

Early History

OF LYONS ESTATE

Lyons Estate has had a long and eventful history prior to being purchased by UCD in 1962. It has been associated with three Irish families, the Tyrrells, the Aylmers and the Lawlesses. The earliest record of Lyons Estate dates to 1274 when the Tyrrell family are recorded as the owners.



1400

TYRRELLS

Around 1400 John Aylmer married Helen Tyrrell and became owner of the manor of Lyons and other lands. In 1548 Richard Aylmer and his wife Elinor Fleming had their coats of arms sculpted side by side at the gates of Lyons churchyard. In 1558, the Earl of Ormonde and Ossory gave Richard Aylmer of Lyons the entire Barony of Cloncurry, a large property in north east Kildare.



1600

AYLMER

By order of Queen Elizabeth, Thomas Aylmer was to be brought up as an English Protestant and was educated at Trinity College Dublin. Thomas remained a Catholic and married a Catholic. He had 5k acres of land when he died in 1639. He is buried at Lyons. In 1641. Following Thomas' death most of his property passed to his brother, George, although his wife, Mabel, retained ownership of Lyons Castle, which was subsequently burned down by the Earl of Ormonde. The old castle was never rebuilt.



MICHAEL AYLMER

1700

During the Jacobite rising from 1688 and 1746 the Aylmers took the side of James II and following his defeat they avoided having their lands at Lyons confiscated, but other branches of the family lost property. Michael Aylmer inherited Lyons Estate at the age of four in 1733. He married three times but squandered his wives' dowries and his own assets. In 1772 he became one of the directors of the Grand Canal Company and Aylmer bridge is called after him. He became indebted to banker Sir Nicholas Lawless (later Baron Cloncurry), eventually selling Lyons Estate and his lands at Cloncurry to Sir Nicholas for around £40,000. Michael Aylmer died in Brussels in 1808.

1750

LAWLESSES

Sir Nicholas Lawless (b. 03/12/1733 d. 28/08/1799) was the son of a successful wool merchant. The family were originally turf sellers from the Wicklow hills. Nicholas' father married into the wool business and later got involved in banking and had business interests in France, where Nicholas spent part of his early life. Nicholas was not happy in France where he was deemed a commoner and wished to play the nobleman. Nicholas succeeded his father, and continued to develop the woollen and banking businesses very successfully. Nicholas turned Protestant, bought Lyons Estate, supported the idea of the Union, was Member of Parliament for Lifford 1776-89, and became first Baron of Cloncurry in 1789. He commissioned architect Oliver Grace to build a "grand Georgian mansion" in 1785, and it was completed in 1797 but died in 1799.

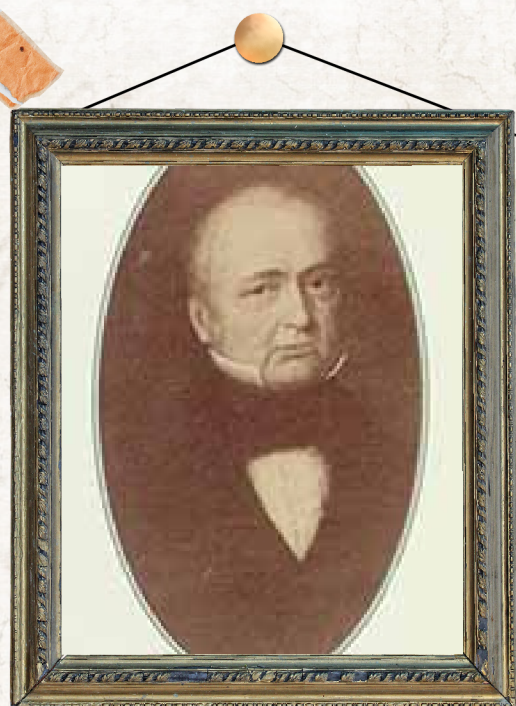


1800

THE 2ND BARON CLONCURRY

Valentine Brown Lawless (b. 19/08/1773 d. 28/10/1853) who became the 2nd Baron of Cloncurry, Lord Valentine, on his father's death, was the most accomplished of the family members and the creator of Lyons Estate as it is known today.

Lord Valentine was a great farmer, and was interested in art, engineering, and landscaping. He was also a great Irish patriot within his meaning of the term and was friends with many of the leading lights of the early Irish Independence movement including Wolfe Tone, Lord Edward Fitzgerald, and Henry Grattan, many of whom he had met while studying in Trinity College Dublin.



On his release, Lord Valentine went to Paris and then Rome. He was there during Robert Emmet's rebellion and is believed by Emmet's biographer Ruan O'Donnell to have been a member of the new Republican Government in waiting. Valentine used his time to purchase works of art being sold off by Italian nobles under pressure from Napoleon's oppressive taxation, and sent four shiploads to Ireland for the refurbishment of Lyons House. This was not an easy task at the time as he was forbidden to take such things from Rome. They included a statue of Venus excavated at Ostia and three pillars from the palace of Nero originally looted from Egypt, but other artefacts were lost when the third shipment sank off Wicklow Head.

Lord Valentine returned in 1804 to oversee Richard Morrison's £200,000 refurbishment of Lyons House (equivalent to €15.25m today) and the reorganisation of his extensive estates. The refurbishment included frescoes by Gaspare Gabrielli. He employed an army of men to undertake the refurbishment work and wrote that the day wasn't long enough for him to get all his work done. The gardens of the estate were developed between 1804 and 1810.



Lord Valentine was an outstanding farmer when many of the landlords at the time had no interest in the land other than what it yielded in terms of rent income from their tenant farmers. He cherished good tillage and championed the spade and its proper use by giving special prizes to his tenants. With the Duke of Leinster, he formed the County Kildare Farming Society, which held the first ever Ploughing Match at Monasterevin. He was a passionate believer in the importance of agriculture and declared: "In the land we have our best raw materials; our first manufacture is farming".

THE THIRD, FOURTH AND FIFTH BARONS CLONCURRY

Edward Lawless, 3rd Baron Cloncurry (b. 13/09/1816, d. 04/04/1869) was Sheriff of Co. Kildare from 1838, and of Co. Dublin from 1846. He married Elizabeth Kirwan (d. 8 May 1895), of Castle Hacket, Co. Galway. They had nine children 5 sons and 4 daughters. Edward committed suicide by jumping from the third floor of Lyons house. He was succeeded by his son Valentine, who became the 4th Baron Cloncurry.

Valentine Lawless, 4th Baron Cloncurry (b. 02/11/1840, d. 12/02/1928) was Sheriff of Co. Kildare from 1867. He married Laura Sophia Priscilla Winn (d. 29 Oct 1891). They had 2 daughters. By then the immense wealth of that branch of the Lawless family had been frittered away. Valentine played a large part in Home Rule. He disposed of some of his remaining lands to the British Government who laid out a scheme for Veterans of World War I.



1900

His oldest daughter, Mary Hermione Lawless (1886-1922) also preceded him in death. As he had no male heir his estate passed to his brother Frederick, who became the 5th Baron Cloncurry.

Frederick Lawless, 4th Baron Cloncurry (b. 20/04/1847, d 18/07/1929) who served on the staff of two Lords Lieutenant of Ireland and as a Governor of the National Gallery of Ireland was unmarried and on his death the Barony and Baronetcy of Cloncurry became extinct and Lyons Estate passed to Valentine's youngest daughter, Kathleen Emily Marie Lawless (1888-1957). Kathleen bequeathed the remaining property to a cousin, G. M. V. Winn.



PURCHASE DAY - TOM RAFTERY, CAPTAIN ROBINSON OF LYONS ESTATE AND MR WYNN PREVIOUS OWNER

SALE OF LYONS DEMESNE

In the early 1990s, the university sold the house and half of the land, approximately 620 acres. It was purchased by the late Ryanair businessman Tony Ryan in 1996 who undertook an extensive renovation at Lyons House to return it to its former splendour.

Lyons Demesne is considered a "Georgian treasure. Country Life, which regards Lyons as Ireland's most significant estate, says of it, "Following extensive renovations by the late Dr Tony Ryan, there are seven suites in the main house, a self-contained guest wing with four bedrooms and staff quarters in the north wing." The house has its own private cinema, gymnasium, billiards room, helicopter landing pad, traditional Irish pub, wine cellar, and half Olympic-sized swimming pool. It is decorated in the Directoire style, of which there are few examples in Ireland.



EMILY LAWLESS IN 1910

UCD PURCHASE LYONS ESTATE

University College, Dublin (UCD), purchased Lyons Estate in 1962 from the Winn family, the purchase consisted of Lyons House and approximately 1,200 acres (490 ha).



LYONS RESEARCH FARM

Lyons Research Farm consists of a portion of the original Lyons Estate and is used by the School of Agriculture, Food Science and Veterinary Medicine for teaching and research activities.

2000

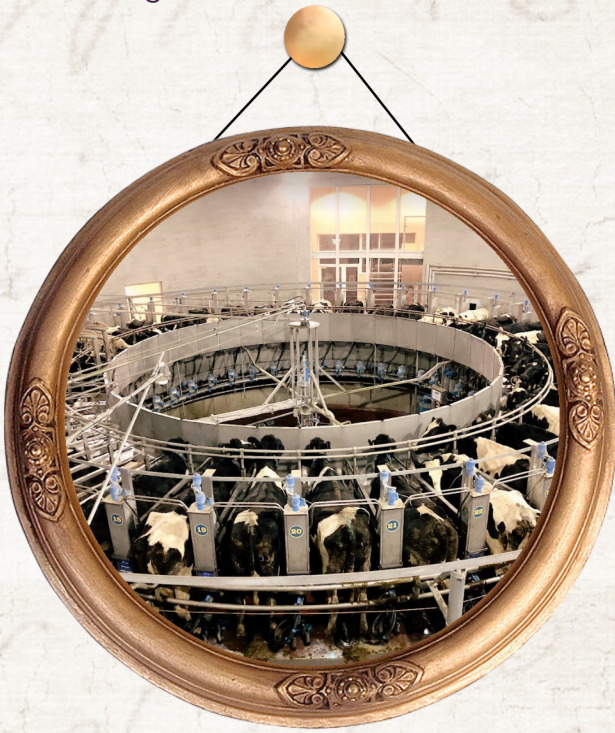
SHEEP 2010

2010 – June 26th saw Sheep 2010 at Lyons Farm, a national event showcasing the Irish sheep industry to both national and international audiences, with over 10,000 visitors to Lyons.



UCD LYONS DAIRY RESEARCH & EDUCATION FACILITY

2014 – In conjunction with industry partners construction starts on new UCD Lyons Dairy Research and Education Facility including a 40 point rotary parlour and expanded housing facilities.



OFFICIAL OPENING & PURCHASE OF MORE LAND

2016 – UCD Lyons Dairy Research and Education Facility officially opened 19th January 2016 by then Minister for Agriculture Simon Coveny TD. Dairy cow numbers increase as EU milk quotas are abolished and UCD marks over 100 years supplying milk.

2016 – Additional 22ha of land purchased with a view to developing a Long Term Grazing Platform to research sustainable agricultural production.



NEW UNDERPASSES

2019 – Two underpasses are installed in Lyons connecting the farm for the first time and the long-term grazing platform is completed.

AGTECH UCD INNOVATION CENTRE & UCD BIMEDA HERD HEALTH HUB

2023 – 25th October 2023 AgTechUCD Innovation Centre and the UCD Bimeda Herd Health Hub, officially opened by then Minister for Trade, Enterprise & Employment Simon Coveny TD.



UCD DAIRY CALF RESEARCH & INNOVATION FACILITY

2024 – April Construction commences on UCD Dairy Calf Research & Innovation Facility.

UCD FBD AGRICULTURAL SCIENCE CENTRE

2024 – July – UCD and FBD announce €14 million investment into a new Agricultural Research and Education Centre at Lyons Farm. FBD Holdings plc and FBD Trust CLG pledge a philanthropic contribution of €6 million in support of the facility and UCD is providing €8 million bringing the combined investment in UCD Lyons Farm to €14 million.

