

“narrow lanes” a cramped passage bounded on both sides by towering walls and full of right angled bends, which wended its crooked course between Loreto Convent cemetery and the garden of Nutgrove House. A massive gateway stood at the entrance to this avenue down to about 1911 which bore the inscription “Nutgrove School Established 1802”.

In 1839 this school was under the supervision of Mr. Philip Jones, who continued to hold the post of principal until 1866 when the position was held by Mrs. Anne Jones. In 1876 the school closed down and the house was occupied as a private residence by various tenants down to recent years when it became the headquarters of the parish council. The new avenue was laid through the former school grounds and the house shorn of its ornamental gardens stood with its front against the footpath. At some time this house had been disfigured with a rather unsightly concrete porch and the old brickwork covered with cement plaster, which concealed the fact that this was a very interesting eighteenth century building containing a fine stairs and coved ceilings with good plaster decoration. Unfortunately the house was allowed to fall into very bad repair and eventually had to be demolished.

Joyce in his *The Neighbourhood of Dublin* states that this house was at one time the dower house of Rathfarnham Castle but in this he is almost certainly mistaken, as Frizell’s map of 1779 shows that it was outside the estate. It is possible that he confused it with the other old house on the opposite side of the avenue which was formerly named Ely Cottage, later altered to Ely Lodge, and which was shown as within the boundary of the estate. This house was in very bad repair but was restored in the late 1970s in a very tasteful manner. The house is now named Ely House.

In 1841 this place was the scene of a brutal murder, when the body of an Italian named Garlibardo was found lying on the open ground in front of the gate. Although arrests were made at the time no one was convicted of the murder. The spot was later marked with a cross.

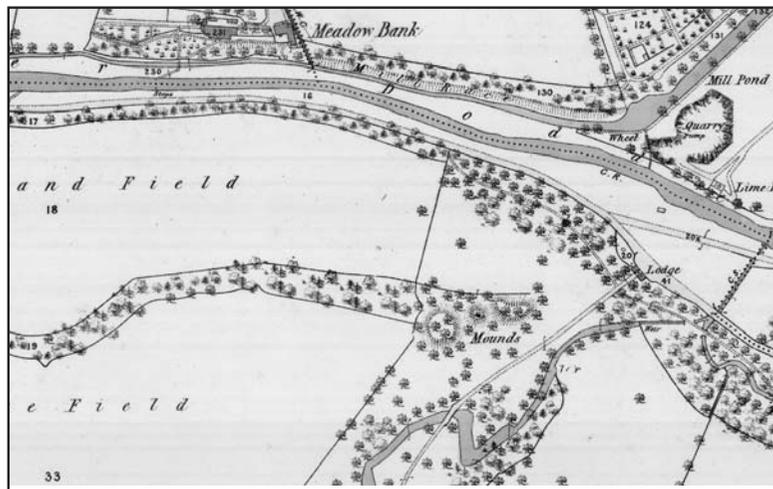
The Motte and Bailey

To the west of this gate is a high and narrow ridge of ground about 50 feet high which is formed between the river Dodder and the stream which flows through the Rathfarnham Estate. With a certain amount of cutting and scraping this ridge has been converted into a defensive earthwork of the motte and bailey type, which were introduced by the Normans in the twelfth century and constructed as a temporary measure until such time as stone castles and bawn walls could be built. They consisted normally of a high and steep sided earthen mound, surrounded by a deep ditch and with a flat summit upon which a wooden tower was built. Against one side of this mound a larger and lower platform was made, also enclosed by a bank and ditch.



The motte and bailey in 1977.

The high mound was for the commander and the larger enclosure for his troops. In the case of the one at Rathfarnham which was probably built by Milo le Bret in 1199, the existing ridge was adopted. The narrow end was cut off by a deep cutting and the soil used to raise the top of the motte. Another cutting was made between the motte and the bailey and where the ridge widened, the bailey was formed and again isolated from the rest of the ridge by another deep cutting. The top of the motte is about 10 yards wide and the bailey is oval in shape and about 23 yards long.



Map shows the mounds of the motte and bailey.

The Old Graveyard

Next to Ashfield is the old graveyard containing the ruins of a church which was dedicated to Saints Peter and Paul. This was a medieval church and was used for Protestant worship down to 1795 when it was found to be too small for the congregation and a new one was erected a short way off. The end walls of the old church are

and vaulted over the wall in pursuit they opened fire and seriously injured the nearest pursuer. Despite this the gardaí continued in the chase and coming to grips they were attacked with a carpenter's brace and battered into unconsciousness, while the culprits escaped down the river. The two gardaí eventually recovered and a man was later arrested, charged with attempted murder and sentenced to twenty-one years imprisonment. The two gardaí Michael Flynn and John Tighe who were promoted to the rank of sergeant were very properly awarded the Scott Gold Medal for their courage.

Nutgrove Avenue

A short distance past the church is Nutgrove Avenue, widened and extended in the 1950s to link up with Churchtown. The old quiet tree shaded avenue has been completely swept away, along with the



Nutgrove school.

On the opposite corner is the well-known Yellow House, a licensed premises built on the site of an inn of the same name which is marked on Taylor's map of 1816. A tradition has been recorded by Mr. Hammond that in 1798 it was owned by a Michael Eades, who sheltered wanted men in his house. It was also frequented by the soldiers of the Rathfarnham Guard whose careless talk was carefully noted by the United Irishmen hiding on the premises. In 1804 when the truth came to be known, the place was wrecked by the same military.



Yellow House and Church of the Annunciation, Rathfarnham in 1977.

The Yellow House was in the news again in the 1940s when two men broke into the premises on Little Christmas night. When the alarm was raised they took refuge in the low-lying gardens beside the bridge over the Owendoher river. When two gardaí spotted them

still standing, the west gable containing a bell turret and the east pierced by a chancel arch, the chancel itself having disappeared. The north wall is gone and all that remains of the south wall is an arched opening.



Ruins of church in Rathfarnham graveyard. Captain Kelly's grave is on the left.

Near the entrance to the burial ground is the grave of Capt. James Kelly, an old fenian who was associated with the rising of 1867. He was organiser for the Rathfarnham district and was known in the area as "The Knight of Glendoo". On one occasion when he was on the run he was hiding in the cellar of his business premises in Wicklow St. when it was raided by police. An employee named James Fitzpatrick who strongly resembled Capt. Kelly in appearance was arrested in error and was tried and sentenced to six months imprisonment, which he served without betraying his identity. Capt. Kelly died on 8th March 1915 in his seventieth year.

On the opposite side of the road are Crannagh Park and Crannagh Road, Rathfarnham Park and Ballytore Road, all built on part of the old Rathfarnham Estate. In the garden of a house formerly named "Tower Court" in Crannagh Road is an ancient circular pigeon house, a relic of Lord Ely's occupation of Rathfarnham Castle. The entrance to this curious structure is by a low door on level with the ground and the inside is lined from floor to roof with holes for the pigeons. A floor of more recent date has been inserted half way up, so as to make two rooms, and a second door broken through the wall at that level.



Circular pigeon house.

Chapter 2

Rathfarnham Lower and Whitehall

 HE Catholic church of the Annunciation was erected in 1878 to replace the old chapel in Willbrook Road. Outside the church door is a primitive type of font on a pedestal bearing the inscription:

*FONT USED IN MASS HOUSE OF PENAL TIMES
IN PARISH OF RATHFARNHAM FROM 1732*

The appearance of this font would suggest that it was originally a stone bullaun and dated to a period much earlier than the penal times.



Font outside the Church of the Annunciation.

financial aid was presented by William Lake of Rathfarnham but we hear of one at Milltown as far back as 1694. In 1751, paper was made here by William and Thomas Slater whose works were destroyed by fire in 1775. Archer's survey of 1801 mentions two paper mills here, Freemans and Teelings, and both D'Alton in 1836 and Lewis in 1837 state that one paper mill was still working and from 1836 to 1839 the name Henry Hayes, Rathfarnham Mill appears in the directories. If this can be identified with the mill at Woodview cottages it must have become idle soon afterwards as it is designated "Old Mill" on the 1843 edition of the O.S. map. In 1854 when this mill had neither water wheel nor machinery, an attempt was made to re-open it for the manufacture of paper but it came to nothing.



Ruins of old mill, Rathfarnham c. 1977.

At the end of the main street the road to Lower Rathfarnham passes on the right the site of the earliest Constabulary barracks which closed down in 1890 when the establishment was transferred to a house named Leighton Lodge near Loreto Abbey.

Rathfarnham Castle

On the east side of the main street and formerly approached through a rather ungraceful gothic archway is the castle of Rathfarnham, its great walls towering over the smaller houses in the village. This ancient fortress was erected by Adam Loftus, Protestant Archbishop of Dublin who was granted in 1583 what was then described as a waste village. His new castle was not long built when in 1600 it had to withstand an attack by the Wicklow clans and again in 1641 it was able to hold out against the Confederate army when the surrounding country was overrun. In 1649, a few days before the battle of Rathmines, the castle, which was garrisoned by the Parliamentary forces, was stormed and taken by the Royalists but they probably evacuated it again when Ormonde withdrew with his army to Kilkenny.



Rathfarnham Castle in 1977.

The property, of which the Loftus family had resumed possession, passed by marriage to the Whartons who sold it in 1723 to the Right Hon. William Connolly, Speaker of the Irish House of Commons, for £62,000. In 1742 the castle was sold to Dr. Hoadly, Archbishop of Armagh, and on his death four years later it passed to his son-in-law Bellingham Boyle. In 1767 he sold the property to Nicholas Loftus, second Earl of Ely, a descendant of Adam Loftus, the original builder of the castle.

This young man died within a few years, probably as an indirect result of great hardships which he had suffered in his youth, and the estate passed to his uncle, Hon. Henry Loftus, who was created Earl of Ely in 1771. This nobleman was responsible for the conversions of the medieval fortress into a Georgian mansion. The narrow loopholes were enlarged and the battlements replaced by a coping with ornamental urns. A semi-circular extension was added to the east side and an entrance porch approached by steps, on the north.



Another view of Rathfarnham Castle in 1977.

Immediately adjoining is Church Lane at the corner of which is a bank built on the site of an R.I.C. barracks which was burned down during the Troubles. In the lane is an old blocked up doorway of an early eighteenth century type.

Church Lane leads to Woodview cottages which are built partly on the site of an old paper mill. The mill race previously mentioned passed under Butterfield Lane to the paper mill and continued on below Ashfield to turn the wheel of the Ely Cloth Factory. It was later turned into the Owendoher river at Woodview Cottages but down to recent years when the new road was made to Templeogue



Blocked up doorway in Church Lane in 1977.

the old mill race could still be traced through the grounds of Ashfield where its dry bed was still spanned by several stone bridges.

The paper mill, of which some old walls and brick arches still survive, has been described as the oldest one in Ireland but there does not appear to be any evidence to support this. The earliest reference to a paper mill here was in 1719 when a petition for

Rathfarnham Village

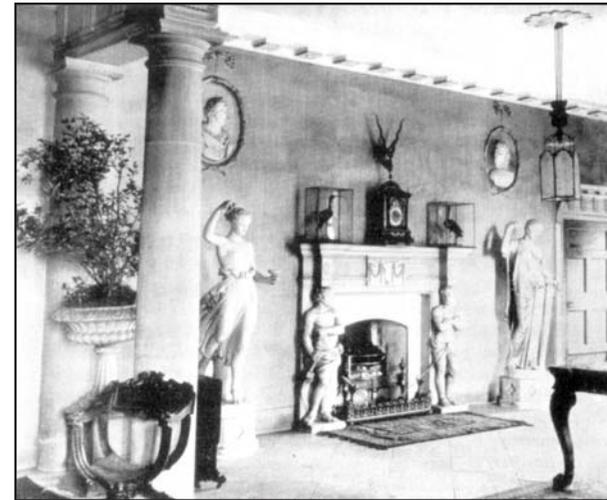
In the castle grounds were several fish ponds which were supplied by a mill race taken from the stream which rises up at Kilmashogue and flows down through Grange Golf Links and St. Enda's. This served several mills before entering the fish ponds, whence it ran through the golf links while a smaller branch was conducted under the road to the flour mills which stood at the corner of Butterfield Lane. Described in 1836 as Sweetman's Flour Mills it frequently changed hands before it closed down in 1887. It was later operated as a saw mill. The dry mill race can still be seen here on the north side of Butterfield Avenue.

Rathfarnham Protestant Parish Church on the Main St. was built in 1795 to replace the church in the old graveyard which had become inadequate for the congregation. Beside the church is the old school house which dates from early in the nineteenth century.



Lower Main Street Rathfarnham in the early 1900s.

The interior was decorated in accordance with the tastes of the period and the leading artists, including Angelica Kauffman, employed in the work. Writers of the period who visited the house have left extravagant descriptions of its splendour. Henry Loftus died in 1783 and was succeeded by his nephew Charles Tottenham. He subsequently became Marquis of Ely, and later, as a reward for his vote at the time of the Union, Earl of Ely.



The entrance hall, Rathfarnham Castle from Ball's *A History of the County Dublin*.

Early in the nineteenth century the family sold the estate and removed their valuable possessions to Loftus Hall in Wexford. The lands were then used for dairy farming and the castle allowed to fall into disrepair. In 1852, it was bought by the Lord Chancellor, Francis Blackbourne, whose family continued to reside there until 1913. In that year the estate was sold and divided. The eastern part became a golf links. The castle and the south western portion were bought by the Jesuit Order and the north western part was devoted to housing.

The original castle consisted of a square building four stories high with a projecting tower at each corner, the walls of which were an average of 5 feet thick. On the ground level are two vaulted apartments divided by a wall nearly 10 feet thick which rises to the full height of the castle. On level with the entrance hall were the library and reception rooms and above this the former ballroom, later converted into a chapel.

To the north of the castle was a long vaulted chamber formerly known as Cromwell's Court or Fort. This was apparently a barn or storehouse erected in connection with the castle farm and like the castle itself had narrow loop holes in its 5 foot thick walls. In 1922 it was incorporated in the new retreat house, to which it formed the ground story and its character concealed from the outside by a uniform covering of cement plaster.



Cromwell's Fort, Rathfarnham Castle.

Not far from the Golf Club House was an attractive little temple built of stone and brick, another relic of Lord Ely's occupation of Rathfarnham. It was rather out of repair but if it had been restored it would have added much to the charm of this part of the links. Unfortunately, by decision of the committee, it was demolished in 1979.



1977 picture of the temple sited on the lands of Rathfarnham Castle. The structure was demolished in 1979.

In 1986 the Jesuits sold Rathfarnham Castle, but before leaving they removed the stained glass windows, made in the famous Harry Clarke studios, from the chapel.