

Maynooth

History of St. Patrick's College.

Maynooth College was founded in 1795 as a seminary for the education of priests and it soon grew to be very large. Over its history it has ordained more than 11,000 priests. Many of these have ministered outside Ireland and it has inspired two major missionary societies, directed to China (1918) and to Africa (1932).

The College was founded because it was urgently needed. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries it had not been possible to educate Catholic priests in Ireland. Institutions had been established in Catholic Europe, where they had become concentrated in France. The French Revolution confiscated all of these in 1792 and 1793. In Ireland the Penal Code was being dismantled, and the British Government, at war with revolutionary France, was anxious to placate Irish Catholic dissatisfactions, and certainly did not wish to see 'revolutionary' priests returning from the continent. In consequence, a petition to Parliament by the Irish Catholic Bishops was successful, and 'An Act for the better education of persons professing the Popish or Roman Catholic religion' was passed in June 1795. It provided a modest grant to establish a college.

The Bishops began to look for a site. It was desirable that the College be near Dublin, but they found themselves not exactly welcome in several desirable locations. They settled on Maynooth because the local magnate, the Duke of Leinster, was benevolent, and his Duchess even more so. This more than compensated for the fact that Maynooth was a little more distant from the city than they would have wished. The College opened in the autumn of 1795 in a house recently built by John Stoyte, steward of the Duke. Though heavily remodelled in the 1950s, it is still distinguishable as the projection on the row of buildings facing the front gate, and it is still called Stoyte House.

Maynooth and the Fitzgeralds

Maynooth is a historic spot. It is Mag Nuadat, the plain of Nuada, a name that bulks large in early Leinster legend. But above all it is associated with the Fitzgeralds. This association began in 1176, when Maurice Fitzgerald was granted a manor there by Strongbow as King of Leinster. He began to fortify the spot where a small tributary joins the Lyreen river. The great keep had risen before 1200, and in 1248 a chapel is mentioned in the complex of buildings. In all probability it was on the site of the present Church of Ireland.

Created Earls of Kildare in 1316, the power of the Fitzgeralds peaked with Garrett Mór (1478-1513) and Garrett Óg (1513-34). When a complaint was made to the first Tudor monarch, Henry VII, that 'all Ireland cannot rule this man' he is reputed to have replied 'then this man shall rule all Ireland'. It was a situation the King had to tolerate. Ireland was indeed 'ruled from Maynooth'. The Great Earl - and perhaps even more so his son Garrett Óg - seemed able to combine control of Irish tribal policies with a wider European vision, instanced by such things as the library they assembled at Maynooth and the claim to fraternal kinship with patricians such as the Gherardini of Florence. So, when Garrett Óg decided to set up a church where priests would pray for his father's soul, it should be no cause of surprise that there were hints of hopes it might develop into that centre of higher education Ireland had always lacked. When the College of St. Mary was established in 1518 the Fitzgeralds were on the crest of a wave. It would seem certain that it occupied the site of the Church of Ireland and the adjacent tower beside the front gate.

It all went badly wrong. The second Tudor King, Henry VIII, was not prepared to let the Fitzgeralds 'rule all Ireland'. Garrett Óg was summoned to London. He left his son Thomas in charge. The epithet 'Silken Thomas' is a piece of bardic whimsy that does not do him justice.

Neither does the legendary image of his playing his lute under the great yew tree still known as 'Silken Thomas's tree'. (It stands on the left of the path leading up from the College gate.) Tree experts are agreed that it was there in his time and indeed well before him, but historians, while not necessarily denying the image of the lute-player, have to insist that Fitzgerald heirs had more serious preoccupations, especially in dangerous times. The revolt he led was a deliberate attempt to assert Fitzgerald indispensability. But the great castle was battered into submission and the garrison massacred. Already Garrett Óg had died in the Tower of London 'of thought and pain'. Thomas surrendered and was executed at Tyburn with his five uncles. The sole survivor, a child half-brother, was spirited abroad into Italy. But his restoration began in 1552 and he was the founder of a line that was content with the new pattern of court nobility. In the mid-eighteenth century Carton and Leinster House (now the seat of the Oireachtas) showed off their glory. James the twentieth earl was created Duke of Leinster in 1766. His son William Robert, the second Duke, was the protector of the fledgling 'Catholic College' in 1795.

St. Joseph's Square

Students flocked in. The problem was to find staff and to put roofs over heads. A long wing was run out from Stoyte House, called, not very imaginatively, Long Corridor. It was begun in 1798, and it might be said that each room was occupied as soon as it became ready. Today it looks very new, because it was heavily remodelled in the 1950s. The authorities had in mind to build a square, and the north side was completed in 1809, not without serious financial anxiety. Again, not very imaginatively, it was called New House. The first part of the south side to be built was a detached building at the western end, to be called Dunboyne House. At the back of this is a curious tale.

John Butler became Catholic Bishop of Cork in 1763. He was of an aristocratic family, and in 1785 succeeded to the title of Lord Dunboyne and to extensive estates. He became obsessed with the thought that he was obliged to produce an heir, and when Rome refused him permission to marry he joined the Established Church in 1787. He died childless on 7 May 1800, reconciled to the Catholic Church. He left all his property to Maynooth College. Inevitably, the will was contested by the family. At this stage the penal laws against Catholics owning property had been repealed, with one exception, still there, everyone agreed, simply because it had been overlooked. If a Catholic converted to Protestantism and reconverted to Catholicism he could not bequeath landed property. But could the religion in which Lord Dunboyne died be established to the satisfaction of a civil court? Faced with the prospect of endless litigation, the parties agreed to a division of the property. For Maynooth, this was wealth indeed, and it is genuinely hard to understand why it was decided to devote it all to postgraduate studies - there were two professors of theology and an urgent need for buildings for undergraduate seminarians. But that was the decision, and the building, Dunboyne House, opened for postgraduate students of the Dunboyne Establishment in 1815. It still keeps the same name and function.

The south side of what was now beginning to look like a square was completed between 1822 and 1824. St. Joseph's Square has character, despite the ravages of time and sometimes questionable refurbishment. It may be that it is hard to go seriously wrong when building within a tradition (in this case the Georgian) and perhaps particularly difficult if there is not much money to spend.

South of the square is an untidy cluster of buildings which housed the lay college. At its heart is the finest heritage building in the College, the eighteenth-century Riverstown Lodge, which still survives the less worthy later additions that surround it. The buildings were incorporated into the seminary when the lay college closed in 1817, clearly made redundant by the opening of Clongowes Wood in 1814. Two large functional buildings, Rhetoric and Logic Houses, were built in the early 1830s and became the Junior House. In this area some relief is provided by the 'Junior Garden'. It is outlined as the garden of Riverstown Lodge on a map dated 1809. It was rejuvenated by the late Cardinal D'Alton when he was President in the 1930s. He initiated what is its most notable feature, the rock garden.

Finding a Staff

In the 1790s it was clearly a problem to find teaching and administrative staff in a country when there had never been a seminary. Fortunately there was a solution in the many émigré priests who had fled the French Revolution. Some were French, some Irish, the latter being strongly French in culture. In consequence, the College had a strong 'French' flavour at the beginning. The passage of time brought its inevitable 'greening'. A good place to get a sense of this is the cemetery, just beyond the Junior Garden, where the first burial took place in 1817. One might also reflect that the most famous of the earlier staff was neither French nor a theologian, Nicholas Callen, Professor of Natural Philosophy (or, as we would say, Mathematics and Physics) from 1826 to 1864. He was a pioneer of applied electricity, patenting an improved battery and a process for galvanising iron, and, it seems certain, making the first working induction coil, which, curiously, he did not patent. The apparatus he built for himself is in the College Museum, near the Junior Garden, and opened by request. The Museum also contains a collection of Irish-made scientific instruments and of ecclesiastical items.

Gothic: St. Mary's Square and College Chapel

There was still not enough space. In the 1840s it became politically expedient 'to do something for Ireland', and part of that 'something' was a building grant of £30,000 for Maynooth. It was the height of the 'Gothic Revival', and its leading exponent, A.W.N. Pugin, was chosen as architect. He chafed at the financial constraints, but produced three sides of 'St. Mary's Square' in plain thirteenth-century Gothic. While it dominates the humbler earlier buildings, it is much plainer than Pugin's dream. His greatest grievance was that funds did not run to a College Chapel.

The Irish Catholics had by now begun the building of new churches, some in an ornate Gothic style. Yet the chapel of the national seminary was still a hall in the north end of Long Corridor, regarded as temporary when it was first used in 1800. But there were still more urgent needs, notably a new infirmary, built to the north of Pugin's buildings in the 1860s. It looks like a Gothic sanatorium and tuberculosis was certainly in the minds of those who commissioned it. It has recently been remodelled (2002) as the headquarters of the commissions and agencies of the Irish Bishops' Conference.

The Chapel, to be built by public subscription, was initiated by Charles W. Russell, President from 1857 to 1880. A distinguished scholar and administrator, he is perhaps most widely remembered as the friend and confidant of John Henry Newman, who said of him that 'he had perhaps more to do with my conversion than anyone else'. The architect was J.J. McCarthy, Professor of Architecture at the Catholic University. The foundation stone was laid on 20 October 1875, and it was finally opened for worship on 24 June 1891. It is in French fourteenth-century Gothic, more ornate than Pugin's buildings, but still restrained. It may perhaps be too dominated by the massive tower and spire, added a decade later.

The architect for the interior was William Hague but the guiding spirit was Robert Brown, President from 1885 to 1894. They were not free of the perennial problem, of having 'to do much with little means', but the outcome was an unqualified success. In a large complex of

plain and generally utilitarian buildings, a visit to the College Chapel can hardly fail to be a genuinely religious experience.

The greatest contributing factor is, inevitably, the stained glass windows. It was not a great period for glass, but the cumulative effect is impressive - the great Rose Window centred on Christ the King in glory, and the row stretching down the nave and round the apse depicting scenes from his public ministry. They were supplied by three firms, Mayer from Munich and Lavers and Westlake and Cox Buckley and Co. from London. N.H.C. Westlake of the first of these London firms gave a 'pre-Raphaelite' feel to the interior with his Stations of the Cross and the great heavenly procession of saints and angels that fills the ceiling (the panels were designed by Westlake and executed by a Dublin artist, Robert Mannix). This praise swelling towards the altar is echoed in the floor, where a psalm-verse in a marble mosaic calls for perpetual praise of the Lord. The massive organ was built by Stahlhut of Aachen. A most impressive feature, rivalling even the light from the stained glass, is the row upon row of carved oak choir-stalls that fill the whole church. Their detail does really suggest the medieval craftsmen, except that here it was produced by a Dublin firm, Connollys of Dominick Street. The five apse chapels are a notable feature of the design. The central one, the Lady Chapel, has mosaics depicting the life of Our Lady, carried out with Italian glass by Earley Studios of Camden Street. The complex of buildings at Maynooth had been substantially completed by about 1900. The architecturally undistinguished Aula Maxima was built in the 1890s, the equally undistinguished but more unexpected swimming pool in 1903, one of the very first in Ireland.

Academic Development

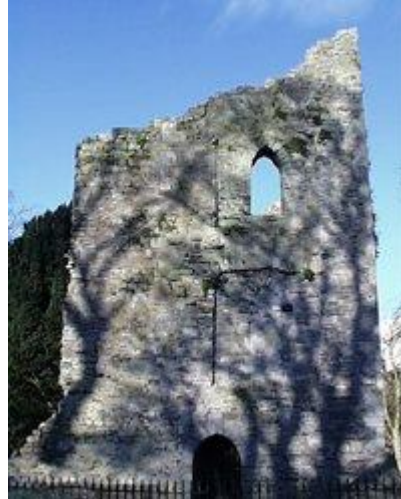
The student body fluctuated between five and six hundred, all of them of course seminarians preparing for the priesthood. Authority to confer degrees came slowly enough to what, by the standards of the time, was a large 'third-level' institution. In the centenary year 1895 a petition was sent to Rome for authority to grant degrees in theology, philosophy and canon law, and this was granted in 1896. The thorny problem of civil university education acceptable to Catholics was resolved by the Irish Universities Act of 1908. There was provision for Maynooth to become a 'recognised college', and this began to function in 1910, with faculties of Arts, Science, Philosophy and Celtic Studies. In 1966 it was decided to open the College courses to religious and laity, and student numbers grew. There are now about 5,000, of whom only a small minority are studying for the priesthood. Legislation in 1997 established the National University of Ireland, Maynooth, as a totally separate body. Its main developments are to the north of the road from Maynooth to Kilcock, but it maintains a significant presence in the older heritage buildings.

The Latest Years

Here a few noteworthy recent developments may be listed. A new library was opened in 1984. Named the John Paul II Library, its main door faces a bronze statue by Imogen Stuart of the Pope with Irish youth. This is surrounded by the 'heritage wall' recording the names of benefactors. Near the main west door of the College Chapel is a bronze statue of Our Lady Queen of Angels, a gift to honour the many Irish priests who have worked in Los Angeles. It was dedicated by Cardinal Roger M. Mahoney on 3 October 1991. St. Mary's Oratory, in the Pugin buildings, had been allotted to the senior students in the 1850s, over the protests of Nicholas Callan, who claimed that he had been promised the large hall as a laboratory. The plain space was slightly embellished after it had been gutted in the fire of 1 November 1878, but it remained utilitarian despite the insertion of two genuinely distinguished stained-glass windows in 1939. They survived an unfortunate refurbishing in the name of liturgical renewal, and remain a chief glory in a total and happier reordering carried out to mark the new millennium. This renewal was made possible with a generous grant from the St. Joseph's Young Priests Society. The Oratory is adorned with works of art by Patrick Pye (Transfiguration), Imogen Stuart (Madonna and Child), Ken Thompson (St. Joseph, Altar, Ambo, Chair), Kim en Joong, O.P. (non-figurative) and Benedict Tutty, O.S.B. (Tabernacle and Cross).

Finally, there is the bicentenary garden, located in St. Mary's Square, designed to symbolise man's spiritual journey towards God. It really should be taken slowly and reflectively

Maynooth Castle



Maynooth Castle is now run by the Office of Public Works.

An exhibition on the history of the Fitzgerald family and the castle is housed in the visitor centre on site. **Admission is free and guided tours are available.**

Maynooth Castle opening times for 2008 are

June-September: Monday to Sunday 10am-6pm,

October: Sundays and Bank Holidays 10am-5pm.

For further information please contact 00 353 1 6286744 or maynoothcastle@opw.ie



The ancient name of Maynooth 'Magh Nuadhat' means the plain of Nuadhat. Nuadhat is referred to as the maternal grandfather of the legendary Fionn MacCumhail in the 'Annals of the Four Masters'. In 1426 the sixth Earl of Kildare enlarged and rebuilt the castle. In the latter half of the fifteenth century, Maynooth Castle became the centre of the Geraldine powerbase, as the Earls of Kildare increased their strength of 'rule'. This was something which the English monarchy disliked. The culmination of the developing friction between the Fitzgeralds and the monarchy was the rebellion of Silken Thomas (so called because of his fine clothes).

Silken Thomas alias Lord Offaly was a son of Garret Óg, the ninth Earl of Kildare. Thomas rose up in rebellion against the king who had arrested his father, and held him in the Tower of London. Thomas marched to Dublin Castle and threw down the sword of state, declaring himself an enemy of the king. However, his rebellion was curbed when he and his followers were defeated and the stronghold of Maynooth taken by the English. All those within the castle were put to death and this became known, ironically, as the 'Maynooth Pardon'. Thomas, along with five of his uncles, was later executed in London. Maynooth Castle then became a royal castle and a popular residence for the Lord Deputies of Ireland. By the seventeenth century however, the castle had fallen derelict. It became the property of the Duke of Leinster and today only the ruined keep and the gate-house survive.

Local Visitor Attractions:

Celbridge Abbey Gardens

Celbridge Abbey Grounds, Clane Road

Tel: 01 -

Fax: 01

Email:

WWW:



Prices:

Adult €3.80 - Children €2.50 - Students €2.50 - Senior Citizen €2.50 - Family €9.50; Group rates available.

Description:

6275508 This property has historic associations with Jonathan Swift and Thomas Marlay, grandfather of Henry Grattan. Situated along the River Liffey and Millrace at Celbridge Abbey, features include themed walks around the grounds, a model railway, children's playground, picnic areas, a restaurant and garden centre.

Dates:

Open all year round - 7 days

Hours:

Mon	-	Sat:	10am	-	6pm
Sundays:	12	noon	-	6pm	
Bank	Holidays	12	noon	-	6pm

Directions:

From Dublin on the M4, turn left at Lucan and head for Celbridge. On the M7, take a right at Rathcoole village and make your way to Celbridge. Bus Services: 67 and 67A from Middle Abbey Street, Dublin 1. Arrow Train service to Hazelhatch Station with feeder bus.

Leixlip Castle

Historically, the centre of Leixlip has always been Leixlip Castle. Built on a rock at the confluence of the River Liffey and the Rye Water was granted to the de Hereford family and dates from the Norman Invasion of 1171 with the round tower added onto the square keep in the 14th Century. The castle was strategically placed at the confluence of the River Liffey and the River Rye. Over the following several hundred years Leixlip Castle was to be one of the strongholds of the Pale - an outpost.



In 1317 the castle was attacked by Robert Bruce, King of Scotland. Bruce's army failed to capture it but in the process burnt part of Leixlip. In 1485 Henry VII granted the castle and lands to Gerald FitzGerald the 8th Earl of Kildare. It was to remain with the FitzGerald family until the rebellion of "Silken Thomas" - the tenth Earl of Kildare - in 1534. After 17 years of turmoil, including a tentative plan to marry the young man to Mary I, "Bloody Mary" Tudor, in 1554 Gerald made a submission to the Catholic Queen Mary I and a portion of his lands were restored and his title as the eleventh Earl of Kildare "legitimised."

Leixlip had returned to its position as a bastion of English authority. In 1569 the castle then passed into the possession of Sir Nicholas Whyte and its importance as a military outpost and seat of power diminished. The Whyte family retained ownership for the next 200 years. Architecturally the castle reflects the passage of time with a complete renovation in the 18th Century when the courtyard was enclosed around a grand staircase and the facade punctuated with Gothic windows.

In 1732 the castle passed into the ownership of the Conolly family where it remained until 1914 when the castle was acquired by Lord Decies who replaced the Gothic windows in the drawing room and library, requiring instead Tudor-style mullioned windows.

Various tenants have included Archbishop Stone, the Protestant Primate; Viceroy Lord Townshend; Lord Waterpark; and Baron de Roebuck. In 1945 the castle was sold to William Kavanagh prior to the purchase in 1958 by The Hon. Desmond Guinness, founder of the Irish Georgian Society.

Castletown House & the Wonderful Barn

Castletown House is the first grand Palladian House in Ireland - the design of the building led to the construction of Leinster House and from thence to the White House in Washington, D.C. Begun in 1722 by Speaker William Conolly (1662-1729), Speaker of the Irish House of Commons, the lands of the estate lie between Leixlip and Celbridge, hence there are two modern estate bearing the Castletown name, one in each town.

Conolly commissioned the Italian architect Alessandro Galilei (1691-1737) to prepare plans for the house. With Galilei's return to Italy in 1718 overseeing actual construction was left to Edward Lovett Pearse who was in possession of Palladio's "Quattro Libri dell' Architettura" - Four Books on Architecture which were printed in Venice in 1570. Palladio's books drew heavily on the classical orders and reflected the essence of High Renaissance philosophy of calm and balance or harmony. Castletown House reflects the balance of that philosophy with a great central block of grey stone flanked by golden Ardbraccan stone curved colonnades which join the kitchen and stables to the main house.

Conolly's widow, Kathleen, continued to live in the house after his death. The house was inherited by Speaker Conolly's nephew, William, who died two years later, leaving the house to his son Tom, known as "Squire Conolly." Born at Leixlip Castle, it was Tom and his wife, Lady Louisa Lennox, who continued to improve the house, adding the world-famous plasterwork by the Lafranchini brothers.

As was the custom with great houses, constructions of various types were made to create vistas. To the west of the house Kathleen Conolly had built "Conolly's Folly," an obelisk which Dr. Mark Giroud has called "the one piece of real architecture in all of Ireland." Though built to mark the western edge of the Conolly lands, the folly is actually built on the lands of neighbouring Carton House, home to the FitzGerald, Earls of Kildare and Dukes of Leinster. Princess Mariga, the late wife of Desmond Guinness, is interred there under the central arch.

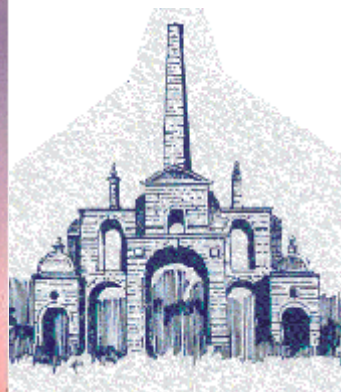
To mark the eastern vista of Castletown a conical shaped building - The Wonderful Barn - went up in 1743 with the stairs ascending upwards around the exterior of the building. It is flanked by two smaller towers. A granary, short tower and dovecote have all been put forward as reasons for building the unique structure. In Georgian times it was a custom to use doves as a delicacy when other animal sources of food were not in season. The height of structure would also lend itself to sport shooting, while a central hole through each of the floors would suggest a place to store grain.



Castletown House



The Wonderful Barn



Connolly's Folly

Carton House, Maynooth



The

History

The name 'Carton' comes from the old Irish 'Baile an Cairthe' or land of the pillar stone. Carton was the country residence of the FitzGeralds, built in 1739. Earl FitzGerald commissioned renowned architect Richard Castles to undertake the project which, at the time, cost a mere £26,000 to build. Their townhouse, Leinster House, was built in 1747 and is now better known as the location of the Irish Parliament (Dáil Éireann). The FitzGeralds arrived in Ireland in 1176 as part of the Anglo-Norman invasion of Ireland. They became Earls of Kildare in the 14th Century and Dukes of Leinster in 1776. Carton Estate was lost to the FitzGerald family in the 1920s when the 3rd son of the 6th Duke sold his birthright to pay off a gambling debt. This wayward son eventually became the 7th Duke and the house and lands were sadly forfeited to an English moneylender.

The first Duke of Leinster, James FitzGerald, married Lady Emily Lennox, the second daughter of the Duke of Richmond and a sister of Lady Louisa Connolly of Castletown. The story of the life and times of the sisters was beautifully captured by the author Stella Tillyard and made into a mini series for the BBC, entitled the Aristocrats which was filmed on site at Carton House. In 1949, Lord Brockett of Brockett Hall purchased the estate. The present owners, the Mallaghan family (from Co. Tyrone) purchased the estate in 1977. Carton House is an 1,100 acre fully walled estate. The boundary wall stretches an incredible 5.5 miles long and the estate itself stretches over two counties, Kildare and Meath. The Glashnoonareen River divides these two counties and meets the River Rye, Carton's main river, at the 1st tee box on the Montgomerie course. In fact, when you play the 1st hole from the white or green tees you drive off in County Meath and your ball lands (hopefully) in County Kildare!

The River Rye stretches for 1.5 miles through the estate and flows into a tranquil lake which, surprisingly, is man made and was created for the family in the 18th Century. The boathouse is thought to have been built especially for one of Queen Victoria's visits to Carton House. The FitzGeralds were informed that she had a dream that she was rowing on the lake at Carton so they hastily built the boathouse and commissioned a special boat for her visit. Queen Victoria stayed in the famous Chinese room on her visits (1849 & 1897). The tower on the estate is called the Tyrconnell Tower. It was rebuilt in famine times as a famine relief project but the original is thought to have had medieval origins. Because of its spectacular location, Carton House has been the location of many films including Scarlet, the sequel to Gone With The Wind. Other movies filmed here include Barry Lyndon, Aristocrats, and The Treaty. They've also had more than our fair share of famous visitors. Inhabitants of Carton and its lodges include Grace Kelly who stayed there while on holidays with Prince Rainier and her young family. Peter Sellers lived in one of the wings of the house for many years in the 1970s. Marian Faithfull, 60s icon and one time girlfriend of the singer Mick Jagger, lived in the Shell Cottage for seven years from 1990-1997. Shell Cottage for seven years from 1990-1997.

