



## Muckross House, Killarney

Bail ó Dhia oraibh go léir.

Welcome to this short presentation on the history of Muckross House. It is a wonderful story about a beautiful place, here in Killarney, on our very doorstep.

As we walk through the House in the company of our guide we will hear stories of royalty, wealth, power and splendour. However, we must never forget the ordinary people who worked here, both in the House and on the Muckross Estate. It was their Muckross too and often more than one generation of their family was employed here.

Today, Muckross House is your house and mine - we all own it. It was presented as a gift to the Irish people late in 1932 by its former owners, William and Agnes Bowers Bourn together with their son-in-law, Arthur Rose Vincent.

We, the Trustees of Muckross House, have worked with the Irish State since 1964 in celebrating the story of this remarkable place.

Tá súil agam go mbainfidh sibh taitneamh is eolais as an taispeántais gearr seo agus táimid ag tnúth le fáilte a chur romhaibh go luath i Mucrois. (We hope you enjoy our presentation and we look forward to welcoming you here, to Muckross House, very soon).

Rory Darcy,

Chairman, Trustees of Muckross House.

## Slide No. 2.

## Queen Elizabeth I of England (1533-1603)

Queen Elizabeth was the daughter of King Henry VIII and his second wife Anne Boleyn. Elizabeth became Queen in 1558 and she reigned until 1603.

As Queen, Elizabeth wanted to have firm control over Ireland. She feared that the Catholic King Philip of Spain intended to send forces to Ireland to attack England.

Elizabeth also established a new religion from the Protestant faith, called the Anglican faith.



Queen Elizabeth was the daughter of the Tudor King Henry VIII and his second wife Anne Boleyn.

- Queen Elizabeth of England (1533 -1603) was crowned in 1558 and reigned for 45 years.
- The Queen feared that King Philip of Spain, would send an army to Ireland to attack England.
- Much of Munster was ruled by the Fitzgerald family led by Gerald, Earl of Desmond.
- At first the Earl was friendly with the Queen but he joined a rebellion against English rule in 1579.



### Slide No. 3

During Queen Elizabeth's reign, the Irish Province of Munster was ruled by a powerful family led by Gerald Fitzgerald, the 14<sup>th</sup> Earl of Desmond. At first he was on friendly terms with the Queen. However, a rebellion broke out against the English in 1579 and the Earl became embroiled in it. The rebellion lasted until November 1583, when the Earl was finally hunted down and killed.

During these four years the Province of Munster was ravaged by war and many people died of famine and plague. Following the death of the Earl of Desmond, his lands and those of his allies were confiscated by the English crown. They were then surveyed by the surveyor-general, Sir Valentine Browne and divided up into large estates. These estates were then granted to English settlers known as 'Undertakers'.

The 'Undertakers' were required to:

- A). Re-populate the devastated Province by bringing English families to Munster to settle and till the land; others would work as servants.
- B). To introduce English farming methods and to pay for soldiers and weapons for the settlers' defence.
- C). To practice English customs
- D). To remove all Irish people from their Estates.
- E). To refrain from intermarrying with the Irish.

- The Desmond Rebellion against the English crown and the extension of English rule over Munster was led by the Earl of Desmond Gerald Fitzgerald.
- The Rebellion began in 1579 and lasted for four years, until November 1583.
- The Province of Munster was devastated during these years of war and many people died of famine and plague.





## Slide No. 4.

Sir Valentine Browne was one of the 'Undertakers' who benefitted from the Munster Plantation. He came to Ireland in 1559 during the first year of Queen Elizabeth's reign.

Following the suppression of the Desmond rebellion in 1583, Sir Valentine was initially granted lands around Dingle and Killorglin. However, he soon surrendered these lands and was granted the equivalent territory from the lands of O'Donoghue Mór of Ross, near Killarney.

For almost 400 years his descendants, the Browne family, held these lands.

- The lands of the rebels were confiscated and granted to 'undertakers' loyal to the English crown.
- Sir Valentine Browne was granted the lands of O'Donoghue Mór of Ross, near Killarney. For almost 400 years the Browne family held these lands.



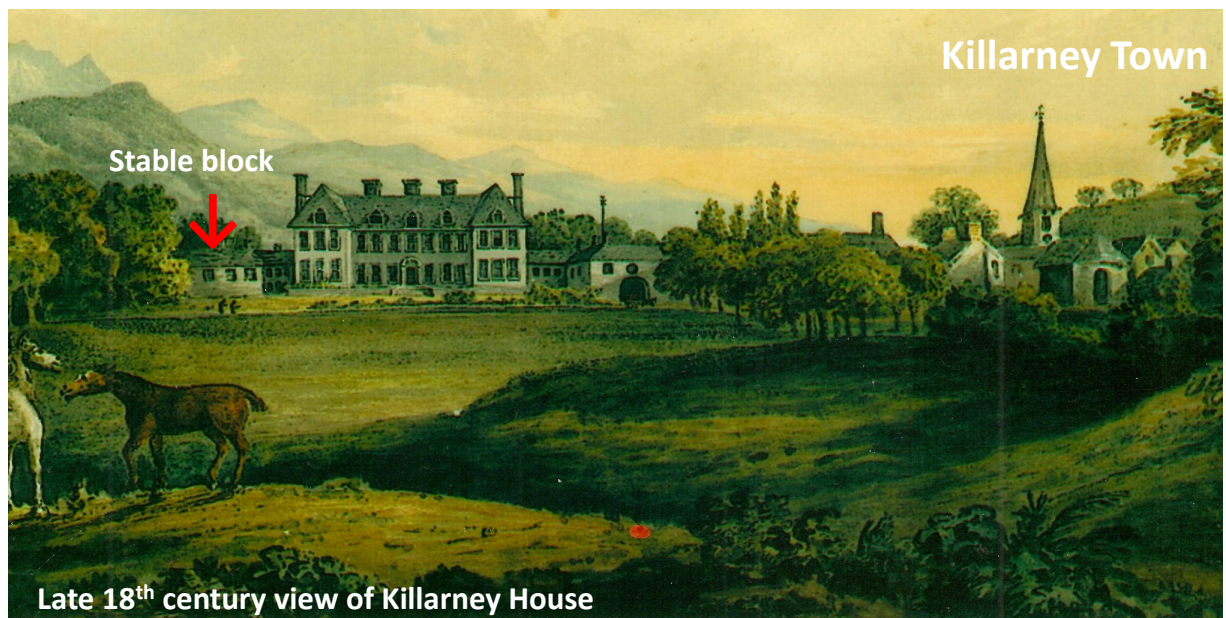


## Slide No. 5.

During the 18th century, one of Sir Valentine Browne's descendants, also called Valentine Browne, built a house near Killarney town. Built c. 1725, it stood near the top of the Ross Road and faced onto the present Countess Road.

Over one hundred years later, Queen Victoria stayed in this house when she visited Killarney in August 1861. The house was demolished during the 1870s. However, its stable block was retained and after 1913 it was converted into the present Killarney House.

It was Valentine's son, called Thomas, who did much to develop the town of Killarney during the 1750s. Thomas tried to introduce the linen industry; he built roads, drained bogs, built houses and planted trees.



- One of Sir Valentine Browne's descendants built a new house, called Killarney House, near Killarney town c. 1725. This view of the house would have looked towards the Countess Road.
- The house was demolished in the late 1870s.
- After 1913 the old eighteenth century stable block was converted into another house, now also known as Killarney House. (See the red arrow)

## Slide No. 6.

The 'Undertaker' who received the most lands during the Munster Plantation was Sir William Herbert of Monmouthshire, in Wales. He received about 6,000 hectares (over 13,000 acres) around Castleisland. A hectare is about the size of a football field.

Over 50 years later another Herbert, Thomas Herbert of Montgomery, was sent over to Ireland as a land agent to administer the Herbert lands for his kinsman.

It may have been Thomas' son Edward (1660-1737) who first came to live at Muckross. He leased these lands from the local Irish Mac Carthaigh Mór family.

The Herbert family lived at Muckross for almost 200 years. During that time they constructed four different houses at Muckross.



Herbert crest of Wyvern or dragon with the motto: 'Every man according to his taste.'

- The first member of the Herbert family to settle in County Kerry was Thomas Herbert, from Wales. He lived near Castleisland.
- Thomas's son Edward may have been the first Herbert to settle at Muckross, on lands leased from the Irish Mac Carthaigh Mór family.
- The Herberts built at least four different houses at Muckross, over a period of almost two centuries.
- The picture above shows one of the Herberts' 18<sup>th</sup> century houses. It stood near Lough Leane (Lower Lake), north of the present Muckross House.

## Slide No. 7      The Herbert Family Settle at Muckross

As previously mentioned, it was probably Edward Herbert who, during the 17th century, leased the lands around Muckross from the Irish Mac Carthaigh Mór family. The remains of one of the Mac Carthaigh Mór castles still stands at Castlelough, near the Lake Hotel, Killarney.

A Herbert descendant, Agnes Herbert, married Florence Mac Carthaigh Mór and the couple had one son. His name was Charles and he died in 1770 when he fell off a horse. All of Charles' lands were then inherited by his mother's family, the Herberts. The Herbert family finally owned the lands they had previously only leased.



Mac Carthaigh Mór castle at Castlelough, near the Lake Hotel, Killarney.

- One of Thomas' great granddaughters, Agnes Herbert, married Florence Mac Carthaigh Mór and they had one son called Charles.
- Charles died when he fell off a horse. His mother's family, the Herberts, inherited his lands at Muckross, which they had previously only leased.



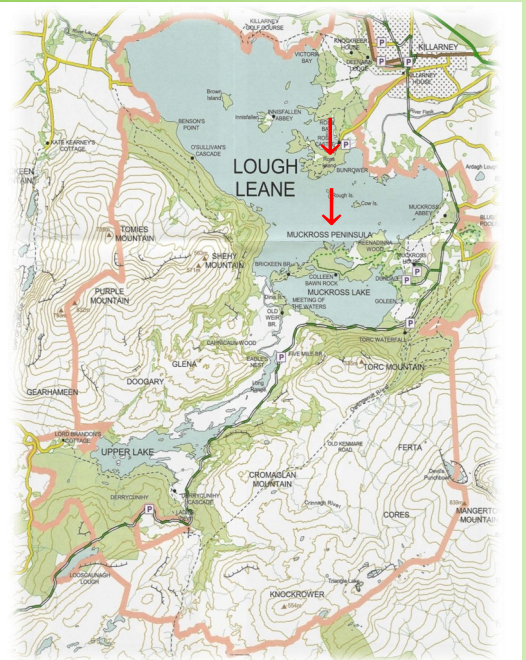
## Slide No. 8.

## The Copper Mining Activities of the Herbert Family

During the 1750s, the Herbert family became very wealthy due to their copper mining activities on the Muckross Peninsula. These mines were worked sporadically over the following decades.

At the same time the Herbert family was also involved in copper-mining activities on nearby Ross Island. They carried out their mining activities on Ross Island under an arrangement made with Thomas Browne of Killarney House.

The copper was taken by road to Kenmare, from where it was shipped to Bristol.



- During the 1750s the Herbert family were involved in copper mining activities on the Muckross Peninsula. The copper was taken by road to Kenmare and then shipped to Bristol.
- The Herberts were also involved in copper mining on Ross Island during the mid 1750s. However, flooding of the mines by lake water was a problem.

The Herbert family became very wealthy during the 18<sup>th</sup> century due to their mining activities.

## Slide No. 9. Henry Arthur Herbert of Muckross and Mary Balfour.

One of the Herbert family descendants was Henry Arthur Herbert (1815-1866) of Muckross. He spent most of his childhood in England, with his English relations, as his mother and father had both died young. Henry Arthur returned to Muckross in 1836 and a year later (1837) he married Mary Balfour from East Lothian in Scotland. The couple had four surviving children, two sons and two daughters.

Henry Arthur became a Member of Parliament in 1847. He was a progressive landlord and he provided much assistance to his tenant farmers during the years of the Great Famine (1845- c. 1850). Henry Arthur was also actively involved in bringing the railway to Killarney in 1853.

Henry Arthur became Chief Secretary for Ireland in 1857. This was a very important political office in the British administration of Ireland. However, Henry Arthur held this office for only a short period of time, probably because he was a poor orator.

Mary Balfour was a very talented water-colour artist and many of her paintings still decorate the walls of Muckross House today.



- Henry Arthur Herbert (1815-1866) married Mary Balfour in 1837.
- He became a Member of Parliament in 1847 and briefly served as Chief Secretary for Ireland 1857-1858.

- Mary (1817-1893) was from Scotland.
- She loved to paint in watercolours and many of her paintings decorate the walls of Muckross House today.



## Slide No. 10.

## The Building of the Present Muckross House.

The Herbert family had lived in three different houses at Muckross before Henry Arthur Herbert and his wife Mary decided to build the present Muckross House.

The well-known Scottish Victorian architect William Burn had been involved in the building of Mary's family home of Whittinghame, in East Lothian, Scotland. Mary and Henry Arthur also employed him to design their new house at Muckross.

Many of the Scottish craftsmen and skilled men who had worked on the building of Mary's family home were also employed at Muckross. Work began in 1839 and the house was completed in 1843. It was built in the Neo-Tudor style of imported Portland stone.



- Muckross House was completed in 1843 for Henry Arthur Herbert and his wife Mary.
- It was designed by the Scottish architect William Burn. He was famous for his Victorian country house designs.
- Muckross House was built in the Elizabethan style, of imported Portland stone.



## Slide No. 11. Queen Victoria (1819 -1901).

Queen Victoria was born in 1819 and succeeded to the throne in 1837, the year that Henry Arthur and Mary were married.

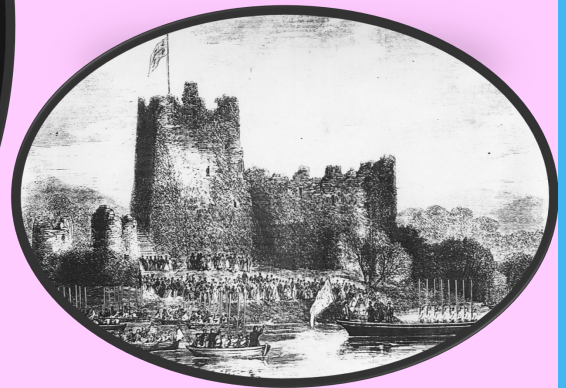
In August 1861 Queen Victoria, with members of her family, paid a four-day visit to Killarney.

It seems likely that both the Browne family of Killarney House and the Herberts of Muckross were involved in inviting the Queen to visit Killarney. Both families moved in high social circles and would have been aware of the economic benefits to Killarney that would result from a royal visit.

There are no known photographs of the Queen's visit to Killarney but some sketches were published in the *London Illustrated News*.



**Victoria (1819-1901), became Queen in 1837.**



The Queen embarking upon the lakes at Ross Castle, Tuesday 27 August 1861.

From: *Illustrated London News*, 1861.

## Slide No. 12. Queen Victoria at Killarney House 26-27 August 1861.

Queen Victoria arrived in Killarney, by train from Dublin, on the evening of Monday 26 August 1861. In total, she spent three nights in Killarney.

The Queen spent the first night with members of the Browne family, Viscount and Viscountess Castlerosse, at Killarney House. This was the more public part of the Queen's visit.

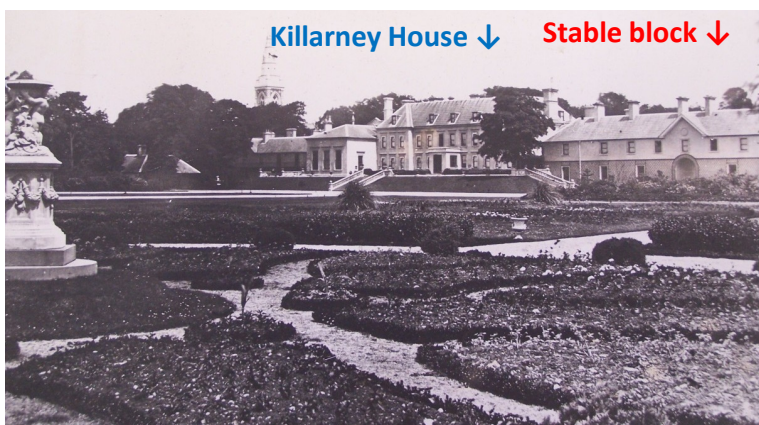
There were many preparations made for the Queen's visit to Killarney House. These included the purchasing of a barge by Viscount Castlerosse in London to accommodate the royal party upon the Lakes. The barge arrived by train in Killarney the week prior to the Queen's arrival.

On the morning of Tuesday 27 August the Queen embarked upon the new barge at Ross Castle. The oarsmen were all local boatmen. She was first rowed around Innisfallen Island before disembarking at Glena, where the royals lunched at Glena Cottage. Later the royal party passed under the Old Weir Bridge and visited Derrycunihy.

On her return to Killarney House that evening, the Queen planted a tree before departing for Muckcross.



Queen Victoria arriving at Killarney House, 26 August, 1861



Ornate Victorian gardens to rear (lakeside) of Killarney House, c. early 1870s.

- Queen Victoria arrived in Killarney, by train from Dublin, on Monday evening, 26 August 1861.
- That night the Queen was a guest of the Browne family (known as Lord and Lady Castlerosse) at their home, Killarney House. This formed the public part of the Queen's visit.
- The photo at bottom left shows the lakeside view of Killarney House (demolished late 1870s) with its stable block (right).
- Today, the stable block is known as Killarney House.
- Notice the garden with lots of flowerbeds, which would have contained many colourful flowers.



## Slide No. 13. Queen Victoria at Muckross House 27-29 August 1861.

The following two nights (27 and 28 August) were spent at Muckross House and this part of the royal visit was a more private affair.

For several years the Herberts had been busy preparing the House for the visit of the Queen. Tapestries, mirrors, carpets, china and linen were purchased. The gardens were planted with late summer flowering plants in order that they would look their best at the time of the royal visit.

One part of Muckross House was set aside solely for the use of the royal party. Upon her arrival at Muckross House, the Queen was first taken into the Library, from where she admired the view over the Muckross Lake.

The Queen departed Muckross at mid-day on Thursday 29 August 1861 and returned to Dublin by train.



Above: Muckross House depicted a few days before the Queen's visit in August 1861.

- The Queen spent the following two nights (27 and 28 August 1861) quietly as a guest of the Herbert family at Muckross House.
- At mid-day on Thursday 29 August she left Muckross and travelled by train back to Dublin.



**Muckross House today.**



## Slide No. 14. The Bedroom and Boudoir of Muckross House.

Queen Victoria is said to have suffered from pyrophobia – which means that she had an irrational fear of fire. It is believed that she developed this fear because her dress had caught fire when she was a child. This may have been the reason that the Queen slept in a ground floor room during her stay at Muckross.

The Queen's suite of rooms at Muckross included Mary Herbert's own Boudoir or sitting-room. This room has been reconstructed from photographs dating from the mid-1860s, which are preserved in the Victoria and Albert Museum, London.

Many years later, another famous person, the poet William Butler Yeats (1865-1939) also stayed in the room known as the 'Queen's Bedroom'. The poet was a guest of the Vincent family during the 1920s.



- This is the bedroom, which was occupied by the Queen during her visit to Muckross House in 1861.
- Many years later, the famous poet William Butler Yeats also stayed here during the mid 1920s.

- The Boudoir was the sitting room used by the lady of the house, Mary Herbert.
- The Boudoir was also one of the rooms used by Queen Victoria while she was a guest of the Herbert family at Muckross House.



## Slide No. 15. The Boudoir Fire Escape.

This slide shows the fire escape that leads from the Boudoir outside into the Sunken Garden. The Boudoir was one of the suite of rooms occupied by Queen Victoria during her visit to Muckross in August 1861.



View of fire escape, which leads from the Boudoir.

- A fire escape leads from the Boudoir down into the Sunken Garden.
- The Boudoir was one of the suite of rooms used by Queen Victoria during her visit to Muckross in August 1861.



Slide No. 16.      The Queen's Activities at Muckross.  
The Dining-room and the Billiard-room.

A formal dinner was held in the Dining-room on the two evenings of the Queen's stay at Muckross House.

However, at lunch time the Queen lunched alone with her family in the Billiard-room, which had been converted into a private dining-room for the royal party.

On her first morning at Muckross House (Wednesday 28 August) the Queen drove, in her carriage, around the Muckross Demesne and viewed Torc Waterfall.

That afternoon, Henry Arthur Herbert had organised a Stag Hunt upon Lough Leane (the Lower Lake) in honour of the Queen.

- A formal dinner was held each evening for the Queen and the royal family in the Dining-room of Muckross House.
- In contrast, the royal family dined by themselves at lunch time each day in the Billiard room of Muckross House.



- The walls of the Billiard room were covered with a pretty wall paper for the royal visit.





Slide No. 17.

## Queen Victoria at Muckross Abbey. The Victorian Craze for Fern Collecting.

On the morning of her departure from Muckross (29 August 1861) the Queen spent some time visiting nearby Muckross Abbey. A watercolour of the Abbey hangs in the Queen's Bedroom at Muckross House. It was painted by Mary Herbert of Muckross in 1861, probably around the time of the Queen's visit.

The Victorians loved to collect ferns and the Queen requested that ivy and ferns from Muckross Abbey should be sent to her home at Osborne on the Isle of Wight.

However, over-collecting of ferns threatened some rarer species with extinction. The Killarney Fern is now very rare and is highly protected.

The Killarney Fern was often depicted on inlaid wooden furniture from Killarney. This local industry was very important in Killarney throughout much of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. There are many examples of Killarney furniture, which was made from arbutus, holly, sycamore and yew, on display in Muckross House.



- This watercolour of Muckross Abbey, was painted by Mary Herbert of Muckross, in 1861. It hangs in the Queen's Bedroom at Muckross House.
- On the morning of her departure from Muckross, the Queen spent some time visiting the abbey. She requested ivy and ferns to be collected from there and sent to her home at Osborne on the Isle of Wight.



Killarney Fern



Arbutus



- The Victorians loved to collect ferns, but over-collecting threatened some rarer species with extinction.
- The Killarney Fern is very rare and is highly protected. It was often depicted on 19<sup>th</sup> century inlaid wooden furniture made in Killarney.
- There are examples of this furniture, made from arbutus, holly, sycamore and yew, in Muckross House.

Slide No. 18.

The Killarney Stag Hunt.

It was once the custom to organise stag hunts upon Killarney's Lakes. These events are known to have taken place from at least the early 18<sup>th</sup> century and indeed probably long before that time.

Stag Hunts were usually organised in honour of important visitors to Killarney. They were also often organised along with other events, for instance the Killarney horse races or regattas.

The stag was hunted down from the mountains by men and hounds until it was driven into the water. It was captured in the water by means of a rope around its antlers. Usually a mark was placed on the ear of a captured animal to show that it had been caught and then released. Isaac Weld, an early 19<sup>th</sup> century writer, recorded that one unfortunate stag had apparently been captured on three different occasions!

Henry Arthur Herbert of Muckross organised a Stag Hunt in honour of Queen Victoria's visit but it was not a great success. It took place on Wednesday afternoon 28 August but the Queen had left the lake by the time the stag was captured. The stag was released.

- It was once the custom to organise stag hunts upon Killarney's lakes.
- The stag was hunted down from the mountains by men and hounds until it was driven into the water.
- It was usually captured in the water by means of a rope around its antlers. Afterwards the stag was usually set free.

This painting of a Killarney Stag Hunt hangs in the Drawing room of Muckross House.



The Herberts organised a Stag Hunt to entertain the Queen when she was their guest at Muckross. It was not a great success as the Queen had left the lake before the stag was eventually captured.



Killarney Stag Hunt, August 1856.

Left: Notice the men pulling hard on their oars.

One man stands in the prow of the boat trying to throw the rope around the deer's antlers.

Can you spot the hounds in the water?



## Slide No. 19. The Victorian Pastimes of Hunting and Shooting.

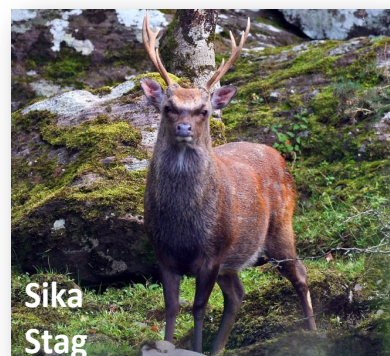
In Victorian times, hunting, shooting and fishing, were very popular pursuits among the wealthy estate owners. In particular, deer stalking became very popular during the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Prince Albert, the Queen's husband, was very fond of this sport, which therefore became very fashionable. Their son, the Prince of Wales (later King Edward VII), also enjoyed deer stalking as a pastime.

The development of the rifle allowed deer to be shot over long distances. It became fashionable to mount the trophies of the shoot on the walls of Victorian homes, as can be seen at Muckross.



Native Red Deer Stag in Killarney National Park.

- Deer stalking became fashionable among wealthy estate owners during the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The Queen's husband, Prince Albert, made the sport popular.
- The development of the rifle allowed deer to be shot over long distances. Deer heads were often mounted on the walls of Victorian houses as at Muckross.
- The Red Deer is native to Killarney. The smaller Japanese Sika Deer were introduced in 1865.



## Slide No. 20. The Death of Prince Albert, Husband of Queen Victoria

The Queen was accompanied to Killarney by her husband Albert and four of her nine children. Albert was, in fact, the Queen's cousin. As she was the Queen, he could not propose marriage to her. Instead, she had to propose marriage to him.

Albert died in December 1861, about three months after the royal couple had left Killarney. For this reason, Queen must often have remembered their visit to Killarney. Following her husband's death the heart-broken Queen retired into deep mourning.



Queen Victoria and her husband Albert in 1860.

- The Queen was accompanied on her visit to Killarney by her husband Prince Albert and four of their children.
- In December 1861, just over three months after leaving Muckross, Prince Albert died and the heart-broken Queen went into deep mourning.



The Queen and Prince Albert with some of their children.



## Slide No. 21. The Death of Henry Arthur Herbert of Muckross

Henry Arthur Herbert's health appears to have declined in the years following the Queen's visit. He died early in 1866 and was buried in the little graveyard of Killeagy, overlooking Muckross.

Shortly after, the tenant farmers on the Muckross Estate erected a large cross at his grave, in his memory. Many of the local tenant farmers were grateful to Henry Arthur Herbert as he had provided them with much assistance during the years of the Great Famine.

Local people often tell the story that Henry Arthur wished to be buried standing up so that he could look out over his beloved Muckross. However, this legend is popularly associated with many other people throughout Ireland also.



- Sadly Henry Arthur Herbert of Muckross died in 1866, just a few years after the royal visit.
- Shortly after, the tenant farmers on the Muckross Estate erected this large cross in his memory at the nearby graveyard of Killeagy. It overlooks Muckross.
- Many of the local tenant farmers were grateful to Henry Arthur Herbert as he had provided them with much assistance during the years of the Great Famine.



This watercolour of the Herbert memorial cross hangs in the Boudoir of Muckross House.

## Slide No. 22. The Herbert Family Leave the Muckross Estate

Henry Arthur Herbert's son, known as Harry, inherited the Muckross Estate following his father's death in 1866. His name was also Henry Arthur Herbert, but he was known within the family as Harry.

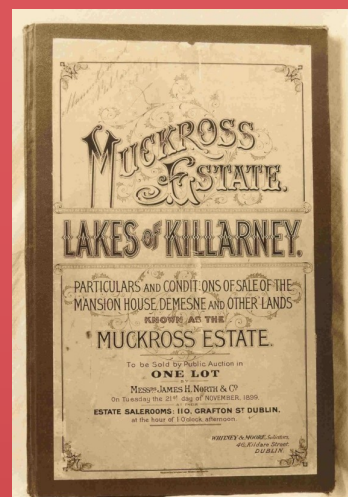
Gradually Harry fell into debt. This was probably due to a number of factors, including the expense that fell upon the Muckross Estate due to the Queen's visit. In addition however, Harry does not appear to have been a very astute businessman and the period of the Land War may also have contributed to his growing financial instability.

The Standard Life Assurance Company of Scotland were the main mortgage holders on the Muckross Estate and they foreclosed on it early in 1890. By March of that year, that company was in possession of the estate. The Herbert family had lost Muckross.

In November 1899 the Standard Life Assurance Company put Muckross up for sale by auction. However, the property failed to reach the reserve price and it was withdrawn. Shortly after it was bought by Lord Ardilaun of the Guinness brewing family. He was related by marriage to the Herbert family.



The auction room for the sale of the Muckross Estate, 21 November 1899.



Lord Ardilaun

- Henry Arthur Herbert's son, known as Harry, inherited the Muckross Estate. Gradually he fell into debt and he was forced to give up Muckross in 1898.
- In November 1899 Muckross was put up for sale by auction but it failed to sell. Shortly after it was bought by Lord Ardilaun of the Guinness brewing family.



## Slide No. 23. Muckross House as a Hunting and Shooting Lodge

Lord Ardilaun never lived at Muckross. He merely let it out as a hunting and fishing lodge. In 1910 Lord Ardilaun let the property to William and Agnes Bowers Bourn.

William Bowers Bourn was a very wealthy American from San Francisco, California. He owned the Empire Gold Mine and he also had interests in the local gas, electricity and water companies.



William and Agnes Bowers Bourn.

- William Bowers Bourn was born in 1857 in San Francisco . He became very wealthy as he owned the Empire gold mine as well as gas, electricity and water companies.
- William was married to Agnes Moody and they had one child called Maud.
- The family travelled a lot. While they were on board ship travelling to Europe in 1906 Maud met her future husband, Arthur Rose Vincent, from County Clare.
- Maud and Arthur were married in California in 1910.
- William and Agnes bought Muckross from Lord Ardilaun in 1911 as a wedding present for Maud.
- Over the following two decades William financially supported developments at Muckross.

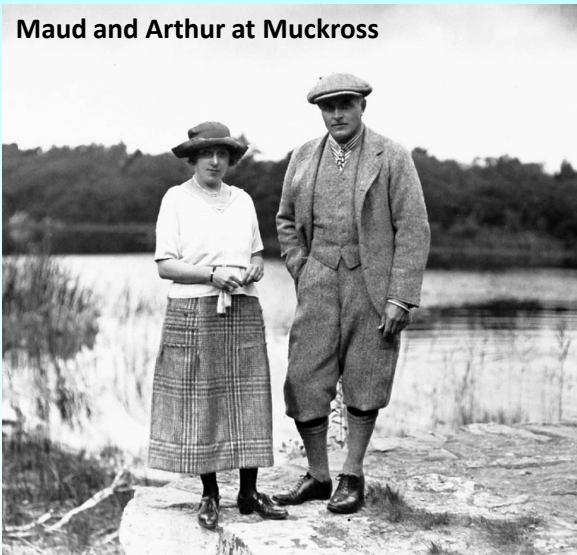
## Slide No. 24. Muckross House is Bought by William Bowers Bourn

William and Agnes had one child called Maud. She married Arthur Rose Vincent, of Cloonlara, in County Clare in 1911. The couple had met on board ship in 1906 when Maud was travelling to Europe with her parents.

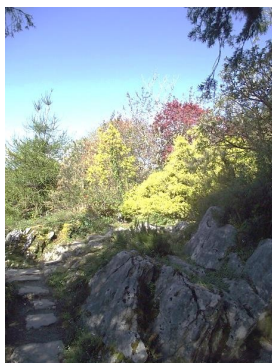
William and Agnes bought Muckross House from Lord Ardilaun as a wedding present for Maud. However, William continued to exercise considerable financial control over all developments on the estate.

Having purchased the property, work immediately began on the development and regeneration of the gardens. By 1914 the development of a Rock Garden was well underway and a Stream Garden was also developed. In addition, the Sunken Garden was re-developed. By 1918 the new glasshouses were producing vines, peaches and figs. Work on the gardens appears to have taken priority over work within Muckross House. William and Arthur did consider installing electricity. However, William dismissed this idea as he considered it too costly. (Electricity was not installed in Muckross House until 1970).

**Maud and Arthur at Muckross**



Stream Garden



Rock Garden

- Arthur Rose Vincent had worked as a judge in many countries including Thailand, China and Korea. He retired from this work following his marriage.
- Like his father-in-law William, Arthur was very interested in developing the beautiful Muckross gardens.
- At Muckross they developed the Rock Garden and Stream Garden and redesigned the Sunken Garden.
- They also grew vines, peaches and figs in the new Muckross glasshouses.
- Maud personally visited the cottages on the estate at least once a year to make sure their employees enjoyed good living conditions.



## Slide No. 25. The Children of Maud and Arthur Rose Vincent.

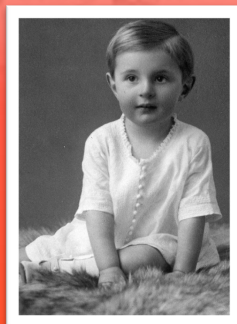
Maud and Arthur Rose Vincent had two children. Elizabeth Rose (Rosie, 1915-1981) and Arthur William (Billy, 1919-2012). The family were constantly travelling between Muckross, the Continent and California. However, they considered Muckross their home.

One of Billy's earliest memories was of travelling to Muckross in 1923 during the Irish Civil War. He recalled:

*'The first thing I remember about Muckross is arriving from California in 1923. We got off the train in Mallow and we were met by Paddy Tangney, who was the chauffeur at that time and he had a big Daimler car. We set off to come to Muckross because the railroad was blown up. The Civil War was on and the bridges were blown as well. I remember that twice we had to get out of the car and wade across the river. The car couldn't take us through in case it would break down. I never forgot that car and wading through the river – I thought it was most exciting. I was about four.'* (Extract from: *Ireland of the Welcomes*, Vol. 32, No. 5, Sept.- Oct. 1983, pp. 32-37).



Rosie 1915-1981.



Billy 1919-2012



➤ Maud and Arthur had two children. Elizabeth Rose (Rosie) and Arthur William (Billy).

➤ Although they travelled a lot, Muckross was the childrens' home.

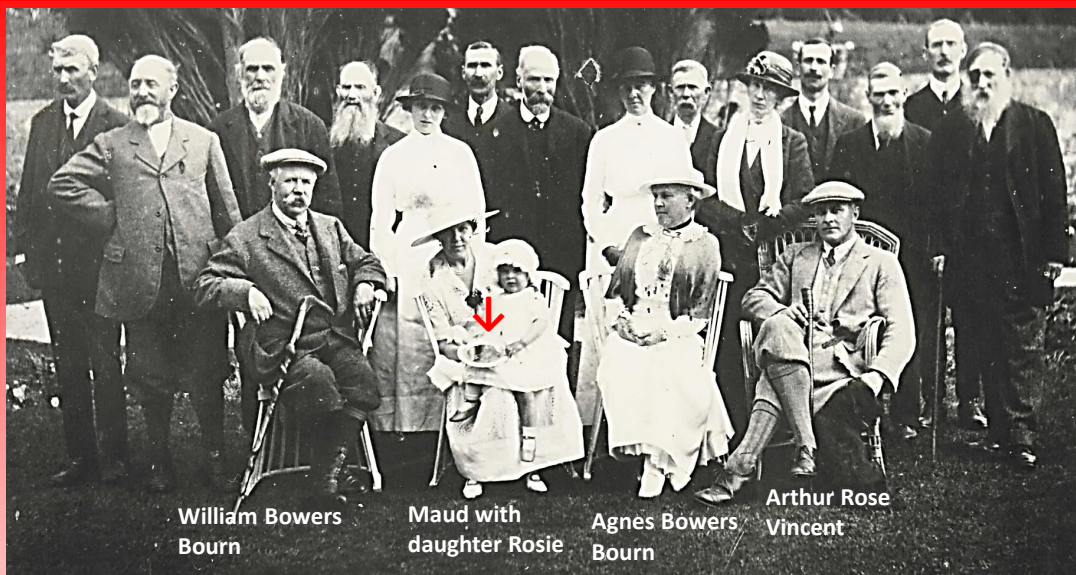
## Slide No. 26. Working and Living Conditions on the Muckross Estate.

The Muckross employees were well treated. Maud was determined to improve their employees' living conditions on the estate. She personally visited each estate cottage at least once a year.

The employees could also buy butter, potatoes, milk and vegetables cheaply on the estate. Malnutrition and rickets were eliminated among the estate children. There was also a clubhouse on the Estate with a reading room for the men.

In July 1916, the employees on the Estate presented a silver salver to baby Rosie when she first arrived 'home' to Muckross. Born in London in 1915, travel conditions would have been difficult because of the ongoing First World War.

On the occasion of this presentation, the employees expressed their gratitude: 'You have made us happy and comfortable in good homes on your Estate and we are grateful.'



**Muckross,  
18 July 1916.**

- This photograph shows Rosie on her mother's lap together with her father and grandparents William and Agnes (all seated).
- The estate employees have just presented Rosie with a silver tray to welcome her to Muckross for the first time. She was born in London and travel would have been difficult because of the First World War.
- The Muckross employees were well treated. Housing conditions were good and they could buy butter, potatoes, milk and vegetables cheaply on the estate. Malnutrition and rickets were eliminated among the estate children.



Slide No. 27.

Hospitality at Muckross during the 1920s.

Many guests enjoyed the hospitality of Muckross during the 1920s. Among them were the famous tenor John McCormack in 1924 and the poet W.B. Yeats in 1925 and again in 1926.

Maud was very fond of poetry and she loved Yeats' work. It has been suggested that one of the poet's most famous poems, *Sailing to Byzantium*, was begun at Muckross in August 1926.

Maud was also an accomplished pianist and she practiced every day in the Drawing room.



W. B. Yeats at Muckross.



John McCormack, the famous Irish tenor, was a guest at Muckross in 1924.

The poet William Butler Yeats was also a guest in 1925 and again in 1926.

Maud was very fond of poetry and she was a very good pianist. She practiced every day in the Drawing room.



## Slide No. 28. The Building of Filoli House in California.

For some years following his purchase of Muckross House and its Estate, William Bowers Bourn had been considering building a new house in California. He chose a site where the landscape reminded him of Muckross and he employed the architect Willis Polk. He called the house Filoli.

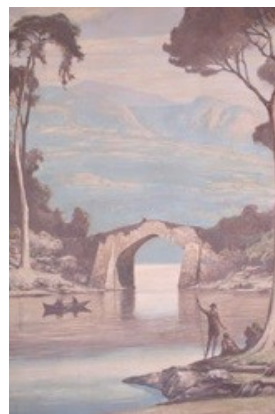
The name Filoli comes from the first letters of the Bourn motto "Fight Love Live". *To fight for a just cause, to love your fellow man, to live a good life.*

William and Agnes visited Muckross early in 1921. It was to be William's last visit as he suffered a severe stroke the following autumn. Unable to visit Ireland again, William had the idea of asking the artist Ernest Peixotto to paint murals of Muckross on the walls of Filoli Ballroom. Peixotto agreed and travelled to Muckross in 1924 to sketch the scenery. The murals were installed in October 1925.

One of the murals depicts William's grandchildren, Rosie and Billy in the Sunken Garden at Muckross.



Filoli House, California.



Brickeen Bridge



Rosie and Billy in the Sunken Garden.



Filoli Ballroom with murals of Muckross Abbey and of Brickeen Bridge.

- William Bowers Bourn suffered a severe stroke in 1921 and was unable to travel to Ireland again.
- He asked the artist Ernest Peixotto to paint scenes from Muckross on the ballroom walls of his Californian home, called Filoli.
- William's two grandchildren Rosie and Billy were painted playing in the Sunken Garden.



## Slide No. 29. The Death of Maud

Unfortunately Maud died of pneumonia in 1929. She is buried in the graveyard in Filoli. Her parents and daughter Elizabeth Rose are also buried there. In the graveyard is a copy of the Celtic Cross in Killeegy.

William was devastated by his daughter's death and he wanted to rid himself of everything that reminded him of her. He decided he could no longer support the upkeep of Muckross.



Memorial to Maud in graveyard at Filoli.



Memorial to Maud's daughter Rosie in graveyard at Filoli.

- With William in poor health, Maud, Arthur and their children, spent much of the 1920s travelling backwards and forwards between California and Muckross.
- In February 1929, Maud became ill while travelling aboard ship from Europe to America. She died shortly after the ship docked in New York and her body was taken to Filoli for burial.
- William was devastated following Maud's death. He decided he could no longer financially support Muckross.

## Slide No. 30. Muckross Becomes Ireland's First National Park.

William and Agnes, together with their son-in-law Arthur Rose Vincent, decided to present Muckross House and its Estate to the Irish Nation in memory of Maud.

It became the property of the State on 1 January 1933 and was called the Bourn Vincent Memorial Park – Ireland's very first National Park.

However, the House remained empty and forlorn for over 30 years, although the gardens were open to the public. There were many ideas during those decades as to how the House should be used. Some suggested that it should be used as a youth hostel, others thought it would be suitable as a summer residence for the President. In 1963 it was suggested that Muckross House should be opened as a hotel, an idea that was much opposed locally.

Finally, a local man, Dr Frank Hilliard, suggested that the House should become a Folk Museum for County Kerry. This idea was enthusiastically received locally.



Saving the hay at  
Muckross.



Dr Frank Hilliard

- William and Agnes, together with their son-in-law Arthur Rose Vincent, decided to present Muckross House and its Estate to the Irish Nation in memory of Maud.
- It became the property of the State on 1 January 1933 and was called the Bourn Vincent Memorial Park. However, the House remained empty and forlorn for over 30 years.
- In 1964 a local man, Dr Frank Hilliard, suggested that the House should become a Folk Museum for County Kerry.



## Slide No. 31. The Opening of Muckross House to the Public, June 1964.

Muckross House opened to the public on 14 June 1964. A crowd of about 5,000 people were present on that occasion. Dr Hilliard had prepared a pamphlet outlining the history of the House and a number of local school girls were employed as guides.

During this first season of 16 weeks that the House was open to the public, 19,500 people of 48 different nationalities crossed the threshold. These encouraging figures allowed the organising committee to lease the House for an initial ten-year period and so a new chapter opened in the History of Muckross House.



*EVENING POST 25/7/64*  
**Many Visitors To  
Muckross House  
Museum**



- Muckross House opened to the public on 14 June 1964.
- Local schoolgirls were recruited as guides.
- About 5,000 people were present for the opening.
- Over that first summer in 1964 (c. 16 weeks) 19,000 people visited Muckross House.

Slide No. 32.

## Muckross House Today.

During the 1970s, the Bourn Vincent Memorial Park was enlarged by the addition of much of the lands and waters of the neighbouring Kenmare Estate. This was formerly the property of the Browne family of Killarney House.

A voluntary body, known as the Trustees of Muckross House, jointly manages the House in partnership with the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht.

Muckross House remains the focal point within Killarney National Park. Together with its gardens it is one of Ireland's premier tourist attractions.



- **Today Muckross House is an important centre within Killarney National Park.**
- **Muckross House and Gardens is one of Ireland's most important visitor attractions.**