

# HISTORY OF LOUGH GUR HOUSE

By Tommy Hourigan, Pat Lombard and Patrick O’Sullivan

## *Introduction (by Tommy Hourigan)*

Lough Gur House in Upper Grange, previously known as “Grange Hill”, is nestled on an elevated site below the hills of Grange and Knockfennel, enjoying a panoramic view of Lough Gur, facing the lake in a southerly direction. The old derelict windmill that remains visible on the lake edge, now hauntingly eye-catching, pumped water to a tank above the house in past times. The house is set in expansive grounds including old woodlands with a large elevated lawn that runs from the house-front towards the lake.

The house and its setting which can be viewed from several vantage points around the lake perimeter, including Knockadoon Hill and slopes, is remarkably attractive at any time of year. Grange people, over many decades and perhaps centuries, had frequent opportunity to gaze upon and admire the house from a short distance, as they walked by the lower slopes from the direction of Grange Church towards the windmill on recreational trips to the lake. In the past, the lake water was much higher than it is now; consequently the lake in those times was nearer the house. The O’Sullivan family, the present owners of Lough Gur House, possesses a very old ordnance survey map of Lough Gur, showing a more expansive body of water than [today’s profile](#). The lake level was lowered in the nineteenth century, apparently during the 1840s, with the construction of an out-flowing channel to the west of

Lough Gur. Early maps show the lake almost surrounding the hill of Knockadoon, incorporating Lake Bog. This is evident from an early map of 1687.

*(Refer to Lough Gur Environmental Management Study – Final Report, Feb 2009)*

The house is accessed through tall double gates giving way to a long winding avenue. The gates are located some hundreds of yards from the main Limerick-



Bruff road. A left turn at Grange Cross Roads, when approaching from the Limerick direction, brings one to the gates very quickly. The route from gates to the house is attractive but was much more so in past times when the woods to the left of the avenue were much denser. Storms over the years felled trees, and the previous owner had many trees cut down, not long before his departure. The avenue and woods were designed in such a way as to ensure that the house would not come into view until the end of the approach was reached. The present owner has very recently carried out landscaping improvements to the approach to the House and in the said wooded area, all of which has served to create an impressive vista.

Lough Gur House, now the home of the O'Sullivan family, has long links with the de Salis family. The house, a beautiful two storey over basement Georgian structure was built in 1786, and other families associated with it over the years include the surnames of O'Connell, Galloway and Matson.

Pat O'Sullivan has delved, in some detail and with apparent fascination, into the history of the house and its previous owners. He has written accounts that appear below, particularly about the early times of the house and the de Salis era. There are two Galloway eras associated with the house, and Pat Lombard has written an account of the first era, which also appears below.

*The O'Sullivan Era (by Tommy Hourigan)*

Lough Gur House and its lands have been in the ownership of the O'Sullivan family since 1983 – for more than thirty years. Patrick, known as Pat, his wife, Fiona (nee Sheahan) and children relocated to their new home from Limerick City. It is clear that Lough Gur House, when they acquired it, fulfilled all of their aspirations and dreams of the idyllic house and setting where they could live joyfully and rear their family. Their love affair with the house has not diminished in the meantime.

The story of how the O'Sullivans purchased the house from Peter Matson is an interesting one. Pat, in particular, had his sights set on buying a specific type of property. Fiona's brother, Tom, had rented the lodge house for a period and consequently she was aware of the existence of Lough Gur House, and she told Pat about it. As a result, they drove from Limerick and pulled right up to the front of the house. Pat said that he looked at the house, then the lake and thought "Oh my God, this is something". They went to a side door and a pleasant member of staff invited them inside and showed them around some parts of the house, after Pat had done the introductions, referring to the lodge house rental by Fiona's brother. She said that Peter Matson liked to show people around the house and that she would tell him of their visit. Pat left contact details.

Within a few weeks, Pat received an invitation to visit from Peter Matson. Upon visiting, Pat was shown around the house (he had only seen the lower house level on the first occasion). It was obvious that Peter Matson was very happy at

Lough Gur House. Therefore, Pat did not inform Peter that he would be interested should the property come on the market at some stage.

Within the year, Pat and Fiona had taken possession of Lough Gur House. Peter Matson, a few months after Pat's visit, contacted him to arrange a private discussion. Peter had, in the meantime, decided to sell his property.

Afterwards, Pat and Fiona travelled to Grange with the children, who had not been appraised of the purchase. Pat stalled the car at the lodge and told the children that they were at their new home. Continuing along the avenue, the children soon saw the house and there was much excitement.

Pat's lineage goes back to the famous O'Sullivan Beare of Cork, of whom Pat has a portrait hanging proudly in an annex to the main house, which annex he restored and upgraded with his own hands over a period. Fiona comes from the well-known family of Limerick architects, the Sheahan family.

Pat, a native of Limerick City, is an entrepreneur by nature and instinct. He commenced his business life at the age of twenty-one, and by the age of twenty-seven he was running seven companies. He has been running businesses ever since. Pat had one of the largest security firms in Munster which he commenced in 1973 and which was acquired by Chubb International, some ten years ago. Fiona is also a business person and runs various ventures from her office at the house – primarily property.

From the outset, Pat had an interest in community affairs and charities. For periods, he sat on the Board of Governors of Limerick University and was one of the first Directors of the Concert Hall at UL. He sat on the Board of the Ordnance Survey and the Audit Committee of the Civil Defence. He also sat on the Foundation Board of Mary Immaculate College. He chaired the Small Firms Association at one time. Pat is Chairman of the Irish Peace Institute, which has its office at UL. The Institute was influential in having a Chair of Peace Studies established at UL, leading to the university academic programme. The Institute has engaged in many initiatives over the years including youth programmes. Initiatives to promote and sustain peace across the island of Ireland were taken over the decades.



The Investiture of Thomas F Sheahan as a Knight of the Holy Sepulchre at St George's Cathedral, London.

Pat is presently the Honorary Consul to Poland, appointed by the Polish Government. Prior to this appointment, the President of Poland, in 2004, conferred on Pat the title of “Knight’s Cross Order of Merit”, in recognition of the tremendous assistance and support that Pat was instrumental in providing to the Polish Community in Ireland, particularly in the earlier days of immigrant settlements here. His work was not confined to the Polish Community. As Pat recalls, there was a time when Ireland’s position on Poland’s application to join the European Union was somewhat negative and nervous. There was a fear at the time among the farming community, in particular, that Poland’s EU membership would enlarge competition, thus having a potentially detrimental impact on Irish farming. Pat assisted the Polish Embassy in informing the general public through public meetings, business meetings, interviews and the like that the needs of Poland and Ireland were very similar and that the two countries could work well together in the EU context. He was instrumental in bringing about the twinning of Limerick City with the Polish City, Starogard Gdanski.

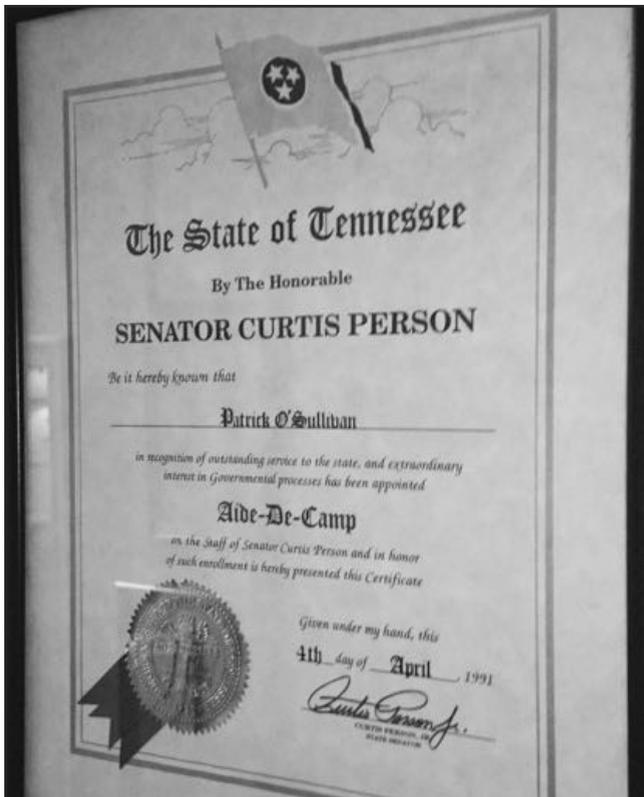
In recognition of his interest in and involvement with overseas communities, titles have been conferred on Pat, particularly in the USA. He has several framed certificates hanging on walls. One is a recognition signed by the Speaker of the Senate and by the Speaker of the House of Representatives. Another marks the granting of “Honorary Shelby County (Tennessee) Citizenship” to Patrick O’Sullivan. While overseas, Pat and his associates would endeavour to bring communities together for the common good. For example, in conjunction with Fr Joe Young, an American Football team was established in Southill, Limerick, and a team came from the USA. American Football is a game that naturally provides an opportunity for young people to channel excess energy and aggression in a controlled environment.

For a hobby, Pat is passionate about barbecuing. He is presently President of the World Barbecue Association, which has an office in Limerick. The association ran its last world championship in Gothenburg, Sweden in June 2015. When his son was married, not so long ago, the wedding feast was provided by Pat in the annex building mentioned earlier. He had constructed a very large barbecue area with seating for sixty people and a bar for the celebrations, which deliberately resembles a pub scene from very old rural Ireland, rustic and homely.

Fiona’s grand-uncle was Patrick Joseph Sheahan, Limerick architect and engineer, who was born in 1893. With a view to becoming a Roman Catholic Priest, he entered the Pallottine College, Thurles but was forced to abandon his studies on account of ill-health. He returned to Limerick where he taught art and mathematics for a period before beginning his professional career as an architect and engineer in the office of the county surveyor for Limerick, John Horan. He set up an independent practice in 1920. Not long afterwards, in association with fellow painters, he estab-

lished an excellent art studio with considerable success. In about 1924, the partnership of Sheahan & Clery was formed and in 1925, PJ Sheahan was appointed architect and engineer to Limerick County Board of Health. Subsequently, he became a consultant to a number of local authorities. He maintained strong links with the Roman Catholic Church and was the first Irish architect to be made “Chevalier of the Order of St Sylvester”, a title conferred on him by Pope Pius XI in 1957 for his achievements as an ecclesiastical architect. According to his obituary in the *Limerick Leader*, he worked for the Bishops of Limerick, Galway, Cloyne, Ferns and Cashel and Emly and also designed churches in Florida, England, Perth (Australia), Nigeria and other parts of Africa. He went into semi-retirement a few years before his death in 1965 but continued to provide advice and consultancy to his nephew, Thomas F Sheahan, Architect, who was Fiona’s father.

Thomas F Sheahan carried on the family business in partnership with others, continuing a professional relationship with local authorities as well as the ecclesiastical



Honour bestowed on Patrick O'Sullivan by the US State of Tennessee.

sector. He was to receive two titles from the Pope. The Investiture of Thomas F Sheahan as a “Knight of the Holy Sepulchre” took place at St George’s Cathedral, Southwark, London in 1975. The resident Knights and Dames (the Holy Sepulchre) in Ireland asked Thomas Sheahan and others to initiate action towards the formal establishment of the Order in Ireland. In June 1985, Tomás Cardinal Ó Fiaich brought the official request for the establishment of an Irish Lieutenancy before the

Conference of Irish Bishops meeting at Maynooth College. The proposal was approved on 9th July 1985, and the Cardinal wrote to Thomas Sheahan formally conveying the approval for the setting up of an Irish Lieutenancy of the Knights of the Holy

Sepulchre and expressing the hope that members of the Order would take the next steps under the leadership of Thomas Sheahan. The Cardinal Grand Master issued decrees: one establishing the Irish Lieutenancy in June 1986 and two others appointing Confrere Thomas F Sheahan as First Lieutenant and Archbishop Thomas Moore as Grand Prior. The certification to the two titles invested in Thomas F Sheahan now has pride of place on the walls of Lough Gur House. At Holycross Abbey in Tipperary, a full portrait of Thomas F Sheahan can be seen – looking resplendent in Knight attire including a green hat with white plumage and wearing a sword.

And so it is that Lough Gur House has two associations and possibly three with the prestigious title of “Knight of the Holy Sepulchre”, Thomas F Sheahan being the most recent. The other two are referenced or alluded to later on in the accounts written by Pat O’Sullivan. Patrick J Sheahan had another connection with Grange. He was the architect who, acting on instructions from Limerick



Fiona O’Sullivan, Lough Gur House.

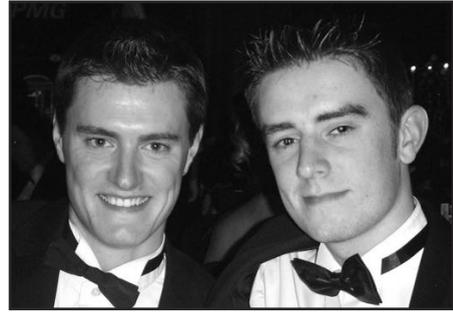
County Council, drew up the plans to extend Grange National School (the additional rooms at either end of the school), resulting from which advertisements inviting tenders for works appeared in May of 1933 (possibly 1932).

The connection of Sheahan architects with Grange and Lough Gur House has continued into recent times. The O’Sullivan family provided the land used to extend the burial grounds at Grange Church and Fiona’s brother, Tom Sheahan, Architect, provided design services for the project.

Lough Gur House is magnificent inside, but nothing prepares you for the holy relic that is kept there – it was passed on to Fiona by her father. It is an encased relic of Saint Patrick for which there is written Vatican authentication of its origin. The relic is a small bone fragment from the body of the Saint. The Vatican confirmation is in Latin. The relic and the document hang together on a wall. The relic came into the ownership of the Sheahan family through the ecclesiastical work undertaken by the architects. Next to the relic is a larger than life-size carving of St Patrick, which Pat acquired many years ago. The statue was obviously carved with great care; it is of the Saint in flowing robes, complete with snake underfoot. It was carved from a single piece of wood and is hollow inside. It is in the order of one hundred and seventy years old. The statue was temporarily on view at Grange Church during 2015.

Pat drew my attention to a large painting that hangs on a wall – it is a portrait of Dr Edward Thomas O’Dwyer (1842-1917), Bishop of Limerick from 1886 until

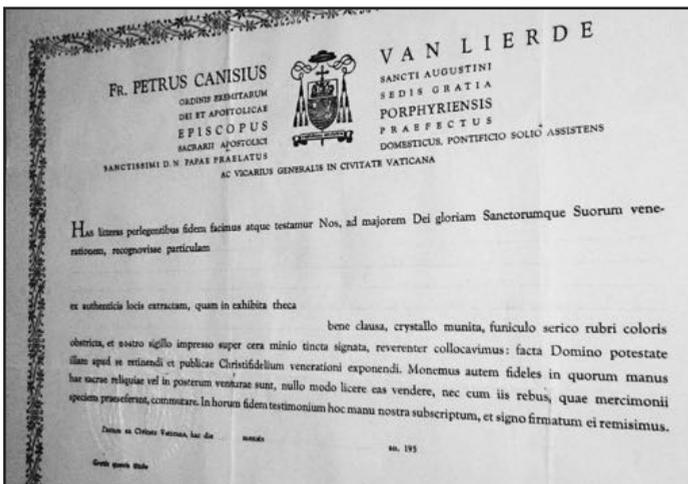
his death. He was regarded as an outstanding churchman and in the 31 years during which he ruled the diocese, he did remarkable work for the advancement of education and the general betterment of the people. He will be remembered, too, as a fearless defender of the rights of Irishmen and as a champion of Irish liberty. Of course, the parish of Bruff will also remember Bishop O'Dwyer for his role in what was dubbed in the press as "Scandal at Bruff" towards the end of the nineteenth century, when a small community of Christian Brothers, which had been providing secondary education under the Intermediate system for boys, was withdrawn in November 1897, allegedly without explanation. A bitter dispute ensued, of which much has been written elsewhere over the years. Accounts of the affair are to be found in the archival material of *The Old Limerick Journal*.



David and Rory O'Sullivan, Lough Gur House.

Pat and Fiona have four children, three boys and a girl, all in good health, as Pat remarked thankfully. Rory is in the USA. He is a lawyer, presently a prosecutor for the City of St Louis. Patrick is a businessman, currently running a medical centre in Limerick. He was previously involved in manufacturing hurleys. Deborah is a peace commissioner and also a quantity surveyor. Her eldest child insisted on having his twenty-first birthday party at Lough Gur House. David is studying business information systems at UCC.

It has struck me that the coming of the O'Sullivan family to Lough Gur House has brought together, under one roof, an amount of notable history that goes back a long time and which at first glance one would expect to be largely unconnected.



Vatican certification of authenticity of Relic of St Patrick (bone fragment).

However, there are apparent threads running through the history. Furthermore, other possible 'connections' are under research. Tom Sheahan rented the lodge house, a direct consequence of which Fiona and Pat knocked on Peter Matson's door

back in 1983 and eventually bought the property. Since then, Pat has been very inquisitive about the history of the house and its former owners, and some of the findings from his research – a work in progress – are set out in his account that follows *The Galloway Era* below.

*The Galloway Era (by Pat Lombard)*

My father, Michael Lombard, was employed in the management of the estate during the Galloway era; I recall the period of the 1950s and 1960s in particular. Lough Gur House and Estate were owned by Lt Col RL Galloway and his wife, who was referred to as “The Madame”.

The Galloway family loved living at Lough Gur House and managed the estate as a business. Both the house and grounds were kept in immaculate condition. It would be very unusual to find a piece of paper or such litter thrown on the ground, and if it were, the expectation was that it would be picked up and disposed of properly. A large garden was kept, surrounded by a hedge, with access via two gates that were kept locked when nobody was working there. Fruit and vegetables for the house were grown in the garden, and the gardener and the cook liaised closely to ensure that the necessary vegetables were on hand to satisfy menu ingredients of the day. The orchard was next to the garden, where apples were grown and harvested in a cage in what was called the “oat house”. The cage held a number of shelves made from timber slats that were spaced about a half inch apart to permit air circulation. Apples were stored in such a way as to avoid them touching each other. The cage was kept locked, but one inventive employee discovered that it was possible to prise an opening in a bottom corner with a walking stick and to nudge an apple, causing it to fall out.

The creosoted timber fences which divided the fields where the horses were kept were always maintained to the high standard that would be expected at any



Nora Brosnan, Margaret Lombard and Bidy O'Brien.

of the major stud farms found worldwide. They kept a herd of Hereford cattle, brood mares, a few cows and two black Labrador dogs. In September time, a trip

took place to the horse sales in Ballsbridge, Dublin. This involved the hiring of a horse box from Coras Iompair Eireann (CIE) and the number of people who travelled for the few days depended on the number of yearlings for sale. In those times, a trip to Dublin was a big occasion. There was a phone line into the house, and once word came through that all had arrived safely in Ballsbridge, there was a sigh of relief from those who did not travel. In later years, the yearlings were sold in Doncaster, England, which involved travel by ferry or by air. At the time, accommodation arrangements were made by post.

The Galloway family had two cars, one of which was used as a ‘run-around’ and the other for longer trips such as to Dublin for the horse sales or to Scotland on holiday. They held dinner parties that were mostly for small groups, but occasionally they had a large number of guests. Every year, the County Limerick Hounds met at the gates to the driveway. It was always exciting to see the dogs, horses and red or black jackets of the riders. Once the hunting horn sounded, the huntsman led the hunt up the driveway and out onto the open hill. There was a small wood on the back hill where they hunted in the hope that a fox would break cover, thus providing huntsmen and dogs with a chase through the countryside. The sound of the hunting horn could be heard on and off during most of that day. It was not unusual to see ladies riding side-saddle, which they seemed to manage without any difficulty.

During this period, the management and operation of the estate required a relatively high number of employees. Normally there were three women working at the main house, carrying out various duties. During their work shifts, they lived in the house and cycled home after coming off duty. The number of men employed could vary, depending on the volumes of work.

Three employees lived in houses owned by the Galloway family, in line with contractual arrangements. In earlier days, those houses didn’t have running water, which had to be carried from the nearest pump. The three men, each had a half day off work every week. On Christmas Day, it was customary for Colonel Galloway to visit each house to wish “Happy Christmas” to the families.

My family resided in one of three estate houses – the house was situated behind the main house at the end of the avenue, enjoying a magnificent lake view. My father hailed from Ballyhooley, County Cork and my mother, Margaret, was from Kilworth, County Cork. While my father’s principal duties during that period were assisting with the management of the estate – like others, he could turn his hand to any task when occasion demanded. My parents continued to live on the estate until the 1990s when my father passed away, and my mother moved to Chapel Lane in Bruff. My father, outside of his employment role, was an active community participant, references to and accounts of which are to be found elsewhere in this book. The Lombard house was occupied for a time previously by the family of the

internationally acclaimed historian, folklorist, poet and author, Dáithí Ó hÓgáin, whose life and works are mentioned elsewhere in this book.

Similar to my family, the other two houses were occupied by families whose heads of household were employed by the Galloway family. Just inside the said gates to the avenue was the lodge house that still exists. It was here that the O'Brien family lived. Bill came from Rockbarton and his wife, Bidy, was from the Palatine Road, Bruff. Bill was primarily the gardener, but when other activities were busy, he was well capable of turning his hand to any task. Bill was a member of the FCA and as part of his training, he went "on camp" from time to time. In the late 1960s, the O'Brien family relocated to Hospital, Co Limerick. The Brosnan family lived in a house that still exists, looking onto the Old Road – it is very near what was the O'Brien home. Connie hailed from Old Pallas and his wife, Nora, came from Newcastlewest. Connie's principal duties revolved around working the tractor and milking cows, but when he was called on to perform any other work, he was also well capable. In the 1970s, Connie and Nora relocated to a house situated adjacent to Grange Church, where they both happily lived out their lives.

Each of the three families had a small garden near their house, where they grew vegetables to feed their families. The families went to Mass in the local church, and the children attended Grange National School. Like most families of the time, the mothers worked at home, looking after their husbands and children.

Both the Colonel and his wife lived out their days at the estate, and after that the house and estate passed to a nephew who was also of the surname Galloway.

Those of us from that period, who are still lucky enough to be alive, carry the wonderful memories of having lived and/or worked on the estate and of having listened to the advice and stories from those whose lives revolved around it.

*Lough Gur House (by Patrick O'Sullivan)*

Having lived at Lough Gur House for over thirty years, I have a natural interest in researching and discovering the history of the house and those who lived in it over the time since it was built back in the late eighteenth century.

Dick (Richard) O'Connell, Member of the Caherconlish IRA Volunteers during the fight for Irish Independence, (Mid-Limerick Brigade: Adjutant, 3rd Battalion; O/C, 5th Battalion; O/C, Brigade Flying Column – Ref: *Bureau of Military History*) and subsequently a TD in Dáil Éireann, once owned Lough Gur House and associated lands that he farmed. According to an article written by Tom O'Donnell (former TD and Minister), which was published in *Lough Gur & District Historical Society Journal* (No 17 2013-2014), "At the end of the Civil War, Dick retired from the Army and bought a farm at Lough Gur..." Tom went on to say, "He sold his farm in Lough Gur in 1928 and moved to Dublin..." However, *Land Registry Records* indicate that Richard O'Connell, TD, bought the property from Count de Salis in

1926 and sold it to “Major” Galloway in 1933. It would appear, therefore, while Richard O’Connell moved to Dublin in 1928, it was some years later before he disposed of Lough Gur House and lands.

Pat Lombard has written about the period when Lough Gur House was in the ownership of Colonel and Mrs RL Galloway. Colonel Galloway’s nephew, Tony Galloway inherited the property, but not a lot is known about the man’s history. It would appear that he was an accomplished organist who played at St Mary’s Church of Ireland Cathedral, Limerick. Subsequently, he played the organ at St Flannan’s Church of Ireland Cathedral in Killaloe. Apparently, he was also a high-level mathematician. He was, of course, known to many locals during his time in Grange.

As has already been mentioned, I purchased Lough Gur House from Peter Matson, who was a businessman in the region. For a period and as was the position in 1971, Peter owned the Coonagh Airfield and was a member of Limerick Flying Club. He was a keen aviator and operated a Cherokee 140 aeroplane.

In endeavouring to map out the ownership and occupation of the house over the centuries, it is necessary to point out that records may not identify all of those who occupied the house from time to time, as distinct from ownership of the property.

From the research that I have conducted to date, ownership history cannot be definitively stated. However, I will continue to do research and in time, I hope that a clearer picture than what follows will emerge.

#### *Grange Hill/Lough Gur House Ownership*

- Grange Hill was built circa 1786. [Jerome](#) was 2nd Count de Salis at that time having married Mary Fane in 1735. Mary and her sister, Dorothy, had co-inherited the Bouchier Estate in 1766.

- Edward Croker resided at Grange Hill in 1814 (Leet). He may not have been the owner, he may have been acting as an agent. [Jerome](#) was 4th Count de Salis at that time.

- Edward John Croker resided there at the time of the first Ordnance Survey, which was completed in 1846. He may not have been the owner, he may have been acting as an agent. [Peter John](#) was 5th Count de Salis at that time.

- It was the residence of the Count de Salis at the time of the Griffith’s Valuation. The Valuations were taken between 1847 and 1865 and were completed for County Limerick in June 1853. In that year, the Count was Peter John (5th).

- [John Francis](#) was 6th Count de Salis from 1870 to 1871.

- [Sir John Francis Charles \(born 1864-died 1939\)](#), was 7th Count in 1871. He

changed the house name to Lough Gur House (LGH) – it was previously Grange Hill. He lived there at some period in his lifetime.

- Mr R O'Connell owned LGH from 1926 to 1933.
- “Major” Galloway acquired the property in 1933. Presumably, this was the same man, known as Colonel Galloway.
- Colonel RL Galloway and then his nephew, Tony Galloway, owned LGH between 1933 and 1974.
- Mr P Matson, owned LGH from 1974 to 1983.
- Mr P O'Sullivan, 1983 – To date. The O'Sullivan family live there.

#### *Background to de Salis Ownership*

Before I address the de Salis family line, it may be of interest to briefly outline salient background information.

[Gerald Fitzgerald, Earl of Desmond](#), was killed in 1583. His lands were confiscated and parcelled out to English settlers in the “Plantation of Munster”. Lough Gur was granted to [Sir George Bouchier \(b. 1535, d. 1605\)](#), the third son of John Bouchier (1499-1561), 2nd Earl of Bath. Sir George was one of the seven signatories of a letter from the Irish Executive to the Privy Council in England (dated 4th November 1591) which enclosed the petition of the Mayor and Corporation of Dublin offering the 28-acre All Hallows site for the foundation of a university (*SPO, Ireland, Elizabeth vol. 1611–8*). Trinity College Dublin was subsequently founded on 3rd March 1592. He is listed, 11th March 1591/2, as a founder and benefactor having donated £30, twice.

Sir George's son, [Sir Henry Bouchier \(1587-1654\)](#) became the 5th and last Earl of Bath. He inherited the Earldom of Bath in 1636 upon the death of his first cousin once removed, Edward Bouchier, 4th Earl of Bath. He then moved from his native Ireland to Devon in England. Sir Henry was a large landowner in Counties Limerick and Armagh. On the death of the 5th Earl without progeny, the Earldom of Bath became extinct.

By 1614, Henry Bouchier had inherited over 18,000 acres in Ireland (Limerick and Armagh) from his father and his brother Sir John (d. 1614). The County Limerick estate (which spilled over into County Tipperary) covered 12,800 acres and included the manors of Lough Gur and Glenogra in the Barony of the Small County in County Limerick, granted in 1589 by Queen Elizabeth to Sir Henry's father, Sir George Bouchier.

In about 1718, the estate consisted of: The manors of Lough Gur and Glenogra, 5 castles, 300 messuages (house with outbuildings and land), 1,500 cottages, 400 tofts (could be a homestead or grove of trees), 8 mills, 1,600 gardens, 2,500 acres of land, 1,300 acres of meadow, 3,600 acres of pasture, 500 acres of woods and underwood, 300 acres of furze and heath and 200 acres of other.

Upon the death of Sir Henry Bouchier, 5th Earl of Bath, his Irish estates passed to his widow, Rachel (Fane) (1613-1680), and from her to her nephew, Sir Henry Fane (1650-1705/06) and then to his son, [Charles Fane \(1675/76-1744\)](#), who, on the strength of his inheritance, was in 1718 created Viscount Fane (1st) and Baron *Loughguyre*, both in the Peerage of Ireland. Rachel Fane was the fifth daughter of [Francis Fane, 1st Earl of Westmoreland](#).

It is interesting to note that the Fane family were granted the [Earldom of Westmoreland](#) in 1624. Westmoreland Street in Dublin was named thus after [John Fane](#) (1759-1841), 10th Earl of Westmoreland, Lord Lieutenant of Ireland (1789-1794). The Earldom was created twice in the Peerage of England, initially in 1397 for Ralph Neville. However, the Earldom was forfeited by Charles Neville in 1571 but was restored in 1624 when Sir Francis Fane (1580-1629) became 1st Earl of Westmoreland (mother was Mary Neville). The connection with County Limerick is that Sir Henry Fane (above) who inherited the Bouchier Estates was a son of George Fane (1616-1663), who was the fifth son of Francis Fane, 1st Earl of Westmoreland. Of course, Rachel Fane was a sister of George Fane.

The 2nd and last Viscount Fane was also named [Charles](#) (c 1708-1766), heir to the Bouchier Estates. He died childless. His sister, Mary Fane, married [Jerome, 2nd Count de Salis](#), in 1735. Mary's sister, [Dorothy](#), married [John Montagu, 4th Earl of Sandwich](#), in 1741, thus becoming Countess of Sandwich. Following the death of Charles in 1766, his estates (Limerick and Armagh) were inherited by his sisters, Mary and Dorothy. Mary's grandson, [Jerome, 4th Count de Salis](#), took the additional name of Fane in 1809. The estates were finally partitioned in 1806. Of 6,620 acres in County Limerick, 4,026 acres transferred to Count de Salis.



[Seventh Count de Salis, John Francis Charles.](#)

It would appear that it was through marriage to Dorothy Fane that the [4th Earl of Sandwich, John Montagu \(1718-1792\)](#), acquired his County Limerick estate, located in the same parishes as the de Salis Estate. During

his life, the Earl held various military and political offices, including Postmaster General, First Lord of the Admiralty and Secretary of State for the Northern Department.

He is perhaps best known for the claim that he was the inventor of the 'sandwich'. The modern sandwich is named after the Earl of Sandwich, but the exact circumstances of its invention and original use are still the subjects of debate. Apparently, bread and meat sustained the Earl of Sandwich at the gambling table. A very conversant gambler, he did not take the time to have a meal during his long hours playing at the card table. Consequently, he would ask his servants to bring him slices of meat between two slices of bread. Because John Montagu was the Earl of Sandwich, others began to order "the same as Sandwich!" – The 'sandwich' was born. Sandwich's biographer apparently suggested that because he was so committed to the Navy, to politics and the arts, it was likely that the first sandwich was consumed at his work desk.

For several years, Sandwich had a mistress, Fanny Murray, the subject of Wilkes' *An Essay on Woman* (1763), but he eventually married Dorothy Fane (and subsequently separated), by whom he had a son, [John](#) (1743-1814) who later succeeded as 5th Earl of Sandwich. Sandwich's (4th Earl) first personal tragedy was his wife's deteriorating health and eventual insanity. During his wife's decline, he had an affair with the opera singer, Martha Ray, who bore him at least five and perhaps as many as nine children. Ray was murdered in 1779 by a jealous suitor and Sandwich never recovered from his grief.

Apparently, in a famous exchange with the actor, Samuel Foote, Sandwich declared, "*Foote, I have often wondered what catastrophe would bring you to your end; but I think that you must either die of the pox or the halter*". "*My Lord*", replied Foote instantaneously, "*that will depend upon one of two contingencies: whether I embrace your lordship's mistress or your lordship's principles*".

Over the years, since I moved to Lough Gur House, I have heard a story allegedly linking the 4th Earl of Sandwich (1718-1792) with Lough Gur House. The main story line is that Sandwich visited the then Count de Salis, who had a very attractive daughter in whom Sandwich was interested. The story goes that he would take the de Salis daughters for walks/picnics around the hills of Knockfennel. Apparently, a picnic included meat between bread, prepared in the kitchen of Lough Gur House, which he enjoyed enormously; possibly leading to an alternative to the origin of the sandwich. I am endeavouring to investigate this story to a conclusion – my efforts may not lead to any certainty. One of my difficulties thus far is establishing with some precision the earliest time in which Lough Gur House was in de Salis ownership, but I am inclined to the view that it was in de Salis or Fane/de Salis ownership from the outset. In the earlier days of the de Salis ownership of estates,

they were absentee landlords in which case their estates would have been under the management of agents – this could explain the Croker factor. This is work-in-progress.

It is clear from historical accounts that Jerome, 2nd Count de Salis and John Montagu, 4th Earl of Sandwich married the Fane sisters within the space of a few years in the 1730s/1740s, and the said sisters inherited the Bouchier Estate from their deceased brother in 1766. Lough Gur House was apparently built in 1786, at which time, Sandwich was 68 years of age – this fact would render my ‘story’ to be unlikely, though not impossible. Interestingly, his affair with Martha Ray ended in 1779 when she was murdered. There is no doubt that Sandwich could have visited the house before his death in 1792. The window of opportunity widens if Grange Hill was built circa 1780 rather than 1786 as has been suggested to me, a detail that I am researching.

Of course, a variation on the story is technically possible having regard to ages, but this would not involve Lough Gur House. Mary Fane married de Salis in 1735 and her sister, Dorothy, married Sandwich in 1741. At the time of the de Salis marriage, Sandwich was only about 17 years old and in the years that followed until his marriage in 1741, he may have indeed walked several damsels around the hills of Lough Gur. However, what has been stated is pure speculation at this juncture.

Of course, Sandwich’s son, John, 5th Earl of Sandwich (1743-1814), was of more favourable age to be associated with amorous links with Grange Hill (Lough Gur House). However, I have not come across any documentation to support this. There remains the possibility that the story about his father, 4th Earl, has some legitimacy.

#### *The Count de Salis Family Line*

The de Salis family can be traced back to the ninth century in Germany. Some earlier members of the family included Rudolph of Soglio, on the southern borders of the Grisons, who died before 1300; Gilbert or Gubert appointed Fourth Grandmaster of the Knights of St John in 1169; Andreas, who assisted Emperor Friedrich Barbarossa in Palestine in 1176 and probably Johann, signatory of the Treaty concluded in 17/8/1219 at Piuro, near Soglio. The title “Baron of the Empire” was conferred by the Emperor Rudolph 2nd on 12/5/1582 on Rudolph de Salis, who distinguished himself in the command of Imperial forces against the Turks.

(“Lough Gur House” by Tony Browne – Lough Gur & District Historical Society Journal 2002, Vol No 12).

**Johannes Baptista de Salis**, of Soglio, brother of Rudolph, born in 1581, became the “Knight of the Golden Spur”.

**Peter de Salis (1675-1749)** of Soglio was created the **First Count de Salis (1748-1749)**. Emperor Francis I by a patent dated Vienna, 12th March 1748, created Peter de Salis, together with his descendants, Count of the Holy Roman Empire.

**Jerome (1709-1794)**, Peter’s son, became the **Second Count de Salis (1749-1794)**. He was naturalised by Act of Parliament on 30th March 1731. In 1735, he married



Connie Brosnan, Pat O'Dwyer, Michael Lombard and Bill O'Brien with Galloway horses.

the Hon Mary Fane, eldest daughter of the First Viscount Fane and co-heir with her sister Dorothy, Countess of Sandwich. On the death of Mary Fane's [brother](#), the Second and last Viscount Fane, she succeeded to the Irish estates of the Bouchier family. These

lands were derived from Rachel (daughter of [Francis Fane, First Earl of Westmoreland](#)), wife of the Fifth and last Earl of Bath and great aunt of the [First Viscount Fane](#).

**Peter (1738-1807)**, second son of Jerome de Salis, became the [Third Count de Salis \(1794-1807\)](#). In March 1785, he inherited his mother's half share of the Bouchier-Fane Estates in Counties Limerick and Armagh. He married: firstly, Elizabeth de Salis, who died in 1764; secondly, Anna de Salis, who died in 1767; and thirdly, Anna de Salis, who died in 1830.

**Jerome (1771-1836)**, Peter's son, who was issue of his third wife, became the [Fourth Count de Salis \(1807-1836\)](#) and seems to have moved to County Armagh, where he became Deputy Lieutenant and Justice of the Peace of County Armagh and Middlesex. He married three times, the third time in Dublin in 1810, where a number of his children were born. He was granted a Royal Licence by George III to bear the title of Count in England on 4/4/1809 and assumed the name Fane in addition to that of de Salis. He settled partition of the Bouchier Estates with the Earl of Sandwich in 1805/06. The de Salis family held a total of 7,689 acres of land divided as 3,663 in the Tandragee area of County Armagh and 4,026 in the Lough Gur area of County Limerick. He was appointed High Sheriff of Armagh in 1810.

**Peter John (1799-1870)**, son of Jerome, became the [Fifth Count de Salis \(1836-1870\)](#) and was Deputy Lieutenant of County Armagh (from 1832) and Justice of the Peace for Middlesex and Westminster. He was a member of the Swiss Guards regiment of the King of France. He was Knight of Malta and a member of The Order of the Red Eagle of Prussia. He was Knight of the Order of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem. He was appointed a Justice of the Peace and High Sheriff of Limerick in 1849. In 1853, he was nominated High Sheriff of Armagh.

**John Francis (1825-1871)**, son of Peter John, became the [Sixth Count de Salis \(1870-1871\)](#) and presented a very fine coin collection to the British Museum. His wife, the Countess, was recorded in Burke's (1881) as having resided at Grange Hill for a period.

**John Francis Charles Fane (Sir) (1864-1939)**, son of John Francis, was the [Seventh Count de Salis \(1871-1939\)](#). He was Deputy Lieutenant of Limerick and

Justice of the Peace of Counties Armagh and Limerick. In 1883, he was recorded in *Bateman's Great Landowners* as owning 4,026 acres in County Limerick. He was recorded in *Burke's* as living at Grange Hill in 1883 and 1887. His livery was: green coat with a yellow waistcoat.

*John Eugene (1891-1949)*, son of Sir John Francis Charles de Salis, became the *Eighth Count de Salis (1939-1949)*. He entered the diplomatic service in 1920 and was wounded twice while serving in the Irish Guards in World War I (1914-1918). He also served in World War II (1939-1945). He was appointed Bailiff of the Grand Cross of Honour and Devotion of the Sovereign Military Order of Malta. He also had the French Legion of Honour, Order of the Crown of Romania, and a silver medal for bravery at Montenegro bestowed on him.

*John Bernard Philip Humbert (1947-2014)*, son of John Eugene, was born on November 16th, 1947, and became the *Ninth Count de Salis (1949-2014)*. The following account has been taken from his obituary published in *The Daily Telegraph* (09-04-2014).

His father died when he was two; his Italian mother, born Camilla Presti di Camarda, died when he was five. The uncle who took responsibility for John also died soon afterwards, and the boy spent a period with his French godfather, the Duc de Magenta, who promptly lost his life in a riding accident. John after that lived between boarding school, his Italian grandmother and his trustees.

Educated at Downside, he went on to law school and was called to the bar by Gray's Inn. He also read international law. He served as a major with the 9th/12th Royal Lancers and had a distinguished career in the International Red Cross, and was Ambassador for the Order of Malta to Thailand and Cambodia. He founded a wealth management business and successfully developed his family's vineyard near Verona.

He spoke perfect French and Italian, fair German and some Thai. He twice served as the head of Red Cross delegations: first in Iraq in 1980-81, and then in Thailand, where between 1981 and 1984 he was responsible for the Red Cross camps on the Cambodian border, running a mission of 600 staff caring for several hundred thousand refugees during the Khmer Rouge period; it was the largest Red Cross operation ever mounted.

In August 1982, he was seconded as Special Envoy to Lebanon during the siege of Beirut – a position that involved not only a great responsibility but also a considerable danger.

De Salis took pride in his ancestry. The first Salis to be ennobled was Rudolf von Salis, created a baron of the Holy Roman Empire in 1582 for his gallantry against the Turks. An ancestor in the 19th century turned down the baronetcy, considering it an inferior honour to the title of Count de Salis.

His family had originated in the Grisons in Switzerland, where they supplied mercenaries to popes and emperors. As a result, John was a Hereditary

Knight of the Golden Spur, an honour conferred in 1571 for services at the battle of Lepanto.

For his work with the Red Cross, de Salis was awarded the Gold Medal with Swords by Lebanon in 1982 and appointed Knight Grand Cross of the Order of the White Elephant by the King of Thailand. He was also much decorated by the Order of Malta, including a Knight Grand Cross of the Order of Merit of the Order of Malta with Swords.

After his retirement, he remained committed to humanitarian work, and he bought a magnificent 18th century house on Lake Neuchâtel, also inheriting an excellent medieval townhouse in Verona and his grandmother's vineyard nearby – the vineyard would become his pride and joy.

The Ninth Count de Salis died on March 21st, 2014, aged 66. His son, *John Maximillian* became the *Tenth Count de Salis*.

There is a possibility that a pope had a personal connection with the de Salis family. This possibility is being researched and remains a work-in-progress without a conclusion.

#### *The First Visit of the Countess de Salis*

The following is the text of an article that appeared in the *Lough Gur Journal* (Tom McNamara). The Source was attributed to the *Limerick Leader*, Wednesday evening, June 7th, 1893.

“The first visit of the Countess de Salis to the state of her husband [7th Count, John Francis Charles] at Lough Gur in this county, was marked by great rejoicing on the part of the tenantry, with whom the Count de Salis and his family have been always on friendly relations. It will be remembered that the Count de Salis has been only a short time married [1890]. The Countess is a daughter of Prince Caraman de Chimay, of Belgium, a family well known in the Diplomatic service. Count de Salis is also an attaché to the service and fills the rather responsible position of Secretary to the Embassy in Madrid. His official duties prevented his visit to Ireland for some time back, and on the arrival of the Countess and himself on Saturday last, the tenants determined to present them with an address of congratulation.

The presentation of the address took place at Lough Gur, one of the prettiest for scenic beauty in the neighbourhood of Limerick, on Saturday, 3rd June 1893. The proceedings began about two o'clock, with the presentation of a beautifully illuminated address to the Count and Countess. It bore their joint arms and insignia and contained three pretty miniature views of the lake and its surroundings. The following deputation of the tenants met the Count and Countess in their drawing room where the presentation took place – Messrs John O'Keeffe, Rahin; James Shinnors, Grange; Patrick Keane, Holycross; Timothy Hartigan, Patrickswell; Patrick Connolly, Ballycullane; William Connolly, Patrickswell;

Michael Connolly, Patrickswell; John Hannon, Grange; William Weekes, Knockfennel; Thomas Ryan, Castle House; and Edward Connolly, Ballycullane.

After the presentation of the address, the tenantry was entertained to a grand luncheon. The caterer was our fellow citizen, Mr James Flynn of Cruise's Royal Hotel, who did everything in his usual first class style. Rev Father McNamara, PP, Bruff, and Rev Father O'Driscoll CC, were present, and occupied seats of honour with the Count and Countess at the head of the table. Father McNamara proposed the health of the young couple, which was appropriately replied to by the Count. Some songs were rendered and a pleasant time, as the Americans have it, 'was had'. In the evening, there was another reunion, and blazing bonfires testified the tenants' rejoicing.

Mr John O'Keeffe read the address that was in the following terms –



Patrick O'Sullivan Jr.

Address to [John Francis Charles Count de Salis](#) from his Limerick Tenantry, on the occasion of his marriage.

Dear Sir, we the tenants of your County Limerick property, avail ourselves, with one accord, of this, the first opportunity that presents itself, to express to you our heartfelt congratulations on your marriage, and our sincere and earnest prayer that the union may be productive of a large and continued measure of unalloyed happiness.

To your Countess, who now comes amongst us for the first time, we beg, in an especial manner, to tender a cordial greeting, and from our 'heart of hearts,' we bid her in the old and expressive language of Ireland a céad míle fáilte. When in years, she will have larger opportunities of judging our characters and observing our fidelity, we would fain hope that she will find much in our conduct and action to arouse her sympathy, and that, following the example of your amiable and excellent mother, whose memory we revere, her influence will be directed, to still further cement the ties of mutual goodwill, which have always characterised the relations of landlord and tenant on the de Salis Estates. We are sure that it is for you, as it certainly is for us, a matter of the greatest pleasure that we can still meet you in the same friendly spirit as when you visited Lough Gur as a child, and that during years of exceptional trial, your Limerick property has been free from those scenes of distress and misery which, in less favoured districts, have been productive of such pitiful and disastrous results. That the same happy conditions may at all times prevail is

our anxious desire, and though from time to time, some of us may be pressed by untoward circumstances, our best efforts shall, as a body, be directed to the maintenance and perpetuation of that mutual consideration which has hitherto proved fruitful of results so gratifying and desirable.

While we regret that you cannot find it convenient to spend more of your time amongst us, we feel a pardonable pride in the knowledge that by sheer ability and determination you succeeded in winning for yourself a post of value and usefulness in the public service, and though absent, we know that in everything that concerns our property and welfare you take a keen and abiding interest. Gratitude is proverbially an Irish virtue, and you may be assured we are not unmindful of the cheerful willingness with which you and Miss de Salis co-operated with us, in the establishment of a creamery which,



Lough Gur House with boating on Lough Gur to foreground.

apart from its direct object and more immediate value may have far-reaching consequences in the promotion of that improved thrift and economy which have brought increased prosperity to countries with less natural advantage than ours.

You have, doubtless, received many congratulations on your

marriage, and many signal proofs of affection and esteem, but in no place, we venture to think, was the happy event regarded with more kindly and sympathetic interest than here, and in conclusion we have only to again express to you our personal attachment and devotion – our sincere desire that the long existing friendly relations between yourself and your tenantry may be drawn closer and closer, and that the giver of all good gifts may bestow on yourself and your Countess a very full measure of Heaven's choicest blessings. We beg to subscribe ourselves, with profound respect, on behalf of the tenantry, your obedient and faithful servants.

The Count de Salis, who was cheered on rising, replied as follows:

I thank you, gentlemen, most heartily for the kind words you have addressed to us on this, the occasion of our first visit here after our marriage. I doubt if a more open-hearted welcome than the one you have just made to us could ever have been hoped for by an Irish landlord. At the present time, after the recent years of trial and difficulty through which we have passed, your congratulations and good wishes will be doubly precious to us. I thank you more than all for the cordial greeting you have offered my wife. The reception you have given us on her arrival in her new home cannot fail to make a lasting impression on her, and though she comes as a stranger to this country, it will be her most earnest hope to merit that place in your esteem with which you have hitherto rewarded our humble efforts to maintain good feeling between us all. I am deeply grateful to you for your affectionate allusion to my mother, and I cannot but be much touched to see that in spite of the lapse of time her memory should still be fresh in your minds. My enforced absence for many months at a time is a matter of no small regret to me. You have spoken in most flattering terms of the cause, and I cannot but hope that in spite of it there will still be many happy and cordial meetings between us at Lough Gur. (cheers).

Cheers were given for the Countess de Salis, who warmly shook hands with the deputation, and expressed her pleasure to meet them.”

#### *Division of Lands*

The de Salis Limerick Estate was quite extensive and included some 4,000 acres. The property was eventually divided among the tenant farmers under the Land Acts of the late 19th century, the actual division occurring in 1913. The family sold the remainder of their property in the early 1920s, retaining the lake and other minor properties. Limerick County Council purchased these at a later time.

Tony Galloway, nephew of Col RL Galloway, and Owen O'Brien.



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