

# Cork's courthouses, the landed elite and the Rockite rebellion: architectural responses to agrarian violence, 1820-27

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The study of architectural history has been fertile ground for revisionist approaches in recent years. In particular, the concept that the neo-classical style of architecture, in ascendancy in late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century Europe, should be understood as the language of a small coterie of international cultural and economic elites, has come under sustained criticism. As Kathleen James-Chakraborty comments, a shift of focus from the 'production' to the 'consumption' of neo-classical architecture (though the argument could as well be applied to any other architectural style) has revealed counter-narratives that highlight aspects of material culture, class and gender, all previously under researched.<sup>1</sup> Far from the preserve of an aristocratic elite, as Conor Lucey and Andrew Tierney have shown in their respective case-studies, the adoption of neo-classical architecture in Ireland formed part of a demarcation of class bound up with concepts of expressing or appropriating 'politeness' and 'gentility'.<sup>2</sup> The great economic and technological advances of the period, coupled with the availability of new 'faux' building materials such as Coade stone and a more vigorous print culture, led to an emboldened and

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<sup>1</sup> Kathleen James-Chakraborty, 'Neo-Classical commodities: from Coade Stone to the fall of the Wall and beyond', in Lynda Mulvin (ed.), *The fusion of neo-classical principles* (Dublin, 2011), pp. 1-10.

<sup>2</sup> Conor Lucey, 'Classicism or commerce? The town house interior as commodity', in Christine Casey (ed.), *The eighteenth-century Dublin town house* (Dublin, 2010), pp. 236-48, and subsequent works; Andrew Tierney, 'Architectures of gentility in nineteenth-century Ireland', in Ciaran O'Neill (ed.), *Irish elites in the nineteenth century* (Dublin, 2013), pp. 31-50.

discerning middle class of architectural patrons at the same time as the financial cost of emulating 'elite' neo-classical began to fall.<sup>3</sup>

Nonetheless, it is an unavoidable fact that the landed elite in Ireland at the dawn of the nineteenth century were still the great patrons of architecture, and while their monopoly was broken, there was still an agenda of 'politeness' that they could control. The country house, especially from the period c. 1750 to c. 1830, marks the most compelling instance of the conspicuous consumption of neo-classical architecture by the Irish landed elite. Furthermore, scholars have highlighted the economic advantages of the eighteenth-century concept of 'improvement,' the desire to follow European trends, and the competitive elements of 'fashion' and 'taste'.<sup>4</sup> There has been less agreement, perhaps unsurprisingly, about the political meaning of these buildings and how they reshaped landscapes: Roy Foster argues that the Irish landed elite, conscious of both their inferiority to their British aristocratic peers, and aware of their tenuous and relatively recent hold over their estates, engaged in an atavistic and ostentatious

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<sup>3</sup> For an overview, see Barbara Arciszewska and Elizabeth McKellar (eds.), *Articulating British classicism: new approaches to eighteenth-century architecture* (London, 2004).

<sup>4</sup> The most useful recent overview is Terence Dooley, *The big houses and landed estates of Ireland: a research guide* (Dublin, 2007), especially pp. 117-18. See also B. J. Graham and Lindsay J. Proudfoot, *Urban improvement in provincial Ireland, 1700-1840* (Athlone, 1994); Lindsay J. Proudfoot, *Property ownership and urban and village improvement in provincial Ireland, c. 1700-1845* (Edinburgh, 1997); Lindsay J. Proudfoot, 'Landownership and improvement, c. 1700 to 1845', in Lindsay J. Proudfoot (ed.), *Down: history & society* (Dublin, 1997), pp. 203-38; Lindsay J. Proudfoot, 'Place and mentalité: the "big house" and its locality in County Tyrone', in Charles Dillon and Henry A. Jeffries (eds.), *Tyrone: history & society* (Dublin, 2001), pp. 511-42; Patrick Duffy, 'Colonial spaces and sites of resistance: landed estates in nineteenth-century Ireland', in Lindsay J. Proudfoot and Michael M. Roche (eds.), *(Dis)placing empire: renegotiating British colonial geographies* (Aldershot, 2005), pp. 15-40.

display of material culture to compensate for their unsure positions in Irish society. Foster considers that it was a desire to put ‘their mark on a landscape only recently won and insecurely held’.<sup>5</sup> This concept of political insecurity is a widely accepted one in the field of Irish architectural history, with Maurice Craig and Douglas Scott Richardson both highlighting what they see as particular associations between the employment of the castellated Gothic style and atavistic political anxieties, and there has been much focus on the absurd Lord Kingston and his Gothic (and financially ruinous) Mitchelstown castle of 1823-25.<sup>6</sup> Nonetheless, in his survey of County Tyrone, Proudfoot shows that what Foster called the ‘building mania’ of the period must be understood within broader European trends, and that if such insecurities did exist, they were ‘unspoken and deeply hidden’ within broader concepts such as ‘improvement’.<sup>7</sup>

One aspect of eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century ‘improvement’ was the provision of new public buildings in cities and towns. Proudfoot and others stress the many close ties between court, market, and infrastructure provision in towns, and estate improvement more generally, highlighting the economic advances that were opened up with town redevelopment.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> See Roy F. Foster, *Modern Ireland, 1600-1972* (London, 1988), p. 192; Graham and Proudfoot, *Urban improvement in provincial Ireland*, pp. 34-36; Proudfoot, ‘Place and mentalité’, pp. 537-40.

<sup>6</sup> Maurice Craig, *The architecture of Ireland from the earliest times to 1880* (London, 1982), p. 248; Douglas Scott Richardson, *Gothic revival architecture in Ireland* (2 vols., New York and London, 1983), 1.18-22 and 1.118-39; Ian D’Alton, ‘Keeping faith: an evocation of the Cork Protestant character, 1820-1920’, in Patrick O’Flanagan and Cornelius G. Buttimer (eds.), *Cork: history & society* (Dublin, 1993), pp. 762-65; Bill Power, *White knights, dark earls: the rise and fall of an Anglo-Irish dynasty* (Cork, 2000); Frederick O’Dwyer, “‘A noble pile in the late Tudor style’: Mitchelstown castle”, *Irish Arts Review Yearbook*, 18 (2002), pp. 30-43.

<sup>7</sup> Proudfoot, ‘Place and mentalité’, pp. 511-42.

<sup>8</sup> William Fraher, ‘The reconstruction of Dungarvan, 1807-c. 1830: a political ploy’, *Decies*, 25 (January 1984), pp. 4-21.

Estate towns often benefitted from the direct patronage of the local landlord, as at Dungarvan, Co. Waterford, Mitchelstown, Co. Cork, Kenmare, Co. Kerry, Clifden, Co. Galway, and Monaghan, Co. Monaghan. The simpler market buildings were plain, functional and unpretentious, with often only a coat-of-arms to mark their patron, but in larger and wealthier towns we find a much more elaborate engagement with the ‘politeness’ and ‘gentility’ of neo-classical architecture.<sup>9</sup> At Bagenalstown, Co. Carlow, the local landlord, Philip Bagenal, bypassed his county’s grand jury and took it upon himself to pay for what must be Ireland’s grandest quarter-sessions courthouse, with a full Greek Ionic portico in local granite; the splendid result was complete by 1826.<sup>10</sup> The picturesque siting of Bagenalstown courthouse is proof that Bagenal himself recognized the potential for public buildings – like follies in gardens – to ornament the centre of urban landscapes. By way of contrast, Carlow’s other quarter-sessions town, Tullow, had to make do with a much simpler courthouse, plain and dour, with virtually no ornamentation, which was funded and built at the same time by a more parsimonious grand jury.<sup>11</sup> This particular contrast is not meant to suggest that grand jurors were incapable of adopting the ‘elite’ language of neo-classicism at the highest level: in many other towns, not least in Carlow town, assize courthouses, gaols and bridewells, and other public buildings are testament to their extraordinary collective pretensions. The grand jury, as an institution, was merely a temporary composite of a county’s landed elite, formed for a week or two, twice a year at the assizes. As landlords competed with each other in the strive towards ‘improvement,’ so did grand juries: both the individual and the collective shared a desire to appropriate, as much as

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<sup>9</sup> For an overview of the concept of ‘politeness,’ see Lawrence E. Klein, ‘Politeness and the interpretation of the British eighteenth century’, *Historical Journal*, 45.4 (2002), pp. 869-98; Tierney, ‘Architectures of gentility’.

<sup>10</sup> Richard J. Butler, ‘The history of Bagenalstown courthouse, Co. Carlow’, *Carloviana*, 63 (2015), pp. 201-04.

<sup>11</sup> *Fifth report . . . on the . . . prisons of Ireland, 1827*, H.C. 1826-27 (471), xi, p. 43.

they could, the latest fashionable architectural trends – and the latter always had greater financial firepower. It is through this prism of consumption and discourses of ‘improvement’ that we must approach the rebuilding of Cork’s courthouses and bridewells in the 1820s (**Fig. 1**).<sup>12</sup>

As obvious symbols of judicial and coercive power, courthouses carry political associations and meanings; they are, with their partners – prisons – the spatial loci of power in the urban environment as much as the country house is in the rural. Historians of nineteenth-century Ireland understand why so many were occupied, destroyed, or burnt during the revolutionary period of 1916-23. They can also readily explain the fact that the crest of courthouse (and prison) building in Ireland occurred in the fifty years before the Great Famine – the troubled years of post-war depression, the Rockite rebellion of the 1820s, the Tithe War, the campaign for repeal of the union, and the demographic crisis of the countryside. Courthouses were often placed strategically in provincial towns, commanding a presence with the almost-uniform adoption of an austere Greek neo-classical style.<sup>13</sup> Sean Rothery, in his survey of Irish architecture, comments that they show an ‘appropriate image of majesty’.<sup>14</sup> Alistair Rowan hints at a post-colonial critique in his review essay, ‘The Irishness of Irish Architecture,’ when he argues that the ‘many monumental and repressive neo-classical courthouses’ in Ireland are ‘international in style and totally foreign in their point of reference.’<sup>15</sup> Similarly, Ciarán Ó Murchadha, in his discussion of the ‘language of public architecture’ with particular reference to the new assize courthouse at Ennis built between 1846 and 1851, claims that there was an

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<sup>12</sup> For an overview of the grand jury system, see Virginia Crossman, *Local government in nineteenth-century Ireland* (Belfast, 1994).

<sup>13</sup> See Richard J. Butler, “‘The radicals in these reform times’”: politics, grand juries and Ireland’s unbuilt assize courthouses, 1800-45’, *Architectural History*, 58 (2015), pp. 109-39.

<sup>14</sup> Sean Rothery, *A field guide to the buildings of Ireland* (Dublin, 1997), p. 154.

<sup>15</sup> Alistair Rowan, ‘The Irishness of Irish architecture’, *Architectural History*, 40 (1997), pp. 1-23, at p. 18.

‘unmistakable political message’: ‘the Grecian splendour [. . .] was intended at once to reassure the Protestant gentry of the permanence and invincibility of imperial authority, and overawe the nationalists disaffected with the futility of attempting to challenge it.’<sup>16</sup>

These post-colonial criticisms remind us that the analysis of the planning of new courthouses is more complicated than any simple narrative of landlord-led improvement, the conspicuous consumption of neo-classical architecture, or atavistic political uncertainty caused by acute agrarian unrest. The Cork rebuilding programme lies at the meeting point of these currents. But which had the greatest influence? Was it the Rockite rebellion that caused these courthouses to be built? Foster, Craig and Richardson, in their different ways, give credence to an interpretation that highlights the intense agrarian unrest of Cork in the early 1820s, and the knee-jerk reaction of local elites to rebuild almost all of the county’s courthouses and bridewells. But these elites were operating within the framework of national and imperial government, and in particular of increased state interference in the management of local prisons. To properly understand the providence of these buildings, then, they should be considered less within the fraught relationship between Cork’s elites and the rebels and peasants destined to be incarcerated within their walls, than the less visible shifting balance of power between these elites and a newly aggressive and reforming central state.<sup>17</sup> A delicate balancing act characterizes central state and

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<sup>16</sup> Ciarán Ó Murchadha, *Sable wings over the land: Ennis, County Clare, and its wider community during the Great Famine* (Ennis, 1998), p. 240; Mary Teehan, ‘The emergence of county courthouses: a socio-archaeological study of Co. Kilkenny and Co. Carlow’ (M.A. thesis, University College Cork, 2004), p. 11; Andrew Kincaid, *Postcolonial Dublin: imperial legacies and the built environment* (Minneapolis and London, 2006), pp. ix-xxx.

<sup>17</sup> See, for example, Marilyn Silvermann, ‘Custom, courts and class formation: constructing the hegemonic process through the Petty Sessions of a south-eastern Irish Parish, 1828-1884’, *American Ethnologist*, 27.2 (2000), pp. 1-31.

Irish grand jury relations in this period: while leading Westminster voices such as Robert Peel were often exceptionally critical of the Irish landed classes and the wastes and abuses of their grand jury system, they also depended upon these elites to manage, tax, and rule the country at a local level.<sup>18</sup> Furthermore, alliance met enmity on the building site: criticisms of landed elites were tempered by the dramatic rise in the number of new Protestant churches, almost all made possible by generous financial assistance from central government. Relations between Westminster, Dublin Castle and Cork's landed elite are thus some of the most interesting power relationships at play at this time: there was no simple binary 'imperial' relationship. While many of the changes that led to the extensive courthouse building programme were influenced by the Rockite troubles, they did not originate in them. In some cases, the events of 1821-24 precipitated administration changes that had been long in the making, and were simply given a renewed impetus in a time of crisis. In other aspects the changes were more sudden. I will argue that these new buildings emerged from a unique confluence of events – local, national and imperial – in the early 1820s. In the absence of grand jury minutes, my narrative is developed from a variety of other sources, visual and textual, including not least the annual reports of the Irish prison inspectors.<sup>19</sup>

The intense agrarian unrest in Munster in the early 1820s, which by January 1822 officials in Dublin Castle were referring to not as disturbances but as open rebellion,<sup>20</sup> created profound

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<sup>18</sup> Norman Gash, *Mr Secretary Peel: the life of Sir Robert Peel to 1830* (London & New York, 1985), pp. 11, 120, 195-210, 378, etc.

<sup>19</sup> For a history of Cork's grand jury after 1836 see David M. Nolan, 'The county Cork grand jury, 1836-1899' (M.A. thesis, University College Cork, 1974).

<sup>20</sup> Wellesley to Peel, 31 Jan. 1822 (National Archives, Kew, HO 100/203), quoted in Galen Broeker, *Rural disorder and police reform in Ireland, 1812-36* (London and Toronto, 1970), p. 132.

difficulties for the administration of justice in Cork.<sup>21</sup> Peel's Peace Preservation Force had been in operation in parts of the county since November 1821, but it proved incapable of containing the scale of the rebellion.<sup>22</sup> As in Dublin, where the entrances to the Castle had been barricaded and the number of guards doubled, a military officer noted that the Cork landed elite 'are preparing for defence, some even blocking up the whole of the lower windows with brick & mortar,' and the provost of Bandon reported that many had left their homes altogether, and had taken 'refuge in the towns.'<sup>23</sup> The rebellion reached its zenith on 21 January 1822, when Richard White, 1st earl of Bantry, and a group of some 50 armed gentlemen and military, were attacked en route from Bantry to Macroom in the pass of Keimaneigh by what a military officer later judged to be around 500 insurgents. Much of the details of this battle were memorialized in Máire Bhuí Ní Laoire's poem, *Cath Céim an Fhia*, and later in Caesar Otway's *Sketches in Ireland*.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> *Papers presented . . . relative to the disturbed state of Ireland*, H.C. 1822 (2), xiv, pp. 3-14; Broeker, *Rural disorder*, pp. 132-59; Virginia Crossman, *Politics, law & order in nineteenth-century Ireland* (Dublin, 1996), pp. 28-35; Shunsuke Katsuka, 'The Rockite movement in County Cork in the early 1820s', *Irish Historical Studies*, 33.131 (May 2003), pp. 278-96; James S. Donnelly, Jr., *Captain Rock: the Irish agrarian rebellion of 1821-1824* (Madison, Wisconsin, 2009).

<sup>22</sup> 'Proclaimed districts, 1814-22' (British Library, Peel papers, Add MS 40328).

<sup>23</sup> Lt. Col. H. J. Eveleigh to Maj. Gen. George Wulff, 8 Jan. 1822 (National Archives of Ireland, SOCP 1, 2342/20); R. Wellesley to H. Sidmouth, 11 Jan. 1822, printed in *Papers presented . . . relative to the disturbed state of Ireland*, H.C. 1822 (2), xiv, pp. 5-6; Broeker, *Rural disorder*, p. 128.

<sup>24</sup> Maj. Carthew to Maj. Gen. Sir John Lambert, 21 Jan. 1822, and Lord Bantry to Henry Goulburn, 22 Jan. 1822, printed in *Papers presented . . . relative to the disturbed state of Ireland*, H.C. 1822 (2), xiv, pp. 12-14. Testimony of William Wrixon Becher, printed in *Minutes . . . taken before the select committee appointed to inquire into the disturbances in Ireland*, H.C. 1825 (20), vii, p. 180; Brian Brennan, *Songs of an Irish poet: the Mary O'Leary story* (Cork, 2007), pp. 42-51; Caesar Otway, *Sketches in Ireland* (London and Edinburgh, 1827), pp. 288-301; Diarmuid Ó Gráda, 'Cath Chéim an Fhia: its place in the Rockite campaign', *Journal of the Cork*



Further significant large-scale battles took place for several days afterwards in the West Muskerry and Duhallow regions of north-west Cork, with many of the rebels encamping in the mountains around Macroom and Kanturk.<sup>25</sup> Westminster's response was the re-enactment of the Insurrection Act in early February and the imposition of a curfew. The scale of the unrest is remarkable: at a special assizes held later that month over 200 persons charged with 'Whiteboy' crimes awaited trial.<sup>26</sup>

But if 1822 saw the most spectacular battle of the rebellion, it by no means marked its end. As compiled by Shunsuke Katsuka, the number of individual 'outrages' was higher in the subsequent winters of 1822-23 and 1823-24 than it had been in 1821-22. And remarkably there were more than twice as many incidents in the summer of 1823 than in the summer of 1822.<sup>27</sup> It was only, according to Galen Broeker, the 'combined weight of the insurrection act, the military establishment, and [Peel's] new [County] Constabulary' that finally restored law and order.<sup>28</sup> However, by putting so much strain on the county's justice system, the rebellion served to bring forward some long-considered administrative changes: up until 1823, the county grand jury met at the assizes in Cork city twice yearly, roughly in April and August. At other times of the year,

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*Historical and Archaeological Society*, 97 (1992), pp. 97-103; Broeker, *Rural disorder*, p. 133; Donnelly, *Captain Rock*, pp. 68-69.

<sup>25</sup> Donnelly, *Captain Rock*, pp. 69-71.

<sup>26</sup> Broeker, *Rural disorder*, pp. 134-35; Donnelly, *Captain Rock*, pp. 299-300 David Dickson, *Old world colony: Cork and South Munster, 1630-1830* (Cork and Madison, Wisconsin, 2005), pp. 489-91.

<sup>27</sup> Katsuka, 'The Rockite Movement', p. 287. For the preceding decade, see *Returns of convictions in the provinces of Munster and Connaught . . . for 1814-1823*, H.C. 1824 (280), xxii, pp. 4-6.

<sup>28</sup> Broeker, *Rural disorder*, p. 154; Wellesley to Peel, 1 May 1822, printed in *Papers relative to the state of Ireland*, H.C. 1822 (423), xiv, p. 9.

quarter sessions were held at Bandon, Macroom, Mallow, and Fermoy.<sup>29</sup> While the courthouses in some of these towns were relatively newly built, others were dilapidated and inconspicuous old buildings, and the great majority of the bridewells were little better than medieval dungeons.<sup>30</sup> When, for example, Youghal's bridewell was inspected by one of the new prison inspectors, major Benjamin Blake Woodward, in late 1822, he commented that 'the indiscriminate and uncontrolled admission of visitors' was such that one man was 'permitted to keep a musical academy (a scene of shameful disorder and dissipation)' in his cell.<sup>31</sup>

At the spring assizes in 1823, an alliance of the county and city grand juries and over 100 local magistrates sent an address to Wellesley, the lord lieutenant, warning of the 'frighteningly disturbed state' of part of their county and that 'the spirit of insurrection is rapidly extending.' 'Crime has increased,' they said, and 'is daily increasing [. . .] We do not feel ourselves competent to propose a remedy [but] in such a state of society as we have described, where all ordinary authorities are disregarded, and the law of the land is set totally at defiance, we feel ourselves justified in expressing [. . .] our opinions, that to meet the present emergency, scarcely any measure which may be calculated upon as effectual, can be too decisive.'<sup>32</sup> The address, signed by many of the landed elite including White of Bantry, King of Mitchelstown, Bernard of Bandon, and Hedges Eyre of Macroom, was a clever move to place the ball firmly in Wellesley's court: for many years Irish magistrates had been accused of incompetence and partiality by Peel and several Westminster committees, and the structure of Peel's Peace Preservation Force was typical of the

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<sup>29</sup> *Prisons of Ireland: report of inspectors general, 1823*, H.C. 1823 (342), x, p. 70.

<sup>30</sup> Mallow and Fermoy courthouses were built around 1807; see *Accounts of presentments by grand juries in Ireland . . . in 1807*, H.C. 1808 (205), xiii, pp. 83-84.

<sup>31</sup> *Prisons of Ireland: report of inspectors general, 1823*, H.C. 1823 (342), x, pp. 46-47.

<sup>32</sup> *Addresses from the grand jury of the county and city of Cork*, H.C. 1823 (302), xvi, pp. 1-3.

time in that it was deliberately structured to bypass the authority of the local magistrates.<sup>33</sup> Not only were the elite's houses and property under attack from the insurgents, but they also had to fend off increasingly structured and organized criticism from Dublin Castle, and from Westminster. Paradoxically, these attacks were interlaced with praise: after the Cork grand jury committed to radically improve their bridewell system in 1822, further discussed below, they were heralded as the pioneers of penal reform and humanitarianism and were celebrated by the new central government prison inspectors in Dublin Castle.<sup>34</sup>

The plea for assistance during the rebellion was answered in parliament with a bill in the summer of 1823 that provided for the division of the county of Cork into two ridings, for the explicit purpose of 'holding additional general sessions'.<sup>35</sup> From September 1823 the number of quarter-sessions towns was increased from five to ten, meaning in effect that every month there would either be at least one quarter sessions or an assize in the county. In the west riding, sittings in Bandon and Macroom were augmented by new arrangements in Bantry, Skibbereen, and Clonakilty, pushing the formal administration of justice through the quarter-sessions system

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<sup>33</sup> Peel thought that the agrarian outrages were 'encouraged by the apathy of one set of magistrates, and the half connivance of another', see Peel to Lord Desart, 10 Feb. 1814 (British Library, Peel papers, Add MS 40285). See also Leonard MacNally, *The justice of the peace for Ireland* (Dublin, 1808), pp. v-viii;

Testimony of the Rev. Michael Collins, printed in *Third report from the select committee on the subject of the disturbed districts in Ireland*, H.C. 1825 (36), xi, p. 335; *Minutes of evidence taken before the select committee of the House of Lords appointed to inquire into the state of Ireland*, H.C. 1825 (521), ix, p.437; *Commissioners appointed to inquire into the . . . temporal and ecclesiastical courts in Ireland, seventeenth report, on the courts of quarter sessions*, H.C. 1828 (144), xii; Broeker, *Rural disorder*, pp. 39-104; Dickson, *Old world colony*, p. 498.

<sup>34</sup> *Report from the select committee on grand jury presentments, Ireland*, H.C. 1826-27 (555), iii, pp. 8-15.

<sup>35</sup> Division of County of Cork Act, 1823 (4 Geo. IV, c. 93).

much further into the county's rural hinterland.<sup>36</sup> In the east riding, the new courthouses at Middleton and Kanturk complemented the existing ones at Cork, Fermoy, and Mallow.<sup>37</sup> If Ní Laoire had boasted in her rebel poem that '*Ní iarrfam cúirt ná stáitse*' – 'We won't hold court or inquest' –, the landed elite were not going to be seen standing idly by.<sup>38</sup> Nevertheless, the expansion of the quarter sessions was not an entirely new idea, as they had been encouraged as early as 1787, when an act of parliament allowed for the doubling of the number of sittings in every Irish county. At this time, it appears that only four took advantage of the new arrangements – Cork, Kerry, Tipperary, and Kilkenny – and it was not until further legislation in 1796 that the measure became truly national.<sup>39</sup> The Cork division in 1823 was also not without precedent: as a response to the great increase in crime in the first half of the 1810s, when average criminal indictments were some 42% higher than over the preceding six years, the Cork county grand jury wrote to Peel in December 1815 asking for the county to be divided, saying that many areas in the west were effectively operating without an effective judicial system; the memorial, signed by lords Bantry and Carbery, and many other landed elite, commented that the status quo in the west of the county 'urged its inhabitants to adopt irregular modes of obtaining redress of

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<sup>36</sup> Government-sponsored road building at this time also contributed to the 'opening up' of western districts, see Dickson, *Old world colony*, pp. 430-33.

<sup>37</sup> There was always some fluctuation in Cork's quarter-sessions towns: by 1823 they were Bandon, Macroom, Fermoy, Mallow, and Cork city, but in 1787-89 they were Bandon, Macroom, Rathcormack, Mallow, and Skibbereen; see *Freeman's Journal*, 3-6 Jan. 1789.

<sup>38</sup> Brennan, *Songs of an Irish poet*, pp. 48-49.

<sup>39</sup> 27 Geo. III, c. 40 (1787); 30 Geo. III (1790), c. 35; 36 Geo. III, c. 25 (1796). For Kerry, Tipperary and Kilkenny, see *Freeman's Journal*, 3-6 Jan. 1789.

wrong'.<sup>40</sup> Peel made it clear in his reply that an act of parliament would be necessary, and there it appears the issue rested until the correspondence was printed as an appendix to an 1819 report on crime in Ireland.<sup>41</sup> It was the Rockite troubles that brought the issue to a head, with Henry Goulburn, Peel's successor as Irish chief secretary, introducing the act to divide the county; this was rushed through parliament in just 16 days, with the royal assent on 18 July 1823. The parliamentary session ended the following day.<sup>42</sup>

Running in parallel with these local reforms were landmark national changes in how prisons were to be managed and inspected. The Prisons (Ireland) acts of 1821 and 1822 allowed Dublin Castle to shut down prisons that did not reach its standards, to regulate the diet and conditions of prisoners, and to appoint two central inspectors who would visit each prison at least once every year and present their reports to each grand jury.<sup>43</sup> No prison was to be built without the plan having first been approved by the inspectors. In this significant state encroachment onto the power of the grand juries, the Westminster reformers had to the

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<sup>40</sup> *Papers relating to the internal judicature of Ireland . . . from 1786-1819*, H.C. 1819-19 (15), iii, pp. 19-24; Lord Carbery to Peel, 1 Dec. 1815 (British Library, Peel papers, Add MS 40202); Dickson, *Old world colony*, pp. 646-49, etc.

<sup>41</sup> Peel to Carbery, 21 Dec. 1815 (British Library, Peel papers, Add MS 40202); *Papers relating to the internal judicature of Ireland . . . from 1786-1819*, H.C. 1819-19 (15), iii, pp. 107-08.

<sup>42</sup> *Journal of the House of Commons*, 78 (1823), pp. 452 & 479. Leave was given to bring in an amending act in April 1824, but it was never introduced – see *Journal of the House of Commons*, 79 (1824), p. 267. The Civil Bill Courts (Ireland) Act, 1836 (6 & 7 Will. IV, c. 75) effectively extended the 1823 Cork act to the entire country, and there were some attempts in 1838 to re-divide Cork by representatives from Kinsale, a town inconveniently placed in the east riding in 1823, but this bill did not pass in the Commons. See *Journal of the House of Commons*, 93 (1838), pp. 66, 546 and *Hansard* 40 (3rd ser.), 14 Feb. 1838, cols. 1111-13.

<sup>43</sup> Prisons (Ireland) Act, 1821 (1 & 2 Geo. IV, c. 57); Prisons (Ireland) Act, 1822 (3 Geo. IV, c. 64).

forefront of their concerns the small bridewells in provincial Irish towns – in their first annual report, the new inspectors James Palmer and Benjamin Woodward, condemned the small bridewells where ‘persons [. . .] were locked up for days without food’ simply because grand jurors failed to make presentments for them. Echoing the penal-reform issue of the time – the separation of different classes of prisoners – they were appalled to find ‘men locked up for the night in the same cell with women of infamous character.’<sup>44</sup> The Prison Act destined that upwards of 100 prisons would have to be altered or re-built, and to tempt grand jurors into complying with the new law, the lord lieutenant offered loans to cover the building works, generally repayable on favourable terms over twenty years.<sup>45</sup> By 1830, Palmer and Woodward were able to boast that a staggering 69 new prisons had been built or were building,<sup>46</sup> and in this atmosphere a competitive spirit developed between grand jurors, with many copying neighbouring designs and façades, each wishing for the latest fashions in efficient and secure prison architecture.<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> *Account of all gaols . . . in the . . . United Kingdom*, H.C. 1819 (137), xvii, pp. 4-7; *Prisons of Ireland: report of inspectors general, 1823*, H.C. 1823 (342), x, p. 8.

<sup>45</sup> *Prisons of Ireland: report of inspectors general, 1823*, H.C. 1823 (342), x, pp. 69-71; see also, *Prisons of Ireland: report of inspectors general, 1825*, H.C. 1825 (493), xxii, pp. 6-7.

<sup>46</sup> *Eighth report . . . on . . . the prisons of Ireland, 1830*, H.C. 1830 (48), xxiv, p. 13.

<sup>47</sup> This building programme was not without its critics: for example, the *Freeman's Journal* complained of perfectly usable courthouses and bridewells being pulled down without good reason, see *Freeman's Journal*, 23 Apr. 1828. For an overview of these reforms, see Patrick Carroll-Burke, *Colonial discipline: the making of the Irish convict system* (Dublin, 2000), pp. 43-50 and Richard J. Butler, ‘Rethinking the origins of the British Prisons Act of 1835: Ireland and the development of central-government prison inspection, 1820-35’, *The Historical Journal*, (forthcoming 2016).

In Cork it is clear that a confluence of events, circumstances, and desires came together to instigate the building of the county's new courthouses and bridewells. We should add one more factor to the debate: the economic depression of the post-1815 period. Cork experienced a banking crisis in 1821 and a partial famine of 1822-23, while at the same time its traditional weaving towns such as Bandon and Skibbereen went into serious decline. Public-works loans, introduced in June 1817, were used to prop up a vulnerable economy, and the Cork grand jurors benefitted from a total of 19 loans in 1824-25 to help build their new courthouses and prisons; they received a total of £9,450 (Irish pounds).<sup>48</sup> The prison reform-agenda emanating from Dublin Castle provided easy justification for the loans: in their first report in 1823, the prison inspectors suggested that the grand jurors consider either Bantry or Skibbereen as the location for a new 'district' bridewell – a half-way house between a county gaol and a small bridewell, especially suitable to larger counties. 'As a measure essential to the administration of justice, and to the convenient detention of prisoners,' they said, 'a plan of a bridewell of this class will be submitted to the grand jury [. . .] at their next assizes,' i.e. that of spring 1823.<sup>49</sup> They had nothing good to say of any of the 20 small bridewells in the county: all would need significant work. For the grand jurors, with their plea for assistance dealing with disturbances likely weighing heavily on their minds, and the bill to divide the county yet to go through parliament, it is likely that they postponed the district bridewell proposal until their summer assizes. However, at this meeting they made an even more far-reaching decision: they would commit to build seven new courthouses with attached bridewells in the county's newly expanded quarter-session towns, and build or repair existing bridewells in Bandon, Charleville, Dunmanway, Fermoy, Millstreet and Rosscarbery.<sup>50</sup> When Woodward next reported in the spring of 1824, he was keen to single out

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<sup>48</sup> Dickson, *Old world colony*, p. 491; *Hansard* 11 (2nd ser.), 11 May 1824, col. 671; *An account of all sums of money . . . for public works, during each of the last four years*, H.C. 1828 (464), xxii, pp. 4-5.

<sup>49</sup> *Prisons of Ireland: report of inspectors general, 1823*, H.C. 1823 (342), x, pp. 8, 45.

<sup>50</sup> *Prisons of Ireland: report of inspectors general, 1824*, H.C. 1824 (294), xxii, p. 43.

Cork as a model county: ‘the most judicious arrangements have been agreed to with respect to the numerous bridewells,’ he said, adding ‘I have no doubt that another year will exhibit in this county a system of bridewells which (without one exception) will, upon inspection, be found to contain every accommodation and supply required’.<sup>51</sup> In subsequent years, as other grand jurors (notably in northern counties) prevaricated or simply refused to rebuild their bridewells, the inspectors relied on the example provided by the Cork grand jury.<sup>52</sup> If such a large country like Cork could commit to this work, they argued, why not smaller ones like Carlow or Limerick?

It was, of course, in the grand jurors’ interests to upgrade and update their public buildings. Like other patrons of architecture, they operated within what James-Chakraborty terms the market of ‘neo-classical commodities’. And wishing for the latest in fashionable penal architecture, it is hardly surprising that they turned to James Pain (c. 1779-1887) and his brother George Richard Pain (c. 1793-1838). Brought up in a respectable middle-class English family, and having trained with John Nash, the King’s architect in London, they came to Galway in the early 1810s to supervise the building of a new Gothic country house (**Fig. 2**) for the prominent tory and victor of 1798, Charles Vereker, later 2<sup>nd</sup> viscount Gort.<sup>53</sup> Ambitious, gifted, and efficient, and able to use the Nash connection to their advantage, the Pain brothers quickly monopolized the public architecture market in south Munster, winning the commission for the

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<sup>51</sup> *Prisons of Ireland: report of inspectors general, 1824*, H.C. 1824 (294), xxii, p. 43.

<sup>52</sup> *Prisons of Ireland: report of inspectors general, 1825*, H.C. 1825 (493), xxii, p. 7; *Eleventh report . . . on . . . the prisons of Ireland, 1833*, H.C. 1833 (67), xvii, p. 30.

<sup>53</sup> Frank Keohane, ‘James and George Richard Pain: architects of Cork’s golden age’ (M.U.B.C. thesis, University College Dublin, 2002); Rosaleen Crushell, ‘Conservation of the Irish sessions house: a study of the Pain brothers’ standard plan in Munster’ (M.U.B.C. thesis, University College Dublin, 2011); see also W. F. [William Fogerty], ‘The late Mr. James Pain, architect’, *Irish Builder*, 20.433 (1 Jan. 1878), p. 4; Richardson, *Gothic revival architecture in Ireland*, pp. 124-28.



new county gaol in Limerick in 1816 (with a surety provided by Vereker, who maintained a stronghold over Limerick politics).<sup>54</sup> Thereafter they moved fast: the Cork county grand jurors awarded them the contract for a House of Correction in 1818 (**Fig. 3**), James Pain became architect to the Board of First Fruits (the body that built new Protestant churches) for the diocese of Cashel in c. 1822, and both brothers designed the largest Gothic country house in Ireland, the aforementioned Mitchelstown castle (**Fig. 4**), in 1823.<sup>55</sup> From this time onwards, James was based in Limerick and George Richard in Cork, and both were made freemen of their respective cities; their many networks assisted their integration into influential Protestant social circles.<sup>56</sup> James Pain is buried in the Vereker family plot; George Richard's daughter, Sarah, married into the Vereker family.<sup>57</sup>

Having won large county gaol commissions in the 1810s, the Pains were the obvious choices for Cork's new courthouses and small bridewells.<sup>58</sup> Their design (**Fig. 5**) has all the decorum and aesthetic taste of Nash but with an underlying utilitarianism. By combining the

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<sup>54</sup> *Limerick Gazette*, 25 Mar. 1816 and 5 Apr. 1816; David Lee, *James Pain, architect* (Limerick, 2005), pp. 44-54.

<sup>55</sup> Davys Tuckey to William Gregory, 19 Feb. 1819 (National Archives of Ireland, CSORP/1819/868); *Pigot & Co's city of Dublin and Hibernian provincial trade directory* (London and Manchester, 1824), p. 286; Aubrey de Vere, *Recollections of Aubrey de Vere* (New York and London, 1897), p. 53; Fogerty, 'The late Mr. James Pain', p. 4; Lee, *James Pain*, pp. 75-76, 131-33.

<sup>56</sup> *Pigot & Co's city of Dublin and Hibernian provincial trade directory*, pp. 248 & 286; Fogerty, 'The late Mr. James Pain', p. 4; Lee, *James Pain*, pp. 14-15, 83.

<sup>57</sup> *Limerick Chronicle*, 15 Dec. 1877; Lee, *James Pain*, pp. 327-28, 254-55.

<sup>58</sup> The details of the competitive process by which the Pains were selected is beyond the scope of this article, but useful sources can be found in *Cork Constitution*, 23 Feb. 1824, *Southern Reporter*, 27 Mar. 1824 and *Cork Constitution*, 3 May 1824. I am grateful to Frank Keohane for these references.

distinct typologies of courthouse and bridewell, the risk of escape during prisoner movements could be virtually eliminated, while services could be concentrated to one site.<sup>59</sup> Every directive of the new prison acts of 1821-22 was followed: separation between the four male cells and the two female ones, with a day-room for each. Between the cells and the keeper's residence two yards allowed for outdoor work and recreation. The cell windows (**Fig. 6**) were sunk well below the surrounding high walls to prevent whiskey being thrown in from outside, a problem that had plagued older street-facing prisons.<sup>60</sup> An outer perimeter wall (**Fig. 7**) guaranteed security; to escape at least three doors would have to be breached. The workings of the bridewell would be hidden behind the court façade, which provided for two doors – one for prisoners and members of the public, the other for magistrates and barristers. Instead of renting and adapted older buildings, as was then usual, the grand jurors planned to erect new purpose-built structures, which the prison inspectors reassured would save money in the long-run. This created the issue of choosing and granting suitable sites, which became the local elite's prerogative. In Kanturk, the agent Edward Tierney on behalf of the absentee earl of Egmont granted a site in May 1824.<sup>61</sup> In Macroom the site came from the tory Robert Hedges Eyre, and in Bantry (**Fig. 8**) from his relation Richard White.<sup>62</sup> In Mallow it was offered, rent-free, by C. D. O. Jephson, the local whig

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<sup>59</sup> This kind of efficient planning was also contemplated by the Queen's County grand jury in 1826, when they were planning new courthouses and bridewells at Stradbally and Borris-in-Ossory. They wished to share their new buildings with the newly-formed county constabulary; see *Journal of the House of Commons*, 81 (1826), p. 231.

<sup>60</sup> *Tenth report . . . on . . . the prisons of Ireland, 1832*, H.C. 1831-32 (152), xxiii, p. 37.

<sup>61</sup> *Freeman's Journal*, 8 May 1824; Ian D'Alton, *Protestant society and politics in Cork, 1812-1844* (Cork, 1980), p. 30.

<sup>62</sup> *Prisons of Ireland: report of inspectors general, 1824*, H.C. 1824 (294), xxii, pp. 45-46; Richard White to Robert Hedges Eyre, 21 June 1836 (University College Cork, Bantry House papers, BL/EP/B/2311); D'Alton, *Protestant society*, pp. 29, 124.

lord of the manor.<sup>63</sup> With the exception of Tierney, these gentlemen formed part of the grand jury that had signed the 1823 disturbances address. And as promised by the inspectors, the grand jurors were loaned £9,450 from a central government fund for promoting public works; barring a few mishaps and delays, the seven new courthouses and bridewells were complete by early 1828.<sup>64</sup>

Let us take as our case-study the west riding town of Bantry, where the site for the new courthouse-bridewell says much for White's ambitions for the planning of his town. During the course of the early nineteenth century, the small river that divides the town was gradually arched over, eventually forming at its estuary a large public square that served as the site for the new courthouse-bridewell and for a new Protestant church. Adopting Ó Murchadha's analysis of Ennis, we can read this redevelopment of Bantry as a conscious effort to create a new urban space with distinctly political undertones.<sup>65</sup> In turn, the town's trade gravitated away from the

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<sup>63</sup> *Prisons of Ireland: report of inspectors general, 1824*, H.C. 1824 (294), xxii, p. 46; M. D. Jephson, *An Anglo-Irish miscellany* (Dublin, 1964), chapters 11 and 12.

<sup>64</sup> Three contractors were involved – Messrs Anthony (Bantry, Clonakilty, Skibbereen), Power (Macroom, Middleton) and Ford (Kanturk, Mallow); see *Cork Constitution*, 23 Feb. 1824, 3 May 1824 and 7 Nov. 1824. Thomas Anthony later worked as the contractor for other Pain-designed buildings such as St Luke's Church, Cork city. Cork County Grand Jury to Wellesley, 25 June 1824 (National Archives of Ireland, CSORP/1824/8695); Michael Mortimer to William Curry, 20 Aug. 1824 (National Library of Ireland, Lismore papers, MS 43/388/5) (I am grateful to Frank Keohane for these references); *Sixth report . . . on . . . the prisons of Ireland, 1828*, H.C. 1828 (68), xii, p. 53.

<sup>65</sup> Samuel Lewis, *A topographical dictionary of Ireland* (2 vols., London, 1837), 1.185-87; William Thackeray, *The Irish sketch-book* (1st ed. 1843; London, 1887), pp. 100-01; Kevin Hourihan, 'Town growth in west Cork: Bantry, 1600-1960', *Journal of the Cork Historical and Archaeological Society*, 82.235 (1977), pp. 83-97.

narrow, steeply inclined streets that made up part of the old town towards the expanse of White's square, which proved especially convenient for hosting cattle markets. The combined courthouse and bridewell, for some years after construction, occupied a footprint only exceeded by that of the Catholic chapel, and with its blank high walls on three sides profoundly altering the urban fabric of the town. The Pains created an effect of strength and impregnability with their pared-down Greek Doric aedicule façade formed of two massive pilasters that dominate the composition, and the heavy bracketed pediments over the two doors, surmounted by blank recessed panels. With no windows at street level, the court proceedings would not be disturbed by the noise of fighting or haggling in the market outside, and the central light, formed of a Serliana with the Pain brother's characteristic heavy bracket, tempered the severity of the design.<sup>66</sup> But if their design was 'calculated to excite a feeling of respect connected with the administration of justice,' as Woodward thought, it was nothing more than a façade, for behind the cut stone was a much plainer building that did not correspond with the façade's dimensions (**Fig. 9**): a fancy dress, the 'thin veneer' of justice.<sup>67</sup>

With the exception of Clonakilty (and to a certain extent Bantry), the new buildings were faced with similarly-sized blocks of Cork limestone, in some cases carted or shipped from the north of the county to the provincial towns. To Woodward the new buildings were a 'very

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Bantry's new Protestant church was designed by the London-based architect Henry Kendall, see *The Builder* 33 (9 Jan. 1875), p. 33.

<sup>66</sup> Rothery, *Field guide to the buildings of Ireland*, p. 154. Markets in Ireland could be notoriously violent events; see Broeker, *Rural disorder*, pp. 15-17.

<sup>67</sup> *Fifth report . . . on the . . . prisons of Ireland, 1827*, H.C. 1826-27 (471), xi, p. 45. The Pain brothers' master, John Nash, was infamous for his 'façade-ism,' – the supposed lack of a relationship between the façade of his buildings and the structure behind, see John Summerson, *Architecture in Britain, 1530-1830* (New Haven and London, 1993), pp. 455-61.

conspicuous object' in their respective towns – the order and regularity of the county's new penal and justice system would be echoed in the commonality of the materials used. The result was that in Bantry and Macroom, at either end of the pass of Keimaneigh route, where White had almost been killed by insurgents in 1822, there were now new courthouses of exactly the same design and using the same materials. This sense of regularity is echoed in comments by William Thackeray during his visit to west Cork in 1842: after visiting Skibbereen, and presumably noticing its new neo-classical courthouse, he arrived in Bantry and commented that the courthouse's design there was, simply, 'as usual'.<sup>68</sup> Later nineteenth-century photos of Bantry (**Fig. 10**) show just how conspicuous the building was, forming a stop-gap to the labyrinth of narrow streets behind, completely dominating the public space: framing, regulating and ordering markets when they took place. The Cork board of superintendence, who oversaw the county's bridewells, had been quick to form regulations for their new model prison system, which included the clause that 'no stalls or buildings' were to be erected 'within eight feet of the boundary walls of bridewells'.<sup>69</sup> This rule served only to further divorce the new buildings from the fabric of their towns. At the same time, for all the coercive qualities of these buildings, we must not forget the sizeable economic advantages that the courthouse bestowed on the town: apart from weekly or fortnightly petty sessions, the annual quarter sessions (generally held in Bantry in February) lasted for an average of seven or eight days, and provided a useful income for town traders and hoteliers at an otherwise quiet time of the year.<sup>70</sup>

The cumulative impact of all seven of the new courthouse-bridewells was most strongly expressed in the comments of the two prison inspectors. As previously noted, they had since

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<sup>68</sup> Thackeray, *Irish sketch-book*, p. 100.

<sup>69</sup> *Sixth report . . . on . . . the prisons of Ireland, 1828*, H.C. 1828 (68), xii, p. 81.

<sup>70</sup> *A return . . . of the places . . . where the quarter sessions . . . were held . . . in . . . 1832 and 1833*, H.C. 1834 (397), xxxviii, p. 4.

1824 used Cork to tempt and prod other grand jurors into action, urging them, for example, to adopt Cork's new bridewell regulations.<sup>71</sup> Combined with the Pain brother's efficient and effective design, these regulations brought impressive financial savings to the Cork grand jury, and by 1835 the inspectors boasted that 'that the cost of prisoners per head [. . .] does not exceed half of what it averages in other counties'.<sup>72</sup> Their case in point was County Tipperary, where with a similar number of total committals and around two-thirds the number of bridewells, the local prison system cost £555 to run in 1834, compared with just £236 in Cork.<sup>73</sup> Cork's system, the inspectors said, 'is a model for other counties; it has been adopted in other counties in the South, and is spreading every year; but until it becomes general we cannot have a security for the proper regulation of the minor prisons of Ireland, which we do trust will surpass those of any other country; and why? Because they *in Ireland alone* form part of a *system*.'<sup>74</sup>

The Prison Act of 1822 created incentives and threatened consequences for inaction; equally the annual inspector's reports, distributed to each grand jury and published in the local press, provided a public forum where achievements could be noted or obfuscation highlighted. Cork's neighbouring counties – Kerry, Limerick, and Waterford – were slower to commit to new building works, but when they did they naturally looked to Cork's success. Thus, in 1827 the Kerry grand jurors decided on the exact form of their new combined courthouse-bridewell in the town of Killarney, and of their new bridewells in Tarbert, Listowel, Castleisland, Dingle, Milltown, Cahersiveen, and Kenmare.<sup>75</sup> It is perhaps no surprise they turned to the Pain

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<sup>71</sup> *Eighth report . . . on . . . the prisons of Ireland, 1830*, H.C. 1830 (48), xxiv, pp. 13-14.

<sup>72</sup> *Thirteenth report . . . on . . . the prisons of Ireland, 1835*, H.C. 1835 (114), xxxvi, p. 8.

<sup>73</sup> *Thirteenth report . . . on . . . the prisons of Ireland, 1835*, H.C. 1835 (114), xxxvi, pp. 35 & 54.

<sup>74</sup> *Eleventh report . . . on . . . the prisons of Ireland, 1833*, H.C. 1833 (67), xvii, p. 8. The italics are original.

<sup>75</sup> *Fifth report . . . on the . . . prisons of Ireland, 1827*, H.C. 1826-27 (471), xi, p. 51; *Southern Reporter*, 30 June 1827 and 14 July 1827 (I am grateful to Frank Keohane for these references); Lee, *James Pain*, pp. 226-27.

brothers, and for the new buildings in Killarney they adapted a near-exact replica of the standard Cork plan (**Fig. 11**). In Limerick, the Pains were again the obvious choice for the new bridewell commissions, having already designed the county gaol that had become the envy of other grand jurors (such as in King's County).<sup>76</sup> In Limerick, the Pains built six small bridewells, all completed by 1829.<sup>77</sup> However the most unequivocal success of their design came with the deliberations over a new courthouse and bridewell in Dungarvan, Co. Waterford. A letter in the Lismore Papers shows that the duke of Devonshire's agent, William Curry, on behalf of a committee, was searching for suitable models in 1824; initially the committee proposed to copy the design used at Thomastown (**Fig. 12**) in county Kilkenny, and they suggested a presentment of £1,200.<sup>78</sup> Woodward, in his 1825 prison report, made it clear that this would be not be sufficient, saying the 'sum will be inadequate to the wants of this town, and I trust that an enlarged plan will be decided on at the next assizes'.<sup>79</sup> Writing privately, Woodward urged the committee to adopt the Cork design, noting in particular that 'the elevation is very neat'.<sup>80</sup> The Pain brothers duly sent a copy of their design, the grand-jury presentment was raised to £2,000, and the new courthouse-bridewell, completed in 1829, was yet another variation on the Cork

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<sup>76</sup> *Seventh report . . . on . . . the prisons of Ireland, 1829*, H.C. 1829 (10), xiii, p. 29; *Ninth report . . . on . . . the prisons of Ireland, 1831*, H.C. 1830-31 (172), iv, p. 42; Lee, *James Pain*, pp. 65, 226-27.

<sup>77</sup> *Seventh report . . . on . . . the prisons of Ireland, 1829*, H.C. 1829 (10), xiii, p. 59.

<sup>78</sup> William Curry to Major Benjamin Woodward, 1 Sept. 1824 (National Library of Ireland, Lismore papers, MS 43/388/5) (I am grateful to Frank Keohane for this reference). See also 'Plan and elevation of the Thomastown Session House & Bridewell', n.d. [1824] (Irish Architectural Archive, Lismore Castle collection, IAA 97/107-57/01).

<sup>79</sup> *Prisons of Ireland: report of inspectors general, 1825*, H.C. 1825 (493), xxii, p. 58.

<sup>80</sup> Curry to Woodward, 13 Aug. 1824 (National Library of Ireland, Lismore papers, MS 43/388/5).

design (**Fig. 13**).<sup>81</sup> Thus in the public architecture market, the Pain brothers profited from their fashionable, efficient and effective design, which was vociferously appropriated by the grand jurors (and so the local elites) of south Munster.

Cork's bridewells were used up until the late 1870s, when in another great shift towards centralisation, their lack of complete separation of inmates was deemed unsatisfactory and they were closed.<sup>82</sup> Abandoned too was the system of government inspectors and the local boards of superintendence, replaced with a distinctly national body – the General Prisons Board. Echoing many of the reforms of the 1820s, the grand jurors lost further power. After this date, many of Cork's bridewells were sold for private use or were simply cannibalized by nearby landowners. Only Kanturk remains, to this day, largely intact. Their history and broader importance, as suggested in this article, extends beyond any simple duo of factors or circumstances. Rather they emerge from a confluence of circumstances, local, national and imperial: the Rockite rebellion moved a long-running issue from debate into action, and the division of the county into two ridings coincided with a revolutionary new approach to prison regulation. The inspectors' annual reports and newly-granted powers moved the Cork grand jurors into action, committing themselves to appropriate and fund a county-wide display of neo-classical 'gentility'. By deciding to combine their courthouses and bridewells in a single building, and embark on such an extensive building scheme, they went beyond what the new government regulations required of

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<sup>81</sup> *Seventh report . . . on . . . the prisons of Ireland, 1829*, H.C. 1829 (10), xiii, p. 63; James and George Richard Pain, 'Design for a courthouse and bridewell to be built in the different sessions towns in the County of Cork', 6 May 1824 (Irish Architectural Archive, Lismore Castle collection, IAA 97/107-41/01). The Pains also provided unexecuted designs for new courthouses and bridewells in the Duke of Devonshire's town of Youghal in the 1820s – see drawings in Irish Architectural Archive, Jones file, P2.

<sup>82</sup> General Prisons (Ireland) Act, 1877 (40 & 41 Vict., c. 49); R. B. McDowell, *The Irish administration, 1801-1914* (London and Toronto, 1964), pp. 159-61.



them. The concept of ‘improvement’ in provincial towns, made possible by appropriating new large public buildings and adopting the ‘elite’ architectural language of the country house, was inherently an eighteenth-century one at heart, but the Rockite troubles and the reformed prison regulations provided distinctly nineteenth-century contexts and agendas.



**Fig. 1.** Clonakilty courthouse and bridewell, main façade. Author’s photograph, 2013.



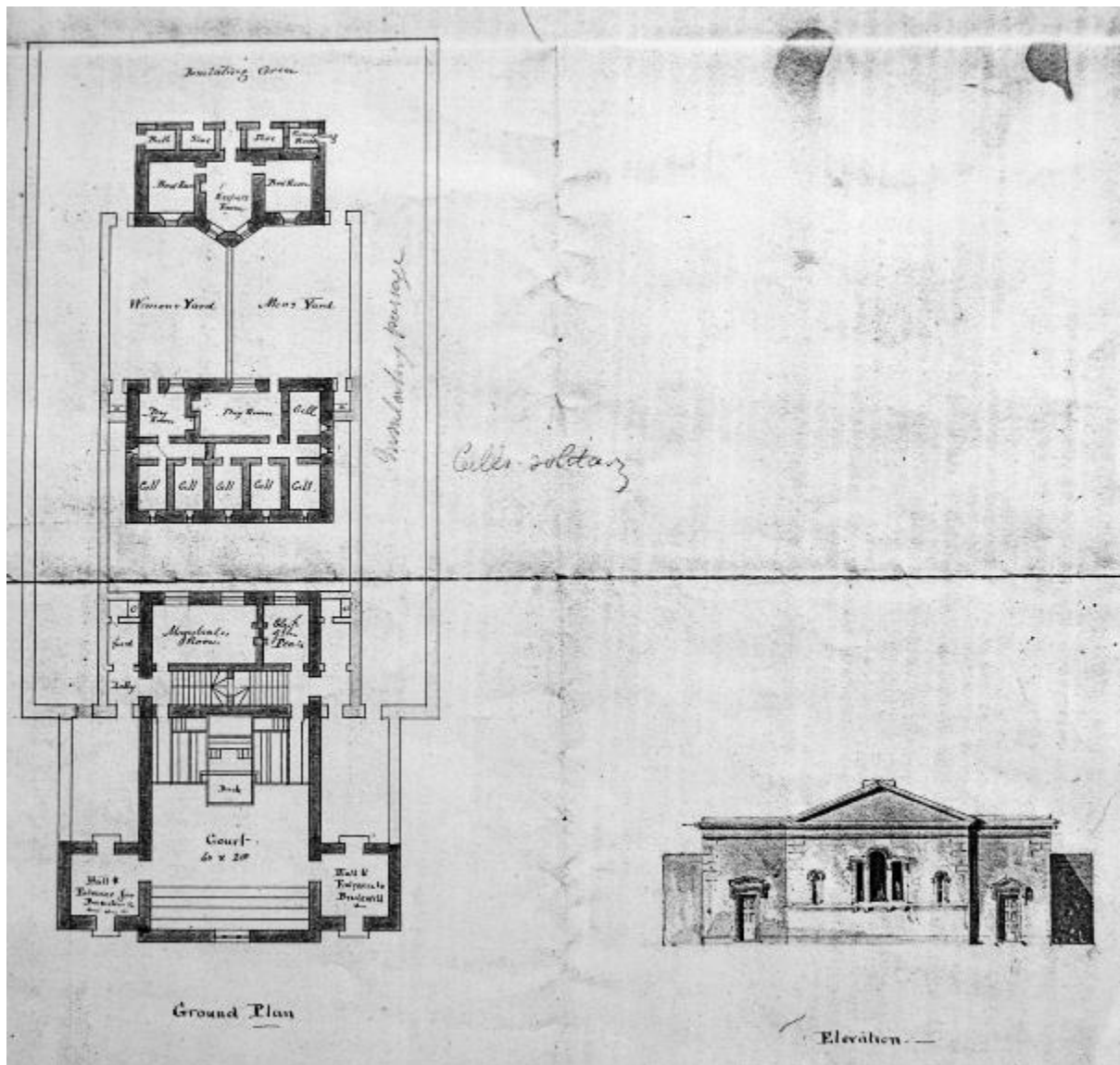
**Fig. 2.** Lough Cutra Castle, near Gort, county Galway, from the east. Author's photograph, 2012.



**Fig. 3.** County gaol, Cork, entrance to the House of Correction. Author's photograph, 2012.



**Fig. 4.** Mitchelstown Castle, county Cork, from the east.  
Courtesy of the Irish Architectural Archive (photographs collection).



**Fig. 5.** 'Design for sessions houses and bridewells in the county of Cork', by George Richard Pain, 1824, plan. Courtesy of the Irish Architectural Archive (Lismore Castle collection).



**Fig. 6.** Middleton bridewell, cell windows, from the west. Author's photograph, 2013.



**Fig. 7.** Kanturk bridewell, outer perimeter wall, from the north-west.  
Author's photograph, 2013.

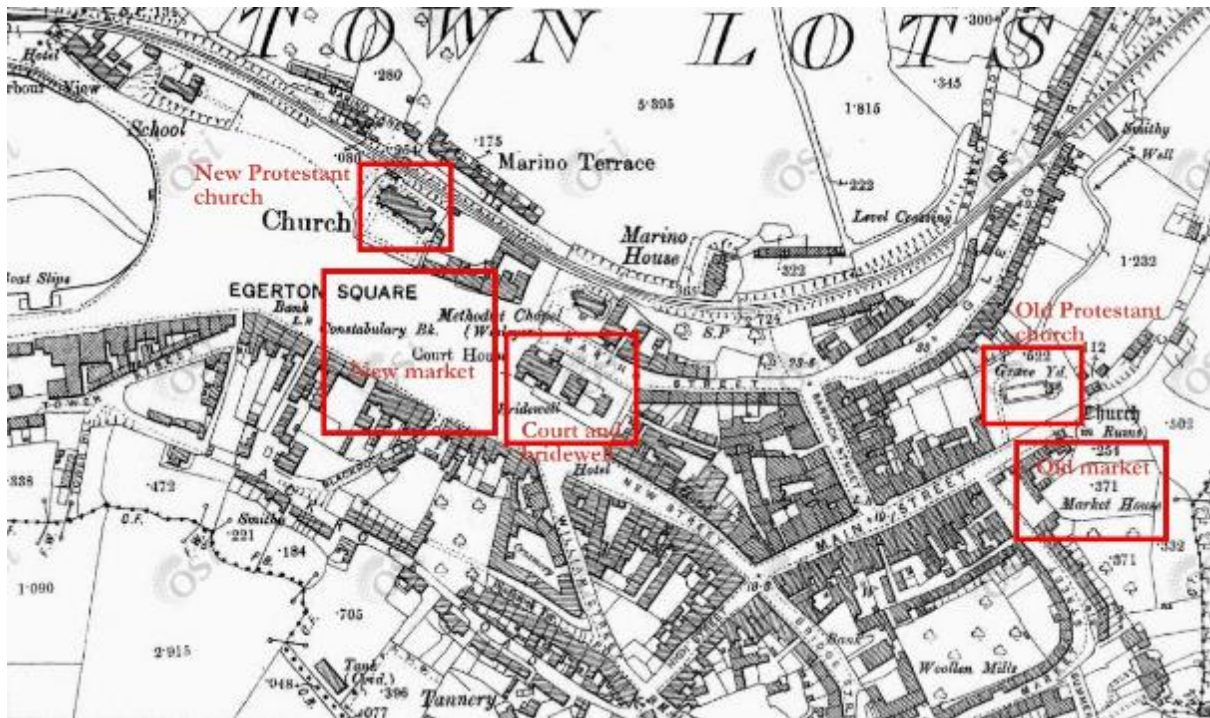


Fig. 8. Bantry, location of courthouse and bridewell, and of the old and new Protestant churches and main markets. 25" Ordnance Survey map, c. 1900 (from osi.ie).



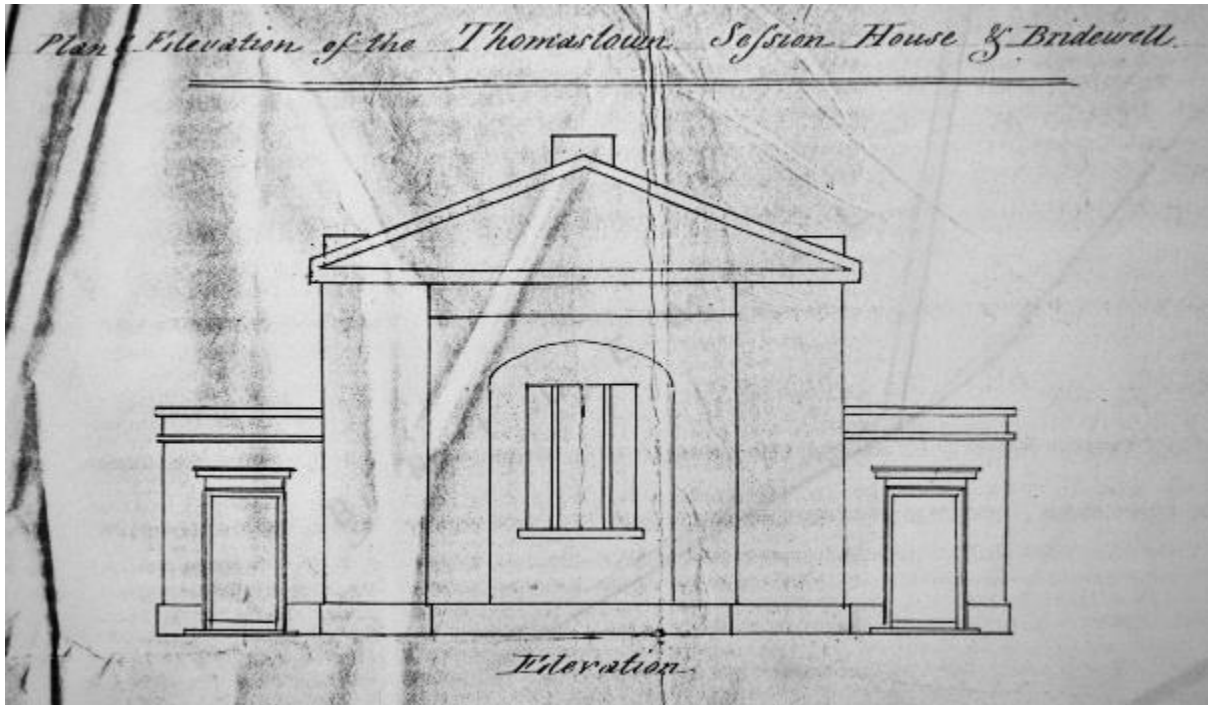
Fig. 9. Macroom courthouse and bridewell, from the south-west. Author's photograph, 2012.



**Fig. 10.** Bantry square and courthouse and bridewell, from the west, c. 1900. Courtesy of the National Library of Ireland (Fergus O'Connor collection).



**Fig. 11.** Killarney courthouse and bridewell, from the north. Author's photo, 2013.



**Fig. 12.** Thomastown sessions house and bridewell, county Kilkenny, elevation. Courtesy of the Irish Architectural Archive (Lismore Castle collection).



**Fig. 13.** Dungarvan courthouse and bridewell, county Waterford, from the west. Author's photograph, 2013.