

‘The Women of Westport House’

Submitted to the Galway-Mayo Institute of Technology,

Mayo Campus,

Westport Rd,

By

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In partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of

Bachelor of Arts (Honours)

In

Heritage Studies

2015

Name of Supervisor:

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Submitted on the 27th of March 2015

“This Dissertation was submitted in part fulfilment of the requirements for the Bachelor of Arts (Honours) Degree in Heritage at Galway-Mayo Institute of Technology, Mayo Campus”.

I hereby declare that this dissertation is of my own work

Signed _____

Acknowledgements

I wish to thank all those that have supported me throughout the course of this dissertation. I would like to thank first and foremost, my supervisor Ms Fiona White, for her unwavering support and guidance throughout the year. Secondly I would like to express my sincere gratitude to the staff of Heritage Studies for their contribution to the research of this dissertation and continued support throughout the last four years.

Special thanks must be extended to Anne Chambers for sharing her precious time and positive insights in order to make this dissertation possible. I would like to express my deepest appreciation to Christine Kinnealy and The Great Hunger Institute in Connecticut, USA, for her kind support and assistance with this research.

I would like to thank my family and friends for their continued support and patience while I completed 'the dissertation'. Lastly I would like to thank my two beautiful doggies Poppy and Archie for their love and patience throughout the entire year. For every stressful day they have cuddled me through the evenings: love always.

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Dedication

I wish to dedicate this dissertation to my late grandfather Michael John O'Connell who loved the Princess Diana of Wales. Love always, RIP.

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Abstract

History plays a significant role in this dissertation as the research for this project relies heavily on local history. The aim of this dissertation is to establish the role women played in society, if any, in the west of Ireland: specifically Westport town. To study the lives of these ladies in detail is a relevant aim. The Browne family of Westport was chosen due to their influence in Westport House and town after their arrival in the west of Ireland over three hundred years ago: they were also chosen as they are descended from the famous 'Pirate Queen of Connaught' Grace O'Malley. For the purpose of this dissertation, three case studies have been chosen from the Browne family, all of whom have been researched and evaluated. They are as follows: Lady Louisa Catherine Howe; Lady Hester Catherine de Burgh and Lady Catherine Henrietta Dicken.

The Browne family made permanent residency in Westport House after inheriting the site in the mid-17th century. Each generation of the Browne family have contributed to Westport House and town. Hester de Burgh is the prime example as she had a direct involvement in salvaging the original work of famous architect James Wyatt in the Large Dining room of the Westport House and she played a significant role in aiding the residents of Westport town during the Famine (Browne, 1981, p. 35). With regards to the research of Hester's involvement in the house renovation and the Famine, the '*Freemans Journal*' and the '*Connaught Telegraph*' along with '*Westport House and the Browne's*', written by Denis Browne (1981), provided the most insight in to her life.

From royalty to slavery to famine to the British Raj, the women of the Browne family have led colourful lives. Not all of them have contributed directly to Westport House and town, each of these three ladies made an impact on Westport during their stay here. Although history did not record much about these women or their extraordinary lives, they were beloved members of the Westport community.

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Chapter One: Introduction

The aim of this dissertation is to investigate the lives of the women in the Browne family of Westport. For the purpose of this research, three ladies from the Browne family have been chosen to be analysed in great detail. They are as follow: Lady Louisa Catherine Howe; Lady Hester de Burgh and Lady Catherine Henrietta Dicken. The time span of this research will span across the late 18th century – early 20th century. This research will explore the lives of these ladies and their contribution, if any, to Westport House and town. The Browne family are descended from the ‘Pirate Queen of Connaught’ Grace O’Malley who was a formidable warrior and seafarer in the 16th century. The Browne’s were linked to Grace O’Malley after John Browne 3rd married Maude Bourke, Grace’s great-great granddaughter in the late 17th century. This research also seeks to investigate any similarities between the ladies of the Browne family and their infamous predecessor. None of the ladies chosen for the case studies are blood related to Grace; however aspects of their lives may mirror Grace such as their absence for history. Although Grace O’Malley has been restored to history sources by historian and author Anne Chambers in her book *‘Granuaile: Grace O’Malley ~ Pirate Queen of Connaught’* (Chambers, 2009), there is little recorded on behalf of the ladies of the Browne family.

Over the course of their lives, these ladies have been styled with numerous titles such as ‘Lady Altamont’ and ‘Marchioness of Sligo’. There is also a mixed portmanteau version of the title known as ‘Lady Sligo’. As the three case studies regarding the ladies of Westport depict three generations of the female lineage of the Browne family, they all receive the titles at one point or another while other’s still held their title. In order to tell them apart they are often referred to as the present Marchioness of Sligo or given a number for example the 1st Marchioness of Sligo. In the case that they became widowed, they were known as the Dowager Marchioness of Sligo while the next female in line became the present Lady Sligo.

This dissertation has divided up the three case studies in to individual chapters in which the lives of the three ladies will be research, including their family history and their marriage in to the Browne’s; their time spent in Westport House and their contribution, if any, to the House and town. The research will also include other significant aspects of their lives including trips abroad, philanthropic work and their lives as socialites.

As the three case studies analysed in this dissertation spanned across the time period of the late 18th century to the early 20th century, five ladies were styled with the title ‘Marchioness of Sligo’: for the

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purpose of this research only three of these ladies were analysed. However it is equally important to acknowledge the 3rd and 4th Marchioness of Sligo. Hester and Howe Peter's eldest son George inherited his father's title after his death in the 1840s. George married his first wife Hon. Ellen Sydney Smith on May the 3rd, 1847 (The Peerage , 2013). Ellen was titled the 3rd Marchioness of Sligo however she died in late November 1852 of unknown causes: they had no children together (The Connaught Telegraph, December 1st, 1852, p.4). He married again, secondly to Julia Catherine Anne Nugent on the 20th of July, 1858 (The Peerage , 2013). Julia passed away the following year: she was 29 years of age. Although her marriage to George was brief, she too held the title of 4th Marchioness of Sligo. George married again, for the last time to Isabella Raymonde de Peyronnet who bore him three children, one of whom was stillborn (The Connaught Telegraph, December 8th, 1883, p. 8) while the surviving children were two daughters Mary Isabelle Peyronnet Browne and Isabel Mary Peyronnet Browne. George died on the 30th of December in 1896. As he had no son to inherit his title, it was passed on to his third eldest brother John Browne: his second eldest brother James passes away ten years previously. John Browne became the 4th Marquis of Sligo when he was 72 years of age. John passed away seven years later in 1903, unmarried and no heirs to inherit his title (The Peerage , 2013). For the second time, the titles were passed down to the next brother in line: Henry Ulick Browne and his wife Catherine Henrietta Dicken.

Lady Louisa Catherine Howe was an extremely intelligent and able woman: she was the power of attorney in Westport House when her husband and son were absent from the estate. Louisa Catherine descended from royalty and in turn spent a lot of her life socialising among royalty. She was a doting mother to her son Howe Peter Browne, who she described as the apple of her eye. Although there is no connection or similarities between Louisa Catherine and her predecessor Grace O'Malley, they were both devoted mothers who stuck by their children through thick and thin. This statement is true however it is not an uncommon character trait that is exclusively relevant to Louisa Catherine and Grace O'Malley. Louisa supported her son Howe unconditionally as Grace supported her children, Tibbot-ne-long in particular, with unconditional love.

Lady Hester de Burgh was an aristocratic lady from the west of Ireland. She was renowned for her 'celebrity-like' status and more notably, for her philanthropic work throughout her life. Hester was an extraordinary woman whose benevolence has led to an exhibition having been opened in her honour in The Great Hunger Institute in Connecticut. Hester and the letters she wrote during the Famine years 'show the role and the agency of women at a time when women were often invisible' (Kinnealy, 2014). Hester's life is simply compelling from her contribution to philanthropy and her status as 'exquisite socialite' while she raised her fourteen children and helped out with the running

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of the Westport House estate: in spite of all of this she still found time to globe trot to Italy, Switzerland and India to name a few. Hester's life differs dramatically to the life Grace O'Malley lived. This may be due to the different eras in which they lived however they do share one similarity: They both got the opportunity to travel all over the world.

Lady Catherine Henrietta Dicken was a very gracious lady born in India during the British Raj. She encountered tiger cats, wolves and cobra during her time living in India, however it is not the creatures she encountered that made her stand out as opposed to her reactions to them. She considered crossing such creatures as 'relatively common' and she could not fathom, after writing her memoirs in her golden years, why people found her to be exotic in nature. It was certainly a contrast in the natural environment of Westport. She was a kind hearted woman who enjoyed her short span as the Marchioness of Sligo and she was fondly remembered by her family and her staff long after her death. Although she shares no similarities with Grace O'Malley, they both shared an adventurous streak which led to many once in a life time experiences: Catherine's escape from India to England during 'The Mutiny' alongside her children. Grace once battled pirate invaders off her ship moments after giving birth to her youngest son.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

History is the primary subject area of this dissertation as it predominantly focuses on local history in the west of Ireland: the women of the Browne family of Westport, in particular. This dissertation is comprised of three case studies which focus on three individuals from the Browne family; Lady Louisa Catherine Howe; Lady Hester de Burgh and Lady Catherine Henrietta Dicken. This project explores the lives of these three ladies who lived in the house during the late 18th – early 20th centuries and their contribution, if any, to Westport. The literature that was consulted in this dissertation consist of books; newspaper articles; estate papers; letters and manuscripts; historical journal articles and relevant online resources. This research project may also include information on the family's predecessor Granuaile and various other ladies in the family e.g. the 3rd Marchioness of Sligo, Lady Ellen Smythe. Other elements of the research may include information up to the present day family.

2.2 Local History of Mayo

Westport House was once owned by the O'Malley clan who roamed the lands prior to the 16th century. Owen O'Malley whose nickname was 'Dubhdara' bequeathed the land and castle of Westport to his only daughter Grace O'Malley: the site itself has seen a shift in ownership from the male lineage of the O'Malley clan to the female lineage (Chambers, 2009). John Browne the 3rd acquired the site through his marriage to Maude Bourke after she inherited the lands from her father Theobald Bourke, the great-grandson of Grace O'Malley. The site reverted back to male lineage of the Bourke clan after Grace's youngest son Theobald Bourke acquired the property: it was offered as Maud Bourke's dowry in her marriage to John Browne 3rd. The property remained in the Browne family ever since, legally passed on from father to son right through until the 21st century. Jeremy Browne, the 11th Marquis of Sligo, decided to challenge Irish Law on the matter. Jeremy took a private bill through the Senate in 1993 which successfully challenged the male succession law and ensured that the future of Westport house stayed with its rightful owners, his five daughters who are all heavily involved in the family business (The Mayo News , 2010).

Denis Brownes' book on Westport House is the most detailed description of the family of the Browne family to date (Browne, 1981). Denis does not include an abundance of information of the female lineage of the family however this does not appear to have been done deliberately. As the book was written in in early 1980s, Denis may not have had the access to old newspaper archives and other restraints could have influenced the lack of female representation in the book.

2.3 Women in the 18th and 19th century Ireland

For the general background of this research project, secondary sources, such as book and online articles, were consulted in order to gain a complete understanding of the historical time periods and contemporary issues. ‘*Women in Mayo: 1821-1851 A Historical Perspective*’ (1986) by Maureen Langen-Egan, ‘*Women and Philanthropy in Nineteenth Century Ireland*’ (1995) by Maria Luddy and ‘*Children of the Raj*’ (2005) by Vyvyen Brendon were among the books examined. Online articles that were read are comprised of the Great Hunger Institute’s research centre ‘*Letter’s from the Lady Sligo*’ in Quinnipiac University, Connecticut and ‘The Famine in Mayo 1845-1850’ which is available to view on the Mayo County Library website. Luddy’s research in to women in the 19th century offers some perspective in to the influences that affected women’s lives such as religion and its role in society as well as its relationship to philanthropy. Philanthropy played a major role in the lives of the three women whose lives have been evaluated in this dissertation. Although this section of the research project deals directly with women and the history of Ireland, the Raj from India was also included in the research: for the purposes of researching Catherine Henrietta Dicken, the 5th Marchioness of Sligo, consulting the book entitled ‘*Children of the Raj*’ was vital in order to gain insight in to her past.

2.4 The Browne’s of Westport House

There is an ample supply of information featured in local newspaper articles such as the ‘*Connaught Telegraph*’ and ‘*Mayo Examiner*’, regarding the women of Westport House: the information ranges from the early 19th century onwards. Information on the ladies prior to this date is scarce; however there are occasional articles which proceed this date e.g. Lady Louisa Catherine Howe (1767- 1817) is mentioned in a miniscule amount of newspaper articles prior to 1816 while Hester de Burgh (1800-1878) features heavily throughout the 19th century. The Browne family appear frequently in the national newspaper ‘*Freemans Journal*’.

In addition to the background information, books, online sources, estate papers and newspaper articles were consulted in order to gather information about the Ladies of Sligo. ‘*Westport House and the Browne’s*’ (1981) by John Denis Browne, the 10th Marquis of Sligo was studied to gain insight in to the Browne family and their history while ‘*Granuaile*’ (2009) by Anne Chambers shed some light on the origins of the Browne family and their predecessor. In order to collect data on the obtainment and division of the Browne family estates ‘*The Browne’s of Westport: Landed Estates*’ were accessed through the NUIG website and the ‘*Westport Estate Papers*’ which were attained from the National Library of Dublin.

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The book entitled '*Westport House and The Browne's*' was published by Denis Browne, the 10th Marquis of Sligo, in the early 1980s. The book includes detailed accounts of the lives of his predecessors, dating back as far as 1580 to John Browne the 1st. His grandson, John Browne the 3rd, married Maud Bourke, the great-great-granddaughter of the seafaring and formidable pirate Grace O'Malley. While the book includes certain details about the ladies of the house, they are for the most part, neglected by the 10th Marquis. However he does succeed in linking the Browne family to Grace O'Malley and the O'Malley Clan who had owned the property of Westport House prior to the Browne's. The research of this dissertation compliments the information gathered from the 10th Marquis' book.

Anne Chambers established the link between the Browne family and the O'Malley Clan. Maude Bourke was the great-great granddaughter of Grace O'Malley. This connection was made through her father Theobald Bourke, the 3rd Viscount of Mayo: his father was Miles Bourke, the 2nd Viscount of Mayo whose father was Theobald Bourke (Tibbott-ne-Long) 1st Viscount of Mayo and the youngest son of Grace O'Malley. For the purpose of this research, Grace O'Malley's past exclusion from history and her influence in the 16th century Ireland has been included in order to establish similarities, if any, between her and her descendants. As Grace O'Malley was a once-off in female historiography, any similarities between her and her descendants are untenable (Chambers, 2015).

Chapter Three: Methodology

In this research project, primary and secondary resource methods were used in order to gain as much information as possible with regards to the Browne family of Westport House. This research project consists of the case studies of three generations of women in the Browne family; Lady Louisa Catherine Howe; Lady Hester de Burgh and Lady Catherine Henrietta Dicken and their contribution, if any, to Westport House. These case studies are accompanied by portraits of the ladies as well as illustrations and photographs of their homes and families. As there is little information available about these ladies, this research project used a mainly archival approach.

The limitations of this study are defined in terms of transport, cost constraints and access to private collections of information e.g. visiting the National Library was a onetime trip due to the cost of travel to Dublin. Westport House was closed from January until March which limited the amount of time that research could be obtained from the museum. However it is a positive attribute that these establishments exist and are full of sources of information regarding this dissertation's case studies. Christine Kinneally, Famine expert who works in the research centre in Quinnipiac University, was kind enough to email various examples of the letters and the exhibition for the purposes of this dissertation.

3.1 Primary Sources

The Irish Newspaper Archives' were instrumental in acquiring information on the Marchioness' of Sligo. The '*Freemans Journal*' was the most common newspaper to feature articles regarding the ladies of the Browne family. The archives were accessed through the GMIT Moore Library website. The digitised Local Newspaper Archives were also useful as they offered local historical accounts of the Browne family in local newspapers such as the '*Connaught Telegraph*'. The local newspapers were accessed through the Mayo County Library.

Sources such as the 'Peerage' and ancestry.co.uk were consulted in relation to relevant information on the family history, heraldry, census forms, birth, marriage and death certificates. These websites were useful in some cases e.g. there is an abundance of information of Catherine Henrietta Dicken however there are gaps in the websites in relation to Louisa Catherine Howe and Hester Catherine de Burgh.

3.2 Fieldtrips

In order to acquire as much information as possible for this dissertation, fieldwork was also carried out. Fieldworks included in this project are as follows; a day in the National Library of Ireland,

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Dublin; a trip to Westport House, Co Mayo; numerous trips to the Mayo County Library in Castlebar and the Moore Library in GMIT Mayo Campus.

Fieldtrips were undertaken to Dublin to visit the National Library of Ireland and Trinity College Dublin to attain primary sources, such as letters, heraldries and portraits on the Browne's. The three manuscripts that were consulted are as follows; *'Letter from Howe Peter Browne, Marquis of Sligo, to Messrs Gowers Nephews, informing them that he is taking up the post of Governor of Jamaica and requesting that his order of sherry be forwarded from Cadiz,'* from December the 17th, 1833; *'Miscellaneous family and political correspondence of Howe Peter Browne, 2nd Marquis of Sligo, Governor of Jamaica, 1815-1839'* and the *'Four letters from the Marquis of Sligo to Thomas de Quincey, 1800-1802'*. The *'Pedigree of Howe, Viscounts How and Barons Howe of Langar, ancestors of Browne, Marquis of Sligo, c. 1550 – 1780'* was accessed through the microfilm section of the library.

An examination of the Prints and Drawing section of Trinity College Dublin led to the discovery of the popular 1830s portrait of Hester de Burgh *'The most noble Hester Marchioness of Sligo'* is on display in the library: multitudes of curious public folk purchased this portrait of the Lady of Sligo after it was published in 1832.

A visit to Westport House for a house tour was essential for the research purposes of this project. There was an abundant of information available regarding the ladies in the house. The Drawing Room is where Louisa Catherine Howe's family heritage is on display, The Long Gallery features portraits of the ladies and The Large Dining Room features the various artefacts relating to the women. The Mahon Room was dedicated to the Mahon family who bequeathed their painting of their predecessors, Henry and Catherine Browne: the 5th Marquis and Marchioness of Sligo, to Westport House.

3.3 Interview

An interview with author Anne Chambers took place on the 28th of January, 2015. The interview was carried out in order to gain extensive knowledge on women in Ireland from the 16th century to the 19th century and to inquire in to any noticeable gaps in Irish history. The interview was agreed to prior to December of the previous year. The interview consisted of six questions which were emailed to Ms Chambers prior to the interview: this allowed her sufficient time to prepare answers that would be most relevant to this project: see the transcribed interview in the appendix.

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Christine Kinnealy, famine expert from the research centre for the Great Hunger museum in Quinnipiac University, was contacted via email, in order to gain an in depth account of the exhibition on Hester de Burgh. Kinnealy, kindly, sent back various links to videos, sample letters and portraits which feature on the Quinnipiac research centre website.

Chapter Four: Lady Louisa Catherine Howe



Figure 1 Portrait of the 1st Marchioness of Sligo (The Peerage , 2009)

Lady Louisa Catherine Howe was an aristocrat from Great Britain. She was very close to royal family as her family has many connections to the Royal family. She also developed a keen eye for estate management after she moved to Westport House with her first husband John Denis Browne. She was, above all, a devoted mother to her only son Howe Peter whom she supported through the many ordeals and misdemeanours of his youth.

4.1 Louisa's Family History

Louisa Catherine Howe was born on the 9th of December, 1767 in London, England (Ancestry, 2006). Louisa was born into a wealthy family background, to Admiral Richard Howe, the 1st Earl of Howe and Mary Hartopp. 'Admiral of the Fleet' Richard Howe was a British naval officer who commanded the British Navy in the time of the American War of Independence and the French Revolution. He also held the title of the 1st Earl of Howe in 1782 (Browne, 1981, p. 32).

There is little known about Louisa's mother, Mary Hartopp prior to her marriage to Richard. However, it was recorded that she was born in the small village of Woodhouse in Leicestershire,

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England in 1932 (Geni.com, 2015). After Mary married Richard Howe, she was styled the Viscountess of Howe. In 1782, she was titled 1st Countess of Howe (The Peerage, 2009). The artist Thomas Gainsborough painted two portraits of Mary and Richard: although it is thought that Gainsborough took a liking to Mary as he put twice as much effort into her portrait than her husband's (Great Works, 2015). Louisa was the youngest of three daughters; her sisters were Lady Sophia Charlotte Howe (styled Baroness of Howe-Langen) and Lady Maria Juliana Howe. She, alongside her sisters, was the co-heiress to their father's fortune (The Silver Bowl, 2006). Louisa inherited her father's estate in Hertfordshire after his death in 1799. She later sold the estate in 1816 (Westport Estate Papers, 2002-2005, p. 487).



Figure 2 Louisa's mother 'Mary, Countess of Howe' painted c.1764 (Ancestry.com, 2002)

Louisa has connections to the royal family through her father Richard and her eldest sister Sophia (Freemans Journal, 13th September, 1817, p.3). Richard's maternal grandmother Sophia Charlotte Von Kielmansegg, Countess of Darlington was the half-sister of George 1st, King of Great Britain (Gallery of Historical Figures, 2015). It was reported that Richard's mother Mary Sophia Charlotte Kielmansegg was the illegitimate daughter of King George the 1st, which would mean that Richard is the grandson of the King of Great Britain (Freemans Journal, 13th September, 1817, p.3).

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Princess Diana of Wales is a direct descendant of Louisa's sister Sophia Charlotte Howe through her only son Richard William Penn Curzon-Howe. Richard Curzon-Howe's second youngest daughter Lady Mary Anna Curzon is the paternal grandmother of Cynthia Elinor Beatrix Hamilton who in turn is the paternal grandmother of Lady Diana Frances Spencer (The Peerage , 2015). Louisa is also linked to modern day royalty, for example, Prince William, Prince Harry and Prince George.



Figure 3 Princess Diana of Wales (The Peerage , 2015)

Louisa Catherine Howe became the 3rd Countess of Altamont after she married John Denis Browne, 3rd Earl of Altamont, on the 21st of May in 1787. Louisa married John Denis at Porter's Lodge, on her father's estate, in Hertfordshire, England (The Silver Bowl, 2006). John Denis was known as a 'big spender' and he and Louisa enjoyed a privileged life of opulence. They never had to worry about money as John Denis made more money than any of his predecessors (Browne, 1981, p. 31). The couple had one son together who they named Howe Peter Browne. He was born on the 18th of May in 1788. Howe Peter was the apple of their eyes and so they spoiled him often. Thanks to

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Louisa, Howe Peter grew up with an 'entrée to the Royal residence' (Browne, 1981, p. 33) Louisa was a friend of the royal family and she would often bring her husband and son to visit them at the royal residence (Browne, 1981, p. 33).

In 1800, John Denis voted for the 'Act of Union' with Great Britain as he believed that it was 'the measure on which so much of our future happiness and security depend' (Browne, 1981, p. 32). In his honour he was titled the '1st Marquis of Sligo' and he was made an Irish representative peer (Browne, 1981, p. 32). Louisa was styled the 1st Marchioness of Sligo.

4.2 Louisa and Westport House

After their marriage, John Denis spent a copious amount of time in Westport House as he had a keen interest in agriculture and estate management (Browne, 1981, p. 33). Louisa spent a lot of time in Westport alongside her husband although she did not directly contribute to the house or town.

However, many of her father's possessions came into the Sligo family because of her. As co-heiress in her father's will, Louisa inherited numerous artefacts from his days as admiral including his writing desk, sword, clock and many of his books and papers (Sunday Independent , 4th April, 1954, p. 4). His portrait and naval officer armour are on display in the Drawing Room on the north-east side of the Westport House.

John Denis was responsible for constructing the main roads of Westport town, building the dam on the Carrowbeg River and completed the square of the house. He also commissioned James Wyatt, a renowned English Architect, to decorate his New Long Gallery and Large Dinging Room. John Denis has contributed more to Westport House than any of his descendants (Browne, 1981, p. 31). While there is little evidence that Louisa contributed to the construction of the house, she has been incorporated into the decoration of the house. The Entrance Hall, Drawing Room and the Long Gallery are full of portraits and artefacts of her and her family.

John Denis was also responsible for the layout of the town of Louisburgh in Co Mayo. The name Louisburgh is thought to have originated from the combined names of Louisa Catherine and Catherine de Burgh, his son's wife. However, in 1758, Henry Browne, John Denis' uncle, was part of the 1758 siege in the fortress town of Louisbourg in Nova Scotia, in Canada. Louisburgh in Co Mayo owes its name to the Canadian maritime town (Lyons, n/y). It may be the case that Louisbourg was chosen by John Denis as the name of his new town because the name represents his wife 'Louisa' and daughter in law 'Burgh'. (Mayo Ireland: Powered By Wild Nature , 1996).

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Figure 4 Portrait of Admiral Earl Howe and his sword on display in Westport House (National Maritime Museum, 2002)



Figure 5 Illustrations of Louisa Catherine's grandchildren: on the left side are George, James and John Browne and on the right are Louisa, Harriet and Hester Browne (Browne, 1981)

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Figure 6 Large Dining Room of Westport House was added to the house by John Denis and Louisa Catherine, with example of plaster work on the east wall designed by James Wyatt (Gannon, 2014)

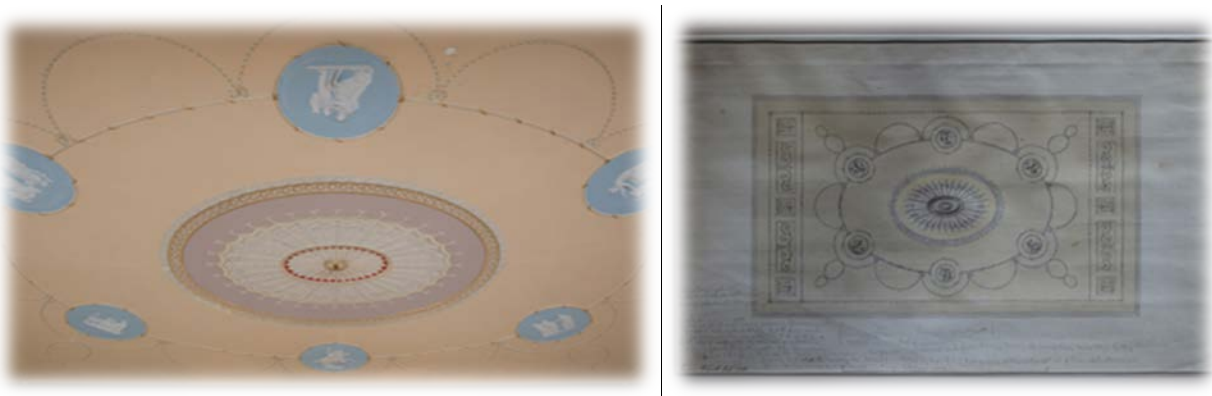


Figure 7 Example of James Wyatt's plaster work on the ceiling in The Large Dining Room of Westport House (Gannon, 2014)



Figure 8 Up-close example of plaster work by James Wyatt (Gannon, 2014)

4.3 Louisa Catherine Howe, Dowager Marchioness of Sligo

In 1809, John Denis Browne died while he was abroad in Lisbon, Portugal. After the death of her husband, the now Dowager Marchioness of Sligo enjoyed a close bond with her son, Howe Peter (Browne, 1981, p. 34). He had now inherited the title of the 2nd Marquis of Sligo from his father. He had also inherited the Westport estate, however as a young man Howe Peter enjoyed expeditions abroad to Italy, Malta and Greece and he spent a majority of his youth globetrotting while his mother remained at home (Browne, 1981, p. 34). As Louisa lived in Westport House for years alongside her husband John Denis, she had a fair idea of how to run the property. Louisa and her son agreed to have a copy of conveyance drawn up in which Louisa would have the power of attorney while her son was abroad; this meant that she consented to managing her son's estate obligations while he was away (Westport Estate Papers , 2002-2005, p. 487).

Louisa Catherine was reported to have been 'a woman of much literary accomplishment'. Although it may be true that Louisa was known for successfully achieving a literary task in her lifetime, there is no evidence of any books, articles or interviews published by the 1st Marchioness of Sligo (The Silver Bowl, 2006).

In 1812, Louisa Catherine met her second husband Sir William Scott, who was the judge in the trial against her son. Louisa was impressed with Judge Scott's firm handling of How Peter after he was arrested on the charge of enticing British navy officer to desert their post in order to assist him in delivering stolen Grecian antiquities to Ireland. Judge Scott was also taken with the Dowager Marchioness' devotion to her son. (Browne, 1981, p. 34). The whole ordeal was referred to as 'part drama, part farce' by the general public after the present Marquis was trialled in the Old Bailey in December, 1812 (Browne, 1981, p. 34). Despite that fact that Howe Peter with fined with £5,000 and sentenced to four months in Newgate prison in London, Louisa married Judge Scott on the day of Howe Peter's release (Browne, 1981, p. 34). The marriage between Louisa and William was not a happy one and so the 'comic opera' element of their relationship ended the day they got married. Louisa complained to her son about how unhappy she was with her new husband: according to Louisa, William was mean with money and he acted judicial and pompous in their home (Browne, 1981, p. 35).

Louisa Catherine died in Amsterdam, 1817, while she was waiting for her husband to return from Switzerland in order for them to return to their England home together. There were no reports about a cause of death; however it appears that she died of natural causes (The Silver Bowl, 2006).

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Louisa Catherine Howe was a fascinating woman, not only was she a relation of the royals, she spent her life socialising among them. Louisa was also a very able woman who had learned a lot from her first husband John Denis Browne about the running of an estate. Although she did not have a direct contribution to Westport House or town, she did live there alongside her husband whom she supported in all of his endeavours: she even got a small town named in her honour. She was a devoted mother to her son Howe Peter who in turn adored his mother.



Figure 9 A portrait of Louisa Catherine Howe (The British Museum , 1902)

Chapter Five: Lady Hester Catherine de Burgh



Figure 10 Portrait of the 2nd Marchioness of Sligo (Irish American Staff , 2014)

Hester de Burgh was an aristocrat from the west of Ireland. She was also the closest thing to a celebrity in her day. She partied with monarchs, moved to the highest circles and she even developed a fan-base after a Gallery in Dublin commissioned a portrait of her to be painted and sold to curious members of public in 1836 (Finn, 2014). After the exhibition of her private letters in the Great Hunger Institute, Quinnipiac, a new light has been cast over Lady Sligo. She was a caring woman who had a keen awareness of contemporary politics in relation to the abolishment of slavery in Jamaica during the 1830s as well as the potato blight which caused the Famine that plagued Ireland in the 1840/50s (Kinnealy, 2014). From the examinations of the contemporary papers, many aspects of Hester's life can be examined.

5.1 Hester's Family History

Hester Catherine de Burgh was born on the 16th of January 1800 in Co Galway, Ireland. She was born into an Anglo-Irish ascendancy, to General John Thomas de Burgh and Elizabeth Bourke (Browne, 1981, p. 33). John de Burgh was an Irish nobleman and soldier. In 1796 he inherited the title of the 13th Earl of Clanricarde after the death of his elder brother Henry (the 12th Earl) He gained rank as Lieutenant-General in Co. Galway where he was made Governor: he held the office of

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Custos Rotulorum in from 1798 – 1808. In 1800, he was given the new title of the 1st Earl of Clanricarde Co Galway (The Peerage , 2013). Her mother, Elizabeth Burke, lived in Galway as her father was the 1st Baronet Burke, of Marble Hill. Elizabeth was styled the Countess of Clanricarde after her marriage to John de Burgh in 1799 (The Peerage , 2013). Hester was the couple's first daughter and the eldest child out of three (Ancestry, 2006).

Hester was titled the 2nd Marchioness of Sligo when she married Howe Peter Browne (the 2nd Marquis of Sligo) in a Cathedral in Dublin before they celebrated their nuptials in Finigan's Hotel on the 4th of March 1816. First Lady of Sligo, Louisa Catherine was originally from London: this made Hester the first wife of a Browne man to be native to the west of Ireland (Browne, 1981, p. 8). Hester gave birth to their first child Lady Louisa Catherine Browne, named after Howe Peter's beloved mother, the following year (Freemans Journal, December 6th, 1817, p. 3). She bore him thirteen more children over the course of their marriage, some of whom were born abroad. Howe Peter inherited his title of Marquis of Sligo from his father John Denis Browne after his death in 1809. The title was created after John Denis, then the 3rd Earl of Altamont, voted for the Act of Union with England: A political move on John Denis' part in order to raise the family's social status in society (Browne, 1981, p. 32).

5.2 Hester and Westport House



Figure 11 Westport House (The Database of Houses , 1999)

Hester was considerably popular with the inhabitants of Westport due to the many acts of charity she and her husband performed in: Her return from abroad would often be celebrated with small festivals around the town e.g. bonfires and parades.

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They spent many months at a time in their beautiful country home in Co Mayo (The Freemans Journal, June 9th, 1829, p. 2). Hester played an important role in the renovation of Westport House. After her husband's stint in jail during his youth for enticing British Officers to desert their posts, he settled down to a quiet life at home in Westport where he devoted his money. Hester and Howe Peter completed a joint project in which they laid out the pleasure grounds on the west side of the house: they planted many specimen trees e.g. Birch, Willow and Alder, which still stand today (Browne, 1981, p. 35).



Figure 12 The Large Dining Room which features the plaster work of James Wyatt alongside Hester de Burghs wooden sideboard (Gannon, 2014)

With regards to the house, Howe Peter commissioned Benjamin Wyatt, an English architect, to design an extension on the north wing of the house in order to build a servants quarters. James Wyatt, Benjamin's father, was commissioned by John Denis, the 1st Marquis, to build and decorate the Long Gallery and Large Dining Room of the north and west side of Westport House forty years prior to Benjamin's contribution (Browne, 1981, p. 35). Although Wyatt was more prone to the Rococo style, Howe Peter and Hester opted for the more fashionable Neo Classical style. Hester spent time assessing Wyatt's north wing plans. She was aware that the younger Wyatt, though a good architect, was not as gifted as his father with regards to decoration. Wyatt destroyed his father's plasterwork in the Long Gallery by removing the cornices and ceiling from the room. Hester forced her husband to get rid of Wyatt before he destroyed the Large Dining room. The Large Dining room now features preserved art work by James Wyatt, all credit to Hester's good sense (Browne, 1981, p. 36). The room also features massive mahogany doors which Howe Peter acquired after one of his

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and Hester trips to Jamaica. Hester placed her gigantic sideboards on either side of the room, a present from her husband for their wedding anniversary. Hester also placed her wedding silver in the room as decoration alongside Elizabeth Kelly's, who was the grandmother of Howe Peter, silver ware (Browne, 1981, p. 36).

Howe Peter and Hester incorporated their love of Italy in to the design of the Drawing room on the north- *east* side of Westport House. Their love for Italian style materialized during their many Continental trips to Italy. Their youngest daughter, Marion Browne was born in Naples on Christmas day during a family holiday in December 25th, 1839 (Freemans Journal, January 6th, 1840, p. 2). Hester was even featured in the '*Italy, Births and Baptisms, 1806-1900*' (Ancestry, 2006). The year of their marriage, they toured through France, Switzerland and Italy before they stopped at the Prince of Wales Hotel in London (Freemans Journal, September 23rd, 1816, p. 3). There are Pompeian figures painted on to the cornices which frame the 19th century hand painted cloudy ceiling. Howe Peter commemorated his mother, the first marchioness, and her family in the room by hanging a portrait of Admiral Earl Howe, Admiral of the Fleet wearing his naval uniform: this great sailor commanded the British Navy at the time of the American Revolution. The room accumulated many portraits of the marchioness' and their families throughout the years: most significantly the drawings of the 2nd Marchioness three young daughter and sons which hang on either side of the doorway (Westport House & Grounds , 2015).



Figure 13 Drawing Room of Westport House (Gannon, 2014)

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5.3 Hester the Hostess

The designs and layout of the neo-classicly decorated home in Westport House mirrors the style of Howe Peter and Hester's home in Mansfield Street in which they frequented. They would often leave on family holidays to spend the season in London, commonly in the winter months (Freemans Journals, December 18th, 1830, p. 3) There are numerous records of the Lord and Lady Sligo's trips from Westport to London before the Lord became ill with gout. They would attend many balls and dinner parties while they stayed in London. After Howe Peter got sick, he stayed in London while Hester brought their children back, via the Antwerp Companys steam boat, to Westport House where she took over the day to day running of the estate (Tuam Herlad, September 30th, 1837, p.5).



Figure 14 Modern day Mansfield Street, London, England (Rightmove , n/y)



Figure 15 16 Mansfield Street, London, England: an example of the ornate home that Hester would have lived in while she stayed in London (Salt, 2011)

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Once the Lords health recovered, Hester returned to Mansfield Street where she became a hostess in her own right. She and her husband would hold parties and entertain individuals like the Duke of Cleveland, the Marquis and Marchioness of Lansdowne and the Earl and Countess of Rosebery (Freemans Journal, May 17th, 1838, p. 4). Hester's first ball in the Mansfield home was a success: guests arrived at the exquisite London home at 10pm, there was a dance at 11:30pm and the supper took place 1:00am (Freemans Journal, March 26th, 1839, p. 2). The ball was a hit and numourously attended according to various sources which recorded the evenings event (Belfast Newsletter, April 14th, 1839, p. 2). The following year Hester and Howe Peter had the honour of being invited to the first state ball of the season which took place in their beloved Naples in the Palace dela Torcesteria (Freemans Journal, March 4th, 1840, p. 2). They were good friends of the 'King of Naples' Joachim Murat (Browne, 1981, p. 33). Hester was involved in many charity functions as a patroness such as the society of St. Vincent De Paul's Bazaar for the poor in Dublin and the 'The Annual Fancy and Full Dress Ball' held for the 'Sick and Indigent Roomkeepers Charity (Freemans Journal, February 17th, 1838, p. 1).

Hester and her son George co-hosted a ball in Westport House on New Year's Day 1862. They sent out 150 invitations to their friends and the middle class sector of Westport to join them for a ball and supper commencing at nine o'clock. The night was a hit with the guests who were treated to a night of new and popular waltzes and quadrilles while the Mayo Rifles provided music for the night. Supper took place at mid-night which comprised of all the delicacies of the season. There were plentiful amounts of wine from the best vintage available for the guests to enjoy. The night ended in the early hours of the morning with each guest leaving in joy and merriment (Freemans Journal, January 17th, 1862, p. 4).

5.4 Hester the Cultured



Figure 16 Hester de Burgh's portrait for sale in Dublin in 1836 (Posselwhite, 1832)

The 2nd Marquis and Marchioness would often travel around the country from Kilkenny to Portumna to attend functions and dinner parties with their friends, the Earl of Clanricarde and the Lord Lieutenant and the Marchioness of Wellesley (Freemans Journal, September 21st, 1824, p. 2). Upon their return from London, they would sometimes stop by their relatives, the Earl and Countess of Howth, in Howth Castle Co Dublin (Freemans Journal, October 19th, 1831, p. 3).

Howe Peter and Hester lived rich and extravagant lifestyles. Among their friends were King George IV, Lord George Gordon Byron (an English poet) and Thomas de Quincey (an English Essayist). They took many expeditions abroad to Italy, Greece and the United States of America: while the latter was business related, the first two were strictly for looting purposes although they did not consider it looting (Browne, 1981, p. 34). Howe Peter inherited Sugar Plantations in Jamaica from his late Grandmother Elizabeth Kelly. Hester would often accompany him on expeditions to Jamaica: this is where her concern for the abolition of slavery began (Freemans Journal, November 26th, 1836, p. 2).

Lady Sligo spent her life travelling all over the world (The Freemans Journal, September 18th, 1832, p. 4). Hester often brought her children with her on holidays to Dublin and London. Her daughters, in

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particular, had many opportunities to become cultured and worldly by going abroad with their mother. In August 1854, Hester brought her daughters on a tour of German spas (Connaught Telegraph, August 23rd, 1854, p. 4). Hester de Burgh and her daughter Elizabeth Browne had the honour of being invited to a dinner party at the Viceregal Lodge, India, to meet her majesty Queen Victoria on the 1st of September 1853 (Freemans Journal, September 2nd, 1853, p. 3). The following February, Hester invited her daughters to join her for the season in Mansfield Street (Freemans Journal, February 18th, 1858, p. 3) The Ladies Browne spend numerous years visiting their mother in London over the years (Freemans Journal, May 25th, 1865, p. 3).

It was not uncommon for Howe Peter and Hester to travel before wintertime, for example they spent the month of December, 1843, in the West Cowes on the Isle of Wight before they spent the winter in their London home (Connaught Telegraph, September 11th, 1843, p. 3). After the decline in the Marquis' health, the family spent most winters in their ornate London home: it was more appropriate to spend the colder months of the year away from the chilly Atlantic coast of Westport.

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5.5 Hester the Philanthropist

Howe Peter and Hester were known for their benevolence which may have contributed to the fact that they were liked by their tenants in Westport. They spent some time in his inherited sugar plantation estates in Jamaica after Howe Peter was appointed Governor of Jamaica in 1834. Hester was tasked with moving their young family to Jamaica to support her husband. This was a difficult task to undergo as she was six months pregnant at the time and she had to prepare her three sons and five daughters who were all under the age of thirteen, for a 40,000 mile voyage across the world (Irish American Staff , 2014).

After witnessing the savagery of the planter society, Howe Peter and Hester campaigned to abolish slavery on the island forever: a campaign that was successful despite a large opposition of the Pro slavery landlords. Howe Peter and Hester were ostracized by the planter society after they introduced an apprenticeship system to the slaves (Irish Independent, March 6th, 2014, p. 5). They played an instrumental role in the abolishment of slavery in 1836 when they built the first slave free village in Jamaica: the village was named Sligoville in their honour. Howe Peter became known as the ‘Champion of the Slaves’ as he continued to lobby the British government and the Royal family to end slavery and presented them with many reports of abuse that was still taking place. In August 1838, the British government announced the emancipation of all slave’s in the British Empire (Irish Independent, March 6th, 2014, p.5). Howe Peter and Hester were offered a Dukedom for their work in Jamaica. However after freeing the slaves, the Lord and Lady Sligo lost their revenue from his Jamaican estates. They were unable to afford the title of Duke and Duchess thus they refused the offer. After all, a Duke and Duchess who are unable to afford their ranks are a contradiction in terms (Browne, 1981, p. 33).

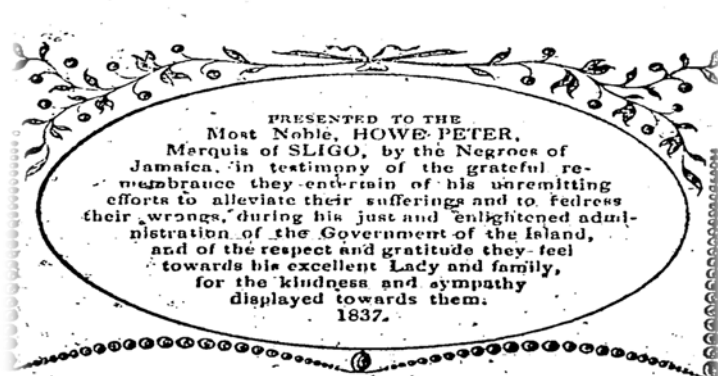


Figure 17 A gift to the Marquis and Marchioness of Sligo by the people of Jamaica whom they saved from slavery in 1836-1838 (The Connaught Telegraph, 1839, p. 4)

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Lady Sligo wrote to George Hildebrand, her agent in the west, in September 20th 1845. She had recently moved to Clontarf in Dublin and she intended on spending Easter in her London home. However she wished to inquire about the extent of the famine in Mayo first. She wrote ‘I’m sorry to say in this country there is a blight on the potatoes, which has caused the stems to turn black and wither. I believe it was caused by the frosty night we had a fortnight ago... Let me know whether the potato crop in Mayo is affected?’ She also requested that Hildebrand buy blankets of good quality for the tenants of Westport House (Finn, 2014). Hildebrand stated that the noble and generous Lady Sligo made no distinction of the distribution (Durkan, 1847, p. 4). Upon receiving word of the extent of the famine in Westport, Hester returned to her home in the west immediately. Hester’s letters have blurred the lines between the ‘simple narratives of bad landlord, good tenant’ according to famine expert Christine Kinnealy (2014).

Due to the lack of income from the rents, Westport House was shut and boarded up. Hester and three of her children, including George the 3rd Marquis, lived in house on James’ Street in Westport town (Browne, 1981, p. 49). Hester had a deep desire to offer her help to those severely affected by the famine. She paid a visit to the Sisters of Mercy where she expressed the warmest and kindest interest in the Convent. On behalf of the Marquis of Sligo, she bestowed a large portion of land, rent free in addition to a substantial financial donation (Freemans Journal, October 2nd, 1847, p. 2).

George was heavily guided by his mother during the 1840s. He attended charity events with his first wife Ellen Sydney, the 3rd Marchioness of Sligo prior to her early death in 1852: such events include the ‘Annual Grand Fancy and Full Dress Charity Ball in Aid of the Funds of the Sick and Indecent Roomkeepers Society’ (Nation, March 4th, 1848, p. 2). Hester was proud of her son George because he was good to his tenants and he strived to keep the Westport workhouse open with his own money. Alongside his cousin George Moore, he paid for a ship containing food to come from America to

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Mayo to feed the starving people (Browne, 1981, p. 49). Westport House was converted into a soup kitchen for the starving peasants.

Hester continued to be a Patroness in aid of the Sisters of Mercy charity events (Freemans Journal, July 27th, 1868, p. 1). Lady Sligo was among the Patronesses at 'A Bazaar in aid of the starving poor of Westport' which was held on the 28th of November in 1849 (Freemans Journal, December 18th, 1849, p. 1). Hester also offered clothes to a great number of girls who were too poor to afford their own and who were currently forced to live in a state of partial nudism: persons of both sexes were nearly in a state of nudity according to the Connaught Telegraph (1851) to which Hester attended to with large supplies of blankets, shawls and other descriptions of clothing for those in need. Hester also supplied many poor people with meals (Freemans Journal, January 30th, 1851, p. 2).

After the famine in the west of Ireland, Hester moved to London to her residence in Mansfield Street where she continued to entertain her friends and through luxurious dinner parties (Irish Examiner, July 3rd, 1857, p. 2). Westport House remained as much of a home to Hester as her homes in Clontarf, Dublin and Mansfield St. London as she returned to visit the house frequently, the most significant visit took place on the 26th of October 1857 when the now 'Dowager' Marchioness of Sligo returned to Westport town after the events of the famine had taken place. Bonfires were ablaze, the South Mayo band paraded around the town and the inhabitants all sang in rejoice for the most benevolent and respected lady in town by giving her a cordial Irish welcome (Connaught Telegraph, October 28th, 1857, p. 4). Hester was accompanied to the festival by her family members and she was said to have enjoyed the welcome festivities (Tuam Herald, October 31st, 1857, p. 4).

Despite her residency in London, Hester de Burgh spent the last years of her life heavily part taking in fund raising for charity events in the west of Ireland. She continued to be a patroness for the 'Annual Bazaar & Drawing of Prizes in Aid of the Charities of the Sisters of Mercy, Castlebar' (The Mayo Examiner, March 8th 1869, p. 4) and the 'Annual Bazaar & Drawing of Prizes for the Relief of the Poor under the Sisters of Mercy, Westport and for the Erection of an Orphanage' will be held at the Railway Hotel, Westport (The Mayo Examiner, August 7th, 1871, p. 4). Sisters of Mercy acknowledged Hester's contribution to the events by thanking her, the most noble Marchioness of Sligo, for the exquisitely inlaid casket and valuable inkstand that she donated as prizes to be won (Connaught Telegraph, February 12th, 1881, p. 8).



Figure 19 Lady Catherine de Burgh's legacy lives on in the Quinnipiac University's research centre The Great Hunger Institute (Finn, 2014)

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Hester passed away on the 17th of February 1878 at the age of 78 (Ballinrobe Chronicle, February 23rd, 1878, p. 4). She passed away in her home at 16 Mansfield Street in Marylebone, London, where she had lived out the last years of her life (Ancestry, 1997-2015). Her health had been in decline prior to her death. There is little known about the exact cause of the noble and respected Marchioness death however it did come as a surprise. The inhabitants of Westport town shared their sincere regret to hear of the passing of the Dowager Marchioness of Sligo, whose constant and magnificent character will be remembered with gratitude by the people of Westport (The Connaught Telegraph, March 9th, 1878, p. 2). Hester is buried in the Kensal Green Cemetery in London, England (Seeking All Ancestors, 2006).

Hester was an aristocratic lady who was renowned at home in Ireland and abroad, although it was not strictly due to her celebrity status. Her contribution to the renovation to Westport House and the philanthropy work she took part in during the Famine years (as well as her contribution the abolishment of slavery in Jamaica) left her as a beloved figure in the west of Ireland and abroad. To be remembered for all her good work is nothing short of what Hester de Burgh deserves. As far as a connection to Grace O'Malley is concerned, she and Hester both part-took in globetrotting more than many people get the opportunity to do even in modern times.



Figure 20 Kensal Green Cemetery, London, England where Hester is buried alongside her husband Howe Peter and Hester de Burgh's grave stone in Kensal Green Cemetery (1800-1878) (Kensal Green Cemetary Online, 2015)

Chapter Six: Lady Catherine Henrietta Dicken



Figure 21 A Portrait of Lady Catherine Henrietta (née Dicken) Marchioness of Sligo on display in the National Portrait Gallery, London (National Portrait Gallery , 1860)

Lady Catherine Henrietta Dicken was a wealthy young woman born in India during the British Raj. Catherine lived in perpetual luxury and wealth: she met her husband Henry Ulick Brown in India where they spent twenty extravagant years living together. She did not move to Westport House or become the 5th Marchioness of Sligo until she was 66 years of age: her husband inherited the title and the estate in 1903. Catherine was adored by the people of Westport due to her kindness and hospitality. She is by far the most exotic of the three ‘Ladies of Sligo’.

6.1 Catherine’s Family History

Catherine Henrietta Dicken was born on the 25th of September, 1837 in Balasore, Orissa, in India during the British Raj. She was born into a wealthy family, to William Stephens Dicken and Catherine Lamb Popham (The Peerage - Dicken, 2015). William was an M.D., Deputy Inspector-General of Hospitals in Bengal, India. William was born in Devon, England but he moved to India after he got a job with the Bengal Medical Services (Family Search , 2011). Her mother Catherine, who she is named after, was also from a wealthy family. She was also from English descent as her family had moved to India from London. Her father, Captain Joseph Lamb Popham, R.N., had a military background: he and his brother Admiral Sir Home Popham were both high up in the military and naval ranks (Family Search , 2011). Catherine Henrietta came from a large family: she was the

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first born daughter out of eleven children (Family Search , 2011). Catherine grew up as a true Victorian; she always had time to admire the flowers, she kept pets, she rode horses and she played the harmonium in church (Browne, 1981, p. 54).

Catherine married Henry Ulick Browne, the sixth son of the 2nd Marquis and Marchioness of Sligo on the 25th of October 1855 in Bankipore, Bengal in India (The Peerage - Dicken, 2015). Henry made a career for himself in the Indian Civil Service and he lived there, alongside his native wife for over 10 years: Catherine Henrietta was the first wife of a Browne man to be native to India (Browne, 1981, p. 54). Catherine and Henry Ulick had ten children altogether: the first seven were born in India according to the India, Births and Baptisms 1786-1947 certificates (Ancestry.co.uk, 1997). For Catherine to have given birth to ten children in her lifetime would be considered more of a ‘life of slavery’ to modern day feminists, as opposed to the ‘great fun’ Catherine considered her life as a mother in her memoirs (Browne, 1981, p. 54).

Henry Ulick and Catherine moved to England during the 1870s where they lived at 41, Eccleston Square (Ancestry.com, 1997). They inherited Westport House in 1903 after the death of Henry’s brother John Thomas Browne, the 4th Marquis of Sligo. Alongside the house, they inherited the titles of the family. Henry Ulick, now 72 years old and Catherine, who was 66 years old, became the 5th Marquis and Marchioness of Sligo.

Catherine urged her family members to come and visit her in England. She organised accommodation for her sister, Miss Pergonnet, to stay in the luxurious Royal Crescent Hotel in Bath, Somerset for a six week stay (Connaught Telegraph, January 22nd, 1910, p. 8). Her children would often visit her in her London home.



Figure 22 Modern day Eccleston Street, England (Rightmove , 2007)

6.2 Catherine and Westport House

In 1911, the present Marquis returned to Westport House for the last time to spend the summer season alongside his wife Catherine (Connaught Telegraph, July 22nd, 1911, p. 16). He died two years later on the 24th of February, 1913 (The Peerage - Dicken, 2015). During their years in Westport House, Henry Ulick was referred to as the most English of the Marquis and he even had a nickname of the 'Nabob' as while he was in India, as he was used to having servants attend to his every need. However he and Catherine were well liked by their workers in the estate. In wet weather, he and Catherine would dress up in their outdoor clothes and circulate around each inter-connecting room of the ground floor of Westport House: this was a pastime they repeated often (Browne, 1981, p. 55).

Catherine immersed herself into life in the west of Ireland. Although it was a major change for her to live in the quiet and rural Westport after spending over thirty years of her life in the exotic India. Catherine, similar to her mother in law Hester, was involved in charity galas. She was on the committee at the 'Castlebar House Demesne' charity night (Connaught Telegraph, July 16th, 1904, p. 4). Although Catherine had an interest in part taking in the BAZAAR charity events, she would often miss the occasions when she was spending the season in London. Nevertheless, on such occasions, Catherine would organise a stand in to take her place e.g. her daughter Lady Edith Charles went to the 'BAZAAR, POLO MATCHES COMIC OPERA, DANCING COMPETITIONS ETC.' in her place. The night was a success (Connaught Telegraph, September 17th, 1910, p. 8).



Figure 23 Photo of Westport House from the west side (Bernie, 2013)

6.3 Catherine's Golden Wedding Anniversary

Henry Ulick and Catherine were presented with a beautiful two handled golden cup of Irish design from their surviving sons and daughters, Lords Arthur, Terence and Alfred Browne and Ladies Edith Charles, Nora More, Florence Beresford Ash and Alice Evelyn Mahon (Mayo News, October 28th, 1905, p. 8). Their children also planted trees in honour of their parent's anniversary on the grounds of Westport House (Browne, 1981, p. 55).

On the evening of their fiftieth wedding anniversary, they invited their friends, family and all of their employees to join them in their celebrations by throwing a supper and dance at the Demesne. Sixty guests were present on the night (Mayo News, November 4th, 1905, p. 8). The Lord and Lady of Sligo were present at the opening dance to welcome their guests. Dancing and singing with intervals for refreshments were kept going until 6 am the following morning. Catherine and Henry Ulick were renowned for their kindness in relation to their employees in Westport estate. Their employees presented the Lord and Lady Sligo with an address congratulating them in their golden wedding anniversary. The address was beautifully illuminated with views of Westport House, The Demesne, the old and new churches and photographs of the Lord and lady of Sligo. It was enclosed on a costly rift frame. Henry, accompanied by his wife Catherine and several of his family members, thanked his employees for their generosity by giving them the following day off work. He also stated that the 'comfort and happiness of those in their employment would always be a consideration of first importance with Lady Sligo and himself' (Mayo News, October 28th, 1905, p. 8).



Figure 24 Photo of the 5th Marquis and Marchioness on their Golden Wedding Anniversary alongside their children (The Mayo News , 1992)

6.4 Catherine's Memoirs

Catherine wrote her memoirs during her golden years. Her grandson, Denis Browne recalled stories of his grandmother in his book *'Westport House and the Browne's'* in which he describes her as an *interesting* individual (Browne, 1981, p. 54). Catherine wrote about her life in India in a casual matter as if there was nothing unusual about encountering a large tiger cat in her bedroom, engaging with a cobra, two wolves who attempted to break in to her home and a wild jackal that bit her pet dog (Browne, 1981, p. 54). In her memoirs she also writes about the famine, plagues, cyclones and the 1857 Indian rebellion known as 'The Mutiny' she experienced while in India. Although the 10th Marquis does not go in to much detail regarding her experiences, there is evidence that her early life in India may be the reason that she got involved in charity work (Browne, 1981, p. 54).

After the death of her husband Henry Ulick in 1913, Catherine was bequeathed her house in Eccleston Square in London where she spent the remaining year of her life. Her son George inherited Westport House and estate along with the title of the 6th Marquis of Sligo (Mayo News, May 10th, 1913, p. 8). His wife Agatha Stewart Hodgson became the 6th Marchioness of Sligo: this meant that Catherine is the 3rd Marchioness to have outlived her husband and gain the title Dowager Marchioness of Sligo.

Catherine died a year after her husband on the 26th of November, 1914 (Mayo News, November 28th, 1914, p. 8). She died in her 41 Eccleston Square home in London where she had retired after the passing of her husband. Although she passed away in England, her death did not go unnoticed by her friends in Westport town. The 'Westport Harbour Commissioners' offered their deepest condolences to the present Marquis and Catherine's son George on the passing of the Dowager Marchioness. They stated that 'they desire to convey their respectful condolence to the Marquis of Sligo upon the death of his mother and they beg to assure him and the other members of his family that they have their deepest sympathies in their hour of trouble and sorrow (Connaught Telegraph, 1914, p. 8). George was touched by their kind sympathies and thanked them in a short article which was posted in the Mayo News on January the 9th 1915 (Mayo News, January 9th, 1915, p. 8). In her will, Catherine left £30 to her maid, Kate: she left £50 to her cook Zoide Stewart and £10 to each of her servants (Mayo News, January 16th, 1915, p. 8).

Catherine Henrietta Dicken was an adored asset to Westport House even though she did not contribute directly to the house or town; she treated the people who lived there with respect and dignity while she also enjoyed going for 'a turnabout the room' doing circle laps of the ground floor alongside her husband, much to the amusement of those who had the good fortune of witnessing this.



Figure 25 Catherine Henrietta Dicken, 5th Marchioness of Sligo (Lafayette, 1989)

Chapter Seven: Conclusion

The aim of this dissertation was to analyse the lives of three women from the Browne family, in the form of case studies, by researching the local history of women in the west of Ireland. Lady Louisa Catherine Howe; Lady Hester de Burgh and Catherine Henrietta Dicken were chosen as the case studies: the time span of this dissertation extends across the late 18th century – the early 19th century. Once the three ladies were chosen and the time span was set out, the second aim was to investigate the link between Grace O'Malley (Pirate Queen of Connaught in the 15th Century) and her female descendants in the Browne family.

Key findings in the results of this dissertation include: Lady Louisa Catherine Howe's familial link to the Royal family via *'The Peerage'* and *'The Irish Newspaper Archives'*; Lady Hester de Burgh's letters to her agent in the west of Ireland, George Hildebrand, during the Famine via *'The Great Hunger Institute'* in Connecticut and Catherine Dickens' Golden Anniversary party in Westport House: she invited her friends and servants to join her and her husband in celebration.

There are gaps in local history in relation to the Ladies of the Browne family prior to the 19th century e.g. Louisa Catherine features in very few newspaper articles and there is even less literature available on her life. This may be due to the lack of newspaper articles digitised in the 1800s. However there is more information available than originally hypothesized, on women in the west of Ireland during and after the 19th century e.g. there was an abundance of information available on Hester de Burgh. It is worth noting that there are still gaps present in the records of many of the women's lives after the 19th century, however they are not as frequent e.g. Catherine Henrietta features in *'The Irish Newspaper Archives'* after she becomes the 5th Marchioness of Sligo in 1903, at 66 years of age, however there is very little information available regarding Catherine life prior to this date.

After each case study was carefully analysed, it is fair to suggest that the three Ladies of Sligo share characteristics with Grace O'Malley: each of the ladies were strong and able women with adventurous streaks and colourful lives, not unlike the Pirate Queen of Connaught. However this is not due to their familial bond with Grace. Grace O'Malley was a once-off in female historiography: any similarities between her and her descendants are simple untenable (Chambers, 2015). Louisa Catherine, Hester and Catherine are equally as fascinating in their own rights, despite not leading lives as wild as the formidable Grace O'Malley: They got the opportunity to travel around the world, party with monarchs and, in Hester's case, participate in philanthropic work.

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This research is of value on a local history level in the west of Ireland as there is very little known about these enchanting women. However with the establishment of the *'Lady Sligo's Letters'* exhibition in The Great Hunger Institute in Connecticut, USA and its upcoming visit to Westport House shines a light on the impact of Hester's contribution to Westport Town during the Famine. It may also raise people's curiosity on the lives of the other ladies in the Browne family. In order to part-take in further research and acquire more information, the *'Westport Estate Paper's'*, *'The Irish Newspaper Archives'* and additional field-trips to the National Library of Ireland, The British Museum, England and The Great Hunger Institute, Connecticut, USA would need to be researched in more depth.

From royalty to slavery to famine to the British Raj, the Ladies of Sligo have each led fascinating lives. It is true that not all of them had a direct influence on Westport House or Westport Town. However, they were beloved members of the Westport community.

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[bin/sse.dll?gl=ROOT_CATEGORY&rank=1&new=1&so=3&MSAV=1&msT=1&gss=seorecords&gsfn=Mary&gsln=Hartopp&msbdy=1732&msbpn__ftp=Woodhouse%2c+Leicestershire%2c+England&msddy=1800&msdpn__ftp=Grafton+St%2c+London%2c+England&cpxt=0&ca](http://search.ancestry.co.uk/cgi-bin/sse.dll?gl=ROOT_CATEGORY&rank=1&new=1&so=3&MSAV=1&msT=1&gss=seorecords&gsfn=Mary&gsln=Hartopp&msbdy=1732&msbpn__ftp=Woodhouse%2c+Leicestershire%2c+England&msddy=1800&msdpn__ftp=Grafton+St%2c+London%2c+England&cpxt=0&ca)

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Appendices

Appendix I

Interviewee: Anne Chamber

Date: January 29th, 2015

1). Grace O' Malley has been described as intelligent, courageous and ruthless. She was a lady who 'suffered no fools' for example 'Grace's chastisement of her son Murrough, after he sided with her enemy Bingham, by pillaging his castle and burning all of his galleys. I read from an unknown source online that Anne Gore, wife of John Browne, 1st Earl of Altamont, was quite similar to Grace in temperament. Although Gore was not related by blood, Is there any evidence of Grace's influence in the female descendants in the Browne family or in women in Irish society in general?

“Grace O’Malley was (and is) a once-off in female historiography. As a powerful political and military leader by land, her life may mirror other female leaders, both in Ireland and in other countries. No such analogy, however, is to be found in modern history for her role as a female commander by sea.

Consequently similarities to her and including Anne Gore and other female members of the Browne family, is simply untenable.

Since the publication of my biography, however, in 1980 (and constantly print since then) in Ireland and in the US, the production of 3 international TV documentaries based on the book, countless interviews and lectures I have given all around the world, as well as the traffic through my website, the interest in Grace O’Malley has greatly increased. From being air-brushed out of history she is now a figure of international interest and standing, part of schools’ curricula at all levels and has become an iconic inspiration for women everywhere, especially where boundaries of gender imbalance and bias exist”.

2). The introduction of Christianity in Ireland influenced Gaelic society. Is it possible that, like Grace O' Malley, women were of less interest in the Anglo-Irish society and were less likely to have been included in historical records?

“Grace O’Malley, as a warrior female leader, is a throw-back to the Bronze-Age matriarchal culture, in which the dominant deities, as well as many military leaders, were women. vide p. 18 Granuaile. The demise of this matriarchal culture coincided with the advent of Christianity in

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Ireland and the influence of male-dominated Roman law which came with it. As Christianity infiltrated the indigenous Brehon, law, which promoted and protected the status of women, gradually over succeeding centuries the role of women became confined to childbearing and domesticity, with the occasional powerful woman coming to the fore, e.g Gormflaith, Dervogilla, albeit seldom in their own right. By the time of Grace O'Malley in the sixteenth century, an analogy for an independent female ruler could be traced only to myth and legend of some 1000 years before. Grace O'Malley alone broke through these boundaries of gender imbalance. After her death, despite the powerful impact and role she played during her lifetime, because she was a non-conformist to what was perceived to be the proper role of woman, it was easier to simply air-brush her from historical record. Few if any other women who followed her, in either Anglo-Irish or Gaelic society, managed to do as she had done”.

3). There are many cases of individuals, such as Henry Sidney, and their encounters with Grace O'Malley. Many of them were left with a striking impression of Grace. What was the Gaelic societies general impression of Grace and her unconventional lifestyle? Was it acceptable for women to follow in Grace's footsteps?

“While written out of Irish historical record, the two main sources which acknowledge the role and impact Grace made on her time are the English State Papers and Irish folklore records and this is where I found her languishing!

English administrators and military men who encountered her, both in Ireland and in England, recorded their impressions and give us some information about her activities. That she was, in her latter years, accorded a meeting with Queen Elizabeth, a very rare occurrence, points to the impact she made on the Tudor administration.

While Irish historians choose to ignore her, Irish Folklore, on the other hand, is full of stories about her. While possibly exaggerated and even distorted with the passage of time, to be remembered for 500 years in folk memory is further proof of the impact Granuaile made on her time”.

4). During your research of Howe Peter Browne's Biography, Did you come across any stories about Lady Louisa Catherine Howe or Lady Hester de Burgh during their times as Marchioness' of Sligo? E.g. did they take part in the running of the Westport House estate?

“For the past 4 years I have been researching and writing the biography of Howe Peter Browne, 2nd Marquis of Sligo (1788-1845). The research has taken me half round the world to the US, Jamaica, England, Greece, France, Scotland etc. and here. Howe Peter left behind a huge collection of

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correspondence and records, some of which are in the National Library more in private ownership to which I have been given access. To date I have examined some 10,000 items either written by or connected with him.

Both his mother, Louisa Howe, and his wife Hester Catherine de Burgh, enjoyed a very close bond with him, as a son and husband. His correspondence with his mother is extremely interesting, as are the diaries he kept of his extensive travels.

I hope to complete this biography by the end of 2015.

Catherine Hester's letters, especially regarding the Famine, need careful interpretation. The views express in them need to be placed within the context of the prevailing social and political mores, especially in relation to the laissez faire attitudes of Victorian society to poverty, property etc. in general, prevalent both in English and Irish society at the time (refer Dickins)".

5). Upon researching the Browne family for the Westport House tour, I noticed that while there is plenty of information available on the male descendants but there is little known about the female descendants. Do you think that people would be interested in learning more about the female lineage of the Browne family?

"The History of the Browne family merely mirrors history generally which, up until very recently, tended to ignore the part played by over 50% of the population in any given time!

As the author of 3 published biographies on women (Granuaile, 1530-1603, Eleanor Countess of Desmond, 1545-1638 and Margaret Burke Sheridan, 1889-1958) I have tried to rectify the imbalance in history and judging by the reaction (and sales!) there is indeed an interest in learning more about the part played by women (including Browne women) in shaping the past".

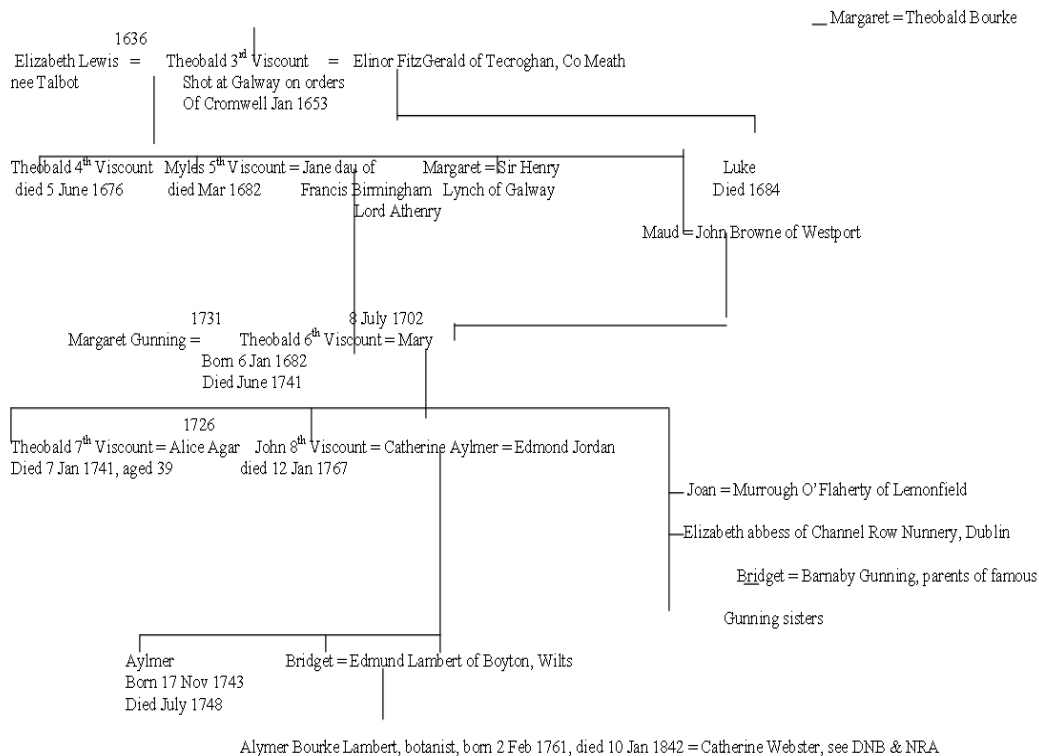
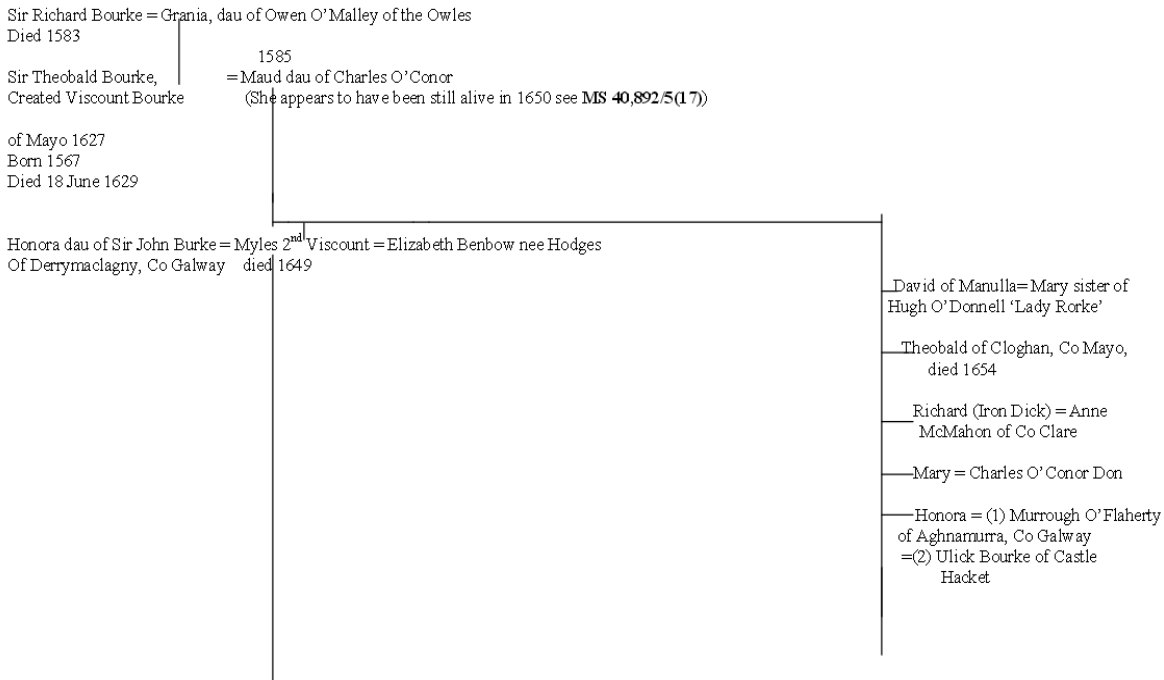
With every good wish in your project, Anne Chambers.

The Women of Westport House

Appendix II

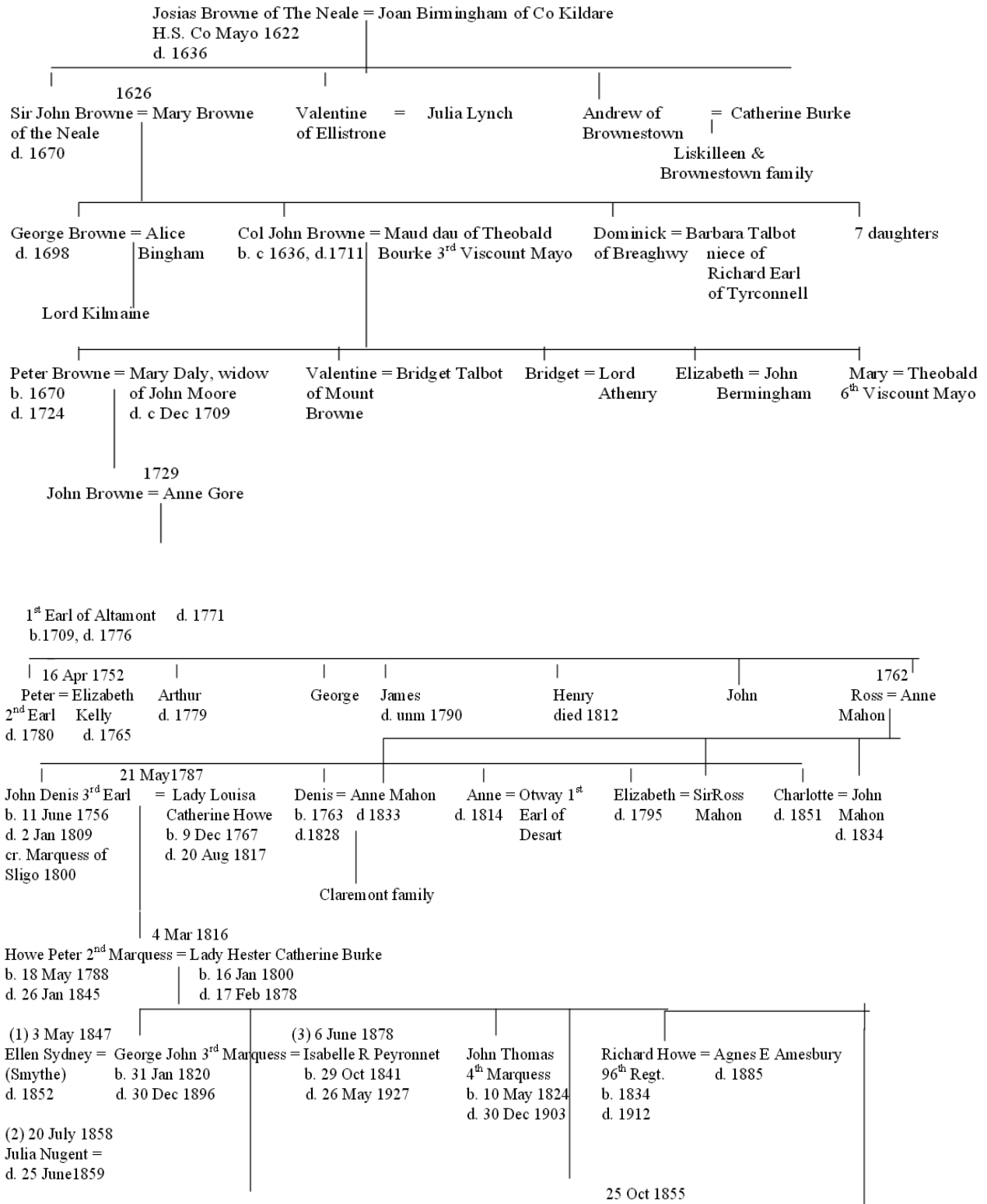
Family Tree: Grace O'Malley link to the Browne Family

Bourke Family Tree

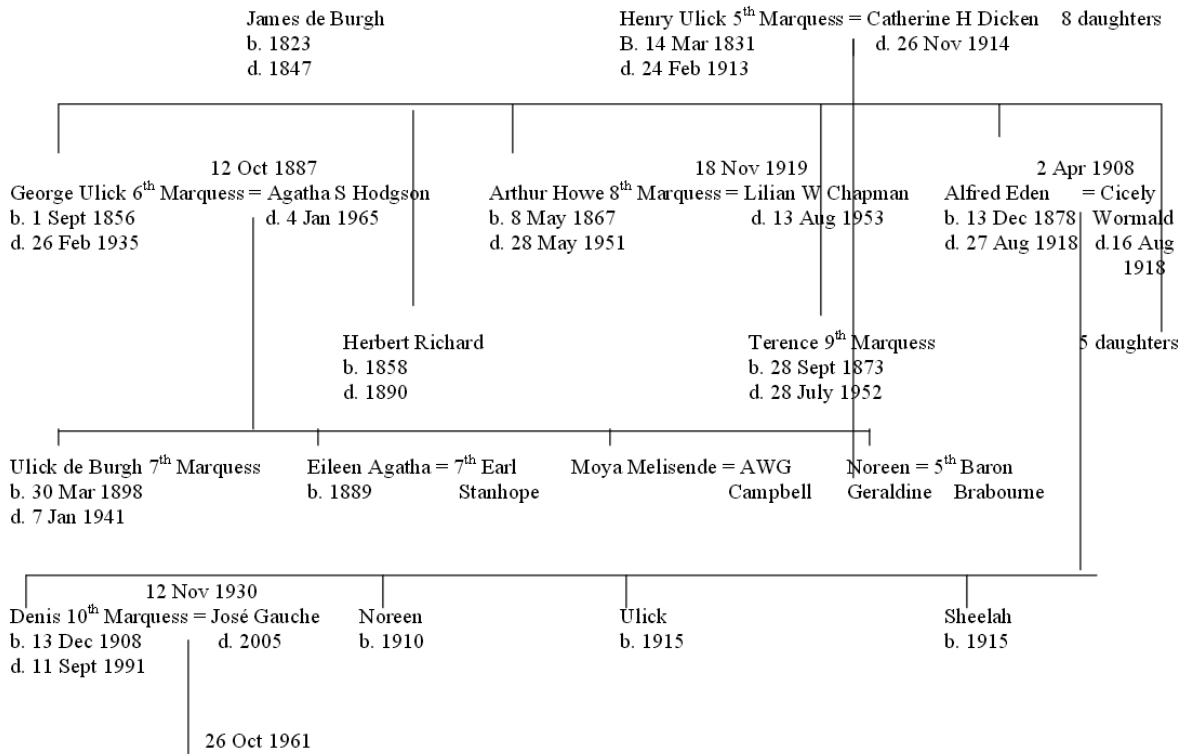


The Women of Westport House

Browne Family Tree



The Women of Westport House



Jeremy 11th Marquess = Jennifer Cooper
 b. 4 June 1939

The Women of Westport House

Appendix III

Catherine Henrietta Dickens' Signatures on the England Census Forms

1817 England Census for Catherine H Browne

The undermentioned Houses are situate within the Boundaries of the									
City or Municipal Borough of		Municipal Ward of		Parliamentary Borough of		Town of		Local Board, or (Improvement Commissioners District) of	
Westport		Bath		Lawdown		Bath		Bath	
No. of House	ROAD, STREET, &c., and No. or NAME of HOUSE	HOUSES (Lines marked with a dot, or not marked with a dot)	NAME and Surname of each Person	RELATION to Head of Family	CON-DITION	AGE of	Rank, Profession, or OCCUPATION	WEEKS SOLD	Whether 1. Dead and Name Dead 2. Blind 3. Lame or Deaf 4. Lunatic
165	17 Russell St		Catherine H Browne	Wife	M	34			
166	18 Russell St	1	George A	Son	M	14	Scholar		
			William J Brown	Head	M	54	Chief Railway Clerk		
			Eliza Brown	Wife	M	42	Domestic Servant		
			Sarah Brown	Servant	M	28	to Parsonage		
			Elizabeth Brown	Servant	M	24	to Post		
			Margaret March	Servant	M	26	to Station Road		
167	1 Cross Place	1	Christian Norman	Wife	M	84	to Station Road		
			Edmund Gooden	Head	M	47	Servant		
			Mary A	Wife	M	41			
			Alice	Daughter	M	13	Scholar		
			Albida	Daughter	M	9	to		
			Julie	Son	M	5	to		
168	2 Cross Place	1	George Bruckner	Head	M	24	Drunkard		
			Leah	Wife	M	25			
			Joseph	Brother	M	24	Barman		
169	3 Cross Place	1	Joseph Smith	Head	M	40	Old unemployed		
			Eliza	Wife	M	32			
			Ann	Daughter	M	8	Scholar		
			William Ann	Son	M	5	to		
			Samuel	Father	M	45	Barman		
			Sarah Brown	Servant	M	24	General Servant		
170			Henry Brown	Servant	M	22	Footman		
Total of Houses..		4	Total of Males and Females..		10	13			

The Women of Westport House

1901 England Census for Catherine H Browne

Administrative County: London
 Civil Parish: St. Andrew's
 Enumeration Date: 31st March 1901
 County Borough: Municipal Borough of West Ham
 Ward of Municipal Borough: West Ham
 Street: The West Ham Road
 House No.: 101
 Page No.: 10

Age	Sex	Marital Status	Name and Surname of each Person	Age	Sex	Marital Status	Occupation or Profession	Religion	Place of Birth	Place of Birth
12	F	Single	Edith Browne	12	F	Single	Wife of a man	Anglican	London	London
13	F	Single	George H. Browne	13	M	Single	Wife of a man	Anglican	London	London
			John H. Browne	14	M	Single	Wife of a man	Anglican	London	London
			John H. Browne	15	M	Single	Wife of a man	Anglican	London	London
			John H. Browne	16	M	Single	Wife of a man	Anglican	London	London
			John H. Browne	17	M	Single	Wife of a man	Anglican	London	London
			John H. Browne	18	M	Single	Wife of a man	Anglican	London	London
			John H. Browne	19	M	Single	Wife of a man	Anglican	London	London
			John H. Browne	20	M	Single	Wife of a man	Anglican	London	London
			John H. Browne	21	M	Single	Wife of a man	Anglican	London	London
			John H. Browne	22	M	Single	Wife of a man	Anglican	London	London
			John H. Browne	23	M	Single	Wife of a man	Anglican	London	London
			John H. Browne	24	M	Single	Wife of a man	Anglican	London	London
			John H. Browne	25	M	Single	Wife of a man	Anglican	London	London
			John H. Browne	26	M	Single	Wife of a man	Anglican	London	London
			John H. Browne	27	M	Single	Wife of a man	Anglican	London	London
			John H. Browne	28	M	Single	Wife of a man	Anglican	London	London
			John H. Browne	29	M	Single	Wife of a man	Anglican	London	London
			John H. Browne	30	M	Single	Wife of a man	Anglican	London	London
			John H. Browne	31	M	Single	Wife of a man	Anglican	London	London
			John H. Browne	32	M	Single	Wife of a man	Anglican	London	London
			John H. Browne	33	M	Single	Wife of a man	Anglican	London	London
			John H. Browne	34	M	Single	Wife of a man	Anglican	London	London
			John H. Browne	35	M	Single	Wife of a man	Anglican	London	London
			John H. Browne	36	M	Single	Wife of a man	Anglican	London	London
			John H. Browne	37	M	Single	Wife of a man	Anglican	London	London
			John H. Browne	38	M	Single	Wife of a man	Anglican	London	London
			John H. Browne	39	M	Single	Wife of a man	Anglican	London	London
			John H. Browne	40	M	Single	Wife of a man	Anglican	London	London
			John H. Browne	41	M	Single	Wife of a man	Anglican	London	London
			John H. Browne	42	M	Single	Wife of a man	Anglican	London	London
			John H. Browne	43	M	Single	Wife of a man	Anglican	London	London
			John H. Browne	44	M	Single	Wife of a man	Anglican	London	London
			John H. Browne	45	M	Single	Wife of a man	Anglican	London	London
			John H. Browne	46	M	Single	Wife of a man	Anglican	London	London
			John H. Browne	47	M	Single	Wife of a man	Anglican	London	London
			John H. Browne	48	M	Single	Wife of a man	Anglican	London	London
			John H. Browne	49	M	Single	Wife of a man	Anglican	London	London
			John H. Browne	50	M	Single	Wife of a man	Anglican	London	London

The Women of Westport House

1911 England Census for Catherine Henrietta Marchioness of Sligo

CENSUS OF ENGLAND AND WALES, 1911.

Persons living on the 2nd day of April 1911.

The contents of this Schedule shall be treated as confidential. Great care will be taken that no information is disclosed with regard to individual persons. The returns are to be used for the purpose of ascertaining the population of the Kingdom of Great Britain and the Channel Islands.

NAME AND SEX	RELATIONSHIP TO HEAD OF FAMILY	AGE	MARRIAGE IN A PREVIOUS YEAR		PROFESSION OR OCCUPATION			EDUCATION	REMARKS
			WAS MARRIED	WAS NOT MARRIED	NAME	CLASSIFICATION	CLASSIFICATION		
<i>Catherine Henrietta Marchioness of Sligo</i>	<i>Head</i>	<i>52</i>	<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>None</i>	<i>None</i>	<i>None</i>	<i>None</i>	
<i>Miss [Name]</i>	<i>Daughter</i>	<i>21</i>	<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>None</i>	<i>None</i>	<i>None</i>	<i>None</i>	
<i>Miss [Name]</i>	<i>Daughter</i>	<i>15</i>	<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>None</i>	<i>None</i>	<i>None</i>	<i>None</i>	
<i>Miss [Name]</i>	<i>Daughter</i>	<i>12</i>	<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>None</i>	<i>None</i>	<i>None</i>	<i>None</i>	
<i>Miss [Name]</i>	<i>Daughter</i>	<i>9</i>	<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>None</i>	<i>None</i>	<i>None</i>	<i>None</i>	
<i>Miss [Name]</i>	<i>Daughter</i>	<i>6</i>	<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>None</i>	<i>None</i>	<i>None</i>	<i>None</i>	
<i>Miss [Name]</i>	<i>Daughter</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>None</i>	<i>None</i>	<i>None</i>	<i>None</i>	

Total: 6