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National College of Art and Design  
Faculty of Design  
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**Killymoon Castle**  
**A Regency Gothic Castle**  
**In Ireland**

**By**  
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Submitted to the Faculty of History of Art and Design and  
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## Introduction

Through the rough thicket or the flowery med, til  
bursting from some deep-imbowered shade, some narrow  
valley, or some opening glade, well mixed and blended  
in the same scene, you show the stately mansions  
rising to the view.<sup>1</sup> The Landscape by Payne Knight,  
1795.

Since I was a child, I was always fascinated by old buildings, especially castles. I always wondered what types of people lived in these castles, how they lived and what these places were like inside. So for my thesis, I decided that I wanted to find out and give an impression of what an early nineteenth century Regency Gothic Country House was like in Ireland, discussing in particular, one of the few houses left in Ireland, designed in this style. The one that I have chosen is Killymoon Castle, Cookstown, Co Tyrone.

To understand what these Country Houses were like, it is essential to discuss what influenced their interior and architectural style. Within architecture a lot of new styles were developing around the end of the eighteenth century, for example, Gothic. I will discuss how the Gothic style developed from poetry and the Antiquaries writings, the influence of Strawberry Hill and its eventual development into Ireland.

Many architects were influenced by this style, such as John Nash who used the style frequently in his Country Houses and in Castles like Killymoon.



I will discuss the history of Killymoon Castle - Who the Stewarts were, and their ilk , the construction of Killymoon and I will give a description of what the present Castle's interior and exterior is like today.

To understand how Killymoon Castle was decorated, it is essential to discuss the social influences of the period. For example, "How did these people live?" I will discuss what Mark Girouard calls "Power Houses" <sup>2</sup> were used for and try and give an idea of how the house was used. I will look at a typical nineteenth century house, for example, Luscombe Castle in Devon, which was designed by John Nash.

What inspired the aristocracy's architectural taste in Ireland? First, the influence of the Grand Tour which led to the publication of pattern books. I will look at English furniture craftsmen and designers such as Thomas Chippendale Jnr, Robert Adam, George Hepplewhite, Thomas Sheraton and discuss how their books and styles influenced English and later, Irish, interior taste.

Later, I will look at the Regency style in interiors and the influence of the Prince Regent and Carlton House, designed by Henry Holland. I will look at the variety of styles which developed, such as Neo-Classicism, Neo-Gothic etc, which began to appear in many houses, especially the decoration of Carlton House which was a major factor in the development of interior designs. I will describe the standard arrangement of rooms and discuss how various rooms and castles were decorated, in particular, Luscombe



Castle, by John Nash, of which Killymoon Castle is believed to be in prototype.

Finally, I will discuss the English influence in Irish nineteenth century country houses, such as the various styles that developed eg. Classical, Gothic into Irish interiors. Although very little survives, I will try to build up a picture of how Killymoon Castle was decorated by looking at Irish country houses such as Caledon, in Co Tyrone, Fota House in Co Cork and Birr Castle in Co Offaly. These houses belong to the few existing early nineteenth century buildings in Ireland which are similar to John Nash architectural style. From this, I hope to achieve an overall view of what a Regency Gothic Irish Castle was like in the early nineteenth century.

#### Footnotes to Introduction

- 1 Watkins, David. The English Vision, London, 1982, p.79
- 2 Girouard, Mark. Life in the English Country House, London, 1980, p.2

## Chapter One

### The Revival of the Gothic Style

By the 1740s, architects were beginning to break away from the limited style of Classicism and one of the new forms which they looked at was the Gothic. This fashion was not an academic revival of Gothic architecture which was to take place in the late nineteenth century but the revival of Gothic trimmings. Architects did not want to produce a fully fledged Gothic house and eighteenth-century architects who adapted Gothic elements rarely allowed them to disturb the classical symmetry of their buildings.

### Influences in the development of the Gothic style

The Gothic revival of the middle of the eighteenth century saw the beginnings of the historicism that informed the later monuments of the style<sup>3</sup>

Indeed, the establishment of the "Gothick" style in architecture, as the Victorians called it, was influenced very much by eighteenth-century literature in England. Writings such as Batty Langley's publication in 1742 of Gothic Architecture restored and Improved. The renewal was prompted also by interest in the Medieval and in Romanticism which was influenced by the restoration of Gothic Churches and Gothic Castles. all of these publications brought about the revival of the Gothic style.

The development of the Gothic taste into architecture owes much to the writings of poets such as Edmund Spenser



and John Milton, whose work shows that by the beginning of the seventeenth century, there was a prophetic enthusiasm for ancient buildings. This can be seen in the following,

This fortification grew from the ruins of an ancient  
abbey; and to yond side o' the river lives a wall,  
piece of a cloister which in my opinion gives the  
best echo you ever heard, so hallow and so dismal <sup>4</sup>

Over a century later, literature by Alexander Pope displays a more romantic view of castles which led to the revival in Gothic taste.

August and hoary, o'er the sloping dale, the Gothic  
Abbey rears in sculptured towers, dull through the  
roofs resound the whistling gale, dark solitude among  
the pillars low'rs.<sup>5</sup>

Thomas Gray, William Wordsworth, William Blake, Percy Bysshe Shelley etc all wrote about the gloom, the dark, the ancient ruins of the old castles and abbeys in the early eighteenth century. Novels by Jane Austen, William Beckford, Mrs Radcliffe, George Eliot and Thomas Love Peacock describe buildings in the Gothic style. From these writings we can see the influence of the Gothic style emerging into architecture.

### The Antiquaries

Behind this sentimental, romantic approach to the past ran the more scholarly endeavours and researches of the Antiquaries.<sup>6</sup>

Some of these Antiquaries were architects like Sir John Vanbrugh who designed Vanbrugh Castle in Greenwich which could be said to display the first stirrings of Gothic. From the onwards, a real passion for Gothic developed. In 1717, the Society of Antiquaries was re-organised. They were a group of people who studied and



collected relics from ancient times. During the early eighteenth century there was a revived taste for the Gothic style and many publications such as James Benthams A History of Gothic and Saxon Architecture in England 1717 began. It was this interesting body of pattern books and literature which influenced the beginnings of the Gothic style into architecture.

Many architects tried their hands at the Gothic style. For example, late eighteenth-century, nineteenth-century Sir William Chambers, Robert Adam and John Nash, and a number of buildings, by them in the Gothic style, began to appear throughout England and Ireland.

#### Strawberry Hill (illus 1)

Throughout the eighteenth century, it was not unusual for a house to be enlarged or altered in keeping with the dominant style. One of the most influential of these houses was Strawberry Hill at Twickenham, built in 1707 by Horace Walpole. 'Walpole was a fervent propagandist for the revival of the Gothic style'.<sup>7</sup> He was determined to emulate the moral essays of Pope and in 1753 he wrote to a friend saying that he was going to build "a little Gothic house" <sup>8</sup>

He selected a number of important designers and architects to be involved in the creation of his house. They were designers such as John Clark, Richard Bentley, William Robinson and Thomas Gray, with whom Walpole did the Grand Tour. The Antiquaries involved were Thomas

Barrett, John Carter and James Essex with Robert Adam and James Wyatt making their own contributions.

This group spent many months designing the house. With his craftsmen, Walpole had succeeded in producing the first irregular picturesque house since Vanbrugh Castle at Greenwich near London. It soon became a private show place, with tickets for admission and influenced architects and architecture in England and Ireland.



illus.1 View of Strawberry Hill from the South-East, 1783

Watercolour by Paul Sandby







illus.2 The Library at Strawberry Hill



illus.3 The Great North Bedchamber, Strawberry Hill

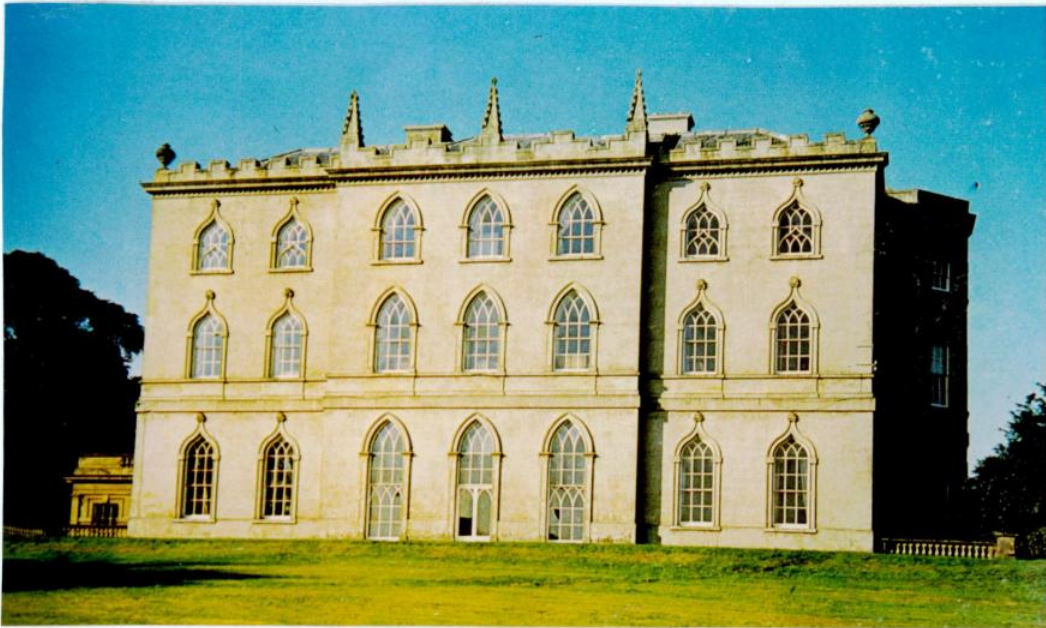








illus.4 The Classical Exterior of Castleward, Co Down



illus.5 The Gothic Exterior of Castleward.





### Gothic in Ireland

From 1750 onwards, the taste for Gothic caught on in Ireland. One of the first houses to be erected in this way was Castleward in Co Down, built in 1760 for Lord and Lady Bangor. (illus 4-5) Husband and wife had different architectural tastes which led to the front entrance being built in a Palladian style and Lady Bangor's garden elevation like Strawberry Hill, being in Gothic.

Leading English architects, such as James Wyatt and John Nash, designed houses in Ireland in both Gothic and Neo-Classical styles. However, the taste for Gothic blossomed mainly in exterior architecture. Houses with pointed windows and doors, clustered columns and plaster vaulted ceilings, towers etc. began to appear all over the Irish countryside.

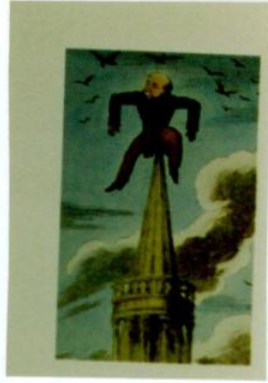
### John Nash Architect (illus 6-7)

In the early nineteenth century, one of the grandest entrepreneurs in the United Kingdom, I consider, was John Nash who did much work in Ireland. Little of his work survives but much of it was in the castellated style of the Gothic revival.

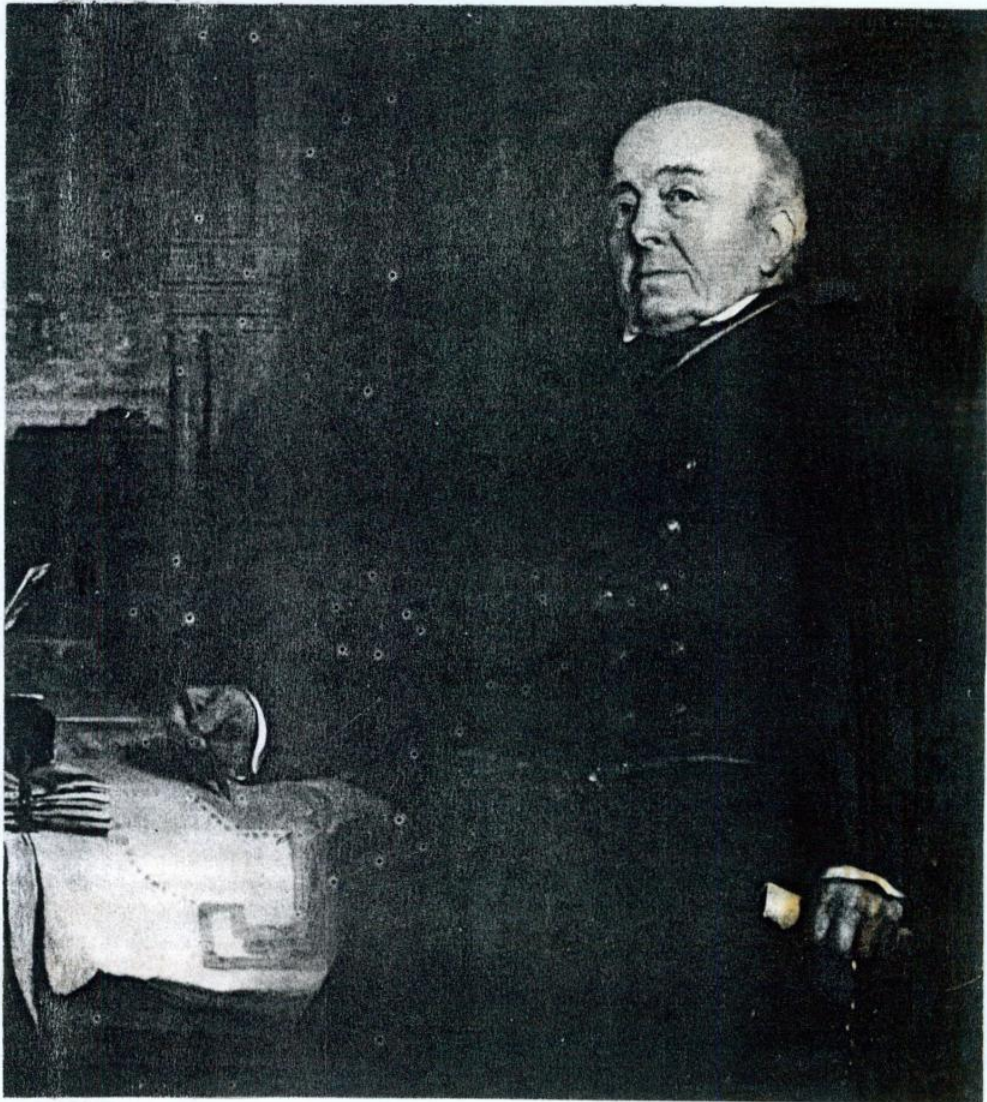
John Nash was born in 1752 in London. His parents were Welsh and his father was an engineer and millwright in Lambeth. The type of person he was, is best described by a Mrs Arbuthnot who wrote in 1824 'Mr Nash is a very clever, odd, amusing man'.<sup>9</sup> He was very much a business man whose only love was his architecture. Early in his career, Nash was employed by Sir Robert Taylor as a



draughtsman in Wales. By 1777, he left Taylor and established himself as an architect in London, but in 1783 he was declared bankrupt and so returned to Wales where he re-established his career. There, he built about fifteen Country Houses and emerged as a leading architect of the picturesque. When he returned to London around 1793, he formed a partnership with Humphrey Repton, who was a fashionable landscape gardener and from London he obtained many architectural commissions. Between them, Nash and Repton transformed and rebuilt many old-fashioned houses as elegant seats and grounds. In 1798, he designed a conservatory for the Prince of Wales at Carlton House, London, later became known as the Prince regent's architect. (illus 8) He designed many places such as Regents Park and Regent Street and remodelled palaces like Buckingham Palace and Brighton Pavilion.

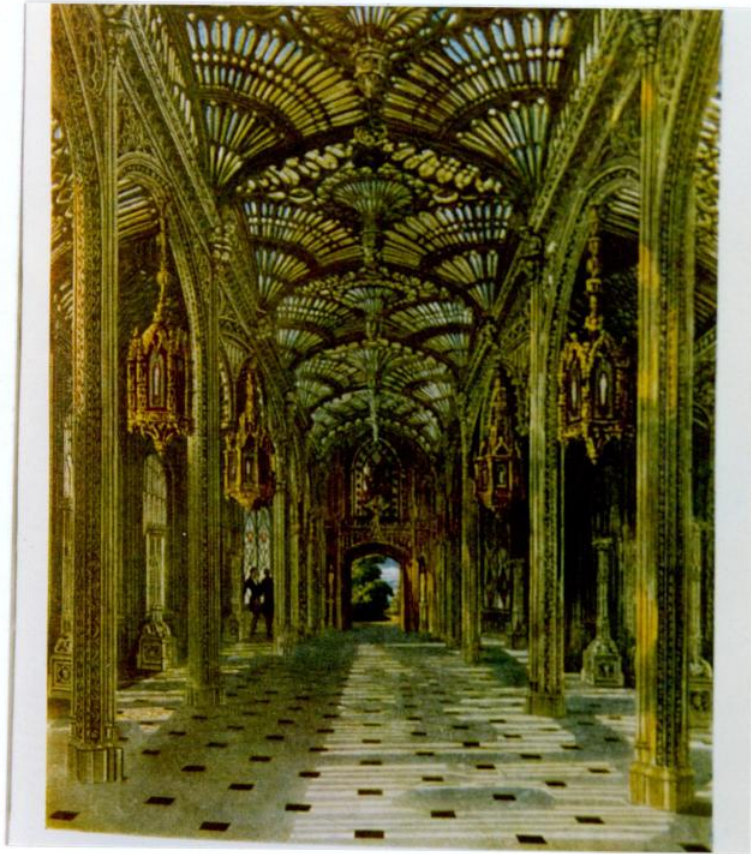


illus.6 George Cruikshank  
View of Nash Dominance of  
the Architectural World  
during the reign of  
George IV



illus.7 Portrait of John Nash (1752-1835)





illus.8 The Conservatory at Carlton House, London





When Nash died in 1835, his reputation as an architect "was at its lowest ebb".<sup>10</sup> But undoubtedly, Nash was a great architect. He had a remarkable gift for composition on a large scale and a brilliant ability to apply the principles of the picturesque to anything he designed. His innovative designs played a major part in the development of English nineteenth-century architecture.

### Nash's Architectural Style

Augustus at Rome was for building renown'd, And of marble he left what of brick he had found. But is not our Nash, too, a very great Master?. He finds us all brick and leaves us all plaster. Quarterly Review 1826. <sup>11</sup>

Although Nash's career started as a Classicist, influenced by the Gothic of Strawberry Hill and the castellated architecture of Downton Castle, he started to produce buildings which were a mixture of all these. Working along with Repton, he produced about thirty houses like Killymoon in the picturesque style. Nash would design the Gothic house while Repton would design the garden. Although Nash is thought of as a "Goth", Kenneth Clark quotes him as saying, 'I hate this Gothic style. One window costs more trouble in designing than two houses ought to do'.<sup>12</sup>

'Nash has often been accused of slipshod workmanship'.<sup>13</sup> His detail was poor and he rarely went to the original sources for his patterns but the overall effect of the irregular outline was enough to create a desired balance between nature and art; as Dr Crook says,

'The rococos began and the picturesque completed the conjunction of architecture with nature'.<sup>14</sup>

#### John Nash in Ireland

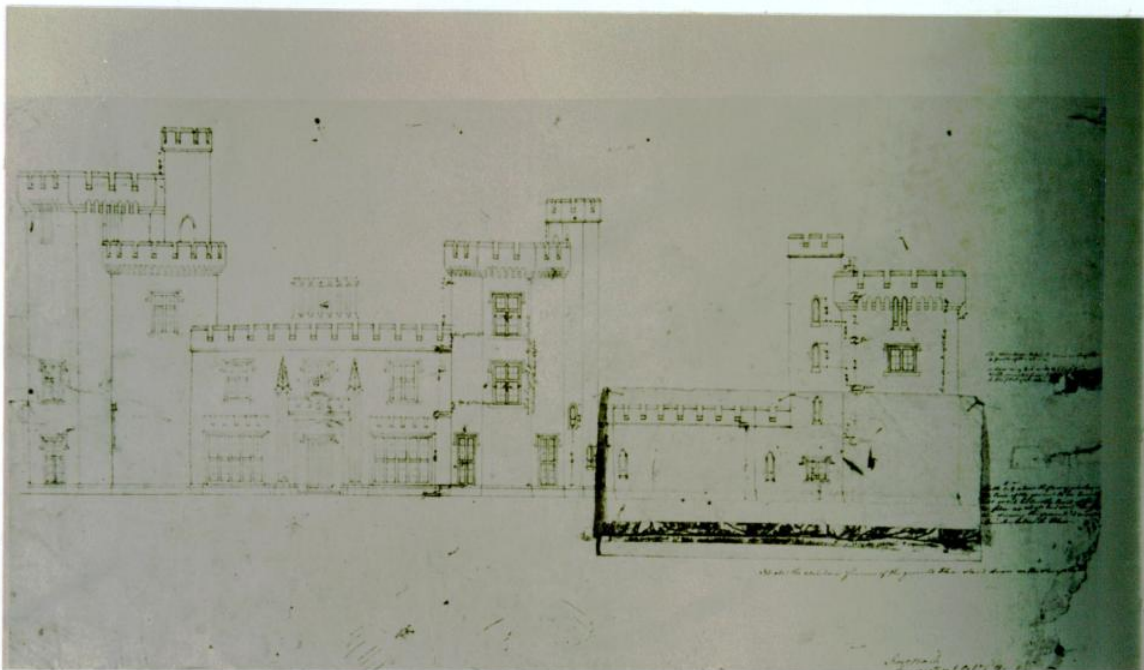
In Ireland, Nash's sites stretched throughout the country. He spent a lot of time designing domestic architecture up until 1812, by which time, he was swamped by the challenge of re-developing the West End of London for George IV. None of Nash's diaries survived when he died, so very little information is known of what sites he actually visited in Ireland. A Letter, which is in the possession of Mr Marcus Clements of Lough Rynn, Co Leitrim, from Lord Lorrone of Boyle, dated 2 July 1809, explains to James Stewart of Killymoon that Nash visited him at Rockingham to discuss various alterations,

His work in Ireland belongs to the comparatively carefree years when for a time in partnership with Humphrey Repton, he enjoyed the patronage of the landed gentry.<sup>15</sup>





illus.9 Rockingham, Co Roscommon: Classical



illus.10 Lough Cutra Castle: Gothic  
John Nash's elevation for the front,  
Signed and dated October 1811





Most of Nash's English Country Houses were castellated and, for the most part, so were the Irish. The Irish buildings differed so little stylistically, that it was said of them 'together they formed a precis of his English works'. <sup>16</sup> Like his English Houses, only a few still exist due to political, economic and negligence by owners. They comprise four Gothic Castles, three Classical Houses and a remodelling to one House. They are,

Killymoon Castle, (illus 11) Cookstown Co Tyrone

1803 Gothic

Kilwaughter Castle, Co Antrim, 1806 Gothic

Lissan Rectory, Co Derry, 1807 Classical

Rockingham, (illus 9) Co Roscommon, 1810 Classical

Shanbally Castle, Co Tipperary, 1812 Gothic

Caledon, Co Tyrone, 1812 Classical

Gracefield Lodge, Co Laois, 1817 Classical

Lough Cutra Castle, (illus 10) Co Galway, 1817

Gothic

John Summerson states that 'John Nash houses in Northern Ireland are of a great interest in the history of architecture in the British Isles'. <sup>17</sup> Here, Nash was an innovator mixing both Gothic and Classical architecture. One such building which combines both these styles is Killymoon Castle, Co Tyrone. 'Built by Nash, it gives a vivid picture of the architect and the tastes of the time.

## Footnotes to Chapter One

- 3 McCarthy, Michael. The Origins of the Gothic Revival, London, 1987, p.3
- 4 Davis, Terence. The Gothick Taste, London, 1974, p.16
- 5 ibid
- 6 Davis, op, cit, p.18
- 7 McCarthy, Michael. The Origins of the Gothic Revival, London, 1987, p.8
- 8 McCarthy, op, cit, p.63
- 9 Davis, Terence. The Architecture of John Nash, London, 1960, p.9
- 10 Colvin, Howard. A Biographical Dictionary of British Architects 1600-1840, London, 1978, p.580
- 11 Parissien, Steven. The Regency Style, London, 1992, p.25
- 12 Scott Richardson, Douglas. Gothic Revival in Ireland, London, 1983, p.124
- 13 Guinness, Desmond. Irish Houses and Castles, London, 1971, p.117
- 14 Davis, Terence. The Gothick Taste, London, 1974, p.124
- 15 Davis, Terence. Irish Georgian Society Bulletin, April-June 1965, Dublin, p.57
- 16 Scott Richardson, Douglas. Gothic Revival in Ireland, London, 1983, p.124
- 17 Jope, E M. Ulster Journal of Archeology, Article, 1956



## Chapter Two

### History

Killymoon Castle (illus 11) was one of Nash's first pieces of architecture in Ireland, and is still in excellent preservation with an unspoilt landscape. A drawing of Killymoon Castle was exhibited to the Royal Academy in 1803, but the Castle had already been begun the previous year. The present Killymoon Castle is the second Castle to have been built on the Killymoon demesne which is situated one mile South-East of Cookstown, Co Tyrone. The original Castle was built in 1671 by James Stewart, whose ancestors came to settle in the area from Scotland. The land lease was purchased by its founder, Dr Allan Cooke, in 1666 from the Earl of Tyrone, after the death of Cooke's son, Edward, that year.

The Stewart family already possessed property in Cookstown from the year 1634. Several generations of the Stewart family resided in the Castle until it was destroyed by fire around 1800. Before the Stewarts took up residence in Cookstown, Dr Cooke's plantation had lain derelict since the December 8 1643 destruction of the town during a rebellion at Cookstown.

### The Stewarts of Cookstown

In 1609 the plantation of Ulster was instituted. The idea of the plantation was straightforward. James 1 of England gave grants of forfeited lands to the established Church as well as to supporters of the King. These

settlers came from all over England and Scotland and it was their duty to look after the land and collect its taxes from its tenants. The Stewarts were one of hundreds of families who came to Ireland in the Jacobean plantation. (illus 12)

In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, land was the main source of wealth and the basis of power. The third James Stewart of Killymoon was one man of such power. Letters from Lord Lorton of Rockingham, to his cousin James Stewart describe how powerful Stewart was within Irish politics. Stewart was an Anglican and one of the leading spokesmen for the Northern Presbyterians. He was a member of Parliament and belonged to the Whig Party. Both James Stewart and his son, William, became acquainted with the Prince Regent in 1801 and came in contact with the higher aristocracy.<sup>18</sup>

James Stewart entered the army which every young gentleman did, in the eighteenth century, and as he liked the taste of the "good life", he made a judicious marriage to the youngest daughter of Viscount Molesworth. A lady with a fortune of £10,000, a pension of £100 from the King, she had property in Dublin's Kildare Street, Leinster street, Molesworth Street, Nassau Street, South Frederick Street and Exchange Street. Later, Elizabeth's sister, Louisa, married William Brabazon Ponsonby, leader of the political party, "cousinhood". This furthermore, strengthened Stewart's connections within the Whig Party.





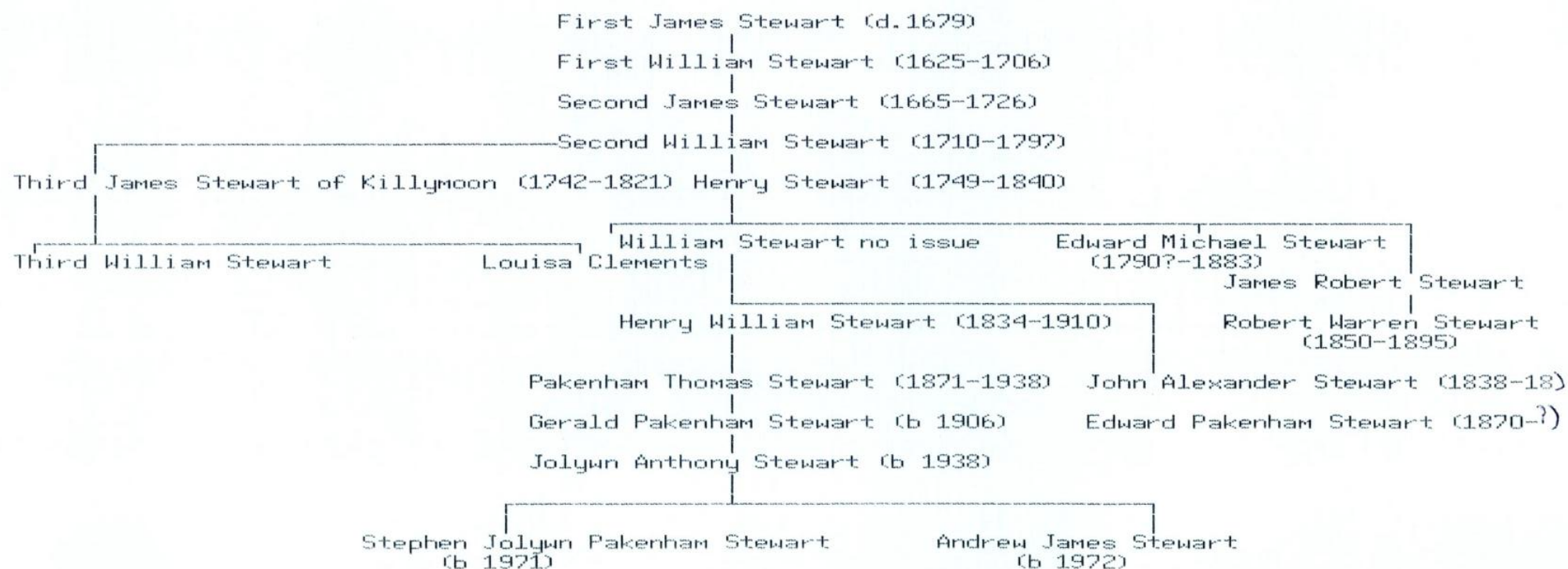
illus.11 Front Entrance, Killymoon Castle, Co Tyrone





Genealogy Chart  
Showing Line of Descent

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In 1768, James Stewart succeeded his father into Parliament, in the House of Commons, and by 1783 became the principal spokesman in the House of Commons for Lord Charlemont. In 1794, Lord Viscount Molesworth died and James Stewart inherited all his property in Dublin, making him a very rich man.

James Stewart was a much respected local squire and many ballads and poems were written in honour of him and his family. Here are two extracts:

To William Stewart, entitled

"The voice of the People"

Since Colonel Stewart is home to Killymoon,  
His absence long and grief we did implore  
But now rejoice since he returns once more...  
The general good he always holds in view,  
And proves himself to be a patriot true...  
A worthy subject to our Sovereign he,  
The best of landlords in a high degree  
The helping friend of all that is distress...<sup>19</sup>

A new song in praise of Colonel Stewart

Ye bards of Erin O pray excuse me,  
These simple lines for to lay down.  
It is concerning a worthy landlord  
that lives convenient onto Cookstown  
His worthy talents deserve great honour,  
His principles being both firm and pure,  
He is a friend and credit to his tenants around him,  
And a benefactor to all the poor...<sup>20</sup>

Although only simple ballads and poems, these show us that Stewart was a popular local squire, involved in local affairs, notably in yeomanry and Church matters. However, as Stewart represented his constituency in Parliament, he had to leave Killymoon and his family for long stretches of time. Because of this, much of the

building supervision and decision-making on the Castle's construction fell to his wife. The Stewarts also had a house in Dublin during the early 1800s and Mrs Stewart and her children spent a considerable amount of time travelling by horse coach between Dublin and Cookstown, while Killymoon was being completed.

Stewart was very much involved in the Prince Regent's set at Carlton House, where he spent a considerable amount of time. There is a story that Stewart lost Killymoon in a night's gambling with the Prince Regent, but the next day the Prince sent him a note telling him that he' did not want a residence in such a benighted country and that he did not want his dirty Irish acres'<sup>21</sup> - an insult to Stewart and poor tribute to John Nash.

The Stewarts' lifestyle certainly matched the magnificent building and estate in which they lived. They were great entertainers and patrons of music and the arts. Banquets were given in what was then one of the most notable houses in Co Tyrone. One memorable ball was the one held to celebrate the Duke of Wellington's victory at the battle of Waterloo, in 1814.

William Stewart did not inherit Killymoon until he was forty one, after his father died in 1821, but it was during James's lifetime that Killymoon reached the summit of its splendour and then plunged into nadir when William inherited it. William was a gambler like so many of his time. He was forced to sell and in 1852 the Killymoon Estate passed from the Stewart family after six



generations. William Stewart died penniless. Little did he know that a few years later, a labourer would discover the Killymoon Hoard while digging some turf. The Hoard which dated to about 800 B.C. included a gold bracelet and several gold pins and now is the property of the National Museum in Dublin.

When Killymoon Castle was finally finished around 1807, it cost £80,000 to construct, at a time when a man earned only sixpence (2.5p) an hour. The Castle changed into many hands and when it was last sold in 1922, it was bought for the rock-bottom price of £100. Since then, the Castle has remained the home of the Coulter family. Their care and upkeep of the Castle has been remarkable since most Irish Country Houses of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries are now in ruins.

#### The Construction of Killymoon Castle

After the fire in 1801, Colonel William Stewart decided to rebuild the Castle on its original site, but in a grander fashion than before. Stewart wanted the best. When he failed to employ the Dublin architect, Richard Woodgate, he then employed one of London's leading architects, John Nash, to design the castellated mansion of local stone. He followed a Gothic style which he is said not to have liked personally.<sup>22</sup>



illus.12 The South Elevation, Killymoon Castle







illus.13 the Front Entrance of Killymoon Castle







illus.14 The North-East Elevation of Killymoon Castle







illus.15 The West Elevation of Killymoon Castle





illus.16 Coach Entrance on East Side of Killymoon Castle







illus.17 Section of the Roof Structure, Killymoon Castle





The Castle is in the picturesque or stage-set architectural style. It is not like a real Castle though John Nash, as Brian Boyd says, 'has caught something of its proportions of a Castle in its bulk and massing and the way different towers appear to group together'<sup>23</sup> A description of Killymoon in the sale contract of 1850 best describes how the Castle looked during the nineteenth century,

The mansion is of dressed stone, in the castellated style, and was built by the well known architect Henry Holland of Carlton House, and John Nash and is in good repair. It stands upon rising ground which forms a natural terrace, at a short distance from the junction of two rivers, the view of which it commands and is, in every way, a suitable residence for a nobleman or gentleman of fortune, no expense having been spared in the decorations, fittings and appointments<sup>24</sup>

Killymoon is also noteworthy for its radical new layout, unlike Castleward and other houses of the time. Nash proved, by Killymoon, that a house did not need to balance and that an effective building could be in a variety of styles.

#### Description of the Exterior

'The general effect of Killymoon is at once imposing and picturesque'<sup>25</sup>, writes Nikolaus Pevsner. 'A romantic cut stone Castle'<sup>26</sup>, writes Maurice Craig. Begun in 1802, the Castle is set close to the north bank of the Ballinderry river. The house consists of a variety of features that Nikolaus Pevsner believes typical of Nash's Castles.

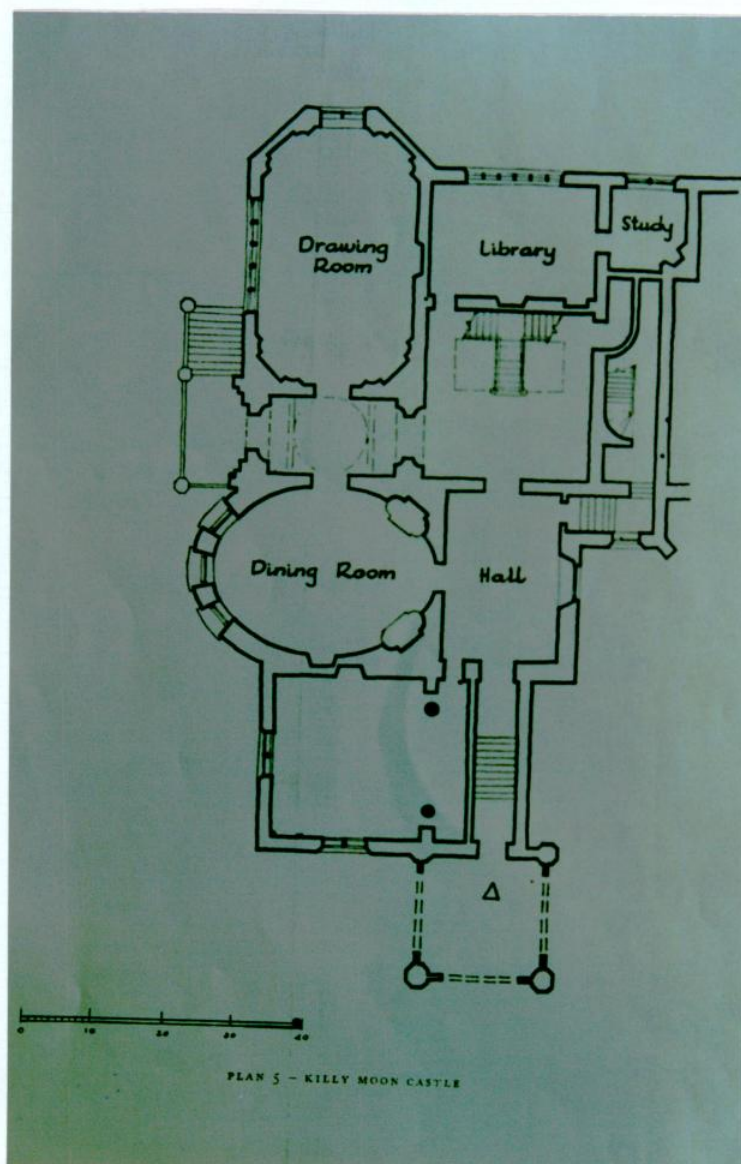
By looking at the elevation design of Killymoon Castle, we can see that the house is two storey with an entrance that has a porte cochere.(illus 12,14,15,18) The South front has a large circular tower nearly at its centre, with slim, taller towers attached behind. The Drawing Room windows are of six intersecting arches. Between this window and centre tower is an arch-headed doorway above a flight of steps. (illus 13) On the South front there is an octagon tower of the same height as the centre tower. The West front extends to a tower which is in the shape of a Gothic Chapel, having stained glass windows, buttresses and a belfry. The Gothic Chapel was the Library, part of the earlier house which survived the fire of 1800. To the right is the stage-coach entrance. There is a circular headed doorway with stained glass, displaying the family coat of arms above and surmounted by a small tower. Brian De Breffny describes the Castle as,

an imposing building, two storeys high above the basement, it is an ingenious composition of circular, rectangular and polygonal elements of differing heights<sup>27</sup>

When completed, the Castle was admired by all. When Mr and Mrs Beaufort visited Killymoon after it was completed, they were full of admiration, with Mr Beaufort describing it as,

A semi-Gothick and Saxon style, but very light. Particularly impressed by the high portico in which carriages could drive to the door<sup>28</sup> (illus 16)





illus.18 Plan of Killymoon Castle











### A Description of the Interior Architecture

By 1800, all sorts of Neo-Styles were in the air, most proprietors still preferred a Classical design but Neo-Egyptian, Neo-Indian and Neo-Gothic were all possible<sup>29</sup>

Killymoon was built in a L-Shaped layout with rooms of varied plan, some Neo-Classic but some Gothic, grouped around a stairhall standing in the inner angle. The interior contrives to provide a dramatic entrance with a narrow flight of steps connecting the 'porte-cochere', the main hall and the stairhall. All have elaborate tierceron plaster vaults. The stair is Nash's issued double return style, set in a square space with a pendant vaulted lantern of Tudor character.

The main rooms offer a succession of square and octagonal shapes, classically detailed inside, - as described in The Irish Penny Journal of 1841:

The State Apartments ... consist of a breakfast parlour, dining room, ante-room and drawing room, all of which are of noble proportions and their woodwork of polished oak<sup>30</sup>

Nash-like, Sir John Soane, was conscious of each room being a 'spatial entity'<sup>31</sup>, and he modelled Killymoon ceiling with domes and pedentives. This use of 'spatial entity' can be seen in the drawing room, which appears much larger than it is through the use of mirrors on the corner walls. (illus 29)

Mrs Stewart had a lot of bother decorating the drawing room as she had, with nearly all the rooms, which consisted of twenty five bedrooms and several laundry rooms, butlers' pantries, store rooms, kitchens etc.

The Interior of Killymoon Castle in 1992



illus.20 Coach Entrance Hall-Way  
with the Stewarts Coat of Arms



illus.21 Ante-Room adjoining Coach Entrance









illus.22    Detail of Ceiling in Ante-Room,  
Killymoon Castle



illus.23    Antique Furniture Piece in Ante-Room  
Designer Unknown





illus.24 Staircase adjoining Ante-Room







illus.25    Detail of the Interior Architecture







illus.26 Gothic Corridor adjoining Staircase







illus.27 Main Entrance Hall-Way known as  
the Lantern Hall-Way



illus.28 Gothic Bench, Designer unknown





illus.29 Dining Room



illus.30 Dining Room looking onto Ante-Room





illus.31 Oak Buffet Table, 1802



illus.32 Cabinet, date and designer unknown



illus.33 Fireplace, Dining Room







illus.34 Drawing Room, Killymoon Castle







illus.35     Detail of Gothic Window, Drawing Room



illus.36     Section of Drawing Room







illus.37     Detail of Stucco Border on Drawing Room Ceiling



illus.38     Section of Drawing Room





Mrs Stewart found the responsibility of looking after Killymoon very difficult. She constantly wrote letters to Nash, pestering him on all aspects, such as interior decoration. One letter, which is in the possession of Marcus Clements of Lough Rynn, is a reply from John Nash to Mrs Stewart on how she should hang her curtains:

Madam, Mrs Nash will have informed you that I have been constantly travelling for two months past and consequently have never had the power of answering your questions respecting curtains etc. There are a variety of forms which may be adapted to the windows at Killymoon, not withstanding there may not be more than an inch between the moulding of the window and the bottom of the cornice<sup>32</sup>...

The letter continues on, giving step by step instructions which was not really to much avail as, still baffled, she was soon writing to Mrs Nash.

Nash sent Mrs Stewart a number of sketches of curtain designs and furniture but, apart from these, very little is known about what style the Castle was decorated in.

In addition to the Castle, Stewart had built on his demesne, riding stables (illus 40), outhouses (illus 39), labourers' cottages and two ornamental cottages, one of which belonged to the head gardener who tended to the several acres of walled flowers and kitchen gardens. In an extract from a letter written by Sir Joseph Paxton, the distinguished landscape gardener and engineer, while visiting Killymoon, said:

I have visited most of the celebrated Country Seats in the Kingdom and a very large number on the Continent and I have never seen one more compact, more perfect in itself, than Killymoon.<sup>33</sup>





illus.39 Outhouses on the Killymoon Demesne



illus.40 The Riding Stables, Killymoon Demesne







illus.41 Section of Outhouses, Killymoon Demesne





## Footnotes to Chapter Two

- 18 Public Record Office, Belfast, Article, D.3167\2\213
- 19 Public Record Office, Belfast, Article, D.3167\212  
14 June 1809
- 20 Davis Terence. The Prince Regent's Architect, London,  
1973, p.48
- 21 Public Record Office, Belfast, Article, James Stewart  
of Killymoon
- 22 Davis, Terence. The Prince Regent's Architect, London  
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- 23 Boyd, Brian. A Heritage from Stone, Belfast, 1980,  
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- 24 Clements Papers, National Library Ireland, Article,  
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- 25 Peusner, Nikolaus. The Buildings of Ireland, London,  
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- 26 Craig, Maurice. Ireland Observed, Dublin, 1970, p.71
- 27 De Breffny, Brian. Castles of Ireland, London, 1977  
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- 28 De Breffny, Brian. The Houses of Ireland, London,  
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- 29 Boyd, Brian. A Heritage from Stone, Belfast, 1980,  
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- 30 Irish Penny Journal, Article, No41, Saturday 10 April  
1841, vol.1
- 31 Killymoon Castle, Article, Cookstown Council, Co  
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- 32 Davis, Terence. The Prince Regent's Architect, London  
1973, p.48
- 33 Peusner, Nikolaus. The Buildings of Ireland,  
North-West Ulster, London, 1979

## Chapter Three

### "Power Houses"

To understand how Killymoon was decorated, it is essential to discuss what was expected of these Country Houses or, as Mark Girouard considers them to be, 'Power Houses'<sup>34</sup>, when they were built in the late eighteenth century and early nineteenth century. These houses were not just places where rich people lived, they were symbols of the ruling classes' power. Usually, the owner was a member of Parliament like James Stewart, who would spend a lot of their time commuting between their Country house and London.

Power was based on how much land you owned. The point of the land was not to farm it but to rent it. A landowner would have so much power over his tenants that he would call on them to fight for him, (for example, James Stewart set up his own regiment around 1800) or to gain their vote. The eighteenth and nineteenth centuries were very much periods of power. This power was obtained through good connections and marriages to heiresses.

In the nineteenth century, anyone who had money and was ambitious, would invest in a country estate. But land was no use unless it had a Country House and, as Mark Girouard writes, 'Land provided the fuel, a Country House was the engine which made it effective'<sup>35</sup>. A Country House was two things. It was the headquarters from which land was administered and a showcase in which to entertain guests and make important connections.



In the nineteenth century, it was a nobleman's duty to serve the public. These statesmen, such as Whig M.Ps like Stewart, made their money out of the Government by doing this. A lot of noblemen like Stewart, put their money towards their property. They would build large houses that would display their power and wealth.

But landowners did not only use their houses for power; they were also designed for pleasure. These houses were built to portray a particular way of life. The move towards the picturesque and nature became a prominent feature for life on the early nineteenth-century estate. Sports such as fox hunting, fishing etc. were popular activities of the rich. The houses themselves became a place of social occasions where house parties were held. (illus 42) At a house party everything was laid on to amuse the guests. An example of this lifestyle can be seen in a description of Carlton House, Co Kildare, by a guest in 1779:

The house was crowded, a thousand comers and goers. We breakfast between ten and eleven. We have an immense table, chocolate and honey, hot bread, all coloured breads and cakes. After breakfast Mr Scot, the Duke's chaplain, reads a few short prayers, and we go as we like, a back room for reading, and whole suites of rooms, not forgetting the music room.... There are all sorts of amusements; the gentlemen are out hunting and shooting all the morning. We dine at half past four or five, go to tea, so to cards about nine.... Play till supper time, 'tis pretty late by the time we go to bed.<sup>36</sup>

### The Social Influence on Interiors

The social aspects of the nineteenth-century "Power Houses", like houseparties, very much influenced the



layout of the house interior. The house was split into two sections, the servants' quarters and the gentry's. It was very much a rich and poor society and these houses portrayed that divide. The split between family and servants was big. The design of the house structure was laid out so that both societies could be split, but still under the same roof. For example, the invention of the private stairs for gentry and different stairs, known as back-stairs, for the servants was typical of Country Houses of that period. Also, it was not unusual, as at Killymoon Castle, to put servants into a wing which was attached to the house, giving it an L-Shaped layout.

The sexual differentiation between men and women of the nineteenth century very much influenced the design of rooms. The mistress of the house often had her own bedroom known as the boudoir. The master of the house had his study. The same applied to other rooms. The dining room was considered masculine, the drawing room feminine. As Mark Girouard says, 'The two reigned as king and Queen over the other rooms.'<sup>37</sup> In such houses, architects usually designed the two rooms opposite each other, divided by a hall - a typical feature which can be seen in Killymoon. This division later developed into furniture, for example in Adam interiors. Andrew Brunt writes that,

He continues to use mahogany for the dining room, a strongly male preserve in the eighteenth and nineteenth century house since the men usually remained there for some hours after their meal. The furniture there is elegant but sturdy. In contrast, the drawing rooms tended to give a feminine lightness and delicacy in their furnishing. In them satinwood

and marquetry "bonhearts-du jour" little work tables were used.<sup>38</sup>

### Study of a Typical Nineteenth-Century House

In the early years of 1800, John Nash, in association with landscape designer, Humphrey Repton, produced a series of houses which very much matched the tastes and needs of landowners of the time. One such place is Luscombe Castle, Devonshire. (illus 44) It is interesting to note that its style influenced Nash when he was designing Killymoon.

Nash and Repton were suggesting 'a natural house in a natural landscape',<sup>39</sup> which they achieved. (illus 43) The house itself is not too big. Like so many other houses of that period, the servants' wing was tucked to one side. The rooms were a variety of shapes, but simple in decoration with windows down to the ground. From the drawing room you can look across the landscape.

Built in 1800, the style of the house was Gothic, the interiors simply decorated in a Classical style. Nash did not stick to the normal strict symmetry but produced a revolutionary outline which is broken and irregular. Nash was clever to include a Classical style of architecture to the Castle, a feeling which Nash also portrays in Killymoon Castle. Indeed, 'all of this was very accomplished and very sophisticated',<sup>40</sup> and when the owner of Luscombe, Charles Hoare, looked out of his drawing room window, he was able to view the countryside with appreciation.





illus.42    Merry Christmas in the Barons Hall, 1838  
by Daniel Maclise  
Displays a View of Life in early 1800







illus.43    An Example of the Picturesque, Killymoon Castle







illus.44 Aerial View of Luscombe Castle, Devon

Wanda's note.





This type of castellated castle became very popular during the nineteenth century. It was a place where a gentleman could retire from the hectic social life in the city. Socially they were also places where they could enjoy total comfort within their houses and also within their surroundings. As Mark Girouard says,

A gentleman's house should be substantial and preferably in a style associated with the traditions of English country life. It should be dignified, as was suitable for the rank of its owner, but not ostentatious, designed for family life and the entertainment of friends, rather than for show. It should provide decent quarters for servants. It should protect the womanliness of women and encourage the manliness of men. It should be comfortable but not luxurious.<sup>41</sup>

### Footnotes to Chapter Three

- 34 Girouard, Mark. Life in the English Country House, London, 1980, p.2
- 35 Girouard, op.cit, p.2
- 36 Girouard, Mark. Life in the English Country House, London, 1980, p.232
- 37 ibid,p.233
- 38 Brunt, Andrew. A Guide to Furniture, Oxford, 1978, p.163
- 39 Girouard, op.cit, p.226
- 40 Girouard, Mark. Life in the English Country House, London, 1980, p.238
- 41 Cornfort, John. English Interiors 1790-1848, london, 1978, p.15

## Chapter Four

In looking at Country Houses it is important to note what influenced peoples' tastes. In the late eighteenth century and early nineteenth century, new fashions were continually appearing. These fashions and trends were adapted by the very wealthy who wanted something new and different. Various styles gradually developed and so, wanting to be like the aristocracy, the lower classes adapted them as well. This was the normal process in which the style in interior and exterior decoration developed. But where did they originate from?

The Neo-Classical style, which was one of the most prominent styles of the nineteenth century, originated in Paris like so many others. Indeed many designs spread from European cities. But why did the English follow the Europeans?.

### The Grand Tour

In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, a sound knowledge of the Arts was regarded as an essential part of a young man's education if he wanted to belong in high society. The Grand Tour was devised, in which a young man could complete his education. Around the age of eighteen, a young man, along with his tutor, would spend some time on the continent, preferably at places which were rich in the Arts, such as Rome and Paris. In the Clements Papers, there is mention of William Stewart as a young man spending some time on the continent.



Visitors from England and Ireland to the continent were not all young, Mrs Stewart of Killymoon herself having "travelled throughout England and many other places".<sup>42</sup> In addition to this, a lot of architects and designers travelled especially to Italy to study, wrote journals and brought them back to England so that they could use them in their clients houses. Even a lot of the clients themselves studied the Arts and architecture, so when they returned home they would use their knowledge to design a magnificent house.

Young gentlemen on their travels would build up a large collection of artifacts and articles which they could use in their homes. In Europe around the eighteenth century, a lot of design books and directories were available by furniture designers such as Charles Percier and Pierre-Francois-Leonard Fontaine, who influenced the interior fashion of many houses in Europe through their publications. But it is interesting to note that during that period,

Rome remained the principal source of inspiration for those with inclinations towards a Classical idiom. It now became increasingly common for architects (and many of their patrons) to visit Paris to see what was new.<sup>43</sup>

#### Furniture Craftsmen\Designers

Joseph Aronson writes,

Within English country furniture, foreign influences usually came in through the Court and the aristocracy in the capital and slowly seeped down through the country aristocracy to the middle classes or the artisans and trades people.<sup>44</sup>

Soon English craftsmen and architects were designing and writing their own directories from which interior styles developed. The most important of these were the furniture designers. There were quite a number of these but the most influential ones of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries were Thomas Chippendale jnr. and Robert Adam who designed for the top market, George Hepplewhite and Thomas Sheraton who designed for the more middle classes and finally, publications by craftsmen, Thomas Hope: Household Furniture and Interior Decoration 1807 and George Smith: Collection of designs for household furniture 1808, used by all classes.

### The Craftsmen

Thomas Chippendale jnr's designs were for the upper end of the furniture market. The reason for his widespread influence lies in his publication in 1754 of The Gentleman and Cabinet Makers Directory. The directory was confined to furniture but it is important as it illustrated practically every type such as French, Rococco Gothic, Chinese. The Rococco taste came from France as the style of Louis XV was greatly used in English work in pieces such as gilt mirrors, candlebra etc. Joseph Aronson writes that,

the electricism of the period also leads to an abortive Gothic revival. Interest in chinoiserie and oriental themes come in periodic waves.<sup>45</sup>

All these types were used in mahogany and oak furniture.



There is no doubt that Robert Adam was responsible for the Classical revival and this is displayed in his furniture designs and later to be seen in the decoration of his interiors. (illus 45) He undoubtedly influenced other designers of the late eighteenth century with his 'Classic symmetry', 'naturalism for the antique', and 'scale'.<sup>46</sup> Adam was also responsible for the Classical revival in English furniture decoration; this included fine, delicate curving of urns, rams heads, floral festoons and his favourite motif, the husk.

The furniture styles of George Hepplewhite were very much in the Neo-Classical style popularised by Robert Adam. His work was more delicate and subtle. His chairs were his best designs, consisting of five shapes, oval, wheel, heart, shield and camel. His symbol was the three feather motif of the Prince of Wales feathers, which was the main attraction of his work. In 1788, he published his book, The Cabinet Maker and Upholsterers Guide, which had the same effect on design taste as did Chippendale's directory.

The furniture for middle class houses was established by the design books of Thomas Sheraton. (illus 46-49) Sheraton explains that he,

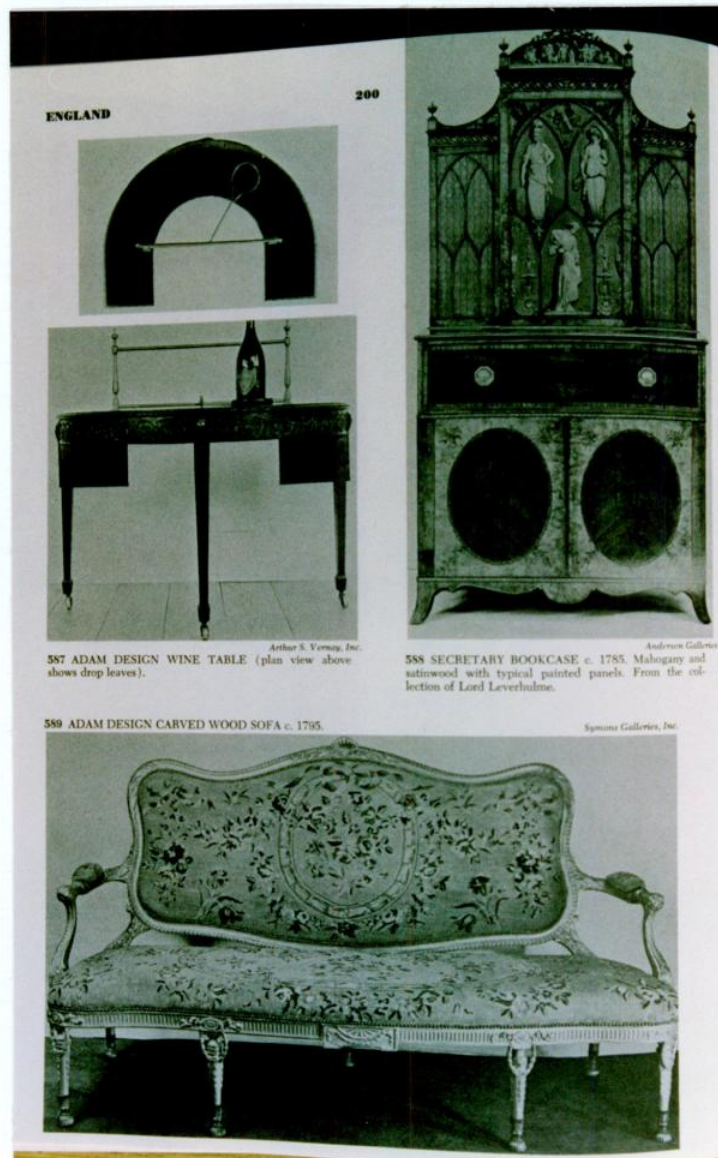
intended to exhibit the present taste of furniture and at the same time to give the workmen some assistance in the manufacturing of it.<sup>47</sup>

Sheraton followed the designs of earlier designers such as Hepplewhite and Adam but there was also evidence that he was influenced by the French styles of



Louis XV1. Like many other designers he also favoured the Classical style using motifs such as acanthus leaf, urns, flowers etc. Sheraton's design books, such as his Cabinet Maker and Upholsterers Guide, published in 1788 were very important publications in influencing design taste as they were a collection of many designers work. (illus 48)

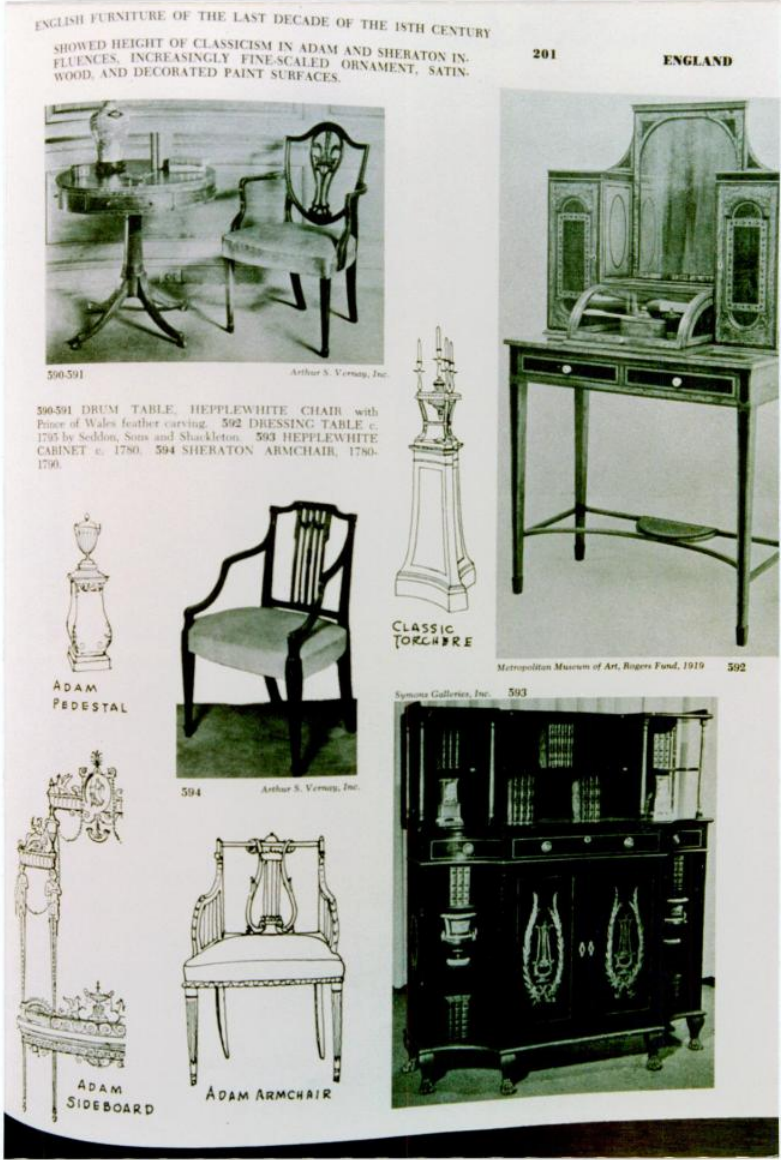
Later in his career, Sheraton was very much influenced by the Regency style which was creeping into English interiors. This style was an extension of eighteenth-century Classicism and is said to have begun when the Prince of Wales appointed Henry Holland in 1785 to rebuild and refurbish Carlton House in London, a house which was to influence furniture design and interior decoration for the next thirty years. (illus 53)



illus.45 Examples of Furniture by Adam







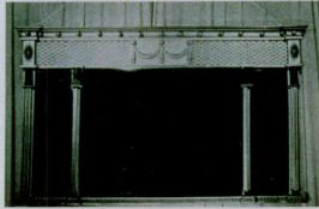
illus.46 Examples of Furniture by Sheraton and Adam



ENGLAND

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595 MIRROR c. 1810, gilded carving. *Simons Galleries, Inc.*



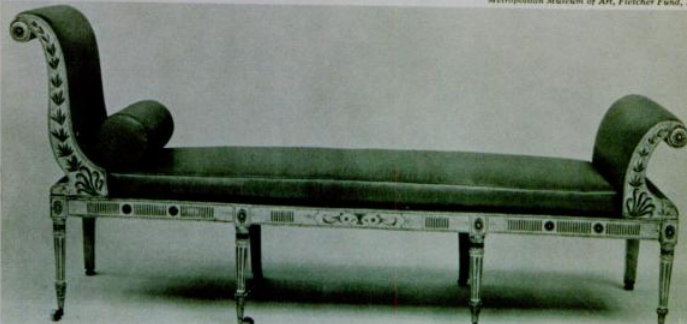
596 SHERATON COMMODORE, 1780-1790. Satinwood, tulipwood banding. *Arthur S. Vernay, Inc.*



597 CHINA CABINET c. 1810. Rosewood with metal inlays and fittings. *Simons Galleries, Inc.*

598 PAINTED SYCAMORE DAYBED c. 1800.

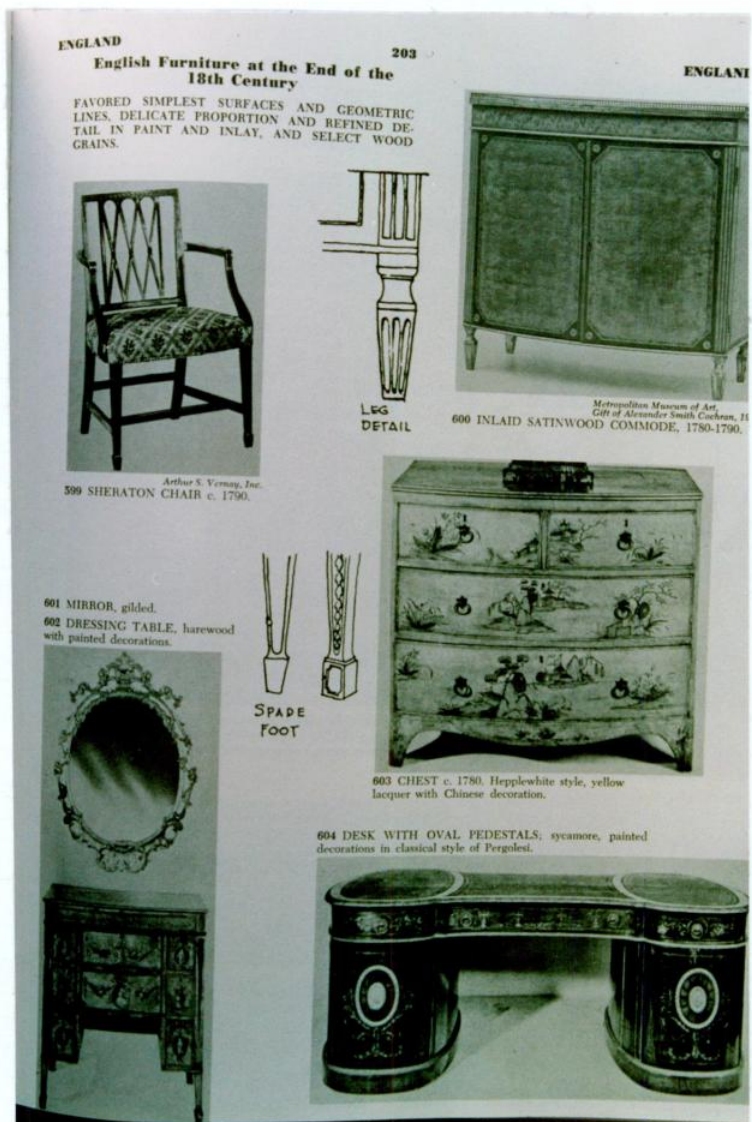
*Metropolitan Museum of Art, Fletcher Fund, 1929*



illus.47 Examples of Furniture by Sheraton



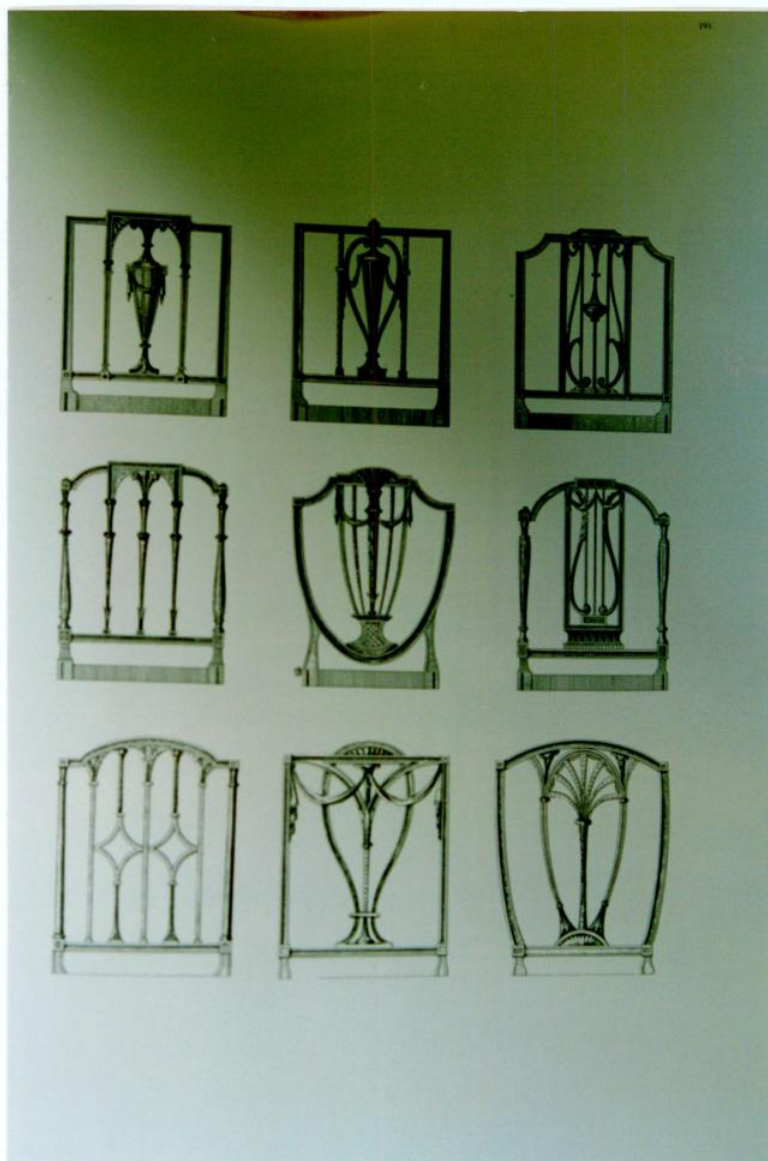




illus.48 English Furniture at the end of the Eighteenth Century







illus.49 Sheraton Designs for Chair Backs of 1793

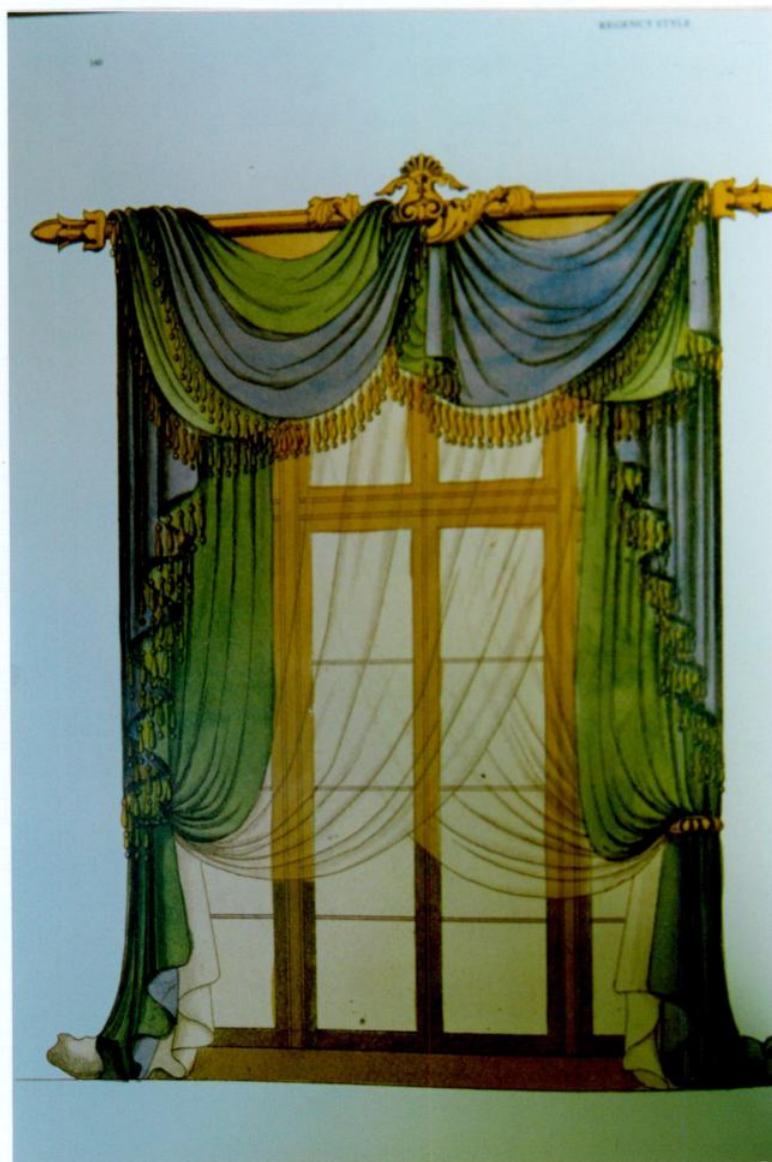




illus.50 Simple Window Treatments



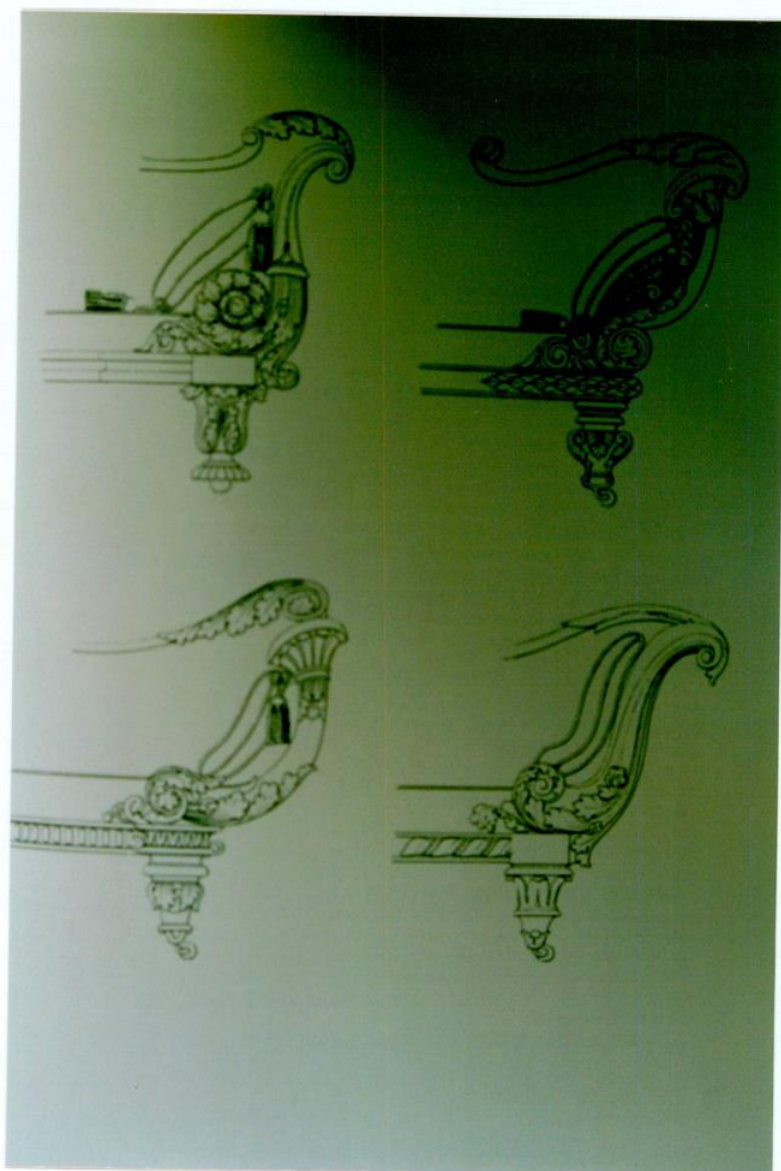




illus.51 Curtain Design by George Smith







illus.52    Design by George Smith for a variety of  
Regency Scroll Sofa Ends

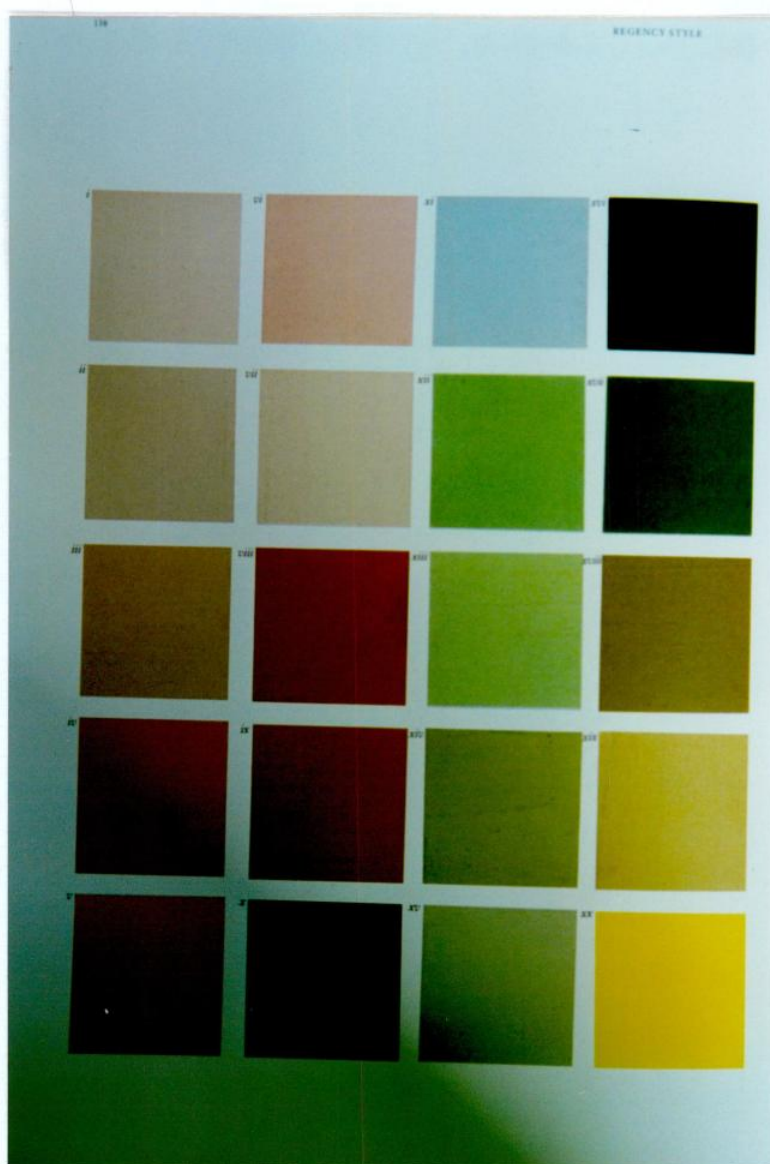




illus.53    Examples of Regency Furniture







illus.54 Regency Paint Colours devised by Paint Historian Patrick Baty using painters' sample cards of 1807.

These are some colour matches from existing Regency Colours

i) & ii)	Lilacs	xiii)	Pea Green
iii)	Fawn	xiv) & xv)	Drabs
iv) to vi)	Peach Blossoms	xvi)	Invisible Green
vii)	Fawn	xvii)	Bronze Green
viii) to x)	Picture Gallery Reds	xviii)	Drab
xi)	Blue	xix)	Buff
xii)	Mineral Green	xx)	Patent Yellow





#### Footnotes to Chapter Four

- 42 The Clements Papers, National Library Ireland,  
Microfilm No 4547
- 43 Thornton, Peter, Authentic Decor, London, 1984,  
p.142
- 44 Aronson, Joseph, The Encyclopaedia of Furniture,  
London, 1989, p.205
- 45 *ibid* p.196
- 46 *ibid*
- 47 Musgrave, Clifford, Regency Furniture, London, 1961  
p.38

## Chapter Five

### The Regency

The Regency and after, saw the heyday of country gentry.<sup>48</sup> In the early nineteenth century, the landed aristocracy was as rich as ever and getting even richer and the gentry were determined to keep on top by spending elaborate amounts of money on their houses. They were a generation of 'extrovert sportsmen of sound education and eccentric sensibilities'.<sup>49</sup> They wanted something new and different and so the taste for the Regency style developed. Christopher Hussey says that,

It was in many respects a vulgar, reactionary, materialistic period. Yet it saw Britain leading the imagination of the world in romantic vision, scientific invention and material achievement.

### The Influences

The first episode of the style can be traced back to 1780 where it appeared in through the Arts influenced by Prince Regent's taste for Neo-Classicism, the political developments of the period, of industrial advances and the revival of taste for the antique.

The Regency was a marvellous period for the visual Arts. It was a time in architecture when Palladian grandeur was fused with Neo-Classical academicism and with the vivid visions of gifted designers such as Soane and Hope.<sup>51</sup>

Colours were more exotic and vibrant than ever before. It was also the period which witnessed the introduction of labour-saving devices and products such as steam engines in 1785 and after 1800, the arrival of cylinder presses for printing.

The Regency was also a time of great social unrest. From 1789, Parliamentary and social reform in Britain was passed. It was the period of the Peterloo Massacre, Manchester in 1819 and the time when the death penalty was prescribed for petty theft, for forgery and poaching. Slavery was not abolished until 1807 yet in 1793 almost a quarter of Robert Owen's workforce was under nine years old. The effects of the gradual industrialization of England and Ireland have been described by an Historian as influencing changes in living conditions:

In the industrial world, members of the new middle class ceased to live over the workshop, and built themselves separate villas and mansions in imitation of the life of the gentry. They no longer formed one household with their apprentices and journeymen. The landed gentry were enlarging their Manor House for the heir and parsonage of the younger son.<sup>52</sup>

#### The Prince Regent (illus 55)

The most important individual of the Regency period was the Prince Regent. As Steven Parissien writes,

His patronage of the Arts which contrasted so dramatically with his father was vital to the propagation of the Regency style.<sup>53</sup>

He had important political influence and many people during that period wanted to follow his style. He was a patron of furniture makers and decorators who built two great palaces for him, Carlton House London and Brighton Pavilion in Brighton, both of which glamourised the 'luxury and pomp'<sup>54</sup> of the Regency style.

#### The Regency Style

The Prince Regent associated himself keenly with the Arts and from around 1780 onwards he had a direct



influence on architecture and interior design, more so the latter. The Regency communicates a specific style rather than a characteristic flavour to a variety of styles which consisted of Gothic, Indian, Egyptian, Greek and more so the Neo-Classical picturesque of John Nash. However, Ralph Dutton says that 'John Nash was predominantly an architect of exteriors,'<sup>55</sup> As very little of Nash's architecture exists today, little is actually known of how his interiors were decorated and in what style.

It is not easy to imagine how people lived in these grand houses and how they were decorated. Unfortunately, a lot of these houses no longer exist but through watercolour drawings by designers such as Humphrey Repton from the time of John Nash onwards, from formal portraits and from descriptions in letters and journals we can build up a picture of what a nineteenth-century house such as Killymoon Castle looked like inside.

Christopher Hussey writes that the 'Regency taste showed more homogeny of designs indoors than out.'<sup>56</sup> This was certainly displayed in the lavish interiors of Holland at Carlton House, London which could be said to emphasise the new direction, effectively launching the Regency style. The interiors were largely decorated by Frenchmen and Peter Thornton writes that the interior of the house 'was an almost pure expression of Parisian taste of the 1780s.'<sup>57</sup> If W H Payne's colour plates of A History of Royal Residences, 1819, are to be believed, the interior

of Carlton House in 1786 was positively overwhelming, a rich collection of decoration and furnishings.

Interior Decoration of Carlton House, London (illus 56-59)

The decoration of the rooms were decorated with 'sumptuous',<sup>58</sup> furnishings. Festoons of the richest material edged with deep gold fringes were draped into folds over the windows. Crystal chandeliers descended from the ceilings, the floors were covered with pale blue carpets of fleur-de-lis which was repeated in silk on many of the gilded, dolphin-flanked settees. On the soft carpet was arranged a gorgeous display of furniture consisting of gilded tables and console cabinets, marble, bronze and porcelain forms of urns, figures and vases and crimson and gold upholstered chairs and sofas.

The furnishings of Carlton House represented a new sentiment of how to decorate and arrange rooms. It was this type of interest that Humphrey Repton writes about in his fragments published in 1816, that began 'No more the cedar, parlours formed gloom with dullness chills, tis now the living room '<sup>59</sup> and which much of the landed gentry such as James Stewart started to incorporate into their houses.

The Standard Arrangement of a Nineteenth-Century Interior

Portrait paintings were the next best thing to the camera and many of them display how a room was decorated during the nineteenth century. Portraits like Philip Hussey's "Interior with Members of a Family" of 1770 and "Mrs William Congreve and Children" by Philip Reinagle



(1749-1833), (illus 60) which are in the National Gallery of Ireland give us the impression of how an Irish interior was decorated. The latter painting displays a chair of Chippendale design and a settee set around the walls, while a chair and table have been brought forward into the middle of the room. The paintings on the walls are well disposed in a symmetrical arrangement and two oval mirrors are hung between, the windows are covered with the usual festooned curtains. Dutton believes that these interiors are entirely different from those at Carlton House, not only in the quality of the furnishings but also the furniture had crept away from the walls and writing tables and chairs were given a central position in the room.

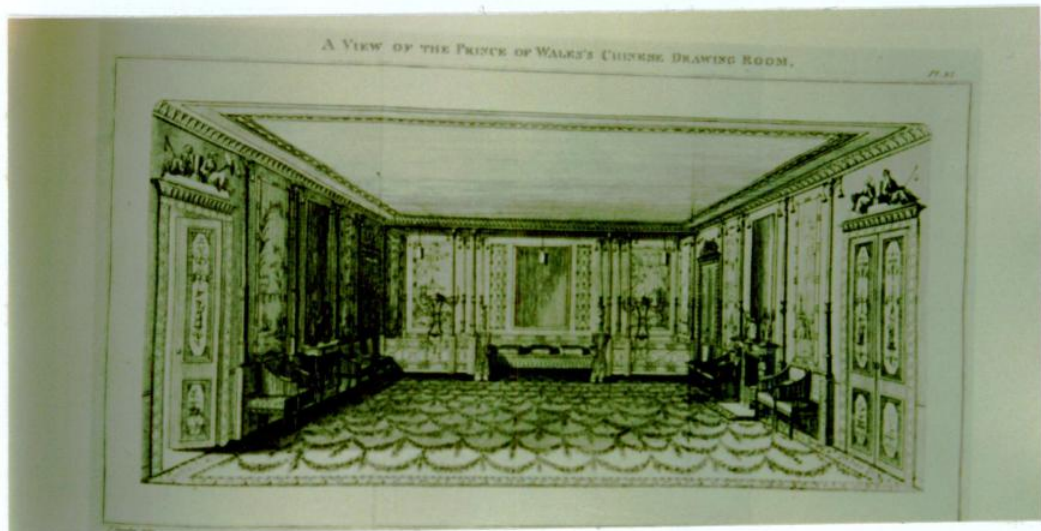
Records from journals also give us an idea of how a house like Killymoon was decorated. An example of this is Brighton Pavilion, Brighton. (illus 61-64) A letter written by Don Manuel in 1802 states, 'An Englishman delights to show his wealth, everything in his house therefore, is expensive, a whole dwelling'.<sup>60</sup> he refers to expensive fabric of the carpets, the rich damask of the festooned curtains, the sofas and chairs covered in the same material, screens of fan silk etc. It is possible that Killymoon Castle was furnished in this style. Obviously James Stewart could afford to furnish his house this way considering that the Castle cost £80,000 when it was eventually finished.



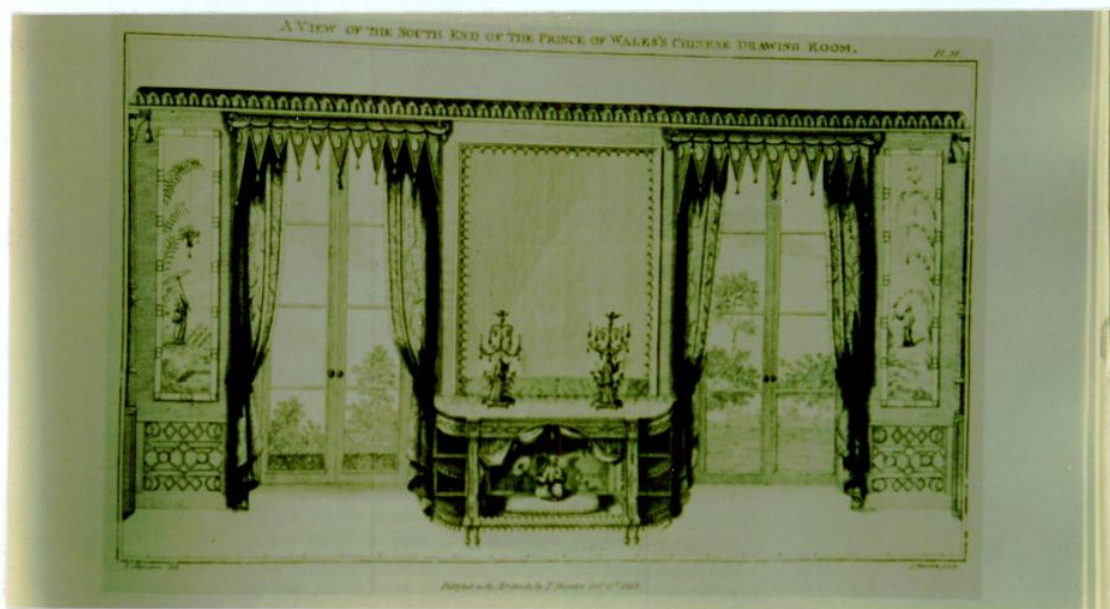


illus.55    George Augustus Frederick 1762-1830  
              Prince Regent (1811-1820)  
              King George IV (1820-1830)





illus.56 Interior of the Chinese Drawing Room,  
Carlton House



illus.57 The South-End of the Chinese Drawing Room







114 Carlton House, London: the Hall of Entrance, designed by Henry Holland in 1783  
Demolished 1826

illus.58 Carlton House, London: The Hall of Entrance  
Designed by Henry Holland in 1793  
From Payne's Royal Residences







illus.59 The Blue Velvet Room, Carlton House, London  
Depicted by Payne in 1818







illus.60     Mrs Congreve With Her Children,  
by Philip Reinagle 1749-1833







illus.61  
The East Front  
from an aquatint  
in John Nash's  
Views of the Royal  
Pavilion Brighton  
1826



illus.62 The Banqueting Room by Nash  
The Royal Pavilion







illus.63  
From an Aquatint  
of John Nash's  
Views of the  
Saloon, Brighton



illus.64 The King's Library. It contains furniture  
examples of the period and displays how a  
room was arranged





### The Standard Arrangement for Various Rooms

Descriptions similar to those previously mentioned give a good picture of how Country Houses were decorated in the first half of the nineteenth century. Loudon's Encyclopaedia of 1883 and Robert Kerr's book Complete Gentlemen's House of 1864, along with many other versions that came before, give detailed accounts of how an interior of an early nineteenth-century house, like Killymoon, was decorated. Loudon describes the typical Entrance Hall as

If the apartments are small and devoid of ornament I would then substitute for the hall a smaller kind of entrance, with a vaulted roof, moreover gloomy, to increase the general effect of the rooms which open onto it.

For the hall he suggested,

Window curtains of cloth of the simplest form.... The walls hung with a few of the oldest family portraits, the founder in the panel over the fireplace, and a few other pictures such as hunting pieces.

Other furnishings on the wall would consist of, armour and curious specimens of defensive arms and ancient sporting weapons together with horns of stags and other animals might be hung around... The Family Arms should be among the ornaments of the hall,

which they are in Killymoon Castle,

and to make the room comfortable there would be a fireplace...<sup>63</sup>

For the Drawing Room he suggested that it should contain imported woodwork preferably oak, with which Killymoon is furnished, with some contrast between the colour of the walls and curtains in either silk or velvet. However Ralph Dutton says that the pale, clear coloured





materials which were used on the 'long lines of women's dresses, were echoed in the upholstery and hangings of rooms'.<sup>64</sup> The damasks, brocades and velvets, which were an essential part of a room, were giving away in favour of flowered patterns and lighter surfaces of chintz and printed linen. It is interesting to note that the wallpaper in Killymoon which was hung in 1802, is a pale blue chintz colour fabric and still survives today.

Loudon continues by saying that the curtains with simple draperies hung from massive gilded pelmet cornices with under curtains of muslin edged with fringe to match the curtains and other upholstery. The carpet and rugs should be Axminster and the seat furniture was to be of great variety,

large reposing chairs, some with and some without arms, some gilded with cane seats and sofas against the wall and at the fireplace. A large round table is usually placed in the middle of the drawing room, on which are books, prints and other things to amuse the company.<sup>65</sup>

In the Library Loudon suggested there be substantial furniture. Hangings should be in a warm dark colour and a large Turkish or Axminster carpet with a variety of seats and tables, some in dark wood on top. The design of the chairs should be antique and to complete the picture daily papers, periodicals and open letters should be on the principal tables, giving it a lived-in effect.

The Dining Room would be in oak, its curtains of crimson velvet trimmed with gold lace fringe hanging from

carved gilded pelmet cornices. On either side of the door would be carved oak sideboards on which to put the vegetables etc during dinner. A large table would be down the middle with matching chairs and at the fireplace would sit two chairs in crimson leather.

The Bedroom : In a description made by Washington Irving in 1835, he tells us how a typical Country House was decorated:

The lower part of the walls were panelled with ancient oak, the upper hung with gobelinn tapestry representing oriental hunting scenes. The furniture was antique high backed chairs curiously curved and wrought in needlework, a massive clothes press of dark oak, well polished, a bed of state, ample and lofty, the huge posts supporting a high tester with a towering rift of crimson plumes at each corner and rich curtains of crimson damask hanging in broad and heavy folds...<sup>66</sup>

From all of these descriptions we can build up an impression of how Killymoon was possibly decorated by the Stewarts.

When looking at a Country House like Killymoon it is important to note John Nash and Humphrey Repton's development of the picturesque Country House in the opening years of the nineteenth century in which they combined architecture and the landscape. John Cornfort<sup>67</sup> says that the appearance of the picturesque house and the breaking up of formal style of furniture arrangement occurred more or less around the same time, 1800-1830. It was as if people were becoming aware of the 'chill of State rooms and the inconvenience of having to be attended by servants'.<sup>67</sup> This change was also noticed by an



American visitor called Louis Simond, to Osterly Park in 1811. He was horrified to find that:

tables, sofas and chairs were studiously disarranged about the fireplaces and in the middle of the rooms, as if the family had just left them. Such is the modern fashion of placing furniture carried to an extreme, as fashions always are, that make the apartments of a fashionable house look like an upholsterers or cabinet-makers shop.<sup>68</sup>

This new arrangement was particularly apt for smaller households which lacked sufficient numbers of servants to continually arrange the furniture. It also corresponded well to other trends of informality, encouraging more light and plants in an interior.

#### The Interior Decoration of Luscombe Castle (illus 65-70)

A good example of how an early nineteenth-century house was decorated is Luscombe Castle, Devonshire, which I have mentioned before. Christopher Hussey compares Luscombe to Killymoon as a 'closely integrated and compact'<sup>69</sup> house resembling Killymoon Castle, Co Tyrone.

Christopher Hussey explains in his essay that Charles Hoare, the owner, bought £900 worth of furniture in 1803-4 believed to be by Chippendale, judging by the watercolour sketch, possibly by Mrs Hoare in 1825 which displays most of the pieces in the drawing room. In the painting we see a round table of mahogany banded with satinwood and supported by four Egyptian figures. There is a set of eight armchairs partly gilded, with cane seats and their backs inlaid with brass. There is also a sofa table of mahogany banded also with satinwood and with gilded lyre supports. Another smaller table is seen in the sketch

along with unusual stools and console tables, all believed to be supplied by Chippendale.

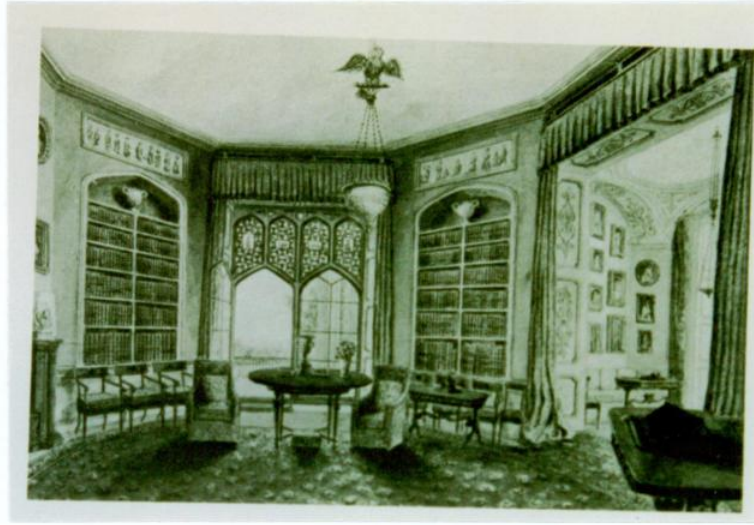
The sketch of the rooms shows the floor covered with floral carpet, several chintz covered chairs and Greek reliefs probably cut out of paper as in the Drawing Room of Killymoon Castle. As at Killymoon, there are fragments of gilded ornamentation on the ceiling and gilt curtain pelmets. On the left of the drawing room which was once the library, the wallpaper consisted of Spanish leather pattern. There were numerous book-shelves along the walls on which family portraits were also hung.

#### Regency Furniture

To fit into these new interiors, furniture had to be light and small so that it could be easily moved. Because of this, new types of furniture appeared such as quartette tables and other small occasional tables which became essential commodities for houses like Killymoon; as Fanny Burney observed,

I think no room looks really comfortable or even quite furnished without two tables, one to keep at the wall.. the other to stand here, there and everywhere.<sup>70</sup>





illus.65 The Drawing Room at Luscombe Castle, Devon  
A Watercolour by Mrs Hoare, 1825



illus.66 The Library, it was originally the Eating Room  
The Bookcases are typical of Nash's style and  
appear to have been transferred from another  
room in 1850







2.—THE STAIRCASE, LIT BY A GOTHIC WINDOW

illus.67 The Staircase, lit by a Gothic Window







illus.68 Luscombe Castle: The South extension of the Drawing Room. The Sofa ,left, can be ascribed to the younger Chippendale. On the right, the Drawing Room chimney piece by Flaxman. Mirror probably by Chippendale







illus.69 Furniture, Luscombe Castle, Devon







6.—THE DRAWING-ROOM DOOR; THE FLANKING PEDESTALS CARRY A ROMAN BUST AND A CLOCK BY VULLIAMY



7.—A TABLE IN THE EGYPTIAN TASTE AND PAIR OF CHAIRS, BY THE YOUNGER CHIPPENDALE, c. 1803-4

illus.70      Examples of Interior Decoration  
Luscombe Castle, Devon





The desire for novelty was a prominent feature of Regency furniture, as Robert Southey commented in 1807,

This is the newest fashion and fashions change so often in these things that it is easy to know how long a house was fitted up by the shape of the furniture. An upholsterer just now advertises commodes, console tables, ottomans etc.<sup>71</sup>

A lot of these designs came from French originals, copied by men such as Adam, Smith etc.

This popular interest in novelty resulted in the production of furniture such as "patent" furniture. (illus 71-72), which could be easily moved. This type of furniture would undoubtedly have been suitable for the Stewarts of Killymoon who constantly commuted by stage-coach between Killymoon Castle and Dublin. The typical types of furniture included extending or folding dining tables, chairs, tables or cupboards which could be turned into library steps and chairs or settees which converted into beds.

However, various other distinctive Regency furniture appeared, such as Trafalgar and Windsor chairs, (illus 73) commodities which were used in nearly all rooms. Its style was very much influenced by women's dress as to what shape they should be. Another important piece of furniture was the sofa-table. Their importance is best described by a Viennese fashion journal Zeitung Fur die Elegante Welt in 1807, in which was said,

There are very few balls and people try to avoid expense... and therefore prefer sitting in a small circle by the stove or fireplace or at the cosy round table... domestic life has become more pleasanter.<sup>72</sup>

Indeed, this sums up the type of furnishings that people like the Stewarts of Killymoon required for their houses.



illus.71 Patent metamorphic Library Chair, Combined Mahogany Chair and Library Steps, 1815 Patented by Morgan and Sanders







Croft, mahogany, c.1810. Named after the Rev. Sir Herbert Croft, Bt., for whom the first example was made to house his Mss. for a new edition of Dr. Johnson's *Dictionary*. Examples are known to have been made by the firm of Seddon.

illus.72    A Croft, Mahogany, 1810







illus.73  
Windsor Garden Chair  
1810



illus.74      Secretaire Bookcase, Satinwood, 1785  
An example of Antique Furniture of the Period





## Footnotes to Chapter Five

- 48 Hussey, Christopher, English Country Houses-Late Georgian, London, 1958, p.9
- 49 ibid
- 50 ibid
- 51 Hussey, op.cit, p.7
- 52 Lloyd, Nathaniel, A History of the English House, London, 1931, p.11
- 53 Parissien, Steven, The Regency Style, London, 1992, p.14
- 54 Parissien, op.cit, p.9
- 55 Dutton, Ralph, The English Interior 1500-1900, London 1948, p.145
- 56 Hussey, Christopher, English Country Houses-Late Georgian, London, 1958, p.15
- 57 Thornton, Peter, Authentic Decor, London, 1984, p.41
- 58 Dutton, op.cit, p.139
- 59 Dutton, Ralph, The English Interior 1500-1900, London 1948, p.140
- 60 ibid p.141
- 61 Cornfort, John, English Interiors, 1790-1848, London, p.20
- 62 ibid
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- 66 ibid
- 67 ibid, p.15
- 68 Parissien, Steven, The Regency Style, London, 1992, p.172
- 69 Hussey, Christopher, English Country Houses Late-Georgian, London, 1958, p.62
- 70 Collard, Frances, Regency Furniture, Suffolk, England 1985, p.18
- 71 Collard, op.cit, p.18
- 72 Thornton, Peter, Authentic Decor, London, 1984, p.149



## Chapter Six

### Irish Country Houses

The great Country houses and Castles of Ireland are a living reminder of the richness of Anglo-Irish culture during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, It was the architecture of the ruling class, otherwise called the "Anglo-Irish Aristocracy" by Desmond Guinness, who have left Ireland of today with a superb legacy of 'serene Palladian facades and embattled Gothic castles.<sup>73</sup>

The Act of Union of 1800 was revolutionary in the development of Irish architecture. It actually caused an increase in Country House building. As Dublin was no longer the seat of Irish Parliament, gentry like James Stewart, spent more time on their estates, encouraging the innovative design of the Morrisons, Francis Johnston, Nash etc in the interior decoration of their homes.

Since the nineteenth century, Irish Country Houses have been falling into decay. Mark Bence-Jones best describes their decline,

Encouraging the belief that almost every Irish Country House was burnt in the troubles, the ruined Country House is an all too frequent sight in Ireland, in fact the great majority of these ruined houses were not burnt, but either dismantled or allowed to fall down.<sup>74</sup>

However, because of this, a large portion of Irish Art and artifacts such as silver, glass, furniture, books and so on have left the country, sold in auctions, very few of the great houses were able to retain their original interior contents. But through sheer

determination a number of owners have brought back to Ireland, objects of beauty and historical interest.

Looking at Irish houses it is more or less impossible to give a positive picture of what a standard Irish interior was like as so many different styles were circulating during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. By looking at various Irish Country Houses I hope to give an impression of how Killymoon Castle was decorated.

### Classical Style

The classical idiom seemed to have become the standard line in late eighteenth and early nineteenth - century Irish interiors and even exteriors. Designing in this style became more or less second nature to architects, builders etc. As Maurice Craig says,

The designers and craftsmen of the period were so deeply imbued with the language of Classicism and that it answered so well to their everyday needs, that they used it unconsciously and felt no need to be scurrying off continually to look things up in pattern books.<sup>75</sup>

Two houses in this style are Fota House, Co Cork by John Smith Barry (illus 75-76) and Caledon, Co Tyrone built in 1779, with alterations done by Nash in 1812. The furnishings in both these houses could be said to be in the Regency style. Both John Smith Barry and Lord Caledon were influenced by Henry Holland and Wyatt; examples of their style can be seen continually throughout these houses, in their architecture, arrangement of rooms etc. It is interesting to note that the owners of Fota House



were companions of the Prince Regent and were members of his famous Carlton House set, like James Stewart.

### The Interior Decoration

These houses were decorated in the typical Regency manner of red/green flock paper on the walls with several portraits. Elaborately shaped, draped pelmets and curtains and wallpaper hinting at oriental and Indian influences which could also be seen in some of the furniture: decorative plasterwork of Classical friezes etc., furnishings in mahogany and French style gilt, reminiscent of Chippendale but probably made in Dublin. The layout of the furniture was a mixture of the old style, against the wall and an assortment around the room. It is possible that Killymoon Castle was not decorated in this way but it is a possibility that cannot be excluded.

### Gothic Interiors in Ireland.

However, in the early nineteenth century, taste was converting towards the Gothic-style Castle which not only expressed a nobleman's power but was also more in line with the Irish countryside. Many houses were pulled down and rebuilt, others had battlements and arrow slits added. As in France, the word 'chateau' referred to both house and castle; in Ireland the castle had a double meaning, as Desmond Guinness says, 'above at the Castle' might turn out to refer to some sober Classical house. Indeed this could be said of Killymoon. By the end of the century architecture had to be 'conservant with the Gothic and the Classical style'.<sup>76</sup>



By 1760 the Gothic revival reached Ireland with the building of Castleward, Co Down. (illus 79) The interior of this house like the outside was a split between Gothic and Classical influence. It is possible that the Stewarts of Killymoon had spent some time in Castleward as reference of it is made in the Clements letters. It is also possible that Killymoon was decorated within the same principle, Gothic on the outside and Classical inside.

### Birr Castle

Very few of these Castles remain intact and furnished. Birr Castle, Co Offaly is a good example of an Irish Castle which contains a mixture of designs. The present appearance of the Castle is due to the interest of Sir Lawrence Parsons, later the second Earl of Rosse, whom Wolfe Tone considered one of the few honest men in the Irish House of Commons. A bitter opponent of the Union, an intellectual and cosmopolitan man like James Stewart, Sir Lawrence devoted time, thought and money to the improvement of his estate. In 1801 he was busy with the architect John Johnston, planning and designing, for example, the Gothic features of the House that we see today.

### The Interiors

Most of the interior features also remained but in 1981, a proportion of furniture, books, carpets, silver, porcelain and paintings including a Guardi, were sold to pay off debts, most of the best furniture being sent overseas, a typical example of what happened to most of

the nineteenth-century Houses. Interestingly, a lot of houses designed around this period seemed to have a mixture of eighteenth and nineteenth-century furnishings and paintings and indeed Birr is a good example of this. Desmond Guinness believes that Irish furniture had a definite character of its own and its carving was unlike anything made in England. He says that the most interesting period as with architecture, plasterwork, silver etc. was from 1725 to 1775, after that, Irish furniture was brought into line with English design of the Sheraton variety.<sup>77</sup> By looking at a selection of photographs of rooms it may be possible to depict how Killymoon was decorated.

The Hall in Birr, for instance, contains several pieces of seventeenth-century furniture, tapestries, swords and cannonballs, typical furnishings with which Killymoon was decorated. The Morning Room contains two magnificent sets of eighteenth-century tapestries from the Italian comedy, Charles Vigne, a mahogany serving table and a fine Japanese lacquer cabinet; As I have mentioned above, the rest of the furnishings were sold. The Dining Room contains a collection of family portraits. It also has plasterwork and pelmets dating from the nineteenth century. Much of the decoration is in the Classical style, for example the red flock paper and the curved oak sideboard displaying the family crest and coat of arms.



illus.75 The Library, Fota House, Co Cork







illus.76 Detail of Window in Library  
Fota House, Co Cork







illus.77 Caledon, Co Tyrone:  
The Boudoir and Grand Staircase



illus.78 Caledon : The Saloon







*Two Gothic rooms; the library (left) and the sitting-room (right)*







illus.80 Birr Castle, Co Offaly





The Countess of Rosse's bedroom displays a matching suite of individual Gothic furniture such as a four poster bed which was designed by Mary, Countess of Rosse in the early nineteenth century and made and painted by the estate's workshops. The cupboards, chest and drawers display the taste of the time, which seemed to be a mixture of Gothic and Classical.

The Yellow Room is one of the few rooms to retain eighteenth-century features: (illus 81) The walls are hung with yellow damask displaying decorated mirrors of Bristol glass. The fireplace was designed by Thomas Clarke of Dublin and the brass fireguard is signed, T.S. Clarke, Aston Quay. Indeed, a lot of Irish craftsmanship can be seen in these great houses and in the Clements Papers there is reference of James Stewart paying a bill for a collection of furniture from Tatham Upholster, Mount Street, Grosvenor Square, Dublin.<sup>78</sup>

The most exquisite room in Birr Castle is the Gothic Saloon which was built onto the house in 1810. (illus 82) The ceiling in it can be compared with that of Killymoon's Hallway. The room was built along the river with three Gothic style windows looking onto it. Green and gold flock paper decorates the walls and curtains. The decoration of the room is light and elegant. The collection of gilt chairs and sofas in the French style is said to be by Chippendale, a style of furniture which the Stewarts would probably have used in Killymoon.

This is a timid picture of how Killymoon was possibly furnished and decorated. But as so little furnished interiors and documentation survives it is practically impossible to give a complete picture of how Killymoon was decorated. However, many people such as the Knight of Glin are re-decorating and furnishing their houses back to their original elegant state.



illus.81 The Yellow Drawing Room, Birr Castle







illus.82    The Gothic Saloon with a set of  
Chippendale Furniture





#### Footnotes to Chapter Six

- 73 Guinness, Desmond, Irish Houses and Castles, London, 1971, p.7
- 74 Robinson, Nickolas K, Vanishing Country Houses of Ireland, Dublin, 1988, p.6
- 75 Jones, Mark-Bence, Burkes Guide to Country Houses, London, 1978, p.1
- 76 Guinness, Desmond, Irish Houses and Castles, London, 1971, p.14
- 77 *ibid* p.1
- 78 Public Record Office, Belfast, Article D3153-3195 account 10 October, 1808

## Conclusion

By looking at early nineteenth-century architecture and its various styles, by discussing the Stewarts and Killymoon Castle, its social aspects, the various interior styles of that period, I feel that I have given an impression of what an Irish Gothic Regency Country House was like.

The Irish Country House of the early nineteenth century was built by men of taste and fashion who were influenced very much by the latest styles in England and on the continent, so that what was happening in England should not be disregarded, as undoubtedly, Anglo-Irish gentry such as James Stewart, were influenced very much by the English taste of that period.

It is also important to understand that the early nineteenth century was a period in which there was an explosion of new ideas combined with a mixture of the old. Everyone was grasping at a particular style which best suited their taste. This variety of style can be seen in Killymoon Castle and many other Irish Country Houses such as Castleward in Co Down.

From looking at the elevation design of Killymoon Castle, I feel that I have succeeded as best I can in giving an idea of how Killymoon Castle was decorated at the start of the nineteenth century, as this was my primary objective. An exact account is deferred by the fact that so little of Nash's buildings survives today in

England and Ireland. Indeed this could be said of so many Irish Country Houses in Ireland. Out of what does survive, like Killymoon Castle, the interior furnishing and paintings of these houses have disappeared due to political and economic changes and even more so, changes in interior taste. Without the interior furnishings etc. the character of the house dies and its majestic glory is lost forever.

Because of this, very little is known of what Irish Country Houses, like Killymoon Castle, were like during the early nineteenth century. Many societies such as the Irish Georgian Society, The Landmark Trust and The National Trust buildings in particular, Castleward, Co Down which I did not discuss in detail as I could not obtain enough relevant information. Also people like Richard Wood, Earl of Rosse, Desmond Guinness, the Knight of Glin who are restoring or trying to maintain these houses back to their original grandeur. With their objective in mind, I hope I have given an idea of what a Regency Gothic Castle was like in early nineteenth-century Ireland.



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