

## Some Georgian Houses of Limerick and Clare

BY S. STEWART AND R. HERBERT.

Castle as residences were abandoned almost altogether early in the 17th century, and were frequently replaced by those very tall strongly built houses of which the Roche house on Newcastle Hill, near Castletroy, is an excellent example. But alas, most of the buildings of the 16th and 17th centuries are in ruins. The only one we can recall not in actual ruins is Carrick Castle, but the Ormonde family have allowed it to decay rapidly. Tudor plaster-work is in pieces on the floors, and the lovely mantelpiece was removed to Kilkenny Castle.

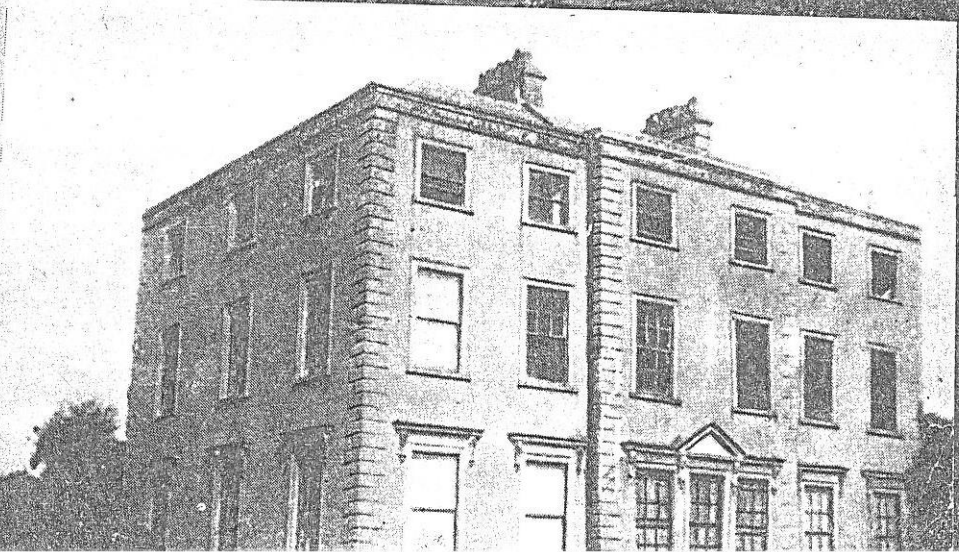
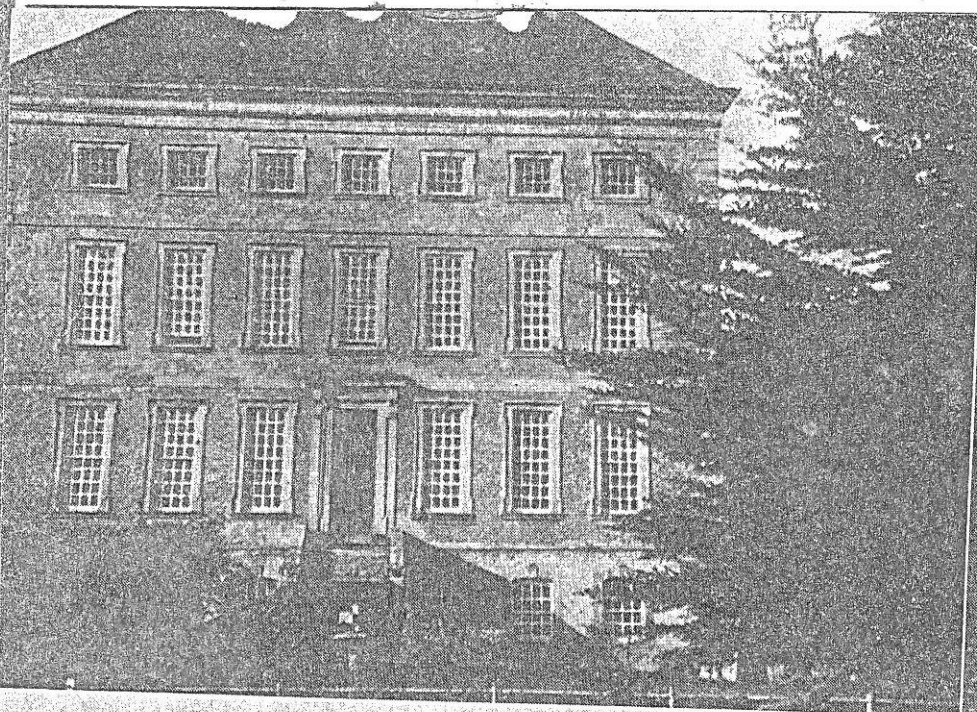
At the turn of the 18th century the influence of Palladio, who had re-introduced classical building into Italy as early as 1570, began to be felt in Ireland as in England, and large, handsome, if somewhat gloomy houses were built in and near Dublin, such as Leinster House, Castletown, and the Provost's House in Trinity College. As the century progressed the lighter Grecian style began to replace the Roman; plasterwork became lighter and more graceful, and the heavy rusticated doorways were replaced by pillars of the Grecian Orders.

In the main, this style of architecture, called Georgian because it extends practically from the beginning to the end of the Four Georges, relies for its effects on the proportion of solids and spaces, and their inter-relation. In the earlier houses the proportion of wall exceeds that of window, but as the building technique improved the windows become larger.

This paper, the extension of a lecture to our Society, is intended merely as an annotated list of the Georgian remains of Limerick and Clare, and it is hoped to continue it in future numbers. But unlike the lecture, family details have been reduced to the bare minimum, as the authors feels that justice would not be done to either in the same paper. In fact, after a little research they feel that the inter-relations and ramifications of Limerick County Families are such that a separate paper would be needed for each family concerned. They do not feel competent to perform such a task.

**SHANNONGROVE.** This is one of the earliest and finest houses in the county, and in its simplicity has more character than many a more elaborate building. It is right on the banks of the Shannon, near Ringmoylan, and facing Rineanna Airport, but the back of the house is now used as the entrance. Wide stone steps, in two flights, narrow as they approach the well-cut doorway with its baroque shield over the rounded pediment. The latter breaks the plain stone coursing which encircles the house, and separates the two stories. The three dormer windows and lovely brick chimneys give an unusual roof line. These four chimneys are set diagonally and are joined by a diamond-patterned brick screen. The old front doorway is of even better design and the shield bears the arms of the Bury family and the date 1709. The interior is panelled in wood like Mount Ievers, though the rooms are much smaller, and like Mount Ievers also the fire places are set in an angle of the rooms. The house is said to have been built as a shooting lodge for the Burys.

**COOPER HILL.** Built in 1791. The most noticeable features are the perpendicular rows of coign stones outlining the edges of the house, and the slightly advanced central block with its pediment and pedimented



doorway. The hall has some pleasant plasterwork and a good inner door with a fanlight, and an alcove. It was built by a descendant of the Cromwell soldier of legendary fame, Cornet Cooper.

**BALLYMACREESE.** Built by Abraham Green in 1710, according to the inscription cut on stone pediment of doorway. The steps to the doorway consist of a series of semi-circular plates and may not be contemporary with the house.

**BALLINAGARDE.** Built by the Crockers in 1774 at a cost of £10,000. The central pedimented block stands on a raised platform on which one would expect to see pillars. The present entrance is through a graceful pavilion of Grecian design surmounted with lions and eagles. The arrangement of the steps is attractive, with the straight steps leading up to a platform from which rise a rounded flight to the door. The blank space of the back wall is relieved by an alcove. The ornamental garden had some rather fine provincial classical statuary, and our photograph shows Hercules in position.

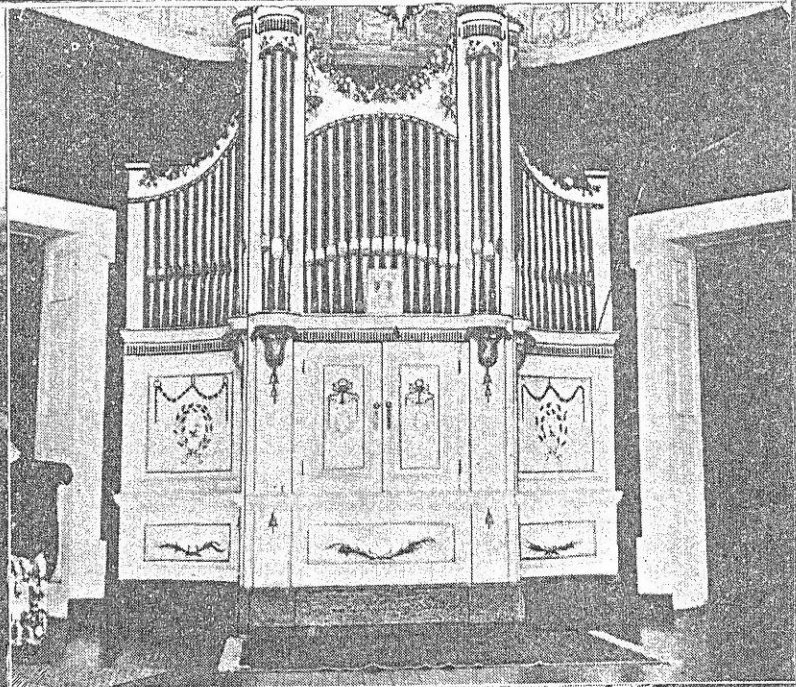
**GRANGE.** According to Mr. Grene Barry, this house was built by John Hannan, of Carnaroy, who also built the County Courthouse. It was afterwards occupied by the Crockers and was dismantled a few years ago, when its fire-places, interior doors, and painted ceiling were destroyed and dispersed.

**ASHILL TOWERS.** Built by Chidley Coote. In 1837, Mr. Eyre Evans "embellished" the building with castellations, side-towers, and lancet windows, with interior to match in good "Old Walter Scott Baronial" style. When we come round to what is now the back of the house we are astonished to find a very handsome Georgian mansion of great length, containing three doorways. The central portion is beautifully morticed on to the main building, all of well-dressed stone. There is a Venetian window over the central doorway. Inside there is some good plasterwork of Adam design, a contemporary mantlepiece, and the remains of a decorated light in a prettily plastered corridor.

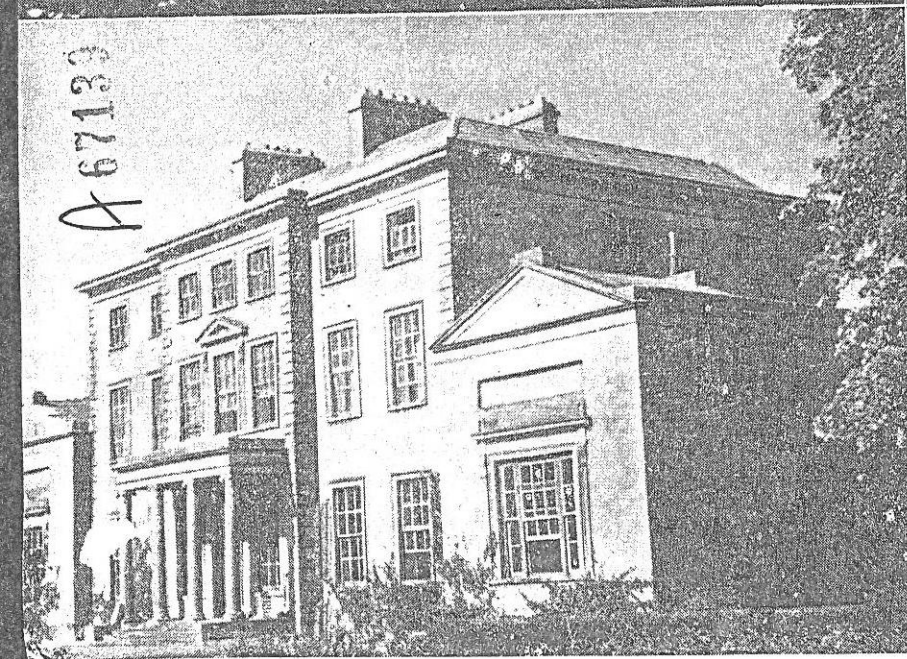
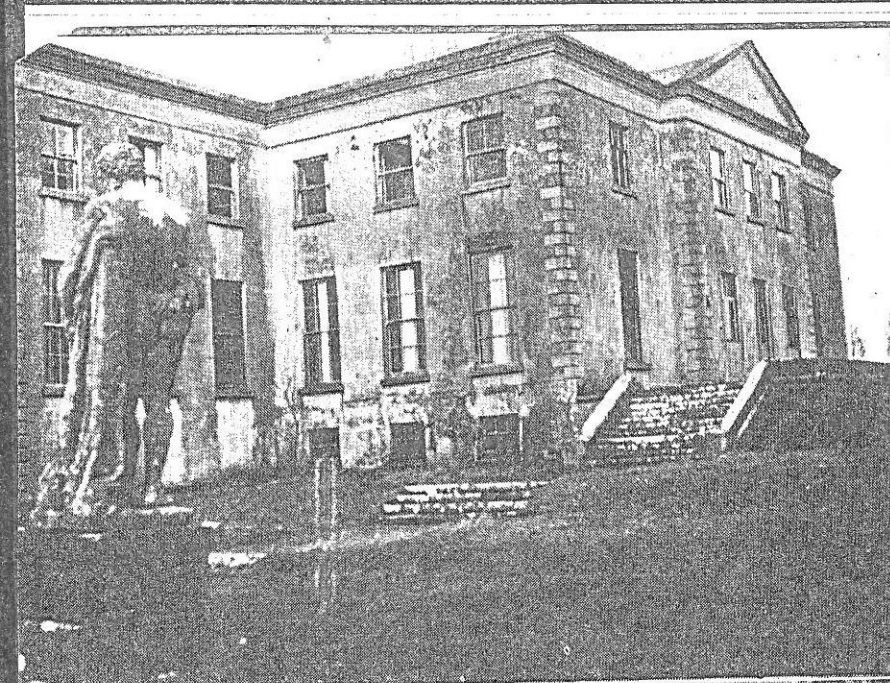
**ATTYFLYN.** This is an early Georgian house, which has been altered in Victorian times but still retains much of the grace of its former setting. The rooms are small, but well-lit, and the front bears the crest of the Westropp family (a lion rampant) by whom it was probably built. Our most famous antiquarian, Thomas Johnson Westropp was born there.

**MOUNT IEVERS.** Built about 1730<sup>(1)</sup> when Sixmilebridge was a flourishing town, evidence of which still remains in a number of well-cut streets and names and the arcaded market house. The original front is now the back of the house, the latter in stone, the former in brick, of a pink hue, said to be Dutch and to have been passed from hand to hand from the oil-mill, at which point the river was tidal. The windows are flush with the front of the house and have the usual Georgian small window-panes and thick glazing bars. As one views it from the road from the village to the Clare Hill through the long open grass avenue flanked by trees, it looks most attractive, being very square and formal, and strangely like a doll's house. The hall has a large stone fireplace, and a dated iron grate-back, both probably from the earlier house, drawn by Dineley. On the left is a panelled drawing room with a beautiful Bossi mantlepiece with ivy-leaf decoration. Over this, painted on the wall is a panoramic view of the brick-front of the house with sentry-boxes and fish ponds in the foreground, and the ornamental gardens, pigeon-house, Bunratty and the Shannon behind. The dining



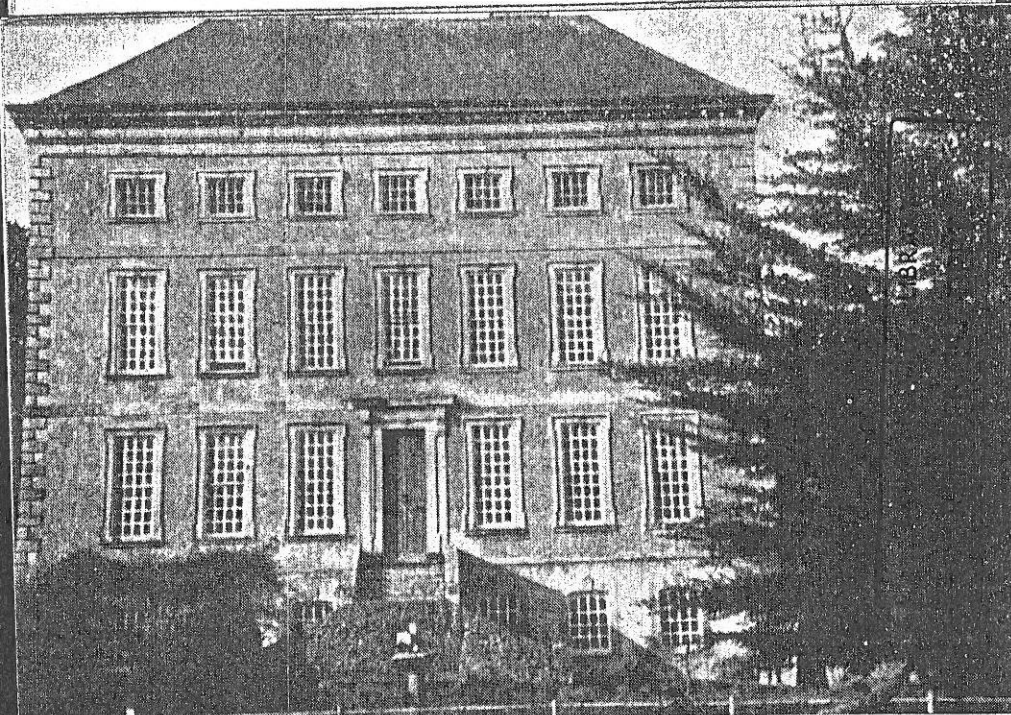








Mount Ievers



Ballymacreese



Shanagrove

Grange

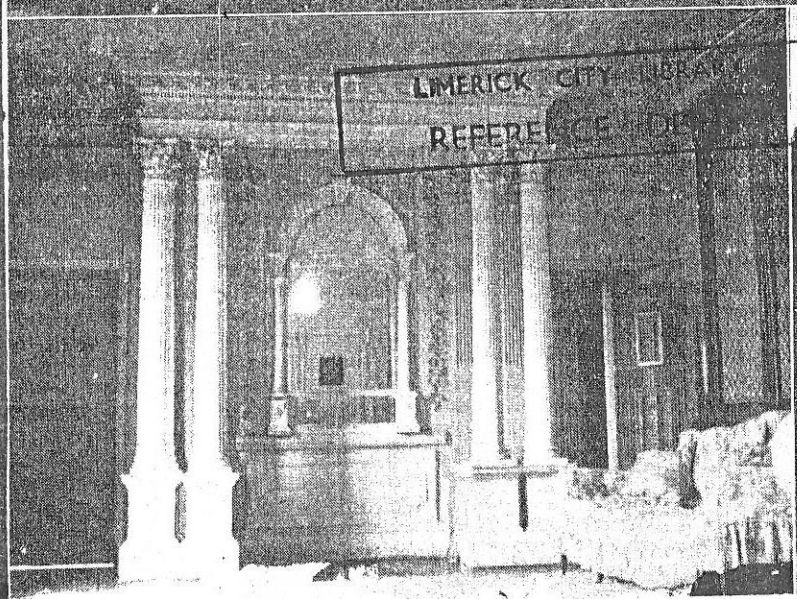
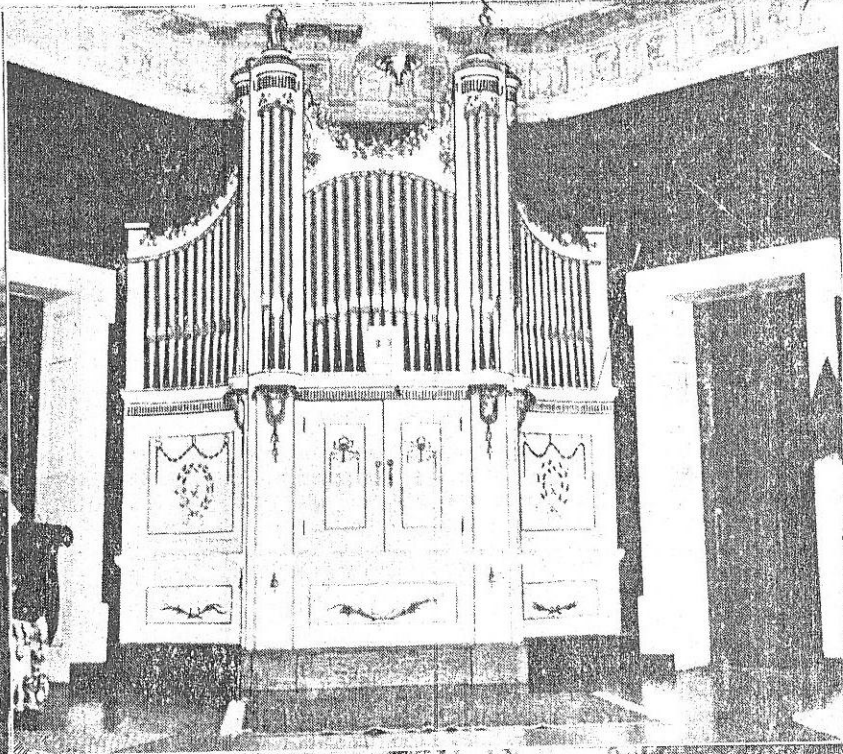
Grange House of Links & Close



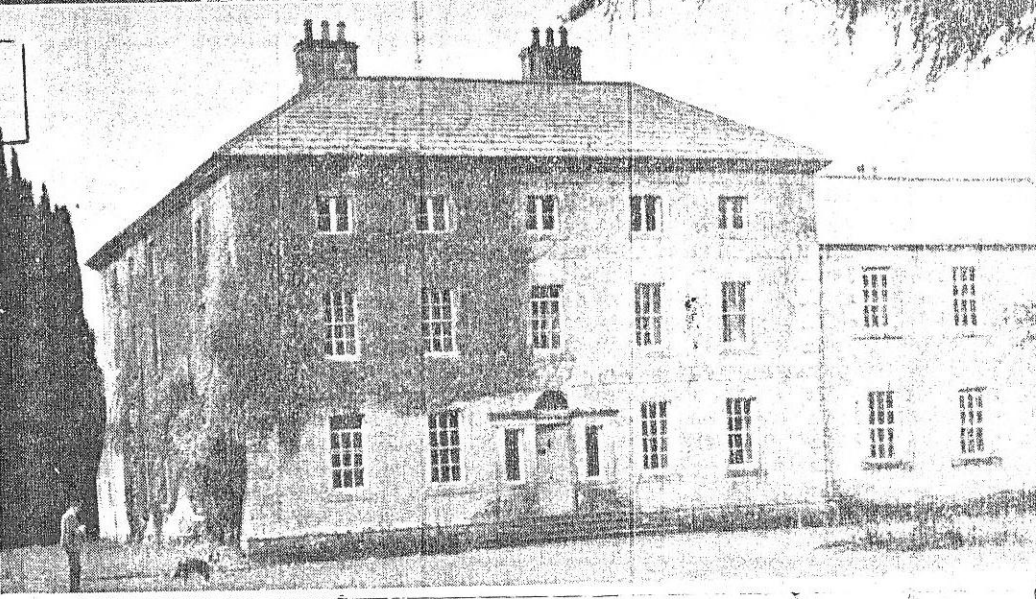
Newhall



Newhall (cupboard in P of an orange case)



Cornelly



Cornelly

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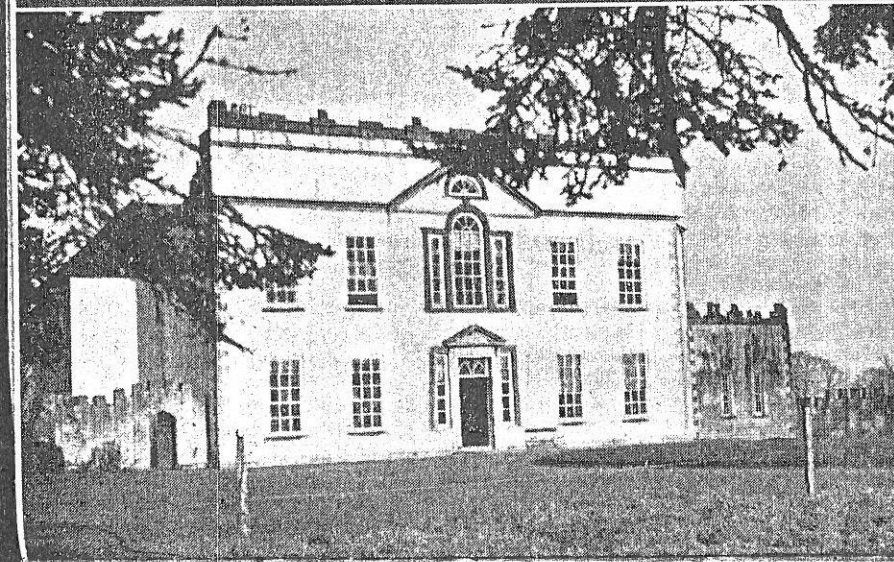
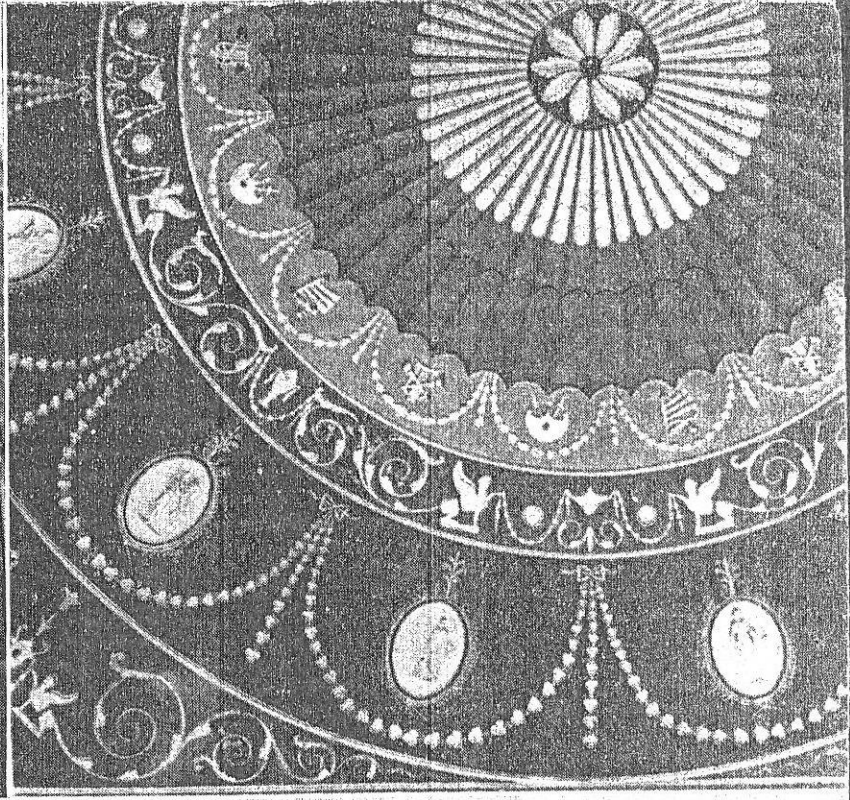


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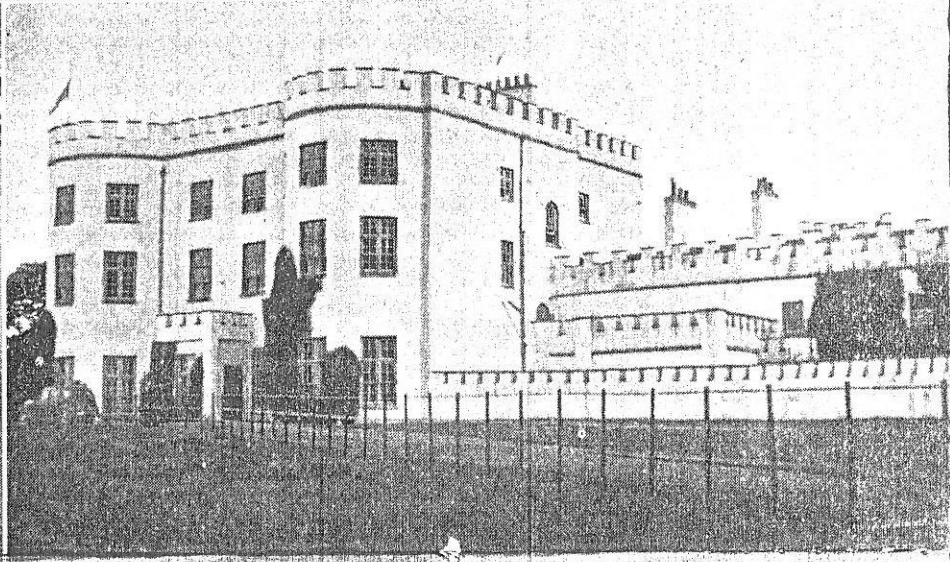
Killballyowen



Ashill Towers



Castlepark



Glis Castle