



1 – Lord Mark Kerr, DISAPPOINTMENT
early nineteenth-century watercolour (detail)
(all illustrations courtesy Hector McDonnell unless otherwise stated)

The Irish world of Lord Mark Kerr: consort of a countess, and admiral artist

ANNE CASEMENT

LORD MARK KERR (1776-1840) WAS THE THIRD SON OF THE 5TH MARQUESS OF Lothian, and spent his childhood years at the family homes of Newbattle Abbey, near Edinburgh, and Charlton, near Greenwich. At the age of sixteen he entered the Royal Navy, in which he served from 1792 to 1805, commencing his career as a midshipman on *HMS Lion*, the vessel which carried Lord Macartney as British ambassador to the court of Peking. The excitement of this unprecedented opportunity to investigate the inner workings of China drew a diverse group of people together for the expedition, including two professional artists, Thomas Hickey and William Alexander. William Alexander made such a fine reputation for himself from the illustrations he executed of the expedition that in 1802 he became the first professor of drawing at Britain's Military College, and in 1808 the first keeper of prints and drawings in the newly founded British Museum. Drawing was an essential tool of a naval officer, as at every landfall profiles had to be sketched of the coastline, and accurate maps made of their anchorages. Lord Mark exhibited a talent for drawing and painting at an early age. Under the tutelage of the artists and draughtsmen associated with Macartney's expedition, particularly William Alexander and Henry Parish, the expedition's geometer and surveyor, he perfected the craft of the naval artist.¹ He also had a considerable talent for drawing in a fantastical manner, and was an adept punster and poet.

By the time of the *Lion's* return in 1794, war had been declared against revolutionary France. In the course of this conflict Lord Mark rose to captain the frigates *Cormorant* and *Fisgard*, and subsequently reached the rank of vice-admiral. Whilst in command of these frigates his artistic life blossomed: there are jewel-like minute watercolours and drawings of his cabin; of the beautifully ordered ropes on the lower deck; of the various codes for signalling with flags; and views of the places

he visited. In 1799 he married Lady Charlotte McDonnell (1779-1835), younger daughter of the 6th Earl of Antrim (1749-1791), who, upon the death of her elder sister in 1834, became Countess of Antrim in her own right. After 1805 Lord Mark never went to sea again.²

The McDonnell family is descended from John Mor McDonnell of Kintyre, younger brother of the Lord of the Isles,³ who in 1399 married Margery Bisset, heiress to the Bisset estates in county Antrim. The Bissets had a castle at Glenarm,⁴ but a cliff-top site on a promontory at Dunluce, outstanding both scenically and in defensive terms, subsequently became the domicile of Sir Randal Arranagh McDonnell, the 1st Earl of Antrim (d.1636), and was one of the strongest fortresses held by a native family anywhere in Ireland.⁵ After the Battle of Kinsale, Randal Arranagh submitted to the English crown, and was rewarded in 1602 with a grant (reconfirmed in 1603) of over 300,000 acres between Coleraine and Larne.⁶ Under the terms of this grant, manors could be created on his estate, each of which was to be provided with a castle or mansion house. Such manors were established at Dunluce, Clough, Ballycastle and Glenarm, and were intended to be administrative, legal and commercial centres. Randal Arranagh thus had considerable need of competent builders and town developers, and the architecture of the fortified houses at Ballygalley, Kilwaughter and Ballycastle reveals that Scottish masons were active on his lands in the 1620s.⁷

In 1813 Lord Mark Kerr purchased Holmwood, in the tiny Oxfordshire village of Shiplake, as a home for himself and his growing family. But the family also made regular visits to Ireland, where Lady Charlotte had inherited a portion of the Antrim family's land.⁸ During these stays they made excursions not only within the vast Antrim estate, but also to friends and relations in other parts of Ireland. On these occasions Lord Mark obviously took his sketching equipment with him, and the majority of the resulting drawings, together with many others made during visits to places in England, Scotland and Wales, were subsequently collected together into three volumes by his eldest daughter, Letitia Louisa, and entitled 'Scratches from Nature'. A few more were included in three other volumes: *Drawings, Writings, Sketches, Monsters etc.*, which were collected together by Letitia Louisa; *Drawings & Sketches by Vice Admiral Lord Mark Robert Kerr*, which was arranged by his wife and presented by him to Letitia Louisa after her mother's death; and *Views Sketches Memoranda etc at or of Glenarm Castle, its demesne – village – & the country for some miles around, taken at different times & by various Artists*, compiled by Letitia Louisa in 1844.

On visits to Lady Charlotte's unmarried agent Edmund McGildowney, the Kerrs stayed with his elder brother, Charles, and his wife at Clare Park, which enjoyed a picturesque, albeit chillingly exposed location on the cliff-top just west of Ballycastle.⁹ Lord Mark obviously became very much a part of Ballycastle society,

and made many friendships in the maritime community clustered around the harbour. In his correspondence with John Casement of Ballycastle, another agent retained by the Antrim family, Lord Mark asked engagingly to be remembered to ‘all my old friends at the Quay’.¹⁰ John Casement was married to Charles and Edmund McGildowney’s sister, and his uncle owned lands a short distance inland from Ballycastle.

During these stays, Lord Mark sketched many of the local views, and made forays by boat to other outstanding nearby landmarks, such as the Giant’s Causeway, Dunseverick Castle, Carrick-a-Rede rope bridge, Fair Head and Rathlin Island. Expeditions were also undertaken to places associated with the Antrim family, such as Dunluce Castle, Kenbane Castle and Bonamargy Friary, and to old Culfeightrin church on the Casement lands at Magherintemple. He was obviously attracted to these subjects because of their links with his wife’s family, but, being a child of the late eighteenth century, he was also drawn by their romantic and picturesque qualities, and association with characters and events of long ago, both mythical and real. His many drawings of monstrous creatures, and passion for creating fanciful garden follies and sculpture, are testimony to his penchant for an ‘other world’ peopled by imaginary, often grotesque, beings (Plate 1).

Lord Mark’s drawings of Dunluce Castle have recently been published in Hector McDonnell’s fine account of its history.¹¹ Whilst impressively comprehensive in their scope, they provide little new information on its architectural history, save to explode the popular myth that part of a range of buildings perched on the cliff-top at the northernmost edge of the castle collapsed into the sea in 1639. A story prevails that it was the castle kitchens that fell, taking a number of the Antrim family’s cooks and servants with it, but this was clearly not the case. The building which is said to have collapsed was, in fact, a high-status one, possibly including the apartments of Catherine Manners, the widow of the Duke of Buckingham, who became the wife of the 2nd Earl of Antrim (d.1682). Lord Mark’s drawing of this range shows both gable ends of the building still standing, so, at most, only part of the seaward-facing façade could have collapsed into the sea (Plates 2, 3).¹²

Lord Mark’s drawings of other local antiquities add little to our knowledge of their architectural history, with the exception of those of Bonamargy Friary, which, apart from providing a detailed record of this establishment in the early nineteenth century, offer some useful new information concerning the architectural detailing of the north wall of the north range.¹³ This friary was probably founded for the Third Order of Franciscans Regular in about 1500, but was rebuilt by Sir Randal Arranagh McDonnell in 1621. It occupied an idyllic site on sheltered, low-lying ground between the River Margy and Ballycastle Bay, and was of special significance to the Antrim family as Randal Arranagh had constructed a family mortuary chapel and vault to one side of the church, in which four earls and two countesses of Antrim



2 – Lord Mark Kerr, *DUNLUCE CASTLE FROM THE EAST*
3 – Lord Mark Kerr, *DUNLUCE CASTLE FROM THE WEST*
August 1809, wash drawings, 11.5 x 18 cm



4 – Lord Mark Kerr
BUONAMARGY FROM THE SEA,
 25th September 1815,
 wash drawing, 12 x 20 cm



were to be buried. The construction of this chapel resembles the work of Plantation builders, and the windows are of a Scottish style. Indeed, the concept of building a mortuary chapel and vault as a transept to a church is a product of the Scottish sixteenth century. The friary was probably abandoned by the end of the seventeenth century, but it continued to be used for burials (Plate 4).¹⁴

The drawings of Ballycastle are, however, of more than uncommon interest. They date from the period 1809 to 1838, and clearly show the relationships between buildings of great significance (many now gone) in the history of the town, such as the castle built by the McNeills, important local tenants of Randal Arranagh, and artefacts associated with the town's remarkable industrial development in the mid-eighteenth century.

The castle was constructed in the first half of the seventeenth century by Hugh McNeill, and demolished about 1856.¹⁵ It was similar to other turreted tower houses in the Scottish style built at the same time on the Antrim estate, such as Ballygalley Castle. Randal Arranagh was a shrewd operator, and cleverly provided accommodation for himself and his family in this barony by requiring a right of residence in McNeill's castle whenever he wished to stay.¹⁶ Its site was in the central area of the town known as the Diamond. The town itself was laid out, not in the haphazard Irish way, but as neat houses on either side of a main street, which widened at one end into a market-place or Diamond.¹⁷ This was the model for many Plantation towns in Ulster, such as Lisburn and Newtownards, the market end of the main street being generally enclosed by the Plantation castle.¹⁸ The first Plantation town was commenced in 1605 at Coleraine,¹⁹ and the town established at the same time by Sir Randal Arranagh at Dunluce was also laid out in a regular way.²⁰ Randal Arranagh is thought to be the only native Ulster landlord to adopt such a systematic approach to town-planning.²¹

By the time Lord Mark Kerr came to sketch the castle in 1811, little remained, part of it being said to have been removed to permit the construction of



5 – Lord Mark Kerr, *BALLYCASTLE*
21st August 1811, pen and ink drawing, 18 x 11.5 cm

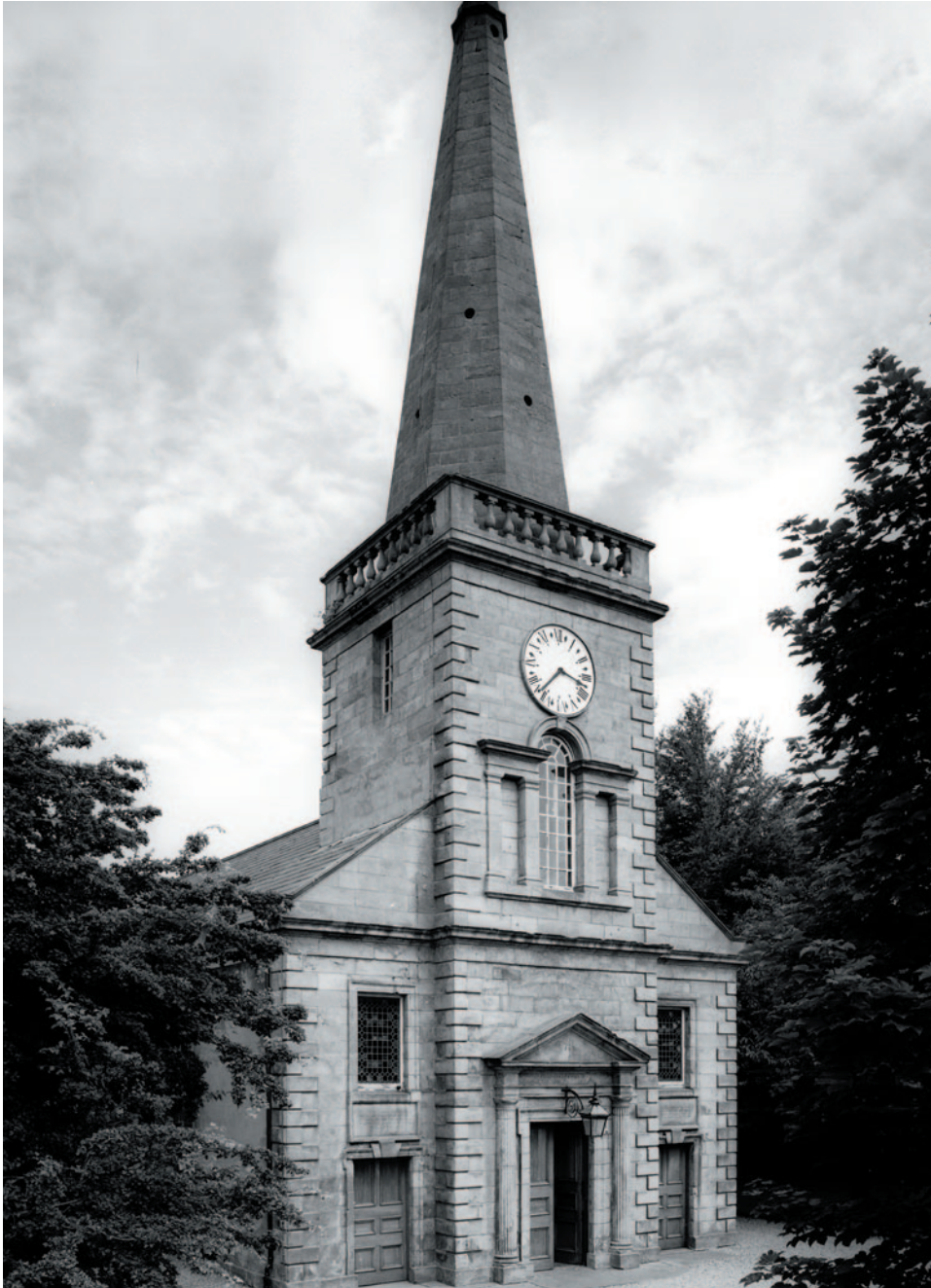
Holy Trinity Church in 1756. The Ordnance Survey Memoir of 1831 described there being nothing left but a gable with a machicolated turret at the corner.²² This may be a slight misreading of its nature, the surveyor mistaking broken window openings in one of the turrets for machicolation. Thackeray in 1842 described ‘a ruined old mansion with round turrets’,²³ and McNeill notes the existence of two old views of the ruin which show a tower house with at least two turrets corbelled out at the angles, which were known in Scotland as ‘studies’.²⁴ This description matches closely the two Kerr sketches, and it is understood that these four images are the only ones of the castle.²⁵ It lay beside the steep bank of a stream, and commanded a fine view towards the coast and into Glentaisie.²⁶ One of the Kerr sketches shows the close juxtaposition of neighbouring buildings in the Diamond to the ruin (Plate 5).²⁷

In the mid-eighteenth century, under the aegis of Hugh Boyd (1690-1765), Ballycastle underwent a remarkable period of development, and became, albeit briefly, one of the foremost industrialised towns in Ireland.²⁸ Hugh Boyd was the son of the rector of Ramoan and his wife Rose McNeill, who inherited the McNeill estate, which included much of the land around Ballycastle. Hugh himself purchased the town of Ballycastle from the Earl of Antrim in 1727.²⁹ Prior to this he had been a colliery manager there, and in 1736 he acquired the mining rights to its coalfield, which, over the next twenty years, he expanded and developed. In an effort to extend the markets for his coal, he vastly improved the harbour facilities of the town, and created a number of coal-dependent industries there. Perhaps the most prominent was the glass works built in 1755 on the Glass Island at the mouth of the River Margy. Its enormous brick flue, some ninety feet high, dominated the local landscape, and it was understood by the Ordnance Survey to be one of the largest buildings of its kind in the United Kingdom.³⁰ Its main product was bottle glass, but all output ceased in the 1790s, and it was demolished in the 1880s.

Boyd established a number of other industries adjacent to the glass house, most of them coal-dependent and interdependent in terms of production, such as a brewery, soapworks, tannery and chandlery. In 1738 he moved his family into the new manor house on the seafront, in the heart of his industrial empire.³¹ Its location should have been an idyllic one, but views to Fair Head were interrupted by the towering glass house, inner dock of the harbour crammed with sailing ships, and wagon-way to the collieries; and the air would have been filled with the noxious fumes permeating from the adjacent tannery and soapworks. In 1784 the Rev William Hamilton remarked on old Mr Boyd who, not possessed of any considerable fortune, nor supported by powerful natural connections, nor endowed with any very superior talents, ‘opened public roads, formed a harbour, built a town, established manufactures, and lived to see a wild and lawless country become populous, cultivated and civilized’.³² ‘What would Ireland be, if every town and village in the country had a landlord like this?’³³

His most lasting memorial is Holy Trinity Church, which he built solely at his own expense. It has been described by C.E.B. Brett as ‘probably the best church, architecturally, in the county’.³⁴ Indeed, the elements composing its façade read like an inventory of classical features. The church is entered through an elegant pedimented doorcase carried on fluted Doric half-columns. The tower projects forward from the flanking walls, and the gable is cut by the tower. Above the central door is a Venetian window with blind side lights. This in turn is surmounted by a large clock-face, oversized so as to be seen at a distance. On the south face of the tower is a sundial, and the tower itself is capped by a balustrade, which encloses the foot of the octagonal spire. The whole façade, whilst not on a large scale, is a lesson in the articulation of classical elements (Plate 6).³⁵ O’Dwyer has recently attributed it to the British architect, Christopher Myers (1717-1789), who first visited Ballycastle in 1754, in all likelihood to discuss plans for this church,³⁶ and was probably engaged upon work to Glenarm Castle at the same time. Myers was subsequently brought back from Whitehaven in 1758 to oversee a scheme for Ballycastle harbour, having previously undertaken similar work at both Whitehaven and Ramsgate.³⁷

Although Lord Mark Kerr did not always record the scale and location of his subjects entirely faithfully, nonetheless an 1809 view (Plate 7) seawards from the foot of Glentaisie towards Fair Head and the Mull of Kintyre shows clearly the relationship between the spire of Holy Trinity church, the remaining gable end of the McNeill castle, the glass house, and a neighbouring dwelling – not the manor house, but in all probability the former Sheskburn House.³⁸ A short distance inland from the glass house is a long roofline and a rounded tower topped by a weather-vane. Another closer view of the buildings near the seafront, drawn in 1815 (Plate 8),³⁹ shows this tower more distinctly, and reveals this to be the only known depiction of the huge chimney of the soapworks, which is known to have been octagonal in



*6 – Holy Trinity Church, Ballycastle, photographed in 1996
(courtesy Michael O’Connell)*

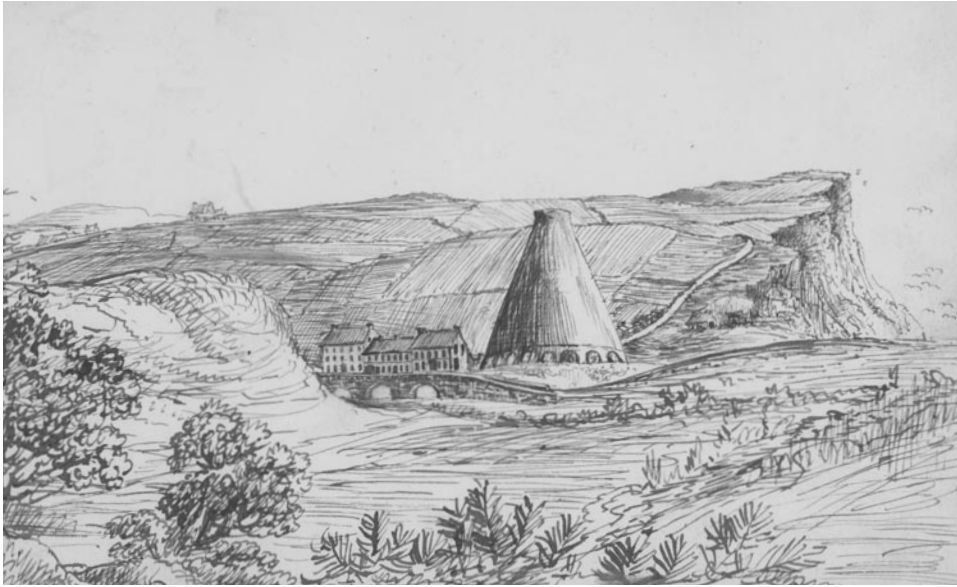


Lord Mark Kerr

7 – BALLYCASTLE FROM A BYE ROAD ABOVE THE TOWN, August 1809, wash drawing, 11.5 x 19 cm

8 – THE QUAY, GLASSHOUSE & ISLAND OF RATHLIN IN THE DISTANCE – BALLYCASTLE
20th August 1815, pen and ink drawing, 11.5 x 19 cm





Lord Mark Kerr

9 – *Lord Mark Kerr, THE QUAY & GLASSHOUSE – BALLYCASTLE*
27th July 1809, wash drawing, 11.5 x 17 cm (courtesy Hector McDonnell)

10 – *RUIN OF CULFEIGHTRIN, 31st August 1811, pen and ink drawing, 11.5 x 18 cm*



shape⁴⁰ and used by the Boyd family as a flagstaff, a flag being raised whenever the family was in residence.⁴¹ This subject would have been of special appeal to a seaman such as Lord Mark.

Other sketches are similarly informative. A view looking westwards towards the glass house in 1809⁴² shows clearly the size of its stack in comparison with the nearby two- and three-storey customs house and inn (Plate 9), whilst its relationship to Bonamargy Friary is revealed in a sketch made at old Culfeightrin church (Plate 10).⁴³ Drawings done in 1815 depict a group of colliery houses (Plate 11),⁴⁴ in all probability those shown on the 1832 Ordnance Survey map in Colliery Bay near Fair Head,⁴⁵ and Bath Lodge (Plate 12), at that time the residence of the rector of Culfeightrin, the Rev Hill,⁴⁶ but understood originally to have comprised the former bath house for the collieries, and adjoining manager's house.⁴⁷ Another 1815 view shows the Margy Bridge at the mouth of the River Margy (Plate 13),⁴⁸ which was swept away in 1857;⁴⁹ whilst many views reveal that the farms in Glenshesk and Glentaisie had been arranged into neat rectangular fields long before the Great Famine (Plate 14).⁵⁰

Visits to Mount Stewart, county Down, the home of the Londonderry family, to whom Lord Mark was connected by marriage, enabled him to draw this house and the fine ruins of Greyabbey, which lay close by; and a visit to the Connolly family at Castletown, county Kildare, to whom Mark was also connected, enabled him to make a study of Maynooth Castle. An interruption to the journey to board the ferry from Donaghadee to Port Patrick permitted him to take in Carrickfergus Castle (Plate 15),⁵¹ whilst easily within reach of Glenarm was the Antrim coast where he sketched the progress of the new coast road, constructed between 1832 and 1842.⁵² In 1828 he documented the coast guard station on Garron Point,⁵³ one of several erected along the east Antrim coast following the establishment of the Coastguard Force in 1822. Each comprised a watch house, boat house and a basic single-storey cottage for the officer and boatmen. By using flags, contact could be made between stations, so keeping track of passing boats.⁵⁴ Again, it is easy to understand Lord Mark's attraction to such a subject.

In 1828 the Belfast-born artist Andrew Nicholl (1804-1886) produced a fine series of watercolours of the Antrim coast, a selection of which was published in 1982 by the Glens of Antrim Historical Society.⁵⁵ Many of the views painted by Nicholl coincide with those depicted by Lord Mark, but in general the Kerr drawings show a finer degree of detail and accuracy. For instance, in an undated sketch of the Garron Tower coast guard station he shows a yardarm,⁵⁶ for signalling, on the flagstaff, and his 1828 sketch shows a window in the seaward gable of the watch-



Lord Mark Kerr

11 – BALLYCASTLE COLLIERY HOUSES, 4th September 1815, wash drawing, 12 x 20 cm

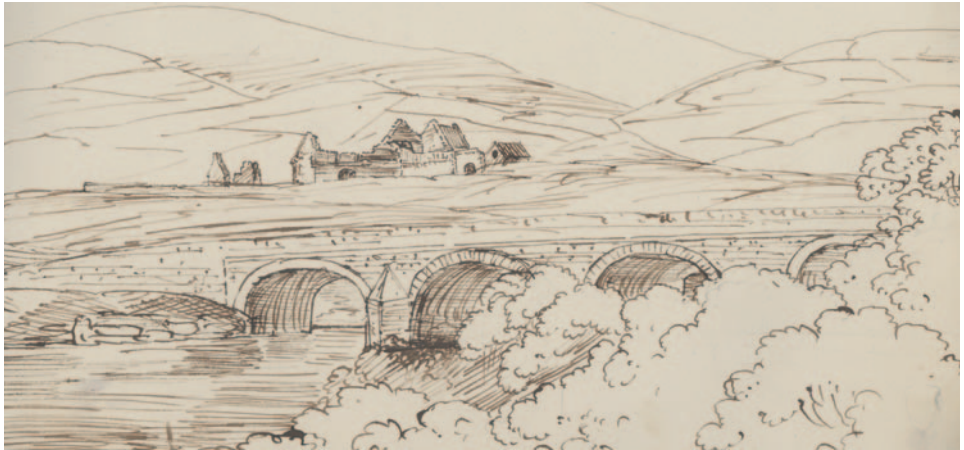
opposite 12 – FAIR HEAD FROM NEAR REVD HILL'S HOUSE, 28th August 1815

13 – BALLYCASTLE – BUONAMARGY, 15th August 1815

14 – BALLYCASTLE – FAIR HEAD – COAST OF SCOTLAND, n.d. (3 pen and ink drawings, ea 12 x 20 cm (detail))

below 15 – CARRICKFERGUS CASTLE, Easter 1826, wash drawing, 11.5 x 18 cm







*16 – Lord Mark Kerr
GARRON POINT
– PASS CUT THROUGH THE
SOLID LIMESTONE CLIFF
11th October 1828, wash drawing,
17 x 11.5 cm (detail)*

house, presumably used by the watchman (Plate 16).

Almost certainly, Lord Mark Kerr's greatest legacy to Irish architectural history is the record he provides of houses that no longer exist, and of previously undocumented or poorly documented phases of the history of those which still remain.

CLARE PARK

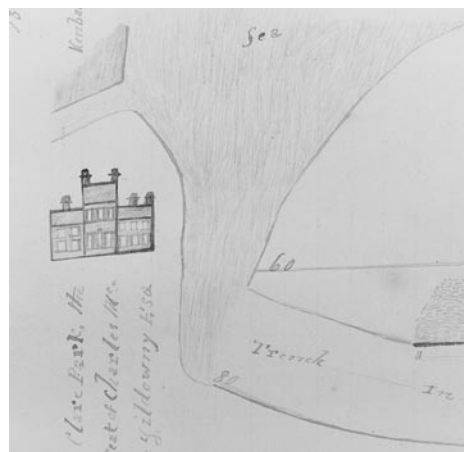
Brett notes that the oldest part of this building, the central block, was started before 1698 by the constable of Dunineany, Daniel McNeill,⁵⁷ whose daughter was the mother of Hugh Boyd, the Ballycastle entrepreneur. In the eighteenth century the house became the property of the McGildowney family,⁵⁸ one of whom was to become Lady Charlotte's agent. No pre-nineteenth-century images of the building are known to this author. The drawing of the front of the house by Lord Mark Kerr (Plate 17) was worked up whilst he was staying in Wales in 1828, but is probably the result of a visit he made to Clare Park in the spring of 1826.⁵⁹ It shows the form



17 – Lord Mark Kerr,
CLARE AND THE COAST FROM
DUNANEENY CASTLE
18th October 1828, wash drawing,
11.5 x 18 cm (detail)

18 – Clare Park, 1936
(photo James Hogg; courtesy
Trustees of the National Museums
Northern Ireland)

19 – Ordnance Survey,
CLARE PARK, THE SEAT OF
CHARLES MCGILDOWNY ESQ
n.d., pen and ink
(courtesy Royal Irish Academy)



of the house prior to construction of a stable block on the north side, but is otherwise similar to a sketch made by another artist in 1880.⁶⁰ The dwelling depicted by Lord Mark is a simple two-storey edifice, comprising a central three-bay block flanked by three-bay wings to the north and south. The middle block is higher than the wings, and has a central doorway and a steeply pitched roof. The Ordnance Survey Memoir written in 1831 noted that ‘there is nothing remarkable in the appearance of the house’, and ‘the house is neat but rather small’.⁶¹ The child-like sketch (Plate 19) of the house produced in association with the Memoir shows a two-storey building with a central three-bay block with an extremely steeply pitched roof, flanked by a two-bay block to the south and three-bay block to the north. No decorative features whatever are illustrated.⁶² Sometime after 1880 the house was gothicised with the addition of two semi-circular castellated bows, with Tudoresque windows, to the central block; a three-storey castellated tower at the end of the northern block; and castellated oriel windows to the southern and stable blocks (Plate 18). This house was demolished, piecemeal, in the last few years.

GLENARM CASTLE

According to a stone now located on the gatehouse, a dwelling on the site of the present house was built in 1636 by ‘Sir Randle McDonnell Knight Erle of Antrim haveing to his wife Dame Aellis O Nill’. It was the same square building we see today, but no architectural details remain, apart from a coat of arms beneath the inscription on the gatehouse. It was probably a plain Irish Jacobean house, with simple mullioned windows and few embellishments.

In 1642 this ‘pleasant house’ was burnt by Monro’s covenanting army,⁶³ and was subsequently neglected, though not entirely abandoned. In 1683 Richard Dobbs penned a description of Glenarm village, which, he stated, comprised all thatched houses, with a few exceptions, including the Earl of Antrim’s,⁶⁴ and Dean William Henry in 1740 remarked ‘the walls [of the castle] seem to be entire and for the most part sound. The out offices are fitted up into lodgings to accommodate the Earl during the hunting season.’⁶⁵ These consisted of an L-shaped wing built on to the body of the castle to the east.⁶⁶

In 1750 the residence of the 5th Earl of Antrim (1713-1775) at Ballymagarry (near Dunluce Castle) burnt down, and he went to live in an ‘ordinary house’ in Glenarm. The core of the castle was still in existence for in 1752 it was described as

Unknown artist

20 – VIEW OF GLENARM CASTLE FROM THE GLEN / 21 – VIEW OF GLENARM CASTLE FROM THE SEA
 mid-eighteenth century, oil on canvas, 124 x 94 cm (courtesy Viscount Dunluce)

THE IRISH WORLD OF LORD MARK KERR



‘an old house with good room in it, without a roof which he [5th Earl] is about to repair’.⁶⁷ According to an inscribed stone currently on the south front, this rebuilding was accomplished ‘by Alexander the present Earl in the year 1756’. Christopher Myers is believed to have been responsible for this work.⁶⁸ In a defence Myers made of his conduct in 1770, he asserted that he had been invited from England by the Earl of Antrim to rebuild the castle of Glanarm, in which he acquitted himself ‘with reputation’.⁶⁹ What this ‘rebuild’ entailed, and how much of the original dwelling remained, is uncertain, for no plans or drawings of the pre-1750s structure are known.⁷⁰ An unsigned topographical painting in Glanarm Castle (Plate 20) reveals this Georgian house to have been a tall three-storey, double-pile block of nine bays, flanked by colonnades terminating in two-storey pavilions with high pyramidal roofs. The windows on the principal [south] front were, without exception, of the Venetian type, though this may have been the result of the reuse by the architect of the original mullioned openings. The pavilion overlooking the river contained a banqueting hall, and there was a spacious grass-plot in front ‘on which is a statue of Hercules of esteemed workmanship’.⁷¹ This layout is confirmed by a map of 1779.⁷² Another, presumably contemporary, topographical painting shows that the seaward side of the building was graced with a small Gothick fancy: two turrets with crenellations between them forming a sort of medieval pediment (Plate 21).⁷³ In 1767

22 – *Thomas Milton, GLENARM IN THE COUNTY OF ARMAGH THE SEAT OF THE COUNTESS OF ANTRIM*
1793, engraving (courtesy Irish Architectural Archive)



Myers built Moore Abbey for Lord Drogheda. He was also probably the architect of Glenarm Parish Church, built in 1763, which, together with Moore Abbey, are two of the earliest examples of Gothick architecture in Ireland.⁷⁴

The 5th Earl, who moved the family's principal residence to Glenarm, was of a different breed to his Catholic forebears. His father had died when he was a young boy, and he was taken to live with his mother's Protestant, Anglo-Irish family at Antrim Castle, becoming himself a member of the Established Church. In consequence, his lifestyle was that of a typical Anglo-Irish aristocrat, with a fine house in Dublin and a Palladian mansion at Glenarm.⁷⁵

A 1793 print by Thomas Milton, after Barralet,⁷⁶ shows essentially the same building as the unsigned topographical paintings, albeit with some small differences. The fenestration of the second storey consists of a pair of tripartite windows, with lights of equal size, flanking three central single lights, again of equal size; the roofs of the pavilions are hipped not pyramidal; and the Venetian window on the centre front of the western pavilion, for certain, appears to have been replaced by a door with a semi-circular light above. The pediment on the main block also seems to have been enlarged and/or remodelled (Plate 22). How much can be attributed to inaccuracy on the part of the artists is difficult to determine, but the differences may, just possibly, reflect repair work stated by Abbott to have been carried out in 1783.⁷⁷

The 5th Earl was succeeded in 1775 by his son, the 6th Earl, who had no male issue. He divided the estate equally between his three daughters, with a remainder to their male heirs in order of seniority. The death of one of the sisters, Letitia, resulted in a long and acrimonious legal dispute regarding the proper disposition of her share between her two sisters, Anne Catherine (1775-1834), who became Countess of Antrim on the death of her father in 1791, and the younger sister, Charlotte, who became the wife of Lord Mark Kerr.⁷⁸ Some time not long after their marriage in 1799, Lady Anne Catherine and her husband, Sir Harry Vane-Tempest (1771-1813), made various alterations to the house in keeping with the gothicisation of the castle and estate which had begun in the mid-1700s.⁷⁹ There is documentary and material evidence to suggest that this work included the remodelling of the Classical entrance shown on the Milton engraving and its replacement by an arched entranceway, flanked by pointed side lights; the removal of the Venetian windows on the ground and first floors and their replacement with Gothic-arched ones; and the gothicisation of the square-headed windows on the ground and first floors of the west front.⁸⁰ Stylistic and structural evidence suggests that the addition of the section of the east wing immediately beside the main block also formed part of this gothicisation scheme. The latter works would have necessitated the demolition of the pretty Palladian wings. In Hill's view, these alterations were 'neither judiciously made, nor in good taste'.⁸¹

The dispute between the Countess of Antrim and her younger sister was not



23 – William Lawrence, late nineteenth-century photograph of Glenarm Castle (courtesy NLI)

opposite 24 – Lady Louisa Tighe, GLENARM CASTLE, 1844, sepia watercolour (courtesy PRONI)

25 – Lord Mark Kerr, GLENARM CASTLE S & W FRONTS, October 1828, wash drawing, 11.5 x 18 cm





finally resolved until 1814, the year after Sir Harry Vane-Tempest's death. Much of the property had been sold to pay the huge family debts, and the remainder was partitioned between the two sisters 'after protracted surveying and valuing, which caused much trouble and led to much expense'.⁸² In 1824 the Georgian house was remodelled by William Vitruvius Morrison⁸³ at the behest of Lady Anne Catherine and her second husband, Edmund Phelps (1779/80-1852), who assumed the name McDonnell. Although plans and elevations for the house by Morrison exist, none shows the principal front as built.⁸⁴

Lord Mark Kerr drew the house as it was in 1828 (Plate 25).⁸⁵ Here, as on other occasions, described later, he was depicting recent changes to a building. Of his collection of drawings of Irish houses, this one is of greatest significance in terms of its contribution to architectural history. It is taken from almost exactly the same angle as a late-nineteenth-century photograph by William Lawrence (Plate 23),⁸⁶ and the two images have many features in common. The square corner turrets topped with ogee-capped octagonal lanterns and weather-vanes are identical, as are the Gothic windows on the ground floor of the south front, the disposition of Gothic and square-headed windows on the west front, and the design of the east wing, apart from the inclusion on the photograph of armorial devices and cylindrical finials on the gables. But here the similarity ends. In 1828 the south front still sported its



26 – *T.M. Baynes, TOWN AND CASTLE OF GLENARM, CO. ANTRIM*
1831, engraving (courtesy Irish Architectural Archive)

Classical pediment, complete with coat of arms. The stepped gables with armorial devices and pairs of cylindrical finials that punctuate its roofline in the late nineteenth-century photograph were entirely absent, as was the Elizabethan-style porch. In its place, Lord Mark Kerr shows steps leading up to a simple arched entranceway, flanked by pointed side lights. The west front is surmounted by a pair of plain gables, each with a double chimney-stack, whereas the photograph shows two stepped gables with pairs of cylindrical finials, capped by quadruple chimneys. The photograph also shows all the windows with drip-stone mouldings, and substantial changes to the fenestration on the south front, such as the insertion of triple square-headed mullioned windows on the second floor, and a pair of round-headed mullioned windows at each side on the first floor.

The Lord Mark Kerr drawing of 1828 clearly shows that the Morrison scheme was implemented in two phases, and almost twenty years appear to have elapsed before the work was finally completed. The reasons for this delay are not currently understood, but presumably finance was a crucial factor. The economic benefits resulting from improvements in access into and out of the area, afforded by the construction of the Antrim Coast Road between 1832 and 1842, may have provided the means to complete the work, but unfortunately it has not been possible to locate any estate accounts for this period.

Lady Anne Catherine died in 1834, and her sister Lady Charlotte a year later. Lord Mark himself died in 1840, bequeathing his collection of drawings to his eldest daughter and companion, Letitia Louisa. She moved shortly afterwards to Glenarm to be the companion of her father's friend, the widowed Edmund McDonnell.⁸⁷ More congenial domestic circumstances may have inspired him to

complete Morrison's scheme by the addition of the Elizabethan-style porch and alterations to the roofscape and the fenestration of the south front. The Ordnance Survey Memoir written in 1835 by James Boyle makes no specific mention of the Elizabethan porch or gabled roofs, merely noting that 'the additions made to it [the castle] are rather extensive; they are in the Elizabethan style of architecture and were executed by the Messrs Morrison of Dublin. Besides this, the appearance of the castle was greatly improved by the addition of minarets at each of its angles.'⁸⁸ The accompanying valuation notebook contains a detailed valuation of the individual components of the building, including the four corner towers. There is no mention of a porch, which, if present, would have been customary in such circumstances.⁸⁹ The removal of the pediment appears not to have occurred before 1842, as three engravings of the view of the castle from the rising ground to the south-east, dated between 1831 and 1842, by T.M. Baynes, F.R. Lewis and W.H. Bartlett, show the transition phase illustrated by Lord Mark Kerr, albeit only the presence of the pediment and absence of gables on the south front (Plate 26).⁹⁰ The Lord Mark Kerr drawing of 1828 is thus the only known image of the transition phases of the south and west fronts in their entirety. The text accompanying the Lewis engraving in the *Irish Penny Magazine* of 1833 described Glenarm Castle as 'a noble structure, reflecting much credit on the taste of the Messers Morrison',⁹¹ though it is to be wondered whether William Vitruvius Morrison would have been pleased to accept authorship of so curious a hybrid. Thackeray, writing in 1842, whilst showing respect for the author of the text of this magazine, noted that the accompanying engravings were 'as unfaithful as any ever made', but it is hard to credit even an unfaithful hand with fabricating such a hybrid. His own description of the building 'an old castle repaired so as to look like new, and increased by modern wings, towers, gables and terraces', whilst mentioning 'gables' does not rule out the possibility that these might refer to those of the east wing, which is certainly the case with the 'long range of fantastic gables, towers and chimneys' flanking the riverside walk.⁹² Likewise, Samuel Lewis in 1837 mentioned the corner towers, but not the gables or porch.⁹³ The texts accompanying the Baynes and Bartlett engravings are similarly inconclusive. A sepia watercolour depicting the completed Morrison scheme, which was executed in 1844 by Lord Mark's cousin, Lady Louisa Tighe,⁹⁴ enables the second phase of the implementation of this scheme to be dated to between 1842 and 1844. This watercolour forms part of an album of views, sketches and memoranda of Glenarm Castle and its environs put together by Letitia Louisa in 1844, in McDonnell's opinion, to celebrate the completion of building work to the castle.⁹⁵ There are differences in the style of the finials and windows on the first floors of the south and west wings as depicted by Lady Louisa, and those shown on the late nineteenth-century photograph, which may, or may not, be of significance (Plate 24).



Lord Mark Kerr

*27 – BELVOIR FORMERLY LORD
DUNGANNON'S RESIDENCE IN
THE COUNTY OF DOWNE.*

IRELAND

n.d., watercolour, 11 x 16 cm

*28 – BELVOIR FORMERLY LORD
DUNGANNON'S RESIDENCE IN
THE COUNTY OF DOWNE*

n.d., watercolour, 11 x 16 cm

29 – BELVOIR CY. OF DOWNE.

IRELAND, SEAT OF ARTHUR

HILL TREVOR VISCOUNT

DUNGANNON

*n.d., watercolour, 18 x 18 cm
(detail)*



The castle was gutted by fire in 1929, but subsequently rebuilt, albeit with plain rectangular windows in place of the majority of the remaining arched ones. Another fire in 1965 led to the demolition of most of the east wing, with the exception of the old kitchen, the only room in continuous occupation since the seventeenth century.⁹⁶

BELVOIR PARK

Belvoir Park in county Down was the Irish seat of Arthur Hill-Trevor, 5th Viscount Dungannon (1763-1837), Lady Charlotte's half-brother, former guardian, and one of the executors of her father's will,⁹⁷ who, in addition, owned a large estate at Brynkinalt in Wales. He was also acquainted with the Kerrs, having toured Europe with Lord Mark's eldest brother, Lord Ancram, in the 1780s.⁹⁸

In 1802 the acrimonious dispute over the disposition of the Antrim family estates necessitated a visit by the Kerrs to Ireland. Relations between Lady Charlotte and her elder sister were, to put it bluntly, atrocious, and the possibility of staying at Glenarm therefore unthinkable. Lord Dungannon came to the rescue and offered the Kerrs accommodation at Belvoir Park.⁹⁹ The difficulties surrounding the settlement of his stepfather's and his own affairs had resulted in such mental torment that he attempted to take his own life,¹⁰⁰ and he now lived in the bosom of his family at Brynkinalt. He had not resided at Belvoir since the mid-1790s, and as a result it had been substantially neglected. 'All the hothouses are in perfect ruin and the gardens wild ... all the roads and walks are out of order ... the outhouses except the stables and coach houses are in a demolished state.'¹⁰¹ The house itself was still habitable, and was the home of Lord Dungannon's agent, Captain Cortland Skinner, and his young family.¹⁰² For Lady Charlotte, the opportunity to stay at Belvoir brought reminders of childhood visits with her family, and the intrigue and excitement of the masquerade balls of her youth.¹⁰³

Either during this stay or another in 1805, Lord Mark made two drawings of Belvoir Park, one of the entrance front (Plate 27) and the other of the east front (Plate 28), which almost certainly became the models for a set of watercolours, one of which is dated 1805.¹⁰⁴ Belvoir Park, as depicted by Lord Mark, is a seven-bay, three-storey block, the third storey being treated as an attic. The entrance front to the west has rectangular windows on all floors, decreasing in size upwards, and a simple doorcase, with a triangular pediment, in the centre of the ground floor. The east front is similar, but incorporates a central canted bow rising through all storeys. Four Ionic columns rise through the three central bays of the ground and first floors of the north front, surmounted by a triangular pediment in the attic storey, complete with coat of arms. Two oculi flank the pediment on the third floor. The remaining

windows on this front are rectangular in shape, again decreasing in size upwards, with the exception of three round-headed ones which occupy the three central bays of the ground floor. The roof has a shallow pitch, and lacks a balustrade. Its corners and canted eastern bow are crowned with decorative features, perhaps urns (Plate 29).¹⁰⁵ Lord Mark's watercolour of the north and west fronts is in many ways similar to an undated oil painting by Jonathan Fisher (active 1763-1809). Both also show the same disposition of outbuildings around the house, and include the spire of Knockbreda parish church, completed in 1737 to a design by Richard Castle (c.1690-1751). The church was built for Anne, Dowager Viscountess Midleton on land made available to her by her son, Arthur Hill, who was to become the 4th Viscount Dungannon (d.1771).¹⁰⁶ There is, nonetheless, a notable difference between the Fisher and Kerr images: the house depicted by Fisher lacks a third storey, and its roof has a steeper pitch (Plate 30).

The original house at Belvoir is shown on Sloane's map of 1739, and was described by Harris in 1744 as an 'agreeable seat'.¹⁰⁷ It has been suggested that Richard Castle may also have had an involvement here,¹⁰⁸ though David Griffin, an authority on this architect, knows of no evidence to support this claim.¹⁰⁹ The Archaeological Survey of county Down records a tradition that the house was built by Lady Midleton, which might posit the involvement of Richard Castle in the work. Construction is said to have started after the death of her second husband in 1728.¹¹⁰ It was probably a two-storey edifice, facing west. It seems to have been substantially enlarged by her son with the addition of an extension to the west, with an entrance on the new west front. Part of the original house was incorporated into a service court to the south.¹¹¹ Mrs Delany visited in 1758 and described it as 'a very good house, though not quite finished, and everything very elegant'.¹¹² Circumstantial evidence suggests Christopher Myers may have been responsible for this work, and it is known that he was employed by Arthur Hill's nephew, Lord Hillsborough, at Hillsborough Fort, before 1757.¹¹³ This would have been the house depicted by Jonathan Fisher, and Lord Hillsborough was also one of Fisher's patrons.¹¹⁴ No date has been attributed to the Fisher painting, though the mid-1770s would seem reasonable. The addition of the third storey had previously been understood to have taken place about 1820 after the estate had become the property of the Bateson family,¹¹⁵ but the Kerr sketches reveal that it must have been completed well before this, almost certainly in the late 1780s. In 1787 Lord Dungannon (5th Viscount) was expected to settle at Belvoir, and by 1788 he was living there 'in a princely style'.¹¹⁶ His residence ceased in the mid-1790s. In an article in the *Belfast News-Letter* of 1st October 1926, Francis Bigger published a painting of Belvoir c.1794, attributed to the as yet unidentified artist E.F. It shows the view of the house from the west, complete with third storey, pilastered north façade and a substantial range of domestic apartments to the south. As Bigger asserted in the accompanying



30 – Jonathan Fisher, *VIEW OF BELVOIR PARK WITH THE RIVER LAGAN AND NEWTOWNBRED A CHURCH*
n.d., oil on canvas, 90 x 126 cm (courtesy Courtauld Institute of Art)

article, this painting (like those by Lord Mark Kerr) clearly shows that Belvoir Park in its final form was largely the creation of the Hill family.¹¹⁷

Arthur Hill inherited the Trevor family's large Brynkinalt estate in Wales in the mid-eighteenth century, when he adopted the name of Trevor, and was later created Viscount Dungannon, a title associated with the Trevor family. He married firstly Anne Deane, daughter and co-heir of Joseph Deane of Crumlin, county Dublin, and secondly Anne Stafford, heir of Edmund Stafford of Brownstown, county Meath. Mrs Delany noted that his fortune was 'a very good one'.¹¹⁸ On his death in 1771 his estates were inherited by his seven-year-old grandson, who became the 5th Viscount, and, who, in 1795, married Charlotte Fitzroy, daughter of Charles, 1st Baron Southampton, and his wife Anne, co-heir to the estate of Vice-Admiral Sir Peter Warren.¹¹⁹ Although the calls upon the family's income have not been investigated, the above circumstances would suggest that the 4th and 5th viscounts were both possessed of sufficient means to undertake the enlargement of a country house.

The Belvoir estate was sold to three Belfast merchants in 1809, and thus became unavailable to the Kerrs. In 1811 it came into the possession of the Bateson family of Orangefield, who made some alterations to the house. Belvoir Park was demolished in 1961, when the grounds were transformed into a forest park.¹²⁰

MOUNT STEWART

Lord Mark visited Mount Stewart on several occasions, and often sketched the house and its surroundings.¹²¹ He was, in all likelihood, a friend of Lord Castlereagh (1769-1822), whose wife Emily was the daughter of Sir John Hobart, 2nd Earl of Buckinghamshire, the former owner of Blickling Hall in Norfolk, which had passed to the Lothian family upon the marriage in 1793 of Emily's elder half-sister, Henrietta, to William Kerr, Earl of Ancram, Lord Mark's eldest brother. The connection was cemented by the fact that, whilst Viceroy of Ireland in the 1770s, the 2nd Earl of Buckinghamshire had become Lady Charlotte's father's best friend. The two men shared the misfortune of lacking a male heir and thus having to decide how best to dispose of their estates amongst their daughters.¹²²

The Londonderry family had long recognised the need for a home more befitting their status in society and political ambitions, but financial constraints had forced them to abandon plans to build a new house in favour of improvements to the existing one.¹²³ Around 1803, Robert Stewart, 1st Earl of Londonderry (1739-1821), commissioned George Dance (1741-1825) to design a replacement for the existing west wing at Mount Stewart, but for the time being to retain the old house to the east.¹²⁴ About £12,000 had been spent on this work when it was completed around 1813.¹²⁵ Dance's plans for the west wing still exist in the Soane Museum, London. It was much modified during the substantial rebuilding of the house which took place in the mid-1840s.¹²⁶ No images are known of the eighteenth-century house, or of the Dance wing prior to the 1840s alterations, apart from those done by Lord Mark. These drawings confirm that Dance's plans were executed as he intended, especially regarding the design and positioning of the *porte cochère* on the north front, which was removed in the 1840s, and the original appearance of this façade, which was altered in the 1840s by the insertion of a tripartite bracketed window frame in place of the *porte cochère*. They also show that Lord Londonderry's suggestion for a Wyatt window in the centre of the second storey of the west front was accepted by Dance.¹²⁷ This was presumably another victim of the 1840s alterations (Plate 31).

Equally significant is the revelation of the extraordinarily idiosyncratic nature of the resulting building, previously only to be surmised. Lord Mark clearly shows that the delightful, classically proportioned Dance extension at the west end was tacked onto a gloriously rambling, higgledy-piggledy mass of buildings to the

east (Plate 32). The long two-storey, twelve-bay south front¹²⁸ overlooking Strangford Lough included an entrance on the ground floor,¹²⁹ though the principal entrance by this time would have been via the new Dance porch, approached by a drive from the west leading off the Portaferry road, which originally passed close to the south front of the house. The westerly drive had been in existence since at least 1779,¹³⁰ but Lord Mark's sketch would indicate that there had also been a southern approach to the house from the Portaferry road (Plate 33).

Previously, the only information about the house in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries came from a few inadequate written accounts. In 1792 George Hardinge described the original house 'or whatever it may be called', which was laid out in 'the most agreeable & chearful manner'.¹³¹ This 'long old low one'¹³² and the new Dance wing were described in the Ordnance Survey Memoir, compiled in the 1830s, as 'plain and small for a nobleman's residence, consisting of 2-storeys, with a range of sleeping apartments on the ground floor which have been added to the house; the kitchen and other offices are on the ground floor connected with the house.'¹³³ Atkinson in 1823 recorded an edifice 'combining some measure of its ancient character, with much modern improvement. It partakes more of the Grecian than of the Roman architecture, (although not modelled exactly on either plan,) and of that style the Grecian portico of Mount Stewart house is a fine specimen.'¹³⁴

In addition, the Kerr drawings enable the composition of the vistas from the house, and the impact of the house in the landscape, to be properly appreciated, and the existence of features within the surrounding park to be confirmed. The Mount Stewart accounts reveal that much additional work was carried out to the demesne during the period 1791 to 1819.¹³⁵ The result was a well-planted park, circumnavigated by a perimeter drive and enlivened by a series of picturesque Gothick buildings, such as lodges, a teahouse and belvedere, and an extensive walled garden.¹³⁶ The sketches support this evidence, clearly showing, for instance, the twin gate lodges that were built at the western approach to the house (Plate 34), and the lawn, 'one of the most beautiful and extensive in this province',¹³⁷ that was created around the house at a cost of about £1700. Its construction was made possible by a realignment of the Portaferry road so that it no longer passed right beside the south side of the house. Lord Mark Kerr's visit to Mount Stewart in November 1809, during which he sketched the west front and adjacent lawn, may indeed have been prompted by the recent completion of this lawn, for which the bulk of the expenditure had by then been made (Plate 35).¹³⁸

A striking revelation of the sketches is the role played by the Temple of the Winds as a focal point and eyecatcher to the east. This corroborates written accounts, such as *The Parliamentary Gazetteer of Ireland*,¹³⁹ which noted that the temple 'sends aloft a spire which figures conspicuously in the exterior views of the demesne'. Trees were subsequently planted on the hilltop surrounding the temple,

ANNE CASEMENT





Lord Mark Kerr

- 34 – MOUNT STEWART, 16th October 1815, wash drawing, 12 x 20 cm
35 – MOUNT STEWART, 15th November 1809, wash drawing, 11.5 x 16.5 cm

opposite

- 31 – MOUNT STEWART HOUSE, 11th August 1811, pen and ink drawing, 12 x 20 cm (detail)
32 – MOUNT STEWART AND THE MORNE MOUNTAINS IN THE DISTANCE
8th August 1815, pen and ink drawing, 12 x 20 cm (detail)
33 – Untitled, n.d., pen and ink drawing, 10 x 15 cm (detail)

considerably lessening its impact in the landscape. The sketches also throw up a number of problems. One of the ledgers clearly shows that an embankment immediately in front of the house was paid for between 1793 and 1803, the initial phase being completed by 1803 when heightening and repairs were undertaken.¹⁴⁰ Unfortunately, one of the sketches, dated 1815, appears to show the area in front of the house covered with water.

ANTRIM CASTLE

The Massereene family of Antrim Castle were distant connections of Lady Charlotte's. Her great-grandfather, the 4th Earl of Antrim, had married a Massereene, and, following his death in 1721, his eight-year-old son had been brought up by the Massereene family in Antrim Castle.¹⁴¹

The original castle was erected between 1610 and 1613 by the important English settler, Sir Hugh Clotworthy (d.1630), and is reputed to have been modified in 1662 by his son, Sir John Clotworthy (d.1665), who, in 1660, was created 1st Viscount Massereene.¹⁴² Its most notable feature was its Carolean doorway 'a tremendous affair of Ionic pilasters, heraldry, festoons and a head of Charles 1'.¹⁴³ The nature of this building is revealed in a fine drawing of the south and east fronts executed in 1806 by the antiquarian and historian, Sir Richard Colt Hoare,¹⁴⁴ and described by Charles Henry O'Neill as being 'quadrangular, of three stories, embellished and strengthened by four square towers, one at each angle. The windows in the rear looked into a small yard in the centre. The walls were of great strength, six feet in depth'. Pointed gables were a feature of the roof.¹⁴⁵ This typically early seventeenth-century gentry house is unlikely to have been the result of a substantial reworking as late as 1662. A quirky feature of the castle was the platform on the roof, accessed by a ladder from within, which could be used for dining *al fresco* by employing a pulley to hoist up the necessary furniture and provisions.¹⁴⁶

The 5th Viscount, who was created Earl of Massereene in 1756, died in 1757 and was succeeded by his son, the 2nd Earl (1743-1805), 'half-mad and twice bankrupted', whose early career was, to put it mildly, distinctly unusual.¹⁴⁷ He spent eighteen years in Parisian gaols, during which time he developed an attachment for a beautiful young woman, reputedly the daughter of the governor of the Châtelet prison. She tried three times to engineer his escape, finally succeeding by inciting a revolutionary mob to break into the prison in which he was lodged. The Earl thus achieved his liberty and married his liberator.¹⁴⁸ During his long debt-driven absence abroad, few resources were likely to have been available for the upkeep and maintenance of Antrim Castle. The estate was held together by the Dowager Countess, Anne Eyre, supported by the Earl's younger brothers, who fought a series of con-

tested, almost certainly costly, elections. In 1785 financial matters were so grave that the Dowager Countess was forced to sell most of her own Derbyshire estate, and in 1790 she contemplated selling the remainder.¹⁴⁹ It is perhaps not surprising that by 1787 the castle was in an advanced state of decay. Edward Berwick saw only ‘some remains of melancholy splendour and departed greatness’,¹⁵⁰ whilst Daniel Beaufort found that ‘the whole is hastening rapidly to decay’.¹⁵¹

The years following the 2nd Earl’s return, in 1797, were dominated by legal wrangles concerning the inheritance of the property. He died without issue in 1805, leaving a tangle of family disputes,¹⁵² and was succeeded by his brother, who died unmarried in 1811. The title passed to another brother, who died without male heir in 1816. The earldom then expired, but the viscountcy devolved upon his daughter Harriet, who, in 1810, had become the wife of Thomas Henry Foster, later 2nd Baron Oriel and 2nd Viscount Ferrard, the son of John Foster, the last Speaker of the Irish House of Commons. The Kerrs first visited Antrim Castle in 1811, the year after Harriet’s marriage, and Lord Mark sketched the front of the house, in danger, it appears, of being subsumed by the surrounding vegetation.¹⁵³ It cannot have been derelict, however, as the Kerrs were accommodated there,¹⁵⁴ and Lord Mark’s sketch corroborates this view (Plate 36). He illustrates the entrance front, complete with Carolean ornaments and simple pediment, between two projecting corner bays. The windows are all rectangular, with small panes. The roof of the front block appears to be in tact, as does that of the pitch-roofed extension to the rear. His sketch closely resembles the building depicted by Sir Richard Colt Hoare in 1806 (Plate 37). Neither of these images gives the appearance of a castle ‘hastening rapidly to decay’; nonetheless, in a journal written at the same time, Hoare described it as ‘a neglected mansion house of the Massereene family’, and Dubourdieu in 1812 echoed this observation.¹⁵⁵

Once again, Lord Mark was depicting a building on the cusp of change. Bence-Jones states that the castle was rebuilt in 1813 to designs by John Bowden of Dublin. He described the resulting house as a solid three-storey Georgian-Gothic castellated affair, faced with Roman cement of a pleasing orange colour, and with the original Carolean doorway re-erected as the central feature of the entrance front. Apart from this striking feature, and the tower-like projections at the corners, with their slender round-angled turrets and shallow pyramidal roofs, the elevations were plain. The entrance front was four bays (it was, in fact, five bays) between the projections, and the long adjoining front comprised eleven bays.¹⁵⁶ Reeves-Smyth is of the opinion that the original house was not demolished, merely ‘restored’ and enlarged, and that this was the work of Richard and William Vitruvius Morrison. It is one of the houses depicted in Neale’s *Views of the Seats of Noblemen and Gentlemen in England, Wales, Scotland and Ireland*,¹⁵⁷ where the illustrations of Irish properties are dominated by buildings executed by the Morrisons (Plate 38).¹⁵⁸



36 – Lord Mark Kerr
ANTRIM CASTLE
14th September 1811, pen and ink
drawing, 11.5 x 12 cm (detail)

37 – Sir Richard Colt Hoare
ANTRIM CASTLE
1806, watercolour
(collection Environment and
Heritage Service; courtesy Royal
Irish Academy)

opposite
38 – J.P. Neale
ANTRIM CASTLE
1825, engraving
(collection Environment and
Heritage Service; courtesy HMSO)





In view of the similarity between the shape and form of the building depicted by Lord Mark and Sir Richard Hoare and that of the post-1813 house, it is quite clear that Reeves-Smyth is correct in his assertion that the work carried out in 1813 should be viewed not in terms of demolition and rebuilding, but of the remodelling and embellishment of an existing building. It is also clear that Neale's 1825 view of the east front is inaccurate: not only is the relationship between the central door and adjacent windows incorrect, but the round-headed panel above the door has been omitted.

The Kerrs visited the castle again in 1828,¹⁵⁹ and soon afterwards it fell into temporary disuse. Lady Harriet died in 1831, and in 1834 her widower abandoned it in favour of his family home of Oriel Temple.¹⁶⁰ The Ordnance Survey Memoir compiled in 1838 noted that the Antrim property had 'been occupied by a few domestics only in the last [blank] years, the castle is but scantily furnished and does not now look to much advantage ... The offices ... are suitable as to size but in other respects unworthy of notice and in bad repair.'¹⁶¹ The castle enjoyed another period of embellishment in the second half of the nineteenth century, but was burnt in 1922 and demolished in 1970.¹⁶²

BIRCH HILL AND BYFIELD COTTAGE

Birch Hill lay in the townland of the same name, about a mile north-east of Antrim town. The Ordnance Survey Memoir compiled by James Boyle in 1838 recorded that the house was built by a member of the Bristow family in about 1785, and described it as being ‘not modern in its appearance but is in good order and is a comfortable and gentleman-like family residence. It is 2-storey and spacious.’ No view of the house in its early years has been discovered by this author apart from that executed by Lord Mark Kerr, who drew the front closely surrounded by trees on 10th October 1815.¹⁶³ From this we learn that it comprised a seven-bay, two-storey block over a sunken basement, with a short flight of steps leading up to a central doorway, flanked by single columns (Plate 39). The house was famed not for its architecture, but more for its tastefully laid out grounds and gardens, complete with a valuable collection of plants. Most spectacular of all was the prospect it enjoyed. It commanded ‘one of the most beautiful and varied views’ in county Antrim, embracing in the foreground Antrim, its numerous plantings and round tower, and the extensive demesne and woods of Shane’s Castle, with Antrim deer park stretching along the shores of Lough Neagh, which might be clearly seen from its northern to its southern extremity. Beyond it rose the Derry mountains, which might be traced diminishing into the lower grounds of Tyrone. Sometimes the view extended into the still lower and more distant county of Armagh.¹⁶⁴ On 16th September 1811 Lord Mark had sketched a view including the house and Antrim round tower (Plate 40).¹⁶⁵ Indeed, in all probability, it was the splendour of the view, including the ancient round tower, which first attracted his attention. There is a Kerr drawing of Antrim Castle dated 14th September 1811,¹⁶⁶ and it seems reasonable to suggest that the Kerrs made an excursion to Birch Hill whilst staying with Lady Charlotte’s ‘cousins’ at Antrim Castle. Birch Hill at this time was, in all likelihood, the property of Miss Bristow,¹⁶⁷ whose family had been agents to the Massereene family in the latter part of the eighteenth century.¹⁶⁸

Birch Hill house was subsequently renamed Ardnaveigh, and was destroyed by fire in 1941. The outbuildings and offices, including the walled garden, remain in the grounds of St Malachy’s High School.¹⁶⁹

There is also a Kerr drawing of Byfield Cottage, home of Miss McCleverty, dated April 1826 (Plate 42), and another of the view from the front of this cottage dated 12th October 1815 (Plate 41).¹⁷⁰ The view from the front of Byfield Cottage shows a glorious prospect over Antrim round tower, the shores of Lough Neagh and the Shane’s Castle estate. Atkinson records Miss McCleverty as being the owner of ‘Bye-field’ in 1823,¹⁷¹ and in 1833 she held the majority of the land in Birch Hill townland.¹⁷² Although no written or cartographic proof has been found, it seems reasonable to surmise that her cottage would have been located here. Indeed, Lord

Mark's 1811 sketch of 'Birch Hill and Cottage' shows a cottage, complete with roof akin to that of Byfield, nestling in the far right-hand corner. An L-shaped structure is also shown in this location on the 1832 Ordnance Survey map,¹⁷³ and a cottage 35' long by 20' 6" wide and 10' 6" high, with a return 30' long by 15' 6" wide and 13' high is listed in the corresponding Ordnance Survey valuation. A note in the valuation indicates that this cottage was shortly afterwards 'Down', presumably a record of its demolition.¹⁷⁴ The Ordnance Survey map shows that it was approached via its own separate drive from the south, which curved sinuously as it approached the cottage, in much the same way as the drive depicted on Lord Mark's 1826 drawing. There was also access from the approach to Birch Hill house.

No views of Byfield Cottage have been discovered by this author except for those done by Lord Mark Kerr. Miss McCleverty's cottage, as depicted by him, was an extremely picturesque thatched L-shaped dwelling, with delightful oval or round-headed windows. It had much in common with Raymond Cottage, situated in Drumraymond townland on the south-eastern shore of Lough Beg, which was constructed for Henrietta Frances O'Neill, wife of the Hon John O'Neill, in about 1777.¹⁷⁵ This cottage was made from wooden frames prefabricated at Shane's Castle, and re-erected in its intended location.¹⁷⁶ Byfield Cottage may, quite possibly, have been another product of the Shane's Castle workshop.

Drawings of such a diverse range of buildings by a skilled, accurate amateur such as Lord Mark Kerr highlight the contribution that such an artist may make to our knowledge of the architectural history of a country. Lord Mark's contribution is outstanding due to the number of buildings of quality he was acquainted with as a result of his elevated social position, and the accuracy of his depiction of them.

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Lord Mark Kerr

42 – BIFIELD COTTAGE – MISS MCCLEVERTY, April 1826, wash drawing, 11.5 x 19 cm

opposite

39 – BIRCH HILL, 10th October 1815, pen and ink drawing, 12 x 20 cm (detail)

40 – BIRCH HILL & COTTAGE, 16th September 1811, pen and ink drawing, 11.5 x 17 cm (detail)

41 – BYFIELD, 12th October 1815, wash drawing, 12 x 20 cm (detail)

ENDNOTES

The following abbreviations are used:

Kerr, 'Scratches'	M.R. Kerr, 'Scratches from Nature', 3 vols, unpublished MSS
McDonnell, <i>Dunluce</i>	Hector McDonnell, <i>A History of Dunluce</i> (Belfast 2004)
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- ³ Tom McNeill, 'The Stone Castles of Northern County Antrim', *Ulster Journal of Archaeology*, 46 (1983) 101-28: 101.
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- ⁶ *ibid.*, 21-22.
- ⁷ *ibid.*, 28-29.
- ⁸ McDonnell, 'Kerr Information File'.
- ⁹ There is a sketch done from his window at Clare Park. Angelique Day, Patrick McWilliams and Nóirín Dobson (eds), *Ordnance Survey Memoirs of Ireland Vol. 24, Parishes of county Antrim IX 1830-2, 1835, 1838-9* (Belfast 1994) 96, says Clare Park was the residence of Charles McGildowney. Edmund appears to have had a modest establishment of his own nearby, PRONI, Townland Valuation Records 1828-1840, Val/1, Val/1B, Field Books: Val/1B/135, Parish of Ramoan, 183, has Edmund McGildowney occupying a house, barn and byre in Clare townland.
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- ²⁴ Tom McNeill, 'The Stone Castles of Northern County Antrim', 101-28: 114; McDonnell, *Dunluce*, 23.
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