

WYNNES OF HAZELWOOD

The Wynne family of Hazelwood, or Annagh as it was originally called, were of Welsh extraction. They claimed descent from a distinguished chieftain of the 12th century in Merionetshire. The first of the family to settle in Ireland was Owen Wynne who received a grant of lands in and around Lurganboy, and was succeeded in 1670 by his eldest son, Capt. James Wynne, who fought on the Williamite side at the siege of Derry, later at the Boyne.

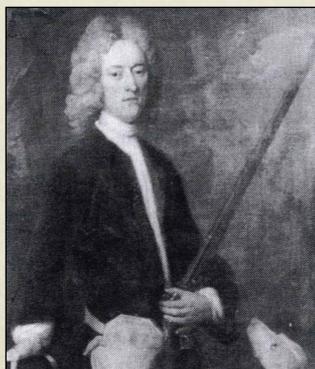


Hazelwood House



John Arthur Wynne and Lady Anne Wynne

Owen Wynne II (1664 – 1737), the 3rd son of the squire of Lurganboy, enjoyed a brilliant military career both at home and on the continent. Following his return to Ireland, was promoted a Lieutenant-general and finally to the exalted post of Commander-in-Chief in Ireland. The apex of his career was the purchase in 1722 of the estate of Annagh, subsequently known as Hazelwood. In addition to the 14,500 acres the conveyance also included extensive property within the Borough, together with the fairs, markets and tolls. Three years later he built Hazelwood House; with his brother, John, was elected a Free Burgess of the Corporation and represented the Borough in the Irish Parliament.



Lieutenant General Owen Wynne II

For over two centuries, and spanning many generations, the Wynnes exercised a powerful influence upon the destinies of the Borough and County and successive members of the family figured prominently in both the civil records and the military annals of that period. They were also prominent in church affairs. The Wynnes were good examples of country gentlemen who, while representing the County in Parliament, had also a 'closed' Borough. As free Burgesses, who regularly filled the office of Provost, they managed the affairs of the Corporation to good effect. Their influence and power extended into almost every civic activity and between 1722 and 1831 the representation in Parliament, the Mayoralty and the Collectorship of Customs were all subject to Wynne patronage. For close on a century and a half they or their nominees sat undisturbed in Parliament representing either the Borough or the County and sometimes both. On the broader horizon they occasionally came into national prominence, one was an Under-secretary of State, two were Privy Councillors and others sat on Select Committees of the House.

Owen Wynne III. (1686 – 1755) succeeded his uncle at Hazelwood in 1737 and was one of the few proprietors of Hazelwood who did not sit in Parliament. Two of his sons, James and Capt. John, between them represented the Borough and County in Parliament for over thirty years.

Owen Wynne IV. (1723 – 1789) was returned as M.P. for the County and had the distinction of sitting in the Irish Parliament for forty years without a break, twenty-nine for the County and eleven for the Borough. In 1756, he was made a Privy Councillor, an appointment that earned him the title 'Right Honourable'. He was also a Governor of the County and a Trustee of the Linen Board.

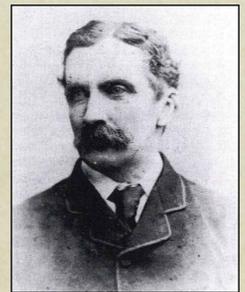
His eldest son, Owen Wynne V (1755 – 1841) succeeded and in keeping with the family tradition he was returned as an M.P. for the Country in 1777, defeating his near neighbour and blood relation, William Ormsby of Willowbrook. He represented the county for thirteen years in Grattan's Parliament, was subsequently returned for Sligo Borough, and sat in both the Irish and Imperial Parliaments for a further quarter of a century and voted against the Act of Union of 1800. At the time of his death he was the oldest surviving representative of Grattan's Parliament.

As a practical farmer and a judge of livestock Wynne stood unrivalled in these parts. He prided himself in the proper and beneficial use of the land and reserved part of his demesne as an experimental farm. His Devon breed of cattle attracted much attention and he had the distinction of being the first to introduce the South Down breed of sheep into Ireland. His reputation as farmer was widely acclaimed and he was President of the Farming Society for a number of years.

Right Hon. John Arthur Wynne (1801 – 1865), Under Secretary of State for Ireland and a Privy Councillor, was the third son of Owen and Lady Sarah Wynne. In keeping with the family tradition he was an ardent Conservative and a Parliamentarian of note. He succeeded his father as M.P. for the Borough in 1830 but lost his seat to John Martin, the 'popular' candidate, in 1832. However, he made a return in 1856 and continued as the Borough representative at Westminster until ill health forced him to resign in July, 1860.

For over a quarter of a century he was deeply involved in local administration as High Sheriff, Magistrate, Foreman of the Grand Jury, Chairman of Sligo Poor Law Union during the arduous Famine period, 1848 – 1852, and a Governor of both the Fever and Mental Hospital. In 1843 he was appointed a member of the Royal commission inquiring into land tenure in Ireland, better known as the Devon Commission.

Owen Wynne VI (1843 – 1910), the last of his family in the direct male line at Hazelwood, succeeded his father in 1865. In his youth he served as a Lieutenant in the 61st Foot Regiment and in 1870 married Stella, younger daughter of Sir Robert Gore-Booth of Lissadell by whom he had four daughters. He sat on both the Grand Jury and the Board of Guardians for many years but, unlike his predecessors, due mainly to changes in the electoral system; he never attained a seat in Parliament. As an extensive landowner, owning 13,000 acres in Sligo, one-sixth of which were demesne lands, he was both a Magistrate and Deputy-Lieutenant of the County and High Sheriff in 1875. He was also a Director of the Sligo Leitrim Northern Counties Railway and was partly responsible for having one of its first locomotives named 'Hazelwood'.



Owen Wynne VI



SHOOTING PARTY AT HAZELWOOD IN THE 1890'S. Owen Wynne VI with his sisters Sarah and Grace are on the left. The rest are guests, with the gamekeeper with his gun on his shoulder.

Owen was succeeded by his eldest daughter, Muriel Caroline Wynne, who had married Philip Dudley Perceval of Templehouse in 1892 and died in June 1932, was the last Wynne of Hazelwood. Evelyn Mary, a younger sister, married Henry L'Estrange of Kevinsfort House and died October 1952. Her demise ended the direct association of the Wynne family with Sligo after a span of two and a half centuries.

