I
ORIGINS AND ANCESTORS

The Irish Hares

The Irish Hares are an off-shoot of the much older Hare family in Norfolk. They go back to a certain Michael Hare 'of Monktown in County Dublin', who had come to Ireland from Norfolk in the 17th Century, and died without issue in 1685, leaving a large fortune in a Will dated 1684 to his nephew John Hare, 'a native of Norfolk'. There is evidence of the relationship between the Irish and the Norfolk Hares in [the] similarity between the family coat of arms, particularly in their shields, which can be traced back by the Norfolk branch of the family to the Norman family of D'Harcourt which is believed to have fought in the Crusades.

John Hare decided to settle in Ireland, where he established himself as a merchant in Cork in 1710. He married the daughter of another Cork merchant, William Bussell, and became the father of four sons and five daughters. He added to the family fortune by his export–import business in Cork, at that time the second city in Ireland. I suppose he exported Irish dairy produce in exchange for English manufactured goods. On his death his very substantial fortune was shared between his wife and his sons.

But it was re-accumulated by his third son Richard, who made himself a gentleman by buying extensive properties in different parts of Ireland. In 1789 he paid the Earl of Kerry[67] £13,000, plus an annuity of £3,000 per annum, for a total of 20,000 acres in County Kerry, and he also bought property in the city of Cork and in the Counties of Cork and Tipperary.

He added to his holding in County Kerry in 1796 by purchasing the lands of Ennismore from Sir Maurice Fitzgerald, the Knight of Kerry.[68] His Kerry land included the site of the present town of Listowel. At that time it was a small village at the foot of the ruins

[67] Francis Thomas-Fitzmaurice, 3rd earl of Kerry (1740–1818).

[68] Sir Maurice Fitzgerald, 18th hereditary 'Green' Knight of Kerry and an Anglo-Irish Whig.

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of the old castle, which had been built in the 13th Century to consolidate the Anglo-Norman conquest of Ireland. It was the last stronghold in Kerry to surrender to the invading British in the year 1600.

It then passed to the first Lord Kerry, and remained in the Kerry family until it was bought by Richard Hare in 1783. But I am afraid the contemporary records show Richard Hare to have been as ambitious and unscrupulous a politician as many others of that period. I quote the following passage from a letter from a Mr Galbraith, the Marquis of Abercorn's Agent in Dublin, to his principal in London, dated November 2nd, 1797.

> The result of my enquiries since I have been here is not favourable to the hope of an immediate sale of Augher on good terms. The only money I can as yet find in the market is Mr Haires (sic). This gent has a very great estate and is very anxious to be a Peer, and with that intent has agreed about two years ago for the purchase of four seats in this Parliament at £2,500 each. As he is anxious to set out a Viscount in the Peerage, and finds the Minister boggled about gratifying him, he would to secure it purchase one or two Boroughs. But his brother-in-law, whom I know, tells me he fixes his price from the standard of Carlow, which was sold to Mr Bury about two years ago for £13,000. Mr Haire has been offering for another Borough, but has come to no agreement for the same cause. He was a great merchant in Cork in the provision trade, and lately purchased Lord Kerry's estate, which is at present £25,000 a year, and he is a man of expense and has ready money enough, from which I still have hopes of him.

Richard Hare's wealth was fortunately matched by the family's sturdy Irish patriotism. The enrolment of his second son, Richard, as an officer in the Irish Volunteer Army was typical of the public spirit of the Anglo-Irish families. It should not be forgotten that a French invasion of Ireland, where they hoped to be welcomed as liberators by the Catholic population, was quite on the cards in the year 1781. Lord Charlemont,[69] the Commander-in-Chief, had been informed by the Lord Lieutenant, that an immediate invasion was expected, and that the City of Cork was a most likely point of attack. 15,000 men had been despatched from Ulster for the defence of the Southern Province of Munster. I am proud to say that my gallant ancestor, Captain Richard Hare, is listed among the Munster Volunteers in County Cork as Captain of a Company in the Cork Artillery. His formidable battery consisted of only two pieces, four pounders, and his military uniform is described as blue, faced scarlet,

[69] James Caulfeild, 1st earl of Charlemont (1728–1799), commander-in-chief of the Volunteer Army, recruited in Ireland to counter possible French invasion.

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with yellow buttons and gold lace. It belonged to the Premier Regiment of the Volunteers of Ireland, later styled the Royal Cork Volunteers. He was certainly a pretty easy target for any enemy soldier holding a rifle!

By the end of the year, a Volunteer Army of about 60,000 men had been raised by Charlemont. The objectives were political as well as military. They wanted to secure for Ireland the same political and constitutional liberty, under the parliamentary system of government, as was present in England since the peaceful and glorious revolution of 1688. This was set out in a series of resolutions passed by the Ulster Volunteers at a meeting in the Church at Dungannon on February 15th, 1782. The first of these resolutions declared that 'the claim of any body of men, other than the King, Lords, and Commons of Ireland, to make laws to bind this Kingdom, is unconstitutional, illegal, and a grievance'. This was the authentic voice of the Protestants of Ireland, as expressed by their political leaders: Grattan,[70] Flood,[71] and Charlemont. The comment of Lecky, as the leading historian of the period, is certainly worth recording:

> Charlemont and Grattan, in the purity of their motives, and the high quality of their patriotism, were not inferior to Hampden or Washington. To [*sic*] the great unpaid armed force, which the necessities of the country had evoked – self-constituted, self-governed, and for the most part self-armed – was guilty of absolutely no acts of violence. It had made the country thoroughly defensible and had possibly saved it from invasion.[72]

Richard Hare died in 1792 having made sure that the Hares would remain among the most powerful Anglo-Irish families in Munster by providing in his will that his land should pass undivided to his eldest son, William.[73] It is also interesting to note that he left a mere £10.00 to the Presbyterian Meeting House where he had worshipped throughout his life.

The First Earl of Listowel

William Hare sat as a member for the City of Cork from 1796 to 1797, and for another constituency Athy, where he was the nominee of the Duke of Leinster, from 1797 to 1800. Both William and his brother, Richard, sat in the Irish House of Commons. I have little

[70] Henry Grattan (1746–1820), Irish and later Westminster MP.

[71] Henry Flood (1732–1791), Irish and later Westminster MP.

[72] [Listowel's original footnotes are in italic.][W.E.H.] *Lecky, Ireland in the 18th Century, Volume 2.*

[73] *Born in 1751.*

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doubt that both were 'placemen' who took their orders strictly from the Lord Lieutenant. The Hare family had finally arrived in the social sense, having graduated from the merchant to the land-owning class and from there to membership of the Irish Parliament.

The Union soon offered William Hare MP the ennoblement which was all he required to complement his enormous wealth. In 1799 a Motion against the Union had been carried by a majority of only 5 votes. Pitt[74] realised that his only hope of consent to the abolition of the Irish Parliament was by the lavish bribery of its members. The total cost to the unfortunate Irish taxpayers has been estimated at about £1,226,000. The average price paid to the incumbents and their patrons in the Boroughs was £15,000. In William Hare's case the lion's share of £13,500 went to his patron, the Duke of Leinster, while he was left with the paltry sum of £1,200. 20 Irish Peers in the Upper House were advanced in rank, and 28 members of the Irish House of Commons, including William Hare, who now became Baron Ennismore and Listowel, were given Peerages. To compensate the Irish Parliament for its undignified self-destruction, Ireland was to be allowed 100 members of the House of Commons at Westminster, and 48 representative Irish Peers[75] in the British House of Lords. Little did Pitt foresee at that time the vital influence of the Irish, in the 19th Century House of Commons, in the struggle for Home Rule or the balance the small minority of Irish members maintained between the opposing Conservative and Liberal Parties in the lower House.

William Hare, or Lord Ennismore as he had become after duly voting for the Act of Union in 1800, soon decided to build a country house appropriate to his new status. Some years before the Union he had bought the house and lands of Convamore, near Mallow, from the O'Callaghans of Cork. The first Convamore house was built, probably in the 18th Century, by a Colonel Bailey, who married a daughter of Lord Doneraile. Lord Ennismore proceeded to demolish the old house, and to build a much larger mansion on the site, which he handed over almost immediately to his son Richard. He employed an architect called Payne, who later built Mitchelstown Castle for Lord Kingston. The house was much admired by his contemporaries:

[74] William Pitt the Younger (1759–1806), prime minister, 1783–1801 and 1804–1806.

[75] *They vanished from our Upper House with the new State of Eire in 1917.* [Actually there was provision for 28 not 48 Irish Representative Peers after the Acts of Union 1800 and the Irish Free State was established in 1922 when the Irish peers ceased to elect representatives though some continued to serve in the House of Lords, as the Irish Representative Peers were able to serve for life.]

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> For the first in beauty and magnificence is Convamore, now the property of the Honourable Richard Hare, eldest son of Lord Ennismore. This place was much and justly admired for the singular beauty of its situation, before it derived any adventitious graces from the hand of art. The addition of a superb house and grounds, highly dressed and judiciously planted, fully entitle it to the pre-eminence here bestowed. This fine mansion is not less calculated to gratify the accomplished spectator within than without. Lord Ennismore and his son are both distinguished for their skill and love of painting, and have in consequence profusely adorned the house with pictures of the best Masters.[76]

After Lord Ennismore had handed over Convamore to his son, I believe that these Old Masters were subsequently transferred by him to Kingston House in Knightsbridge, where he lived permanently, and which had at that time one of the finest private collections of Old Masters in London. These were hung, as I remember, looking like rows of postage stamps in the large drawing rooms of Kingston House. This would explain why a later description of Convamore in 1837 omits a reference to the Old Masters:

> Convamore, the seat of Viscount Ennismore, eldest son of the first Earl of Listowel, is a handsome modern mansion, beautifully situated in a fine domain stretching along the banks of the Blackwater, and commanding an interesting view of the winding of that river through rich masses of woodland to the picturesque ruins of the ancient castle of Ballyhooly, situated on a rocky prominent over the Blackwater, and, with the present church and the ruins of the former, both closely adjoining, presenting a highly picturesque and romantic group.[77]

The rural nature of Convamore and its surroundings is made clear by an amusing interchange between the second Earl and the novelist Anthony Trollope,[78] who at that time was employed in the Post Office as their surveyor in the area of County Cork. Lord Listowel wanted a Post Office opened in his local village of Ballyhooly, but Trollope replied that there would be too few literates to justify the expense. The fact was the only literate people in the neighbourhood of Ballyhooly were Lord Listowel himself and the Parish Priest! Here is Trollope's reply which I think is worth putting on the record.

[76] *A Statistical Survey of County Cork (1815), by Townsend about country seats situated on the River Blackwater near Ballyhooly.*

[77] *Lewis S, A Topographical Dictionary of Ireland, Vols 1 and 2 (London 1837 and 1846).*

[78] Anthony Trollope (1815–1882), 19th-century English novelist and author of works such as the series *The Chronicles of Barsetshire* and *Phineas Finn.*

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My Lord,

I have before me a representation made by your Lordship to the Postmaster General respecting the renewal of the Post Office at Ballyhooly. I beg to remind your Lordship of a conversation I had the honour of having with you on the subject. The Postmaster General cannot establish the office at Ballyhooly at the expense of the Crown as the number of letters in the locality is found impossibly insufficient to warrant him in doing so in conformity with the regulations issued by the Lords of the Treasury on this subject. The Office can, however, be put in Operation if your Lordship will give a guarantee to the Crown to repay annually the whole expense of £4.00 per annum. In the event, however, I would wish your Lordship to bear in mind that the number of letters going to Ballyhooly after the establishment of the Office would have to depend on the guarantee given by your Lordship which would be unconditional and that your Lordship would be annually called on to pay the full sum of £4.00 per annum until such time as you should withdraw from the arrangement by giving the Post Office three months notice of your wish to do so. If your Lordship would wish to have the office renewal at Ballyhooly on these terms, I will thank you to notify to me your willingness to execute a guarantee to this effect. My address is Mallow.

I have the honour to be, my Lord, your Lordship's most obedient servant
Anthony Trollope

There is no record of my ancestor undertaking to pay this amount to the Post Office

I have always been somewhat surprised about the first Listowel's advancement in the peerage. For he was a Whig, and Lord Liverpool's[79] administration from 1820 to 1830 was of course Tory. His promotion to an Earldom in 1822 under such an administration has always been something of a mystery. He did not appear to take any further interest in party politics after he had left Convamore for Kingston House.

There is an amusing entry in a diary of 1818 kept by Mr Justice Day of Kerry, an old friend of the Hare family, whose father had been Rector of Listowel and was himself a 'Freeman' of the City of Cork. His mother had been a daughter of the Knight of Kerry and he was guardian of the young Maurice Fitzgerald, heir to the Knight of Kerry. He had been visiting his many friends in London and walked to Kingston House, where he 'enjoyed a hour's interview with that trifler [Lord Ennismore] and then walked back to town'. The disdainful tone of his comment may have been due to the fact that Ennismore was very much a self-made man, and looked down upon by the old

[79] Robert Jenkinson, 2nd earl of Liverpool (1770–1828), prime minister, 1812–1827.

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Anglo-Irish gentry of County Kerry. It was also probably a reminder that at that time the future first Listowel was no longer interested in the important political issues of the day, and really only giving serious thought to his own future and that of his family.

He had been an absentee landlord from the time he handed over Convamore to his eldest son, Richard, until his death at Kingston House in 1837. He had lived to the grand old age of 86. He married his second wife Anne Latham when he was 67, and she placed a rather touching memorial plaque in Cork Cathedral, inscribed as follows:

> Sacred to the memory of William, Earl of Listowel. Born in Cork 1751 and departed this life at his London residence July the 13th, 1837. His remains are interred in Westminster Abbey.[80] He died in humble hope of divine mercy, through the merits of his Redeemer. Anne, his widow, erects this tablet. Also to Anne, the second wife of the above.

Kingston House, which was inherited (along with the rest of his estate) by his eldest son's eldest son, William, was the last of the great private houses, standing in their own grounds within five minutes of Hyde Park Corner, to disappear between the World Wars. It followed in the footsteps of Grosvenor House, Dorchester House, Lansdowne House, and Devonshire House.

Kingston House had been built as a country house, surrounded on three sides by fields, in the year 1770 for Elizabeth Chudleigh – the notorious Duchess of Kingston, by her husband the Duke. It was not until 1851 that Princes Gate was built on the west side of Kingston House, and still later Ennismore Gardens on the fields behind it. I remember my Grandfather telling me that, as a boy, when Kingston House was still regarded as being in the suburbs, the family used to take a house in Eton Square for 'the season' every summer, and that cows were brought over from Ireland to provide the children with fresh milk, grazing on the adjacent pasture in the rear of the family mansion, now Ennismore Gardens.

The style of architecture was that of Isaac Ware,[81] the architect of Chesterfield House, built 20 years earlier, and not unfortunately of such contemporary architects as Adam and Wyatt. Its austere, finely proportioned 18th Century exterior had been spoilt by the addition of bow windows, the front verandas, and extensions such as a large conservatory and stables, added by the first Listowel, to match his grander style of life, when he bought the house during the Napoleonic Wars from the childless Earl of Stair.

[80] *He was buried there because the Abbey was his parish church, Kingston House being in the parish of Westminster.*

[81] Isaac Ware (1704–1766), an architectural exponent of the Palladian style and a writer.

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My grandfather enjoyed telling the story of the flight from his London home of its more widely publicised earlier occupant, the Duchess of Kingston. After a sensational trial by her peers in the Upper House of Parliament in Westminster hall,[82] she was found guilty of a felony, a bigamous marriage to the Duke of Kingston, and only escaped being branded on the hand by claiming benefit of peerage, as she was still the legal wife of the Earl of Bristol. As she was no longer the widow of a Duke who had left his property to his wife, the Duke's nephews decided to start legal proceedings to invalidate his Will. They obtained a Writ forbidding her to leave the country pending the hearing of the case, and to escape the service of this Writ, the Duchess fled secretly to France. She left, as the story goes, a dinner party at Kingston House in order to speed by coach to Dover in a friend's carriage. Her story continued in Paris but that was the last I heard of it.

The most distinguished occupant after the Duchess at Kingston was the Marquis Wellesley,[83] elder brother of the Duke of Wellington, who rented it from the Second Earl of Listowel from 1837 until he died there in 1842. His brother, the 'iron' Duke, used to ride over from Apsley House to see him. The interior had fine 18th Century features, ceilings, and fireplaces, with Regency Hepplewhite and Sheraton furniture, as well as the fine collections of Old Master paintings. It was occupied by the Listowel family from 1842 until my Grandmother[84] died there in 1937.

Richard, Viscount Ennismore

Richard, the eldest son of the first Earl, served in Parliament from 1812 to 1827, when he died suddenly at Convamore of an 'apoplexy' – presumably the word used for a heart attack.

Throughout his political life, his views were typical of the Protestant die-hards. His attitude to the Irish can be judged from a speech he made in the House of Commons in May 1823 on a Government Motion 'To continue the Irish Insurrection Acts':

> Before tranquillity could be expected to prevail in Ireland, it was necessary to strike terror in the lower orders. They must be made to know that the laws are strong and they cannot break through them.

[82] In 1776.

[83] Richard Wellesley, 1st Marquess Wellesley (1760–1842), held many senior posts including lord lieutenant of Ireland and governor general of India.

[84] Ernestine, Countess of Listowel, née Brudenell-Bruce (1849–1936). She is actually recorded as having died in 1936, not 1937 as mentioned throughout the memoirs.

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Daniel O'Connell[85] records, in a letter to his wife dated February 25th, 1825, that he appeared before the House of Commons Committee on Irish Affairs, and was asked a few questions by Lord Ennismore, at that time a member of Parliament for County Cork. This was a high-powered Committee, which included Goulburn, Peel, Spring-Rice and Sir Henry Parnell.[86] At any rate he was not an absentee landowner, like most of his predecessors, as he spent the best part of the time at Convamore after his father had handed over his Irish property and moved his own permanent residence to Kingston House.

Richard maintained the family tradition of the Protestant Ascendency[87] by objecting to measures to remove the disabilities of Roman Catholics. He decided to oppose the Second Reading of Sir Francis Burdett's[88] 'Catholic Relief Bill' in April 1825, which was carried by a narrow majority of 268 to 241 votes in the House of Commons. He returned to the charge on May 6th urging the House not to give the Bill a Third Reading until another Bill dealing with provision for the Irish Clergy had been passed. He was answered by Mr Brougham, speaking for the Government, who said that although he was entirely willing to make 'reasonable sacrifices to conciliate the noble Lord, he entreated him to consider how completely the condition he proposed would go to nullify some of the most gracious labours in which the House had ever been engaged'. Lord Ennismore consented to withdraw his proposition and the Bill was duly passed.

The Second Earl of Listowel

My great grandfather, the second Earl of Listowel, sat in Parliament as a Whig MP for Kerry from 1825 to 1830. He became Viscount Ennismore in 1827 on the death of his father at Convamore, and succeeded his Grandfather the first Earl on his death in 1837. He sat in Parliament again, as an Irish Peer he was eligible for the Lower House, and represented St. Albans from 1841 until 1846. He then retired from Party politics, and became a courtier as an intermittent Lord-in-Waiting to Queen Victoria until his death in 1856.

[85] Daniel O'Connell (1775–1847), Irish political leader and MP known as 'The Emancipator' due to his campaign for Catholic emancipation.

[86] The MPs Henry Goulburn, Sir Robert Peel, Thomas Spring-Rice and Sir Henry Parnell.

[87] A term used from the beginning of the 17th century till the early 20th century to describe a small group of Protestant Anglo-Irish figures who dominated the political, economic and social affairs of Ireland.

[88] Sir Francis Burdett, 5th baronet (1770–1844), English MP and reformer.

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His early career in the House of Commons was more sensational than successful. In 1826 he fought an election in Kerry characterised by all the worst features of violence and corruption prevalent in unreformed constituencies during that period. The Kerry election of 1826 has been described as 'the most tempestuous in the history of Kerry', and has gone down to Irish history as 'Hare's Election'. There were three candidates for the two Kerry seats. Two were sitting members, Maurice Fitzgerald, Knight of Kerry, and Colonel James Crosbie. The third candidate was William Hare. Both the sitting members had supported Catholic Emancipation. Hare, on the other hand, had a fiercely Protestant family background and his father had been returned for County Cork since 1812 by the 'high Protestant interest' – an interest entirely opposed to Catholic emancipation. As the election would be decided by the votes of the 40 shilling freeholders, most of whom were Catholics, it was fortunate and timely that Hare decided to change the family allegiance. He gave a solemn undertaking that, if he were returned, he would support Catholic Emancipation in Parliament.

Fitzgerald's seat was unassailable, so the contest lay between Crosbie and Hare. Polling day was on June 4th and the voters gathered in the Court House at Tralee. On a show of hands, the Sheriff declared Crosbie and Fitzgerald to have the majority. A supporter of Hare called for a poll. The Sheriff conceded to this request but adjourned the count for several days. This made it possible for the powerful absentee landlords such as Lord Ventry to collect their tenants who could be relied on to vote for Hare. But when the police marched back to Tralee with the enfranchised tenants, a riot broke out between the rival supporters, the military opened fire, and 16 people were killed. The Sheriff adjourned the election result until July 3rd when Hare was duly returned with Fitzgerald. The election had been blatantly 'rigged' by Hare, in collusion with the Sheriff, the military, and the police. Crosbie sent a well documented complaint to Dublin Castle,[89] but his complaint was dismissed by the Lord Lieutenant out of obvious political prejudice.

That great Irishman, Daniel O'Connell, was one of my great grandfather's Kerry constituents, and he expressed his fury about the election in several letters. Gladstone[90] wrote in one of his Diaries: 'O'Connell was the missionary of an ideal – the idea was

[89] The seat of the English administration in the country headed by the lord lieutenant of Ireland.

[90] William Ewart Gladstone (1809–1898), Liberal prime minister, 1868–1874, 1880–1885, 1886 and 1892–1894.

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the restoration of the public life of his country'. On 4th July 1846, O'Connell wrote the following to a member of his family:

> Colonel Crosbie must insist on his being returned, as he had the show of hands on the first day and Hare, it is, who called for a poll. That poll is plainly illegal. The Sheriff ought certainly to be hanged; but if he escapes the gallows – which god forbid! – he will be imprisoned for months in Newgate. I will not however attend an illegal poll. This election must be set aside.[91]

He wrote a less strong letter to William himself. I quote an extract from William Hare's reply dated February 1827:

> In reply to a letter which you have done me the honour of addressing to me, I beg leave to say that far from thinking that its contents were dictated by any unkind or offensive feeling, I am thankful for any suggestion that my constituents have the goodness to offer me. I look upon Catholic Emancipation as an all important step. I regard it as a measure that would strengthen the bonds of union, tranquillity, and welfare, in a country that has been too long distracted by well grounded discontent. It is therefore my intention to pursue a course I had adopted with steadiness and zeal, unabated by any trivial circumstances, and unaccompanied by injudicious and compromising conduct.'

This was pretty strong language from my great grandfather. The reference to 'injudicious or compromising conduct' might have referred to the possibility of a duel. Duelling was of course strictly illegal, but it still happened quite frequently in the early part of the 19th Century.

As if to atone for his behaviour in the 1826 election, Hare, or Ennismore as he had now become, submitted a petition to the House of Commons in the following year from the people of Listowel protesting against their religious disabilities. He said in support of his petition:

> That he had himself witnessed the many evils which resulted from the system of exclusion which was acted on towards his Roman Catholic fellow subjects. All the disunion, ill feeling, and animosity, public and private, which prevailed in Ireland, might be traced to that source, nor could he conceive how permanent tranquillity could be secured in that country, so long as such a penal code was suffered to exist. It was a matter of infinite moment to conciliate the feelings of the people of Ireland, and by that means restore peace, order and unanimity; and he was convinced nothing could affect that most desirable object but complete and unqualified emancipation.

[91] *This dramatic reappraisal of O'Connell was in spite of Gladstone's agreement in the Peel Cabinet of 1843 to the prosecution of O'Connell for treason.*

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Again in 1828, Viscount Ennismore supported a resolution in the House of Commons proposed by Sir Francis Burdett and seconded by Mr Broome:

> That this House do resolve itself into a Committee to consider the State of the Laws affecting His Majesty's Roman Catholic subjects in Great Britain and Ireland with a view to a final and conciliatory adjustment.

After condemning the laws in question, he went on to argue that coercion would not work because it would not remove the causes of violence and hatred. This could only be achieved 'by conciliation'. The resolution scraped through the House with a majority of 6 votes – 272 to 266, against the Opposition of the then Tory Government. Lord Ennismore is recorded on the list of those who voted for the Third Reading of the Catholic Emancipation Bill in 1829. He unfortunately resigned his seat in the House of Commons in 1830.

He had not abandoned his Liberal Whig allegiance when he became MP for St. Albans between 1841 and 1846. He spoke and voted in May 1843 against the Second Reading of the Arms (Ireland) Bill, which had been introduced to authorise coercion against the disaffected Catholics. He was for reform, particularly the reform of the Church, which would remove the causes of violence and the need for coercion:

> No man could deplore more than he did the agitation now going on in Ireland, which prevented the introduction of capital and the amelioration of the condition of the people; yet they should recollect that to this agitation 7/8ths of the people were parties, it should be met, not by unconstitutional coercion, but by redress of the peoples' wrongs.

He ended with a strong plea for equality of treatment of the Catholic Church in Ireland:

> If the Government had the moral courage to grapple with the ecclesiastical establishment in Ireland, he was persuaded that the difficulties with regard to the Government of that Country would cease. They should govern Ireland as they govern the distant dependencies of the Crown, whether Hindu or Roman Catholic, whether in India or Canada. They should respect her Church, and her sons would respect and support the Government.

In August of the same year, 1843, he spoke in support of a Motion on the Irish Church. The Motion proposed that the tithe revenue and property of the Irish Church should also be available to support the Catholic clergy. What he wanted was for the payment of tithes, deeply resented by the Catholic peasants, should benefit the three faiths in Ireland, Catholic, Protestant, and Presbyterian. The

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House was eventually 'counted out' (that is to say less than 40 members were present) at 8.00pm in the evening.

Lord Listowel as he had now become (since the death of his father in 1837) attributed the ills of Ireland to the domination of a Protestant minority over a Catholic majority. 'No, Sir, the cause of these evils is as clear as the noonday sun, and may be expressed in three words, Protestant against Catholic. The people of Ireland were oppressed solely because they maintained that religion which was once your own – a Protestant Church was forced upon a Catholic people'. In April 1845, Lord Listowel voted for the Second Reading of the Maynooth College Bill, the purpose of which was to provide a grant for the training of Catholic Priests. This was for Gladstone the momentous issue on which he resigned from Peel's Government and ceased to be a Tory. Again reverting to the reform of the Protestant Church in Ireland, Lord Listowel said in the House of Commons:

> Let me observe that such opinions lead to the one result, namely, that in a country which numbers 8,000,000 of population, and of which less than 1/8th professes the Protestant faith, the Protestant Church ought to be cut down and adapted to the wants of those who do belong to it, and not suffer to remain as she now is, an object of distrust and of disgust, of contempt, and of annoyance, to those who do not.

His enlightened attitude led to his vote in May 1846 for the total repeal of the Corn Laws – which for so long had protected the interests of British landlords, supporting a Motion 'That all restrictions on corn should be now abolished'. In the Division Lobby he was joined by other free traders including Cobden and Bright[92] and his own Leader Lord John Russell[93].

Emerging from retirement during the last years of his life he became on three occasions a Lord-in-Waiting to Queen Victoria from 1840 to 1841, from 1846 to 1852, and finally 1853 to 1856 when he died at the early age of 54.

The Third Earl of Listowel

On the Second Earl's death in 1856 he was succeeded by my Grandfather, another William, and now Third Earl of Listowel. He was born in 1833, and after three years at Eton joined a

[92] The leaders of the Anti-Corn Law League, Richard Cobden and John Bright.

[93] Lord John Russell (1792–1878), later 1st Earl Russell, Liberal prime minister, 1846–1852 and 1865–1866.

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Guards Regiment, the Scots Guard, at the age of 19. He was soon to see active service in the Crimean War, and was seriously wounded early in that war at the battle of the Alma in September 1854. He was invalided home, and as a Captain served as Aide-de-Camp to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland in 1856. He retired from the army on succeeding his father.

He now turned his attention to politics, where his life-long ambition was to add to his Irish honours a Peerage that would give him a seat in the House of Lords. As can be seen from a letter from Lord John Russell, then Prime Minster, dated May 10th, 1866:

My dear Lord,

Your claims to a British Peerage shall be fairly considered with those of some others – of your father's merits I have the strongest impression and I should be happy to have his son in the House of Lords. But there is at least one Claim which when Irish Peers are given seats in the House of Lords may appear equal or superior to yours.

I remain, yours faithfully,
Russell

He persevered after Lord Russell had been succeeded as Prime Minster by Mr Gladstone. When Mr Gladstone rewarded his support of the Liberal party with the title of Lord Hare of Convamore in the County of Cork, his ambition was at last realised. I quote the following letter from No. 10 Downing Street, dated November 8th, 1869:

My dear Lord,

I have received the permission of Her Majesty to propose to you that you should become a Peer of the United Kingdom.

It gives me much pleasure to convey an offer the proprietary of which will I am sure on all hands be recognised.

I trust that I may anticipate your acceptance.

I remain, my dear Lord, very faithfully yours,
W.G. Gladstone

In 1873 he became, like his father, a Knight of St. Patrick[94], and in 1880 a Liberal Lord-in-Waiting to Queen Victoria, again following in his father's footsteps. He also increased the family property in County Kerry from 25,500 acres in 1870 to 30,000 in 1883.

His tenure of office as a Lord-in-Waiting started in May 1880, and ended abruptly in August of that year. In that month he resigned, in

[94] The Most Illustrious Order of St Patrick, a prestigious British honour linked with Ireland.

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protest against Forster's[95] 'Compensation for Disturbance (Ireland) Bill'. Sir Edward Hamilton,[96] who was Private Secretary to Mr Gladstone, noted in his diary at the time 'There have been further resignations. Listowel and Zetland.' What had this Bill done to upset the Irish landlords? The Irish Land Act of 1870 had recognised the tenant's right to compensation for improvements when he left or was evicted from his holding. But it made an exception in the case of non-payment of rent. Forster's Bill sought to remove this exception, but only 'in exceptional circumstances'. For example, if a farmer failed to pay his rent because his crop had failed (a frequent occurrence during the famine years) he would not forfeit his claim to compensation if evicted by his landlord. The Bill was to apply only in the distressed areas, and for a limited period of time. The plea of 'exceptional circumstances' was the ground on which a tenant could appeal to a County Court Judge against a landlord's decision to evict him. It was this revolutionary measure which was too much for the landlords in the House of Lords! They threw it out by a majority of 282 to 51. Lord Granville,[97] the Liberal Leader in the House of Lords, was astonished that more than half the Liberal Peers voted against the Bill, though it had been carried comfortably by the Liberal majority in the House of Commons.

It gave my grandparents great prestige when the Prince, the future Edward the VII, and Princess of Wales stayed with them at Convamore from April 8th to April 27th, 1885, on their visit to the south during their tour of Ireland. The Prince had been bullied by Mr Gladstone, who was seeking popularity, into visiting the country and his reluctance can easily be understood by the reception of the Royal couple in the city of Cork. As reported by the Prince's equerry, Arthur Ellis, to Queen Victoria on April 15th:

> The fact is that the lower class, the lazzaronis of Cork, which exists in overpowering numbers, were rabid rebels. No other word can convey their hostility and behaviour.

However, there was a well-dressed middle class crowd to cheer the Prince and Princess outside the Protestant Cathedral.

Unlike his father, who had spent most of his time at Convamore, my grandfather was an absentee landlord who lived permanently at

[95] W.E. Forster (1818–1886), chief secretary for Ireland, 1880–1882.

[96] Sir Edward Hamilton (1847–1908), later permanent secretary to the Treasury.

[97] Granville Leveson-Gower, 2nd earl Granville (1815–1891), Liberal peer and minister. As well as Liberal leader in the House of Lords, he also served several times in other ministerial posts including foreign secretary, colonial secretary and lord president of the Council.

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his London residence, Kingston House, and only visited his Irish home occasionally, usually during the summer months. On some of these occasions my grandmother is said to have enjoyed her visits to Gurtinard House, the family residence in the town of Listowel. My grandfather was 80 in 1913, the last year in which I spent Christmas at Convamore.

The Fourth Earl of Listowel

On his death in 1924 he was succeeded by my father, another Richard Hare, who was born in 1866. After Eton and Oxford he joined the First Life Guards in 1890 as a Second Lieutenant. He was soon to see active service in the Boer War, and on May 30th, 1900 he was taken prisoner and held in a prisoner of war camp until the end of hostilities.

I do not think I can do better than describe the battle in which he was taken prisoner in the words of Thomas Pakenham's excellent history of the Boer War:

> A still more humiliating coup (inflicted by de Wet's brother, Piet) was the capture of the thirteenth battalion of the Imperial Yeomanry at Lindley on May the 31st. To British eyes, this mounted Battalion was the social and political show-piece of the new Volunteer Army; a company of Irish M.F.H.'s known as the Irish Hunt Contingent, including the Earl of Longford and Viscount Ennismore; two companies of Ulster Protestant Unionists, including the Earl of Leitrim, a whiskey Baronet (Sir John Power) and the future Lord Craigavon; and a company of English and Irish men-about-town raised by Lord Donoughmore, who had insisted on paying their own passage to South Africa.
>
> This patriotic band was commanded by a British regular, Lieutenant Colonel Basil Spragge; and Spragge proved himself a regular ass. They were supposed to join General Colville, who was desperately short of men. When they arrived at Lindley on May the 27th, they found that Lindley had somehow slipped back under the control of the Boers. Instead of making a fighting retreat towards Kroonstadt, as he acknowledged was perfectly possible, ('I can get out but shall lose in doing so'), Spragge sent an SOS to Colville. Then he and his men sat down on some kopjes outside Lindley, and waited to be rescued. Unfortunately Colville, who had been ordered to be at Heilbron by May the 29th, and was not fully aware of Spragge's dangerous situation, decided not to delay his Brigade by returning to rescue the mounted troops. He marched on to Heilbron, leaving them to their own devices.
>
> On June the 1st, when the rescue column – three Yeomanry Battalions led by Lord Methuen (downgraded by Roberts) – reached Lindley and stormed the

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kopjes they found the hills already strewn with dead, Spragge's dead. The rest of Spragge's Yeomanry had surrendered the previous day when de Wet brought up field guns. The surrender of Spragge's Irish Yeomanry was the cause of a ripple of mirth in nationalist circles in Ireland.

In fact, there was a gallant Last Stand made by the Irish Hunt Company. Lord Longford, with blood streaming from wounds at the neck, face, and wrists, ordered his men to fight to the end. 'I knew it to be madness,' said one of the gentlemen troopers, (son of the Irish Lord Chancellor) 'and so did everyone else, I think, but not a man refused'.

In general raw Irish Yeomen fought no worse than British regulars had fought in similar situations. A respectable total of 80 were killed or wounded before the White Flag went up.

Piet de Wet's bag totalled about 530 men, including Spragge, Lord Longford (seriously wounded), Lords Ennismore, Leitrim, and Donoughmore (and the future Lord Craigavon), all captured, and the whiskey Baronet killed. The wounded were left at Lindley: and the other prisoners were marched away northwards to the eastern Transvaal. Their captors evaded the net of 20,000 British troops trying to rescue them.[98]

When my father returned home he resigned his Commission in the Army shortly after his marriage in 1904, but insisted at the age of 48 on rejoining his old Regiment, the Royal Munster Fusiliers, on the outbreak of the First World War in 1914. As he was no longer fit for active service in the front line, he joined the Army Police, and became a Provost Marshal, first in the Mediterranean, and later in Cairo. After the war he retired from the Army with the rank of Major.

As a young man he was an enthusiast for all field sports, and spent much of his time salmon fishing in the River Blackwater at Convamore, and shooting woodcock in the surrounding woodlands. While he lived in Ireland he was also master of a famous Irish pack of hounds, the Duhallow Hunt. He usually visited friends in Scotland for deer and grouse shooting in the autumn. It was the age of hunting big game with the rifle rather than the camera. My father was an excellent rifle shot, and had been in the 'Shooting Eight' at Eton. He went abroad for long periods to shoot big game on safari in Africa, and came home with his trophies, to be stuffed by a famous firm in Piccadilly.[99] Our home became a menagerie of dead animals – stuffed or affixed by their horns to the walls.

He taught me with much patience how to use a shotgun without risk of injury to myself or other people and insisted on my cleaning

[98] *Thomas Pakenham, The Boer War, pp. 436 and 437* [1979.]
[99] Most likely Rowland Ward Ltd.

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the gun in his gun room every evening after a day's shooting. As he grew older, and preferred to stay at home, he became a keen gardener. He made a superb garden in our Yorkshire home, and built the rock garden with his own hands. I often marvelled how he could lift and carry enormous blocks of granite, to place them at regular intervals as steps between his rock plants. He was also a keen embroiderer and did many elaborate chair seats in gros point.

He still hankered after his Irish home after it had been burnt down in 1921. The fire was probably started by Sinn Fein in retaliation for the destruction of many small Irish homes by the Black and Tans during the 'troubles' that followed in Ireland after the First World War.

The following is an extract from The Times of the 29th October 1921:

£85,000 COMPENSATION

Lord Listowel's Burnt Mansion

At Fermoy Sessions yesterday £150,000 was claimed for Lord Listowel for the destruction of his mansion, Convamore, Ballyhooly.

His solicitor submitted to the Court a typewritten document addressed to Lord Listowel from 'Headquarters, Cork, No. 2 Brigade,' saying 'On Wednesday, the 13th instant, the enemy bombed and destroyed six houses of Republicans as reprisals for IRA activities on the 10th instant. You being an aggressively anti-Irish person and your residence being in the Battalion area of enemy reprisals, I have hereby ordered that the same be destroyed as part of our counter-reprisals, – Commandant.'

The Recorder awarded £85,202, including £55,319 for the mansion, £21,234 for the furniture, and £7,430 for pictures.

This was followed by a final sentence which reads as follows:

A schoolteacher was awarded £5,000 compensation for the loss of her husband, who was taken from his home by armed and masked men and was found by the roadside shot dead.

This statement suggests the difference in value between life and property. However, in spite of the substantial compensation payment, my father decided to sell the site of the house to a developer.

So it was a sad, but at the same time fortunate, moment in his life when my grandfather died in 1924. For the first time, at the age of 58, he could afford to buy his own country house. He chose the Oxton Estate in Devon, between Exeter and the sea. The climate, mild and damp, and the rough shooting and the trout streams, must have reminded him strongly of his beloved Ireland. It was a happy retreat

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for the last years of his life. The rest of the family went there for school holidays, and we were allowed to ask our friends to stay. My father obviously intended Oxton to replace Convamore as the family country seat. However it had been left for life to his youngest son, my brother Alan,[100] who was still a schoolboy, and the trustees sold the estate almost immediately after his death. He died there in November 1931, having developed pneumonia after coming home drenched to the skin after a day's shooting with a neighbour, Sir Trehawke Kekewich,[101] with whom he was staying.

A close friend of the Kekewich family, Sir Jocelyn Lucas,[102] was also staying at that time at Peamore, their country house. Many years later he became a Conservative member of the House of Commons. It was at Westminster that Sir Jocelyn spoke to me about my father's death. When the doctor informed him that his illness might be fatal, my father expressed a wish to see a lawyer in order to change his will. But this did not happen. When I arrived at Peamore, my father was in the final stages of pneumonia, struggling for breath and not recognising me or others around him. I had travelled home from Paris, where I was studying at the Sorbonne, as soon as I heard the news of his critical illness.

I was glad to think that my disinheritance was due to an accident, and that my father bore me no ill-will. He had obviously not expected to die in his 60's (he was 66) and had not therefore altered a will made when he was furious (and, I am afraid, deeply hurt) when I became a Socialist. It was a sad story that could have been avoided had I not been so impetuous about airing my political opinions in public.

My father's London property, including Kingston House and Ennismore Gardens, was inherited by my brother John.[103] When my grandmother died there in 1937, he decided to sell the house, which has been replaced by a large block of luxury flats. My brother kept the best of the family pictures, the family plate, and the family jewellery, and decided to sell the remainder of the contents by auction on the premises. My mother[104] went to the auction, and bought a few things which she gave to me as mementos of the old family residence. I like to think that many families are now enjoying a beautiful home that was for so long the preserve of one family only, but I still

[100] Alan Hare (1919–1995), later served in the Armed Forces and Foreign Office, and then joined the *Financial Times*.

[101] Sir Trehawke Kekewich, 1st baronet (1851–1932), English judge.

[102] Sir Jocelyn Lucas, 4th baronet (1889–1980), Conservative MP.

[103] John Hare, later 1st Viscount Blakenham (1911–1982), Conservative MP and later Cabinet minister in the 1950s and 1960s.

[104] Freda, Countess of Listowel, née Vanden-Bempde-Johnstone (1885–1968).

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deeply regret that the old 18th Century house had to go, with the beautiful croquet lawn and back garden, where the old people played a gentle game on a summer's evening: an oasis of peace amid the roar of London traffic passing between Knightsbridge and Hyde Park Corner.

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