

Sons and daughters

In recording the history of the landlords of Moira, we have already spoken of the children of the Rawdon family who continued to live here and make a name for themselves. Other Moira children, from both sides of the social divide, have become famous for a variety of reasons. Our first and perhaps most famous child of Moira left the village when he was still a young lad.

Francis Rawdon (1754-1826).

Francis Rawdon was born in Moira Castle. His mother was the Earl's third wife, Lady Elizabeth Hastings.

On one occasion when he was ten years old, while playing war games in the demesne, a gun exploded injuring Francis in the leg. He always had an ambition to be a soldier. Francis was educated at Lisburn and Harrow and later enrolled in University College, Oxford but he discontinued his studies to purchase a lieutenancy. He was commissioned on 20th October 1773 and spent the remainder of his life in the service of his country. He may never have returned to Moira except perhaps for his father's funeral but his story is fascinating.

In 1774 he was posted to America and fought in the American War of Independence. He quickly distinguished himself and later became Adjutant-General with the rank of Lieutenant Colonel. He spent a total of seven years fighting in America and is said to have been one of the most courageous leaders in the whole war. But a combination of fatigue and malaria destroyed Rawdon's health. He gave up his command in 1781 and set off for home. However that voyage proved eventful, for his ship was captured and for a time he was imprisoned by the French. Eventually he was allowed to return to England.

But a great many of his Irish soldiers remained in North America after the war because they were not repatriated by Great Britain. Some are said to have founded a town called Moira in New York State, in memory of his exploits. Many more of his men were relocated to Canada, along with settlers he had rescued in a siege in 1781. There they founded Upper Rawdon, Central Rawdon and South Rawdon in Nova Scotia.

Rawdon's fighting days were not over though. In the French Revolutionary Wars, Francis Rawdon was appointed Major General and fought in the Low Countries in 1793.

While Francis was in America, he had been appointed Member of the Irish Parliament for Randalstown. He also became a Baron in 1783 and when his father died in 1793 he became the second Earl and served in the Irish House of Lords. He was to eventually inherit his mother's titles as well as his father's, and also much of the estates belonging to the Huntingdon dynasty. Francis took on his mother's maiden name and became known as Francis Rawdon-Hastings. He was made Marquess of Hastings in 1817 and Earl of Moira was retained as an inferior title.

The Earl was extremely critical of repression in Ireland and did more than most to expose the

misgovernment of Ireland.¹ In a debate in the Lords in 1797, Lord Moira described the horrors he had witnessed in Ireland against the Catholic people. He declared that ninety-one householders had been banished from one of his own estates (it is unclear which estate this was). He asserted that he wished to uphold the Protestant ascendancy in Ireland as much as his accusers but only asked that the poor Catholics be allowed to live in peace.²

Wolf Tone was often a visitor at Moira House, Dublin and Rawdon was godfather to Tone's son, Francis Rawdon Tone. He sent his own chaplain, Rev. Mr Berwick to christen the child in 1793.³ Tone hoped he could persuade Moira "to lead the rebellion in Ireland and so become one of the greatest men in Europe." Francis refused the offer but he did encourage the rebels though without entirely committing himself to them. A major arsenal was discovered on one of his estates. There is no record that this was Moira estate; more likely his estate at Ballynahinch but in Moira, the innkeeper and a guest were arrested.⁴

It seemed the village of Moira was to be just a distant memory. Francis sold his properties in Ulster around 1800 and after his mother died in 1808, he sold Moira house in Dublin too, thus closing his associations with Ireland. Interestingly, in 1916, some of the heaviest fighting of the Easter Rising took place in what was once Moira House, Dublin.

The boy who had played in the demesne of Moira had grown up to move in very high circles. He had a very close relationship with the Prince Regent. In 1797 the Prince initially appeared to support some parliamentarians' proposal that Rawdon be Prime Minister in place of William Pitt. However he was unable to raise enough support to form a government. He had various military postings including Commander and Chief in Scotland (1803-1806), Colonel of the 27th Regiment of Foot (1804-1826) and Master-General of the Ordnance (1806-1807). The Earl eventually married in 1804. His wife was Fiona Campbell, 6th Countess of Loudoun.

In 1812 he was sent to India as Governor General and Commander-in-Chief of one section of the growing British Empire. Rawdon held this post until 1823 and was largely responsible for the establishing of Central India as part of the British Empire. While there he was also involved in the purchase of Singapore for the British in 1819. It was during this time that he was raised to the rank of Marquess of Hastings.

Although Hastings had been mostly engaged in war during his time in India, he also took civic affairs seriously including the building of roads and bridges and digging of canals. He encouraged education among the Indians, founded the Hindu College at Calcutta in 1817 and encouraged the setting up of a printing press and a college at Serampore.

The missionary in Serampore at that time was none other than William Carey, the great Baptist Missionary, known as the father of modern missions. Carey had very close associations with the Earl and Lady Hastings. He dined with the Governor privately and talked of conversations and correspondence he had with him. The Earl even "gave an unequivocal mark of his approbation" for the College at Serampore and became a "patron of the infant institution."⁵

¹ An Historical Review of the State of Ireland Vol. 4 by Francis Plowden. Publ. 1906.

² The Land War in Ireland by James Godkin.

³ The Life of Theobald Wolfe Tone - Autobiography 1828.

⁴ McGill Faculty of Education, Montreal <http://www.mcgill.ca/education>

⁵ A Modern Traveller, India Vol. 3. Publ. 1828.

Hastings wrote to comfort Carey on the death of his wife. In Carey's will, when he bequeathed his books to the library at Serampore, one of only two books he named was "the folio edition of Hortus Wobournensis (a descriptive catalogue of upwards of six hundred ornamental plants) which was presented to me by Lord Hastings."⁶

His Lordship apparently was a very generous man and much respected. "His ample fortune absolutely sank under the benevolence of his nature"⁷ and, far from becoming wealthy as Governor-General, he returned to England in desperate need of employment. He always seemed to have severe financial problems and large debts.

He was later appointed the first Commander-in-Chief of Malta. He died at sea off Naples in 1826 but had left clear instructions that he was to be buried where he fell, if his "adored wife had no objections." But in a bizarre demonstration of his love, he instructed "that his right hand be cut off and preserved, so that it may be put with her body into the coffin when it pleased the Almighty to decree the reunion of our spirits." This "last earthly token" of his and Lady Loudoun's "attachment," he declared, "shall not be an idle lesson for our precious children, to whom I now give my fondest blessing." He was buried in Valetta and his hand was eventually buried, clasped in his wife's hand, fourteen years later!⁸ A most impressive monument marks Hastings' resting place in Hastings Gardens, Valletta.

William Sharman-Crawford (1781-1861)

William Sharman's son, also called William, was born in Moira Castle. He later wrote about his youth, explaining that he was considered a delicate child.

I spent my infantile years at Moira Castle but every year spending the winter in Dublin during the Parliamentary session. I was inclined as a child to delicacy of health - at least it was thought so by my parents - and I was kept under the most annoying superintendence. I was drugged with medicines. I was made what you would call a crock and a pet. It was alleged I would soon die if I went to school and my Father had an abhorrence of Tutors, so he determined to teach me to read and write; also arithmetic, Latin and some Greek. I instructed myself in history, mathematics, mechanics, geography and astronomy, etc. I was exceedingly anxious to have gone to college but this was prohibited lest my morals should be corrupted.⁹

William's father clearly was terribly controlling of his son. Sharman senior died when William was twenty-two and almost immediately William joined the Yeomanry as captain of the Moyrah Corps. Two years later he married the wealthy heiress, Mabel Crawford of Crawfordsburn, whose surname and Arms he added to his own. Shortly afterwards he "left Moira Castle, the place and estate having been purchased by Mr Bateson."¹⁰

William Sharman-Crawford became a very notable radical politician and represented Dundalk

⁶ Memoir of William Carey by Eustace Carey. Publ. 1836 pages 572/3.

⁷ The Annual Biography and Obituary for the year 1818 page 157.

⁸ Francis Rawdon-Hastings by Paul David Nelson.

⁹ A brief autobiography of William Sharman-Crawford, dated c.1844.

¹⁰ *ibid.*

in Parliament from 1834 to 1837. In his first contribution, he spoke against the Tithe system for the repair of church buildings. He said

justice was not done to the Catholic or Presbyterian population in being called on to contribute to the support of a Church to which they did not belong.¹¹

He fought hard to protect tenant farmers from eviction and became known as “the father of tenant-right.” He was also Colonel of a union regiment of volunteers.

Dennis O’Lavery (?-1781)

Dennis was a native of Moira. His family had been granted land by King James but that was later confiscated because of the Lavery family’s support for the rebellion. Dennis grew up in poor surroundings and with little hope. He was recruited by the Army and was shipped off to America with thousands of others from Ireland to fight in the American War of Independence. He never returned to Moira but his name is legendary and deserves its place on these pages.

Denis O’Lavery was serving as a corporal under Francis Rawdon in 1781 and was chosen to accompany a bearer of a highly important despatch. Unfortunately, soon after setting out, both of them were attacked and the one carrying the message was mortally wounded. Despite his own serious wounds, O’Lavery took the despatch from his dead companion and rode off to deliver it. Loss of blood took its toll and soon he too fell to earth. To avoid the despatch falling into enemy hands he hid it in his wound. Denis lay for hours, more dead than alive but when found he somehow used his last breath to reveal the hidden message. It was saved but the injury was fatal. The surgeon who examined the body declared

that the wound in itself was not mortal, but rendered so by the irritation of the paper. Thus fell this patriot soldier. His name was O’Lavery, from the parish of Moira, in County Down.¹²

A verse was written commemorating his heroic actions.

Within his wound the fatal paper placed
Which proved his death, nor by that death disgraced.
A smile, benignant, on his countenance shone,
Pleased that his secret had remained unknown:
So was he found.¹³

Sir John Fortescue said that a monument to O’Lavery had been erected in Co. Down.¹⁴ Another military historian believed Rawdon erected the monument. A letter written sometime in the last century says of O’Lavery,

... in rank a corporal, he was in mind a hero ... his country Ireland and his parish Moira in which a chaste monument records at once his fame and the gratitude of his illustrious commander and countryman Lord Rawdon.¹⁵

¹¹ Hansard. Church of Ireland Committee. *HC Deb 03 April 1835 Vol. 27 cc 790-828.*

¹² The O’Lavery’s by The Right Rev. Monsignor O’Lavery P.P. M.R.I.A. (1904)

¹³ Tales of the Wars - Saturday March 17, 1838.

¹⁴ A History of the 17th Lancers (Duke of Cambridge’s Own), by Hon. J W Fortescue. Publ. 1895 by Macmillan.

¹⁵ Journal of Craigavon Historical Society Vol. 2 No. 1 by Very Rev. H Hughes M.A. (Formerly Rector of Moira).

The location of the monument has never been established.

Edward Berwick (1754-1820) ¹⁶

Edward Berwick was born in County Down, almost certainly in Berwick Hall just outside the village of Moira. His father was called Duke Berwick, which has led to some confusion over his ancestry.¹⁷ Edward Berwick was ordained a deacon by the Bishop of Down in 1776 and was the Rector of Tullylish in the Diocese of Dromore from 1776 to 1779 before moving to parishes in the South. In 1793 he baptised Wolfe Tone's fourth son. Two years later he was appointed both Vicar of Leixlip, Co Kildare, in the Diocese of Glendalough, and Rector of Clongish, in the Diocese of Ardagh, holding both parishes at the same time.

He was a great writer and scholar, publishing his own works, scholarly translations of other Greek and Latin works and editing letters including The Rawdon Papers. The Irish novelist George Moore believed that Berwick "wrote the best English prose that ever came out of Ireland."¹⁸

The bio on Berwick's many publications indicate that he was "domestic Chaplain to the late Earl of Moira and present chaplain to the Marquess of Hastings, Governor General of India &c." He became a friend of the leading Irish politician Henry Grattan in the 1780s and 1790s and of the writer Sir Walter Scott.

Anne Lutton (1791-1881)

A less well-known child of Moira was Anne Lutton yet even today her influence is felt in this village. She was born and raised in number 65 Main Street, just below the four trees. She has an interesting ancestry. Two soldiers called Ralph and William Lutton had come to Ireland in 1690 with William III and served as officers in his army. When the war was over, the brothers elected to remain in Ireland - perhaps in Moira. William was an ancestor of Anne Lutton.

Anne's father, Ralph Lutton, was an only son of a prosperous farmer also called Ralph. He inherited much land and property in and around Moira. At the age of eighteen he married his cousin Anne, and became the father of nine sons and four daughters who outlived infancy. Anne was the youngest of these and was born on the 16th December 1791. Later in life, Anne described her home behind the trees that lined the street.

Conspicuous in this pleasant leafy street stood the spacious, lofty family mansion of the Luttons, lifting its three-storied, many-windowed front close to the sidewalk; its ample garden lay all in the rear.¹⁹

¹⁶ Some sources say he was born in 1750 but the later date seems more accurate.

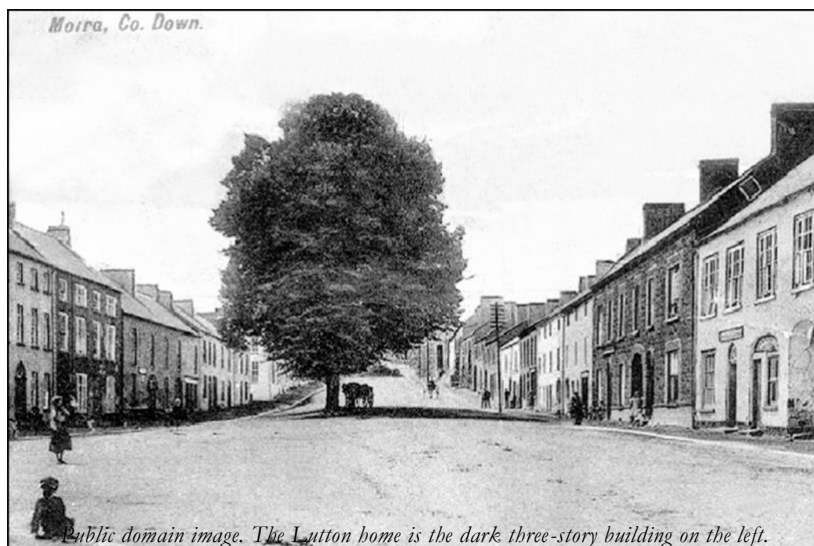
¹⁷ It has been suggested that his grandfather was the Duke of Berwick, the illegitimate son of James II who had fought with King James at the Battle of the Boyne. However, a study of the genealogies of the Dukes of Berwick shows that is impossible. Duke Berwick was not related to the Dukes of Berwick.

¹⁸ Quoted by Patrick Comerford. (<http://www.patrickcomerford.com/2015/08/more-about-edward-berwick-but-lady.html>)

¹⁹ Eminent Methodist Women (1889) by Annie E Keeling.

Mr and Mrs Lutton were both unusually intelligent, though Mr Lutton was partially blind. Anne can hardly be said to have been educated. "Reading, writing, plain and fancy work, household management, and the single accomplishment of dancing," were all that was required of girls at that time. But Anne was a little home-bird. She did not like school at all so the youngest child of the family was spoiled and indulged.

It seems strange that she did not enjoy school for even as a five-year-old she was passionately fond of reading. She wanted to be an author, so she devoured every book she could get her hands on from her father's bookshelves. Her eldest brother gave her a lesson or two in writing; the schoolmaster came to the house each day to teach her arithmetic. When she was seventeen years old she attended a Moravian school, where she learned "a little grammar and geography, as well as satin-stitch and embroidery."²⁰ She was virtually self-taught.



In 1811, when Anne was twenty, Mr Lutton and his family moved seven miles away to live in Donaghcloney. The house was so different from the one in Moira. It was a rural location surrounded by lawns and gardens on the banks of the River Lagan. These quiet surroundings were the perfect place for study.

Anne had always coveted the ability to read languages other than her own and began to study Latin. She had discovered a tattered "Lily's Latin Grammar" on her father's upper bookshelves. The book was rather battered; "schoolboys and worms had combined to outrage and deface it;" but Anne tidied it up and, with only what help her blind father could offer, she studied until she could read the great Latin classics.

Then she did the same with Greek, beginning with the New Testament, followed by Homer, Plutarch, Longinus and Demosthenes. To the classic languages she then added Hebrew, Samaritan, Syriac, Chaldee, Arabic, and Persian; "a little" of Ethiopic, Hindustanee and Irish; and not a little of French, Italian, Spanish, Portuguese, and German. Oriental languages followed and in all, it is said she could understand more than fifty languages and speak fifteen accurately. In addition, she became a musician, an able metaphysician, a mathematician, and a very good poet.

What was the point of all this study? Here was a young woman living in the backwaters of society acquiring the most wonderful education largely self-taught, but it was of little apparent

²⁰ *ibid.*

use in Moira or Donaghcloney. But she later saw the purpose. "It was a training process for higher and more hallowed duties," she said. Anne became a highly-respected poet throughout Ireland and Britain. Publications by her or about her include:

Poems on Moral and religious subjects. 1829

Memorials of a consecrated Life. 1882

But it was for another reason that she became famous in Moira and far beyond, as we shall see in a later chapter.

Sir John Lavery (1856-1941)

John Lavery is not quite a child of Moira for he was not born in the village. Somehow Moira likes to think it adopted him so I have included him in this chapter.

John Lavery was a Belfast boy whose father was a wine and spirit merchant. They were desperately poor, so his father decided to emigrate to America to set up a new life for his family. But the ship broke up in a gale off the Wexford coast and he perished with three hundred and eighty-six other passengers. John was only three years old at the time. Worse was to follow, for within three months of this tragedy, John's mother also died leaving John an orphan.

His uncle, a farmer from "Trainview," Back-of-the-Wood, Moira took him in. It is almost certain this was where Clenaghan's Restaurant is located, for their former web site gave this information:

Until recent times this establishment was known as Winnies after Winnie Clenaghan. Her mother was Kate Clenaghan (nee Lavery). She was a first cousin of Sir John Lavery, one of our most distinguished Irish artists and he was reared on this farm as a young boy."²¹

John attended school, first in Soldierstown and then in Magheralin, where it is said he detested arithmetic.

It seems the troubled lad was passed through the families of several relatives and he eventually fled to Scotland. He replied to an advertisement for a lad "good at drawing" and got a job as a re-toucher in a studio. With the income from his apprenticeship, Lavery enrolled for evening classes at the Haldane Academy of Art in Glasgow and set up a small studio in the city. Unfortunately, his workshop burned down in a freak accident while he was away in London. However, he used the insurance money to move to Paris to study at the Académie Julian in 1881.

From humblest of beginnings, he rose to be regarded as one of the greatest painters of the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries. In 1888, Lavery received a court commission to paint Queen Victoria's visit to the International Exhibition in Glasgow. It was the year of her jubilee. The prestige of being awarded this commission and the social connections he gained from this one sitting were to benefit him for the next fifty years.

²¹ From a previous version of Clenaghan's web site accessed 2015.

He painted at a time of Edwardian elegance, scandal and the struggle for Irish independence. All of this set against the backdrop of the Great War. In 1918, as an official war artist assigned to the Royal Navy, Lavery witnessed and painted the surrender of the German Fleet! He was knighted in 1918.

Sir John and his wife were indirectly involved in the establishing of the Irish Free State in 1922. They had given their home in London to the Irish representatives during the negotiations of the Anglo-Irish Treaty. When shortly after Michael Collins was killed, Lavery painted him lying in state and in the corner added the title, Love of Ireland.

His other portraits included George V, Winston Churchill, JM Barrie, George Bernard Shaw and Shirley Temple.

We are left with the impression that he knew everyone in high society and every one in high society knew him. He was honoured by many cities in Europe, and received the Freedom of Belfast in 1930. He died in Kilkenny where he had settled at the outbreak of World War II.