

*Butler of Mountgarret*

**Butler of Mountgarret  
Co. Kilkenny**

**By  
Arthur Kavanagh  
(Revised Edition 2014)**

**From the Gentry & Aristocracy of Kilkenny  
Published in 2004**

*Butler of Mountgarret*

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Butler of Mountgarret

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## Butlers Viscounts of Mountgarret

The 17<sup>th</sup> Viscount Mountgarret who passed away in 2004 was a most colourful character. He sat in the House of Lords and he certainly did not endear himself to those whose political persuasion inclined to the left. He rejoiced in not being dependent on the whim of electors. “I do not have to curry favour with constituents” he stated tritely in the House much to the chagrin of the *New Worker* which reported his comment and went on to say “Just a few weeks ago an industrial tribunal ordered him (Viscount Mountgarret) to pay £20,000 compensation to a gamekeeper who had suffered eight years of his (Mountgarret’s) *unpredictable, irrational and intolerable rages*”.

Another remarkable incident was noted in a brief comment about the Viscount in an article on the Internet. “*The 17th Viscount Mountgarret, who has died of a heart attack aged 67, claimed descent from King Henry VII and regularly behaved as though living in the 16th century. His most famous exploit was to take a shotgun to a hot-air balloon manned by tourists, which floated too low for his liking over his Yorkshire grouse moor in 1982. He was fined £1,800 by Skipton magistrates, amid much testy harrumphing.*”

While the Viscount may have claimed descent from Henry VII it would appear from all the relevant documentation available that this claim was

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incorrect.<sup>1</sup> He was in fact descended from Edward Longshanks inasmuch as a granddaughter of that monarch was married to the 1<sup>st</sup> Duke of Ormonde, in the early 14<sup>th</sup> century and bore his children.

The first Viscount Mountgarret was Richard, the second son of Piers Roe Butler the 8<sup>th</sup> Earl of Ormonde. Piers Roe himself was the son of Sir Richard Butler of Polestown and Sadbh Kavanagh the sister of Art Bui Kavanagh the McMurrough and King of Leinster. Piers Roe was given a Gaelic upbringing by his Kavanagh mother but his Fitzgerald wife, the famous Lady Margaret soon brought him back to ‘civility’. She was the daughter of the Great Earl of Kildare but when she married Piers Roe she soon became a dedicated Butler and used her not inconsiderable talents and influences to further the interests of that family. Her eldest son was James who became the 9<sup>th</sup> Earl of Ormonde and Richard was her second son.<sup>2</sup> She strove with all her maternal instincts to ensure that Richard became a very powerful lord also.

The 16<sup>th</sup> century in Ireland was a very exciting time for the entrepreneurial English and Anglo Irish such as the Butlers. Huge swathes of church lands were taken by Henry VIII and leased or sold to members of the powerful ruling families. In 1541 Richard Butler was given leases of lands in Wexford and Kilkenny, notably in Inistioge, Thomastown and Shankill.<sup>3</sup> Two years later, in 1543 he got a grant of all the Augustinian lands in and near New Ross.<sup>4</sup> He was created Viscount Mountgarret and Baron of Kells in 1550 in direct response to his plea to be given a title that would outshine that of the McMurrough. “For the next two centuries those Viscounts had a noble record of supporting losing causes with considerable gallantry, culminating in 1793 with the death of the 11<sup>th</sup> Viscount from a surfeit of strawberries and cider!”<sup>5</sup>

Richard the 1<sup>st</sup> Viscount was not among that unhappy band. The forays of his father Piers into the territories of the Fitzpatricks of Upper Ossory, trained him in the exercise and knowledge of those military operations, which he afterwards turned to good account in defending the King’s lands against the “Irish enemy,” especially in

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<sup>1</sup> It might be possible that Henry VII had an affair with Margaret Fitzgerald the wife of Piers Roe, the 8<sup>th</sup> Earl but if this is the case it is certainly not information that is in the public domain, while it may have been part of the family lore. It is well known that Margaret made every effort to advance her son Richard, but from what we know of her character this was to be expected.

<sup>2</sup> Her third son, Thomas, was killed in a battle with his Geraldine cousins, at Jerpoint Abbey in Co. Kilkenny in 1532. Lady Margaret’s niece, Lady Alice Fitzgerald, was married to Cahir McArt Kavanagh of Borris, Co. Carlow, ancestor of the present day Kavanaghs of Borris.

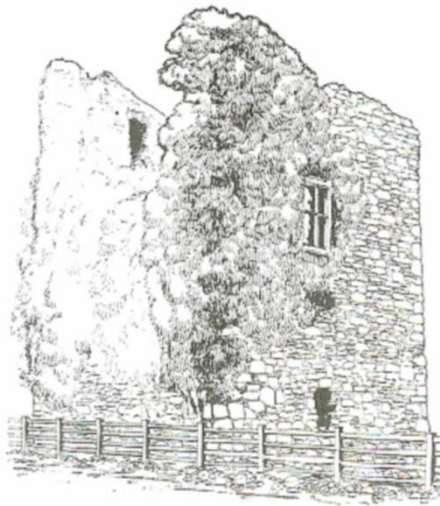
<sup>3</sup> Fiaints of Henry VIII no. 239

<sup>4</sup> Fiant no. 396

<sup>5</sup> Lord Dunboyne’s talk at Kilkenny Castle (*Old Kilkenny Review*)

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Wexford, against the Kavanaghs. It was in recompense for such services to his Sovereign that King Edward VI gave directions to have him created a Viscount. He had already been installed in Mountgarret Manor and castle, on the outskirts of New Ross, and it was from this that the name Mountgarret derived. The Manor was formerly Church lands and the Castle was the home of the famous Bishop Barrett in the late 14<sup>th</sup> and early 15<sup>th</sup> centuries, after he had removed from Ferns, the traditional residence.



**Mountgarret Castle**

In addition to the Augustinian lands of New Ross that he had acquired earlier, Mountgarret bought the lands of Kayer (Davidstown to Glynn) from Foulks Denn in 1556. The Kayer lands were later demised to Piers Butler his son. The Butler family of Kayer was subsequently dispossessed by the Cromwellians.

During the reigns of Edward and Queen Mary, prior to being created Viscount Mountgarret, Richard was made keeper of the Castle of Ferns. He was also in two commissions for the preservation of the peace, in the Counties of Tipperary, Kilkenny and Wexford. He was present in the Parliament of 1560 which met in Dublin and which ended in passing the Statute of Uniformity, which made Queen Elizabeth head of the Church, in Ireland, and re-established the

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reformed worship, as it had existed under Edward VI. Richard was buried in St. Canice's Cathedral, Kilkenny, in 1571.<sup>6</sup>

By his first wife, Eleanor, daughter of Theobald Butler of Neigham, he had a daughter Margaret<sup>7</sup> and a son, Edmund, who became the 2nd Viscount. He followed in his father's footsteps of persecuting and hunting down the 'mere Irishry'. He was ever ready to spill blood, in quarrels and in defence. He renewed the old animosities with the Fitzpatricks, the Princes of Upper Ossory. Edmund later married Grainne, the daughter of Lord Ossory (Sir Barnaby Fitzpatrick). Marriage alliances in those days were often used in an attempt to patch up old enmities.

The 2<sup>nd</sup> Viscount was a significant political player in his time, siding with the Earl of Ormond and Lord Justice Pelham against the Earl of Desmond. He played a prominent role in the 'plantation of Munster. He accompanied the Lord Deputy in his Munster Expedition in 1579 against the Spaniards and James Fitzmaurice, who was leader of the Desmond insurgents. He sat in Perrott's Parliament in Dublin (1585-6) which attainted the late Earl of Desmond. One hundred and forty of his followers confiscated 600,000 acres of land, to be distributed among English undertakers, who peopled it with English families.

Strange as it may seem the Ormondes and the Mountgarrets were closely related to the Desmonds of Munster as Edmund's uncle, James, the 9<sup>th</sup> Earl of Ormonde, was married to Lady Joan Fitzgerald the daughter and heir of the 11<sup>th</sup> Earl of Desmond. It was even stranger to note that some of the sons of the 9<sup>th</sup> Earl were involved in what was known as the Desmond Rebellion, which found expression in a battle fought for Kilkenny city. And yet stranger was the fact that Piers and James, two brothers of Edmund the future Viscount Mountgarret also

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<sup>6</sup> The Viscount was not without his enemies and one such may have been Colclough of Tintern in Wexford who complained to the Lord Deputy that Sir Richard refused to attend a hearing to answer for complaints against his men. The complaints were that they were responsible for 'taking of preyes, Bordragges, wounding of men by night and taking Gentilwomen prisoners' (Hore – *History of the town & county of Wexford* Vol. 6 pg. 35)

<sup>7</sup> Married to Sir Nicholas Devereux of Ballymagir in Co. Wexford. This made her the mother-in-law of Catherine, the daughter of Brian McCahir Kavanagh of Polmonty, the ancestor of the Kavanaghs of Borris in Co. Carlow. Catherine was married to Walter Devereux the son of Sir Nicholas.

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sided with the Desmond faction, then led by James FitzMaurice the son of Sir Morish Fitzgibbon, the White Knight.<sup>8</sup>

The rebel Butlers all took an active part in the battle of Kilkenny in 1568. The Butler participation in the rebellions of the period stemmed from two grievances – the loss of land suffered by the Butlers of Cloghgreennan, Co. Carlow<sup>9</sup> and the pressure being put on them to renounce Catholicism.

The battle of Kilkenny was a serious affair involving the Butlers allied to the Gaelic clans of the region, the Kavanaghs, O'Byrnes and O'Nolans. The rebel Butlers with their Gaelic allies took over the city and defended it against the Crown forces led by Sir Peter Carew and probably the Mountgarret forces. The defenders numbered two thousand. Carew defeated them with great slaughter, killing over four hundred.

Following this defeat the Butlers were arrested but were released on the orders of Black Tom the 10<sup>th</sup> Earl who enjoyed almost unlimited influence at court.<sup>10</sup> They were in rebellion again the next year (1569) and together with their old allies sacked the town of Enniscorthy. After this the rebellion seems to have fizzled out and the Butlers were again arrested but once more because of the influence of their brother (who claimed they were mad) they were released.

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<sup>8</sup> Edmund Fitzgibbon, the last White Knight, was granted possession of Kilbehenny Castle after the defeat of the Geraldine Rebellion in 1583. The White Knight already owned a large territory, known as the White Knight's Country, in south-east Limerick and in the Mitchelstown area. He died in Kilbehenny Castle on April 23 1608. His son and heir, Maurice Fitzgibbon, had died the previous day. Father and son were interred in the old Dominican priory in Kilmallock, which had been founded and endowed by their ancestors.

<sup>9</sup> The Cloghgreennan Butlers were Sir Edmund (a son of James the 9<sup>th</sup> Earl of Ormonde) and his sons. They were Piers of Ballysax and James. Both Piers and James were executed for their part in the Nine Years War.

<sup>10</sup> See the chapter about the Butlers of Ormond.

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Edmund the 2<sup>nd</sup> Viscount Mountgarret lived through the Nine Years War<sup>11</sup> but died in 1602.<sup>12</sup> He was succeeded in his estates and titles by his eldest son Sir Richard Butler the 3<sup>rd</sup> Viscount.<sup>13</sup>

At only twenty four years of age, the young Richard was already inured to the hardships of war. He and his father had sided with the O'Neills of Tyrone in the Nine Years War and Richard was married to Margaret the daughter of Hugh O'Neill the Earl of Tyrone.<sup>14</sup> In a bewildering change of allegiance the Butlers, father and son, sided with the Earl of Essex who arrived in 1599 to put down the rebellion. This was probably done because of the urgings of the Earl of Ormonde. When the Nine Years War was finally brought to a conclusion by the defeat at Kinsale the Mountgarret Butlers had their lands intact.

Richard continued as a loyal subject under King James I and sat in the Parliament of 1615 in his capacity of Viscount. He continued as a solid citizen and loyal to the crown and was again in Parliament in 1634 when Wentworth was Lord Deputy.<sup>15</sup> However in 1641-2 he resurrected his ancient armour, mounted his old war steed, and joined the Confederacy in support of the Catholic cause. At this time he was the owner of a huge amount of land in Kilkenny, Wexford and Carlow, said to have been in excess of twenty thousand acres.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> The Earl of Ormonde in writing to the Privy Council, in 1598, stated that Viscount Mountgarret was in rebellion. (Hore – *Chronicles of Ross* – page 284)

<sup>12</sup> Edmund had at least three brothers : Piers ancestor of the Butlers of Kayer, Moneyhore and Munfin (Wexford) and Tullow (Co. Carlow), John: ancestor of the Butlers of New Ross and Wells (Co. Carlow), Thomas: ancestor of the Butlers of Castlecomer & Coolnaheen (Co. Kilkenny)

<sup>13</sup> Richard had at least one brother, James who was ancestor of the Bealaborrow (Wexford) and Tinnehinch (Carlow) Butlers. He also had a sister, Eleanor, (one of three) who was married to Morgan Kavanagh of Polmonty, a nephew of Fiach McHugh O'Byrne.

<sup>14</sup> Sir Richard was married three times. His second wife was a daughter of Sir William Andrews of Buckinghamshire who died in 1625 and his third wife was the widow of Sir Thomas Spencer. She survived Sir Richard and died in 1656.

<sup>15</sup> Joan Butler a daughter of Lord Mountgarret was murdered in 1639 by her husband John Butler. She had a daughter by a previous marriage Mary Poulett and there was much effort by her grandfather to make sure her property was not stolen. In 1642 he also requested the Confederacy to enforce payments to Mary by her tenants. (NLI Ms. 3172-85)

<sup>16</sup> Sir Richard Butler, Lord Mountgarret paid £800 for lands in Co. Wexford in 1640. He bought the lands from Nic Busssher. At this time he owned over 20,000 acres of land in Kilkenny and over 3,000 acres in Co. Wexford. Mountgarret Manor, just outside New Ross, comprised a castle and 380 acres in demesne.



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This move by Mountgarret was a staggering blow to the government side and his second cousin James the 12<sup>th</sup> Earl of Ormonde. The old warrior now in his early sixties commanded such huge respect that all the Catholic gentlemen of the county with their cohorts flocked to his standard. He swept into Kilkenny city and seized it for the Confederacy. One of his first acts was to extend his protection to all the Protestant citizens and their property. Of course the wife of the 12<sup>th</sup> Earl was also a Protestant and she made every effort to help her co-religionists by giving them sanctuary in the Castle. These moves did help to quell the tide of religious hatred that was a hallmark of that particular period.<sup>17</sup> However in the aftermath of the Cromwellian invasion Sir Richard was accused of attacking Protestants as the following deposition shows

‘Deposition of Simon Sellers of the city of Dublin, gent, sworn, etc., sayth *that* about the 1<sup>st</sup> December 1641, he, being at Eniscorfy in the Co. of Wexford, was then and there, with his wife and children, forceably deprived and expelled from their house dwelling and farmes there, and of two mills, and was then and there also forcibly robbed and dispoyled of Cowes, horses, mares, young cattle, household goods, hay, a tanyard with a great quantity of leather in it, bark, and other goods and meanes to the value of £800 at the least. In debts also this Deponent is perswaded he hath lost also £540 at least. He sayth that the Rebels in the County that rose up in armes and deprived and dispoyled him of his houses, etc., were Pierce Butler late of Clonekerry,<sup>18</sup> Esq<sup>r</sup>, Joseph Farrell of Eniscorfy aforesaid, merchant, the Lord Mountgarret and the friars of Wexford.’<sup>19</sup>

Viscount Mountgarret was very much involved militarily during the period and in 1642 he seems to have had joint leadership of the southern Confederate Army with General Preston. This army suffered serious defeats at the hands of the Marquess of Ormonde, his second cousin, in that year at Kilrush, Co. Kildare and at Ballinvegga near New Ross.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> In another instance he prevented ‘the Irish’ from hanging a Richard Fitzhenry from near New Ross, who was accused by them of hanging ‘three or four’ Kavanaghs, who according to him had murdered and robbed 16 English men and women and sucking children. Fitzhenry at the time had a Commission from Lord Ormonde to execute martial law in the county. (Hore’s *History of the town & county of Wexford* Vol.6 pg. 483)

<sup>18</sup> Cloghnakeeragh now called Wilton near Enniscorthy.

<sup>19</sup> Hore’s *History of Wexford and county* Vol. 6 pg. 480

<sup>20</sup> Over 700 of the Irish force were killed on the day, including Sir Morgan Kavanagh of Clonmullen, Co. Carlow – a distant cousin of the Marquess. A Lt. Col. Butler was captured and this may in fact have been Richard Butler of Kilcash the brother of the Marquess. The prisoners were brought to Dublin but the gentlemen were very well

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Sir Richard, who was elected President of the Council of the Confederates, headquartered at Kilkenny, was sidelined by the Machiavellian Rinuccini, the Pope's envoy to the Confederates, possibly because he was a near relation of the Duke of Ormonde – a committed Protestant. However he still commanded loyalty and respect from his old comrades. Because of the interference of Rinuccini the Confederacy was deeply divided about its policies and aims and any attempts by the more moderate Confederates to find a solution to the impasse were thwarted by that worthy. An example of his overbearing and meddlesome behaviour was his opposition to the terms of peace negotiated between Ormonde and the Confederates in 1646. The majority of the Confederates opted to agree to the conditions which promised to guarantee them some freedom in the area of religious worship, relief from the oath of supremacy and concessions in the areas of land ownership and education rights. The brave bishop used his mighty mitre and threatened to interdict every town and parish that allowed the terms of the peace to be made public.<sup>21</sup> Furthermore he forbade church services to be held and silenced any clergy who opposed him.<sup>22</sup> To his credit Viscount Mountgarret was not overly impressed and he sent his son, Edmund, with a party of horsemen to ensure that the terms of the peace would be promulgated in the city of Kilkenny and in the surrounding towns.

It is not clear what subsequent role Lord Mountgarret played in the Confederacy or in the campaign against Cromwell, but he died a natural death in 1652.<sup>23</sup> Edward one of Mountgarret's younger sons who had been living in Urlingford Castle was arrested in 1652 and taken to Dublin. He was tried for the murder of people in the Freshford area ten years earlier. He was believed to be innocent but on the testimony of Major Warren he was found guilty and executed.<sup>24</sup>

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looked after by the Marquess and on his orders were not sent as prisoners to England. One writer complained that they were treated as if they had been the victors!

<sup>21</sup> In May of 1648 when a peace deal was finally agreed between the Confederacy and the King's representatives (but not by Owen Roe O'Neill) the nuncio excommunicated all those who were party to the arrangements.

<sup>22</sup> Such was the superstitious nature of the people at that time many really believed they would have to endure hell's fires if they opposed the wishes of the Church Hierarchy.

<sup>23</sup> After the Cromwellian campaign he fled to Galway where he took refuge and died there. His castle at Ballyragget was taken over by Major Abel Warren. Warren's father, Rev. Edward Warren, the rector of the parish was ousted from his living by Mountgarret's soldiers in 1641. Rev. Edward had three sons, two of whom were officers in Cromwell's army.

<sup>24</sup> Abel Warren had a brother Edward who was a Colonel. After the Restoration they were involved in a plot to take the Lord Lieutenant as a hostage and compel him to

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Lord Mountgarret's successor was his eldest son, Edmund, who became the 4<sup>th</sup> Viscount Mountgarret. Edmund, like his father, was a key player in the Confederate Army and saw action at Kilrush and Ballinvegga and in Co. Wexford, where he was for a time Governor of Enniscorthy and then of the entire county of Wexford.<sup>25</sup> He was also Governor of Kilkenny in 1646. Sir Edmund was taken prisoner when Wexford was captured by the Cromwellian Army.<sup>26</sup> It is unclear how he came to be in France with Charles II where he was a Captain in that monarch's army. In the subsequent land grabbing fever the lands of the Mountgarrets were declared forfeit and were earmarked for distribution to the land hungry Cromwellian soldiers and adventurers.

However this arrangement was declared null and void in 1660 when Charles II was restored to the throne of England. The Duke of Ormonde was his most trusted advisor and probably the most powerful man in Ireland. One of his first acts was to restore their lands, almost in total to his relatives. In this way Edmund Butler the 4<sup>th</sup> Viscount Mountgarret was reinstated in most of his Kilkenny lands. In addition he received further lands in 1667 in an Act of Settlement grant. Those lands were in the barony of Knocktopher.

Sir Edmund was married twice and by his first wife, Lady Dorothy Touchet, he had two sons and two daughters. His second wife was a widow, Elizabeth Conyers, who was the daughter of an heiress Lady Simeon, whose mother was the heiress of Baron Vaux of Harrowden. Sir Edmund and Elizabeth had a son, Edward. Edward was the grandfather of James Butler the Archbishop of Cashel.<sup>27</sup>

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change the law relating to the restitution of lands. The plot was discovered and the Colonel was hanged for his part. Abel escaped but died two years later. The notorious Captain Blood was also involved in this escapade.

<sup>25</sup> Hore Vol. 6 pg. 488

<sup>26</sup> Hore Vol. 5 pg.280

<sup>27</sup> Edward was willed the lands of Ballyragget, with other properties, by his father Sir Edmund. At some period, possibly in the late 1670s, Edward was found guilty of the manslaughter of a man servant in Dublin (Cal S.P. 1669-70). Edward's mother was the daughter of Edward the 4<sup>th</sup> Lord Vaux of Harrowden. Lord Vaux died in 1662 and the estate went into abeyance. It was restored almost two hundred years later, in 1832, by Royal assent, to George Charles Mostyn a descendant of Edward Butler. Edward's wife was a daughter of George Mathew of Thomastown, Co. Tipperary (for notice of that family see *The Tipperary Gentry* by Art Kavanagh & Wm. Hayes). Through various marriage alliances the Butlers of Ballyragget were connected to the Kingstons, the Talbots of Malahide and the Bellews (all aristocratic families). Edward's great grandson, George Butler, had no male heirs and he transferred most of his property to his brother-in-law, Walter Kavanagh of Borris, Co. Carlow in 1813. George had one

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After Sir Edmund's death in 1679 he was succeeded by his eldest son, Sir Richard the 5<sup>th</sup> Viscount Mountgarret. Richard, who served as a Captain in the French army was imprisoned in Liverpool in 1658 and also in Dublin Castle in the same year, because of his religion.<sup>28</sup> He claimed his seat in Parliament in 1692 and took the oath of allegiance but refused to take the oath of supremacy.



### **Ballyragget Castle**

The 5<sup>th</sup> Viscount was married twice. His first wife was an English lady Emilia Blundell and his second wife was the widow of Gilbert Butler and daughter of Richard Shee of Shee's Court. The Viscount was lucky in that his relation, the 2<sup>nd</sup> Duke of Ormonde, was a committed Williamite, who entertained that monarch in his castle of Kilkenny after the defeat of King James at the Battle of the Boyne. In the Jacobite confiscations that followed the Mountgarret Butlers emerged unscathed. They still remained Catholic and produced children too numerous to mention in this short article<sup>29</sup>. The 5<sup>th</sup>

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daughter Maria Lucinda and it was her son, George Charles Mostyn who became the 6<sup>th</sup> Lord Vaux of Harrowden as mentioned above.

<sup>28</sup> The Duke of Ormonde wrote of him as 'the weakest young man both in body and mind that I know, living without a guardian, if he may be said to be so, who has a good discreet woman to his wife' – Ormonde Mss vol. IV pg. 234

<sup>29</sup> Edmund and Richard Butler sons of the 5<sup>th</sup> Lord Mountgarret were reared in England and tutored by their grandfather Blundell – a royalist and a Catholic. Both the 6<sup>th</sup>

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Viscount died in 1706. His son and heir was educated at the Jesuit Colleges of Flamstead, St. Omer and La Fleche. He was a Lt. Colonel of Horse in the Army of King James II at the siege of Derry but was captured and outlawed. The outlawry was reversed in 1721 but while he took the oath of alliegience he would not take the oath of supremacy and withdrew from the House of Parliament.

A succession of Mountgarret Viscounts followed<sup>30</sup> and the next man of note was Edmund the 11<sup>th</sup> Viscount who finally succumbed to the pressures of the Penal Laws and took the expedient step of becoming a Protestant. He was born in 1745 and was an M.P. for the County of Kilkenny from 1776 to 1779. His father had died in 1779 and the 11<sup>th</sup> Viscount took his seat in the House of Lords. His wife was Henrietta, the daughter of Somerset Hamilton Butler the 1<sup>st</sup> Lord Carrick. They had four sons and one daughter who married a Colonel John Smith. The sons were Edmund, Somerset Richard, Henry and Pierce. The 11<sup>th</sup> Viscount must have been a man of impetuous temper as in 1790 he fought a duel with a Counsellor Bushe with the result that Bushe was seriously, though not mortally wounded, in the stomach.<sup>31</sup>

After the death of the 11<sup>th</sup> Viscount in 1793 the following strange entry appears in the private diary of Lord Clonmell, an enemy of his: 'died Lord Mountgarret, as wicked a malignant selfish monster as I ever knew, a victim to his brutal appetites and thirst for blood; a lesson to vice and a caution to be civil to all, obliging to many, to serve few and offend none, as the safest, wisest, pleasantest mode of going through life'. The Gentleman's Magazine was more complimentary and stated that he 'was an excellent scholar, a man of strong intellect, of a violent disposition...an excellent parliamentary speaker who had been for several years a staunch and dauntless patriot.'

The 12<sup>th</sup> Viscount had a memorable year in 1793. He was married in June, to Mildred Fowler the daughter of the Archbishop of Dublin, his father died in July<sup>32</sup> and in December he was created Earl of Kilkenny. Edmund had no children and he was in turn succeeded by his nephew, Henry Edmund as the 13<sup>th</sup> Viscount. The Earldom became extinct on the death of the 12<sup>th</sup>

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Viscount and his father sought refuge from persecution in Ormskirk near Crosby. (*Cavalier's Notebook* – Wm. Blundell)

<sup>30</sup> These included four Viscounts who were brothers. The 6<sup>th</sup> Viscount was outlawed in 1716 after his cousin the Duke of Ormonde was attainted. However he seems to have been able to escape having his lands declared forfeit.

<sup>31</sup> This must have been Gervase Parker Bushe of Kilfane, an eminent lawyer and politician who died in the early 1790s. He was married to a sister of Henry Grattan. It would appear that the Bushe family left Kilfane at around this time and settled at Glencairne in Co. Waterford.

<sup>32</sup> 'From a surfeit of strawberries and cider' according to Lord Dunboyne in his talk in Kilkenny Castle.

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Viscount (in 1846) who according to Lord Dunboyne was insane for most of his adult life. Of the widow of the Earl it was said 'Her manners would be fascinating were it not too evident that she labours to be so. She had great remains of beauty; but she is a deep character, insincere and consequently always to be feared'. Referring to her husband it was said 'the old man in a brown scratch-wig is a queer, specious old Irishman'<sup>33</sup> However 'the specious old Irishman' had his moments as recounted by Barrington.

Lord Mountgarret, the Earl of Kilkenny, had a great number of lawsuits with his insolvent tenants and having lost a number of cases he decided on a course of action which involved challenging the attorney and all the counsel on the opposing side. The first duel was with a Mr. Ball an attorney and in this Lord Mountgarret was wounded. He was hit in the arm and in the side but neither wound was dangerous. The Hon. Somerset Butler the brother of Lord Mountgarret now proceeded to challenge the first of the counsel, a Mr. Peter Burrowes. The duel took place one cold frosty morning near Kilkenny. On his way to the duelling ground Peter bought some spiced gingerbread nuts from a peddler and put the nuts and the change in his waistcoat pocket. They met and the ten paces were measured. Somerset fired first and hit Peter in the body. Peter dropped to the ground and Somerset fled. However the shot had by an extraordinary coincidence hit the coins in his pocket. That saved his life.

When his Lordship was sufficiently recovered he challenged the next counsel, John Byrne. On this occasion the nobleman was the victor and John Byrne was struck in the body but not mortally.

Next to take on the counsels was Captain Pierce Butler, Somerset's brother. His intended protagonist was Dick Guinness but following various procrastinations this duel never took place. Captain Pierce was known as a most courageous man and a fine marksman. Pierce actually attacked Dick in an open court and pandemonium broke out. Pierce narrowly escaped being jailed for his assault. After this the Earl was persuaded to finish his crusade of duels and he decided to let the law take its course in the future.

Lord Dunboyne went on to say that Henry, a younger brother of the Earl, 'as a dashing, dissipated young man of fashion who having sown his wild oats in Ireland, drifted to England, a hunted debtor and in Regency Brighton formed an attachment with an affluent and attractive widow.' They eventually ended up in Edinburgh where they parted. Henry decided to head for calmer climes 'but in the Yorkshire snow his horse fell near Harrowgate, where as luck would have it, he was found by the daughter and heiress of the local land owner John Harrison. She promptly married him and their son, the 13<sup>th</sup> Viscount (Henry Edmund), in turn, married a Yorkshire heiress, the only child of Thomas Rawson of Nidd Hall, near Ripley.'

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<sup>33</sup> *Private Correspondence of a Woman of Fashion* vol.1 pg 49

## *Butler of Mountgarret*

Pierce, the Earl's youngest brother was a more serious type and as well as becoming a Colonel in the Kilkenny militia became an M.P. from 1832 onwards. Pierce who married Anne March of Lisburn had seven sons and three daughters (all three died unmarried).

His eldest son was involved in a bitter dispute with his cousin Henry the only son of his uncle Henry. The strange case of Pierce Somerset claiming that he was entitled to sit in the House of Lords in the place of his cousin Henry Edmund the 13<sup>th</sup> Viscount was first entered for hearing by the Committee of Privileges in 1847, the year after the death of the 12<sup>th</sup> Viscount. In addition Pierce Somerset had sought an ejectment order against Henry Edmund from the Castle of Ballyconra and from the hereditary lands. The case did not come up for hearing until 1854 and many witnesses were called who proved that Henry's father was in fact older than Pierce the father of Pierce Somerset. Birth certificates and death certificates were produced. The case was postponed in 1854 because the ejectment case was then being heard in Co. Kilkenny. Pierce Somerset won the ejectment case but it was appealed and overturned. When the case before the Committee for Privileges was resumed no witnesses for Pierce Somerset were produced on the grounds that two of them had died and another was incapacitated and the case was dropped. Henry was then declared the legitimate 13<sup>th</sup> Viscount.<sup>34</sup>

Most of Pierce's sons and grandsons were in the Army or Navy and that family is represented today mainly by the descendants of Walter the 7<sup>th</sup> son. Walter's eldest son by his wife Maria Farrell was Theobald who was born in 1853. Theobald was married twice. Most of the descendants of Theobald and his first wife have died out, but his only daughter who married Capt. John Percy Groves had a family some members of which may still be alive. By his second marriage to Elizabeth Frazscher of Sweden he had a son Pierce and a daughter Dorothy who married Edward de Fine Sucht and had a family.

Pierce the son of Elizabeth Frazscher became a medical doctor and was a pioneer in geriatric research. He married Kerstein Samuelson of Sweden in 1923. They had three sons and one daughter, Kerstin who was born in 1923. Their sons are Pierce Torsten, Carl Somerset and Lars Theobald.

Both Pierce Tolsten and Lars Theobald married. Pierce married Dagmar Hakansson and Lars married Ulla Bergh. Pierce has one son Pierce and two daughters Jenny and Anne all born in the 1960s.

Lars and Ulla have one son Pierce Anders and one daughter Anna Christina both born in the 60s also.

While 13 may be an unlucky number it proved to be a very lucky one for Henry Edmund the 13<sup>th</sup> Viscount who had married Frances Rawson of Nidd Hall. Not alone did he win his legal battles but his wife's aunt left him

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<sup>34</sup> Ms in the National Library

## *Butler of Mountgarret*

over half a million pounds. This was a huge sum of money, equivalent in today's terms to about fifty million sterling. In addition his son, the 14th Viscount, was left considerable properties in Yorkshire.



**Nidd Hall**

In 1883 the Mountgarret estates were as follows. In Kilkenny they owned over 14,000 acres, in Wexford over 500 acres and in Yorkshire 120 acres. The estates in Ireland were valued at almost £10,000 per annum. The Rawson estate which came to the family in 1891 consisted of almost 8000 acres in Yorkshire, 1300 in Herefordshire and 160 in Lancashire. That estate was valued at over £12,000 per annum.

Henry Edmund, who succeeded as the 14<sup>th</sup> Viscount, in 1900, was educated at Eton and Oxford was High Sheriff of Yorkshire in 1895. He was a Lt. in the Life Guards and later in 1911 was created Baron Mountgarret of Nidd. He married Mary Charlton (of Apley castle). They had one son and three daughters, two of whom married. Elinor married Andrew Lawson of Aldborough Manor and had daughters, co-heirs, one of whom married Sir Thomas Selby Tancred who later assumed the name Lawson Tancred. Ethel married Henry Wilson of Bromhead Hall, Yorkshire and they had a family. The transfer of the Irish properties to the tenants, begun in the lifetime of his predecessor the 13<sup>th</sup> Earl was completed during the tenure of the 14<sup>th</sup> Earl who died in 1912.

His only son by his first wife was Edmund Somerset Butler the 15<sup>th</sup> Viscount. Edmund, although married had no children and when he died in 1918 his titles and estates passed to his half brother Piers Henry who became the 16<sup>th</sup> Viscount. Piers Henry was the son of Henry Edmund the 14<sup>th</sup> Viscount and his second wife Robina Hanning-Lee of Bighton Manor, Hants.

The 16<sup>th</sup> Viscount who inherited in 1918 was educated in the Royal Navy College and in Cambridge. He was a J.P. and was twice married. His first wife was Elizabeth Christie of Jervaulx Abbey, Yorks. and they had one



## *Butler of Mountgarret*

son and one daughter. The daughter is The Hon. Mrs. Sarah Raynar who has two sons Rupert and James.

The 16<sup>th</sup> Viscount's son, Richard Henry Piers Butler the 17<sup>th</sup> Viscount, is the man we wrote about at the start of this chapter. He served in the Army and the Navy. He was married three times. He had two sons and one daughter by his first wife, Gillian Buckley of Chelsea<sup>35</sup>.

Their sons are Piers James Richard (now the 18<sup>th</sup> Viscount), born in 1961 and educated at Eton, and Edmund Henry b. 1962. Piers the 18<sup>th</sup> Viscount married Laura William of Illinois in 1995 while Edmund Henry married Adelle Lloyd of New York.

Henrietta the only daughter married Robert Cluer of South Africa in 1991.

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<sup>35</sup> She later married Baron Howard de Walden

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