

MANORIAL HERITAGE REGISTRY HISTORICAL RECORD EXTRACT

MHR-M-0002708 • MANOR
Craigstown, Leitrim

Evidence status: Unverified
Generated: 14 October 2026 01:03 UTC

Location: Ireland
Associated places: Ireland

LORDSHIP / TITLE ASSOCIATIONS

- Lordship of the Manor of Craigstown | Historically associated | 1640 | Provisional

ABOUT THE MANOR

Note: FeudalTitles.com does not guarantee to the validity of Irish feudal titles - which have been abused mightily and exist outside of ANY formal gov't recognition. See: [Suspicious & Fake Titles](#) page for more.

(As spoken by the present Lord of the Manor, the Rt. Hon. John Godley VI, 3rd Baron Kilbracken of Killegar, DSC, MA)

THE EARLY history of the Manor of Craigstown is provided in great detail in the Rent Book drawn up in 1750-52 by Richard Morgan, Esquire, the Dublin merchant and landowner who had purchased it in 1734. Photostats of this document, which is in Morgan's own handwriting, are available and the original is at the Manorial Society. It shows that the lands involved, which had previously belonged to the O'Rorkes, were granted by Charles I in 1640 by Letters Patent to two brothers, Sir James Craig and Dr John Craig, their heirs and assigns, at a yearly Crown Rent of £23 14s 5 1/2d, having been "erected into the Manor of Craigstown, with the usual jurisdiction and Privilege of holding Courts, appointing Seneschal &c". The property ran to 3,409 Irish acres (about 4,500 statute acres) embracing 22 townlands in County Leitrim, running down to the County Cavan border, from Cornawallen in the north through Killegar and Drumergoul to Aghavore in the south. Sir James was already a prominent Scottish "planter", having purchased a separate estate of about 2,000 acres in 1611, as part of the Plantation of Ulster, at Croaghan, only five miles from Craigstown though in County Cavan. Here he had built and

fortified a castle, from which he could now also administer his newly granted Manor. But his enjoyment of Craigstown would be extremely short lived. The Great Rebellion broke out in 1641, within 12 months of its grant, and there was at once fierce fighting in the area. It was in Coaghan Castle (also known as Castlecraig) that many of the hard-pressed Scottish settlers sought refuge. Under Craig's leadership they resisted the siege of the rebels for six months until his death in April 1642. Soon afterwards, in June, the garrison was forced to capitulate. All were then, rather surprisingly, allowed to return unharmed to Scotland, where the Craigs still held a sizeable estate. It is not known how long a term elapsed before their Irish lands were restored to them - soon after the "reduction" of Ireland by Cromwell in the 1650s or not until after the Battle of the Boyne in 1690. We learn only that all their holdings in both countries duly passed "in a Lineal Descent" to Thomas Craig, Esquire, "a Scotch gentleman who resided altogether in Scotland". On his death in 1690, he had only one child, Hellen, an eight-month-old baby. This enabled his younger brother, Robert, to practise three full decades of Chancery. The estate in Scotland was entailed, and therefore correctly passed to him. He then made the journey to Ireland, produced the Scottish deeds, and successfully pretended that Craigstown, too, was governed by them and had therefore also become his property. In fact, Craigstown was not entailed and should have gone immediately to Hellen, his baby niece. So, for more than 30 years, Robert was to enjoy all the rights and privileges of Lord of the Manor at Craigstown, collecting the rents there as well as from the Scottish estate. No details are known about the family's property in County Cavan at Castlecraig or whether it was subject to similar trickery. But his long-delayed deserts were on their way. Though he should have been very comfortably off, we learn that he "contracted many and great Debts (in Ireland) particularly with George Deniston, merchant"; and eventually, in 1728, came to an agreement with his creditors to sell Craigstown to pay his debts. He did not get away with it. Hellen, in the meantime, had married in 1707, at the age of 17, the son of a nobleman, The Hon William Carmichael; had presented him three years later with a son, John Carmichael, and had died in 1718

without ever
 having left Scotland or been aware of her Irish property.
 When news reached William Carmichael of the intended sale of Craigstown, his suspicions were
 somehow
 aroused. He finally sought out the relevant Letters Patent, discovered long lay that the
 estate
 should have passed to his wife, Hellen, 38 years previously when she was a baby, and on her
 death to
 his son, John, now aged 18. He forthwith "caused Ejectment to be brought in the
 Exchequer for
 the said lands", at once putting a stop to any sale. Six years of litigation followed,
 involving two Acts of Parliament, before John Carmichael could conclusively prove he was his
 grandfather's true heir and became undisputed Lord of the Manor of Craigstown with an
 unencumbered estate. We are not told how Robert's creditors fared out, but presumably
 they
 could be satisfied through the sale of his lands in Scotland, which may well have led to his
 bankruptcy. He was already an old man. It certainly seems unlikely that he could have been
 forced to
 repay the rents he had filched for 38 years from the rightful owners.
 John Carmichael had no Irish connections of any kind and no thought of leaving Scotland. He
 put
 Craigstown up for sale by private tender, and it was purchased by Richard Morgan on 19 June
 1734 for
 £5626 8s 4d, or about £1.25 a statute acre. An Indenture of that date, of which a
 photocopy is
 available, bears the signature and seal of John Carmichael, and comprehensively transfers
 the Manor
 to Richard Morgan
 "together with all and singular the Rights Members Priviledges Appendances &
 Appurtenances
 thereunto belonging.....and also all Houses Out Houses Gardens Orchards Edifices Buildings
 Lands
 Meadows Pastures Feedings Commons Bogs Turbaries Woods Underwoods Mines Minerals &
 Royalties
 Ways Paths Water Water Courses Mills Mill-ponds Fishings Fisheries Waifs Strays Deodands
 Courts Leet
 Courts Baron Profitts Franchises Priviledges Emoluments Hereditaments and Advantages
 whatsoever to
 the said Manour".
 Morgan's Rent Book gives extremely full details of all his tenants and their leases.
 Townland
 by townland he lists the name or names of the tenants, the acreage involved, the rent per
 acre
 (subdivided according to quality), and the particulars of each lease together with
 "some
 Observations". For example, the townland of Killigar (sic), where Killegar House would
 be built
 by his great-grandson, John Godley, some 80 years later, was then tenanted by one John

Murray. Its 116 acres 28 perches of arable land was let at four shillings an acre a year; its 21 acres 2 rods of "rushy pasture" at 2s 7p; and its 2 acres 2 rods of "bog" at 6d, for a total "Real Value" of £26 1s 9½d a year. The lease was "for 3 lives or 31 years which shall last Longest, Viz the said John Murray, Richard Murray his Son & James Connely, commencing 1st May 1733". The highest rent charged was in "Langhine" (now Laheen) where Thomas Johnston paid 5s 6d for the best section of his holding. The above figures are Irish measure. It is instructive to consider what these figures mean in terms of today's money. Inflation since 1734 has been far lower than is generally believed. A chart published by The Economist estimated that prices in 1734 had trebled by 1815 but had returned by 1895 to almost precisely the same level. Since then they have multiplied about 50 times. We can therefore reckon that Morgan bought his land at only about £62 a statute acre in today's money. Rents, however, were correspondingly low: the average figure at Craigstown would have been the equivalent of only £3.00 a year per statute acre today, with a maximum for the best land of about £10.30. The Manor descended in due course to my family through the marriage of Richard Morgan's only daughter, Mary, to the Rev Dr William Godley, Rector of Mullabrack, County Armagh, in 1731. He gave her a generous marriage portion, but left Craigstown to his only surviving son, Richard junior. It was only on the death of the latter in 1784 without issue, despite two marriages, that it passed to the rector's son, John Godley, a Dublin barrister, as his mother's heir. However, this inheritance was disputed, because Richard junior, it transpired, had left all his property to build and endow a school for impoverished Protestants in Dublin, and it had to be shown that Craigstown should be excluded from this bequest because by now it had been entailed, as Richard junior must certainly have known. This litigation was not to take more than two decades, again involving a couple of Acts of Parliament. The Godley's right to the Lordship of the Manor were finally established in 1807, the year after the barrister's death. He was succeeded by his son, John Godley II, who forthwith decided to build a "Big House" on the estate and to farm

two of the townlands himself. Those he chose were Killegar and Drumergoul. He completed the Georgian mansion, Killegar House, where I am now writing these words, in 1813. During the 19th century, the Irish Land Acts came into force, which enabled tenants to purchase their holdings on very favourable terms. My family were one of the very few that actively encouraged them to do so. This would result in the sale by 1922 of all the manorial land except two untenanted townlands mentioned above, which I still own today - about 420 acres. By then the property had passed direct from John II to his grandson, John Arthur Godley, who in 1909 had been created Baron Kilbracken of Killegar in the peerage of the United Kingdom. I am the elder son of his elder son. A map of the Manor may be inspected at the offices of the Manorial Society. Rights, customs and incidents So, for more than 30 years, Robert was to enjoy all the rights and privileges of Lord of the Manor at Craigstown, collecting the rents there as well as from the Scottish estate. "together with all and singular the Rights Members Priviledges Appendances & Appurtenances thereunto belonging.....and also all Houses Out Houses Gardens Orchards Edifices Buildings Lands Meadows Pastures Feedings Commons Bogs Turbaries Woods Underwoods Mines Minerals & Royalties Ways Paths Water Water Courses Mills Mill-ponds Fishings Fisheries Waifs Strays Deodands Courts Leet Courts Baron Profitts Franchises Priviledges Emoluments Hereditaments and Advantages whatsoever to the said Manour".

The Godley's right to the Lordship of the Manor were finally established in 1807, the year after the barrister's death.

Catalogue source Lot #5 Manorial Auctioneers Partnership October 1990

OWNERSHIP / HOLDER ACCOUNT

Historical holder / succession information him [source claim requiring identity review] passed to • historical_holder_or_transferee Source wording: The estate in Scotland was entailed, and therefore correctly passed to him. his wife, Hellen, 38 years previously [source claim requiring identity review] passed to • historical_holder_or_transferee Source wording: He finally sought out the relevant Letters Patent, discovered long lay that the estate should have passed to his wife, Hellen,

38 years previously when she was a baby, and on her death to his son, John, now aged 18.

CONVEYANCE / DESCENT

- 1640 | Sir James Craig and Dr John Craig | Letters Patent | Manor And Title |
- 1690 - 1728 | Robert Craig | Disputed succession | Manor And Title |
- after litigation concluding before 1734 - 19 June 1734 | John Carmichael | Inheritance and court-litigation settlement | Manor And Title |
- 19 June 1734 | Richard Morgan | Indenture of conveyance | Manor And Title |
- 1784 - 1806 | John Godley | Inheritance and litigation | Manor And Title |
- 1807 | John Godley II | Inheritance | Manor And Title |
- after 1734 - 1784 | Richard Morgan junior | Family succession | Manor And Title |
- after 1807 | John Arthur Godley | Inheritance | Manor And Title |

RECORDED RIGHTS

- Courts leet and courts baron: The 1640 Letters Patent are stated to have erected the manor with the usual jurisdiction and privilege of holding courts, including appointment of a seneschal.
- Manorial rents and leases: The 1750 1752 Rent Book is described as recording tenants, acreage, rents and lease terms across the manor.
- Commons, bogs, turbaries, woods, waters, mills and fisheries: The 1734 indenture expressly lists these rights and appurtenances as transferred with the manor.
- Waifs, strays and deodands: These incidents are expressly included in the rights transferred by the 1734 indenture.
- Franchises, privileges, profits and emoluments: The 1734 conveyance expressly includes these manorial incidents and advantages.

RESEARCH GAPS / WANTED EVIDENCE

- [OPEN] The civil parish has not been identified from the supplied record. | Wanted: Source-backed evidence resolving this point
- [OPEN] The surviving or current status of the lordship title is not positively established. | Wanted: Source-backed evidence resolving this point
- [OPEN] The precise succession dates between the Craigs and the later holders require source verification. | Wanted: Source-backed evidence resolving this point
- [OPEN] The identity of any present title holder is not established. | Wanted: Source-backed evidence resolving this point

DISCLAIMER

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