VOICES *from the* GREAT HOUSES

Cork and Kerry

JANE O'HEA O'KEEFFE

MERCIER PRESS

IRISH PUBLISHER – IRISH STORY

For Hélène, Claire and David – beautiful souls

MERCIER PRESS
Cork
www.mercierpress.ie

ISBN: 978 1 78117 131 8

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

A CIP record for this title is available from the British Library

Printed and bound in Ireland.

An Roinn
Ealaíon, Oidhreachta agus Gaeltachta
Department of
Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht

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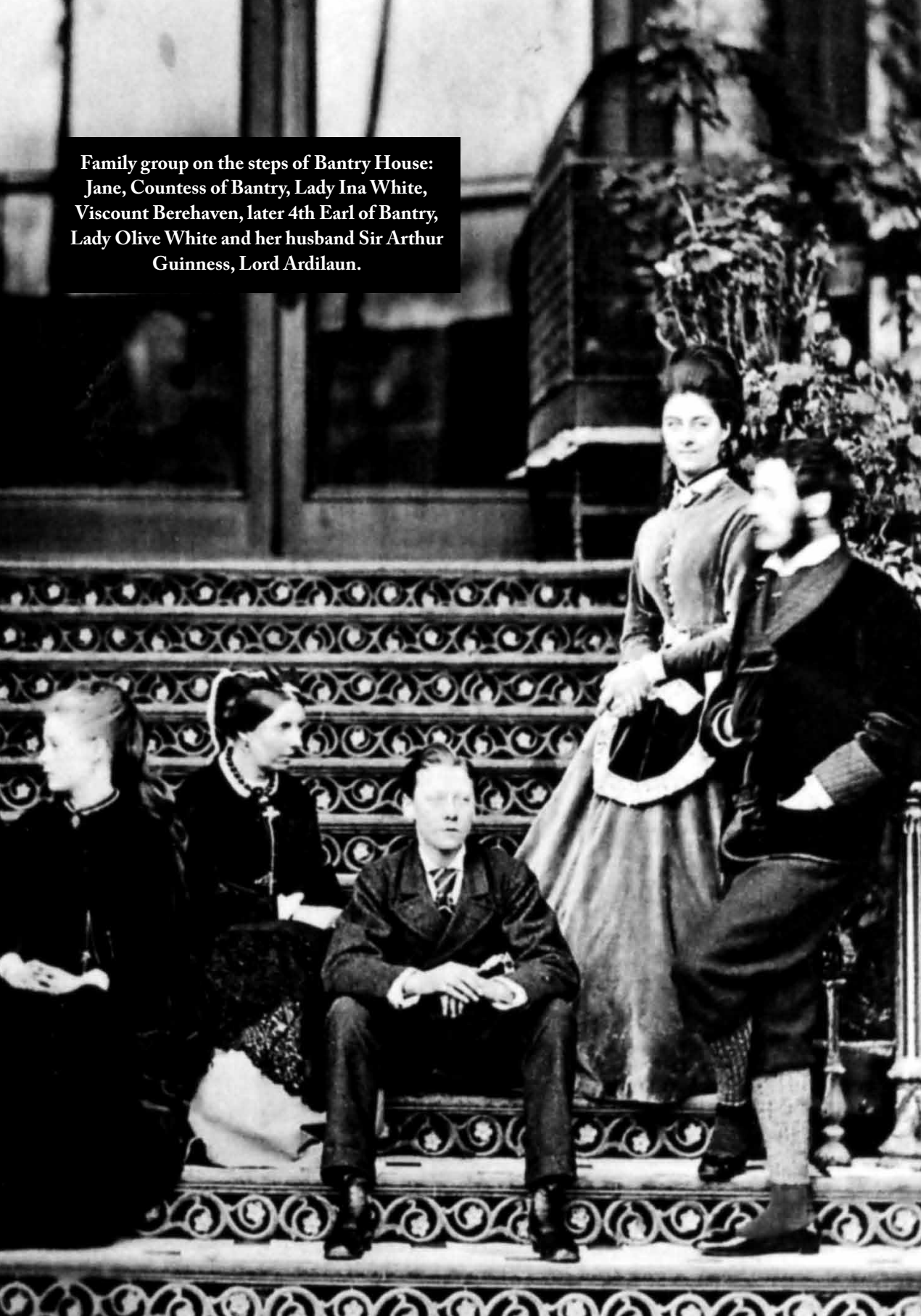

Family group on the steps of Bantry House: Jane, Countess of Bantry, Lady Ina White, Viscount Berehaven, later 4th Earl of Bantry, Lady Olive White and her husband Sir Arthur Guinness, Lord Ardilaun.

Acknowledgements

This book could never have been written were it not for the great cooperation of those who allowed us to record their unique stories. They cooperated with open hearts and with deep integrity at every stage, through the recording process with my husband, Maurice O'Keeffe, and the subsequent checking of my text for the book.

The people whose narratives appear in the book are some of those recorded for our Irish Life and Lore series. Since 1990 Maurice and I have been involved in the compilation, cataloguing and archiving of the oral history of the counties of Ireland, of particular institutions and of seminal events in our history. Over 3,000 hours of recorded material has been archived, and the complete body of work may be accessed in many libraries and also through our website at www.irishlifeandlore.com.

We must express our deep gratitude to Brian McCarthy of Fexco Financial Services, Killorglin, County Kerry, for funding the compilation of fifty recordings for the Great Houses of Cork and Kerry Oral History collection and this subsequent book. Fexco has also funded the more recent Great Houses of Munster collection, comprised of seventy recordings. We are also very grateful for funding provided by the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.

Charles Lysaght graciously agreed to write the foreword to this book, and I feel his words form a most valuable addition to the narrative. His deep knowledge of the histories of the more well-known families of Ireland lends an added historical authority to the work.

I am very grateful to historians Dr Hélène O'Keeffe, Dr John Knightly and Mr Russell McMorran for their help, and for some very valuable advice as the work took shape over the past two years. The assistance of Christina O'Sullivan of Cork County Library and Michael Lynch of Kerry County Library must also be acknowledged. Brigid O'Hea made excellent use of her eagle proof-reading eye and Nora Burke of NB Services, Tralee, deserves my thanks for her diligence in the typing of the several drafts. We are very grateful to Barra

Vernon of Vernon Productions in Cork, for his excellent work in the production of the audio recordings, and also to Marcus Fitz-Gerald for his expertise in photographic production. I would also like to express my gratitude to Mary Feehan and the staff of Mercier Press for their invaluable assistance in bringing this work to its present form and to its ultimate home on your bookshelf.

Foreword

Charles Lysaght

Until the beginning of the twentieth century, most of the land of Ireland was owned by a relatively small number of aristocratic or gentry families who lived in Big Houses spread throughout the countryside and were classed collectively as 'the ascendancy' or 'the county'. As landowners in a society where more governance took place at local level than is the case today, they were responsible for local government. A majority of this landed upper class was Protestant in religion, and many could trace their origins back to families that had come from England in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and acquired land at that time or subsequently, when it was confiscated from its Irish owners. Marrying among themselves or with members of British families of the same class, and preferring an English education for their children, this aristocracy formed a separate caste in Ireland, with an identity clearly distinct from other classes, even the prosperous and well-educated merchant and professional classes of their own religion. This division was more marked than in England where in the nineteenth century the upper and upper-middle classes had come together through shared education at the great public schools and ancient universities. In Ireland, during the same period, the isolation of the landed upper class was accentuated because the sons of aristocratic or gentry families tended increasingly to make their careers in England or in the empire and seldom returned to live or work in Ireland unless they were heirs to the family home.

The creation of popularly elected local councils in 1898 and the subsequent abolition of resident magistrates and Justices of the Peace (most of whom were from the gentry) at the time of independence in 1922 terminated the role of

the gentry in local government. The sale of most of the tenanted land to the tenants from 1903 onwards eroded their economic position and meant that the old landowners were no longer a separate class in economic terms, distinct from large farmers. In the 1912 edition of *Burke's Landed Gentry of Ireland* the editor wrote: 'One is now confronted with the problem whether there remains a landed gentry at all in that country so great has been the compulsory alienation of land in Ireland during the last decade.'

With a few notable exceptions, the aristocracy and gentry were opposed to the nationalist movement, which they saw essentially as a social revolution with its roots in the tenant agitation known to history as the Land War. They were dismissive of allegations that they were any less Irish for desiring a union with Britain and being loyal to the crown. The penalty they paid for this perceived British allegiance was that 200 Big Houses were burnt down during the violence that ushered in Irish independence in 1922. Many of the owners departed to live in Britain.

However, when the dust had settled, most aristocratic and gentry families were still in possession of their ancestral homes and still much better off than other sections of the population. They may have been deprived of governmental power, but they still commanded and expected social deference in a manner superbly captured in the novels of their last great chronicler, Molly Keane. They controlled activities such as racing and hunting. Through English education they were able to maintain a broader British identity and secure access for themselves and their children to privileged sectors of British life. As long as the money lasted and order was maintained, they could, if they wished, live on in Ireland as if it were Shropshire. Most saw no need to concern themselves with local or national politics and were not troubled by the Catholic or Gaelic ethos of the new state. So it came about that the descendants of the erstwhile rulers of Ireland came to resemble nothing so much as an English colony in a foreign land, their alienation emphasised by the description of them as 'Anglo-Irish' – an expression unknown before the twentieth century and quite absurd when used of the many families boasting a long Irish lineage.

Despite all that had happened, most retained a sense of themselves as Irish and a love of Ireland, albeit probably the Ireland of their own circle and their own home places to which they were invariably deeply devoted. This persisted

even in families that no longer lived in Ireland. Few sold their ancestral homes unless they could no longer afford to keep them up. The incentive to stay on was that they were accorded a special status, albeit sometimes grudgingly, that would not be granted to those without the link.

While the general pattern was as I have described, it was not universal. A minority integrated themselves into the new nationalist Ireland. The accommodation that different families made with the new order varied according to their economic circumstances as well as their allegiances. The post-independence life of the aristocracy and gentry is well chronicled in numerous individual memoirs, some biographies and general surveys, such as Mark Bence-Jones' *Twilight of the Ascendancy* covering the period to 1970. Mark himself remarked that the effect of independence had been to make some of the ascendancy more English and some more Irish.

For those who have stayed on into the new millennium, even more varied patterns of life have developed. These are reflected in this book in which Jane O'Keeffe records interviews with members of old gentry families from Cork and Kerry. While a few no longer live in Ireland or are planning to depart because their children have made their lives out of the country and some come to their Irish house only for holidays, the majority have their homes here.

The interviews are a mixture of historical reminiscence and accounts of the present way of life and are a splendid example of 'oral history'. It is possible to discern in most of the chapters how important an historic home is to a family's sense of itself. What was once well described by Horace Plunkett as 'the tragic unrequited love of the Irish gentry for Ireland' shines through, despite rebuffs and atrocities suffered down the years.

In general the families surveyed are less isolated from other parts of Irish society than was the case in previous generations. Several factors have contributed to this. English schooling has become impossible except for the very rich. Since the 1950s fewer of what was once almost a military caste have gone into the British Army, a career choice that kept them out of Ireland at a formative stage of their lives and inevitably caused them to be regarded by many as less than fully Irish. Enclaves of Irish life that remained the preserve of the gentry after independence have been opened up, while distinctive ascendancy institutions such as the county clubs or Dublin's Kildare Street Club have

closed or merged. The mutual standoff between the old upper class and the rulers of the new Ireland, elites which once felt threatened by each other, is less marked. In fact, our rulers, who had once tended to dismiss the gentry as 'Britishers' disloyal to Ireland, have grown quite benign, granting assistance for the preservation of historic houses to owners prepared to share their heritage by opening their houses to the public. Perhaps, in time, these owners themselves will come to be regarded as national treasures – it certainly adds much to the appeal of such houses when the historic owners are still there displaying their inherited possessions.

It may be predicted that as the years pass most surviving members of the gentry will become integrated with other sections of the population on the same economic and educational level. While this may erode the purity of their caste, which some may still like to preserve, it will mean that a larger proportion of the population will be able to trace descent (albeit not exclusive descent) from the ruling class of pre-independence Ireland. This should help to ensure that what the poet Yeats proudly described as 'one of the great stocks of Europe' is accepted more readily as part of modern Ireland's inheritance, in the same way as treasured institutions they founded and passed on.

Introduction

Our unique personal histories, together with the places in which they were created, provide the solid foundations for the people we become. In the varied narratives included in this book, the historic Irish Big House is the common keystone.

My hope is that this book will provide an arena in which the living voices of many ancient Irish and Anglo-Irish families may be shared, enjoyed and preserved for future generations. These voices display a profound emotional attachment to a place and its people, sometimes through dangerous and volatile times.

Descriptions of the Irish childhood experience behind the demesne wall are both fascinating and historically valuable. The late Egerton Shelswell-White of Bantry House, County Cork, put it this way:

> When I was a child, the estate wall seemed like a prison wall keeping me in, not keeping other people out. … In the estate wall, there were five gates, only one of which did not have an arch over it. So, I had to run down a hill and jump over the gate to get out. It was easier than having to ask my parents for the key all the time, and it felt like escaping from prison! I remember that so well.

Jane Waller, formerly of Dromore Castle near Kenmare, recalls:

> One of the most remarkable things about Dromore was that it was the only domestic building in Ireland and the UK to use home-produced gas for lighting. As lighthouses did until recently, we made our own gas with carbide and water.
>
> One of my fondest memories would be of sitting around the dining room

> table, in good company, with this lovely gas light in the centre, hissing very softly and creating a pink, rosy glow. The twelve-foot high walls would recede into the darkness. I clearly remember the comforting feeling. We had those gas lights all over the house and sometimes there would be a bit of a leak, which created a smell like rotten eggs.

Dr John Knightly, a native of Milltown, County Kerry, had always been fascinated by the local Big House, Kilcoleman Abbey, during his childhood and youth, until its sad demolition in the 1970s. He has completed extensive studies on the Godfrey family, owners of Kilcoleman. He asserts:

> The notion that the Anglo-Irish sat around all day, doing nothing except hunting, shooting and fishing, is very much a fantasy, a very clever propaganda. Families such as the Godfreys, and their relatives, the Leeson-Marshalls at nearby Callinafercy, were very far removed from the image of isolated figures living lives of pleasant ease behind estate walls.
>
> Sir William Godfrey had a perfectly fine English estate, and he could have easily moved there during the Troubles, but he chose to stay in Kerry because it was his home. At the time of the Land War of the 1880s, the landed gentry were portrayed in a very negative light in a most successful propaganda exercise which has lasted right down to the present day. They were all painted thus, regardless of how good or bad they were as landlords or whether they were Catholic or Protestant. I think, in the new independent Ireland of 1921, it was easy for people to dismiss them out of hand.

The Honourable David Bigham, owner of Derreen House and Gardens near Kenmare, County Kerry, is the great-grandson of Henry Charles Petty-Fitzmaurice, 5th Marquis of Lansdowne, who was visited at Derreen by King Edward VII and Queen Alexandra in 1903. David spent his school holidays with his family at Derreen during his childhood and has very fond memories of carefree days spent in that wonderful place. He recalls a long-standing annual summer ritual from those days:

> The children from the local school would be invited to the estate for the 'school

> feast'. In one of the family albums may be seen photographs dating from 1895, showing the children enjoying the feast. As the local school got smaller, we took in another school, and yet another. The number of children in the three schools was then the same as it had originally been in the first school. There are only twenty-three children in that school now, and there are over fifty in the photographs taken in 1895.

To listen to the voices featured in this book is to relish the nuances of the unique personal experience. It is equally rewarding to attempt to attach the significance of the individual narratives to the social and national history of Ireland. These narratives enrich our understanding of a past that has faded from view, while providing a warm embrace around the cold facts of documented history. The vividly recalled memories allow us to begin to understand feelings of connection and disconnection, to learn of acts of great humanity in the face of famine, to relive the feelings of terror of suspected republican reprisals, and to understand the daily financial and emotional struggle to maintain a dying heritage.

This is the value of oral history, and the voices of the people included in this book occupy a unique and important place in Irish social history, a place on which perhaps the light of history has been insufficiently shone.

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July 2012
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County Cork

The Hutchins family at Ardnagashel *c.* 1900.

Ardnagashel, Bantry

Sir Cosmo Haskard

Richard Hutchins arrived in Ireland during the Irish Confederate Wars between 1641 and 1653. He served under the 1st Earl of Orrery, Roger Boyle, Baron Broghill, who was the son of Richard Boyle, 1st Earl of Cork. William III appointed Richard Hutchins as Poll Tax commissioner and he acquired lands in west Cork formerly owned by the O'Sullivan clan.

In 1759 Richard's great-grandson Thomas Hutchins married his cousin Elinor Hutchins, only child of Arthur Hutchins of Thomastown and Cregane, County Limerick. Thomas and Elinor had a large family, and were based at Ballylickey near Bantry. Their second son Arthur (1770–1838) established a branch of the family at Ardnagashel, on the western side of an inlet of Bantry Bay in 1800, having acquired 300 acres there. P. W. Joyce explains the Irish meaning of the place name in his *Irish Names of Places*: 'Ardnagashel: height of the cashels or circular stone forts'. Arthur built a substantial house on the lands and planted extensive woodlands. On his death, his estate passed to his elder brother Emanuel, a friend of Irish revolutionary figure Theobald Wolfe Tone, with whom he had attended Trinity College. In 1796 Tone was with the French fleet which attempted to land at Bantry Bay, and he wrote at that time of his hopes of meeting his friend from his college days who he knew had a home nearby. On Emanuel's death in 1839 the estate passed to his youngest brother Samuel, who established a soup kitchen at Ardnagashel during the Famine. Ellen Hutchins, who died in 1815, was a sister of Emanuel and Samuel, and was a very talented botanist and artist.

Griffith's Valuation – a property valuation record named for Richard Griffith, director of the Valuation Office which conducted the first survey of property in Ireland between 1848 and 1864 – shows that Samuel Hutchins held lands in the

baronies of West Carbery, Beara, Orrery and Kilmore, Bantry, West Muskerry and Fermoy in the mid 1800s. Although extensive lands in County Cork and elsewhere were sold by the family between 1850 and 1871, Samuel Hutchins was still the owner of over 7,500 acres in County Cork during the 1870s.

Samuel Hutchins, uncle of Sir Cosmo Haskard, on board the Bantry to Cork train *c.* 1913.

He was succeeded by his son Emanuel, and later by another son, Samuel Newburgh, who was in the Australian Mounted Police during the Australian gold rush. In 1873 he married Marianne Isabella Harrison of Castle Harrison in Charleville, County Cork. He died in 1915, the same year in which his son, Captain Richard Hutchins of the Royal Munster Fusiliers, became one of the many victims of the Great War.

Over following years, the estate at Ardnagashel suffered some neglect due to the straitened financial circumstances of the Hutchins family. At the end of the Second World War it was sold to Colonel Ronald Kaulback, who had travelled with English botanist and explorer Frank Kingdon-Ward on one of his

Himalayan expeditions. Later, Kaulback made further expeditions and collected botanical specimens in Tibet, Upper Assam and Upper Burma. During his ownership, the old gardens at Ardnagashel were restored and replenished, and the house was successfully run as a summer hotel.

In 1968 Ardnagashel was devastated by an accidental fire and a private house was subsequently built on the site, later to be replaced by a large bungalow. In the 1980s the original stable yard was converted for use as holiday accommodation.

Richard Newburgh Hutchins, who was born at Ardnagashel in 1915, is a cousin of the narrator Sir Cosmo Haskard. He was the last owner of Ardnagashel House, which was sold, together with most of the land, at the end of the Second World War. Mr Hutchins retained a portion of the land for himself and his two sisters. He would willingly have recorded his memories but did not feel quite up to the task, and he asked Sir Cosmo to do it in his stead.

Sir Cosmo Haskard is a great-grandson of the Samuel Hutchins who inherited Ardnagashel in 1839. He is now in his mid nineties and lives with his wife, Lady Phillada (née Stanley), at Tragariff, close to the old Hutchins estate at Ardnagashel. They settled there in 1972 in a house built by his father following his retirement from the British Colonial Service.

***

'I was brought up on the stories of the Hutchins family of Ardnagashel, my mother's people. As a child I remember thinking that summers must have been rather fun for previous generations who lived at Ardnagashel. The whole family used to migrate to Garinish, at the tip of the Beara Peninsula, for some weeks in the summer when my mother was a child. There is a wonderful white strand there, and it was to a farmhouse close by that the family migrated. They would set off from Ardnagashel early on the morning of the expedition, in horse-drawn vehicles. A couple of horses would have been sent ahead on the previous day to Adrigole. There was a beagle kennel at Ardnagashel, which is marked on the Ordnance Survey map, and the beagles would also migrate to Garinish with the family.

'The trip to Castletownbere took about eight hours, allowing for pauses, and a further two hours from there to Garinish. My grandmother, Marianne Hutchins, would be taken from Ardnagashel to Bantry with the youngest children. There they would board one of the steamers, either the *Princess Beara* or the *Lady Elsie,*

and on arrival at Castletownbere, the family would meet up for high tea in The Square. Then, they'd journey on and eventually arrive at the farmhouse where they would spend their summer holiday.'

Sir Cosmo has a real fascination for the lives and experiences of some of his forebears.

'In the early seventeenth century, one branch of the family had settled around Mitchelstown in County Cork, and they also had lands near Charleville and in County Limerick. They lived their lives as farmers and landowners.

'The other branch was here in Bantry, and they also had lands west of Berehaven. This branch of the family was engaged in fishing and farming. At that time, pilchards were fished in huge numbers right around these coasts. The family ran "fish palaces", where the fish were unloaded and cured, and the ruins of one such palace may still be seen at the mouth of the Ouvane River at Ballylickey. Time passed and the Mitchelstown branch of the Hutchins family was reduced to one female heiress, Elinor Hutchins, who married her cousin Thomas Hutchins of Ballylickey near Bantry, whose family were tenants of Lord Kenmare.

'That union of the two branches of the family was beneficial to the Bantry branch, because of Elinor's inheritance of rich farmlands in north Cork and Limerick. Elinor and Thomas are reputed to have had twenty-one children! That is hard to believe, I know, but I do know that six children survived into adulthood; four boys and two girls, all of whom were quite interesting characters.

'Emanuel, the eldest son, spent much of his life at Cregane Castle in County Limerick. I've been there, and the "castle" is a stump of a building which must have worked hard to merit the title of castle. When Emanuel was at Trinity College, he became part of a small political group, founded by Theobald Wolfe Tone, which was the predecessor to the United Irishmen. He was politically motivated, though seemingly not a part of the Establishment. He put in a plea for clemency to the Lord Lieutenant on behalf of two Bantry men who were sentenced to deportation to Australia after the rising by the United Irishmen, though he appears to have had no further involvement.'

The letter to which Sir Cosmo refers was written by Emanuel Hutchins on 11 August 1799 to the Lord Lieutenant, and contains a plea for clemency for Bantry men Dr Bryan O'Connor and Florence McCarthy, an attorney, who had both been sentenced to transportation to Botany Bay.

Emanuel Hutchins ran a substantial stud at Cregane Castle, and on 21 August 1839 a bloodstock auction was held there at which over eighty horses were offered for sale. Sir Cosmo treasures the original list of horses and an original copy of the auction notice. During that time, he explains, Charleville was a garrison town and many of the horses were bred for sale to the cavalry.

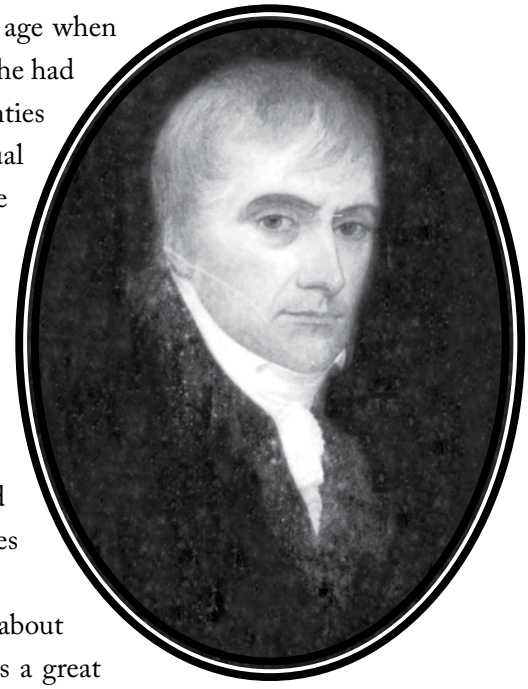
In 1839 Emanuel set off to the Middle East, ostensibly to buy Arab livestock for the Marquess of Lansdowne. In the National Library, where the family papers are deposited, one can see his correspondence with Lord Lansdowne. There is very little reference to Arab livestock, but a great deal about the political situation in the Levant. Sir Cosmo continues:

'He got as far as Damascus, where he died in November 1839, and his groom, Mr Condon, a tenant of Cregane, brought such horses as they had purchased back to Alexandria. In the National Library archive there are two letters from him addressed to Samuel Hutchins, Emanuel's youngest brother, at 17 Dame Street, Dublin, indicating that they were waiting at Alexandria for transport to Malta, and onward to Ireland.

'Emanuel Hutchins was seventy years of age when he set out on this long trip. Quite late in life, he had been appointed a Justice of the Peace for Counties Cork and Limerick. This was probably unusual in those days, when large landowners were often appointed Justices of the Peace quite early in their careers. I feel that he had not been favoured by the Establishment, but perhaps his views mellowed later in his life.'

Arthur Hutchins, the second son of Elinor and Thomas Hutchins, established himself at Ardnagashel in 1800. He had previously lived at Ballylickey, just a few miles distant.

'The estate at Ardnagashel consisted of about 300 acres at that time. Arthur Hutchins was a great tree-planter and was responsible, we think, for the construction of major drains on the land at



Portrait of Arthur Hutchins (1770–1838).

Ardnagashel. He diverted a stream which ran near the house, so that it took a great curve which enclosed part of the garden. I suspect that some of this work may have been undertaken as famine relief. Within this enclosure, exotic trees were planted and flourished due to the mild climate.'

The third brother, Thomas Hutchins, was a semi-invalid due to a bad fall on ice while he was a student. He took care of the land at Ballylickey, where he lived with his sister Ellen and their elderly mother. The youngest son of Elinor and Thomas Hutchins was Samuel, who, on the death of his brothers, inherited the Hutchins property at Ardnagashel and also properties in north Cork and elsewhere.

'He was a most energetic chap,' declares Sir Cosmo. 'In 1844 he gave evidence to the Devon Commission, which was set up to study the landlord situation in Ireland. I have a record of his evidence to the Commission, sitting in Bantry, part of which states:

> On 9th September, 1844, Samuel Hutchins Esq. sworn and examined:
>
> Where do you reside?
>
> Ardnagashel, in this Barony, within five miles of this place, in the county of Cork.
>
> Are you a Magistrate of the county and a landed proprietor?
>
> Yes, I have property in a great many parts of this county. The smallest property I have is in this Barony.'

This era probably marked the peak of the Hutchins family fortunes, as in the following decades a certain financial strain made itself evident. The interesting and industrious lives of the Hutchins brothers at this time have been somewhat eclipsed by the talent and endeavour of their more famous sister, Ellen.

Ellen Hutchins was born in Ballylickey, near Bantry in 1785, and she was destined to suffer ill health throughout her short life. Professor Whitley Stokes was her doctor. He had been a friend to her brother Emanuel at Trinity College. He encouraged her to take up the study of botany, feeling that it would provide her with both an outdoor activity in the collection of specimens and an indoor activity in cataloguing and research.

'Professor Whitley Stokes and his wife had cared for Ellen in Dublin during

an illness, and he knew that she dreaded returning home to Ballylickey to her invalid brother and ailing elderly mother,' explains Sir Cosmo. 'There followed eight years of the most incredible flowering of this girl. She took up the study of botany with great energy, and it is quite astounding what she managed to do. The book *Early observations on the Flora of Southwest Ireland: selected letters of Ellen Hutchins and Dawson Turner 1807–1814* provides an insight into the life and achievements of Ellen Hutchins.

'She went as far as Knockbuee, the highest hill behind Ardnagashel, and she went to Hungry Hill. She took specimens at Snave, Reendesert, Bantry and the islands in the bay. She had a boat which was rowed for her, and she did great work on lichens and seaweed. She was reckoned to be Ireland's first female botanist.' (A fern she discovered bears her name: *jubula hutchinsiae*, commonly known as the dark companion of the Killarney fern. She identified and listed in Latin about 1,200 plants in the Bantry area during the period from 1807 to 1811.)

Ellen Hutchins was also an extraordinarily talented botanical artist, and her sketches and paintings on botanical specimens are true works of art and things of rare beauty. They may be viewed at the Library of the Royal Botanic Gardens at Kew in London and at Sheffield City Museum. Ellen's life came to an end at Ardnagashel in her thirtieth year, in February 1815, and she is buried in Bantry graveyard.

The Troubles of the early 1920s in Ireland did not impact on the Hutchins family's property, at a time when many of the Big Houses in County Cork and elsewhere were burned. These acts were carried out by the Irish Republican Army (IRA) during the Irish War of Independence against the British, and around this period about 200 houses were burnt. Sir Cosmo has his own theory about the escape of the Hutchins' property at this time: 'I feel that places like Ardnagashel, Bantry House and Ballylickey House weren't touched because the families lived there and were very much in tune with their neighbours. No burning of houses took place in this area, excepting Dunboy Castle, the Puxley property at Berehaven. The Puxleys were absentee landlords.'

Life at Ardnagashel for the Hutchins family during succeeding years became more difficult. Resources were dwindling and the economic situation took its toll. Rental income had all but ceased due to the disposal of lands and the sale to tenants of properties following the passing of the five British Land Acts

between 1870 and 1909. Until 1869 ownership of farmland in Ireland had been in the hands of landlords and just a minority of tenants were leaseholders. The five Land Acts facilitated the transfer of ownership from landlord to tenant. 'The family had become quite badly off, though still maintaining as much of the old lifestyle as possible and certainly maintaining the stiff upper lip. Eventually, just after the end of the Second World War, the greater part of Ardnagashel was sold to Colonel Ronald Kaulback.'

Cosmo Haskard was born in 1916 in Dublin to Alicia 'Lily' Haskard née Hutchins and John McDougal Haskard of the Royal Dublin Fusiliers. Lily was the daughter of Marianne Isabella Hutchins (née Harrison) and Samuel Newburgh Hutchins. He was a barrister and Justice of the Peace who, after a few years in Australia, had spent most of his life at Ardnagashel until, in old age, he moved to Ballylickey.

'My grandfather Samuel Newburgh Hutchins had died before I was born,' explains Sir Cosmo, 'but I knew my grandmother, Marianne, very well. She was a wonderful, kindly person, who was very good to me.'

Following Cosmo's birth, his mother Lily became unwell and she was to spend much of her subsequent life in nursing homes.

'In earlier days, she was a wonderful horsewoman,' says her son. 'She would sometimes ride from Ardnagashel, with a family party, for a weekend at Ardtully Castle in Kilgarvan, County Kerry, owned by the Orpens, their cousins by marriage. She and my father met at a dance at the Harold-Barry home at Ballyvonare near Buttevant, County Cork, at the foot of the Ballyhoura hills. The Harold-Barrys were substantial Catholic landowners, and my father was stationed with the Royal Dublin Fusiliers at Fermoy and Buttevant. I know for a fact that my father proposed to my mother at Ardnagashel, at a romantic spot on the west side of the woodlands.'

During his early childhood, Cosmo lived in Egypt and China, where his father was serving with the British Army. At eleven years of age, he started prep school in England and would spend his subsequent school holidays with his beloved grandmother at Reendesert Lodge, close to the old Hutchins home at Ardnagashel, and just over the water from his present home at Tragariff, the house built by his father.

'When I came back from China, I fell in love with this part of the world. It

Alicia Isabella Hutchins, mother of Sir Cosmo Haskard.

John McDougal Haskard, father of Sir Cosmo Haskard, photographed in 1924 at Alexandria.

was a wonderful place for a schoolboy because of the hill climbing, the sailing, the fishing and all the other country pursuits. My grandmother was a dear and genuine person, though I do know that older people often get fixed ideas. She used to say, "The dear Cosmo loves jelly", and when I came back from school, there was always jelly which I wasn't particularly keen on!

'She was a very committed, conventional Christian. In the 1890s, the parish

**Marianne Isabella Hutchins,
grandmother of Sir Cosmo Haskard.**

church for Ardnagashel was Holy Trinity Church of Ireland in Glengariff, attendance at which involved a fairly long pull for the horses each week. There was a Methodist schoolhouse at Snave, about a mile away, and when the Methodist community declined, it came on the market. My grandmother persuaded the Bishop of Cork to interest himself in this and it was purchased from the owner, Mr Vickery, and established as a Chapel of Ease for the Church of Ireland

population in the area. In old diaries, I've found that the Hutchins family was very much involved in the refurbishment of the schoolhouse, providing pews and a pulpit and other necessities. It remained our church till about fifteen years ago, when sadly it closed due to the reduction in the numbers of churches around the county.'

As a child, Cosmo relished the long carefree days in west Cork during his school holidays, but the return journey from Cork to Fishguard could prove to be a cause of some heartache to a small boy: 'I always hated the end of the holidays. We used to drive up to Cork to catch the boat from Penrose Quay. When the very grand *Innisfallen* arrived on the scene, we couldn't get over the splendour of her, after the old *Ardmore* and *Kenmare* which had previously served the route. I remember the lovely sticky buns and tea we would have at Thompson's in Patrick Street while we waited to board, and the awful feeling that I should be enjoying this, but I couldn't, as I didn't want to go back to school. The street-cry "ECHO!" from the *Evening Echo* newsboys was the signal to leave, and I would be placed into the care of Miss O'Keeffe, the *Innisfallen* stewardess in her starched uniform, who would be given 2/6d to see that I was well looked after during the sailing.'

Sometimes on his way to the family home, young Cosmo was dispatched from Cork to Bantry on the train: 'I remember on one or two occasions I travelled first-class on the train. Only first- and third-class carriages were available. It was during winter, and the first-class carriage had three most comfortable armchair-like seats on one side, and on the other side were two similar seats. Between those was a doorway, which led to a little private washroom. An almost unique aspect of the first-class carriage in winter was that a foot warmer was installed before one left Albert Quay station in Cork. This was a long metal affair, filled with hot water, onto which you put your feet. On arrival at Bandon station, the cooling foot warmer was replaced and as you travelled west, the water got colder and colder, so no more foot warming after that!'

Cosmo would be met at Bantry station by his father, or by his Aunt Ellen, who kept house at Tragariff. There was no central heating in the house, but a welcoming fire would have been lit in his bedroom, as it also was on the night before his departure for school at the end of the holidays. One of Cosmo's real pleasures in those far-off days was to lie in bed and watch the firelight flickering

on the ceiling as he anticipated the many and varied joys of the long Irish holidays.

One of those joys involved visits to his beloved grandmother's home, a wonderful old farmhouse, full of nooks and crannies. The living rock formed the floor of the back kitchen and domestic arrangements were somewhat primitive: 'One wall in the main bedroom was rather damp,' recalls Cosmo. 'I remember a day when Mrs Leigh-White of Bantry House was due to visit and to spend the night. My Aunt Peg, who ran the house, looked at the damp stain on the bedroom wall, left the room and returned with a large picture and a nail, which she hammered into the wall to hang the picture, nicely obscuring the stain!'

In the 1930s, when Cosmo's father was contemplating the building of a home in Ireland for himself and his son, the site of their eventual home at Tragariff had already had some work undertaken on it in anticipation of a house being constructed there by a Glengariff lady, May Flynn. Sir Cosmo explains: 'May and her husband Edward Flynn, who was a solicitor in Bantry, had entered into an agreement to purchase the site at Tragariff from its non-resident owner, Kate Rebecca Bird, who lived in England. May was the daughter of Mr Roche who owned Roche's Hotel in Glengariff. The couple had put in the main line of the avenue, and had planted the avenue trees, which still stand, and also a big eucalyptus which stands outside the front door. They were preparing to build their house when Mr Roche died, and his daughter inherited the hotel. She and her husband then decided to live at the hotel and to continue to run it. My Aunt Ellen had heard that the work on the site had been done, and it was an obvious place for my father to build a house, close to the family at Ardnagashel. He was an imaginative and hard-working man, who was very keen on sports. He built a tennis court at Tragariff on a design he had seen elsewhere.

'The surface of this tennis court was made of tiny chips of gravel, or stone, and the lines were made of lead, which one could easily trip over! My job was to push three yard brushes, encased end to end in a frame, with a roller at each end, so that the chips would be spread around as they should be. I was a hopeless tennis player myself and much preferred sailing. My father and my aunt were quite keen tennis players and tennis parties often took place here, which were quite a feature of social life. There was a summer house here and tea would be served on the lawn.'

Sir Cosmo has always had tremendous respect and admiration for his father, and for his achievements during his lifetime. 'He had called his own father "Sir", as was not unusual in those times, but my father was always "Dad" to me. He was quite a private person and my mother's illness was not easy for him. He had a very healthy interest in field sports and while he was stationed at Fermoy and Buttevant, after his service in the South African War, he was a member of two local hunts. He was also a very good shot. There was a good snipe bog only a quarter of a mile from Tragariff. In the winter, woodcock would come down from the hills, and if one shot a woodcock it was quite an event. Grouse had been introduced in various places, but Mangerton in Kerry was the place for grouse in those days.

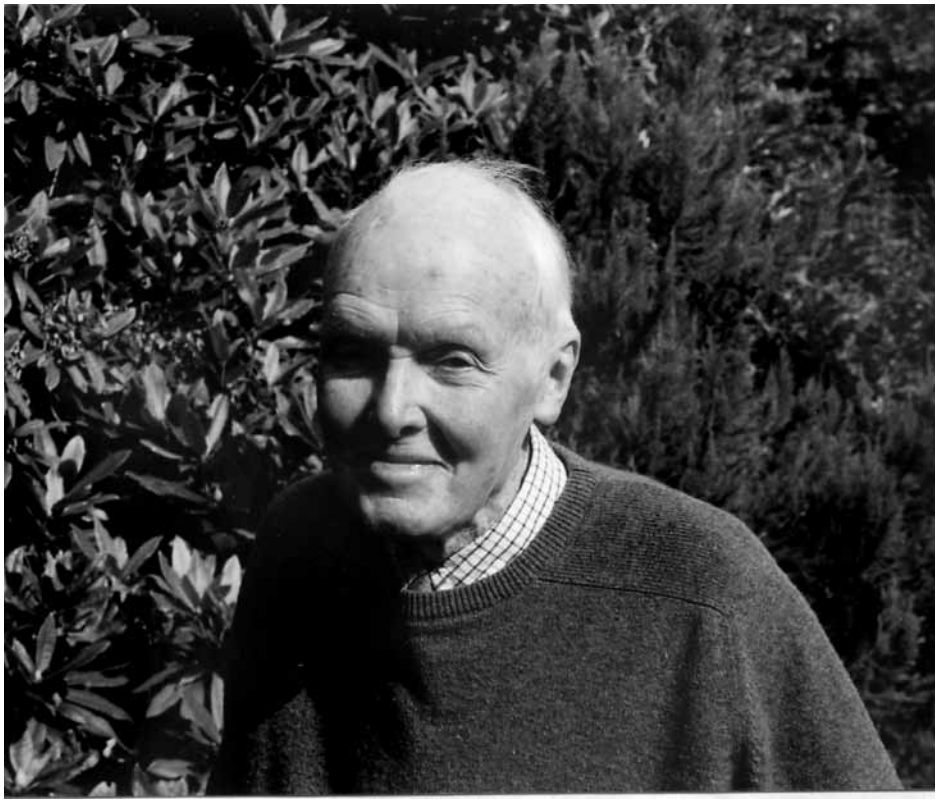
'Mackerel used to come in swarms and salmon fishing was quite good here. The great salmon rivers are the big rivers which flow east. The short rivers, like the Ouvane and the Glengariff, do not have a big salmon population. In the mountain lakes, there were wonderful little brown trout and *gillarua*, trout with little red flecks.'

Today, Sir Cosmo and Lady Haskard live contentedly at Tragariff. They happily take care of their own needs, though the house was originally built to accommodate four indoor servants: 'The cook, two maids and a man-servant, Gerard Jones, all lived here during the first years of my father's time. That situation lasted for only a few years. We find life so much easier now, without any domestic staff. In earlier days, around the 1930s, we used to clear out the garage here and have a party for children from the neighbouring farms. About thirty children would attend and we'd have music and dancing, and buns and jelly. Gerry Buhig, who lived in one of the dwelling houses on either side of the yard at Ardnagashel, was a wonderful and charming man, who taught me a lot about gardening. He played the fiddle and the accordion and he would provide the music at the children's parties.'

Sir Cosmo and Lady Haskard have lived long and productive lives in various parts of the world. Phillada Haskard is a Londoner, who was first introduced to west Cork at the time of her marriage. Their son Julian and his family live in Australia. When asked if he would like to see them return to occupy the old home at Tragariff, Sir Cosmo contemplates the question before replying. 'It's really a question of head and heart. Although my heart is in favour of their living

here, my head tells me that they live in Australia where our grandchildren are at school and university. Our daughter-in-law is an Australian girl, with whom we get on extremely well, and they have a great climate there. We don't live in a daydream and we know that it may not be possible to have a member of the family live in this house again. We would love to see it, but we know we may not.'

At his home in west Cork, at ninety-five years of age, this most accomplished of gentlemen, who served as Governor of the Falkland Islands from 1964 to 1970, and High Commissioner for the British Antarctic Territory, is quite content as he reflects on his fascinating and highly productive life, and his eventual return to the area long occupied by his ancestors.



Sir Cosmo Haskard.