

# Newsletter



Issue No. 107 Spring 2017

## Museum News

2016 was a very successful year from a number of viewpoints.

Firstly, we are very grateful to the twenty or so members who very kindly volunteered to act as attendants and, indeed, quite a few did duty on numerous dates. This enabled opening on weekend afternoons from May to November and every afternoon during Heritage Week. And not forgetting the good ladies at the Castle Visitor Reception counter who so kindly look after the keys of our premises.



Secondly, even with such limited opening the number of visitors came to about 50 short of 3,000 !

People who signed the visitors book came from Canada, U.S.A., Brazil, Australia, New Zealand, other far flung places and, of course, from all over Ireland, Britain and continental Europe.

And we had just one room open as past experience has taught us that, unfortunately, close supervision is necessary to prevent loss of artefacts. However, see the adjoining panel for news about putting the second room to good use.

It is hoped to re-open shortly when we shall again be calling for volunteer attendants.

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## Upcoming lectures

Wednesday April 12<sup>th</sup>:

***William Dargan, Irish Railway Pioneer***

Speaker: Fergus Mulligan

Wednesday May 10<sup>th</sup>:

***Malahide's Early Water Supply***

Speaker: Declan Brady

## How to make best use of Room 2

The committee have been giving much thought to a best use for the second room at our disposal at the museum.

One option would be to purchase secure display cases where exhibits would be under lock and key but this would be expensive and we might not have sufficient artefacts to display and rotate.

Alternatively, a high quality audio/visual display could be installed and remotely controlled from Room 1. This might be used to narrate various aspects of the history of the village and its inhabitants against a background of images from our archive.

We are currently developing this proposition and committee members have visited exhibitions and museums for ideas. We hope shortly to consult with a number of professionals to further develop our ideas and ascertain the likely costs involved. We will keep members informed.

# A Mysterious Claddagh Ring

Dr. Ian Broinowski, PhD, MEd, BA (Soc Wk), BEd, Dip Teach, a resident of Hobart, the capital of Tasmania, has been in correspondence with the Society regarding aspects of his family's history around the time Tasmania or Van Diemen's Land, as it was then called, was being settled. Sons of well-to-do Irish families as well as Irish convicts played a large part in the early development of this far away land. It was about a four month voyage from here to there.

Ian has had great success in researching his ancestors helped considerably by letters and other documents held by his family also by a book written by his great aunt, Kate Hamilton Dougharty, in 1953 under the title ***A Story of a Pioneering Family in Van Diemen's Land***. Ian kindly sent us some of the results of his research together with several chapters from this book which are reproduced on the following pages. In these the author, Ms Dougharty, describes a love affair between her Aunt Catherine (or Kate) and the young William Talbot. They also give a great insight into life in a penal colony in the 1830s.

Ian is trying to establish how William was connected with the Malahide Talbots and the origin of the Claddagh rings mentioned in the story. Malahide Historical Society has extensive family trees for the main Malahide Talbot family and also for other closely related Talbot families but nowhere can we find the William in the story. Ian states: "...clearly he existed and so too does the ring and Katie's transcripts of his letters. Also Katie heard the story directly from Catherine so their brief young love did occur but perhaps it should remain as half fact half myth as I doubt if we will ever know the truth." We do

know that the author took licence in that she calls the house *Roscomroe* when it was in fact called *Eastbourne*.

Ian is not convinced Queen Elizabeth would have given such a personal and valuable ring to a page boy but may have given it to GEORGE TALBOT, sixth Earl of Shrewsbury who was very much favoured by the Queen and was Mary Queen of Scots' keeper for 15 years. However, George was only distantly



The ring itself is as beautiful as it is intriguing. It appears to be an earlier version of a Claddagh ring which became popular at the end of Elizabeth's reign. Named after the small fishing village of Claddagh on the West Coast of Ireland meaning flat stony shore. Even now it is renowned for creating the ring with varying myths and versions of its origin. However its earliest date is around 1596 with its central leitmotif on the intimacy of relationships.



The Claddagh's distinctive design features two hands clasping a heart, and usually surmounted by a crown. The elements of this symbol are often said to correspond to the qualities of love (the heart), friendship (the hands), and loyalty (the crown). (Murphy, Colin, and Donal O'Dea (2006) *The Feckin' Book of Everything Irish*. New York,)

The ring William was given for his future bride is simpler with two hands clasping but no crown or heart. It resembles the more classical medieval 'fede motif' as described by the British Museum;

The fede motif (two clasped hands joined at the bezel) represents the joining of hands of the couple at a marriage ceremony, a practice that dates back to ancient Rome and was known as 'dextrarum iunctio'. (British Museum)

The ring also looks like a [gimmel-ring](#) popular at this time and is evidenced by the Will of Johan Brouncker, who in 1577, left one 'Ringe of golde with an hande in hande' to her sister-in-law. The two interlocking rings were each given to the bride and bridegroom and reunited at their wedding. The implication is clear that the ring is closely entwined with love, marriage and friendship.

The origin of the ring and its precise journey from the 1500's to Van Dieman's Land in 1833 will for-ever remain a mystery.



Catherine Grey wore the ring for the rest of her life and died on the 30<sup>th</sup> March 1902. Catherine is Ian Broinowski's great aunt.

*Photo held by family: inscription on reverse side reads as follows; Collagh, "Baron Lord Talbot de Malahide, Malahide Castle, County Dublin. EIRE." "Brookes" Club, St James St.*

# Background to the Greys who figure in the following love storey

The Greys (or Grays) came to Ireland with Cromwellian forces in 1649 and were subsequently granted lands in the south of Kings County (Offaly) at Roscomroe, Rockford, Garrycastle and Ballycumber. No large house survives at Roscomroe but the house at Rockford is still standing.

William and James were sons of Dr. Richard Gray, MD (1760-1830) of Birr, Kings County. William had a fairly distinguished career in the army rising to the rank of major. He may not have seen much fighting in the years after Napoleon but he explored deep in to West Africa along the River Niger, the principal river of western Africa with a length of 2,600 miles (4,200 km). James also joined the army but the peace at the time led to him soon being put on half pay with the rank of lieutenant. The brothers saw little hope of a good life back in King's County and availed of land grants being offered to soldiers by the British government. They settled in Van Diemen's Land in 1826 and called their property Avoca.

Their uncle, Humphrey Gray (b.1780), was a storekeeper in the Commissariat, the supply organization of the army. Humphrey was a cautious, thoughtful man with a keen sense of business with maturity on his side and had accumulated some considerable wealth before deciding to emigrate.

Humphrey and Catherine Grey, both in their late forties, were at a different stage of their lives with adult children to accompany them in their new life in VDL. Margaret at 22, Humphrey 20, and Catherine 15 with two younger children Sarah 8 or 9 and Henrietta 7. Although Humphrey had taken longer to decide whether to emigrate than his more impetuous and spirited cousins he soon became committed and set about planning their exodus from Ireland. This probably reflected more on Humphrey's nature than anything but the potential for a better life in the colonies must have eventually persuaded him to commit and so, on the 19th of July 1828 the Grey family set sail to VDL on the Letitia. Humphrey had commissioned the ship with several other families including; (Commander) William Moriarty from Summer Hill in Cork, John Gee of Rathmolyn, Co. Meath, Henry Gee, his cousin, all with their families and some with servants, following, like Edward Conyngham of Dublin, siblings already settled on the other side of the world. Also involved was the irascible Joseph Henry Moore, son of the Earl of Drogheda, and his family, from Dublin; Richard Popham of Bandon, Co. Cork; Dr Jonathan Clerke, his brother Alexander, with his wife, married only days before in Skibbereen, Co. Cork . Mrs Ann Weston, together with her son, joined the group, setting out to join her husband, Superintendent of the Hyde Park Barracks in Sydney. Perhaps because of lack of cargo space some, including the Greys, had sent much of their possessions out in another ship. The journey though well planned failed dismally once reaching St Jago. The Captain's seamanship and sobriety left much to be desired and the crew were inexperienced and ineffectual. At the port of St Jago the ship was inadequately secured for an oncoming storm and was crushed upon the rocks before sinking.

Humphrey wrote:

*On the 15th of August, we came to anchor at Porto Prayo Island, off St. Jago, to take in water as what we had on board was bad. It came on to blow, which occasioned a swell and the ship rolled much. It was deemed advisable to let go the second anchor, which the Captain had neglected. We were then in 8 fathoms of water with less than 30 fathoms of chain, and about 3 o'clock on the evening of the 19th she parted from the anchor, the chain breaking. Then, too late, the second anchor was let go, but did not hold. You can imagine what a situation we were in, leaving the boat and getting most of the passengers ashore. A signal was made, which brought a boat alongside. We instantly got all the Ladies and Children in her and sent them ashore. Shortly after 4 o'clock, she struck on the rocks, in a fearful surf. She soon began to fill and the masts to roll which made it dangerous to stay near her. I remained till her lower deck was forced up to the upper one. I am sorry to say that no exertion was made to save the ship or cargo. The wind abated before the anchor broke. I wanted Clements to let the kedge anchor be rung from the ship, but he would take no notice of what anyone said. We can never give sufficient thanks to the Almighty, for, had it happened at night, I think not even five would have been saved. Owing to the great heat of the weather, the Ladies had on only a gown, no coat, and the gentlemen, jacket and trousers, and in that state, we are now obliged to remain, for want of others to change them. I have seen some shipwrecks, but anything to equal this, I have never witnessed. She was actually torn to pieces! We have experienced much kindness from Mr. Goodwin, the British Consul, who provided us with provisions and lodgings during our stay, and a passage for as many as wished to go to Rio de Janeiro.*

The Grey family members were safe on dry land but had lost all their possessions but luckily Humphrey had retained his money belt with sufficient funds to continue their journey. The British Consul managed to secure a berth on the Hesperus from Cape Verde to Rio de Janeiro arriving in October 1828. The passenger list from the vessel clearly shows all the Grey family members. In Rio the Greys again appealed to the British Consul who arranged accommodation. A ship in poor condition was secured and the carpenters and shipwrights from a British warship based there were to carry out repairs. However, the warship was urgently summoned elsewhere resulting in further tribulations. Eight of the original passengers made their own arrangements but the remaining, being without funds, appealed to the British Consul for further assistance. After many difficulties and delays the brig Anne was eventually made available to enable them to continue to Hobart, Van Diemen's Land, where they eventually arrived in Hobart on the 8th July 1829. The Greys joined others of their family already settled at Avoca in the Fingal district in the north-east. The journey from Cobh had taken eleven months.

For a detailed first hand account of their epic voyage see:  
<http://www.frankmurray.com.au/the-letitia-shipwreck>

# William Talbot

## A sad love story

In 1953 Kate Hamilton Dougharty, published *A Story of a Pioneering Family in Van Diemen's Land*.

The following is an extract. The Catherine or Kate mentioned in the story was the author's Grand Aunt.

### A Visit from the Governor

Shortly after this Margaret<sup>1</sup> had again gone away for a week's visit when one morning early a boy on horseback clattered noisily over the cobbled courtyard. He brought a note from Major William Grey asking for help in an emergency.

*Dear Humphrey,*

*Mrs. Grey wishes me to ask if you and Kitty would allow Catherine to visit us for a few days. We are expecting a visit from Governor and Suite, in two days' time. They wish to make a survey of the district.*

*If it were possible, we should be charmed if you and your wife could accompany Kate, but we know that Humphrey is in Hobart Town and you may not think it wise to leave your home.*

*"The Old Lady" would be so glad of Catherine's support for the occasion. Mrs. Grey is not very well. She would be immensely pleased if you allow Catherine to come, and, of course, we would send the carriage for her.*

*Your affectionate cousin,*

*WILLIAM GREY.*

Humphrey took the note to his wife and discussed it before calling Kate. They agreed that, with the elders away it would be unwise to leave the children in charge of the servants. There were so many aborigines roaming about and a few miles away was a convict settlement. They decided that the visit would be a pleasant experience for Kate so they told her to dress and pack and sent a note to Rockford to relieve Mrs. Grey's mind saying that she would be ready at three o'clock.

Kate had an adaptable nature and would fit in and help. She was highly delighted and the small girls equally so. They went to her room to give advice on packing her sandlewood box. Lysbeth's ideas were practical. She said, "Let's put everything that you need on the bed first - your kerchiefs, brush and comb, toothbrush," and was interrupted by Henrietta who did not care for prosaic things "Take

<sup>1</sup> Kate's elder sister.

your blue French muslin, with blue ribands, and then Kate you will want your pink organdie for the first evening and your silver sandals." Lysbeth went on "Your riding-habit and boots and will you have your green Gingham in case you walk in the orchard?" "Yes," burst in irrepressible Henrietta again, "you will need your Leghorn<sup>1</sup> and your new riding hat with the green feather."

They were enjoying themselves thoroughly but suddenly Kate had had enough of them and her mother had come to see what they were doing and banished them to play— Henny saying, "Come on Lysbeth let us play. You can be His Excellency and I will be Kate curtsying to you." Kate laughed and thanked them as they went off.

Punctually at three the old coachman in a low carriage escorted by two young men on horseback arrived. One was William<sup>2</sup> Talbot from Break O' Day who was also on a visit to Rockford and the other was Basil, Major William's eldest son, aged fourteen. Both came in to pay their compliments to Mrs. Grey but would not linger. The sooner they got away the better. They had to travel slowly and bumpily over unmade roads, and no one knew what dangers lurked there. Henny and Lysbeth saw them start and the last they saw of the children was a picture, Henny stood stiffly, one hand across her chest in imitation of the Governor while Lysbeth coyly acted Catherine, making a deep curtsy.

Kate never forgot that day, such a lovely one. The beauty of the surrounding country the deep blue of the Tiers and the delightful scent of the rain-sprinkled gums impressed her. The two gallant escorts rode as near as safety permitted on each side of the carriage vying with one another in making well-turned compliments telling any news they could and exchanging gay witty repartee all for Kate's benefit. She tried not to give more attention to the debonair William than to her young cousin but it was an effort! Still young as she was she had already a natural sweetness and poise so that she survived. William was her brother's great friend and often came to Roscomroe and had heard admiringly of the snake incident.

She arrived at Rockford with even brighter eyes and more glowing cheeks than usually, descended from the carriage with the grace taught at her Paris school. William who had dismounted quickly assisted her and they received a warm welcome from Major William and the "Old Lady."

## The Dinner Party

Like most early settlers, Mrs. Grey and her husband kept open house and were noted for their hospitality. Many well-known travellers came to their home, sure of their welcome. The only drawback to such hospitality was Mrs. Grey's delicate health. She was not very robust and was prone to bad headaches for which a rest in bed was the only solution. The standard of her house-keeping demanded that things should be well done. Most of the servants were rough ex-convicts and needed much training, so there was little chance of the mistress relaxing.

In appearance, she was a dainty little lady with a pretty, oval, finely-featured face, sweet eyes. She had a sense of humour and was admired and loved by many friends. She always dressed in stiff rich silk, with "real" lace at the neck and wrists. On her head she wore a lace or net cap with lappets reaching from her smooth fine hair to her shoulders.

<sup>1</sup> A type of straw hat.

<sup>2</sup> Ed. note. We have been unable to positively identify this 'William' among the Malahide Talbots. He was not the William Talbot (b. circa 1784, d. 1845) of Malahide Castle who established the Malahide estate in Tasmania where the Break O' Day River joins the South Esk River.

Kate was delighted to go and stay with her and especially to join in the preparation for a party. She and Mrs. Grey rose early next day and before 6 a.m., were in the kitchen with Cook.

Several things were already done. On the cool, wired-in underground, storeroom shelves rich plum cakes, mince pies, plum puddings waited, also a ham cooked in port wine. When Kate went into the room she was filled with admiration. On the shelves too, were cut-glass cups of custard and beautiful green Worcester dishes on which stalked strawberries would be piled and next to them were two fat silver jugs to hold whipped cream. Brandy sauce too, must be made.

The housekeeper of 1830 had not dreamt of refrigerators nor even of Mrs. Beeton, but many prized and well-tried recipes were handed down from mother to daughter. Until 12.30 Catherine, Mrs. Grey and her staff were fully occupied. They had had a meal and were sent off to rest. The Governor and suite were not expected until 5 p.m. Kate had spent the greater part of the morning making the dinner table beautiful.



She had two or three black Wedgwood bowls, filled -with lovely pink camellias. The very handsome Georgian silver twinkled on the finely hand-woven linen cloth. A chest of silver had been brought safely from the old home. It had been especially designed in 1801, at the time of the Union of England, Ireland, Scotland and Wales and their emblems were embossed on the handles on each piece.

Acorns were wrought on the spoon bowls, while the rose, thistle shamrock and leek were raised on the handles. They were used only on special occasion such as weddings and parties and the Greys hoped to hand them on to their descendants. There were spoons of all shapes and sizes and Kate loved to unpack them and rub them on the soft chamois in which they were rolled.

There were goblets of Waterford glass and a Dresden service. Everything sparkled under the light of the Sheffield-plate candelabra. The polished cedar walls and the backs of the mahogany dining-chairs shone like pools of water, reflecting- the flowers and pretty colours.

Dinner was at eight o'clock. Then there was no such thing as "afternoon tea." This was instituted by the Duchess of Bedford in 1852, but any of the household was at liberty to visit and enjoy the apple-room. Mrs. Grey firmly believed in the "apple-a- day" theory.

That afternoon the threatened headache became rapidly worse. She fought it until every preparation for the visit had been made. Then knowing that rest was the only cure, she went to lie down. By 6.30 it had not abated. The "Old Lady" was most concerned and would not leave her, for when she tried to stand, she became faint.



Finally they sent for Catherine, saying, "Catherine, dear, I am afraid I must ask a great deal of you. Will you act as hostess at the dinner to-night? You can see that I am useless, and it would comfort me to know that you will see to everyone's well-being and enjoyment?"

Poor Kate ! Her heart jumped and almost failed her. What an ordeal! And she had not made her debut and felt very inexperienced. If only Margaret had been there instead! She flushed and her eyes were full of anxiety, but she did not interrupt Mrs. Grey who went on, "You must not feel nervous. Your cousin and William will help you. Remember, you will be entertaining gentlemen who will realise your youth and will do everything to help you.

"The Major will see that correct wines are served and cook knows how to send the dishes in. I will be glad if you will take another look at the table to see if the silver and glass are adequate. The Major will welcome His Excellency and make my excuses, and will show them to their rooms.

"You need not hurry. A hostess must appear calm and at her ease and you need not appear till just before dinner, when you will meet them all in the drawing-room."

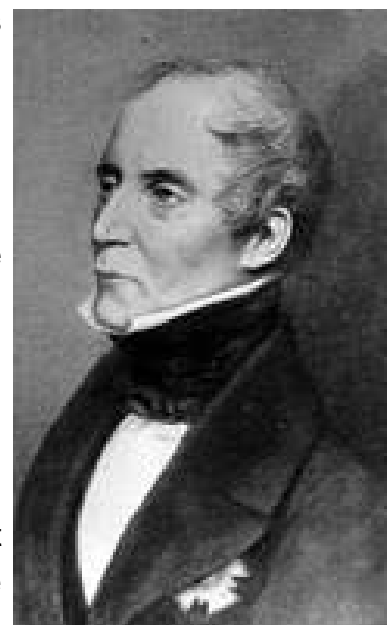
Kate gasped. How could she fail when her cousin needed her so? But before she could speak, the "Old Lady" chimed in—"You have your muslin and your blue sash—tie your curls with a riband to match and wear a rose. Do not be frightened. Carry your head high. Walk in, forgetting they are strangers. Think of them as furniture."

That made Kate laugh. What would His Excellency think if he knew that his young hostess was regarding him as a two-legged table? And the small gallants, clad in tight-fitting trousers, as chairs.

She went to her room and dressed with great care. Tall for her age, graceful and slender, she carried her head well. Her clear hazel eyes were sparkling and intelligent. She had bright, golden brown hair and a soft, clear skin, but her most attractive feature was her wide, generous mouth. She spoke to her reflection in the long pier glass, "No quaking nor shaking now," and went upstairs to the drawing-room.

When the Governor entered, she swept him such a graceful curtsy that everyone was charmed. Dinner was announced and at his request, she took His Excellency's arm and sat next to him. The dinner went off well and happily. Mrs. Grey had trained a boy to wait at table and the decorations were much admired. Kate enjoyed it all, but slipped away before they drank the toast to His Majesty, King William.

They soon joined her in the drawing-room for coffee and begged for a little music. A young lieutenant placed a tall, beech wood armless chair before the satinwood piano, which was one of the first semi-grand pianos to be



**Sir George Athur, Governor of Tasmania ,1824-1836. He was then sent as Lieutenant Governor of Upper Canada where Col. Thomas Talbot (brother of William from Malahide) was in control of over 540,000 acres.**

imported to the colony. She tinkled out the Londonderry Air and after entreaties from the Governor, added the Battle of the Prague, which all young ladies were expected to know.

After playing for them and receiving the thanks and compliments of the guests, Kate curtseyed and escaped. She flew to Mrs. Grey, who was already feeling better and she amused her and the "Old Lady" by relating the compliments and drawing a picture of Lieutenant "Fatty" bringing- her the tall, slender chair. She said, "I couldn't think of him as that kind of chair."

Early next day, after thanks and compliments, the survey party was off—His Excellency saying that he hoped to visit Roscomroe at a later date. The Major went with them, but William stayed. He was rather intrigued and wanted to find a reason for Kate's very modest air and downcast eyes. He knew the Roscomroe family well, and despite the fact that this pose was most becoming to her, decided it must be regarded with deep suspicion. He could swear he had seen a gleam of mischief in her eyes when "Fatty" had rushed over with the piano chair. Mrs. Grey had been well enough that morning to re-arrange the chairs in the sitting-room and with Kate's help they seemed to be laughing with great enjoyment. What was the joke connected with "chairs?"

Later on he found out how they turned each man into a chair or table. William said, "Was I the bow-legged one?" And Kate replied demurely, "Don't forget that is the best rosewood, Mr. Talbot."

## William

Then they began discussing his travels. He was starting them in the New Year, accompanied by a pleasant middle-aged tutor. He had made a solemn promise to his grandfather to do this and had been given introductions to European courts where he would see foreign customs and meet famous men and beautiful women. He would see life at its best and gayest, especially in Vienna, and he would learn how important a place his own country held in the world <sup>3</sup>.

Then they talked of their old homes in Ireland. He told her that his parents were dead, but he had an older brother, lately married, who hoped someday to bring his wife to visit him in V.D.L. He then described two rings given by Queen Elizabeth to his ancestors, who had been her pages. These rings were called "Clodagh" and were handed down to each generation, for brides.

William's brother had given his to his wife and on his eighteenth birthday his grandfather had given him the other, asking him to make no use of it until after he had attained his majority, and had returned from his Grand Tour.

<sup>3</sup> The siblings of William of Malahide Castle were exceptionally well travelled. His sister, Fanny, was a Countess of the Austrian Empire, a Bavarian Chanoinesse and according to herself she was held in great regard throughout the Courts of Europe. A brother was a lieutenant-colonel and another a full admiral. His mother's sister was the wife of the Marquis of Buckingham. Count General O'Reilly, William's uncle, was Chamberlain to the Austrian Emperor Joseph II and held huge amounts of property in Bohemia and Galicia.

Then Kate asked, "What is it like?" and he replied, "You will see it one day, Kate." He gave her a description of it—two very finely moulded gold hands, clasped over two large diamonds, in a curious setting. At the wrist of each little hand, is a gold frill, Tudor fashion, but what made the ring unusual, is the tiny hidden spring under it, which when touched, causes the whole to split into five complete rings, held together on one side, by a tiny hinge. The two outer rings are plain, the next two chased, and the centre, filigree. The workmanship is Italian, and the clasped hands typify "Love and marriage."



He said, "I do not mean to take it with me, because if I lost it, it would be irreplaceable. I must leave it here with my uncle, until I return," Then looking earnestly at her, he continued, "I shall be quite certain what I will do with it when I come back. Would you be interested if I write to Humphrey or your father about my travels? We intend to see famous pictures and hear all the latest music."

Kate smiled as she answered, "I am sure we shall be most interested, William."

William must have gained some satisfaction from the brightness of her eyes because the anxiety in his relaxed.

Next day, after thanks on both sides, Kate and her escorts returned to Roscomroe, much to the joy of the small girls. When leaving, William had asked Mrs. Grey if he might call again, as there was only a month before he departed. She replied, "Of course, we shall be very pleased to see you," so on one excuse or another, with Humphrey or alone, he contrived to call every day. It might be with a new book for the Major or with plants for Catherine's garden, which she was trying to make as like as possible to the one they had left in Ireland.

She planted tulips, crocuses, and sweet scented moss roses, mignonette, lavender, rosemary, pinks and laburnum.

One day he arrived with an invitation from his aunt. "Would Mrs. Grey, the Major, Humphrey and Kate dine with them? An informal, farewell dinner for William and his tutor. Most of their neighbours would be there.

Fifteen was considered rather too young, even in those days, for a girl to attend a dinner, and Mrs. Grey hesitated, but the Major, noticing Kate's suddenly heightened colour, said, "Now that Catherine has helped entertain His Excellency, don't you think that further experience would be good for her, my love?"

Before Mrs. Grey could express any misgivings, he had sat down at his desk, and had written a note of acceptance, and had given it to William. But Mr. Talbot was in no hurry. He had brought a list of roses for Kate, and asked if he may assist her to lay out a border of primroses.

Putting on her Leghorn and taking a basket, she said she would be glad of help, and added that she must gather some flowers for the house. He immediately offered to go with her.

They disappeared for quite an hour, and were stunned when Lysbeth came running to ask. Lysbeth expressed surprise that the basket was still empty! William then recalled that his aunt had given him other notes to deliver, so went to the house to say farewell, after which Lysbeth remarked, "William is very happy about the party. He was singing as he went down the trail."

Most of the surrounding settlers had been invited to the dinner, some of their daughters were no older than Kate, so she felt happy. Her poise and her slim, tall figure made her look older. The guests included the Legges, Parramores, O'Connors, the three Grey families, the Dumaresques, the Jennings and a Von Stieglitz who had arrived lately. They all knew one another, so it was a happy gathering.

Kate wore an off-the-shoulder, high-waisted frock. It was made of cream gauze with a wide cherry satin stripe, and she wore a sash and hair ribbon to match, with a rose in her hair. She had no jewels, for her mother thought them out of keeping with her youth. But she looked charming.

William did not sit near Catherine. When arranging the guests, his aunt had deputed him to take in a much older lady. Yet, half way through the meal, Kate found him at her elbow, saying:

"Miss Catherine, I sent my man to ask might I have the pleasure of taking wine with you, but you were busy with your neighbour. So I have come myself to beg the honour?"

Kate blushed with pleasure. She knew of course of this custom of honouring a lady, but she was too young to have experienced it herself. She felt now she was a woman of the world. How pleased Henry and Lysbeth would be when they heard of it! They would be sure to toast one another in tank water.

While these thoughts flashed quickly through her mind, William stood patiently waiting, looking at her with his appealing eyes and charming smile, prepared to touch her glass with his. She lifted hers.

Conveying his to his lips, he murmured, "Much happiness and good health," and to her startled ears, added, "My little love." Confused, she hurriedly raised hers to her lips, and responded, "A happy voyage and a safe return, Mr. Talbot." He then bowed and returned to his seat.

When Mrs. Talbot gave the signal, the ladies went to the drawing-room while the men settled down to toast His Majesty, their wives and daughters and William and his tutor.

Meanwhile, the ladies were enjoying themselves immensely. It was not often they got together. While the men discussed Home politics, farming, the Government and the convict question, the women talked of news from Home, the latest fashions and recipes. The girls gathered round Catherine. They had heard of her acting hostess for Mrs. Grey. They admired her for this, assuring her they themselves

would have swooned with fear. "Wasn't she nervous? And were any of the suite as interesting as the local beaux?"

In the candle light and the glow from a blazing fire, the big room made a delightful picture. The gentlemen wore dark green or plum-coloured coats, ruffles and knee breeches with silk stockings and buckled shoes. The elder ladies wore turbans, often feathered, on their heads.

Being after Waterloo, they wore Empire dress with very short waists and decidedly low necks with gauze scarves. The puffed sleeves were short and very full and the skirts long and made of rich striped silks.

Reflected in the big wall mirrors were all these gay colours, and with them, scarlet, high necked uniforms. Many of the officers, including Lieutenant Champ (later to become the first Premier of Tasmania) were stationed at the Avoca Barracks, a military post for the 68th Regiment.

One of the young sparks helped to entertain by singing in a melting voice — "Drink to me only with thine eyes" at the same time rolling his at any lady near. It was quite a feat to do this because of the high boned military collar. The girls tinkled on the piano, and there were a few more songs and choruses, then a general move to say goodbye and to wish William bon voyage.



**Portion of a contemporary view with a lady and gentleman departing in a carriage from the Malahide farmhouse in the background.**

A man servant, carrying lanterns, called the name of the owner of the barouche or gig as it came round, and with the escorts on horseback quite a gay cavalcade went down the road. The ladies had wonderful cloaks and furs which were bought to last a life time, mostly of seal or sable.

Catherine's cloak, like that of the other young girls, was of cream cashmere. Hers was trimmed with a key pattern of narrow cherry coloured, velvet, and the cherry velvet hood made a charming frame for her small face.

The night was bright but the roads not yet made. Part of their way was just a bush track where escaped, desperate convicts might lurk, or the traveller be stuck up by bushrangers or frightened by war-like aborigines. Every man carried arms and had a loaded pistol in his hand.

## FAREWELL

Two days later, William paid his final visit to Roscomroe. Humphrey, who was in his confidence, contrived that he should first see the Major alone. Kate did not know of the purpose of this visit for two years.

He told him that on his return he meant to settle on his own property. He then would ask permission to pay his addresses to Catherine for whom he felt an affection such that he knew neither time nor distance could lessen. He was quite sure that she was the love of his life, and when he returned, she would be old enough to decide.

Might he write often to the two Humphreys and give them a full account of his travels, and would they tell her and keep her interest alive? He was so earnest that Kate's father could only smile and give him his promise. Much relieved, William went off to see Mrs. Grey and the girls. He had wine and cake with them and then said good-bye rather more formally than usual.

He thanked Mrs. Grey for the hospitality she had always shown him, and she replied that they would all miss him, and would look forward to his return. He then asked had she no commission for him in Europe? Could he send her some lace from Malta or Brussels? He promised Henny a clock from Switzerland, and Lysbeth a doll dressed a-la-mode from Paris.

He paused then, and Lysbeth with her usual impetuosity said, "But you will not forget Kate, will you William?"

Kate in horror said, "Lysbeth!" But he answered, "How could I? It was to be a surprise, but now perhaps I should ask her would she like a little Italian arm-chair?"

Kate, who had been rather pale and quiet, became rosy and looked at him with sparkling eyes and said, "Nothing could be happier, Mr. Talbot." She knew it would bring happy memories of the Governor's dinner and William's curiosity. He smiled, took Mrs. Grey's hand, and kissing it, murmured "Your servant Ma-am".

Then he went to Kate and doing the same, added, almost under his breath, "Always." He smiled charmingly at the small girls and was gone. They saw him for one moment as he halted at the turn of the road, took off his hat and waved it.

He wrote regularly to the two Humphreys, giving a full description of all he saw and did. They followed his journeyings on a map, and looked forward to his return.

In about two years, Catherine had grown to be the belle of the district—her slenderness and pretty carriage were much admired and she was attracting more attention than her parents wished. This was inevitable when so many young settlers kept arriving, but she had a gentle mischief equal to most occasions.

One day she was at Rockford talking to Miss Winston, the pretty young governess there, when they heard a horse cantering to the homestead. In a few minutes, down came a breathless young man, a new settler who was building a very comfortable home on his grant.

He bowed, facing Kate, took off his hat and addressed her, "Madam, they say that you and I are fated to go through life together. Will you not agree?"

This was too much for Kate, who barely knew him. She looked quickly at her companion and said, "I think Mr. N. is speaking to you, Margaret."

She told the rest of the story to her mother, "He did not say another word. He struck his boot with his whip, flung off to the stables, got his horse and went home! When we went inside to Mrs. Grey, she said that never again would she receive Mr. N., because he went off without a word of farewell or apology. We said nothing and thought it best not to explain!"

About this time, Catherine's Aunt Quain sent her a beautiful frock. She had seen it in a Dublin shop and could not resist buying it for one of her nieces. It was a creamy brocade, soft and rich, embroidered with little green Irish harps. It seemed almost too handsome a dress for a young girl, but the fashion then in vogue was simple. The bodice was closely-fitting, short tight sleeves, a rather narrow, deep, square-cut neck, a high waist and very full skirt. The only trimming was lovely Limerick lace at the neck and sleeves. It hung so softly, it would suit a tall girl admirably and was being kept for Catherine's eighteenth birthday.

She spent all her spare time in the garden. The flowers and plants William had given her were growing well and she wanted him to admire them. Meanwhile, she would look hopefully along the track along which he would ride. No letters had come for two months, but with the uncertain postal arrangements, that was not surprising.

He had not forgotten them. For Mrs. Grey came lovely lace from Brussels, Henrietta's clock from Switzerland, a curious pipe and snuff box for the Humphreys and a very smart and exquisitely dressed doll for Lysbeth.

While they were in Italy studying pictures and sculpture, William had an opportunity of keeping his promise to Kate. There was great excitement at Roscomroe when a little, round-backed, Italian walnut armchair arrived. It was upholstered in soft floral tapestry.

Kate was charmed beyond words. William had put in a note, "This is your laughing, musical chair!" And when she sat on the arm, from that came strains of music.

But William was never to ride along that track again. At the time his ship was expected, his uncle found he was not on board. A passenger brought a letter. He and his tutor were both at Naples, ill. They had Neapolitan fever. His grandfather and brother hurried post haste across Europe to get the best medical skill for them.

The tutor, older and tougher, fought his way to recovery, but William, never strong, had found it beyond him. The next boat brought news of his death and much sorrow to relations and friends.

Young Humphrey, knowing all about his feeling for Kate, was much upset. He said to his father, "Catherine, what can we tell her?" His father, greatly grieved, said, "We must tell her the truth." The poor man had to tell his young, tender-hearted daughter, who said nothing for a moment, then very quietly, "Are you quite sure, Papa?"

He showed her the letters from William's brother and tutor, in which they said that, in his delirium, William had said over and over again, "Not long, now, Catherine. I will not be long, my little love."

Her father gave her the letters, kissed her gently and left her alone.

No one could comfort such sorrow. She must bear it alone, but the rest made up their minds to make continual demands on her thoughts and time. She was an unselfish girl and must be made to feel how necessary she was to them.

By the following boat, a delayed letter came from William, asking the Major if, with Catherine's permission, they might announce their engagement as soon as he returned. If so, would her father give her the enclosed letter? This was done, and she read :

*My Dearest Little Love,*

*Ever since I left you, I have been longing to send you this letter. When you get it, you will know that your parents have given me their permission, with your consent, to announce our engagement. I cannot tell you how delighted I am, and how the days drag. I am counting them.*

*My grandfather is anxious that we should see the famous pictures here and Naples will be our last port of call. Then I shall have the pleasure of telling you that neither the beauties of Spain, France, Norway nor any other country, can hold a candle to Miss Catherine Grey of Roscomroe. My uncle is keeping the old ring till my return, then, if you look along the track, you will see a man on horseback, galloping to bring it to you, my very dear, lovely Catherine. I wish I had wings.*



*Your most devoted and loving servant,*

*WILLIAM*

Not long after this letter, the ring came. Her parents made no remark when she put it on her engagement finger and was never seen without it until the end of her life.

She was a beauty, admired and loved for the sweetness of her disposition and later on owned a fine property in her own right, but no man could persuade her, and several tried, to let him replace that ring.

Soon after the sad news, the little girls came home for their holidays. Their parents, to spare Kate, went to meet them at Avoca and told them about William. They were very distressed. Lysbeth, always very fond of him, said, "He told us he would be our brother when he came back".

Mrs. Grey explained that if he had returned, it would have been so, and asked them not to say much to Kate, it might upset her, so they were very quiet. When they arrived at the house, she was in the garden, so they ran to hug her, but she was not their Kate so thin and quiet, with all the sparkle gone from her lovely, shadowed eyes.

That night, she was tucking Lysbeth in her bed, when the loving little girl put both arms round her neck, saying, "Dear Catherine, there is no one like you. You will always be the dearest one in the world to me!"

She did not mention William, but all the time she was at home, she followed Kate like a puppy and would call her for any service, making her feel how they needed her. In years to come, Lysbeth's children and grandchildren grew up to think, "There is no one like Aunt Kate!"

William's uncle had told everyone about the ring to spare Kate, and he thought it right to make the intended engagement public. They were all very kind to her, though their sympathy was unspoken. It took the form of asking her to join many riding parties or a game of croquet or anything to make variety.

Fortunately, there was a continual coming and going of young settlers, but not all were of equal culture or good manners, but it was good for Kate to meet them. She could help them and her parents and the small girls continued their demands on her thought and time. She gradually became the pivot of the family and when death made gaps and the marriages of her sisters drew them far apart, they clung to her. She was the means of keeping them together. Their children were sure of a welcome and warm-hearted understanding at her home.

# William Talbot

## Of Malahide, Ireland and Malahide, Van Diemen's Land

Colonel William Talbot (d.1845), born the seventh son at Malahide Castle in 1784. At the age of twelve he was sent to the renowned Manchester Free Public School. On leaving school he obtained a position as a customs officer in the West Indies. A few years later he joined his brothers in obtaining an army commission but may not have seen active service. Next he started sheep farming in Devon for a short period. In 1811 he visited his brother Thomas at his settlement at Port Talbot in Canada. In 1814 he commenced two years on the Grand Tour, accompanied by his sister Fanny. They visited Paris, Austria, Italy, Egypt and Constantinople. Although his mother, brothers and sisters (he had about twelve) were not happy with the idea he set sail in 1820 for Van Diemen's Land (Tasmania), a journey that took five months. He arrived in Hobart in November but then departed again for Sydney, Australia. He returned to Tasmania the following year with six convicts or 'ticket-of-leave men' and a location order for 2,000 acres. He choose land at Great Swan Port on the east coast and looked set to become a successful farmer when it transpired his land had previously been granted to someone else. Talbot was then granted three thousand acres with frontages to the rivers Esk and Break o' Day near Launceston in north-east Tasmania. Working in very difficult conditions and with the help of convict labour he soon cleared the land and became outstandingly successful as a wool producer. He built a timber dwelling house but it burned down in 1827 and in 1827/28. William built a handsome new Georgian farmhouse and named it 'Malahide'. The Colonial Government built a Convict Station to house the convicts that would be used to build roads and other infrastructure in this newly settled area. The Station was on the banks of the South Esk River just a mile or so from the spot William had chosen to build his home.

**The entrance to Malahide in 2013**



In no time, as more settlers moved into the area, a village began to spring up around the Convict Station and as William had taken it on himself to call the area around his grant 'Fingal', the new township adopted that name. William would have been pleased, too, that the valley itself became known as The Fingal Valley.

Fingal was the first township in the Fingal Valley and as it is positioned in the heart of the valley, it soon became the centre of administration.

By 1829 his stock had increased to 7,000 sheep and 1,000 head of cattle. Fire struck again in 1835 and his house had to be rebuilt. By 1884 the estate was over 21,000 acres in extent and said to be one of the biggest and finest sheep stations in Tasmania. The surrounding area prospered with the discovery of gold and coal but Talbot stuck to his farming.



**Malahide homestead in the 1990s**

William never married and died at his home, Malahide, in Tasmania on 22 December, 1845 aged 61 years. He willed his estate to his nephew, Richard Gilbert Talbot of Ballinclea, Killiney, Co. Dublin who was the second son of James, the third Baron Talbot de Malahide.

The original house has been enlarged and altered over the years and is now a stone seven-bay two-storey building with an iron hipped roof and a full-length single storey veranda. It is classified as a historic building as it was one of the first stations to be built in Tasmania.

Until she died in 2009, the house and 8,100 hectare (20,000 acre) estate was the home of the last of the Malahide Talbots, the Hon. Rose Talbot. She went to reside there in 1976 having sold Malahide Castle and lands to Dublin County Council following the death of her brother Milo, the last of the Malahide Lords Talbot. Today the estate is run by Fingal Pastoral Proprietary Limited and remains in the control of Talbot descendants. The title of Lord Talbot de Malahide has now passed to the descendants of William's brother Admiral Sir John Talbot.

To conclude the following notice appeared in The Daily Telegraph on the 24th November, 2016.

*TALBOT OF MALAHIDE.—Reginald John, 10th Lord Talbot of Malahide. Died peacefully on 21st November 2016 aged 85. Beloved husband of Patricia and the late Laura. Devoted father, grandfather and great grandfather. Requiem Mass at All Saints Chapel, Wardour Castle on Friday 2nd December at 12 noon. RIP.*