Cork architect George Richard Pain. Peter Browne may have used the same plans for all three churches perhaps with only a few modifications.

John Coltsman is regarded as the architect/builder for Christ Church, Cork, which also replaced a medieval building. Some of its windows are said to have come from the gaol at the South Gate Bridge where Coltsman, as stone cutter, and the mason Thomas Chatterton set about building a stone



bridge in 1713. One can speculate as to whether or not Peter Browne might have used their services elsewhere in his building campaigns, such as at Bishopstown. Further details of the demolition of the 18<sup>th</sup>-century cathedral and Richard Caulfield's antiquarian activities on site can be found in UCC Library manuscript U327.

8. Act of Parliament A.D. 1792 (32 George III).

9. As above.

10. ABHBA 1860, p. 143. ABHBA was the pseudonym of Rev. Beaver H. Blacker according to *The Irish Book Lover*, Vol. 14, 1924. See under Blacker, B.H. in the Sources section at the end of this book.

11. Isaac Mann: Born in 1710 in Norwich, England. He was educated in Trinity College, Dublin. Between 1757 and 1772 he was Archdeacon of Dublin. In 1772 he became Bishop of Cork and Ross. He was the author of two religious school texts, one of which was a popular catechism (Brady 1864, Vol. 3, p. 80).

12. Act of Parliament A.D. 1792. Full details of Bennet's part in the matter are given here.

13. Act of Parliament A.D. 1831 (1 & 2 William IV).

14. Letter dated 10 December 1980 from Dr Neville to the author.

15. Richard Caulfield: He was born in Cork on 23 April 1823. First educated in Bandon, he entered Trinity College, Dublin, in 1841, where he obtained his doctorate in 1866. In his time he was a highly respected antiquarian and librarian. He was a fellow of the Royal Society of Antiquaries of London, a member of the Society of Antiquaries of Normandy, and an honorary member of the Royal Academy of Madrid. From 1864 he was librarian at the Royal Cork Institution which was located in what is now part of the Crawford Art Gallery. In 1876 he was appointed Librarian of Queen's College, Cork (QCC), which is now University College, Cork. He worked there until his death in 1887. During his time at QCC he resided at the Royal Cork Institution. He is buried in St Luke's cemetery in Douglas, Cork, beside his friend and antiquarian colleague Rev. Samuel Hayman. During his life he was closely connected with St Finbarre's Cathedral and was a member of the building committee for the present cathedral, the construction of which began in 1865. He was the author of numerous publications dealing with aspects of Cork history. His work and that of his contemporaries greatly influenced the founding of the Cork Historical and Archaeological Society (McCarthy, 1991). Further information is available in:

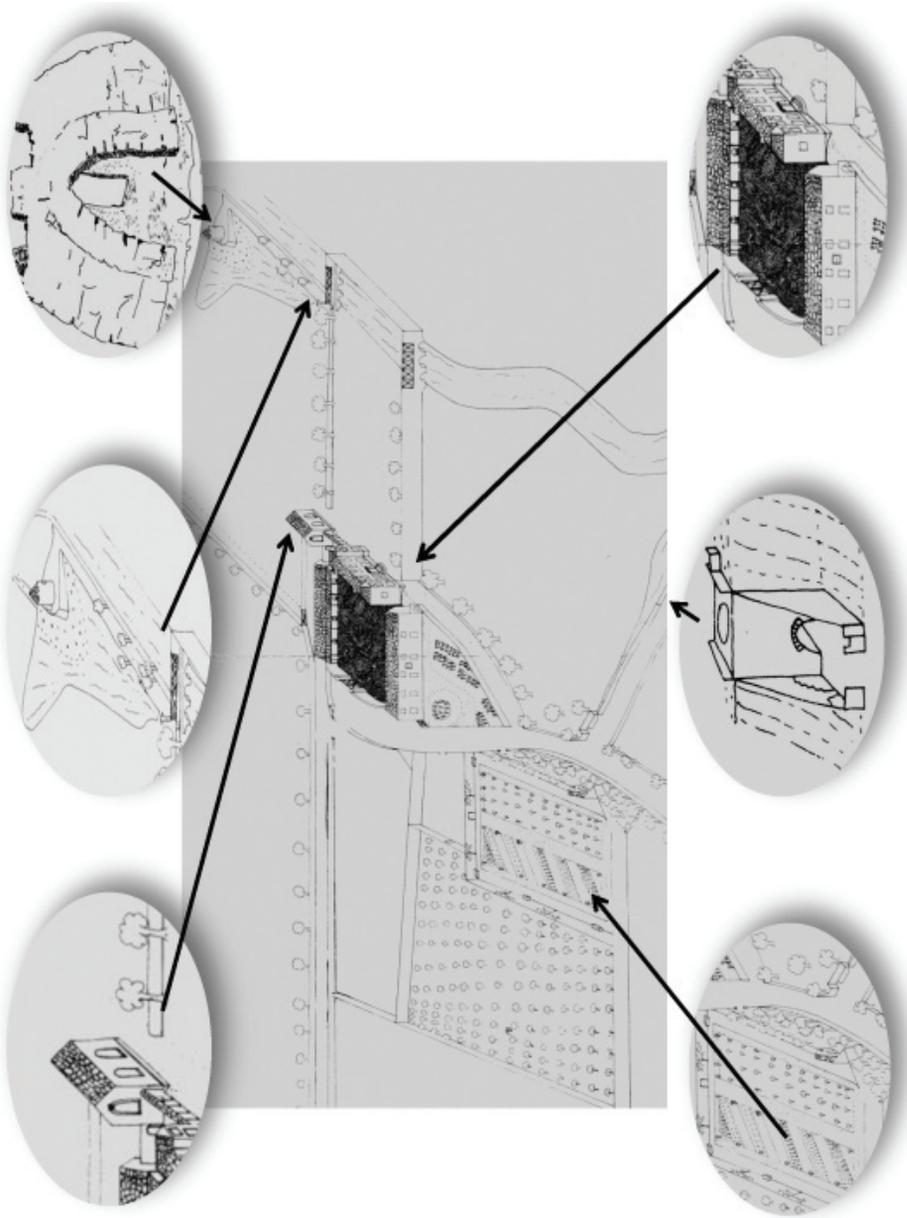
- 1) The 1892-1940 index of the *Journal of the Cork Historical and Archaeological Society*.
- 2) *Cork Constitution newspaper*, 7 February 1887.
- 3) University College Cork, Library Manuscript Collection, No. U83.
- 4) A biographical sketch by J.P. McCarthy (McCarthy, 1987).

16. A manuscript entry in a copy of Part Three of Henry Cotton's *Fasti Ecclesiae Hibernicae*, now in the Boole Library, University College, Cork.

17. As seen in the early 1980s, preserved at the Chapter House of St Finbarre's Cathedral.
18. Tithe Applotment Books, Co. Cork volume.
19. Griffith's Valuation 1852: St Finbarre's Parish.
20. Census of Ireland, 1891.



Doorframe, now in wall of farmhouse, believed to be from original mansion house  
(ca. 1725)



Conjectural drawing of Bishopstow Domesne

## PART II

### A GUIDE TO BISHOPSTOWN DEMESNE

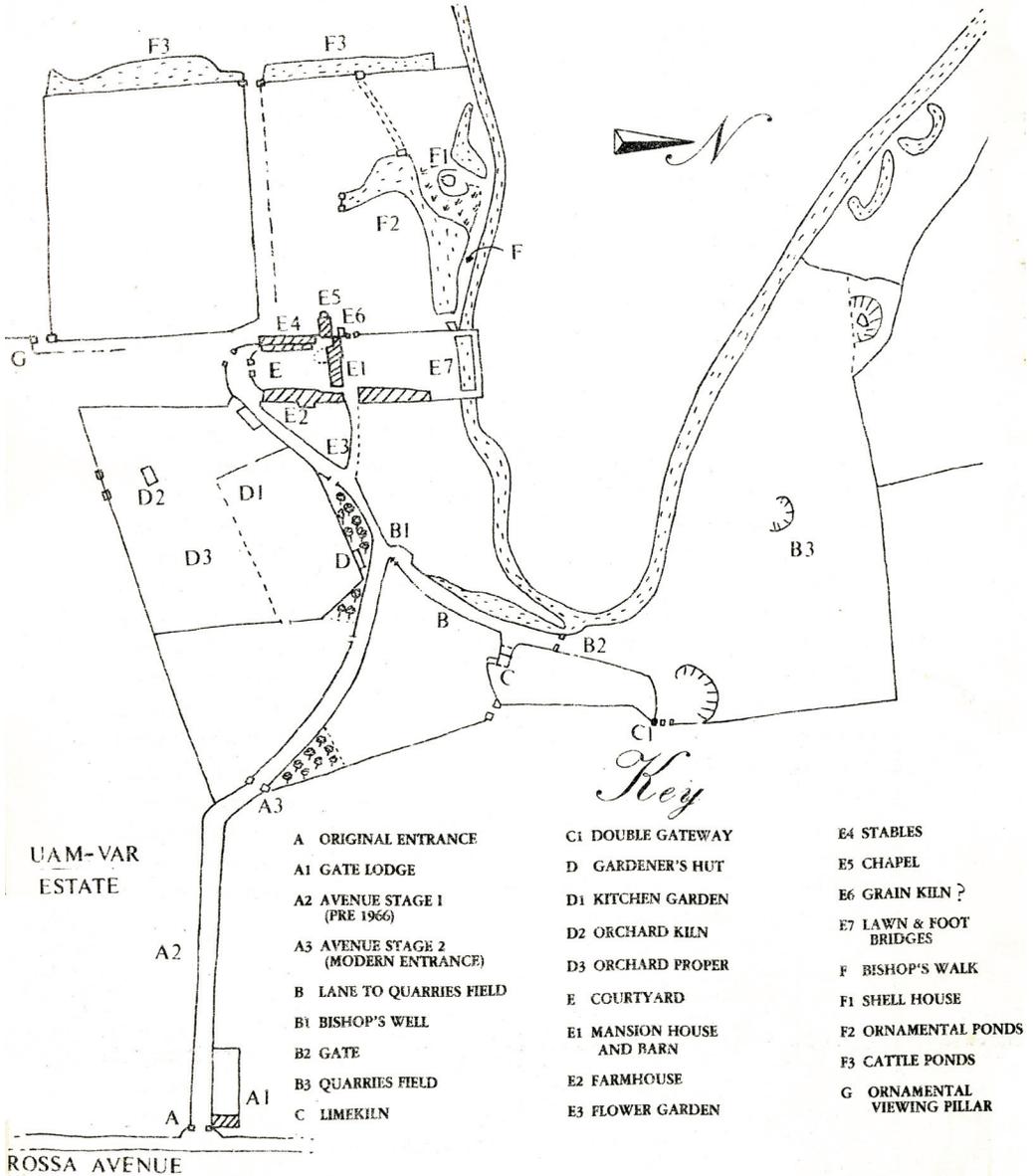
#### *Introduction*

The demesne lies in a lowland hilly area which is drained by the Curragheen River and the Twopot River. The latter is a tributary of the Curragheen River, which drains into the River Lee. The north-western side of the estate is a flat wetland area. The local bedrock there is limestone. In reference to Ballineaspigmore, a 1792 Act of Parliament describes Peter Browne's activities there as the construction of a dwelling house and 'improvements'. These improvements were created by landscaping. Who the designer was for Bishopstown Demesne is unknown though it is apparent that he applied on a minor scale what was the fashion of his time. Landscape gardening was the means of tastefully shaping the natural features of a landscape, thereby creating a form of artistic expression. This involved the modeling of the natural elements of the landscape, i.e., land and water, and the addition of two other elements which were plants and buildings. Broadly, the features of Bishopstown Demesne can be classified into two purpose categories: (1) domestic and farmyard features, and (2) pleasure-ground features. The latter was mainly based around the river and the adjoining wetland.

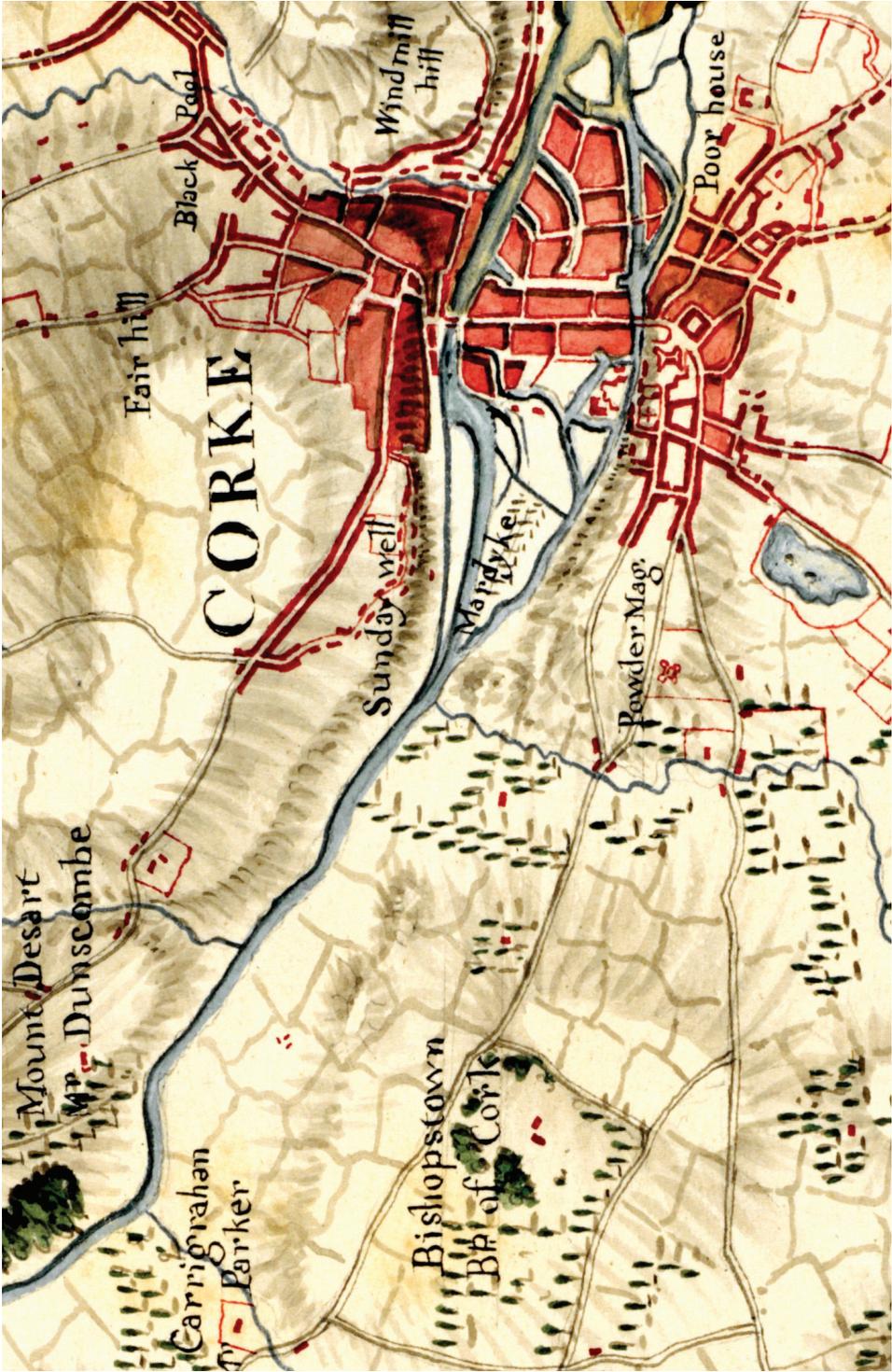
For the use of this Guide, in conjunction with the plan of the demesne, letters and numbers are provided in brackets following the various subheadings below. A conjectural view of how the core of the demesne might have looked during the 18th century is provided in a separate drawing. As well as being an invitation to stroll among its ruins and pathways, the Guide is also an invitation to those readers who have an interest in mystery-hunting to engage with some of the questions which still remain about the estate, and about its original appearance and attributes. On the Ordnance Survey 6-inch maps, the demesne, or estate, is represented on the Co. Cork sheet no. 74, at 9.2 cm from the south margin and 1.2 cm from the west margin.

Descriptions of buildings and features in the Guide largely follow the same lettering sequence as in the plan. Where numbers appear after letters, acting as individual identifiers for particular places or structures, occasional randomization is a reflection of the study circuits made during the creation of the plan for the 1976 edition.

# Bishopstown House.



Guide map for Bishopstown Demesne



Detail from Charles Vallancey's manuscript map of Cork, 1776-1785. Note two rectangles below 'Bishopstown: Bp of Cork', one representing the Bishop's mansion house, the other representing the courtyard carriage house and stables buildings.

The visitor to Bishopstown House today can design a number of personal walking routes using the plan by simply selecting a choice of letters, and any associated numbers, to create a route referenced to the page numbers for the descriptions contained in the Guide. Examples might be:

1. *The River Route* from points B1-B2-E7-F-F3-E4-D,
2. *The Courtyard Route* from points D-E-F3-F-E7-B2-B1.

Alternatively, one could choose to explore only a group of buildings and features associated with a particular letter.

### ***Entrance and Gate Lodge (A and A1)***

The original entrance to Bishopstown Demesne was in Cáit Sé's Lane which became known as Rossa Avenue in later years. I was unable to find a folk memory or explanation for these parallel names, to clarify their age, or indeed if the lane had an earlier name during the 18th or 19th centuries, and I have been unable to find any information on the identity of the original Cáit Sé. Perhaps she might have lived at the lodge house or elsewhere along the lane.

The gateway consisted of two rectangular pillars from which two sidewalls curved outwards to form a semicircular entrance area. Beside the gateway, on the northern side, was a gate lodge which was still in existence at the beginning of the 20th century. The people living there once worked on the estate.

### ***Boundaries***

The exact boundaries for the original estate are now difficult to determine. Using details from inaccurate map sources from the 18th century, such as General Charles Vallancey's survey of 1776-85 and a manuscript map prepared for an adjoining landowner (Mr Waller) in 1779, the following would appear to have been the original boundaries when matched to the first edition of the Ordnance Survey map. The boundaries appear to have been Cáit Sé's Lane (Rossa Avenue) at the east, the Curraheen Road at the south, the Twopot River at the south-west, the Curragheen River at the north-west, and a field fence immediately south of the Cork Institute of Technology (CIT) at the north-east where the Pitch and Putt green ends. This

boundary ran eastwards to join Rossa Avenue. The south and some of the east boundaries were walled and tree-lined originally, a common feature of demesne landscapes. Today (2011), what remains of the core of Bishopstown House and its features is partly enclosed by Uam-Var Estate which bounds it on the east and south sides. The Chestnut Grove housing estate occupies what was the orchard.

### ***The Avenue (A2 and A3)***

As dictated by the principles of landscape gardening, the approach to a country mansion was of the greatest importance. It was thought that the avenue should gradually reveal the dwelling in a series of stages. At Bishopstown there were three stages. The first began in Cáit Sé's Lane (Rossa Avenue) and ran west to where the present (2011) entrance to the avenue lies. It was lined with earthen banks and in the eighteenth century there were probably trees behind these. The avenue was surfaced with a bedding of limestone chips. The second stage curved gently, and descended from the high ground which forms the east and south sides of the estate, to the lower land where the estate buildings and water features are located.

At the junction of stages one and two was a small wood, triangular in plan, a little of which is still in existence today at the modern entrance to the avenue. It is now difficult to say if this and another wooded area outside the walled garden were original or else later plantings. When visited in the 1970s, examples of beech, sycamore, horse chestnut, and ash were noted among other species of trees. Wooded areas would have acted as a landscaping feature intended to enhance the view from various points along the avenue and by partial concealment to gradually open up a view of the mansion and its grounds. Nearing the bottom of stage two, there is a second very small piece of triangular woodland fronting the east wall of the walled garden. It served the same purpose. At this point a third stage began, opposite the Bishop's Well and the lane which leads to the limekiln. For half its length on the south side there was a low stone wall which had a stile in it. A stile was a traditional means of crossing a wall or boundary fence. It consisted of steps inset at each side of a wall and a recumbent slab of stone used as a divider between them. This wall formed the boundary of the third wood, in effect part of the second one. It still fronts the north wall of the kitchen garden.

Beyond this wooded area was a high avenue wall intended to conceal buildings connected with domestic activities. This extended to a point opposite the courtyard

entrance. On the north side of the avenue was a laneway which led to the lawn and to what may have been the front of the dwelling overlooking the footbridges and the river. The triangular area between this lane and the avenue was occupied by the flower garden. We can only speculate on what types of flowers and shrubs grew there in the 18th century. The avenue ended just beyond the gateway which is the entrance to the courtyard.

The woodland along the avenue was doubtless a place of birdsong and one can imagine such rural pleasantries along the Bishop's Walk, the laneway to the limekiln, along the river banks, and at the shell house with its L-shaped pond on the southern side.

### ***The Lane to the Quarries and the Bishop's Well (B and B1)***

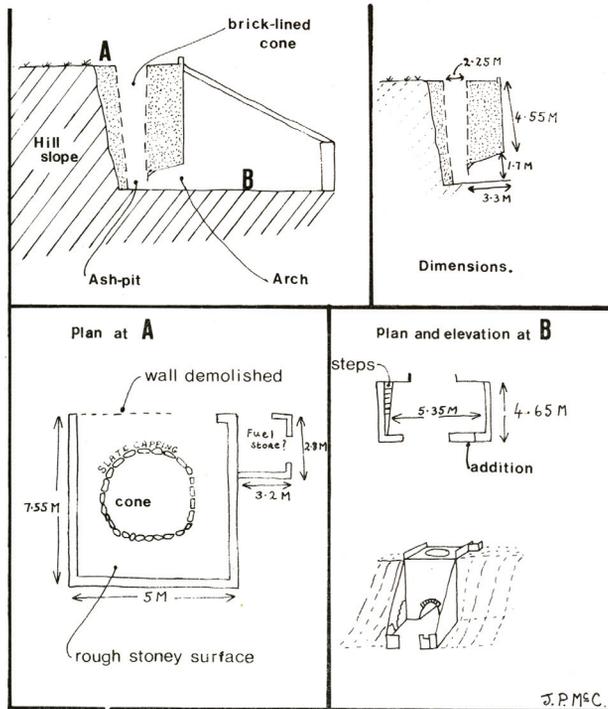
A natural stream was channeled to run beside the laneway leading to the limekiln, before it connects to the Curragheen River. It is possible that some of its water was previously channeled into the field beside the well, which is still a very wet piece of land. The well area itself was enclosed on three sides with walling, and the water there appears to derive from a natural spring. It is more than likely that the well was created in the 18th century and, as with the Bishop's Walk, that its folk name derives from an association with Peter Browne or his immediate successors. The reconstruction of a water garden area with the planting of gunnera was an innovation of Cork Corporation in the 1980s. Careful study of this area may reveal the true nature of its little channels and comparative study may allow for imaginative reconstruction of its original glory. Other examples of the use of water features in early 18th-century Cork landscape gardening were to be found in places such as Vosterburg, near Tivoli, at the residence of Dutchman Elias Voster, as described by Charles Smith (1750).

### ***The Limekiln (C)***

This type of kiln was in use in the later part of the 18th and also during the 19th century. The laneway, beside which it is located, is situated below what is now Áras Leon. It was known as a standing kiln. Kilns were in use in Ireland from the seventeenth century at least and they produced lime, primarily as a conditioner for agricultural land. I do not know how old the kiln at Bishopstown Demesne is. As lime was also used for building purposes the construction of the kiln could be associated with the early years of the Demesne, or it might have been constructed in connection with gentleman



Author pictured in 1981 with limekiln interior showing steps, ash-pit, and arch



Schematic drawing of Bishopstown limekiln

farming activities in subsequent decades. All that can be said with certainty is that it was in existence by 1841. However, from the early map evidence it is not possible to establish that quarrying was taking place in the immediate vicinity of the kiln at this time. See Rod MacConnail, 2007 (<http://ballincollig.wordpress.com/limekilns>) for further information on Muskerry limekilns and also Rynne (2006).

The following description of limekilns was published in a *Rural Cyclopaedia* in 1848:

*A lime-kiln, as usually constructed, is placed, if possible, on the side of a natural hill to avoid the expense of brick-work or masonry in its construction. Indeed lime-kilns should always be built in the immediate vicinity of the stone to be burnt to save its transportation, and if they cannot be formed in the natural soil, they must be wholly built. The kiln itself is an inverted cone excavated out of the soil, or formed in the brick-work or masonry, and must be lined with fire-bricks, or the hardest bricks that can be procured. Its form is usually that of a cone, from twelve to fifteen feet in diameter at its top or largest end, and diminishing down to about three feet in diameter at the draught-hole or ash-pit, which opens by an archway to the front of the kiln, and should be high enough near the front for a man to stand upright to work in it. The cone should be from twelve to fifteen feet deep from its top to the base. Two strong iron bars, called bearing-bars, are fixed in the brick-work to bear or support the fire-bars that lie upon them, at about an inch asunder. These fire-bars are of wrought iron, about an inch and a half square, and more than two feet longer than the opening they have to cover, so that their ends project into the arch. The bars being properly arranged, a large fire is made upon them, and coals are thrown upon it from the circular platform formed round the top of the kiln. When the fire is properly ignited, a layer of chalk or limestone, broken into pieces, is in like manner thrown upon it, until the layer is about nine inches thick. Sometime afterwards a layer of coal is deposited in the same manner, and if the mass appears to burn well, the whole kiln may be filled with alternate layers of broken stone and coal, in a proportion that must be determined by trial upon the stone that is burning, as some kinds take more fuel than others, but chalk will burn if the layers are in the proportion of ten to one. This is determined by the baskets from which the materials are thrown into the kiln; they hold a bushel, and ten bushels of chalk require about one bushel of coal. When once the kiln is set properly to work, the fire requires no re-kindling, but its operation may be continued for months together, by merely supplying fresh materials to the top of the kiln in the same proportion as the lime is drawn away from the bottom. The kiln is usually drawn every twenty-four hours, by taking out, or pushing to one side, one or two of the fire-bars, when*

*a quantity of the bottom or fully burnt lime falls down into the ash-hole. If the lime does not fall fast enough, it is agitated by a bar of iron with its end turned up about a foot. This is introduced up the hole between the bars, and the lime is easily got down. It is then drawn to the front of the arch by an iron hoe and, when cold, is ready for measuring and carting away. The workman judges from his experience how much lime he may draw at once, and if pieces fall that are not sufficiently burnt, they are returned to the top of the kiln again; but this seldom happens, because an experienced kiln man will cease drawing before such pieces appear. The drawing having closed, the fire-bars are re-instated in their proper places, and the kiln is not touched again until the following day. It might be supposed that rain falling on a kiln of this description would be detrimental to the burning of the lime, and that a roof would be necessary for its protection. The heat is however so great that any rain water is evaporated without sinking into the kiln; and in dry weather the top of it is sometimes watered, as the presence of moist vapour in the upper part of the kiln is thought to assist in the escape of the carbonic acid gas. (Wilson, 1848)*

Projecting from the front of the Bishopstown Demesne limekiln are the remains of two walls which supported a lean-to roof. These are not a common feature of limekilns. Some years ago people living in Bishopstown referred to the limekiln as the 'forge'. This was not its original function and 'forge' is either a misnomer or it may refer to a secondary use of the structure. Steps in the north wall could have been connected with a small loft, the presence of which is suggested by a thin slot in both the north and south walls. Writing sometime shortly before 1810, the Rev. Horatio Townsend had the following to say about lime and limekilns in the Barony of Muskerry, which lies to the west and north-west of Bishopstown Demesne, in Co. Cork:

*This barony has been greatly improved within the last forty years. At the commencement of that period there was scarcely a road in this barony on which a wheel carriage could pass with safety. The farmers in general had no other carriage than a sliding car. More frequently they carried limestone, hay, etc. on horses' backs, packed upon side frames of forked sticks. There being now good roads in all directions, wheel carriages are universally used. Lime is an approved manure for all the lands of Muskerry. The drawing of limestone to their farms is therefore one of their most important occupations. They pay for the stone raised at the quarries from three pence to four pence per barrel (half the wheat quarter) and burn it in standing kilns with turf or furze. Such lime generally sells at the kiln from two*

*shillings and four pence to two shillings and eight pence per barrel. Forty barrels are esteemed a good manuring for an acre.* (Townsend, 1810, Vol. 2, p. 129)

### **Quarries Gateway (B2)**

At Ballineaspig, at the north end of the laneway where the limekiln is located there was a gateway leading to the quarries field. One can imagine cartloads of burnt lime travelling through it in former times, for use on the farm, orchard, and walled garden at Bishopstown House or for use on neighbouring farms. See also under heading **Exits and Entrances** below.

### **The Quarries (C1 and B3)**

In the 1970s three disused quarries were to be seen at Bishopstown Demesne, i.e. in the putting green of what is the Riverside Pitch & Putt club today. None of these are shown on the 1841-2 Ordnance Survey map. It is possible that they may not have been recorded due to being overgrown and disused. The only quarry shown on this map is that which lies at the junction of Curraheen Road with the entrance to Melbourn housing estate. This may have been the original source of limestone for the kiln at Bishopstown Demesne and the limestone may have been brought to the kiln by way of Cáit Sé's Lane entering the estate grounds through a gateway which was situated near the Cork Institute of Technology. The carts were probably then driven diagonally across one field to a double gateway, which remained into the 1970s at the bottom of the north side of the hill slope in which the kiln is built. Carts could climb the gentle slope there bringing the limestone for placing in the cone of the kiln. A gateway located in the field fence immediately east of the kiln's top may have been connected with this activity also.

The quarries at Bishopstown House could have been created when the Curraheen Road quarry was nearly exhausted or else they may reflect a trend towards eliminating problems of carriage by having the kiln and quarries in close proximity. This activity probably reflects the use of the estate after 1831 as a farm. In the plan accompanying the 1878 Magner acquisition of the demesne, a limestone quarry is shown in the field immediately north-east of the bridge on the Curraheen Road over the Twopot River.

On the same plan only one quarry is shown in the quarries field (today's Pitch and Putt green). This is the centre one of the three. On the 25-inch revision of the OS map, dated 1898-1900, the field has two quarries, one located where the Pitch and Putt club stands, the other at the far end of the field and close to the precincts of Cork Institute of Technology (CIT). During a visit to the quarries in the 1990s Mr James Howley noted evidence for the use of 'feathers', part of a process by which rock splitting was undertaken in the course of quarrying activities. The quarry subsequently used as the Pitch and Putt club site was probably opened up to provide limestone for the kiln, given its proximity to that structure.



Quarries field — now Pitch & Putt grounds

One wonders where the limestone used in the construction of the estate came from, if the map evidence we have is accurate. Did it come from somewhere outside the boundaries of the estate? Was it produced in the course of landscaping when the grounds were laid out before construction of the house? It was common practice to lay out the grounds first and then construct the mansion house. Alternatively, are

some of the plan/map details incomplete, allowing for the possibility that what was originally the largest and deepest of the quarries was opened to provide stone for masonry rather than lime burning? This quarry first appears on the 25-inch OS map as mentioned above and it was located at the north-western end of the green near CIT. The quarry had a depth of about 20 feet and was heavily overgrown with thick, ropelike vines, quite concealing its existence when visited in the 1960s.

We can speculate on how much limestone was used in the construction of the estate buildings and boundary walls and field fences. However, the mansion house would not have been unusual if constructed in brick as this was then very fashionable (McCarthy, 2011b, pp. 69, 82). As to where brick was made is an interesting question for future consideration. Cork brickworks are not known to have existed at this period (Breslin, 2002; Rynne, 2006, pp. 165-72). One old story states that some of what was used locally in Cork city was imported as ships' ballast from the Netherlands (McNamara, 1981, p. 201). Examples of brickwork still surviving in the entrance way to the shell house and in the crypt are worth studying in this regard. From where, also, might the cut and dressed limestone work for external door and window surrounds have come, for plinth moldings and for quoins? Perhaps this was the work of local Cork stone cutters/masons at a time when construction work was booming in the city and county.

### ***The Orchard and the Kitchen Garden / Walled Garden (D, D1, D2, and D3)***



Bishopstown Lawn Tennis Club, 2011, showing walled garden and farmhouse in background

A walled garden (D1) was a concept which included the idea of a kitchen garden. This type of structure derives its origins from medieval castle gardens. It was a common feature of landed estates from the late 17th century onwards and it is indicative of a style of living which was largely self-sufficient. The kitchen garden was a place in which to grow fruit, vegetables, and flowers at a time when the idea of local shops was non-existent and when the three-mile journey by horse or carriage to Cork city was a time-consuming event. At Bishopstown Demesne the walled garden was part of a larger enclosure which contained an orchard. The orchard (D2) area was located at the west side of where the housing estate Chestnut Grove is today and the remnant of the kitchen/walled garden is now used by the Bishopstown Lawn Tennis Club as part of its tennis courts.

An inventory of what was growing on land attached to the Bishop's residence in Cork city in the year 1710, when Browne took up residency there, may give some idea of what the walled garden at Bishopstown originally contained. The items listed (Brady, 1864, Vol. 3, p. 69) are: plums, pears, cherries, apple trees, walnuts, and peaches. The orchard was reserved for the hardier fruits such as apples, pears, cherries, and plums. A kitchen garden grew other fruits, flowers, and vegetables for the household. Some fruits were grown on or against the walls. The inclusion of the kitchen garden within the boundaries of an orchard was one of several forms which a walled garden could have. Sometimes the orchard could be located in its own walled garden. In later times the concept expanded to encompass other forms of garden layout.

Much attention was given to the appearance and layout of the kitchen garden. Some of the desirable characteristics included: walks for manuring, border beds, an entrance giving the best possible view, a sheltered location, and a picturesque arrangement of plants. If something of the original design/layout for the walled garden at Bishopstown Demesne survived into the 19th century its characteristics are reflected on the first edition of the six-inch Ordnance Survey map. Dr Neville said that the walled garden in the early part of the 20th century also contained a greenhouse which grew tomatoes, and that the orchard grew apples, pears, plums, gooseberries, and strawberries.

Two structures associated with horticultural activities in this part of the estate were a gardener's hut (D) and a small wood kiln (D3). The kiln situated in the orchard beyond the walled garden was probably used for burning waste vegetation. The ashes produced were probably used as fertilizer. The kiln measured 2.44 m square in plan with an aperture 1.12 m at the front and 0.9 m at the back. The cone had a depth of

1.6 m, a diameter of 1.53 m, and it was brick-lined. Two gate pillars in the southern boundary of the orchard, opposite the kiln, imply that activities connected with the kiln took place elsewhere on the estate.

The gardener's hut was situated at the north wall of the kitchen garden and it projected into the woodland in front. It was demolished some years ago and consisted of a single room. It had a pitched roof with gables showing to the front and back rather than on the sidewalls. The stile was in the avenue wall opposite it. One of the hut's functions could have been that of a potting shed and a place of storage for gardening tools.

The differentiation at Bishopstown between a walled garden and a distinct orchard area may reflect a desire at some time during the history of the estate's use as a farm to grow fruit for commercial purposes. Whereas fruits grown in the walled garden would originally have been intended for domestic use at the mansion, as time progressed and the dominant activity at the site became that of commercial farming, the cultivation of land surrounding the walled garden for fruit growing — e.g. apples for local markets — may have taken place. It is possible that the orchard kiln was constructed at this time.

### *The Courtyard Buildings*

The courtyard is entered from the south. In the 1970s the farmhouse building, which is still present today, and a grain loft were situated at the east side, the barn was at the north, and the stables occupied the western side. The north west corner contained a small single-room hut and the chapel. The earliest plan of the courtyard known to me is on a manuscript map which is part of a military survey of the south of Ireland by General Charles Vallancey (Andrews, 1966) in the period 1776-1805, preserved at the British Library. Apart from his work as a military surveyor/engineer, Vallancey is a noted figure in the history of Irish antiquarianism. He came to Ireland to assist with a survey of the country but only the southern part was mapped. Commonly, the map is associated with his name. He lived in the Cork region for a period of six years (1790-96) and he was connected with fortification works at Spike Island and Charles Fort, Kinsale. He was also working intermittently in the Cork area from 1776 to 1790 (Rockley, 2008, p. 30). One wonders if he personally surveyed Bishopstown House as part of his mapping activities.



View from the south, taken in 1981, showing the entrance to the courtyard with the carriage house on the left and steps leading to the granary on the right



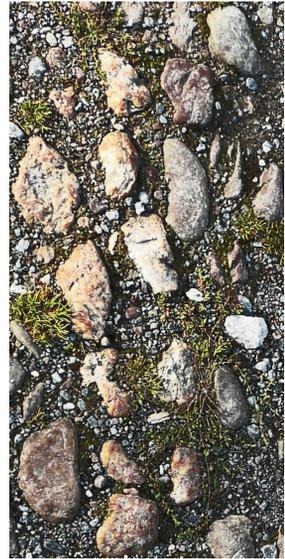
What remains of the courtyard, 2011

The map shows only two buildings in the courtyard. Though the map has several topographical inaccuracies I wonder if the buildings shown on it are a true representation of what was to be seen at the time of survey. Instead of a courtyard enclosed on four sides, only two buildings are shown and these are free-standing. Where was the range of buildings at the east side of the courtyard? Had the east wing of the courtyard been demolished prior to the time of survey? Was the original design an L-shaped plan, open at one side with the back of the mansion being visible from the avenue? The buildings shown on the map are situated at the north and at the west sides, and would correspond to the location of the stables and of a barn which was later built on the site of the mansion house. Was the mansion house still in existence at this time but demolished sometime in the following fifty years to make way for the barn which was still in existence in the 1970s? The chapel, which was consecrated in 1730, is not shown — reflecting the questionable accuracy of the map's detail.

If this map is in any way accurate, and if it is the mansion house — rather than the barn subsequently built on its site — that is represented, then the barn building was constructed after the date of survey and possibly before 1831 when Croker visited. If the L-shape plan for this area, as on Vallancey's map, is accurate, the eastern side of the courtyard originally opened onto the flower garden perhaps, and the east wing (the 'offices') would have been constructed later. An L-shaped plan would have had its advantages in terms of appearances when one entered the third stage of the avenue. Was the decorative cobbling, along with a garden opening from it to the east, meant to be viewed as one approached from the avenue and was the front of the mansion facing onto the cobbled courtyard? As there were differing 'improvements' by different occupants through two hundred years of occupancy, these are questions to ponder as one searches for exemplars in historical sources. However, if the map is inaccurate then credence can be given to the possibility that 'offices' mentioned in connection with the original construction of the estate are those mentioned by Crofton Croker in 1831 when he states that the 'offices' had been converted into a farmhouse. One assumes that the building occupied up to the 1970s by the Murphy family as their 'farmhouse' is the building mentioned by Croker and that it would have assumed this status after the mansion house was demolished; explaining why the cut limestone door surround from the mansion was incorporated in the garden doorway of the farmhouse, where it is still located to this day (2011). In the 1980s this building was renovated for use by the local community.

## *The Cobblestones in the Courtyard (E)*

The courtyard is worthy of preservation because it contains a unique example of decorative cobbling. I do not know what the precise details of the designs are. What remains today beneath the tarmacadam would need to be excavated sensitively with a view to recording and conservation if this feature is to be added to the national architectural record. Richard Caulfield said of the courtyard in 1861 that yellow cobbles created the shapes of a crown and of a bishop's mitre, and the date '1726' was visible up to 'three years ago at the approximate centre of the courtyard'. The decorative cobbles are either of flint or quartz. Set against the other cobblestones which are either limestone chips or water-rolled sandstone pebbles, the designs, according to Caulfield, gave a very 'pretty' effect to the courtyard. Also represented in the cobble work are the letters P and B, standing for Peter Browne. The designs shown on my conjectural reconstruction of the estate are not a true representation as they are intended to present nothing more than a general impression. When I first visited the courtyard in the 1960s the then owner Mr Denis Murphy showed me the date 1726 near the north end of the courtyard and parts of the outlines of the letters P and B. Some traces of the mitre were also evident. Very few studies have been undertaken over the years on this type of decorative cobbling craftwork. One is mindful of work by Dr A.T. Lucas on the subject. It should be interesting to establish where the cobblestones for Bishopstown were sourced, for example, if they were sourced from local Cork beaches.



## *The Mansion House / Barn (E1)*

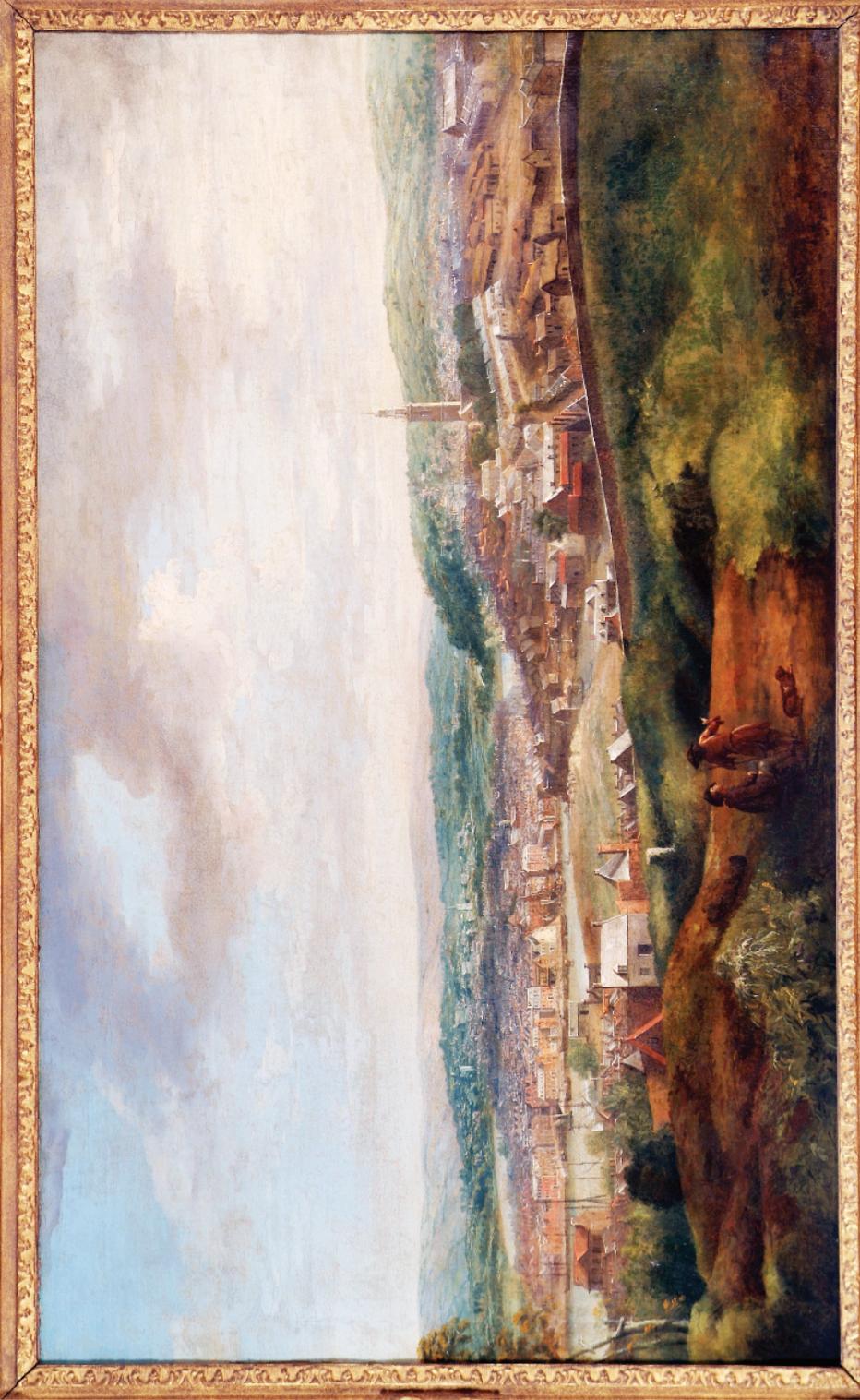
The northern end of the courtyard is about 1.25 m above the level of what was the lawn leading to the footbridges. Because of this a retaining wall, which was capped by a cut limestone plinth-molding and which was part of the base of the mansion house, survived. Both the barn and the building there today utilized it as part of their foundations. I have not been able to find any details of what the house looked like. Possibly it was not very different from the schematic symbol used by Taylor and Skinner for their road maps of Ireland published in 1778 or from that shown, also as

a schematic symbol, on the Cork Grand Jury Map of 1811. Alternatively, Maurice Craig's *Classic Irish Houses of the Middle Size* may provide some indication of what was common at the time, and a comparative study of Riverstown House, Cork, might also prove fruitful, particularly in regard to that facade of the house which faces the river. There is no more than a twenty-year gap between the construction dates for the two houses and in both cases members of the Browne family were involved.



Detail from Taylor and Skinner's *Maps of the Roads of Ireland surveyed in 1777*

Though, as said above, we do not know what the house looked like, perhaps there are some clues in the context of the Cork city and hinterland which was emerging at the time. It is interesting that references to a Thomas Browne, a Burgess of the city and a common clerk of the Corporation, appear frequently in the *Council Book of the Corporation of Cork* (Caulfield, 1876) during the early years of the 18th century. This seems to be the father of Edward Browne who became Mayor in 1714 and whose



*View of Cork* by John Butts, ca. 1760

© Crawford Art Gallery, Cork



son Jemmett, ordained by Peter Browne his relative, became Bishop of Cork and Ross in 1745. Jemmett rebuilt Riverstown House in 1745 and used it as a residence, leaving Bishopstown to be leased. Thomas Browne appeared in many entries in the Council Book in the 1700-1720 period, in connection with construction work both as overseer and paymaster. His role was, in time, passed on to Edward Webber — of Dutch origins who created the Mardyke in imitation of a promenade in Amsterdam, with a beautiful residence at its west end. Reconstruction and improvement works took place in the city, along with construction work in the surrounding countryside, during the early years of the 18th century, as Cork recovered from the Williamite siege in 1690, and when the Cork Brownes and Peter Browne as a ‘builder bishop’ lived. We do not know if the Cork Brownes might have been involved in the construction of Bishopstown House. The 1726 date marked in the cobblestone courtyard has a resonance with the date on John Carty’s map and prospectus for Cork city, published in Cockpit Lane off North Main Street in that year.

The map shows a city with a new vision of itself emerging and elements with a Dutch/Anglo-Dutch influence. Edward Browne, later to become Mayor, was educated and, on the advice of his father, returned from his education in the Netherlands with a young Dutchman named Elias Voster who worked for the family and was later the founder of a mathematics school and author of a popular arithmetic which saw many editions. His home in Cork was Vosterburg, Tivoli, which Charles Smith comments upon, circa 1750, as having water features in its gardens including mini canals. As a city of canals and a few promenades, early 18th-century Cork had a Dutch ambience to it (McCarthy, 2011b).

In summary, further study of landscaping and country-house construction in Cork in the early 18th century should contribute to a clearer understanding of what existed at Bishopstown. As to the economic and social life of Cork at that time, Dr David Dickson’s *Old World Colony: Cork and South Munster 1630-1830* gives an interesting account. John Butts’s painting showing Cork city in the middle years of the 18th century, now at the Crawford Art Gallery, Cork, gives a sense of how the city looked at that time. This is a view of an urban landscape encapsulating the achievements of rebuilding in Cork during the previous 50 years with a new Continental style of vision, recovering from the siege of 1690, a place to which the Brownes, Coltsman, Carty and Voster contributed, where they lived and worked — *their* town!

But to return to the mansion at Ballineaspig, one might ask did the house have a library? A library would not have been out of place in such houses. It was said by Caulfield that part of Browne’s library was added to the one at St Finbarre’s Cathedral when Browne

created that resource and its structure in the Cathedral grounds, intending it for use as a 'public' library in the same sense as the library of Archbishop Marsh in Dublin. We do not know if he had a collection at Bishopstown, and even some volumes in the shell house, given his life as a scholar and the use of the shell house as a retreat or study. One might also query if some manuscripts given to Caulfield circa 1875 by Ed. F. Browne at Riverstown originated from a library at Bishopstown.

The decorated limestone door-surround which would have encased the front door to the mansion house was revealed again in the late 1970s intact in the course of renovating the farmhouse. It had been placed, possibly in 1831, as part of a doorway to the front garden situated inside the porch of this building. The mansion house at Bishopstown was constructed during the early Georgian period of architecture (1714-1820). The inner surround of the doorway is stepped outwards. Its lintel has an emphasized keyblock with a festoon carved on it. Encasing it, and incorporating the upper portion of the keyblock, there is a decorated architrave with a pilaster at each side containing a blank vertical panel. Above these panels are capitals which bear the same festoon motif as the keyblock. The motif is a string of flower heads tied in a bow at the top. Between the keyblock and the capital at each side, there is a decorated panel with an 'end-to-end scrolls' motif. A notched cornice completes the ensemble.



Another interesting remnant of architectural decor emerged during the 20th century. This was part of a baroque ornamentation called a putto, i.e. the face of a cherub made of fired clay. We do not know if the putto had been located inside or outside the original buildings.

The barn which stood on the site of the mansion house was built about the year 1831 and it had a room overhead for casual farm labourers. From the point of view of the history of the estate as a farm, a stone-faced earthen platform which was in front of the barn is of interest. As described by Dr Neville, this held a large iron 'lever' or horizontal timber beam to which a jennet was tackled and driven around the platform. This action activated a pulping machine in the barn. Placed high on the outside wall of the barn and facing the entrance to the courtyard was a sundial. This was originally in the garden. The age of this item, now stored offsite, requires further investigation and could prove an enlightening study. The building which today occupies the site of the barn, originally the mansion house, is now the Bishopstown Scout Hall.

## *The Farmhouse (E2)*



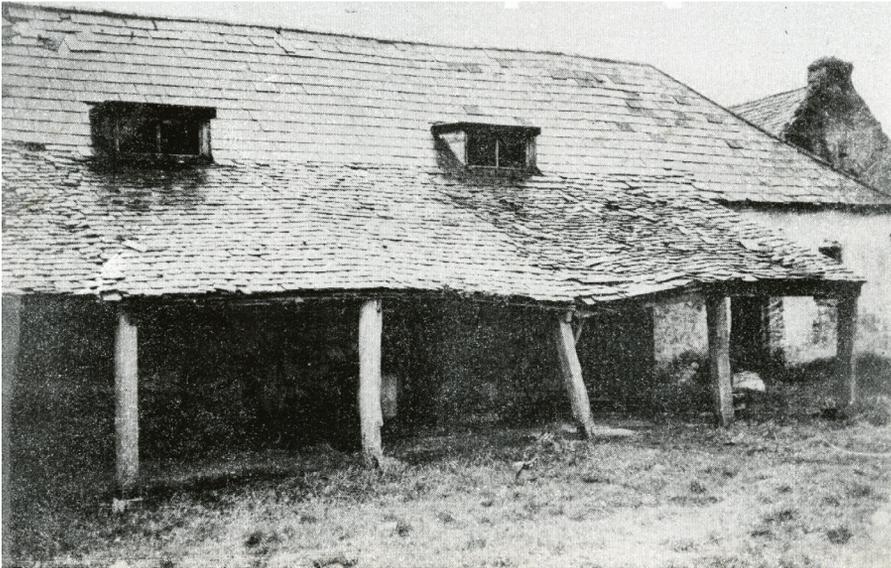
The farmhouse, 2011

This building is today (2011) the home of the Bishopstown Youth Club. There were three parts to this block. The centre portion was the farmhouse proper which was two-storeyed with a drawing room, small entrance hall, dining room, back entrance hall, pantry, kitchen, and two other rooms for the storage of fruit and dairy produce. On the second storey were three bedrooms for the family and three bedrooms for servant quarters. Fruit was stored in one of these rooms. The northern end of the farmhouse was an addition made sometime after 1842, as a passage used to lead through here from the courtyard into the flower garden before that time. At a later stage, after this addition was built, a passage leading onto the lawn ran from the courtyard between the farmhouse and the barn. The south end of the farmhouse was a separate structure which had a store on the ground floor and a grain loft overhead. The grain loft was reached by a flight of steps from the end of the avenue. Several examples of this type of loft still survive today in traditional farm buildings (see Heritage Council booklet: *Traditional Buildings on Irish Farms*).

### *The Flower Garden (E3)*

No details survive of the design of the original flower garden, except that it contained a sundial. In the early part of the twentieth century the garden was still used for growing flowers. It also contained a vinery for growing grapes. Recent studies and reconstructions of 18th-century gardens may help in developing an insight to the nature and variety of available plants for such gardens, as well as information on choices for layouts (Laird, 1999).

### *The Stables / Carriage House / Dairy (E4)*



Stables fronted by lean-to, 1976

This building was demolished in the later part of the 20th century. There were three parts to it. The south end was a carriage house, while the centre portion of the building was used as stables. A milking parlour or dairy was at the northern end. Portion of the northern end wall and of the west side of this is still standing (in 2011), and in the west wall a brick-arched gateway leads outwards beside the chapel wall. The wall abuts the quoins of the chapel, suggesting it was not an original feature of the courtyard. A glance along the masonry work of the east wall of this range or wing of buildings revealed several phases of activity. Along the centre portion of the range, facing the courtyard, were the remains of three stable doors. At the south

end of the range, in the cobbling, two limestone slabs were set a few feet apart in the ground. These indicated the presence of a side entrance into the carriage house through the courtyard. An important and attractive feature at this side of the range was destroyed in the 1970s. It consisted of a lean-to slate roof supported by a facade of upright timber posts placed at intervals fronting the stables. The posts rested on square blocks of cut limestone. The slates were not of uniform size and they were held in place by timber pegs which rested on a series of laths running lengthways along the roof, resting on timber joists. These represented an important example of a traditional method of roofing.

In the 19th century the western wall of the range was separated from the field beside it by a fence. It is possible that in the 18th century this wall was fully visible as part of a pleasant prospect from the cattle ponds field and the shell house. However another possibility, which perhaps only archaeological excavation would reveal, is that neither the east range or wing of buildings, containing what became the farmhouse and grain loft, or the west range were originally part of the House design. In such a case, from the entrance pillars at the end of the avenue containing a tall gate, simple sidewalls would have curved outwards enfolding three sides of the decorative cobbled yard with the mansion house front entrance and the covered way to the chapel facing the visitor on entry. The sidewalls could have continued from there and joined with the walls of the lawn leading down to the footbridges. In such circumstances, stabling and carriage facilities might well have been located behind the high wall which existed on the opposite side of the avenue, to the south of the entrance gate pillars. This interpretation would imply that there were modifications made to the layout of this part of the estate through the 18th and 19th centuries.

### *The Chapel (E5)*

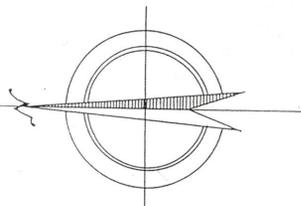
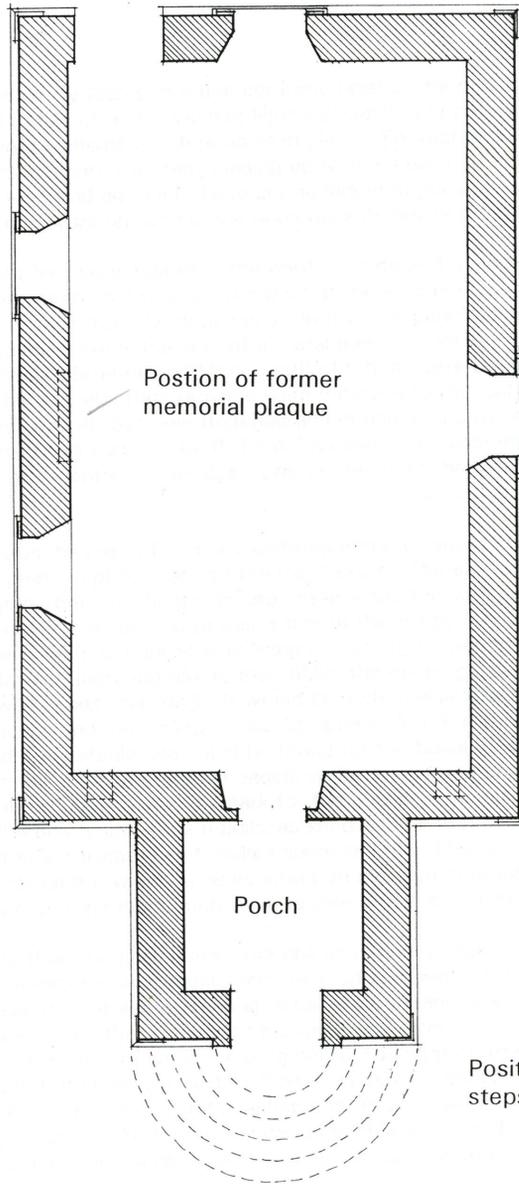
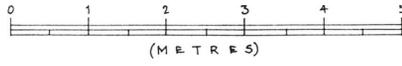
This structure, though now dilapidated, is 10.35 m in length and 6 m in width externally. The sidewalls are 3.90 m high and the gables were 6 m in height. The chapel was lit by four windows; one in the south sidewall, two in the north sidewall, and one in the eastern gable. Caulfield says that there was a little belfry on top of the eastern gable. Metal bars which were visible on the east gable in the 1970s were the remains of an early radio antenna. At the western side of the building was a porch which was approached by a flight of five semicircular steps of cut limestone. The window and door surrounds as well as the pediment of the porch and quoins were also in cut limestone. The exterior of this building has the same limestone string



Chapel from the south-west in 1976



Ruin of chapel from the north-east in 2011



Chapel plan, 1999

molding as could be seen in the remnants of the mansion house foundations facing the lawn in the 1970s, indicating the floor level. Apart from the prepared limestone elements, the masonry of the chapel building contains green and red sandstone as well as some slate. There is some indication of masonry courses alternating between flat slabs and larger stones.

Perhaps some of the stone originated from rubble after demolition and construction work in the city. The source of the cut and dressed limestone work is worthy of further investigation, particularly if it was the work of Cork stone carvers or stonemasons. The possibility that some of the stone might have been reused material from elsewhere is worth considering, as it is known that John Coltsman — the Cork stone-carver, builder, architect, and quarryman — reused limestone window surrounds from the city gaols when constructing Christ Church in the city for Peter Browne. As stated elsewhere in this book, it was a time in the history of Cork city when much building and redevelopment was taking place, and Browne and his Cork relatives were very active in this regard. The raised nature of the foundations of the chapel and mansion, to match that of the courtyard, gives an indication of the leveling activity required in the layout of the site. There were two entrances to the chapel, one in the east gable opening into the courtyard area and the other through the porch at the west. A ‘covered way’ is said to have existed between the east entrance and the mansion house. One might imagine something slate-roofed, timber-framed, and open at the sides.

In the 1970s, there was a rectangular impression in the surviving plasterwork inside the chapel on the north wall. A marble monument or plaque to Bishop Mann may have been situated there. A niche in the internal face of the west gable contained a cut-limestone block which is now in St Finbarre’s Cathedral, bearing the inscription:

HOC  
SACELLVM ÆDIFICAVIT  
PETRVS  
CORCAGIENSIS ET ROSSENSIS  
EPISCOPVS  
ANNO DOMINI MDCCXXX  
IDEMQVE  
SOLENNITER CONSECRAVIT  
DIE SEP. XXIX

[Translation: This chapel was built by Peter Bishop of Cork and Ross A.D. 1730 and solemnly consecrated in September 29]

The monument to Bishop Mann reads:

THE REMAINS OF ISAAC MANN D.D.  
BISHOP OF CORK AND ROSS ARE  
DEPOSITED  
IN A VAULT UNDERNEATH

In 1848 this slab was also removed to St Finbarre's Cathedral. Dr Neville remembered a Latin inscription on the south side of the chapel sometime between 1916 and 1933. I could find no trace of this. He could not recall what it said. There was also a plaque to Peter Browne, of which Caulfield noted that 'being formed of some perishable material, such as plaster of Paris, it gradually crumbled away after the roof fell in'. The chapel has had at least three roofs; the first of slate, the second of thatch, and the third of slate again. In the course of Bishopstown House's farming years the chapel was used, among other activities, as a dairy.

Beneath the chapel is the vault in which the remains of Peter Browne and Isaac Mann rested until 1865. The vault was entered by a flight of steps at the bottom of the east gable. From 1865 until 1976 this entrance was closed up. When reopened, a large slab previously referred to by Dr Caulfield was found lying on the floor at the north side of the doorway. On the floor of the vault was a pair of low brick walls which had supported the bishops' coffins. The following is Caulfield's description of his investigation of the vault and its contents in 1861 which was occasioned by a rumour that the coffins had been interfered with:

*Jan. 12, 1861. — This morning, a little after 6 o'clock, Mr Lewis set three labourers to clear away the earth which filled up the space between the steps and the entrance to the vault under the chancel of the Episcopal Chapel at Bishopstown. In about three hours this work was accomplished, and the space cleared, when a very large and weighty flag presented itself, fixed upright, and closing securely the entrance to the vault. This, after much difficulty and the assistance of two other men, we got in an inclined position against the steps, and then descended, by means of a ladder placed against the flag, into the vault, which is 14 feet long by 8 broad, and 6 feet 2 in. high, and paved with square flags. On procuring candles we discovered the two coffins at the upper end of the chamber lying side by side about two feet apart, and resting on two low walls made of brick. The timber of the outer coffins had completely decayed, and lay on the ground as it fell off, like a thick mould. The lead coffins were quite perfect, and evidently had never been disturbed. The first coffin*

*examined was that of Bishop P. Browne. On the lid, embedded in the decayed timber, we found the plate, which required the greatest care to touch, as it was quite corroded and not much thicker than a sheet of paper. This we succeeded in raising. It was originally square, and in the centre was an oval with a bead pattern, within which were the letters 'P.C & R. 1735'. As the lid of this coffin had never been soldered, and had yielded a little to the weight of the decayed timber that lay on it, it was found necessary to take it off (to replace it in its proper position, and exclude the drops of water which fell from the ceiling near it), when all that was mortal of Bishop Browne presented itself. There was no appearance of an inner shell. The body was placed in the lead, enveloped in folds of linen, which was not in the slightest degree discoloured. The body was nearly entire from the middle up; so perfect were the features that anyone who had seen his portrait at the Palace Cork would readily have detected the resemblance. The lid then was carefully replaced. The outer coffin must have been originally adorned with escutcheons, as the remains of such decorations were found mixed up with the decayed timber. The massive brass handles were as perfect as ever. Bishop Mann's coffin must have been originally stuffed with thousands of small nails. The leaden coffin is in the highest state of preservation. On the lid was a mitre of brass, and below it a large brass plate, quite sound with this inscription:*

*The Right Revd.  
Issac Mann,  
D.D.  
Lord Bishop  
Of Cork and Ross,  
Died 10th Decr., 1788,  
Aged 77.*

*Both the mitre and plate were gilt. The coffin was closely soldered all round. Bishop Browne's coffin is 5 feet 8 inches long, 21½in. across the shoulders, and 15 in. in depth. After the investigation, which occupied over an hour, the flag was carefully replaced, and the earth filled in as before.*

In 1865, four years after Caulfield's investigation, the coffins were removed to St Finbarre's Cathedral, which was then undergoing rebuilding, with demolition of the old church underway, and the foundation stone laid. Richard Caulfield meanwhile continued excavating for historical information: recording work on the crypt and on the relocation of family vaults, and consulting with his friend Col. A. Lane Fox

— later to become the father of scientific archaeology under the inherited surname Pitt Rivers (Bowden, 1991). Caulfield's endeavours were subsequently honoured by the erection of a doorway at the Cathedral dedicated to him.

'Notes taken during the demolition of the Old Cathedral . . . by Richard Caulfield', a recently purchased manuscript now held by the Library at University College Cork, contains the following entries and anecdote relating to the arrival of the coffins at St Finbarre's:

*14 June. I met Dick Neale this morning going to Ballineaspig to see the bodies of Bishops Browne and Mann brought in to the Cathedral vault.*

*15 June. This morning the coffins of Bishop Browne and Mann were brought to the Cathedral, they were followed by a large crowd of people who were allowed to satisfy their curiosity by looking at the coffins placed on the ground in the cemetery, when they quietly dispersed, the coffin of Bishop Browne was placed in a timber shell. A drunken horse tamer named Reardan got inside the gate and defied the janitor to remove him but Jerry Cody the bossman and a few labourers, one of whom gave him an actual chastisement, soon removed him from the sacred precincts.*

This part of Caulfield's text also has some interesting comments regarding local 18th-century embalming practices.

Occupying the place where the 'covered way' is said to have existed, between the mansion and the chapel, was a small hut, a later building which may have been used as extra onsite accommodation for casual workers. This was demolished in the 1970s.

### ***Privy or Grain Drying Kiln or Pine Stove (E6)***

In the first and second editions of this book, I referred to this structure as a grain-drying kiln, a function which was suggested to me by some people during my original investigations at Bishopstown, on the basis that the arched chamber under the floor could have been used as a fire pit. But, given the dimensions of the structure, the internal space would seem too small for this purpose. As the structure is now in a far more dilapidated state than it was in the 1970s I have retained the sketch made at that time. Correspondence with Professor Michael Olmert (email, 10 July 2011) suggests two other possibilities for interpreting this building: that it was either a

privy (outdoor lavatory) or else a pine stove (pinery).

The size of the internal space, the lean-to roof, arched chamber under the floor and floor slot near the back wall (with brick flue) are reminiscent of 18th-century privies as described by Olmert (2009, pp. 118-146). There would have been a box-like seating area, in timber, situated above the floor slot. An anecdote which I heard many years ago about Swift visiting Peter Browne at Bishopstown is humorously interesting, particularly in the context of Swift's witticisms. It is tempting to see this building as an early 18th-century privy, but without further dating evidence all one can say is that its appearance on the Ordnance Survey maps points to a date sometime during the later half of the 19th century, though this may mean that it was not considered as of sufficient detail to warrant recording for the first edition of the Ordnance map.

The location of the building is interesting as it would have been easily accessible from the house, the backdoor of the chapel, the lawn and the shell house/retreat if one is to judge by a surviving gate pillar beside the building. The door to the privy would have blended discretely into the wall façade of the lawn. Olmert (2009, p. 124 ) has an entertaining piece of poetry from Jonathan Swift celebrating the construction of two privies in his garden in Dublin. It is entitled *A Panegyrick of the Dean* and was written in 1730, the year Browne's chapel was built and consecrated at Bishopstown.

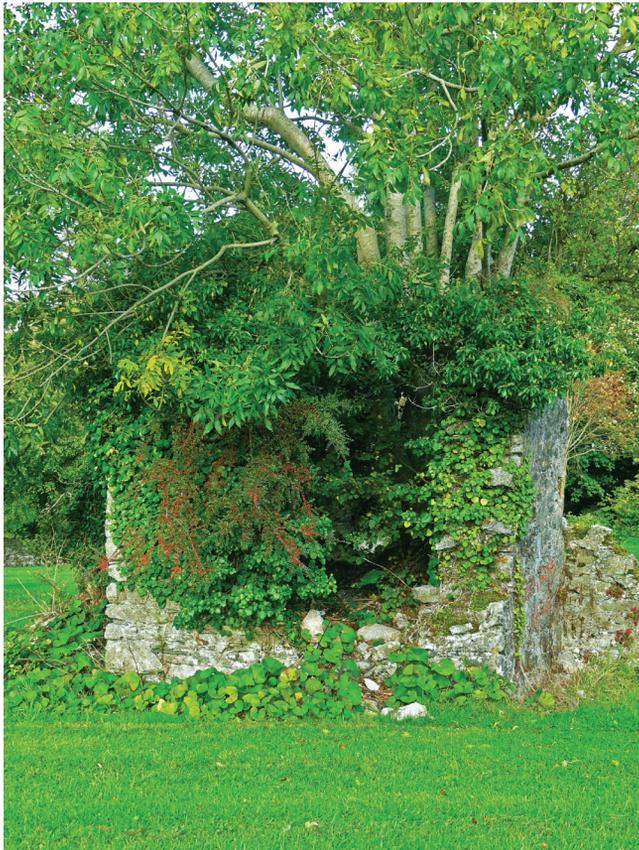
Another suggestion by Professor Olmert (email, 10 July 2011) is that the building was a pine stove or pinery, a sort of small greenhouse for raising pineapples. He suggests:

*the flue would have run up the cold (west/north) wall and the slot in the floor would have allowed heat to come up through the floor and along the other walls. The passage under the floor was a little like a Roman hypocaust system widely used in orangeries in the 17th and 18th centuries. The passage would have led to a 'firebox' which would have fought off the cold so the tropical plants could thrive in a very temperate zone. There is a religious symbolism in the pineapple i.e. it was seen as a symbol of Christ, because each tree produced only one fruit, like the cross on Calvary which produced the one Godhead.*

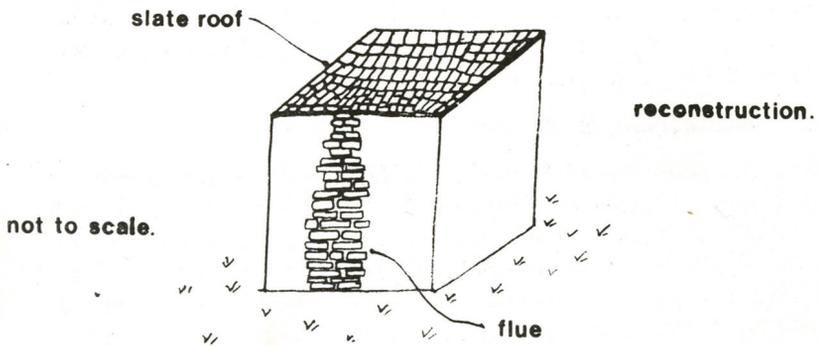
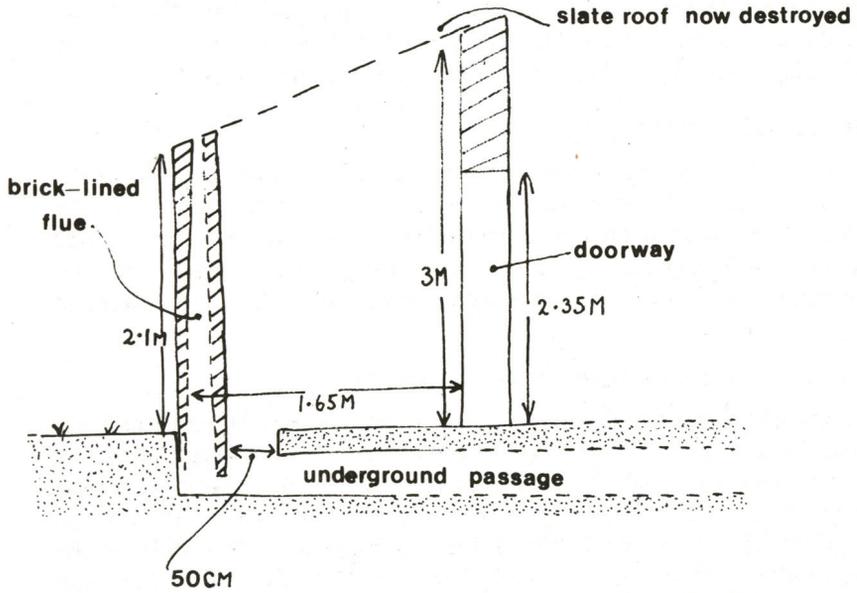
The pineapple was used as a decorative element in early 18th-century Cork city architecture, such as at the old Customs House now the Crawford Art Gallery. Elsewhere in Cork it appears in stained glass work at the Presbyterian church, formerly Church of Ireland church, in Aghada, Co. Cork. It has resonances with

Cork Harbour's associations from the 17th century onwards in the development of trade with the West Indies. The pineapple was placed at the entrances to their houses by Caribbean Indians as a symbol of hospitality and friendship and this motif was adopted by Europeans and New England colonists.

However, having observed a pineapple tree at the National Botanic Gardens at Glasnevin, Dublin, I think that this building would have been able to accommodate no more than two or three of these plants. Consequently, I am more inclined to consider that its original function was that of a privy, a point of conversation and fashion in its day before the wonder of the early 1870s arrived in the form of the water closet.



Privy, 2011



J. P. M<sup>SC</sup>.

Schematic drawing of privy, 1981

### *The Pleasure-Grounds / Water Features*

Situated to the north, north-west, and north-east of the site of the mansion house were the 'pleasure-grounds' features of the estate. The principles of landscape gardening of the 18th and 19th centuries encouraged the development of wetland wherever possible on an estate. At Bishopstown House the presence of natural springs, wetland, and the Curragheen River was put to good use. This may have been one of the main considerations behind the choice of this particular site for the demesne.

#### *The Lawn (E7)*

Originally this was a grassy patch of land stretching from the mansion house to the river, walled and lined with trees on each side. In the later years of the estate it became a haggard, complete with large hayshed and outhouses. The latter provided a storage place for machinery and domestic fuels. Some farm animals were also kept in this place, including bulls and pigs.



Barn (on site of former mansion house), lawn, and water feature, 2011

## *The Footbridges (E7)*

Spanning the river at the end of the lawn are two footbridges which are about 33.5 m apart. Each bridge has three arches, which are approximately 3.15 m wide and which have a height of 1.5 m from the river bed to the keyblock. On the upstream side both bridges have cutwaters. The average length for the bridges is 12.2 m and the walkways are 1.6 m wide. In the outer wall of each walkway were a number of small slots set into the wall-top at intervals. These suggested the existence of a timber trellis on each bridge. Some type of flowering vines may have been grown on them. On the northern side of the river is a small rectangular patch of ground which is enclosed by a high wall. This is connected to the footbridges. Up to about thirty years ago the ground there was used as a graveyard. I do not know the names of those who were buried there. At a later date their remains were removed and trees planted there. The chapel and patch of ground were in the possession of John Lewis through a lease from the Ecclesiastical Commissioners dated 9 December 1868.



Western footbridge, 2011

## *The Bishop's Walk (F)*



Bishop's Walk, 2011

At the north-western end of the lawn in the fence near the footbridge was the remains of a stile, a stepped feature built into both sides of a boundary wall as a means of climbing over it safely. Moving west, immediately beyond where the stile was, there is a small rivulet which runs from the ponds and enters the river. Crossing this there is a small bridge. The Bishop's Walk begins there and runs west flanking the south bank of the river which is tree-lined and raised somewhat above the level of the river. It leads towards the shell house. It is bounded on the south side by one of two sets of ponds located in this part of the estate. An earthen ramp leads off from the Walk to the shell house. The Walk ended at this point and connected to the shell house ramp beside an artificial bend in the river. Today the Walk continues beyond the shell house to the sports field and the Twopot River junction with the Curragheen River, where the Twopot by this stage has been reduced to a small stream. Immediately beyond the shell house was a further area of wetland which seems to have had pond features also, as evidenced by the first edition Ordnance Survey map. This area is defined on its west side by the field fence behind which the cattle/fish ponds are located.

## ***The Ornamental Ponds (F2)***

These are located immediately to the south of the shell house mount. Though now diminished in size, these ponds had an approximately L-shaped plan originally. Near the right-angle corner of the plan the shell house was constructed. The ponds are fed by two natural springs to be found at the south end of the western pond. At the north-west corner of this pond is the beginning of a stone-built subterranean channel through which water appears to be flowing from the cattle/fish ponds further west. Richard Caulfield refers to ponds on the estate:

*Bishop Browne also constructed large ponds here and he is said to have introduced pike into the stream — a fish which he was particularly fond of.*

The ponds and their water sources require further investigation both from archaeological and historical perspectives. They are currently a part of Bishopstown Demesne that has not been exploited to full advantage as an amenity.

## ***The Shell House (F1)***

This is built on a platform/mount of limestone overlooking the river and ornamental ponds. Here again the principles of landscape gardening may be evident as it was recommended that natural eminences should be utilized to their best advantage. The faces of the platform were roughly squared. A ramp slopes down from it at the north-west side to meet the Bishop's Walk. It is difficult to ascertain if this mount or platform is natural or manmade. If the mount is natural then why is the immediate landscape around it so flat? If manmade where did the limestone blocks come from? Might they have come from excavations to create the basins for the ponds in this area?

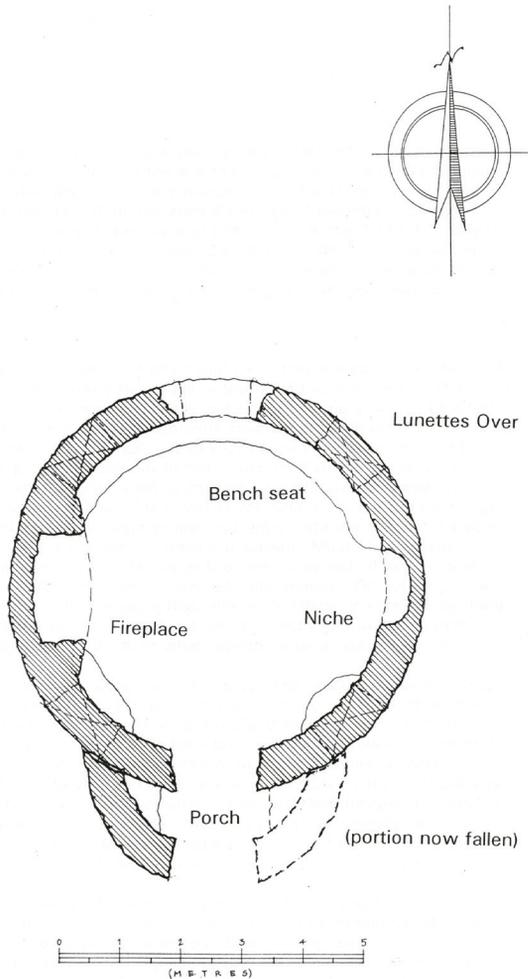
The shell house is a circular structure with an entrance at the south side. Its wall top is crenellated and the roof was perhaps conical in shape. The porch is in the shape of two segments of a beehive cone. These do not appear to have been attached to the original shell house structure and may be an addition at a later date. Noticeable in the doorway side walls of the shell house itself is a slanting line of bricks which are at a higher level than the roof of the porch. One interpretation which may be given to these is that they represent the original doorway and that the porch is a later



The shell house, 1976, south side



Sketch of shell house, possibly by Thomas Crofton Croker (1831?), north side



Shell house plan, 1999

addition in keeping with the folly or shell-house reuse of the building, giving the entrance something of the look of a hermit's cell, with a place to sit at its west side and a view over the pond below the mount. The ledge seat at the west side was probably intended as a viewing point. From here one can look down on the L-shaped pond.

One wonders if the porch area is an addition made in Bishop Clayton's time or if it was a part of Browne's design. Inside the shell house facing north is a window which had a stepped ledge. On the west side is a stone-canopied fireplace, the flue of which opens at the top of the wall above it. At the east side is a wall niche possibly for shelves of some kind. It would be interesting to investigate if the brick work — near the window and in the entrance sidewalls — was locally produced in the Cork area or if it was imported.

The walls of the shell house were decorated with plasterwork inset with hundreds of shells as well as with green and blue pieces of a glassy substance. Most of this is now destroyed due to vandalism. It was still possible to trace some of the shellwork designs up to the 1990s. A large circular area of plaster between the fireplace and the entrance might have held a mirror. There was some evidence for swags. A leaf motif impression existed in the 'bookcase' niche. A row of razor clams were embedded in the upper wall area between this and the entrance. Other tracings suggested flower patterns. The types of shells used included razor clams, mussel, scallop, and cockle shells. It is not possible to determine if any exotic shells were used, though this would not have been unusual if such were available.

Natural History collecting and that passion for exotica from faraway places already had its place among the intellectually curious, and a busy port was an opportunity to purchase and request such items from mariners. The degree of transatlantic interaction between Cork, the North American colonies, the West Indies and even the East Indies, as reflected in the Book of Presents of the Royal Cork Institution now at UCC Library, is worth bearing in mind in this regard, as is the story of the importation of seeds and plants, some going directly to the Institution, others to the homes and great houses of the local landscape, a tradition — which perhaps had its beginnings in the late 17th century, spreading through to the 18th century and on to the 19th — reflected in the introduction to William West's *Cork Directory* (sold from his bookshop in Castle Street in 1810) which speaks of such houses, and craftwork in materials such as exotic feathers at the home of the Penrose family of Woodhill, Tivoli. Further evidence of the potential availability of exotic shells and of a more contemporary date with the shell house is reflected in the *Council Book of the Corporation of Cork* (Caulfield, 1876) which records that, on 19 June 1711, the Jamaica fleet was in Cork Harbour and that on the same day an ambassador representing Algiers, Tunis, and Tripoli was made a Freeman of the City. All of which represented Cork's far-flung maritime connections, a network which had been growing since the 17th century.



Cartouche from the Cork Grand Jury map of 1811, reflecting Cork's maritime trade

I was not able to identify the glassy or vitreous substance in years past — none of it now evident at the shell house. If it was glass slag it might have been acquired at a glassworks somewhere in Ireland, but not in Cork as the industry did not develop in Cork city until about the early 1780s (O'Sullivan, 1937, p. 198). I am presuming that the decorative work at the shell house is dated to the period 1735-45. If not glass slag, it could have been the byproduct of some other process. Further urban archaeological work may change this interpretation at a future date. If it is glass slag, then the O'Sullivan dating stands (Rynne, 2010, pp. 135-144) in favour of a source elsewhere, until further evidence of either an archaeological or documentary nature might challenge this supposition.

The shell house is 5 m in diameter. In height it is 2.3 m and 2.80 m if measured to the top of the crenellations. The walls are 0.80 m in thickness. There are traces of white cobbling in the floor which may have been a feature to highlight the shell work decoration. A low ledge runs around the base of the interior wall, its line broken by the fireplace and wall niche. It is difficult to say if this served a decorative or a structural purpose. The shell house was used by Peter Browne as a retreat possibly for study and meditations.

At the sixth meeting of the Cork Cuvierian and Archaeological Society for the session 1864/5, the President of the Society Dr Richard Caulfield exhibited, on behalf of Rev Fred Dobbin of St Finbarre's Cathedral, four small manuscript works entitled *Sketches of Cork and its Environs, with Plates etc 1813*. He said 'These little books were the result of the labour of two schoolfellows, one of whom afterwards bore a high reputation as an artist, the other a distinguished writer of the *History of County Cork . . .*'. It is tempting to ask if the schoolfellows in question were none other than the young Daniel Maclise and Rev. Charles B. Gibson, one-time chaplain at Spike Island, who published *The history of County and City of Cork* in 1861. However, Maclise would have been too young in 1813 (b.1806), unless there is some confusion in the record whereby the date given by Caulfield was printed as a typographical error — '13' instead of '31' — in the newspaper report of the meeting, in which case the date may be 1831 which is when Croker visited the shell house. In the fourth part of the manuscript there are views of the Cathedral Church of St Finbarre and of the Bishop's Palace and, apparently, a sketch of the shell house at Bishopstown, as Caulfield continues by saying that it was erected by Peter Browne. He says, "The shell house cost £500 but it is now almost destroyed, nothing but the walls, and a few of the worst shells being left". The report goes on to comment that the ruins of this interesting little building may still be seen covered over with ivy (*Transactions of the Cork Cuvierian and Archaeological Society, 1853-75, p. 43*).

The 7-8 December 2004 sale catalogue of rare books, manuscripts, maps, ephemera by Mealy's auctioneers contained the following entry under Lot number 723, associated with which is a copy of the sketch (catalogue plate 50): 'A pen and ink drawing of a figure approaching a ruined summerhouse at Bishopstown c. 4.25 x 7 inches.' This and an accompanying drawing showing Kilcolman castle are described as having an association with the Cork antiquary Thomas Crofton Croker and the provenance is given as the Robert Day Collection. It is possible, given the close connections within Cork antiquarian circles (McCarthy, 1991), that Croker or his son Dillon acquired the manuscript either before or after it came to Rev. Dobbin's possession, if indeed the item offered by Mealy's is the same sketch as mentioned by Caulfield. The illustration is intriguing as it shows the shell house raised on its mount but the crenellations are either infilled or missing — giving an outwardly stepped circular top to the wall, and the window is also missing and replaced by a small rectangular ope. The outwardly stepped appearance may reflect the use of a style of brickwork with ends lying 'header out', still evident in a gatepost near the courtyard. In the catalogue's illustration, a figure approaching the shell house, by means of the earthen ramp leading up to it from the Bishop's walk, wears what seems to be a tricorne hat and cloak.

It is just a thought, but the ‘half beehive like’ porch and the crenellations would have looked more antiquarian and folly-like than the image in this sketch. Perhaps this is how we should imagine Browne’s study.

Subsequently, the decorative shell work, the infilling of the crenellations, a possible external plastering/rendering, and the closing up of the window — leaving just a small rectangular light box, perhaps from one of the crenellation gaps suggested by the 19th-century sketch — might have given a totally different appearance to the building, with more space for shell work and more controlled/artistic dependence on natural light, either daylight or moonlight for illumination. See Howley (1999, p. 13) regarding a suggestion of elliptical lunettes at the shell house. Rays of light from the single ope entering the building at an angle, at a slightly higher level than a mirror situated on the opposite wall, would have produced a variety of effects on the shell work. It is notable that the circular plastered area near the doorway, which could have held a mirror, would have been located opposite the small ope which, on letting a little light through, would reflect off the mirror onto the shell work; an intended trick of light perhaps and also perhaps an attractive evening display using candlelight reflections. But why facing north rather than east or west? Perhaps to offset too much strength of sunlight on very bright days. If this interpretation is in any sense correct then by imagining it we can glimpse something of the enjoyment the shell work of Bishops Clayton’s time at Ballineaspig may have offered, particularly when one considers the social importance of dazzle and sparkle in costume, display, and entertainment for those generations of people who lived candlelit lives and who traveled the Grand Tour in 18th-century Europe.

Is what we now see at the shell house Peter Browne’s retreat returned somewhat to its original appearance, due to vandalism and weathering over many years? The remnants of those changes and adaptations which made it a shell house are now all but vanished. If this is true then the differences in the sketch are largely explained and the thought that the shell house may have been intact and a point of interest and enjoyment at the demesne up to the early years of the 19th century is of much interest. The sketch would appear to be no later than 1831, i.e. within 50 years of the passing of the 1792 Act of Parliament concerning Bishopstown. By 1831 Crofton Croker, on visiting the estate, reported that Ballineaspig was in a state of deterioration — and presumably the shell house. By the early 1860s, as reported by Caulfield, most of the shell work was gone and the building was overgrown with ivy.

Finally, as he did not achieve a high reputation as an artist and did not write a history of Cork, with a title as quoted by Caulfield above, perhaps Crofton Croker was not one of the schoolfellows mentioned in connection with the sketch. Alternatively, if he was present and if the date of the sketch was correctly 1831 then one cannot discount the possibility that this particular sketch was by Croker. He was famous as a folklorist, author, and antiquarian scholar who wrote much about Cork and Munster and who to this day is still well regarded.

An example of a shell house that can be viewed today (2011) is at Curraghmore House and Gardens, Co. Waterford, ([www.curraghmorehouse.ie](http://www.curraghmorehouse.ie)), where Catherine Countess of Tyrone created a shell house in 1754, an undertaking which took 261 days to complete using shells from many parts of the world. In it is a statue of the Countess by John Van Nost, a Dublin sculptor, who was also responsible for a statue of King George II which stood at the junction of Grand Parade and the South Mall in Cork city. Another example of modern shell construction is located at Ballymaloe Cookery School, Shanagarry, Co. Cork. After seeing these places one can muse how the shell house at Bishopstown might have looked before its shells were ‘robbed out’ at sometime around the beginning of the 19th century.

### *The Cattle/Fish Ponds (F3)*



These two ponds are the source of the water flowing underground through a stone-built drain to the ornamental ponds. Their water is probably sourced either from the Curragheen River or from natural springs. The ponds were possibly used as cattle ponds, though interpreting Caulfield's reference to them and to the river as already quoted in regards to the ornamental ponds, they may also have held fish stock. Having a few cows grazing in a portion of land near a residence was considered an attractive attribute of demesne landscapes, something conveying a pastoral sense of beauty. Fish ponds were popular for supplying fresh fish for the table as well as for the opportunity to engage in fishing activities; all part of the intended leisurely ambience of the demesne landscape and a not uncommon feature of such landscapes where it was possible. At the western boundary of the field in which the ponds are located is the Twopot River. Like the Bishop's well area at the east and the shell house ornamental ponds nearby, the precise

source of the water which flows into the ponds and the means by which the ponds were constructed deserve closer investigation and recording. It has been suggested that the lining of the ponds was done using marl clay.

Twopot is an interesting placename which occurs elsewhere in Ireland, in differing contexts. One suggestion for its origin is that it refers to an association with a tavern or 'two pot' house somewhere along its course at one time, perhaps at Twopot Bridge along the Waterfall Road. The name is derived from advertising signboards which showed two jars of ale i.e. two jorums. An account of the history of 18th- and 19th-century English signboards can be found in Jacob Larwood and John Camden Hotten's *The history of signboards from the earliest times to the present day* published in 1867.

### *Exits and Entrances*

There were three of these. Two have already been described, i.e. the avenue and that which connected the limekiln and quarries field area with Cáit Sé's Lane. The third one survived in part to the south of Scoil Naomh Therésé. It ran south in two lengths from the carriage house and opened on to the Curraheen Road beside the crest of the hill which leads down to a bridge over the Twopot River. Portion of the southern part of this lane survived to the 1970s. At a point where it reached the top of the hill slope it had a gateway opening to the west, entering a field.

It is interesting to note that the entrance to the demesne, as shown on the 1811 Grand Jury map for Cork, is at a different point on Rossa Avenue to where it is shown on the 1841-2 first edition of the Ordnance Survey. This might be simply an inaccuracy by the surveyor or it might suggest that an alternative entrance to the estate, one closer to the old Carrigrohane Road as a main road to Cork city, was then more prominently in use than the original entrance to the demesne. The 1811 entrance is shown beside a curve in Rossa Avenue at a point where today the remnant of an older section of road still exists opposite where the south boundary of CIT meets Rossa Avenue. From there the entrance way appears to run to where double field gates existed, opening towards the limekiln lane. If this interpretation is correct then perhaps a focus on access to the limekiln was dominant at this time; the original demesne entrance becoming of secondary importance as farming activities took precedence.



Detail from 1811 Cork Grand Jury map

### *Ornamental Viewing Pillar (G)*

The southern pillar of the gateway mentioned above was designed as a viewing spot. The upper portion of the pillar was hollow and two steps lead up into it from the lane. Being situated at the top of a hill and easily approached, as a short walk from the main part of the demesne, it provided at one time an excellent vantage point for viewing the land in all directions around it.

### *Changes in the Course of the River*

That part of the Curragheen River which flows by the land of Bishopstown House was straightened at some time during the 19th century. The old course of the river had many meanders and bends which were removed at that time. Though it still retains much of its character — its roughly U-shaped bend at the Pitch and Putt green, the occasional glimpse of bedrock beneath its waters, a deep trenching to lower it, and its noticeably high banks in places to offset flooding — it is interesting to contemplate what it may have looked like, and how picturesque it was prior to efforts to straighten it at some time during the later part of the 19th century. It is also

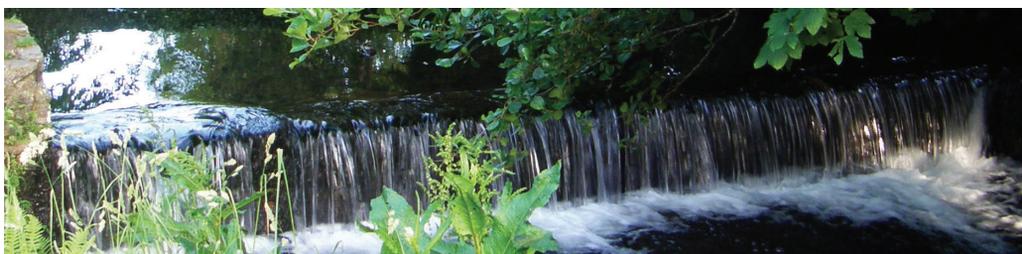
interesting to contemplate what it might have looked like when the surveyors arrived at the beginning of the 18th century to plan and design the demesne. One imagines that it was just an ill-defined piece of wetland with a sprawling river, an area of little use for farming and, therefore, an ideal place for a landscaper's imagination.

The 25-inch edition of the Ordnance Survey map for 1898-1900 shows that significant modifications to bends in the course of the river were underway to give it a straighter course. At the same time the flow of water was still using the old bends. The map states that land in the immediate vicinity, as for example at Scotch Farm on the northern bank of the river, is liable to flooding. The river had three oxbow-like bends stretching beyond what is now the pitch and putt green and into the next field as one walks towards the sports ground and Inchigaggin. The bends looked more ornamental than natural given the degree of curvature. Just outside the boundary of what I have suggested was the limit of the demesne in this area, it is possible that the river bends indicate that the demesne's limits may have stretched further north towards Inchigaggin Bridge at some stage in the past; an interesting thought in so far as Inchigaggin townland was in the 17th century also in the possession of the Bishop of Cork.

The Cork Grand Jury map of 1811 shows that the bends and curves in the Curragheen River were still in place at that time — strengthening the evidence that the straightening of the river took place at the end of the 19th century.

Giving a river a 'serpentine flow' was not out of character in landscape designing during the 18th century. Other bends lay immediately west of the shell house. Perhaps these were removed to prevent flooding and to give greater impetus to the flow of the river. The cascade/weir-like feature on the east side of the footbridges was introduced during parkland renovations and enhancements by Cork Corporation in the 1980s.

Weir



## PART III

### BALLINEASPIGMORE: MISCELLANEOUS NOTES

Noticeable in the history of Bishopstown Demesne, as outlined in Part I, is the extent to which its story unfolded as a farming landscape rather than as a summer retreat and pleasure ground. That history is worthy of further investigation. Bell (2009, pp. 44-56) gives a brief overview of the development of Irish farmhouses and farmyards from the late eighteenth century onwards, a context in which this aspect of the history of both the demesne and surrounding townlands deserves further study. Broadening this history again, Richard Henchion's *Bishopstown, Wilton, and Glasheen* (2001) introduces the researcher and reader to many aspects of the social history of the Bishopstown region as it evolved from the nineteenth into the twentieth centuries.

Sometimes enquiries are made about the origins of the names for the Benvoirlich and Uam-Var housing estates. These are placenames from the Scottish Highlands (*Beinn Mhúrluig* and *Uamh Mhór*). They were taken from Sir Walter Scott's poem *The Lady of the Lake*, first published in Edinburgh in 1810, and it is local lore that the builder of these estates and his agent were familiar with the poem. Though Scottish in origin and unlike many other placenames introduced to Bishopstown during the construction of its many housing estates in the second half of the 20th century, there is something about these two names which has a resonance with Bishopstown Demesne and its 18th-century history, with its cultured bishop residents, and the features of its landscape such as the ridge on which Benvoirlich is built and the sweep of Uam-Var down to the wetlands along the Curragheen River. The lines from the poem which refer to a stag hunt are:

*But when the sun his beacon red  
Had kindled on Benvoirlich's head,  
The deep-mouthed bloodhound's heavy bay  
Resounded up the rock way  
(from Stanza 1, Canto 1)*

*Then, as the headmost foes appeared,  
With one brave bound the copse he cleared,  
And, stretching forward free and far,  
Sought the wild heaths of Uam-Var.  
(from Stanza 11, Canto 1)*

The notes in this part of the booklet are provided in order to show something of the range of other physical remains which reflect the history and prehistory of the townland.

### *Prehistory / Early History*

**FULACHTAÍ FIA:** These ancient Irish cooking places were in use from the Bronze Age to Medieval times (Ó Riordáin 1979, pp. 84-88). They are mentioned in the tales of Finn McCool and the Fianna and described in Geoffrey Keating's *Foras Feasa ar Éirinn* published in the 17th century. A fulacht fia consisted of a horseshoe-shaped mound of burnt stones and charcoal surrounding a wooden trough set in the ground. They were located in waterlogged areas so that the trough could fill naturally with water. The people who used these cooking places were, it is believed, bands of hunters and these sites were part of their temporary dwellings.

When game had been killed and cut up, a fire was lit in the immediate vicinity of the trough. Stones were then heated in the fire. When these were very hot they were manoeuvred into the trough causing the water to come to the boil. A joint of meat was then wrapped in straw and placed in the water. This was cooked in about three and a half hours, the water being kept at boiling point by the constant addition of hot stones from the fire. Cracked and burned stones accumulated around the trough to form a horseshoe shaped mound.

There are large numbers of these sites recorded for County Cork, as evidenced by the five volumes of the *Archaeological Inventory of County Cork* published from 1992 to 2009. Very little can be said of the Ballineaspigmore site other than that it was destroyed sometime early in the 20th century. It was located in the wetland beside the Curragheen River on the grounds of what was the UCC Farm, which is now occupied by the University Technology Centre Park. Fulachtaí fia have recently been archaeologically investigated in the Curraheen/Maglin area. More details of Maglin fulachtaí fia can be found in the *Database of Irish Excavation Reports* at [www.excavations.ie](http://www.excavations.ie).

**RINGFORTS:** Current archaeological thinking accepts that these sites were mostly used as farm dwellings from Early Christian to Medieval times, i.e. A.D. 700 to A.D. 1200 approximately, but some examples of later occupation are known. When field

walking in the 1970s, the most common type of ringfort which survived in the western hinterland of Ballineaspig, i.e. in the Waterfall/Ballinora area, consisted of a circular area of ground enclosed by either one or two earthen banks and by a deep trench known as a ditch or fosse. As a result of the inventory work of the Archaeological Survey of County Cork there is now a greater amount of information available about ringforts and ringfort settlement patterns in Cork than ever before (Power 1994). In Ballineaspigmore the remnants of two ringforts were identified (monument numbers 4334 and 4668). For discussions on ringforts see Ó Riordáin (1979, pp. 29-59) and Stout (1997).

Ringforts are commonly understood to have been farmsteads representing varying degrees of social importance in the communities which created them, emphasized by the number of surrounding banks and ditches; though some excavated sites have shown that the concept of a circular enclosure was also used for sites with other functions. Sometimes evidence suggests that surrounding field systems/patterns may have developed with such sites as the focal point. Archaeological literature will guide the reader to research concerned with the economy of these sites, to conjectural reconstructions of what life was like living in them; opening up the intriguing question as to why some have underground rooms and passages, sometimes adapted as refuges, sometimes used as cold storage areas. These underground places are called *souterrains* and in some examples they have been discovered with roofing slabs bearing inscriptions in the Ogham alphabet cipher.

Though many Cork ringforts have now been ploughed out, using the *Archaeological Inventory of County Cork* (Power, 1994, maps on pages 420-421, site numbers 4375, 4334, 4413, 4577, 4540, 4577-9) it is still possible to get a sense of how ubiquitous these sites were as for example in the Waterfall district to the south west of Ballineaspigmore. To understand the lost topography of these places, that daily movement of people on a landscape going about their daily business, generation after generation of families and newcomers one also needs to look at the markers of other remnants in time: as fulachtaí fia, standing stones, medieval churches and holy wells all make their appearances on the maps they are indicative of very different patterns of life and landscape in earlier millennia, compared with the patterns of life of Bishopstown residents today.

These 'ruins in the landscape' blend in with the course of Irish social history as we currently understand it. They merge in to the heritage and history of such places as Ballincollig, a place of the Maglin River, (see an online account of this history by

Dr Paul MacCotter at [www.ballincollig.wordpress.com/medieval-ballincollig](http://www.ballincollig.wordpress.com/medieval-ballincollig)) and they also bring to mind such monumental treasures as Kilcrea Abbey with its castle nearby, the burials of a MacCarthy lordship and the grave of local folk hero and Austrian cavalry officer Art Ó Laoghaire immortalized by that *Caoineadh* which is a masterpiece of 18th-century Gaelic poetry and in other ways a lament for an age of Muskerry people we no longer envision.

### *Post-Medieval*

The Cromwellian Conquest of Ireland and subsequent settlement had a major impact on the Irish landscape. Surviving documentation from that time includes the Books of Survey and Distribution and the maps of the Down Survey along with their terrier documents (a written survey or inventory listing proprietors, land measurements, and related details).

The Books of Survey and Distribution were created by government as a register of landowners in Ireland for the purposes of imposing rent (Quit Rent). The books detail those who forfeited land after the Irish Rebellion of 1641 and those who were granted land under various Acts between 1662 and 1703.

The Down Survey maps which were created by Sir William Petty in a period of 13 months between 1654 and 1656 in order to record forfeited lands. The Commonwealth government was indebted to private individuals known as Adventurers who helped finance the war in Ireland. Also, many soldiers were owed pay in arrears, so were given confiscated lands as payment. The types of lands Petty was asked to survey were those forfeited as well as crown and church lands. Because measurements were also recorded in the form of maps the survey became known as the Down Survey.

These sources provide interesting peripheral information relating to the townland of Ballineaspigmore where Peter Browne chose to build his country estate. References in the Civil Survey and in the Books of Survey and Distribution have already been quoted in Part I of this book. The Down Survey parish map and its terrier provide further information about the townland and its surrounding landscape.

The Survey's parish map for 'St Finnbarrie', which contained Ballineaspig, shows that the parish contained 4,785 acres, of which land owned by the bishop amounted to 965 acres. Most of the parish was described as arable and pasture land. Beyond the

northern boundary of Ballineaspigmore the townland of Inchigaggin was also in the possession of the bishop.

The map shows the Carrigrohane Bridge at Inchigaggin, by a fork in the course of the river, with one branch of the fork running east forming the boundary between Inchigaggin and Ballygaggin townlands, and the other running north between Inchigaggin and Carrigrohane. At the fork in the river a tower-like building (planter's castle perhaps) is shown. The terrier document says of Inchigaggin that it contained a house and a church. Allowing for inaccuracies and slight boundary changes over time, the church would appear to be what is known today as Carrigrohane church. The house would appear to have occupied the site of a building recorded on the firsts edition Ordnance Survey map in 1841-2 as a dispensary.

The *Archaeological Inventory of County Cork* (Power, 1994) records two 18th-century houses in this townland: Carrigrohane House and Inchigaggin House. The survey also recorded that, according to local lore, a mill existed close to Carrigrohane House. Given that the Down Survey records Inchigaggin townland as in the possession of the Bishop of Cork, and if local lore is true and refers to a mill of some antiquity, it is possible that the mill mentioned in the Rent Roll of the Diocese of Cork for 1699, as quoted in Part I above, was that at Inchigaggin. The Ardarostig mill, noted below, could have been an alternative choice for farmers, or it might have originated at a different time.

Also of interest on the Down Survey map is that the Curragheen River, as its U-shaped bend follows a fairly even course along the boundary of what would become the demesne and indicates that modifications to the course of the river were part of the landscape design for the demesne.

Apart from lands which were owned by the bishop and clergy and a small portion of land still in the hands of Lord Muskerry, the rest of the parish landowners represented the medieval merchant families of Cork city: the Goulds, Roches, Ronaynes, Meades, Galweys and Coppingers.

To the north of Ballineaspigmore the townland of Carrigrohane has a number of interesting placenames and farm names shown on the first edition Ordnance Survey map. One such name is 'Scotch', a farm on the north side of the Curragheen River forming a boundary with Bishopstown House demesne and occupying the U-shaped space at the bend in the river opposite where the Pitch and Putt green is today.

Immediately west of this farm are places called Cooleen and Raheen. The name 'Raheen' would indicate that a small ringfort was there at one time.

Inchigaggin townland had an earthwork that was excavated by UCC Archaeologist P.J. Hartnett in the early 1940s (Hartnett, 1946). Some evidence of settlement activity was found on what appeared to be a natural sand and gravel platform. The finds recovered suggest that the site was post medieval. Other archaeological work in recent years in the Ballincollig area, west from Carrigrohane Bridge, such as the excavation of a souterrain (or underground chambers) during ground-preparation work for a new fire station offered a further opportunity to peer into those layers of time and history located to the south-west of Cork city — in lands with proximity to tributaries that drained into the natural transport route of the River Lee.

Along with the Ballineaspigmore and the Ballineaspigbeg ringforts mentioned above, and the remnants of landholdings in the possession of Lord Muskerry recorded in the Down Survey terrier, structures such as ringforts and souterrains are representative of this landscape as it was in centuries prior to the Cromwellian conquest and to the subsequent building of the demesne in the early 18th century.

### *Nineteenth-century History*

**FLOUR MILL:** A mill was situated in the townland of Ardarostig to the south of Ballineaspigmore. As Poll's Lane led from it to the Curraheen Road, joining it at a point where the Catholic church now stands (2011), some of the farmers of Ballineaspigmore probably used this mill when it was in operation. The Grand Jury map of 1811 (p. 73 above) shows another mill beside the Curraheen Road close to where Curraheen village is located today but does not identify its type. Small flour mills gradually went out of use when milling companies were established in the city. Rev. Horatio Townsend gives some interesting information on milling in early nineteenth-century Cork (Vol. 1, p. 30):

*The general character of our rivers, as has been observed, is rapidity; a circumstance as unfriendly to navigation as it is favourable to the erection of mills. Of this advantage a more than prudent use seems to have been made, particularly in the article of bolting mills, the number of which has greatly multiplied of late. Thirty years ago, I doubt if there were more than three of this description in the whole county, and they sent most of their flour to Dublin. The number now is not easy*

*to be counted, and Cork is the principal market for their flour. The competition, however, is very favourable to the supply of the city, as well as very conducive to the convenience of the farmer, by affording him a near and ready market for his grain. The great number of mills has certainly lessened the profits of the miller's trade, but it shows an increase of wealth, and a spirit of expenditure, ready to embrace an occasion which promises a reasonable reward to industrious speculation.*

For 1851-2, Griffith's Valuation says of the mill at Ardarostig that it was leased by a Mr Timothy Hallinan. He also had a mill-pond, a house, offices, and land. The lessor was Samuel Abbott Esquire. The area of the mill-pond was one acre. The other buildings etc. amounted to an area of approximately 16 acres.

Running east and south-east from the mill-pond were two mill races. The south-east one ran to a point where it met the Cork-Bandon mail-coach road, running beside and then crossing it to a further mill-pond near Chetwynd House and viaduct. I do not know when the Ardarostig mill was demolished, possibly sometime before 1898-1900 judging by the 25-inch OS map. All that could be seen in 1981 was part of its foundation. For further information on the history of Irish flour milling, see Bielenberg (2003).

Like Cáit Sé's Lane, Poll's Lane was once a leafy country lane named perhaps for a local resident. At one time, members of the Traveller community camped there, their traditional caravan a swirl of colour and fretwork.

**OTHER MILLS AND HIVES OF INDUSTRY:** At Curraheen village, the Curragheen River flows through a glen which was once a very industrious place. Up to the 1960s a forge still operated beside the crossroads at Curraheen village adjacent to the bridge beneath which the Curragheen flows. When one looks at the early Ordnance Survey maps, those between the 1840s and 1900 show a corn (flour) mill and a tuck mill, replaced in later years by an iron works. A tuck or fulling mill was used as part of the process in the making of woollen cloth, a process from which such phrases as 'being on tenter hooks' and the term 'fuller's earth' are derived. As part of the industrial archaeology of Ireland, mills for corn, fulling, and iron are discussed by Dr Colin Rynne in his monumental opus *Industrial Ireland: 1750-1930* (Rynne, 2006). For a historian's viewpoint see also Dr Andy Bielenberg's *Cork's Industrial Revolution: 1780-1880* (Bielenberg, 1991). The social history of the village of Curraheen, in the context of such industry, is a tempting topic for future investigation.



Curraheen in 1841 showing tuck mill and corn mill  
OSi Permit No. MP 005311

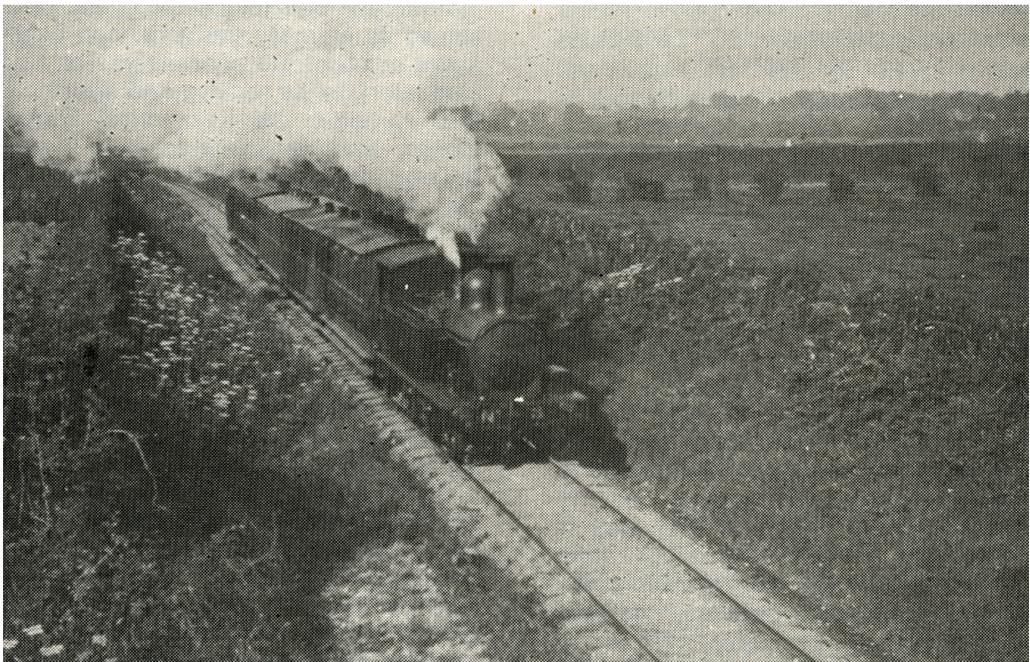
**RAILWAYS AND MAIL COACHES:** Part of the railway line of the Cork and Macroom Direct Railway Company passed through the townland of Ballineaspigmore. Beyond Ballineaspig Cottage, the Curraheen Road crossed over one of its bridges. It was initially connected to the Cork and Bandon line and used the Albert Quay terminus. In 1879 the Cork and Macroom Direct Railway Company built its own terminus at Capwell. Its link with the Cork and Bandon line was severed at this time but a new link was created in 1914. Colm Creedon (1960) wrote a useful account of the line, and Michael Galvin (1996) wrote an account of its establishment.

Railway lines such as these were very significant in improving access both to the city and to West Cork from social and economic viewpoints as well as for tourism and short-term excursions for middle class residents of the city; a point sometimes noted by Cork antiquarians in their travels and an activity popular at that time — something that was reflected in guide books produced by companies such as Guys of St Patrick Street, Cork. The railway lines also had a significant impact on communications, as the sound of the mail coach bugle became a fading memory — with its former routeways, pothouses (taverns), passengers, and other associated characteristics fading away over time. The steam engines of the railways, in harmony with those of

Cork Harbour's paddle-steamers and the pumping of church organs heralded the Age of Victoria. In time, Thackeray's 1842 description of the four-horse coach, the 'Skibbereen Perseverance', taking the road westward out of Cork heading to Bandon, which would have passed by Looney's Cross at Ballineaspig, would become a quaint conversation piece (Thackeray, 1843) and a literary relic.

In 1878, a derailment occurred on this line which caused the death of five people travelling on their return journey from Macroom to Cork. The site of this accident was near the village of Curraheen and a detailed account of the event by Walter McGrath was published in the *Evening Echo* on Monday, 4 September 1978, (p. 5).

The line passed near to what would colloquially be called the 'Bishopstown bog', that area of wetland landscape stretching from where the Bandon Road exits the Bishopstown roundabout on the South Link Road today and stretching east to Pouladuff. In the course of the construction of the link road some years ago the antlers of an Irish elk were discovered — opening up a window to a more distant past, one in the wake of the last Ice Age and an age of hunters and gatherers.



Train on the Macroom to Cork line which passed through Curraheen (1920)

## OUTINGS OF THE CORK NATURALISTS CLUB TO BISHOPSTOWN, 1912 AND 1917

22 May 1911/1912(?) — Excursion to Bishopstown. — The weather being unpromising, although a fine evening followed, only a small party travelled by 3 p.m. train from Capwell to Bishopstown Station, from which the members walked to Bishopstown House, the residence of Mr E. Neville, Bishopstown, or Ballynaspig, was the summer residence of the Bishops of Cork and Ross in the eighteenth century, and many experiments in horticulture, pisciculture, acoustics, &c., were carried out in its grounds. Many interesting remains of the period, including the curiously-paved court-yard, the old chapel, fish-pond (once a favourite haunt of watercress gatherers from Cork), and summer-house were pointed out by Mr Neville. There is a remarkable echo in the grounds, and some fine specimens of holly, Spanish chestnut, and walnut were noted. Mr Neville's extensive and well-kept fruit gardens also attracted a deal of attention. The members walked from Bishopstown to the Munster Institute, a school under the Department of Agriculture, for female students. Here they were received by Misses M. Sheedy, M. Laird, and L. Murphy, who entertained them at tea, and afterwards showed them through the various departments of the school. The party then walked back to the city (*Irish Naturalist*, Vol. 21, 1912, p. 149).

12 July 1916/1917(?) — Excursion to Bishopstown. — The members walked from Bishopstown station to Bishopstown House to visit the site of the eighteenth-century residence of the Bishop of Cork. The small chapel, 'shell house', remains of old fish ponds, mineral springs, etc., were shown by Mr E. Neville. Returning to the city by "Kate Shea's Lane," a fine glacial deposit was examined. West of it is a magnesian limestone quarry. By the wayside, east of the Munster Institute, the hop (*humulus* [*lupulus*]) was found well established. This plant is gradually spreading south-west of the city (*Irish Naturalist*, Vol. 26, 1917, p.16).





## SOURCES

We are fortunate in 2011 to live at a time when, more than ever before, there is a widespread availability of access to historical information sources, ranging from full-text digital versions of long out-of-print books and articles on the Internet to more recent publications in print or online. Both our public and academic libraries and their staff have a wealth of guidance knowledge and a wealth of information to facilitate anyone with an interest in knowing more about where they live. What follows below is a list of sources aimed at encouraging the reader to explore the information resources I have used. The list provides an opportunity to learn more about the broader contexts for Bishopstown Demesne and its features. There is always something new to learn, something perhaps not noticed by anyone else to date, something to discuss with friends, something to ponder.

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## ACTS OF PARLIAMENT

- |      |                          |   |
|------|--------------------------|---|
| 1721 | 8 Geo. I                 | <i>An Act for the supplying a Defect in an Act passed in the Second Year of the Reign of Her late Majesty Queen Anne, intituled, An Act for the Exchange of Glebes belonging to Churches in this kingdom.</i>   |
| 1792 | 32 Geo. III              | <i>An Act to explain and amend an Act made in this kingdom, in the Eight Year of the Reign of King George the First, Entitled, An Act for the supplying a Defect (as above).</i>  |
| 1831 | 1 & 2 Wm. IV,<br>Cap. 75 | <i>An Act to repeal in part an Act passed in the Parliament of Ireland in the Thirty-second Year of the Reign of King George the Third, relating to a portion of the Lands of Ballinaspeg, near the City of Cork, belonging to the See of Cork; and to enable the Bishops of that See to demise the same under certain restrictions. (Local and Personal Act)</i> |

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