The Architectural Legacy of Eyre Massey,
3rd Lord Clarina (1798 - 1872)

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The building work undertaken by the 3rd Lord Clarina is outlined and evaluated. Possessed of a relatively modest income he was able, through marriage to a wealthy heiress, to commission the Pain brothers to rebuild his ancestral home in the fashionable Gothic style. In addition to the construction of Elm Park Castle, his creation of an estate village, New Clarina, is discussed as well as his contribution to church building in the area.

One of the chief controversies in Irish historiography over the past fifty years concerns the role of the landlords in Irish society. The traditional nationalist view of them was almost entirely negative: with few exceptions, they were characterised as being predatory, tyrannical, selfish, unproductive and anti-national. Modern research has produced a much more complex, indeed diffuse picture. It has tended to emphasise the diversity of the land-owning elite, a body that produced Lord Edward Fitzgerald, Daniel O'Connell and Countess Markievicz, as well as the third Lord Leitrim, John George Adair, and Field-Marshall Sir Henry Wilson. It has also brought to the fore the real contributions made to Ireland's physical and cultural heritage by the landed gentry. Their legacy of great houses and castles, though sadly depleted, is well known and has, in recent decades, been accorded belated recognition by the modern Irish state and nation. Less known and appreciated is the gentry's contribution to our urban and rural landscape. Between 1700 and 1850, it is estimated that at least 750 towns and villages were either rebuilt or founded at the initiative of landlords, and this process continued into the early twentieth century. At the same time the rural landscape was transformed through the enclosure of fields, the reclamation of poor quality lands, the planting of trees, and the development of parks and demesnes.¹

In his definitive work on the urban development of County Limerick Dr. Patrick O'Connor emphasises the crucial role played by the land-owning elite in creating our urban network.² The most spectacular example in Limerick city was the development of Georgian Newtown Pery by the Prys, later Earls of Limerick, between 1770 and 1840.³ However, there were many other such projects. Adare and Croom were built by the Earls of Dunraven, Newcastle West by the Earls of Devon, Cappamore by the Stafford O'Briens, Glin by the Fitzgeralds and Hospital by the Earls of Kenmare.⁴ Several other estate towns and villages were similarly developed all over the county. The district of

¹ See B. J. Graham and C. J. Proudfoot (eds), An Historical Geography of Ireland, London, 1993, pp 227-52
⁴ O'Connor, Exploring Limerick's Past, pp 88-98.
Ballybrown (centred on the village of Clarina at a crossroads on the N-69 road from Limerick City to Foynes and Glin) acquired two small estate villages in the 1850s, each consisting of six houses. Tervoc village was built by the enlightened Catholic Liberal M.P., William Monsell (1812-94).\(^5\) New Clarina was constructed by the other chief resident landlord in the area, the third Lord Clarina. It is the latter who is the subject of this article, for he is a good example of a typical Irish landed gentleman, whose contribution to the heritage of his locality was very great.

The title Baron Clarina of Elm Park was held by the Massey Family between 1800 and 1952.\(^6\) In total, there were six successive Lords Clarina. The first Baron was General Eyre Massey (1719-1804), a distinguished soldier whose long military career was rewarded with an Irish peerage in the dying days of Grattan’s parliament.\(^7\) He was the sixth son of Hugh Massey (1685-1757) of Duntryleague, near Galbally, in East County Limerick. Hugh’s eldest son, also named Hugh (1700-88), was created the First Baron Massey of Duntryleague in 1776.\(^8\) The Massys were a numerous and thrusting family, who intermarried extensively with their neighbours. Indeed they had acquired the former Evans estate in Ballybrown through marriage in the 1750s. However, the Massesys of Clarina, a cadet branch of the family, were always to be much less wealthy than their Duntryleague cousins, or indeed than many of their neighbours in North County Limerick. In the 1880s, Lord Massy, whose chief residence was the Hermitage in Castleconnell, enjoyed an income of £12,000 per year from his estates in Co. Limerick (8432 acres) and in Co. Leitrim (24,571 acres). In comparison, Lord Dunraven derived an annual income of £39,000 from 35,478 acres in the counties of Limerick, Kerry, Clare, Glamorgan and Gloucestershire while the Knight of Glin received £3,825 from 5,700 acres in Co. Limerick. By contrast, Lord Clarina, in 1883, only received £2,497 from 2012 acres.\(^9\) This comparative poverty was to be a determining factor in the activities of successive Lords Clarina.

The subject of this article, Eyre Massey, was born on 6 May 1798, in Cork, just three weeks before revolution erupted in Ireland.\(^10\) His father, the second Lord Clarina (1773-1810), a serving army officer, briefly held the title from 1804 to 1810. Eyre’s mother was Penelope Westropp (1779-1843) from County Cork. When his father died of fever, while on active service in Barbados, the eleven-year-old boy became the third Lord Clarina. He was to hold the title for sixty-two years, by far the longest period of tenure of any of the six Lords Clarina, indeed one of the longest in the history of the Irish peerage. Eyre Massey was the only Lord Clarina not to be a soldier, and the only one to attend university. He was a student at Christ Church College, Oxford, from 1816 to 1819, graduating with a B.A. degree. Christ Church was the most distinguished college in Oxford at this time and even more than other colleges of the university it was “predisposed to the rich, the titled and the potentially famous”.\(^11\) Into the latter category fall the fourteen Prime Ministers produced by Christ Church between 1763 and 1964. One of these, the fourteenth Earl of Derby (1799-1869) was a contemporary of Lord Clarina’s at Christ Church, and they knew each other well for the rest of their lives. However, Christ Church was also an excellent teaching college, at a time when British Universities were often corrupt and intellectually fœeble.

In 1819 the young Lord returned to Co. Limerick and took up residence on his estates. The vast

\(^6\) Sir Bernard Burke, *A Genealogical and Heraldic Dictionary of the Peerage and Baronetage*, London, 1887, pp 347-8, see also subsequent editions of *Burke’s Peerage*.
\(^7\) For the career of the first Lord Clarina see Matthew Potter, “The Life and Times of Eyre Massey, 1st Baron Clarina of Elm Park 1719-1804” in *Old Limerick Journal* no. 34, Summer, 1998, pp 20-3.
\(^8\) *Burke’s Peerage*, pp 1104-06.
\(^10\) *Burke’s Peerage*, pp 347-8.
bulk of his lands (about 1700 out of a total of 2000 acres) were in the Ballybrown area. He owned the townlands of Ballybrown, Ballycarney, Briskamore, Briskabeg, Doon, Rahina and Elm Park, and he held the townland of Cragbeg from William Barker, on a lease of lives renewable forever. In 1841, the total population of these lands was around 1,000 persons. The 1820s were a period of social unrest, and saw the rise of Daniel O'Connell and his formidable Catholic Association. Agrarian disturbances were also common, and Ribbonmen operated in the Ballybrown area. The landlords were not immune; it was reported on 23 February 1822 that “Lord Clarina was robbed of his gun on Thursday by two men in women's clothes at Clarina”.

Nevertheless, the chief difficulty faced by the impecunious peer at this time was the lack of an adequate income on which to support himself, his mother, two brothers and two sisters. It was a time of conspicuous consumption by the landed elite all over Europe and the Americas. The phrase “to live like a lord” was not a tired cliche, but a description of the manner in which a nobleman was expected to live. His necessities of life included at least one large and imposing residence, lavish expenditure on clothes and equipages, an active and showy social life, and the means to dabble in politics if he so desired. For all these reasons, Lord Clarina needed to lay his hands on a lot of money as quickly as possible.

One of the traditional routes to financial security lay in marriage to a wealthy heiress. In the mid-eighteenth century, one of Lord Clarina’s Massey forbears had solved the problem to his own satisfaction (though not, one suspects, to the satisfaction of the unfortunate lady in question) by carrying off and marrying a wealthy young woman. By the 1820s, such rough and ready methods had fallen into disfavour, but the pursuit of wealth through the medium of marriage had not. Indeed, the practice gained a new lease of life as a result of the vast new fortunes created by the Industrial Revolution, and culminated in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries with the arrival of hordes of enormously wealthy American heiresses (the so-called ‘dollar princesses’) onto the European marriage market. Lord Clarina was on the lookout some fifty years before this influx of foreign wealth but he also ended up by marrying an imported heiress, whose roots, in part, lay overseas.

The rich young woman in question was Susan Elizabeth Barton (1810-86). The Barton family were a Hibernian-French family, one of a group of Irish wine merchants settled in France, now known popularly as the “Wine Geese.” The Barton family were among the wealthiest of these families. They had settled in France in 1722, near Bordeaux, and by the 1780s, had amassed a huge fortune. William Barton (1723-92) resided at the Chateau Le Boscq, outside Bordeaux, but also possessed an Irish mansion, at Grove, near Fethard, Co. Tipperary. He was married to Grace Massey, a first cousin of the first Lord Clarina. Their eldest son Hugh (1766-1854) led a life as exciting and colourful as that of the Count de Monte Cristo or of the Scarlet Pimpernel. During the French Revolution, he and his wife Anne Johnson, daughter of another Wine Geese family, were imprisoned as aliens during the Reign of Terror (1793-4). They narrowly escaped execution, supposedly because Hugh stole the keys to the local guillotine. He fled to Ireland, and left his French concerns in the hands of his partner, Daniel Guestier. Thus began the firm of Barton and Guestier. During the succeeding decades, Hugh Barton made a huge fortune, acquiring estates in Ireland, England and France. His Irish properties

13 Ibid., p. 81.
14 Ibid., p. 70.
centred on the town of Straffan in Co. Kildare. Here, he erected Straffan House, built appropriately enough, in the lavish style of a magnificent French chateau. In France, the fall of Napoleon in 1815 gave Barton the chance to increase his holdings there. In 1821, he bought the Chateau Langoa, and in 1826 the Chateau Leoville. Both properties included extensive vineyards. His English properties were centred on the town of Battle in Sussex (site of the battle of Hastings). By the 1840s, Hugh Barton was worth an estimated £650,000 (about €80,000,000 in current purchasing power). He and his wife had a family of five sons and six daughters, but only two of the latter survived to adulthood, and only one was to marry. Consequently, the dowry that Susan Barton brought with her was a huge one.

The thirty year old Lord Clarina wed the eighteen year old Miss Barton at Battle, Sussex, on 3 September, 1828. It was to be a fruitful marriage in every sense of the word. Between 1829 and 1845, the Lady Clarina bore her husband six sons and two daughters, all of whom, except one son, survived to adulthood. She had thus carried out her main duty of providing the Clarina Massesys with an heir and several spares. She also brought the long awaited capital injection that her husband had needed to carry out extensive improvements on his properties. It is interesting to note the strong French influence in the Ballybourn area in the nineteenth century. The two chief resident landlords both married into the French elite. Lady Clarina was a Franco-Irish woman with strong roots in France as well as in Ireland. William Monsell, later the first Lord Emly, married as his second wife a French aristocrat Berthe de Montigny.\(^{17}\) Both ladies dominated the social life of the locality, and contributed much, directly and indirectly, to the heritage of Ballybourn.

Lord Clarina lost no time in putting his newly acquired wealth to work. His first and greatest project was the building of a suitable residence to house his rapidly growing family. His ancestral home, Elm Park House, was not very impressive. A Scottish visitor to Ballybourn in 1835 noted that Elm Park demesne ‘is a fine place, with an indifferent house, but that will soon be remedied, as a new one is in rapid progress of advancement’.\(^{18}\) Work had commenced on the new residence in 1833, and Lord Clarina employed the most fashionable architects then working in Munster, to design his dream house. The Pain brothers, James (1779-1877) and George Richard (1793-1838), were Englishmen employed in the practice of John Nash (1752-1835), one of the most eminent English architects of that or any other age.\(^{19}\) Nash was the favourite architect of the Prince Regent, later King George IV (1762-1830), who employed him to carry out most of his grandiose and expensive building projects. Nash produced a vast output for his self-indulgent royal patron, including the Royal Pavilion in Brighton, Buckingham Palace, Marble Arch, Regents Park, Regents Street and Carlton House Terrace. Incredibly, he also found time to carry out commissions for noble patrons in Ireland. It was such a project that brought the Pains to Ireland. Nash designed Lough Cutra Castle, near Gort, Co. Galway for Colonel Charles Vereker, later the 2nd Viscount Gort. Around 1811, he sent the architect brothers to Ireland to supervise the building of the castle. They remained here, and soon built up their own extremely successful practice. Their heyday was between 1815 and 1840. They operated all over Munster, chiefly in Limerick and Cork. Their output was impressive, by any standards. In Limerick city alone, they designed the original Dominican Church in Baker Place (1816), the prison on Mulgrave Street (1817-21), the Villiers Almshouses (1825), St. Munchin’s Church of Ireland Church, King’s Island (1827), Athlunkard Bridge (1830), Baals Bridge (1831), Trinity Church, Catherine Street (early 1830s), the Georgian Houses, Pery Square (1838), Thomond Bridge (1838-40) and St. Michael’s Church, Pery Square (1844).\(^{20}\)

\(^{17}\) Potter, Catholic Unionist, pp 45-6.


Plate 1 Eyre Massey, 3rd Lord Clarina (1798-1872)
Lord Clarina clearly favoured the Gothic style of architecture and virtually all his major commissions were to be according to that taste. He was obviously impressed by the Pain’s output of magnificent castles. They had already designed Dromoland (1820-35) for Lord Inchquin, and their greatest single work, Mitchelstown (1825-7) for Lord Kingston. Lord Clarina wanted to keep up with these aristocratic Joneses, and the result was Clarina Castle (1833-6), also known as Elm Park Castle, or sometimes just plain Clarina House. This spectacular building is one of Ireland’s greatest “lost castles,” and was the most magnificent structure ever erected in Ballybrown, with the possible exception of the mediaeval, and now completely ruinous, Carrigogunnell Castle. The modern observer, trying to imagine Clarina Castle in its heyday would do well to study Dromoland, for they were “sister castles” and very similar in appearance. Clarina was highly irregular in design, with a great deal of crenellated, and was adorned with both round and square towers. The central block and tower to the right of the main entrance were three story over a basement, but the rest of the building was two story over a basement. The main entrance was an elaborate crenellated affair. The numerous windows were rectangular, and mostly Georgian in appearance. The castle contained forty-nine rooms. Like Dromoland and Mitchelstown, it had a large “baronial” hall that could be used as a ballroom. The total cost of this huge pile, built of cut stone, was around £50,000 (equivalent in present day purchasing power to about €6,500,000). Even so, it was a bargain compared to Mitchelstown, which cost £100,000. The castle was set in a 318 acre demesne and had three gate lodges, of which two survive. One of these is an imposing castellated structure, and is now known as Quins Castle. The other, known as the “Brick Lodge” was built in Picturesque style (both are used as dwelling houses nowadays). About three hundred yards from the Castle, Lord Clarina ordered the construction of a series of outbuildings, set around a main courtyard. The year 1851 is carved over the main archway in the courtyard, which is possibly the date of the completion of these buildings.

The popularity of Gothic revival castles among Irish landlords at this time requires some explanation. On one level, it was simply part of a craze sweeping the whole United Kingdom at this time, of which Windsor castle (rebuilt in the 1820s) was the most spectacular manifestation. However other theories have been advanced. Maurice Craig argues that:

by castellating their houses, or adding castellated wings to them, or in extreme cases, replacing them by sham castles, they sought - at the sub-conscious level no doubt - to convince themselves and others that they had been there a long time, and their houses, like so many in England, reflected the vicissitudes of centuries.22

This theory is based on the relatively recent origins of many of the landlords’ connection with Ireland, mostly dating back to the plantations of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Mark Bence-Jones concurs with this, but also writes that Gothic castles “were thought to be more in keeping with the rugged and dramatic scenery ... than classical houses”.23 Finally, David Lee puts forward the interesting explanation that:

the popularity of this medieval style among sections of the Anglo-Irish landed class (indicated) a returned sense of insecurity engendered by a climate of violence and political uncertainty to be found in Ireland in the revolutionary 1790s and the first half of the nineteenth century.... building in the Gothic style was also making a symbolic statement that one was British, or loyal to the Union, for .... Gothic architecture was rooted in identification with various aspects of English history, and was seen as a distinctive expression of British identity.24

23Bence-Jones, A Guide to Irish Country Houses, p. XVIII.
In the case of Lord Clarina, it is probable that all of the above factors played a role in his choice of Gothic for his magnificent new home.

In the 1830s, the present St. Joseph’s Catholic Church was also being built in Ballybrown, on Lord Clarina’s estate, and in 1840 a school for one hundred pupils was attached to it. Although he was a staunch Protestant, this project must have been carried out with his approval. Indeed, he seems to have been a benevolent landlord who treated his servants and tenants with consideration. This is evidenced by his construction of the estate village of New Clarina (now simply called Clarina) in the 1850s. The village owed its origins to the construction of the new main road (the present N-69) from Limerick city to Glin in the early nineteenth century. Dr. Patrick O’Connor has described how this new road caused the existing villages of Old Clarina and Old Kildimo, which it bypassed, to decay, and their new counterparts as well as the port of Foyne, to come into existence.22 New Clarina village had already crystallised in 1840. In that year, it consisted of “a few houses built on a cross road connection of a police station, consisting of one constable and five sub-constables. It also has a huckster, a publican and two neat cottages.”20 In the early 1850s Lord Clarina greatly enlarged this meagre housing stock by erecting six two-story houses, designed as homes for the families of men working on the estate. These fine sturdy houses were connected to a well by what was known as the Barrack Walk. The estate village of Clarina was a modest one, compared to the ambitious developments carried out in Adare and Newcastle West, but this simply reflects the much more slender resources at the disposal of Lord Clarina.

As he grew older, it seems that Lord Clarina’s thoughts turned increasingly to the next world. At any rate, he had a large and imposing family vault erected at the local graveyard, in 1863. By the late 1860s, the local Church of Ireland Church (now the principal ruin in Kilkeedy Cemetery) was in need of replacement. The Rev. John Maguire, Rector of Kilkeedy from 1867 to 1876, described Lord Clarina’s role in the construction of the new church in the following terms:

> when it was found necessary to build a new church .... (Lord Clarina) contributed largely towards its erection, and sought and obtained help from others, so that .... without him, we should not have accomplished our object .... (Lord Clarina) made choice of the site of this our new church upon the very day after Mr. Gladstone carried his resolutions in the House of Commons in the year 1868, thus showing his confidence and hopes for the future of our church in this country”.27

Thus, it seems that Lord Clarina was instrumental in the erection of the new Church of Ireland church in Kilkeedy.20 His motivation on this occasion seems to have been similar to the impulses behind the building of Clarina Castle. 1871 saw the disestablishment of the Church of Ireland, but paradoxically, it was a period that saw the building of new large Protestant Cathedrals in Tuam (1861-78) and Cork (1865-79) as well as a number of lesser churches. These buildings “take on an air of defiance, of rebuke to the government, and of confidence in the future of the new independent church”.29 Whether or not Lord Clarina was thumping his nose at Daniel O’Connell and the Ribbonmen in the 1830s when he built Clarina Castle, it is evident that in 1868, he saw the building of his new parish church as a slap in the face to Gladstone.

The architect chosen to design the new church was James Edward Rogers (1838-96). He was a pupil of Benjamin Woodward, (1816-61), who is described by Maurice Craig as perhaps the most

27 Limerick Chronicle, 23 November, 1872; the resolutions carried by Mr. Gladstone were those concerning disestablishment.
29 Kilkeedy was the old name of the parish which includes Ballybrown. The name is now used for the local cemetery alone.
original Irish architect of the nineteenth century." Woodward’s two greatest buildings are situated
very near each other in Dublin city centre - the Trinity College Museum and the Kildare St. Club.
Rogers himself was a talented architect and artist, who has been rescued from undeserved obscurity
by two recent articles in prominent journals. Born in Dublin, he enjoyed a brief but distinguished
career as an architect in Ireland, from 1863 to 1873. Thereafter, he devoted himself to painting, and
after he moved permanently to London in 1876, he exhibited works in the Royal Academy on a
number of occasions. As well as being a friend of William Morris and Dante Gabriel Rossetti, when
he worked briefly in Oxford in the 1850s, Rogers was also close to the famous Trinity Don, and later
Provost of the University, Sir John Pentland Mahaffy. Rogers showed some literary ability when he
co-authored Sketches from a tour through Holland and Germany (1889) with Mahaffy. However, his
chief legacy is the seven churches which he designed in the 1860s in thirteenth century Gothic style.
Two of these were in Co. Limerick, Kilfergus (1865), in the grounds of Glin Castle, and, Kilkeedy.
The church of Sts. Philip and James, Kilkeedy was designed in 1868 and was Rogers’ simplest
church. There were only three main elements to the plan - the entrance porch with the tower over,
the nave and chancel, and the vestry. The chancel was contained in the nave and was marked with
a double truss. The church had an area of 129 square metres, and cost about £1,000 to build.
Kilkeedy, like all Rogers’ churches was very well planned. He always carefully worked out the
proportions of his spaces, so that the internal ratio of width to length in the nave of the church was
1:2.

It is very difficult to fathom the character of Lord Clarina, in the present state of research. There
are no Massey family papers extant and no known portrait of him has been located to date. In his
obituary he was described as “a fine specimen of the Irish gentleman - affable, courteous and sincere
in all his vital relations”. He was also characterised as a good landlord, who constantly resided on
his estates. He seems to have been a benevolent figure who worked to improve the lot of his staff
and tenants. He was a patriotic, Unionist, Irishman and a patron of many local charities. As a local
magnate, he and his wife took a prominent role in County Society. However he seems to have
lacked ambition. Even his obituary stated that “in politics, Lord Clarina never made himself very
prominent” while Rev. Maguire said that “he did not use his influence as a means of advancing his
worldly rank or emoluments for himself and his family”. Nevertheless, he was always a staunch supporter of the Tory party, (Not for him the political
corrections of his neighbour, William Monsell). In 1849 he was elected as a representative peer and
sat until his death in 1872. It is curious that his neighbour and life long friend William Monsell sat
as Liberal MP for County Limerick for almost the exact same time span (1847-74). Thus the small
district of Ballybrown, which has returned no member to either House of the Oireachtas since 1922,
had two members in the Imperial Parliament throughout the 1850s and 1860s. Lord Clarina was a
loyal support of his old friend from Christ Church Oxford Lord Derby, who was leader of the Tories
from 1846 to 1868, and who took his seat in the Lords in 1851. Thus when Monsell brought a bill
before parliament in 1865 to reform the offensive oath taken by Catholic MPs before they could

31 Peter Howell, “Who was Rogers, a Pupil of Woodward?” in Irish Arts Review Yearbook 1998, vol. 13, 1997, pp 105-11; Brendan Grimes,
32 Grimes, Church architecture of Rogers, p. 178.
33 Limerick Chronicle, 19 November 1872.
34 Limerick Chronicle, 6 March 1839 et passim.
35 Limerick Chronicle, 23 November 1872.
36 Article Four of the Irish Act of Union provided that “28 Lords Temporal of Ireland elected for life by the peers of Ireland shall be the
number to sit and vote on the part of Ireland in the House of Lords of the Parliament of the United Kingdom.” Nearly all Irish representative
peers were Tories.
claim their seats, Lord Clarina was part of the majority in the Lords which defeated the Bill, by 84 votes to 63, on 26th June, 1865. It was a debate that saw many of Lord Clarina's neighbours participate in different ways. The Earl of Devon, the owner of the largest estate in County Limerick, moved the Bill in the Lords, and was supported by Lord Monteagle. On the other hand, Lords Clarina, Limerick and Inchiquin voted against. It is surely a tribute to both Monsell and Lord Clarina that their strong friendship was not in any way impaired by their lifelong political and religious differences.

Lord Clarina's family continued his political traditions. His eldest son Eyre (1830-97) succeeded him as fourth Baron, and was also elected a Tory representative peer, sitting from 1889 to 1897. He in turn was succeeded by another son, Lionel, (1837-1922) who, as the fifth Baron, was the last holder of the title to reside in Clarina Castle. The third Baron's youngest son William Frederick (1845 - 1907) took the additional surname of Mainwaring on his marriage to a lady of that name. He was Conservative MP for the London constituency of Finsbury from 1895 to 1903. Another son died unmarried, and another was an Anglican vicar. Both of Lord Clarina's daughters married well. Anne Emily (1829-1907) his eldest child was married in 1855 to her cousin Hugh Barton (1824-99), who owned Straffan House and estate from 1867 to 1899. Thus the very close connection between Clarina and Straffan spanned most of the nineteenth century (1828-99). The other daughter, Isabella

33 Hansard Parliamentary Debates, Third Series, CLXXX, 26 June 1865, 821-22.
(1841-71), was married to Sir David Roche (1833-1908) of Caherass House in Croom in 1867, but after only four years as Lady Roche, she died at the early age of thirty. Just over a year later, 18 November 1872, the venerable Lord Clarina, who had enjoyed vigorous health all his life, died at the age of 74. His death and funeral aptly symbolised the fine architectural legacy that he had left behind. He died in Clarina Castle, and lay in state in the baronial hall there. His remains were then taken to Kilkeedy parish church where the funeral service was conducted. He was buried in the family vault in the nearby churchyard.

What of Lord Clarina’s legacy? The estate itself was broken up and sold in the 1920s, and the fifth Lord Clarina, who died in 1922 was, as already stated, the last holder of the title to reside at Elm Park. The title itself became extinct in 1952 on the death of the 6th Baron. The castle was sold in 1923, accidentally burnt in part in 1933 and demolished in the early 1960s. The outbuildings and two of the gate lodges survive. The six houses of the original estate village in Clarina are still inhabited, and the village as a whole is in a flourishing state. The church of Sts. Philip and James ceased to be a place of worship in 1963 and is now a private dwelling. There is no doubt that Lord Clarina spent a disproportionate amount of the money available to him from the 1830s onwards on his own huge residence and a relatively small amount on the local infrastructure. Nevertheless, he left an enduring legacy in Ballybrown, and until the 1960s, it was his work which had shaped the physical appearance of the locality more than that of any other single figure. Even today this influence still survives though many of the present inhabitants have never heard of him. Perhaps as a retiring and unambitious man, he might have preferred it that way.

38 Burke’s Peerage.
39 Limerick Chronicle, 23 November 1872.