



A visit to Follies and Gate Lodges in County Armagh on Friday 16 May 2014.

We meet at Armagh Observatory at 1.45pm (sharp). Mark Bailey, Director of Armagh Observatory, has kindly agreed to show us around the grounds and in particular the Troughton dome. Founded in 1790, the Armagh Observatory is the oldest scientific institution in Northern Ireland; the main building was designed by Francis Johnston. The dome, located on the south side of the building, housed the Troughton Equatorial Telescope installed in 1795. From there observations were made using north and south meridian markers to provide stable reference points on the horizon to check the accuracy of the instruments.

The meridian markers are c.2 miles away and we visit the northern marker next. The arched structure, probably designed by Francis Johnston, was built in the 1790s while the adjacent cast iron obelisk is the work of Gardner's foundry, Armagh, and erected in 1864. Later in the afternoon we will see the southern marker which is in the form of a square neo-classical column.

Next we travel to see the Summer Island gate lodges near Loughgall built c.1820. They were described by J.A.K. Dean in *The Gate Lodges of Ulster* as 'the prettiest pair of surviving Georgian Gothick porters' lodges in the Province'.

Our next stop, the lodges and gates of the former main entrance to Castle Dillon, are stylistically very different. The twin lodges are built in monumental Roman Palladian style of large rusticated limestone blocks with grand, full width, ashlar pediments above. Tradition has it that they were designed by Sir William Chambers though there is no documentary evidence to support this assertion. It was the 3rd Baronet who erected these lodges and the nearby obelisk which bears a plaque 'This Obelisk was erected by the Right Hon. Sir Capel Molyneaux, of Castle Dillon, Bart, in the year 1782, to commemorate the glorious revolution, which took place in favour of the Constitution of the Kingdom, under the auspices of the volunteers of Ireland.'

Just a year later the Archbishop of Armagh, Richard Robinson, had an obelisk erected on his demesne to commemorate his patron, the Duke of Northumberland, to whom he owed his preferment. John Carr of York apparently provided the original sketch for the obelisk which was executed by Francis Johnston. On two sides of the pedestal are the Royal Arms and the arms of Northumberland; the shaft carries the arms of the See and those of the Archbishop, Lord Rokeby. Now located in the middle of Armagh golf club this will be our final visit of the afternoon.

Edward & Primrose have invited those attending to a buffet supper with wine and soft drinks at their home, Marlacoo House, after the event.

The cost of the day is £20 but only £5 without supper (all proceeds to the Follies Trust). Please book with Tom Atkinson, Hon. Treasurer, the Follies Trust, 100 Mullahead Road, Tandragee, Craigavon BT62 2LB enclosing a cheque made payable to the Follies Trust.