



THE BUTLER SOCIETY NEWSLETTER



August 2013 - No. 37

Hello members,

We are pleased to send all members of the Butler Society our August 2013 Butler Society Newsletter. Included in this issue is a brief report on the Butler Rally held in August 2012 centred around Kilkenny Castle.

In Memoriam

John Dunboyne

First, however, we must impart the very sad news of the passing of John, 29th Lord Dunboyne, at 61 years of age, after a long illness, bravely borne. Brenda Butler, the Hon Secretary of the Butler Society, conveyed our sympathies to John's wife, Caroline and to his family at his funeral on 25th July 2013. While the funeral service, held in Rotherfield Church in East Sussex, was a solemn occasion, there were lighter moments too, as friends and relatives recounted humorous snapshots from John's life, all of which lent to a general atmosphere of enjoyment as, indeed, he would have wished it to be, according to his family. Later, back at Argos Hill House, the family home in Rotherfield, the sun shone and a marquee for refreshments had been set up on the lawn behind the house. Apart from the fact that John will certainly be missed in Ireland and, indeed, by all our Butler Society members throughout the world, he had an enormous circle of friends from all walks of life, as well as many friends in his local community. He had been visiting Ireland since 1967 when he with his father and sisters attended the first Butler Rally. On that occasion, Arthur, 6th Marquess of Ormonde, handed over Kilkenny Castle to the city of Kilkenny. John attended every rally since then and his warmth and sense of fun has given great joy to all who met him over the years. He will be also remembered for his helpful contribution to the Butler Society Committee generally and for the patient management of the Butler Society website.

Anne Lowe, Victoria, Australia

We are sad to report the passing of Anne, the wife of Hinton Lowe, in Victoria, Australia. Anne and Hinton had been frequent visitors to the Butler Rally over the years. She will be sadly missed.

Eleanor Burgess, Essex, England

Eleanor Burgess, the former editor of the Butler Journal, passed away in 2012. Brenda attended the Sunday memorial day in her honour in September 2012 in Boreham Town Hall, Essex. Eleanor had for many years edited the Butler Society Journal and had worked tirelessly in that capacity. She was a frequent visit to the Butler Rally and will be remembered for her lively company, her intellect and her sense of fun.

Thelma Gillott, Sussex, England

Hilary Blandford, Thelma's daughter, sadly informed us that her mother had passed away on 15th February 2013 after a very brief stay in hospital. Her funeral was held in Cuckfield, Sussex, on 8th March. Thelma was a much loved Vice-President of the Butler Society for many years and was in her

98th year at the time of her passing. She worked tirelessly and selflessly for the Society for which she had great affection.

Mary Butler of Torquay, Devon

Georgina Butler informed us of the passing of Mary Butler of Torquay, Devon, on 12th March 2013. Mary was an enthusiastic member of the Butler Society and became a good friend of the late Paddy and Anne Dunboyne (John Dunboyne's parents) during her researches into her family heritage. She loved trips to the Butler Rallies in Ireland and Spain.

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Retirement

George Butler, long-serving committee member, and former Chairman of the Butler Society, retired in 2012. His efforts over the years for the Society are much appreciated.

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Appointment of new Vice-Presidents of the Society

Abigail Butler was appointed Vice-President of the Butler Society in Australia (Southern Region). Craig Foster was appointed Vice-President of the Butler Society for the United States. It is the Society's intention to invite Lord Mountgarret to become a Vice-President of the Society.

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Kilkenny Archives

The Butler Society Committee recently decided to place the Society's Papers in the care of Kilkenny Archives Ltd., which was established in 1995 with support from the late Peggy Butler, widow of Hubert Butler, one of our founder members. The Archive has found a home on the campus of St. Kieran's College, Kilkenny, where a number of the early Rallies were based during the period when Kilkenny Castle was being restored. The ownership of the Papers remains with the Society but maintenance and access will be done through Kilkenny Archives, whose archivist is our committee member, John Kirwan. To-date Kilkenny Archives have received collections from:

- Prior-Wandesforde Estate;
- Barton Family;
- Kilkenny Castle (via our late member Ms. Paddy Friel);
- Clifden Castle Papers;
- Cuffe of Leyrath Papers (through Melo Lenox-Conyngham);
- Kavanagh Papers (Borris House);
- The Papers of Lavistown & Maidenhall (Butler & Lenox-Conyngham) which were gifted to Kilkenny Archives by Melo's family and her good friends and neighbours the Goodwillies;
- Glanbia Papers;

and many others.

The Butler Society Papers include books, photographs, genealogies, scrapbooks etc., which were gifted to the Society over the years. All the business and administrative papers of the Society. Accessioning will be completed sometime in August. For the first time since its foundation in 1967, the Society can with ease accept further gifts of Butler material, knowing that it will become part of the Society's archives and be freely available. A scrapbook which is believed to have been assembled by Mrs. Elizabeth Smith, who ably assisted Hubert Butler, in the early days of the Society is a tremendous treasure.

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The Butler “Gathering”, Saturday, 31st August 2013

The Butler Society will be making its contribution to ‘*The Gathering*’ by holding an event in the Conference Centre of Kilkenny Castle on Saturday, 31st August 2013. This will start with the official launch of a book in memory of Melo Lenox-Conyngham, which has been edited by her niece Sophia Grene. The book will be launched by Mr Nicholas Grene, Melo's brother-in-law and father of the editor. We hope that all members who attend this event will be able to buy the book which has been sponsored by the Society. There will be a drinks reception in Kilkenny Castle, after which an afternoon barbeque will be held in the garden of Langtons, in John Street, Kilkenny. Tickets for the drinks reception and barbeque will cost €20.00. It would be appreciated if members could let us know if they wish to attend, so that we can inform Langtons of numbers. Attached at the end of this Newsletter is a flyer for the book which shows a lovely picture of Melo on a bicycle and gives a flavour of what is inside. Contact details are also included on this page for any member wishing to purchase this most enjoyable book, but who will be unable to attend our August event.

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Notes on the 2012 Butler Rally in Kilkenny – according to Brenda Butler (Hon Sec)

After registration in Kilkenny Castle on the evening of Tuesday, 21 August 2012, there was a wine reception and tour of the Castle. Everyone was in a jovial mood and members, in some cases running to several generations, were delighted to meet up again since previous rallies. It is good to see younger members joining us on the Rallies and we hope to encourage this.

The next morning, Wednesday, 22 August, the Mayor of Kilkenny, Sean O hArgain, officially opened the 2012 Butler Rally. The Mayor spoke about how proud are the people of Kilkenny about the Ormonde Butler connection with the city and that they would do their best to ensure that the Butler visitors have an enjoyable stay during the Rally. Kilkenny Castle, he said, is made available to the Butler Society for the enjoyment of its members with the agreement of the Office of Public Works. After the official opening, we went by coach for lunch to Lisnavagh, County Carlow, the home of William and Emily Bunbury and family, where we also met William's parents, Lord and Lady Rathdonnell. Our delicious lunch was followed by a couple of hours relaxing in the Bunbury's historical home. Following this, we headed for Ballintemple, the home of Tom and Pamela Butler and family, for a barbecue in their garden. Tom and his father, Sir Richard Butler, gave us a fascinating talk on the history of the Butlers of Ballintemple and their connection with the U.S. at the time of the signing of the Declaration of Independence. This was of particular interest to our American visitors and Sir Richard even had some old documents and pictures by way of illustration on the background to this slice of history. After lunch, the family led us on a walk in the sunshine along the banks of the River Slaney, in the grounds of their home. The younger visitors, along with Tom and Pamela's children, led the way on this fun walk. That evening we returned to Kilkenny, tired from all the fresh air but with a store of anecdotes about our full day in Ballintemple.

In the morning of Thursday, 23 August, the Triennial Annual General Meeting was held in the Tower of Kilkenny Castle. Sir Richard Butler, President of the Butler Society, chaired this meeting and other committee members present were: Colm Butler (Chairman), Mark Reade (Treasurer), Brenda Butler (Hon Secretary), John Kirwan, Dr David Butler and James Butler and Nickie Toler-Aylward. The minutes of this meeting will appear in the next edition of the Butler Journal.

This was followed by lunch in Zuni restaurant where a delicious meal and wine were consumed. Then back at the Castle, Nicholas Grene gave the Hubert Butler Memorial Lecture which reviewed Hubert's work as an essayist. This was listened to intently and enjoyed by the audience, after which Nicholas was happy to answer questions on Hubert's work. We then progressed by coach to the home of the late Hubert and the current home of his daughter Mrs Julia Crampton and her husband

Dr Dick Crampton. Julia kindly allowed us to ramble around and enjoy the ambience of her home and its wonderful gardens. Again, we were lucky with the weather on that occasion. The tea and buns were enjoyed too.

Later that evening, back in Kilkenny, we attended a memorial evening in honour of Melosina Lenox-Conyngham in Kilkenny Castle. Members of Melo's family and several of her friends gave poignant readings from her writings and recited many anecdotes to demonstrate the affection in which she was held. This was amplified by the praise heaped on her by Butler Society committee members for all her years of hard work on behalf of the Society since its foundation, in her capacity of Honorary Secretary up until her sad passing in 2011. As a convivial conclusion to this enjoyable occasion, we stayed on to chat with Melo's family and friends over a glass of wine and canapés.

On Friday, 24 August we set off early for a coach trip to Carrick-on-Suir, and then on to Kilcash and Clonmel in Tipperary. At Carrick we were given a tour of Ormonde Castle and the Butler connections were explained to the visitors. At this point, much-needed hot coffee and cakes were served, as the famous Irish wet weather had once again returned. We also paid a visit to the Heritage Centre in Carrick, guided by the curator Patsy Fitzgerald who gave us an interesting talk on the building – a former Church of Ireland church from the 1670s. From Carrick we went on to Kilcash, a favourite site of Butler history and a former Ormonde stronghold. An extraordinarily warm welcome was afforded us by the residents of the village of Kilcash, who are always delighted to see us, even if we do not manage to squeeze in a visit to them on each Rally. On our way to Kilcash, down some very narrow winding country roads, much mirth was to be heard emanating from our coachload of visitors as the bus took a wrong turn. It then became stuck in the lane and had little prospect of turning around. However, thanks to our canny driver Bryan Buggy we eventually made it to the village hall where a veritable feast of food, wine and music awaited us from the ever hospital residents of Kilcash. Much laughter rang out from the village hall and visitors said this was the highlight of their visit. They particularly enjoyed the solo song in Irish ("*Cad a dhéanfaimid feasta gan adhmaid*") by a local lady about the glorious history of Kilcash. So it can be seen that, although we arrived late, no time was wasted in making the most of our few hours there, some visitors even joining in an Irish jig. Attached to this newsletter is a photograph showing John Dunboyne speaking to us in the village hall in Kilcash, looking like he was really enjoying himself.

In the afternoon, we continued on by coach to Clonmel in County Tipperary where we explored the Main Guard, an historic Ormonde building. After tea and cakes we boarded the coach back to Kilkenny.

On Saturday morning, 25 August, we held a genealogical forum in Butler House. Craig Foster, our newly elected Vice-President for the US spoke briefly on the subject and Lord Dunboyne also spoke about enquiries on genealogy for interested members. A general discussion then followed.

That evening there was the formal dinner in Kilkenny Castle. The Tower was fitted out perfectly for a most enjoyable dinner, using the two open-aspect floors. The Main Gallery was not available for the dinner this year due to health and safety concerns of the local authorities. However, although it was tight squeeze in the Tower, this proved to be a wonderful night and the chatter and clinking of glasses could be heard in the next county, I am told! This was a kind of farewell for many visitors who were not able to stay for the Sunday lunch the next day. Promises were made to keep in touch, photos were taken and email addresses were exchanged. A lovely photo of guests on the lawn of Kilkenny Castle prior to the Saturday dinner is shown at the end of this Newsletter.

On Sunday, 26 August, a service was held in St Canice's Cathedral, Kilkenny, followed by a farewell lunch back in Kilkenny Castle to round off the Rally. I think it fair to say that a good time was had by

all, and even though visitors might have felt a little tired at the end, many happy memories were carried back home.

Notes on the 2012 Butler Rally in Kilkenny – according to Roger Butler (Moree, Australia)

2012 Butler Rally Kilkenny Ireland 21-26 August 2012

The 17th Rally opened with the traditional registration, fine wine and finger food in the Parade Tower of the Castle. This was the charming Brenda Butler's "baptism of fire" after the sad passing of Melo. Lord Dunboyne (John Butler) welcomed us and there were many familiar faces some admitting the three years that had passed since the last rally. After the reception Frank Kavanagh escorted us on a tour of the Castle - each tour becomes more evocative than its predecessor. Frank made a passionate plea for us all to embrace the Butler ethos.

The official opening of the Rally by the Mayor of Kilkenny occurred the following morning, again also in the Parade Tower. The Mayor traced the Butler connections with Waterford and thanked the Butlers for their "unequalled contribution to Ireland generally and Kilkenny in particular". Then we travelled to Lisnavagh, Rathvilly, Carlow for our traditional lunch with the Rathdonnells. The weather was cool with intermittent drizzle but inside was exceedingly pleasant as usual - one will never die of starvation or thirst at a Butler Rally!

During the afternoon we went on to Ballintemple the ancestral home of our President Sir Richard Butler where in the family marquee (more like an oversized yurt!) Tom Butler gave us a talk on the history of the property. He and his father display an engaging mutual respect. There was a challenging walk down to the river for those hardened souls who accepted the invitation. That was followed by a barbecue in "The Summer Palace" (as the "yurt" is described). My son Giles ended up being the chief cook whilst Tom's son Jasper entertained my grandsons Caylum and Logan. Our return to Kilkenny was a little earlier than anticipated mainly thanks to Lady Butler's sensible (and thankful) suggestion.

Thursday morning was occupied by the triennial general meeting of the Butler Society. Our chairman Colm Butler (he of the three microphones - describing himself as "from the whispering branch" of the Butlers!) acknowledged Melo's passing and commented that "she was the Butler Society"! He conveyed his thanks to his sister Brenda for assuming the secretaryship. Apart from the sad passing of Melo, we also received reports on the death of Eleanor Burgess, the former editor of the journal, and of the Earl of Carrick. George Butler one of the "fathers" of the Society had retired in poor health. As Australian Vice President I gave a report on events in Australia and invited Abigail Butler to report on the resurrection of the Southern Cross Society. There were reports from the US, Germany and France. The existing committee was re-elected but there was added to it Craig Foster as a further US Vice President (to replace the venerable Bill Butler) and Abigail Butler as a further Australian Vice President to replace an ailing Hinton Lowe. Dr. David Butler the current editor of the journal reported that the next edition should be out within 18 months. He informed us that "all written donations will be gratefully received" and he especially asked for any obituary notices.

Then to Zuni's restaurant for the usual convivial luncheon (sans wine).

That afternoon back in the Castle Nicholas Grene (husband of Eleanor who was Melo's sister and the niece of Hubert) gave the Hubert Butler Memorial Lecture. In his splendid address he quoted expansively from Hubert's essays and said: "his inner self was elsewhere", "seeing differently", a study of family history: "to see who you are and what you might become", "emigrants fail in their duty to stay and transform".

Fittingly thereafter we made our pilgrimage to Maidenhall (the original home of Hubert Butler and now of his daughter Julia Crampton) to the very room where he wrote so extensively. Both the house and its location capture the evocative spirit of Hubert's essays.

That evening there was a "Remembering Melo" when family (mainly) members read from her writings and recounted their remembrances and experiences. Strangely no one referred to her steely determination cloaked by the consummate ease with which she seduced.

Friday was devoted to the traditional safari but this time with low cloud, drizzling rain and wind. At Carrick-on-Suir we visited the Ormonde Castle a restored manor house which, like Kilkenny Castle, we should now reclaim! The inclement weather put our timetable out and we only had a very short period at the Heritage Centre before we were on the coach to Kilcass passing a legion of farms with wheat begging to be harvested.

Our acquaintance with the Kilcass community was renewed (we had not been there since 2003). Those good people again provided a fine time: ample food and wine, Irish music and singing and a genealogical talk by John Flood concerning the 17th century. Then it was on to the Mainguard house at Clonmel - a court house and tax office built by the 1st Duke. The Irish Office of Public Works has undertaken a superb restoration (again warranting a reclaim by us!)

Saturday morning featured our traditional genealogical forum in Butler House where Craig Foster reported on the Mormon Genealogical Centre - there are twenty six million images from Ireland alone. The forum was very well attended, possibly the best that I have seen. A languid sense of innate questing pervaded. John, Lord Dunboyne then spoke (he was not giving a talk): "you never know what you are going to get with DNA". "This is a one name society, not a one tribe society". "The name Butler is a family name." "The Earl of Chester was a Butler but totally unrelated to the Irish family". "My father (Lord Paddy Dunboyne) from his research discovered one hundred and seventy separate family groups of different origins". The forum ended after much friendly discussion and when we went outside we were pleased to see that the sun was shining.

The tour of the Castle and/or Old Bishops Palace did not happen owing to the absence of Ben Murtagh the Castle archaeologist.

That evening there were drinks in the Picture Gallery (transformed once again) and then the black tie dinner in the Parade Tower - as usual a splendid, if late, event. I had a £5 bet with Sir Richard Butler whether he or I would be the first to have four generations at a Rally.

Sunday morning was at St Canice's Cathedral (with its superb organ and organist) for Holy Communion on a glorious sunny morning. The sermon was on Joshua - fighting the good fight.

Then off to the Parade Tower for the farewell lunch and again the regretted parting of friends made over many Rallies.

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A note from David J Butler in Spain

Those of you who read my article in volume 5 number 1 of the Journal of the Butler Society "*Who was Azucena Butteler?*" may remember that there was a football club in the housing development in Buenos Aires "*Barrio Butteler*" and how that got transformed over the years into the leading Club Atlético San Lorenzo de Almagro with its battle hymn *La Gloriosa Butteler* - well, that now has the honour of being the first ever football club, and a prestigious Argentinian one at that, that has the

Pope as a member. Pope Francis I has taken delight as a lifelong fan and member of the supporters' club and doubtless joined in singing La Gloriosa Butteler with the best of them.

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Butler Journal

The Journal editor, Dr David Butler, Carrigeen Castle, Ireland, tells us that he hopes to have the next edition of the Butler Journal ready around Christmas this year.

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Finally, a note from the Hon. Secretary, Brenda Butler

I took on the mantle of Hon. Secretary of the Butler Society after the passing of Melosina Lenox-Conyngham. Fortunately, the Butler Rally in August 2012, which was my first big challenge in that role, went reasonably smoothly. I am told that a good time was had by all and I know I certainly enjoyed it. Although we all knew Melo went to great lengths to ensure that the Rallies were successful, I don't think anyone realised just how much work she put into them. I discovered this in a baptism by fire, rightly identified by Roger Butler above. However, credit where credit is due - none of it would have been possible in August 2012 without the help of all the committee members who worked tirelessly and voluntarily behind the scenes to make it happen. The committee consists of: Colm Butler, Mark Reade, James Butler, John Kirwan, Tom Butler, Sir Richard Butler, David Butler, Nickie Toler-Aylward, Ailbhe de Buitléar and myself. We look forward to seeing you all back again for the next Rally in 2015.

Brenda Butler
Hon Secretary
2 Evans Houses
Arklow
County Wicklow
Ireland
butlerbcastle571@gmail.com



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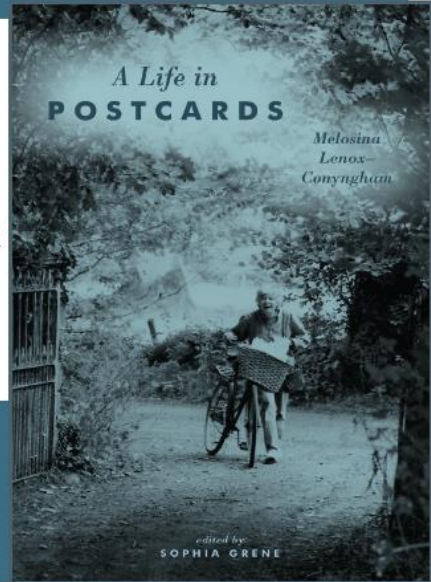
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A LIFE IN POSTCARDS

The Writings of Melosina Lenox-Conyngham

SOPHIA GRENE

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Many people will remember Melosina’s voice from ‘Sunday Miscellany’, where these pieces were first broadcast, or have read them in ‘Irishwoman’s Diary’ in *The Irish Times*. Fewer may have discovered her intriguing short stories, most of them published here for the first time. Though all of her writing conveys her distinctive slant on things, relatively few of her essays were directly concerned with her personal life. Several of these are collected here, including a moving account of her first experience of the cancer from which she eventually died in 2011.

Growing up as a teaplanters’ daughter in Sri Lanka (then Ceylon), evacuated with her mother to Africa during the war, Melosina Lenox-Conyngham acquired early on a taste for travel and an interest in the curiosities of life. Certainly these qualities are well illustrated in this collection. Her many years as Secretary to the Butler Society gave her expertise at rallying the clan as well as a special interest in key figures from Kilkenny local history. Vignettes of Irish social life take us to houses that have never been sold or fill readers in on the strange eventful history of a portrait of the Duchess of Devonshire. Some of the most intriguing of the essays cover her travels to remote parts of the globe, to Yemen, the home of the legendary Queen of Sheba, to Nagaland in the far north-east of India, or to Timbuktu in Mali. But even if it is only a visit to a restaurant in Barcelona where food is served entirely in the dark, or an artistic centre high in the Pyrennees, the amused gaze of the writer brings the experience vividly to life.

Edited by her niece Sophia Grene, the volume is divided into several sections each of which is introduced by members of the family or friends who round out the sense of the writer’s life. This anthology of Melosina Lenox-Conyngham’s writings, so rich in her delightful sense of humour, her ironic and quizzical pleasure in the world around her, has something for everyone to enjoy.

Sophia Grene has been a financial journalist for fifteen years. She is currently a reporter for the Financial Times and lives in London.

Trade orders: Gill & Macmillan, Hume Avenue, Park West, Dublin 12 tel 01-5009555 fax 01-5009596 email sales@gillmacmillan.ie

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John Dunboyne chatting to Butler Rally guests in Kilcash Village Hall, County Tipperary, August 2012



Butler Rally guests in the grounds of Kilkenny Castle before dinner on Saturday, 25 August 2012

