

Constance Gore-Booth

I gCÚIS NA hÉIREANN

The Gore-Booth Family



Constance and Josslyn Gore-Booth
© Gore-Booth Family Collection

Sir Robert mortgaged his estates for £50,000 and used the money to feed his tenants. A letter from the Drumcliffe Catholic Parish Priest written in 1847 stated that prayers are said "every night in every home" for Lady Gore-Booth's "extensive and unostentatious charity". While he fed his tenants on his estate, the introduction of the Poor Law System into Ireland meant that as the owner of land he could also become liable to pay a Poor Law Rate on every acre he owned to pay for all those in the Workhouse in Sligo Union or being fed and housed in the Auxiliary Workhouses set up to cope with the destitution, starvation and disease that engulfed them. As malnutrition weakened the population typhoid, cholera and dysentery were major killers in a community badly housed, ill-clothed, and scarcely fed.

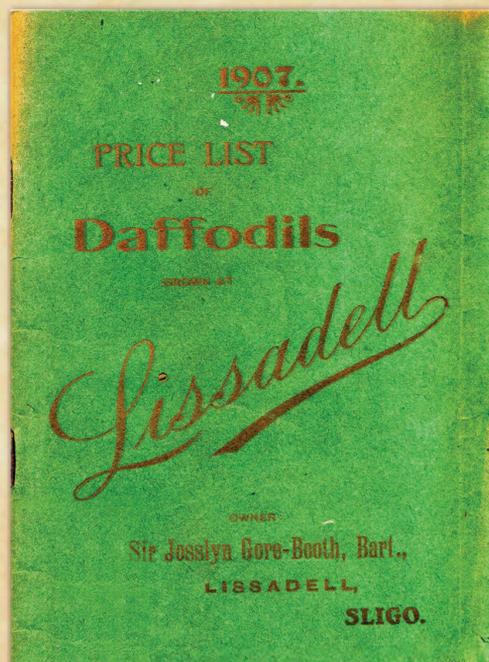
On the death of Sir Robert the estate was inherited by Sir Henry Gore-Booth who succeeded to an estate of 32,000 acres. His schooling finished when he left Eton and his life was less public than that of his father. He held the office of High Sheriff in 1872 but his main interests were his estate and the management of it. He continued the family tradition of being generous in times of need. By 1871 the estate was recorded as being 31,774 acres in extent. In 1879 when there was another potato blight he stocked and opened a food store in Lissadell "giving out meal etc. to the starving poor, free to all, at his own cost". Sir Henry is chiefly remembered for his interest in sailing which resulted in his rescuing a friend in the arctic in 1882 aboard his sloop "Kara". He enjoyed shooting and fishing and taught his children these skills. Sir Henry married Georgina Mary Hill of Yorkshire and his eldest child, Constance Gore Booth, was born in 1868. His second child, Josslyn, born in 1869 inherited the estate and title in 1900 on the death of his father.

Sir Josslyn Gore-Booth enlisted in the Royal Munster Fusiliers and spent some time farming in Manitoba in Canada before returning to Ireland. He took a great interest in the estate and established many ventures on it. He was interested in all aspects of farming, was a well-known livestock breeder, namely cattle and also established a nursery, growing commercially, herbaceous and alpine plants and then trees and ornamental shrubs. He has keenly interested in forestry and planted a large amount of land on the demesne with trees. In the early decades of the century he was employing over 200 workers on the estate. These were successful businesses employing local labour using the rail network and the local port to supply goods both in Ireland and abroad.

Sir Josslyn was also interested in any activity that could enhance the economic well-being of his tenants and became very interested in the Co-Operative movement and was instrumental in the establishment of the Drumcliffe, Ballinfull and Ballintrillick Creameries. Farmers now had a local market for their milk and its processing provided local employment. Sir Josslyn is notable in that he was one of the first to sell his land to his tenants under the Land Act of 1903. Approximately 30,000 acres were sold to the tenants and this in a major way signalled the end of the Gore-Booth family as landlords. Sir Josslyn still held the estate farm and demesne which amounted to approximately 3,000 acres. Sir Josslyn died in 1944 having been predeceased by two of his sons, Brian and Hugh killed in action in 1940 and 1944 in World War 2.



A field of daffodils at Lissadell
Photograph from the Lissadell daffodil price list 1907
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Cover of the Lissadell daffodil price list 1907
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