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# **INTRODUCTION**

# **BELMORE PAPERS**

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# Belmore Papers (D3007)

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## Summary

The Belmore Papers consist of 36,400 documents and 278 volumes. They span the period 1612-1949, and document the acquisition, management and dispersal of the estates of the Lowry-Corry family of Castle Coole, Co. Fermanagh, Barons, Viscounts and Earls Belmore, in Fermanagh and Tyrone and also in Cos Longford, Monaghan, Antrim, Armagh, Dublin and elsewhere. They also document the political careers of Somerset Lowry-Corry, 2nd Earl Belmore, and Somerset Lowry-Corry, 4th Earl Belmore, in Ireland and as Governors of Jamaica (1828-1832) and New South Wales (1868-1872) respectively.



## Castle Coole and its owners

'The documented history of Castle Coole', writes Thomas McErlean (D3007/D/1/15/1), 'can be said to begin in 1611 [1612] when Roger Atkinson was granted an estate of 1,000 plantation acres called Coole. During the century the castle and lands changed hands a number of times until it was purchased in 1656 by John Corry a Belfast merchant of Scottish origin. As with many of the Plantation estates, the assessment of 1,000 plantation acres was considerably inaccurate. [The 4th Earl] Belmore in his *Two Ulster Manors* (London, 1881), p.77, computes the real size of Atkinson's grant to consist of 2,762 plantation acres (approximately 4,576 statute acres). By the time of Pynnar's Survey ... carried out in 1618/1619 Atkinson and his family were resident on the estate and had built his castle. The house and bawn were known in the first half of the century as Castle Atkinson. Atkinson sold the estate to Arthur Champion in 1640. Champion lost his life a year later at his other estate of Shannock, Co. Monaghan. During the 1641-1646 rebellion Castle Atkinson was destroyed by fire. In 1646 the estate was leased to Emery Hill, described as a brewer of Westminster. He in turn, shortly after, leased it to Henry Gibert who had become the husband of Arthur Champion's widow. In 1656 John Corry bought the estate for £860 and commenced the long and still continuing association with the Corry family. It is assumed that John Corry extensively repaired the Castle and made it defensible again after its destruction in the 1640s. A second destruction took place in 1689 during the Williamite wars.'



## **Colonel John Corry's will**

The manor of Coole passed to John Corry's son, Colonel James Corry (c.1643-1726). On October 1721 Colonel John Corry made his will (D3007/A/6/37). His son, Leslie Corry, then a minor, was to inherit the estate, '... with remainder first to his sons then to his daughters in order; in default of such to the use of his own daughters and their heirs similarly in order. ... All the above persons are to take the name of Corry if they succeed to the property. If anyone does not take the name then he or she is to lose all benefit which is to go to the next in succession.' By a codicil of 1726 Margetson Armar, John Corry's nephew, was appointed guardian during Leslie Corry's minority. Leslie Corry came of age in 1733. He did not however enjoy his estate for very long as he died in 1741.



## **Complicated co-heirship, 1741-1773**

Margetson Armar is an important link in the chain of succession to the Castle Coole estate. He had managed the estate during the minority of his cousin; he continued to live there even after Leslie Corry attained his majority in 1733; and in 1736 he married Mary Corry, the youngest of Leslie Corry's three sisters. His management of the estate helped to improve and increase it. In 1756 he purchased from Nathaniel Clements the residue of a 21-year lease of the churchlands of Aghavea adjoining Castle Coole which Clements had obtained in 1754 from Bishop Clayton of Clogher (D3007/A/6/54 et seq.), subject to a £400 head rent. (On 22 January 1756 Richard Baldwin, Provost of Trinity College, Dublin, lent the sum of £8,000 to Margetson Armar; so it is assumed that this money was used for the purchase of the churchlands lease.) Margetson Armar made his will on 5 May 1768 (D3007/A/6/59). In it he left all his Fermanagh lands to his wife and her issue, and, failing such issue, to Sarah Lowry-Corry and her heirs male.

Sarah Lowry-Corry was the second of Leslie Corry and Mary Margetson's sisters. In 1733, she had married Galbraith Lowry, the second son of Robert Lowry of Finagh (alias Sixmilecross) and Aghenis (near Caledon), Co. Tyrone. According to the terms of Robert Lowry's will, dated 1 November 1738 (D3007/A/4/6), his estate was to be divided between his first and second sons, Finagh being settled on the eldest son, Robert, and the Aghenis portion of the estate on Galbraith. Robert Lowry Junior died in 1764 leaving no male heirs, so that the estate was reunited in the person of Galbraith Lowry. In the same year, 1764, Sarah Corry inherited that portion of her father's estates which had first passed to her eldest sister, Martha Corry, and in accordance with her father's will assumed the name of Corry, as did her son and heir, Armar Lowry-Corry, later 1st Earl Belmore. Armar Lowry-Corry's three names represented the three components of his future inheritance: Armar, the valuable churchlands in Fermanagh, Lowry his paternal estate in Tyrone, and Corry the rest of his Fermanagh estate and his country seat.

The value of the churchlands can be gauged from an agreement which Armar Lowry-Corry entered into on 13 December 1773 (D3007/A/6/60) with Mary Armar, by which he purchased her interest in the churchlands lease for £31,314.4.2. The Bishop of Clogher was not empowered to let these lands for a longer term than 21 years, which meant that Armar Lowry-Corry never owned them or even held them on long lease. However it was customary for bishops to give preference to the sitting tenants when the lease came up for renewal (a form of upper-class tenant right), and it was also customary for the tenants of churchland to renew their leases before the end of the 21 years, thereby ensuring that there was always a considerable portion of the lease unexpired. This arrangement suited both parties: the tenant secured his interest and the bishop obtained an additional payment in the form of a renewal fine. (The fine on the Fermanagh churchlands was £309.15.6.) Armar Lowry-Corry renewed his lease with the Bishop every second year (in November), which meant that his lease never had less than

19 years to run, and that every second year he paid a fine over and above his rent of £320, i.e. about £630, or an average annual payment of about £475. In return Lowry-Corry had 14,900 acres of land worth £2,300 (fines and rents subtracted) per annum.



## The Lowry-Corry estates

It has not proved possible to establish the exact size and value of all Lowry-Corry's estates (which were situated in Longford, Monaghan, Armagh and Dublin as well as Tyrone and Fermanagh). However, an approximate figure may be gained by working backwards from the land advertised for sale in the Encumbered Estates Court in 1852. Other estates which were sold prior to 1852 together with what remained after that date, have been added to give an idea of what the estate amounted to in the heyday of the 1<sup>st</sup> Earl. The Fermanagh estate amounted to 7,140 acres plus the 14,900 acres of churchland leased from the Bishop of Clogher. The Longford estate amounted to 4,647 acres and the Tyrone estate to 41,448 acres. This amounts in all to 72,715 acres. In 1789 the gross rentals were as follows: Fermanagh churchlands £2,700; Fermanagh estate £1,400; Longford estate plus miscellaneous small properties £1,565; and Tyrone estate £7,130: giving a total rental of £12,795. By 1800 this had increased to £16,645.





## **Armar Lowry-Corry, 1st Earl Belmore**

It was the inheritance of three family estates which made Lowry-Corry an important and wealthy magnate and a potential political power. Politics, indeed, was part of his inheritance, as his father, his two uncles and his maternal grandfather had all been members of the Irish House of Commons. At the general election of 1768 Galbraith Lowry decided not to stand for re-election for Co. Tyrone, recommending that his son seek election in his place. Armar Lowry-Corry was indeed elected, though at a cost of over £3,000, and sat for the Co. Tyrone until his elevation to the peerage in 1781.

As well as enabling him to win and retain a seat for the county where the bulk of his property lay, Lowry-Corry's inheritance also entitled him to look for an advantageous marriage. In 1772 he had made an aristocratic, but otherwise unremarkable, match in the person of Lady Margaret Butler, daughter of Somerset, 1st Earl of Carrick. This marriage was happy but short, Lady Margaret dying in April 1775. The one lasting consolation from it was a son and heir, Somerset, subsequently 2nd Earl Belmore. By 1780 Lowry Corry was again thinking of marriage, this time to Lady Harriet Hobart, daughter of the reigning Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, the 2nd Earl of Buckinghamshire. It seemed the perfect match, for the bride, as well as being well-connected politically and a member of the English aristocracy, also brought with her a large marriage portion of £20,000 (D3007/A/14/4).

However, the marriage was not destined to last. On 21 July 1780 Lord Buckinghamshire wrote jocularly: 'Lady Harriet Corry and Lady Emilia Hobart are all subdued by the naked hocks of Lord Strathaven, a blooming Highlander' (PRONI, T3429/1/62). The remark, though jocular, was prophetic of her future liaison with another Scot, the 6th Marquess of Lothian, whom she married in 1793. On 6 January 1781 Lowry-Corry was raised to the peerage as Baron Belmore, and on 15 June 1781 his wife and he entered into a deed of separation by which he agreed to pay her £1,000 a year. They were never reconciled and the marriage was finally dissolved by divorce in April 1793 (at a cost to Belmore in legal and parliamentary fees of well over £4,000 – see D3007/B/5/8/3A). During the separation Lady Belmore's misconduct' so 'distracted' Belmore that he 'almost entirely secluded himself from society' (PRONI, D623/A/136/24). Only in his third marriage to a local Co. Fermanagh lady of small fortune (some £2,000 – see D3007/A/14/8), Mary-Anne Caldwell of Castle Caldwell, did he find a contentment which lasted from their marriage in 1794 to his death in 1802.



## **Political and dynastic achievement**

In spite of the breakdown of his second marriage, the years between 1781 and the Act of Union were basically ones of personal and dynastic achievement for the new Lord Belmore. Debarred by reason of peerage from the House of Commons, and with his son too young to stand for parliament in his place, he pursued political influence by the most direct method available in his day - the purchase of parliamentary boroughs and consequently of control over the members returned for them to the House of Commons. His reward was promotion to a viscountcy in 1789 and to an earldom in 1797. The only thing that eluded him in his rapid ascent was the title of his first choice – Fermanagh (HMC Drogheda MSS, i, 537). Unfortunately this was already held by an English family with no remaining connection with Ireland, and so was not available for Belmore. In his original sphere of political influence, Tyrone, Lord Belmore, if he did not enhance his position, at least held his own; and in 1797 he had the satisfaction of seeing his son and heir elected MP for the county.



## **The building of Castle Coole**

The 1780s and 1790s were the years in which Belmore not only maintained and enhanced his political and social position, but in which he also started and finished his only enduring achievement, Castle Coole. 'The masterpiece of the architect James Wyatt, built between 1789 and 1795 ... Castle Coole has claims to be the finest Neo-Classical house in Ireland. The assurance of its design is the more remarkable since it was apparently adapted from an earlier scheme by the Irish architect Richard Johnston, the foundations of whose building had already been laid. The masonry and carving of the Portland stone exterior and the precision of the joinery and plasterwork within are of the highest quality, ... [as are] Wyatt's interiors, with ceilings by Joseph Rose and chimneypieces by Richard Westmacott ...' (National Trust guidebook, p.4). Nevertheless, the excellence and therefore timelessness of Castle Coole as a building must not obscure the fact that it was built at a particular point in time and as part and parcel of Belmore's plans for his own and his family's political and social aggrandisement. As a borough owner and leading county magnate, Belmore could exert considerable influence in the House of Commons, by means of which he could hope to obtain offices for himself and his family and so to supplement his landed income. Castle Coole therefore reflects Belmore's confidence in his own political future and in the future of the political institutions of his day. It was to be the home of a great Irish political family: not merely a place to live in, but a showpiece to proclaim Belmore's position in Irish society and influence in the Irish House of Commons.



## **The Act of Union and its aftermath**

The Act of Union of 1800 left both house and builder high and dry. To the end, Belmore and his son, now Lord Corry, opposed the measure, in common with some other 'borough-owning magnates who had thriven under the Constitution of 1782, who had newly enlarged their spheres of influence by the purchase of constituencies, and who were unwilling to see the closing of the theatre in which they had hoped to cut a great figure' (G.C. Bolton, *The Passing of the Irish Act of Union*, OUP, 1966, p.182). Belmore, however, was in opposition in 1799-1800 not only because he sought to protect his own interests from extinction, but also because he believed in the Protestant Ascendancy and saw the Irish Parliament as the safest bulwark of his class and creed. In consequence of his root-and-branch opposition, Belmore - though he received compensation for the disfranchisement of his two boroughs, in common with all borough-patrons without political distinction - received neither emoluments to cushion him against his loss of political influence nor the honour of a British peerage which would at least have guaranteed his family an hereditary place in the House of Lords of the United Kingdom. Just as Castle Coole was inconveniently remote from the one remaining sphere of his political influence, Co. Tyrone, so Belmore himself was now remote from the centre of political activity at Westminster.



## Mounting indebtedness

Worse was to follow; for Belmore had been 'much pushed to make out by ... loans' his expenditure on politics and building (D623/A/108), and he had borrowed largely on the security of the continuation of the Irish Parliament. By the time of his death in 1802, the total debt affecting his estates stood at £133,000, of which about £70,000 was attributable to the building of Castle Coole. Further heavy expenditure of c.£27,500 followed almost immediately (D3007/A/21/2-3 and D3007/B/1/1); and as Belmore's widow survived him by 39 years, dying in 1841, the charge which fell on the estate as a result of her jointure of £1,000 a year in the end totalled almost £40,000. The Dublin townhouse was sold, but the transfer of Ireland's parliamentary capital from Dublin to London made it desirable for the 2nd Earl to have a town house in the latter city, on the acquisition of which he spent no less than £18,000 in or around 1814. Other aspects of what his agent in 1817 euphemistically called his 'liberal frugality' included £10,000 on plate and £5,000 on a hunting lodge at Jerpoint, Co. Kilkenny. As the National Trust's guidebook to Castle Coole comments (p.4), 'Wyatt's interiors ... were largely furnished by the 2nd Earl of Belmore in a more exuberant Regency fashion, between 1802 and 1825. Elaborate curtains and pelmets, pier glasses, "Grecian" couches and a magnificent state bed were all supplied by the Dublin upholsterer John Preston [at a total cost of c.£30,000-35,000 (D3007/D/2/13)].' The 2nd Earl was also responsible for a new stable block, designed by Sir Richard Morrison, and built c.1817.

Thus, it is not surprising to find that the 2nd Earl's nominal income of £26,849 (in 1816) was nearly all consumed in servicing various debts. Moreover, the end of the Napoleonic war extinguished the false and inflationary buoyancy of the preceding years and heralded an agricultural depression. It is no accident that it was at this time that the 2nd Earl went abroad on his yacht so that he could live more cheaply (D3007/H/6/4). The real crisis in financial terms came not with the 1st Earl's death in 1802 but with the post war depression from 1815.



## **Enforced sale of land**

From this point on the only realistic recourse was sales of land – the least important or most remote parts of the estate first. Already in the mid-1790s most of the detached Co. Monaghan estate had been sold by the 1st Earl, and in 1814 the 2nd Earl raised about £5,750 by selling the remainder, together with the Armagh estate and a small amount of land in Tyrone. In 1837 a much more substantial portion of the Tyrone estate followed; this was the so-called Langfield estate, in the barony of Omagh, containing 1967 acres and producing £510.17.7 a year in rent. In the same year the Longford estate of 4,647 with a rental of £2,593 was sold, and in 1839 the Clabby, Loughside and Mountain estates in Fermanagh with a combined acreage of 8,145 and a rental of £1,869. The Longford and Fermanagh lands were purchased (appropriately enough) by the Rev. J.G. Porter, son of a former Bishop of Clogher. These sales were followed by the much larger one of 1852 through the Encumbered Estates Court.



## Post-Union politics

Though deferred for half a century, the financial near-collapse of the family was a direct consequence, not simply of the building of Castle Coole but of the conjunction of that expenditure with the extinction of the Irish Parliament.

After the Union, with government patronage still heavily mortgaged to unrequited Unionists, the prospects were far from bright for an anti-Unionist family with no English title or property, few English connections, and no son of age to occupy the one remaining seat in parliament which they could reasonably expect to win. In 1816 it was claimed of the 2nd Earl (D3007/H/2/2): '... are there six peers residing in Ireland that have such an estate and so splendid a residence? ...'; but even then the claim - as far as the estate was concerned - was rather thin. The 2nd Earl had to wait until 1819 before he obtained a seat in the House of Lords (and then it was only as a representative peer - the family have never held a UK peerage); and until 1828 before he achieved government office (the uncongenial and, as things turned out, highly controversial Governorship of Jamaica). Yet the 2nd Earl, his second son, Henry Lowry-Corry (who became First Lord of the Admiralty), his grandsons, the 4th Earl and Montagu Lowry-Corry (who became Disraeli's private secretary and was created Lord Rowton), were all men of ability who would have achieved more if Irish borough influence had retained its weight in the unreformed electoral system and thereafter if they had operated in a political milieu where Irishness was not a disadvantage.



## The 4th Earl Belmore

Henry and Montagu Lowry-Corry are virtually unrepresented in the archive; the 2nd Earl is partially represented (particularly in respect of the Jamaican Governorship); but it is the 4th Earl who features more prominently than any other member of the family. A good résumé of his career is provided by a newspaper obituary of 1913:

'The Rt Hon. the Earl of Belmore ..., senior representative peer of Ireland, was born on the 9th of April 1835, and succeeded his father in 1845 .... [He] was a man of much intellectuality and was a ripe scholar. He received his education first at Eton and then at Cambridge. In 1861 he married a daughter of Capt. John Neilson Gladstone, RN, of Bowden Park, Chippenham, who was MP for Ipswich and Devizes. Capt. Gladstone was brother to William Ewart Gladstone, who, like the late Earl of Belmore, was in early life brought up in the principles of Evangelicalism, and whose strong Tory opinions gained him his first seat in parliament.

Unlike the distinguished statesman and scholar, Lord Belmore through the whole of his long life remained a consistent Conservative. For a short time, 1866-1867, he was Under Secretary for the Home Department, and so highly did he account this honour that he hardly ever spoke in public, whether on a religious or political platform, without a reference to the fact that he had been an Under Secretary. In 1867 he was made a member of the Privy Council, and was for four years Governor of New South Wales. In 1877 the Earl of Belmore acted as President of the Commission appointed to enquire into the affairs of Dublin University. A more admirable choice could not have been made. Lord Belmore will also be remembered for the part that he took in defending the Irish landlords as a class than any other English statesman. He was for years a leader in the Irish Landowners' Convention. A man of deep religious convictions, he opposed the disestablishment of the Irish Church. At what were formerly the largely attended gatherings, known as the April meetings, Lord Belmore was a regular speaker. His religious sympathies were, however, far from being confined to the Episcopalian body. Protestants of all denominations had a friend and supporter in him, and in this respect the relatives, Lord James Butler, the late Earl of Carrick and Lord Belmore were conspicuous.

The late Earl was a literary man of some mark. His Parliamentary Memoirs of Fermanagh and Tyrone is a book that was the result of much research, and is highly thought about [sic]. The history of the Corry family is a standard genealogical work, and was also written by the Earl of Belmore. On the fascinating subject of archaeology, Lord Belmore was an authority, and contributed many learned and instructive articles from time to time to the Ulster Journal of Archaeology. His life was a stirring one, and he was successively a major in the London Irish RV and a captain in the Fermanagh Militia. He was Lord Lieutenant for the County of Tyrone, and took an active part in discharging his duties as a magistrate of that county. He acted on many occasions as one of the Lords Justices for Ireland, and in everything connected with Ireland he was deeply interested.



The Royal Irish Academy elected him a member in recognition of his contributions to literature, and there was no man in Ireland who was more thoroughly respected by all classes. ...'



## Title deeds

The title deed material in the archive consisting of c.465 documents, 1612-1880, has been arranged as far as possible according to the 4th Earl Belmore's privately printed Catalogue of the Earl of Belmore's Ancient Deeds, etc. (Dublin, 1882). Background information on the principal components of the family estates, the manors of Coole and Finagh, are to be found in his *Two Ulster Manors* (London, 1881). The earliest group of title deeds (D3007/A/5) concerns the 17th-century history of the manor of Coole. The title deeds also document the Lowry family estates in Co. Tyrone, 1677-1779, notably the manor of Finagh, the Aghenis, Ballynahatey, Dromore and Fintona, and Monterloney estates, and various lands in the manors of Hastings and Touchet in the barony of Omagh, which originally belonged to the Mervyn family of Trillick (the second wife of James Corry of Castle Coole was a Mervyn). Also documented are the subsidiary Corry estate of Aghacordinan, Ballagh, etc, in the baronies of Granard and Longford, Co. Longford, 1697-1764, and other Corry properties elsewhere. From c.1780 the title deeds relate to settlements of and charges affecting the existing estates, not to the acquisition of new ones.



## Leases

Apart from a few 18th-century leases of townlands in the Longford estate, the leases in the archive relate to Fermanagh and Tyrone; for the former county there are c.200, running from 1708 to 1904, and for the latter c.475, running from 1724 to 1895.



## **Rental accounts and vouchers**

Rentals, accounts and vouchers comprise the following: rentals for the Longford estate, 1740-1837, for the Tyrone, 1777-1913, and for the Fermanagh, 1759-1946; farm, demesne, workmen's and labourers' account books, mainly for Castle Coole, 1789-1925, and personal account books and accounts of successive Earls Belmore, 1727-1901; and vouchers for the Longford estate, 1776-1778 and 1794-1797, for the Tyrone, 1773, 1777-1799, 1802, 1812-1848 and 1905-1913, for the Fermanagh (including Castle Coole household vouchers), 1780 and 1785-1949, for London and Cowes houses, 1813-1826 and 1867-1880, and for the 2nd Earl's yachting expeditions in the Mediterranean and Middle East, 1814-1818. One particular feature is a volume compiled by the 4th Earl Belmore which documents the progress of debt accumulation, rent reduction (either because of the post-1815 recession or of enforced sales of land) and finally of Land Purchase over the long period 1789-1893.



## Maps, architectural materials, etc

The maps, surveys, valuations, plans, drawings and non-pictorial material relating to the building and furnishing of Castle Coole constitute c.300 documents and volumes, the maps, surveys and valuations running from 1718 to 1892, and the architectural material from 1789 to 1903 with subsequent notes and research papers on the same subject by the late Ladies Dorothy and Violet Lowry-Corry, c.1930-1967. They include: 2 surveys of the manor and demesne of Coole, 1723, and one of the Monterloney estate, near Strabane, 1750, all by William Starrat; photocopies of 2 outsize maps of the demesne and surrounding lands at Castle Coole, c.1780, probably drawn prior to an extension of the demesne; building accounts and correspondence for the 1st Earl Belmore's new Castle Coole, 1789-1798; accounts and plans for the furnishing of the house and the building of the stable block and other additions to it, c.1807-1843; copy of an inventory of the furniture, etc, in Castle Coole, 1816; and manuscript notes by Lady Violet Lowry-Corry, seventh daughter of the 4th Earl Belmore, relating mainly to the building and furnishing of the third Castle Coole, 1788-1804, but relating also to the building of the two previous houses at Castle Coole in 1611 and 1709.

One especially interesting survival (D3007/D/1/5/1-2) is '... an undated and unsigned map which shows the formal garden, pleasure ground and demesne of the Queen Anne period house together with surrounding farmland. ... In the last 19th century the 4th Earl made ink additions to it showing subsequent developments. ... This map is in fact one of a pair that have survived. The second one shows a plan for a grand landscape park, but by comparing the two maps it is clear that they are the result of one survey and that the first is in a sense the parent to the second. Taken together it seems evident that they were intended to show a cartographic "before and after" sequence. the "before" consists of showing the garden and grounds of the Queen Anne house together with the surrounding demesne and adjoining farms which were to be transformed into an ambitious new landscape park. The "after" picture shows a radical transformation of the landscape with the eradication of the earlier house and its associated formal landscaping and planting together with the surrounding farms and field systems into a sylvan and well watered landscape part as a setting for a new mansion. ... The first map provides a retrospective picture of the development of the landscape in the previous 80 years of the 18th century and ... is likely to date from after Armar Lowry-Corry's accession to ownership in 1779 and before the first clear documentary evidence of the enlarging of the park traceable from rent reduction for land taken of tenants whose farms were brought into the new park in 1784. For these reasons an approximate date of c.1783 is assigned. Both maps are uncoloured.'



## **Correspondence**

Correspondence for the 18th century is small in quantity and scrappy in content; in the main what survives relates solely to estate business. Only with the 2nd Earl Belmore, who succeeded in 1802 and died in 1841, does a substantial corpus of correspondence materialise.



## **General correspondence of the 2nd Earl Belmore**

His general correspondence relates, in addition to his mounting financial difficulties, to his not unrelated absences from home on yachting expeditions in the Mediterranean and Middle East and travels in Greece, Egypt and Syria, 1813-1821, to the antiquities he collected on these travels, and to his contacts with G. Belzoni (who writes from Cairo, Thebes and Bebar El Malook, 1818), Dr Bronstead, Mr Burkhardt, Dr Chaboceau (who writes from Damascus, 1819), the lithographer Hullmandel (who published illustrations of the Egyptian antiquities brought home by Belmore), Belmore's 'friend, the Maronite Sheik Latouf in Eden', Henry Salt (who writes from Cairo in October 1818) and Lady Hester Stanhope, who writes a number of letters, from Mount Lebanon and elsewhere, 25 August 1817-25 May 1818. Associated with this correspondence is a later letter of 1941 about the historical significance of the 2nd Earl's collection of antiquities, much of which was sold by his executors in 1842 to the British Museum and forms a significant part of its Egyptology holdings to this day. The 2nd Earl's correspondence also relates to his political influence in Cos Tyrone, Fermanagh and Longford and in Enniskillen borough, 1816-1838, and to his aspirations to be elected an Irish representative peer, 1816-1819.



## **Correspondence of the 2nd Earl as Governor of Jamaica**

Of even greater interest is his correspondence as Governor of Jamaica, 1828-1832. His tenure of this office coincided with a slave revolt and was marked by deteriorating relations between Belmore and the home government culminating in a letter of 18 February 1832 from Viscount Goderich, Secretary of State for the Colonies, announcing Belmore's recall. The principal matter at issue between Belmore and the home government was the slave question, Belmore being accused of proceeding too slowly in the direction of emancipation, under pressure from anti-slave interests in Jamaica. The papers on this subject include: letters from James Batty, a magistrate of the parish of St Ann's (and James's temporary successor) and from other magistrates justifying themselves against charges of undue severity towards slaves; copies of the proceedings of various slave courts; copies of mainly 'private and confidential' correspondence between Belmore and Sir George Murray, Lord Goderich's predecessor as Secretary of State for the Colonies, on the subject of slavery; correspondence relating to Belmore's disputes with various missionary organisations, particularly the catechists of the Church Missionary Society, who claimed that they had been refused exemption from militia duty; and copies of letters from the Rev. Isaac Whitehouse, a Wesleyan Methodist missionary, and the Rev. George W. Bridges, an Anglican clergyman accused by Whitehouse of barbarity towards his slaves (in the ensuing row over this accusation, Belmore sided with Bridges).

Other issues which featured prominently during Belmore's governorship are: his troubles with the Jamaican Assembly, a row in the Assembly over the collection of the customs, relations between the Island Agent and the Colonial Office, the superintendency of Honduras, the composition of the Jamaican Council, the subsistence of the troops in Jamaica and the removal of a regiment from the island, a law relating to the holding of elections in Jamaica, Belmore's proxy in the British House of Lords, the packet service to Carthagena, a patronage dispute between Belmore and William Carr Beresford, Viscount Beresford, Master General of the Ordnance in the United Kingdom, etc, etc. Perhaps the most interesting series of letters are those written to Belmore, often at the rate of two or three a day, from the Governor's Secretary, William Bullock, about all manner of official business; these letters are all of a private and confidential nature, and unlike Belmore's correspondence with the home government, are none of them duplicated in any official series.

The Jamaican papers conclude with Belmore's correspondence with the Duke of Wellington and Lord Goderich, August 1832-February 1833, about Belmore's anxiety to get Goderich to publish the despatches relating to Belmore's recall, and his successful attempt, on Goderich's refusing to comply with this request, to obtain Wellington's sanction for raising the matter in the House of Lords; included in this section is a letter to Belmore from Sir Henry Hardinge expressing entire concurrence in the propriety of Belmore's conduct while Governor, and one from the 3rd Marquess of Lansdowne about a motion which Belmore wishes to make in the House of Lords.





## **Arrangement of the 4th Earl Belmore's correspondence**

The short-lived 3rd Earl Belmore is not represented in the correspondence section, but his son and successor, the 4th Earl, who succeeded in 1845 and died in 1913, more than makes up for this deficiency.

Perhaps the most striking feature of the 4th Earl's correspondence is its sheer volume - c.15,000 items. A further striking feature seemed to justify and indeed necessitate a drastic treatment. There was really no family filing system from which guidance might have been drawn; or rather there was originally one filing system strictly according to year, a partial parallel system according to topic, and a large quantity of material left lying around in various places in Castle Coole according to no system at all. Accordingly, the family filing system, or lack of system, has largely been discarded, the most important exception being the present D3007/Q, basically the 4th Earl's Co. Tyrone HML papers, which were largely stored by him in their present form, but which required the subsequent addition of a few score items from the 'year' bundles. The other 'year' bundles have been re-sorted, and amalgamated with what can only be described as vaguely 'topic' clumps, into a new topic arrangement (D3007/J-R), with D3007/T and D3007/X consisting largely of old 'topic' clumps, regularised by appropriate additions from the 'year' bundles. Such a drastic re-sorting has its dangers, the principal dangers being the unavoidable lack of time and care in the sorting, and the inevitable tendency of letters to deal with more than one topic. Students of the land question must certainly look at the Co. Tyrone election material, vice versa; students of the Church of Ireland at the education material, and vice versa; students of Co. Tyrone at everything; and so on.

Among the highlights of the 4th Earl's correspondence, some of them not altogether anticipated by the already-quoted newspaper obituary, are: his correspondence about Irish representative peerage elections, 1856-c.1904; his papers as Governor of New South Wales, 1868-1872, and about that colony subsequent to his departure; his correspondence about Co. Tyrone elections, particularly in the period 1873-1874 when the Belmore interest was challenged by a new kind of Orange, radical, tenant-right Conservatism, personified in Tyrone by the irrepressible John William Ellison-Macartney; his correspondence and working notes as a genealogist and local historian, 1858-1907, many of them still valuable to his present-day successors in those fields; and two fine, long runs of agent's letters from the agents for his Fermanagh and Tyrone estates, both covering the period c.1860-1910, and both conveying a remarkable picture of the running of a great estate in the era of Land Purchase.



## **20th-century and miscellaneous papers**

The 20th century is represented by an unusually large volume of correspondence, almost all of it generated by the 5th Earl Belmore, c.1914-1947; but this has still to be sorted and listed.

Two miscellaneous items of note, the first of them a considerable curiosity, are: an original bundle of recipes and one remedy, [c.1740s], reputed to have belonged to Sarah Lowry-Corry, but written by various hands (and including 3 methods of fattening poultry and a recommendation of house-snails for making a jelly described as restorative); and a minute book of the Enniskillen District Orange Lodge, 1845-1868.

