



Historical Overview



Photo, circa 1915, showing Castle House in the background

ABSTRACT

An historical synopsis of Castle House, its surroundings, architecture, timeline, owners over the years and how it fits in with the bigger Warrenpoint narrative.

By Heinrich (Rick) Louw

Acknowledgments

A massive thank you to the following people that made putting this narrative together –

Newry Mourne & Down Museums, and in particular **Joanne Cummins** for her kind research assistance and helping me obtain crucial bits of information to form the narrative, and for the draft review.

Ros Davies who got me started on this research journey by suggesting a multitude of valuable online research resources.

Elaine Monument, Marie & Seamus Heaney, Susan Farrell for proofreading.

Contents

Early history	4-5
About Castle House	6-7
Castle House Historical Timeline	8-9
James Townley Halyday	10-11
Joseph Mayne	12-13
Dr William Hariot Maybe II	14-15
Homeowners Continued	16
Castle House Design Features	17-20
Narrow Water Castle History	21-23

Early History of Warrenpoint and Surrounding Areas

Circa 1670, Francis Hall of Glasdrumman in County Armagh bought the townland of Narrow Water (where the Narrow Water Keep and Narrow Water Castle are located) and eight other townlands, including the townland of Ringmacilroy. (Read Narrow Water Castle History later in this document)

Built within the townland of Ringmackilroy, which translates as 'MacIlroy's Point', Warrenpoint occupied a strategic location where Carlingford Lough reached the entrance to Clanrye River and had significance as a harbour from earliest times. While there remains a division of opinion on how the 'Point' became Warrenpoint, this later name likely reflects the association between the locality and a Waring family prominent in the area from the beginning of the eighteenth century.

A Mr. C.J. Robb, in correspondence on this subject to the *Belfast Newsletter* in May 1938, refers to a letter apparently written in 1708 by a William Waring, who gave his place of writing as "Waring's Point, near Newry." In his *Ancient and Present State of County Down*, Walter Harris includes a map of 1743 showing the harbour with the title "Waring's Point." By 1786, William Wilson, in his *Post Chaise Companion*, calls it "Warren's Point." The following year, Gordon's

Newry Chronicle gave the name "Warren Point." By the time of the Ordnance Survey of 1835, the name "Warrenpoint" is being used (See Ordnance Survey map on page 20).

Pigot's Directory of 1824 tells its readers, "This place and its immediate neighbourhood contain a large number of comfortable lodging houses for the accommodation of visitors, hot and cold baths and an excellent inn. Its vicinity also abounds with the most delightful scenery. On passing through the town towards the shore, the prospect becomes extremely beautiful and grand; the bay of Carlingford, expanding to the view and forming a noble basin where a thousand ships may ride in perfect safety, is bounded on the right and left by lofty mountains... The quay is very convenient and capable of receiving vessels of large burden... In the town's vicinity, there is a neat row of houses called Seaview, extremely well adapted for the accommodation of bathers, the prospect from which is very fine."

This extract indicates the two great pillars of Warrenpoint's economic development in the nineteenth century – its attraction as a seaside resort and its growth as a shipping port.

Two initiatives significantly helped its progress – Firstly, the Hall family of Narrow Water took a major interest in planning the layout of Warrenpoint as it grew and in encouraging improvements in its appearance and investment within it. Roger Hall, for example, gave notice in the *Newry Telegraph* of 3rd April 1813, announcing his intention to grant leases in perpetuity to anyone "inclined to build permanent stone and lime and slated houses." As well as those who responded to the growth in tourism by providing inns and guesthouses, wealthier merchants from nearby Newry and elsewhere helped Warrenpoint's expansion by often choosing it as a location for a seaside home.¹

Warrenpoint developed quite rapidly in the early years of the nineteenth century. Before this, it was a small fishing village with few homes. In his *Topographical Dictionary of Ireland* (1837), Samuel Lewis stated that in 1780 it had merely two homes "with a few huts for the occasional residence of the fishermen during the oyster season." He continues to describe how: "In the succeeding fifty years.... its scenic beauty and coastal location seem to have instigated its rapid development."

The building of a tidal dock in 1767 initiated the development of the town of Warrenpoint. The Irish Parliament funded the dock after the merchants of Newry petitioned them for a grant to build the dock. They submitted a plan and an estimate of the work, appraised at almost £3,000, with two years for the building. The merchants were given a grant of £1,500. Roger Hall, Robert Ross, Robert Scott and Edward Corry were appointed commissioners, and the dock became the property of the Hall family, who were the landlords in the area.

In 1777, the Newry merchants petitioned for another grant of £1,447, which was approved. Two years later, Warrenpoint docks had ships sailing from Warrenpoint to America. Around 1830, the piers were extended into the channel to enable vessels to come in at half-tide and a patent slip was constructed to build and repair ships.

This port expansion, combined with the introduction of rail in the Newry-Warrenpoint region circa 1849, increased the demand for tourist accommodation, permanent residences, and office space. Post-1849, it would take only 16 hours to reach London from Warrenpoint by boat and train.²

Until 1850, ships of 150 tons and over could go as high as Warrenpoint. During the Great Famine, emigrants to America and elsewhere bought their tickets in Newry and sailed from Warrenpoint. However, opening a new ship canal at Newry in 1850 changed this situation.

Roger Hall carried out improvements on the harbour at Warrenpoint, which were noted in the minutes of a select Committee of the House of Lords in 1863. Some of the improvements made throughout the years included building the Victoria Pier and a large shed costing around £5,000-£6,000. Hall also had gas lights set up at the harbour and the pier. It was also noted that since 1819, Hall had spent an estimated £4000 on improving the accommodation of Warrenpoint.

After the opening of the Newry – Warrenpoint Railway in 1849, £5,000 was spent on extensions at Warrenpoint so that goods could be transported to and from Warrenpoint Harbour by rail, reducing transit expenses by half.³



Photo, 1890

¹ The Diocese of Dromore, Past and Present. <https://lisburn.com/books/dromore-diocese/parish-stpeters-clonallon.html>

² The Warrenpoint Branch, Dez Fitzgerald, ISBN 1898392145

³ <https://lisburn.com/books/dromore-diocese/parish-stpeters-clonallon.html>

A Bit About the Architecture of Castle House

Castle House was constructed in a late Georgian (Regency) architectural style, and it's assumed that Castle House got its name based on its association with Narrow Water Castle. A brief historical overview of the castle is provided towards the end of this document.

The exact construction date has yet to be established but is estimated to be around 1845. Early Georgian style, commonly referred to as Palladianism (1714-1745), was inspired by Renaissance architect Andrea Palladio, who incorporated the simple symmetrical proportions and elements of Greek and Roman architecture. Many of these design principles

were 'revived' in a simpler format in the later Regency period and beyond. As an aesthetic movement, the Regency style refers to architecture and other forms of design. This includes home furnishings (such as wallpaper, textile furnishings, and other aspects of the decorative arts), painting, and even clothing styles.

As part of the Castle House restoration project, utmost care was taken to sympathetically restore the dwelling and preserve as much of its Georgian features as possible, with the assistance of Historic Environment Division Northern Ireland.

Who was the Architect for Castle House?

This is speculation, but the theory is that Thomas John Duff (or his apprentice William Barre) designed Castle House, based on several 'connections' picked up during our research:

1. Duff designed Narrow Water Castle in 1836⁴
2. Duff's practice in Newry was in Castle Street
3. Duff designed and oversaw the building of St Peter's Chapel (1834-1841), which is next to Castle House, and the latter references prominent gothic and ecclesiastical design elements of the chapel, i.e. doors and windows. Duff chose Gothic Revival style architecture in most of his design projects. George Ogle Godfrey donated the land for the chapel⁵

NEW CATHOLIC CHAPEL AT WARRENPOINT.—On Tuesday last, the Right Rev. Dr. Blake, waited on by the Parish Priest, the Rev. P. Murphy, the Very Rev. Doctor Keenan, and the Rev. Messrs. M'Evoy, Fitzpatrick and Roney, laid the first stone of a very beautiful Chapel, which is to be erected in the above place. The design has been given by Thomas J. Duff, Esq., and, like all his other plans, displays the classic taste of that eminent architect.

⁴ <https://www.newry.ie/newry-100-years-ago/iconic-buildings-from-thomas-duff-and-william-barre>

⁵ Newry Examiner and Louth Advertiser, <https://www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk/viewer/bl/0000829/18340730/006/0002>

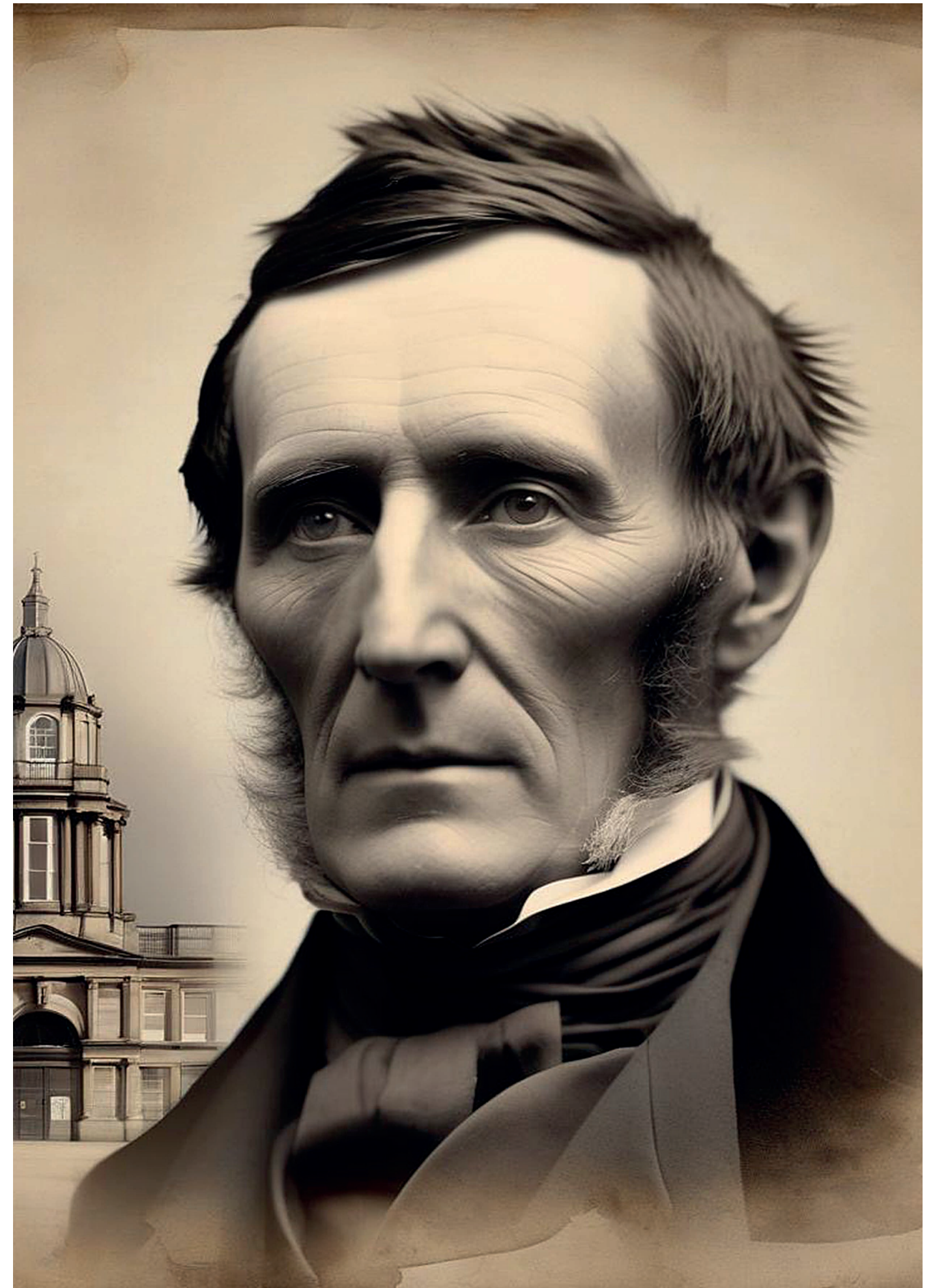


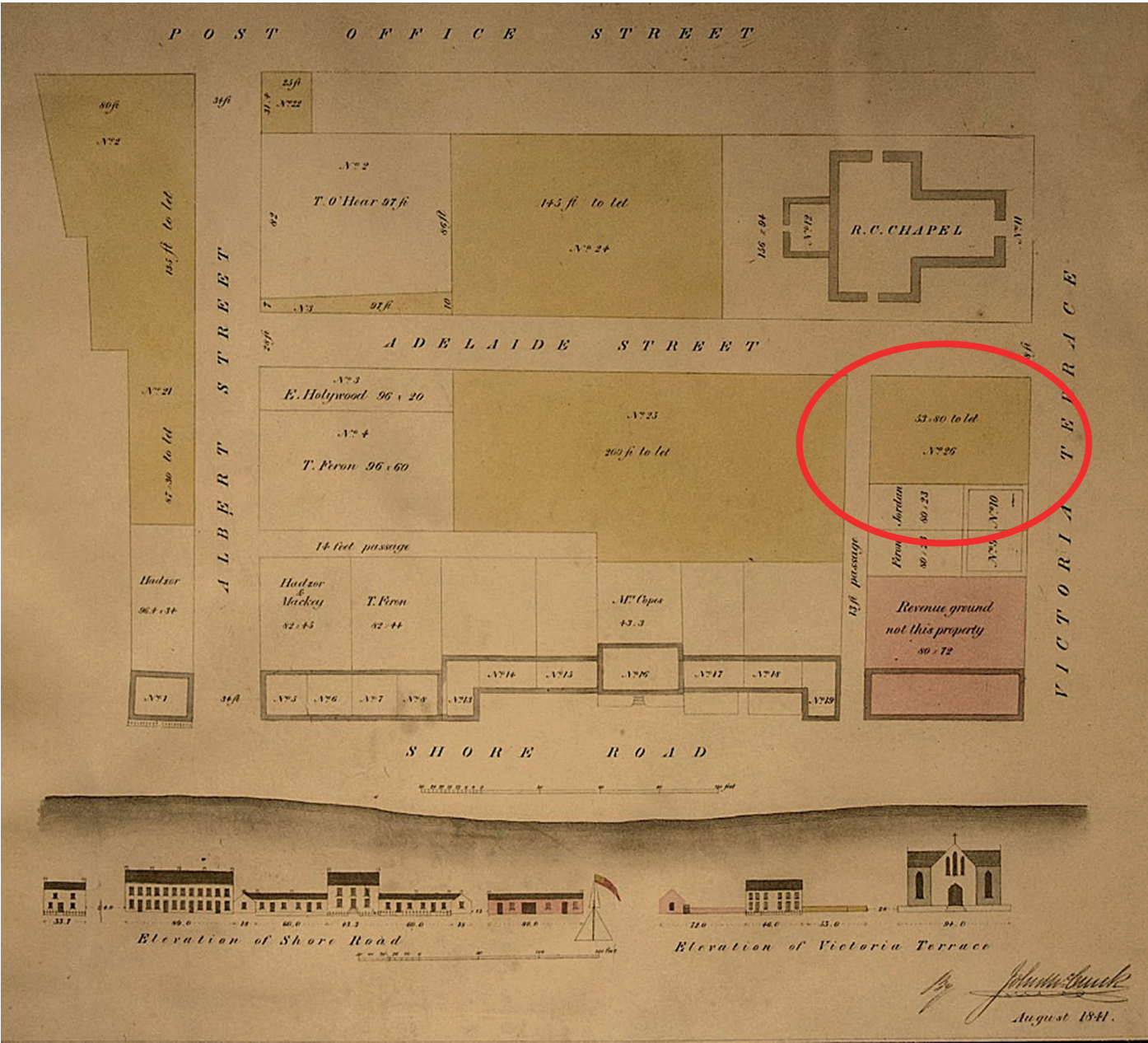
Illustration of Thomas John Duff

Castle House Historical Timeline

Location

The map below is the earliest record of Castle House and its history. Dating back to **1841**, this map shows the early layout of Warrenpoint town and the site where Castle House was eventually built (opposite the Roman Catholic Chapel on the corner of Adelaide Street and Victoria Terrace). Note that Adelaide Street was later renamed St. Peter's Street (after St Peter's Chapel), and Victoria Terrace became Great Georges Street.

The view of the chapel from Victoria Terrace is at the bottom right-hand corner of the diagram. Note that the chapel is without its spire, which was only added in 1874.



Warrenpoint Town Map, 1841

Ownership Timeline

Castle House owners over the years according to Valuation Revision Books at PRONI.

1845 - 1854 Roger Hall

1877 - 1906 Joseph Mayne

1934 Castle House Sold

1947 Castle House Sold

1964 - 1997 William McCullough

2023 Brian Mullan & Rick (Heinrich) Louw

1854 - 1877 James Townley Halyday

1907 - 1926 Dr. William Hariot Mayne II

1934 - 1964 Mary Claire Connolly

1947 - 1964 George & Bridget Devlin

1988 - 2023 Cecilia McVeigh

Lease in perpetuity signed between Roger Hall of Narrow Water Castle and James Townley Halyday, 8th June 1854, making Halyday the new Immediate Lessor of Castle House

Dr. Mayne lived in Castle House until 1926, but moved to Catherine Lodge (another family house) after his mother passed. Dr Mayne died suddenly in 1930

Mary left the house to Charlotte McCarey after her death

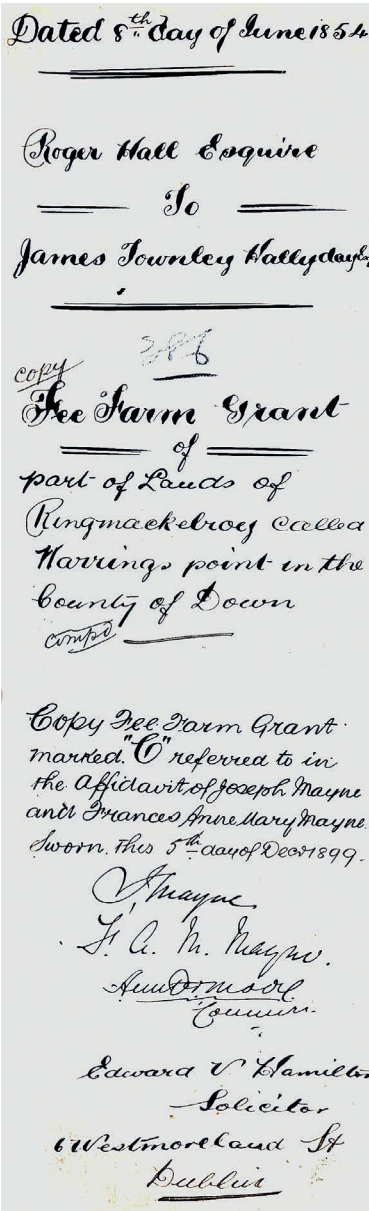
Charlotte McCarey didn't hold on to Castle House long and sold it in this year

James Townley Halyday

Castle House, built circa **1845**, is situated on 2 acres of land (a rugby pitch is typically 1.375 acres), initially owned by the Hall family of Narrow Water Castle. The earliest recorded ownership transfer of Castle House occurred in **1854** when a Fee Farm Grant was signed between **James Townley Halyday Esq.**, a wealthy merchant from Newry, and **Roger Hall** of Narrow Water Castle. This grant functioned as a freehold title with certain lease-like features, including rent (of £9.50 per year) and forfeiture rights. The lease stipulated: "All that and those, the hereditaments and premises contained in the indenture of Fee Farm Grant dated 8th June 1854 between Roger Hall of the one part and James Townley Halyday of the other part and therein described as all that and those of the herein beforementioned two acres of land in the Town and lands of Ringmacilroy, commonly called Warrings Point."

The original lease document still exists and is kept for safeguarding by the Newry Mourne and Down Museum in Newry. Below are scans of the lease document and a map associated with the lease agreement. The fact that the lease is dated 1854, nine years after Castle House came into being (1845), would imply that Castle House was most likely built by the Hall family of Narrow Water Castle, hence the name.

We also managed to track down a Deed of settlement from James Townley Halyday to Jane Halyday, under which the former agrees to assign a plot of ground consisting of two acres and buildings in the townland of Ringmackilroy, Warrenpoint, County Down, to be held in trust by William Harriot Mayne I and Richard Coulter. James Townley Halyday is to exercise control, and in the event of his death, an annuity in the form of a rent charge of £100 per year will be paid to his wife, Jane Halyday, for the term of her natural life.⁶



Original Lease Document



Lease Map

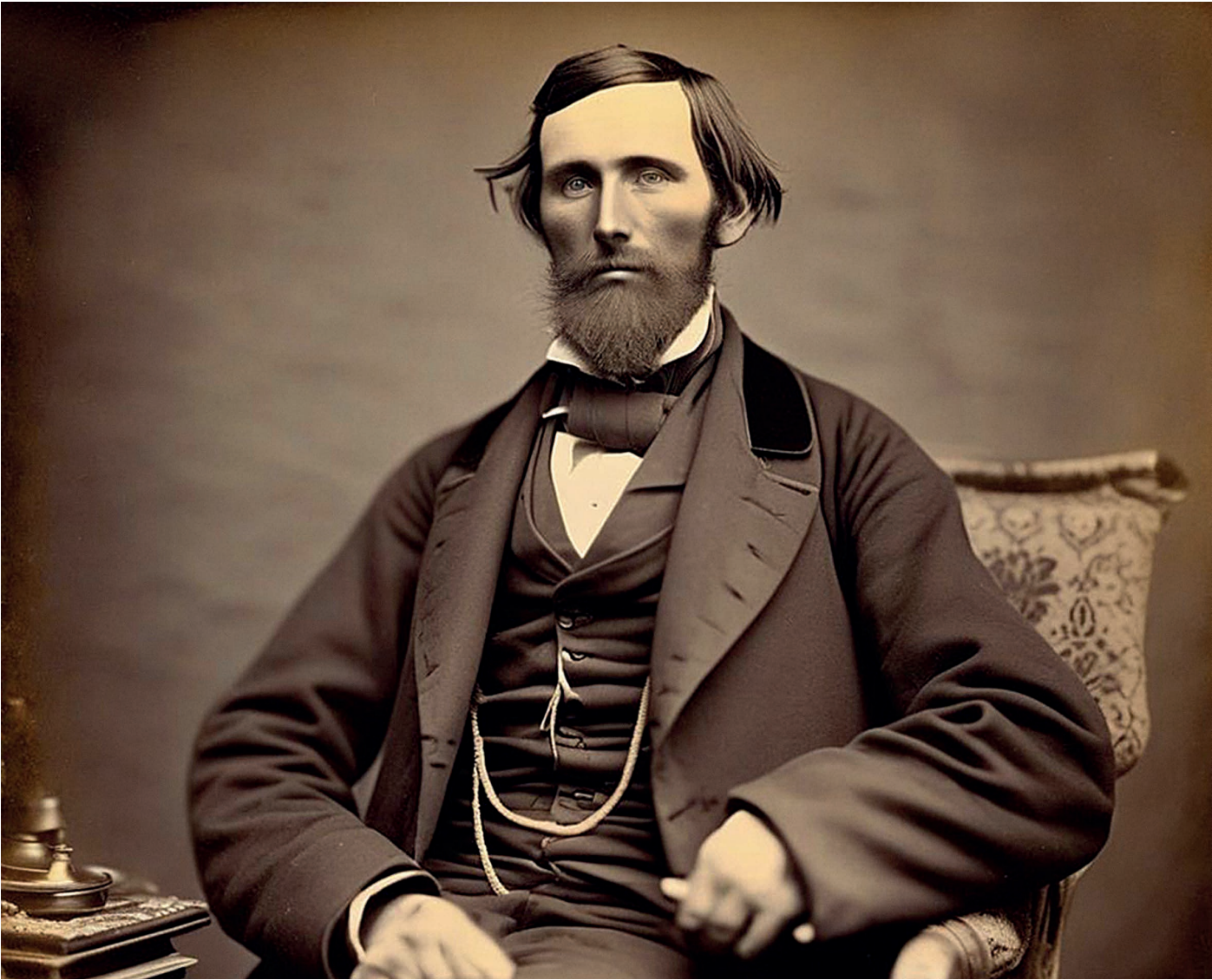


Illustration of James Townley Halyday

James Townley Halyday, a successful businessman, was a woollen draper who owned a carpet and furnishings warehouse and served as an agent for Sun Insurance. He was also renowned for his extensive property portfolio across Warrenpoint, Newry, and the surrounding areas. Sadly, his wife Jane passed away on April 18th, 1855, at the age of 42. James died eight years later, on December 7th, 1863, at 76.

Records show that he was living at Catherine Lodge Estate (39 Seaview Rd) shortly before his death and that he was buried in Clonallan Church of Ireland graveyard. His will was probated on January 30th, 1864, with Joseph Mayne Esq. of Warrenpoint serving as the executor of his estate. Another document found during research indicates that Joseph Mayne was also a devisee (a person who was left freehold property or land in a will) of James Townley Halyday.⁷ Therefore, we conclude that Halyday had left Castle House to Joseph Mayne in his will, and that there may have been a familial connection between the two gentlemen.

⁶ NMD Museums (Newry & Mourne Museum Collection), <https://nmdmuseumscollections.visitmournemountains.co.uk/collections/d7db959a-8dcf-3898-8670-d917b40efe6f/#read-more>

⁷ NMD Museums (Newry & Mourne Museum Collection), <https://nmdmuseumscollections.visitmournemountains.co.uk/collections/bc44a30e-d6ee-3c71-a59d-2a7de0a21217/?s%3Dnmm%253A2003.7.a.16.001&pos=1#read-more>

WOOL AND TOW CARO MANUFACTURERS.
Boyd John, Market-street
M'Ginnis Hugh, Water-street

WOOLLEN DRAPERS.
Byrne Catherine, Market-street
Graham Andrew, Market-street
Halyday James, (& carpet and furniture warehouse) Hill-street
O'Hagan John, (proprietor of the wholesale and retail English and Irish woollen warehouse) North-st
O'Hagan Mary, Market-street
Phelan & Deurir, (new Woollen Mart) Hill-street
Searight Jane & Geo. North-st
Walsh Richard, Market-street

Miscellaneous.
Blackham Jas. ship broker, North-st
Boyle Michl. plumber and brick founder, lower Mill street

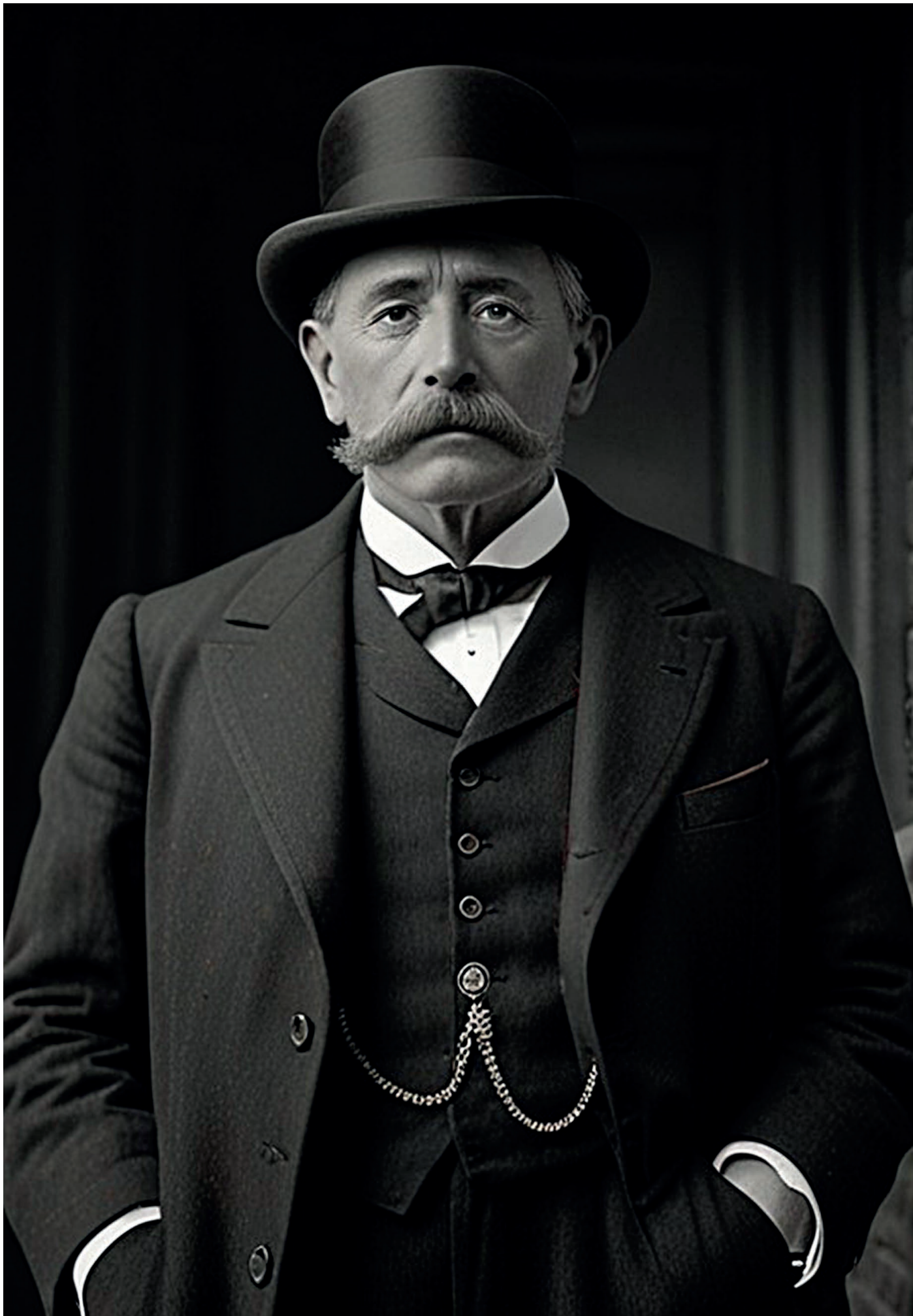


Illustration of Joseph Mayne

Joseph Mayne

Joseph Mayne, a solicitor and Justice of the Peace based in Warrenpoint, became the legal owner of Castle House from 1877 to 1906. The Public Record Office of Northern Ireland (PRONI), official archive for Northern Ireland, has records indicating that he rented the house out to Anne Hardy for the period 1882-1906. His own domicile is recorded in the archives as Catherine Lodge, the same as James Townley Halyday's.

Another interesting find is an 1893 newspaper advertisement which indicated that all of Castle House's furniture and household items were sold at public auction that year.

Joseph Mayne tragically died in February 1911 from suspected heart failure while catching a train to Newry. See the newspaper clip below.

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TRAGIC OCCURRENCE AT WARRENPOINT.

Magistrate Dies at the Railway Station

Shortly before the 10-20 train was due to leave Warrenpoint yesterday morning, a painful sensation was caused by the announcement that Mr. Joseph Mayne, J.P., a well-known Warrenpoint gentleman, had died in very sad circumstances at the station. Mr. Mayne arrived at the station some time before the train left, and entered one of the railway carriages, being then apparently in his usual good health. A few minutes later one of the railway officials noticed that he appeared to be unwell and, on going to his assistance, found that he was in a state of collapse. A messenger was despatched for Dr. W. H. Mayne, his son, who soon arrived, but was unable to save life, the cause of death being, it is presumed, heart failure. The deceased gentleman, who had reached an advanced age, was held in high esteem in Warrenpoint, where he had hosts of friends. He was a Justice of the Peace for County Down, and in religion was a loyal member of the Church of Ireland. In politics he was a Unionist, and took an active part during the last two General Elections. The greatest sympathy is felt with his widow and family in their sad and sudden bereavement.

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ROBINETT GRANDY'S AUCTION SALES FOR APRIL.

CASTLE HOUSE, WARRENPOINT.—Entire HOUSEHOLD FURNITURE, on WEDNESDAY, 19th APRIL.

In BEACH HOTEL, on FRIDAY, 21st APRIL. —Sale of Valuable FREEHOLD HOUSE PROPERTY.

No. 4, BELLE VUE, WARRENPOINT.—Entire HOUSEHOLD FURNITURE, on WEDNESDAY, 26th APRIL.

ROBINETT GRANDY,
Auctioneer, Newry, War-
renpoint, and Rother.

Joseph Mayne's wife, Catherine, died in February 1924.

MRS C MAYNE, WARRENPOINT.

There was a large attendance yesterday at the funeral to Clonallon Cemetery of Mrs. Catherine Mayne, Catherine Lodge, Warrenpoint, who succumbed to an attack of influenza. She is survived by a sister, four sons and four daughters, Mrs. Cameron, Bexhill, Surrey; Mrs. Addenbrook, Kidderminster; the Misses Ethel and Olive Mayne, Warrenpoint; Dr. W. H. Mayne, Warrenpoint; Rev. H. B. Mayne, Chaplain of the Royal Navy Barracks, Chatham; Captain J. H. Mayne, Norwich, and Mr. R. M. Mayne, Birmingham. The deceased lady was the second daughter of the late Mr. Robert G. Patchell of Dublin and widow of the late Mr. Joseph Mayne, J.P., who predeceased her thirteen years ago.

Dr William Hariot Mayne II

As of 1907, the next recorded owner and occupier was Dr. William Hariot Mayne II, the son of Joseph Mayne.

Dr. Mayne, a widely acclaimed physician and researcher, is referenced by *The Catalogue of Medical and Veterinary Zoology* as having published a paper on Trypanosomiasis in The British Medical Journal (1903). Dr. Mayne was appointed as a certifying surgeon under the *Factory and Workshops Acts* for the district of Warrenpoint in 1913. He was a member of the Local Government Board and actively served on several other committees.

INDEX-CATALOGUE OF MEDICAL AND VETERINARY ZOOLOGY 3197	
MAYNE, BRUCE ; and YOUNG, MARTIN D. 1938 a.—Antagonism between species of malaria parasites in induced mixed infections (Preliminary note) <Pub. Health Rep., U. S. Pub. Health Serv., v. 53 (30), pp. 1289-1291. [W^a.] MAYNE, FINLAY SINCLAIR. [M. B., F. R. C. S. E., SUDAN MED. SERV.] See Humphreys, Roy Mervyn; and Mayne, Finlay Sinclair. MAYNE, THOMAS. [Surg., 2. Regt., M. N. I.] 1875 a.—A case of death by maggots <Indian Med. Gaz., v. 10 (1), Jan. 1, p. 17. [W^m.] MAYNE, W. HARIOT. [Dr., Warrenpoint.] - 1903 a.—Trypanosomiasis <Brit. Med. J., (2219), July 11, p. 120. [W^a, W^m.] MAYNE, W. WILSON. [Coffee Scient. Officer] 1935 a.—Work on nematode worms and the establishment of supplies. (In his Annual report of the coffee scientific officer, 1934-35) <Bull. (13) Mysore Coffee Exper. Sta-	MAYO, NELSON SLATER—Continued. 1909 a.—Report of the Department of animal industry <2. Ann. Rep. Cuba Agric. Exper. Station (June 30, 1905-Jan. 1, 1909) (1), pp. 21-27, pl. [W^a.] 1910 a.—A new bot fly [Letter to editor in Jackson, J. F., 1910 a] <South. Planter, v. 71 (9), Sept., p. 921. [W^a.] 1910 b.—Paralysis in swine [Letter to editor] <Breeder's Gaz. (1480), v. 57 (14), Apr. 6, p. 866. [W^a.] 1910 c.—Some diseases of swine <Bull. (189) Virginia Agric. Exper. Station, Dec., pp. 1-19, figs. 1-6. [W^a.] 1910 d.—Thymol and stomach worms in sheep [Letter to editor] <Breeder's Gaz. (1504), v. 58 (12), Sept. 21, p. 506. [W^a.] 1913 a.—Cattle ticks in Central America [Letter to editor] <Breeder's Gaz. (1654), v. 64 (6), Aug. 6, pp. 213-214. [W^a.]

WARRENPOINT.

FREEHOLD GENTLEMAN'S RESIDENCE

AND

ACCOMMODATION LANDS.

To be SOLD BY PUBLIC AUCTION (if not previously disposed of privately) on the PREMISES on FRIDAY, 27th June, 1930, at 3 o'clock p.m.,

DWELLING HOUSE WITH CONSERVATORIES, OUT-OFFICES, and premises known as Catherine Lodge, Warrenpoint, the residence of the late Dr. W. H. Mayne, held in fee farm subject to yearly rent of £3 8s 0d, situated in centre of Sea Front overlooking Carlingford Lough and Mourne Mountains, and having front and rear entrances, together with lands containing 8a 1r. 80p. Statute Measure, held in fee simple free of rent.

The House contains three excellent Reception Rooms, Library, 8 Bedrooms, Maid's Room, Bathroom and W.C., Kitchen, &c., &c., and there are numerous healthy bearing vines in one of the Conservatories.

Out-offices include Stable, Byre, 2 Garages, Lofts, &c.

There is a well-kept Flower Lawn in front and a large well stocked Garden to the rear. On the sea shore in front is a substantially built Boat House.

This Residence is one of the most desirable in the District, and all the Buildings are in excellent repair.

VACANT POSSESSION.

Further particulars and Orders to view obtainable from either of the undersigned.

JOHNSON & RUTHERFORD, Solicitors, 6, Marcus Square, Newry; or

GARNET W. HOLT & CO. LTD. Auctioneers, Newry.

He had a keen interest in golf and sailing, owned a sailboat called Fidget, and, as the Honorary Secretary of the Warrenpoint Sailing Club, organised several regattas around Carlingford Lough. In 1924, after Dr. Mayne's mother died, he moved to Catherine Lodge in Seaview, which he inherited. Both Castle House and Catherine Lodge were part of the Mayne family's extensive property portfolio, so both would have belonged to Dr. Mayne.

Dr. Mayne, an unmarried gentleman, died on April 3rd, 1930, at the age of 51, only six years after his mother. That same year, his mansion at Catherine Lodge was sold—see newspaper advert on the left.

After his death, Dublin University erected a tablet in his memory. He left his brother Robert Newell Mayne effects to the value of £1,954.⁸

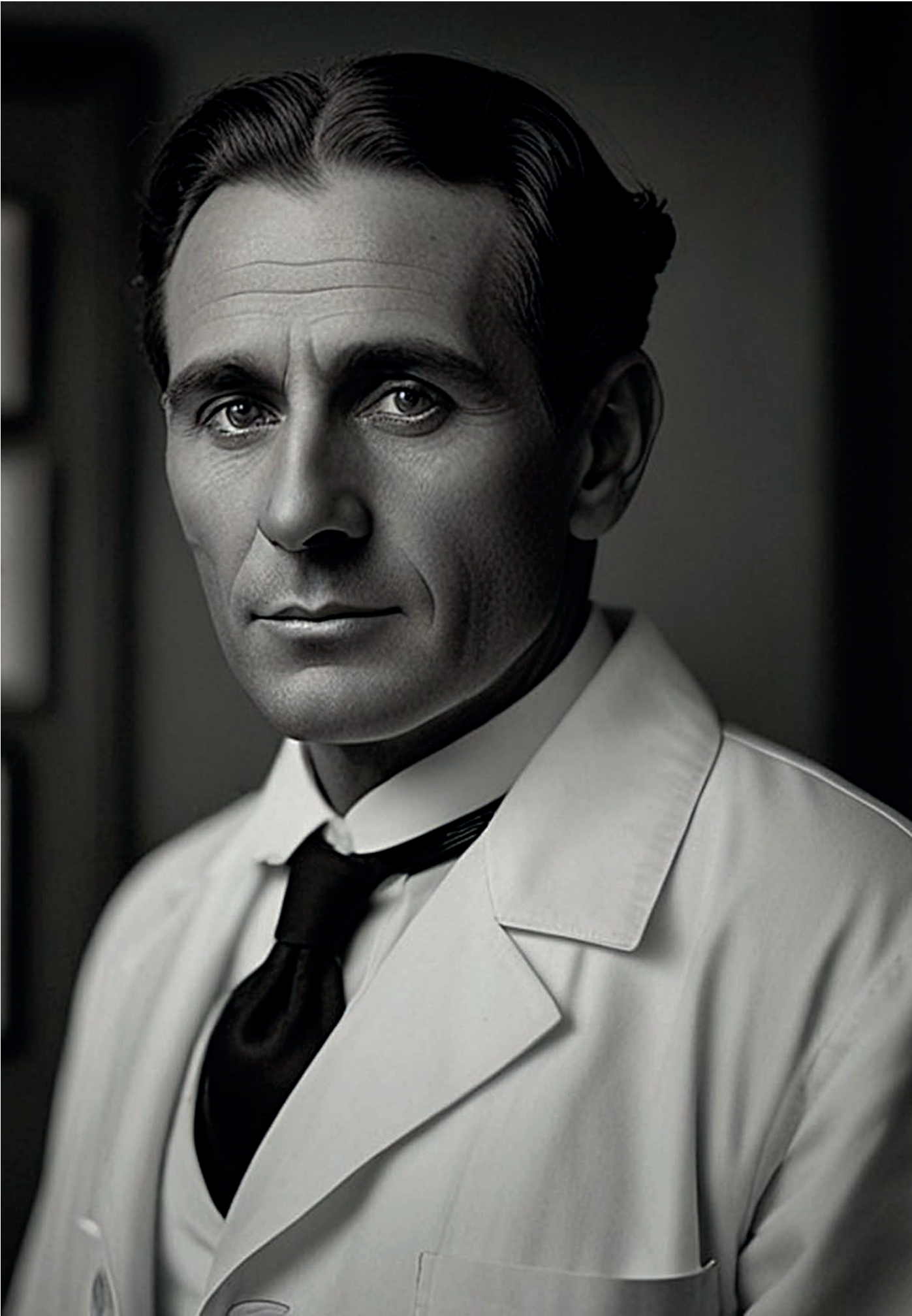


Illustration of Dr. William Hariot Mayne II

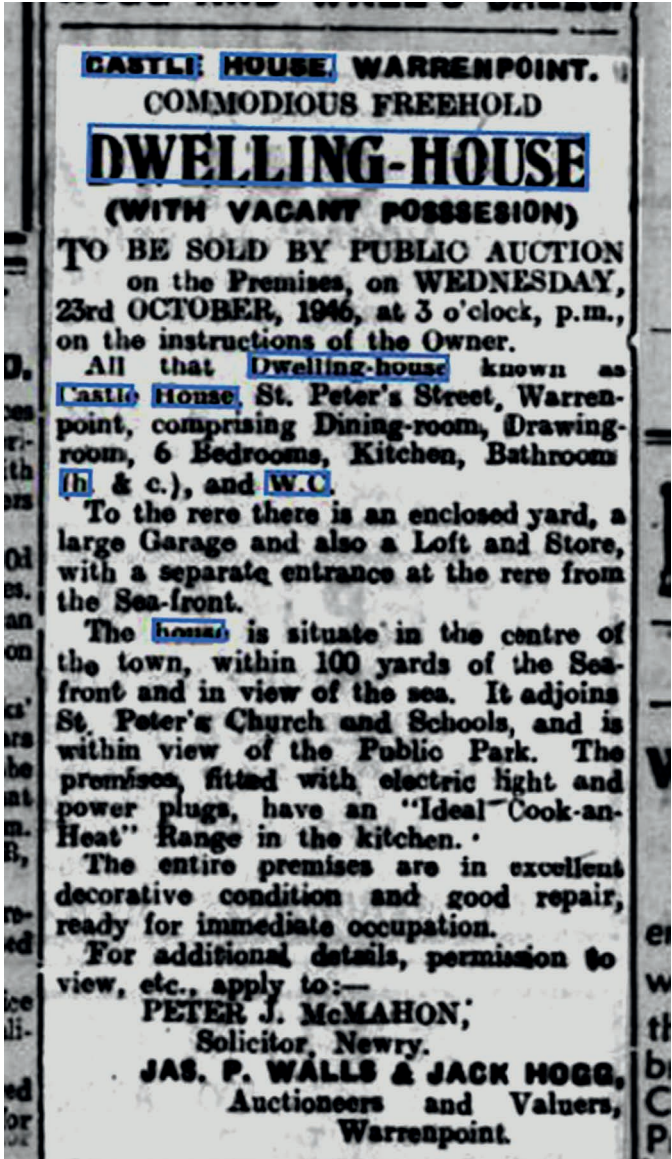
⁸https://apps.proni.gov.uk/WillsCalendar_IE/willsSearchResultsDetails.aspx

Mary Claire Connolly & Charlotte McCarey

The late Dr. Mayne had two brothers, Howard Bertram Mayne, a naval chaplain on HMS Shannon, and Robert Newell Mayne (an engineer), who served as trustees of the Estate of Joseph Mayne. In 1934, they sold Castle House to Mary Claire Connolly, and after her death in 1946, the house was inherited by Charlotte McCarey. Charlotte didn't hang on to the house for long and sold it at a public auction in October of that same year. The newspaper advert for the public auction of Castle House can be seen on the right.



Castle House



George and Bridget Devlin

In June 1947, Castle House was conveyed from Charlotte McCarey to George and Bridget Devlin.

William McCullough

In April 1964, George and Bridget Devlin sold the house to William McCullough. William died in April 1997, and in August 1998, Bridget Heany, the administrator of William's estate, sold Castle House to Cecilia and Gerard McVeigh.

Cecilia McVeigh

She owned the house until October 2023.

Heinrich (Rick) Louw & Brian Mullan

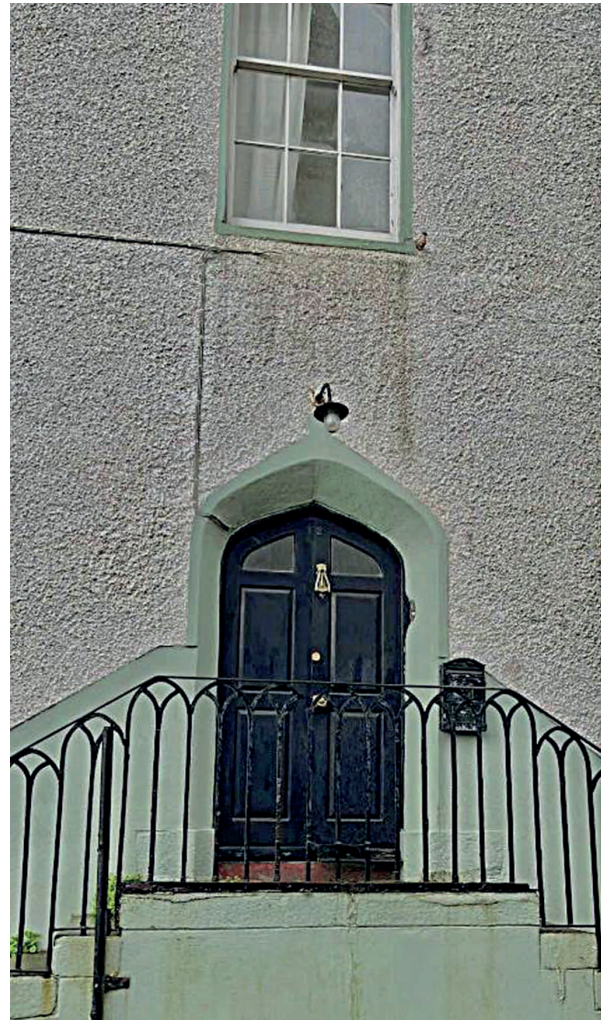
Purchased Castle House from Cecilia in October 2023. Heinrich was born and raised in South Africa and has German/Dutch heritage. Brian is originally from County Down and grew up in Warrenpoint.

Castle House Design Features

Built around 1845, Castle House is a prime example of late Georgian architecture, showcasing authentic Georgian features. The exterior boasts elegant classical proportions, symmetry and a simple yet refined façade. Inside, you'll find spacious boxy rooms with high ceilings adorned with crown mouldings, ceiling roses, and decorative cornices.

Furthermore, some of Castle House's design elements are influenced by ecclesiastical architecture, likely inspired by the neighbouring St Peter's Roman Catholic Chapel. For instance, the Gothic-style front door mirrors the chapel doors, and the windows on the north elevation of the house pay homage to chapel windows, especially the Holy Trinity and Rose Windows.





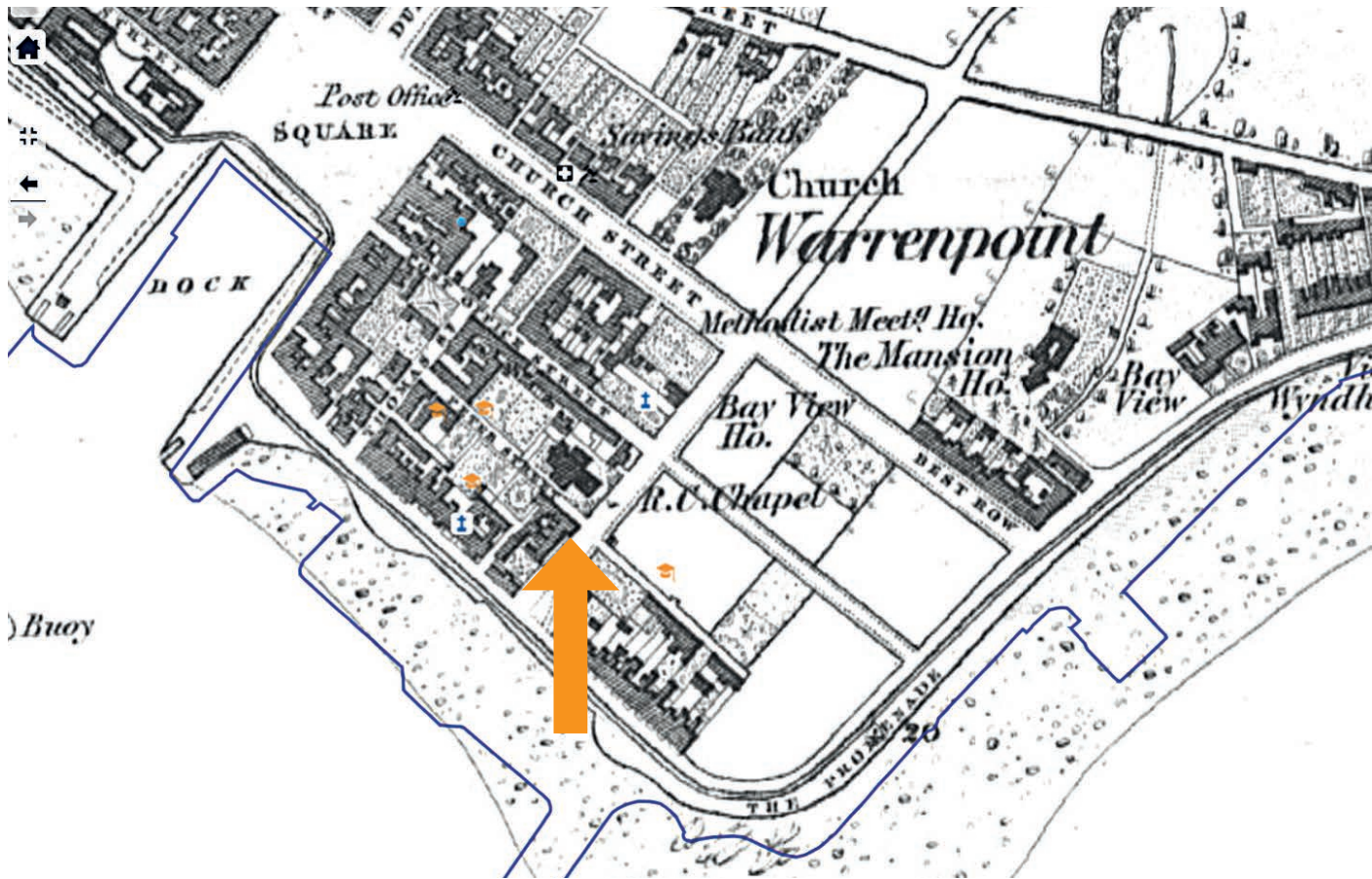
Photo, circa 1914



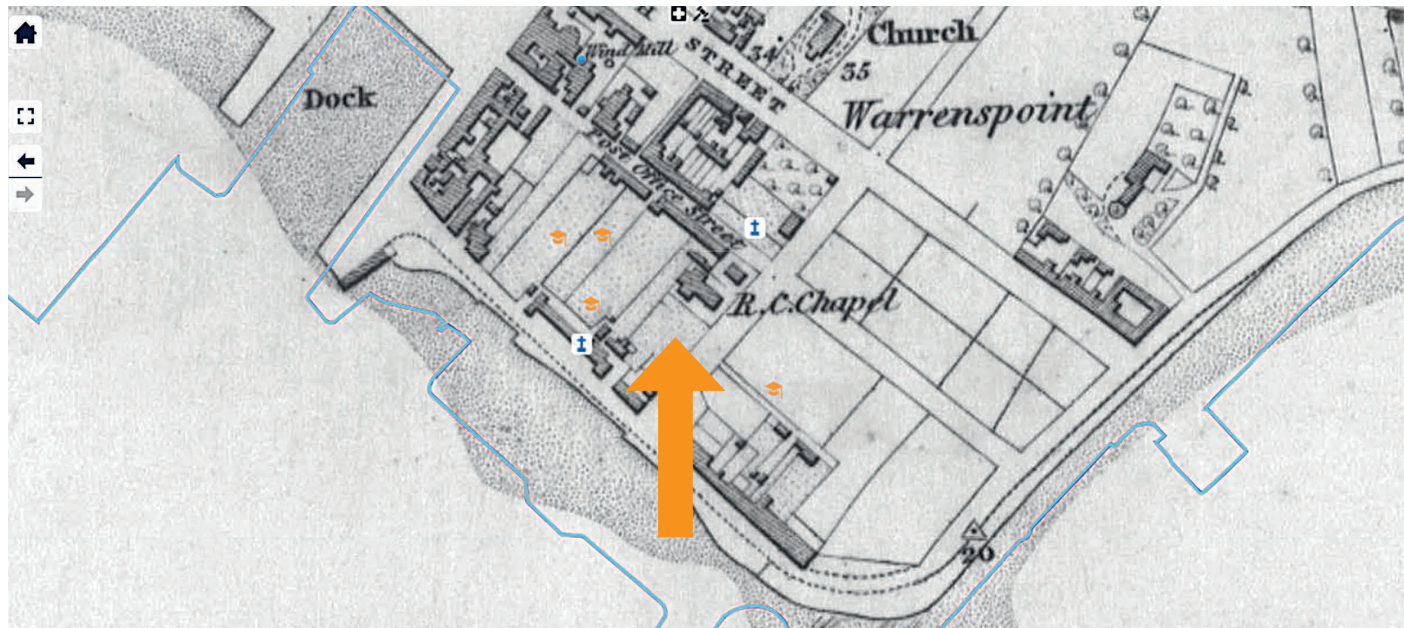
Sadly, there is no exact date for this image, but history shows that Warrenpoint Municipal Park is an Edwardian Park that opened in 1907, so the assumption is that these photos were taken around the same time.

As the chapel and the park were frequently photographed, a glimpse of Castle House is almost guaranteed.

Castle House first appeared on a map in the Ordinance Survey Northern Ireland map, OSNI 1846-1860 edition. See the map below—the orange arrow indicates Castle House's location.



The Ordnance Survey map, edition 1932-1846 below, clearly shows that Castle House didn't exist before 1846, and neither did St Peter's Street (which now runs between the house and the chapel). The orange arrow indicates where Castle House would eventually be built.



Narrow Water Keep

Narrow Water Castle History

As previously mentioned in this document (page 10), the Hall family of **Narrow Water Castle** were the original owners of Castle House.

The following is a short contextual overview of the history of Narrow Water Castle, the Hall family, and their contribution to the history of Warrenpoint and the surrounding area.

12th Century

Narrow Water Castle initially started as a keep (fortified structure) located on the County Down bank of the Clanrye River, which enters Carlingford Lough a mile to the south. The story of Narrow Water Keep begins with the arrival of the Normans in Ireland in the late 12th century. It is specifically associated with Hugh de Lacy, 1st Earl of Ulster, an Anglo-Norman soldier, peer, and leading figure in the Norman invasion of Ireland. The keep itself was constructed as part of a broader Norman strategy to consolidate their hold over territories seized from the Irish chieftains. It served as a military stronghold and a point of control over a vital waterway essential for trade and military movements.

16th Century

Initially, Narrow Water Keep was a simple tower house—a tall, fortified structure designed to withstand attacks. However, over time, as political and military threats evolved, so did the fortifications.

By the 16th century, the keep had been expanded and fortified further, transforming it into a castle-like structure when the Magennis family built a replacement tower house and bawn at Narrow Water. The replacement structure, built in the 1560s, was a typical example of the tower houses built throughout Ireland. This evolution from a small defensive tower into a more robust fortress reflected the changing nature of warfare, with artillery becoming a prominent feature of sieges and defence.

For centuries, Narrow Water Keep stood as a symbol of Anglo-Norman and later English power, which the native Irish sought to resist. The O'Neills and O'Hanlons, powerful Gaelic clans of the region, often clashed with the Norman and English forces in the area, seeking to reclaim their lands and autonomy. The keep was frequently the target of raids and skirmishes, becoming a focal point in the larger struggle between the native Irish chieftains and the foreign occupiers.

17th Century

The **Irish Rebellion of 1641** was a key moment in the history of Narrow Water Keep. This rebellion erupted across Ireland and was driven by long-standing tensions between the native Catholic Irish population and the Protestant settlers, many of whom were English or Scottish. In the region around Narrow Water, local Irish forces, seeking to drive out the English colonists and reclaim their lands, launched an ambush and captured the keep. This brief moment of triumph for the Irish reflected the broader desire for self-determination and resistance to colonial rule. The castle was damaged during the Irish Rebellion and sold to the Hall family in the 1670s. The Hall family occupied it until they built an “Elizabethan revival style” mansion in the picture below (also called “Narrow Water Castle”) in the early 19th century.¹⁰

The Hall Family

It is believed that William Hall arrived in Ireland, possibly alongside Arthur Chichester, in the early 17th century. His son, Francis, acquired Narrow Water Castle (the original tower house), also known as Mount Hall Estate, and the nearby town of Warrenpoint, possibly in the 1670s. In 1686, Francis’ eldest son, Roger, married Christian, daughter of Sir Toby Poyntz from Acton in County Armagh. Roger’s younger brother, Edward, went on to establish a significant estate at Knockbrack in Galway, which eventually spanned over 4,000 acres.

Roger and Christian’s son Toby married Margaret, a niece of the 19th Earl of Kildare, and they had three children: a son, Roger, and two daughters. Roger later married Catherine Savage from Portaferry. Their son, Savage Hall, married Elizabeth Madden, daughter of John Madden of Manor Waterhouse and Hilton Park. Savage and Elizabeth’s son, Roger, known locally as “the old squire,” died without leaving any heirs, passing the estate to his brother, Samuel Madden Hall. After Samuel’s death, the estate was inherited by his nephew, William, who had served with distinction in the Crimean War, notably during the siege of Sevastopol. When William passed away in 1896, his eldest son, Roger, a 1st Battalion Royal Fusiliers captain, took over the estate.

Roger died in 1915 and was succeeded by his son, also named Roger, a captain in the Royal Fusiliers. In 1917, this younger Roger was awarded the Military Cross for bravery by King George V. After recovering from war injuries in 1919, he made a notable decision by marrying Marie de Lourdes, whose father was from Gibraltar and, notably, a Roman Catholic.

This marriage was controversial within the family, especially for his mother and half-uncle Frank, a close associate of Edward Carson. His father would likely not have approved of the union had he been alive. Nevertheless, Roger and Marie had six children: Moira, Christian, Margaret, Roger, William, and Noël. Roger, the eldest son, had three children with his wife, Maeve Pryce. Their son Marcus is the current steward of the estate.

After purchasing the Narrow Water/Mount Hall Estate, Francis Hall may have lived briefly in the original tower house (Narrow Water Keep), which, as mentioned, dates back to the 12th century under Hugh DeLacy. However, the version of the building that survives today dates to the 1560s when John Sancky fortified it for a little over £361. It later came into the hands of the Magennis family (Lords of Iveagh) and the Bagenals and eventually served as a saltworks and kennels for a local hunt in the 1830s.

Francis Hall is believed to have constructed Mount Hall House not long after purchasing the estate, likely in the late 17th or early 18th century. This house was situated behind the current “new” castle and was expanded multiple times over the following century. Eventually, it became the service wing of the Tudor Revival castle that was later built, though it has been restored for residential use today.

The magnificent Tudor Revival castle that now stands is about two centuries old. Though most historians place its construction in the 1830s, Marcus Hall, the current occupant, suggests that plans for the castle may have started as early as 1817. It was Roger Hall, who married Barbara Savage, another member of the Savage family, who oversaw the construction of the new castle. The older Mount Hall had likely become too small for the family’s status, as they had held many prestigious positions in the county for generations. The family once owned large tracts of land across multiple counties, including Warrenpoint. By the 1870s, their holdings included 3,648 acres in County Down, 2,657 in County Armagh, 751 in County Louth, and 4,718 in County Clare.

Roger and Barbara Hall’s initials can be found throughout the castle, a testament to their relationship during that period. Thomas Duff, a prominent local architect known for his expertise in the Tudor and Gothic Revival styles, was given the task of designing the castle. The construction likely took many years, and some elements, such as the fireplace in the library, were finished around 1848, as evidenced by an inscription from Curran and Sons, sculptors from Lisburn.

In the 1901 census, Roger Hall was recorded as residing at the castle with his wife, Elvira Adela, their children, Roger and Elizabeth, and a household staff of twelve. Over time, the castle has housed many interesting artefacts and pieces of furniture, reflecting its long history and the Hall family’s continuous ownership.

The castle, with its finely cut stone from the family’s Armagh quarry, features gables, finials, oriels, a tower, large chimneys, and originally four gate lodges. However, what stands out the most is its stunning location. The castle offers breathtaking views of Carlingford Lough, the surrounding mountains, and the valley leading back toward Newry, which can be appreciated from the beautifully maintained gardens and grounds.

Today, the castle remains a private residence. It has served various purposes over the years, including a stint as a hotel, apartments, and, more recently, a wedding venue.¹¹

¹⁰Narrow Water Castle - Wikipedia
¹¹<https://www.facebook.com/stephenstown66>



Narrow Water Castle



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