

# Adare Manor



THE ADARE MANOR STORY



## THE HISTORY OF ADARE MANOR

Adare Manor might not have existed were it not for the 2nd Earl of Dunraven succumbing to gout in the 1830s. From what is known of him, he appears to have been a vigorous man, always to be found outside enjoying the chase or the hunt. Rebuilding his Georgian house to make it fit for a gothic romance was unlikely to have often preoccupied him. But the onset of his disease soon changed that. The physical sensitivities and pains that are typical of gout effectively made the Earl an invalid. He can't have been a happy man with the chief passions of his life cut off from him, but his wife did not let matters rest. Lady Caroline soon planted in her husband's mind the seed of a vast scheme, one, which would offer the Earl renewed purpose and fresh challenges, which could be met from a chair indoors rather than a saddle outside.

Imagination was not in short supply in the Dunraven family. Not only did they conceive of a unique work of architecture, but they also desired that it brim with eccentric detail, the precise reasons for some of which remain a mystery even now. Importantly, they acknowledged at the outset that their ambitious vision would need the services of an outstanding architect if it was to be realised properly. They sent for James Pain, who, in the company of his brother, stood in the front rank of the epoch's practitioners. The conversations that took place between the Dunravens and Pain over many days and nights can only be guessed at, as the architect discovered that his patrons had strong ideas of their own.

The Dunravens intended that visitors and passers-by would need to observe the Manor carefully if they were to understand some of its secrets; a lazy glance or

unquestioning eye might enjoy what it saw, but it would not pierce through the surface to the riches beneath. Perhaps the most obvious of these was the Manor's construction as a Calendar House. 365 stained windows and 52 chimneys mark the annual tally of days and weeks. Other features of ascending size were incorporated to represent the 7 days and 4 seasons. Throughout the formal spaces, mottoes in French and Latin, symbolism from India to Belgium and imagery from Judaea to Versailles were all carefully allotted their place. It is clear that the Earl and his wife were not casual decorators. And the repetition of one motto in particular throughout the Manor hints at how significant their efforts were: quae sursum volo videre – what is heavenly I would see.



Pain's abilities were not the only one to be brought to Adare, E.W. Pugin was summoned from London to contribute fresh designs for many of the house's interior features. Son of the celebrated A.W. Pugin who had sparked the Gothic Revival to life, E. W.'s ability was renowned. He set to his task with breathtaking creative gusto. Designs for stairwells, ceilings, decorative features and vast fireplaces were drawn up and executed with aplomb.

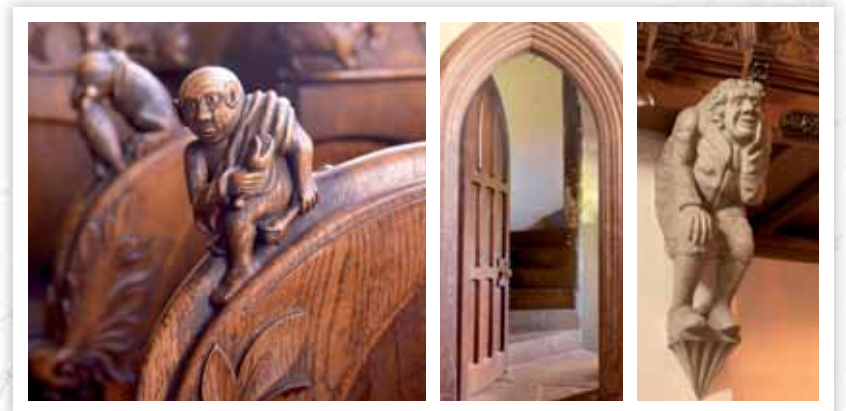
Records indicate, however, that the Earl was prone to frequently changing his mind, so much so that by the time of his death at the age of 67 in 1850 the Manor still lay incomplete.

Compelled to return from London, the 3rd Earl brought with him a determination and single-mindedness that reinvigorated the project. Nor did he come alone. Six children were now cavorting about the house. From this point in time the Manor became more than a grand and eloquent building project; it became a family home. Perhaps it was for this reason that the new Earl commissioned a young architect, Philip Charles Hardwick, to take matters in hand. With such exuberant fresh energies at play, it is not surprising that attentions began to turn outside, to the laying out of the gardens. Specimens were obtained from near and far and marshalled about the Manor in one of the most diverse arboreal displays in the country.

For a decade more, the Manor hummed with activity and exertion, and at last in the early 1860s was completed. 'Except The Lord Build The House Then Labour Is But Lost That Build It', reads the dedication of the roofline parapet, echoing a

psalm of Solomon. 'It may seem on the surface a grandiose claim for the primacy of the Dunravens, but by implication it acknowledges the efforts of all who had a hand in the Manor's birth.' They were many, and during dark days when starvation gnawed through the marrow of the country, the labourers of Adare were glad to have an employer who had no intention of abandoning them to the privations of famine. The history of the relationship between landlord and local at that time in Ireland is murky and strained, but the Dunraven family emerged from it with the reputation of attempting always to sustain and succour those around them. In later years, long after the Manor's completion, the 4th Earl (a colourful figure who had many adventures in Africa and America) was instrumental in the progressive politics that led to land reform and the gradual dismemberment of many large Irish estates, including, eventually, the Dunravens' 39,000 acres at Adare.

In 1982, Thady Wyndham Quin, the 7th Earl of Dunraven put the Manor on the market for it to be bought by a consortium, which, five years later, sold the house and remaining estate to the Kane family of Florida. Like an ageing dowager duchess, the Manor still exuded enormous presence, but a century and a half of wear and tear needed to be addressed. The laborious renovation consequently undertaken by Tom and Judy Kane was careful, sensitive and thorough. Every authentic detail that could be preserved, no matter how difficult, was. It is this that allows the Manor to claim the personality of a great house for itself, something very few hotels can do. More importantly, and perhaps alone amongst that elite, it is never forgotten here that the Manor was built to be a home: impressive but warm, mysterious but welcoming, ambitious but intimate.



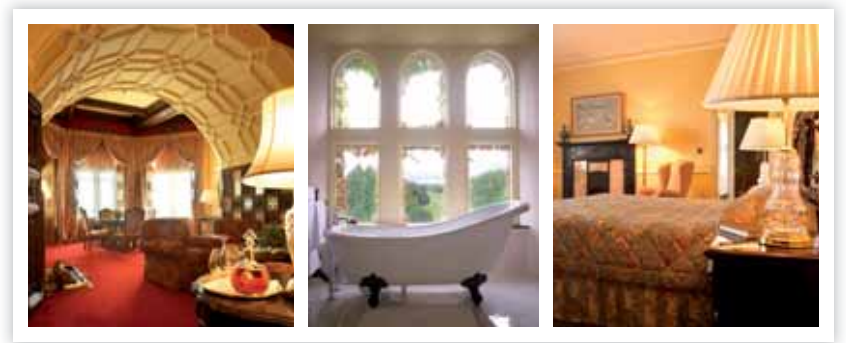


## YOUR ADARE MANOR STORY

This place is magical. Upon arriving early in the autumn morning, a soft, dewy mist floats off the river and wraps a wispy cloak over the grounds. It hints mysteriously that there will be much to discover here. The smooth bends of the avenue uncoil beneath the wheels until, with a final turn; the broad autumnal canopies give way and open out before the Manor. Turrets and bell towers rear up from the mist and glancing shafts of light pierce the haze and sparkle to life on the broad flow of the river below the house. It's a fairy tale. If the Lady of Shallot were to float past in the magic barque that brought her to Camelot, it wouldn't seem unusual.

Pat is quick from the entrance to the car door, quicker still with his smile and his welcome, like a greeting from an uncle not seen for some time. Within the hall, beneath the tall-coffered ceiling, a fire is already crackling. Willing hands reach for the cases, which are carried aloft to the room, while friendly faces ask how the journey was. 'It's early,' they say, 'You must be tired. Maybe something to warm you after your travelling? We'll send a tray to your room.' That feeling within must be the same one those questing knights had when they returned to their round table after enduring long tests and struggles. It's the feeling of sanctuary, the feeling of coming home.

On the broad staircase a child examines the woodwork. She peers minutely at every turn in the carved oak timbers. Purposeful, slow. Roger, who leads the way to the bedroom, pauses for a moment to ruffle her hair, but nothing disturbs her efforts. 'The old plans,' he explains as he walks on. 'The original architect's drawings for the Manor are said to be hidden somewhere in these stairs.' In the



bedroom, morning light streams through the fretted windows, burning away the mists outside and illuminating the rich interior with its swags and upholstered furniture. The tray arrives with a muffled knock on the door. Why unpack now? Wouldn't it be better just to sip the tea in a deep, steaming bath with a view of the landscape stretching out beyond. Maybe just ten minutes of sleep beforehand . . . Such a long journey . . . Such a soft bed . . .

Lunch in the Clubhouse is a robust and cheerful affair. Golfers, visitors and locals chatter and eat with the gusto and appetite of those who've been in the fresh air all morning. In the wood-panelled bar, a bet between two is being collected. One pays for the other's drink with a shake of the head and a long-suffering smile.

The Manor estate is vast. Walking into its wooded fringe through the orchard, the apples are beginning to fall. Pick one up and shine it on a sleeve. Think of Newton beneath his tree and wonder if he ate that famous fallen fruit after his revelation. Past the isolated icehouse and its buttressed ramparts, the woods spread mysteriously away. Who knows what strange things they play host to, what men and women have trodden the same obscure paths over the centuries, their feet rustling through the fallen leaves as the passed beneath the shady groves. A weathered stone tablet bears an inscription that speaks of the Dunraven family's gratitude to a nearby tree during troubled times. All these parts of the past still here in the present, it seems this is a place that doesn't forget.

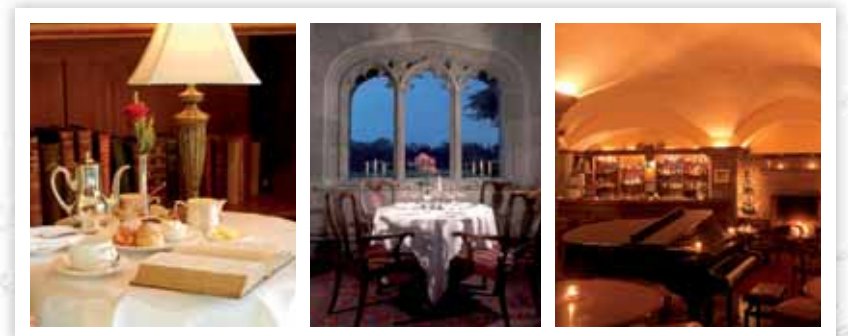
Back inside, the fire in the library soon takes the chill off cold hands. Newspapers are scattered across the table, but there seems no point in immersing oneself in the distant world outside. Better by far to relish the here and now. Through the window, a falconer is visible on the lawn. Before a handful of onlookers, he heaves his hawk from his gauntlet to the air. It soars above the colourful autumn trees and climbs steadily aloft. More and more, it is becoming obvious that this place and the people who make it tick, enjoy rising above expectations. On one of the shelves there is an old, bound book by Lucretius. Flicking it open reveals that he was a devotee of Epicurus. Epicurus; the very name is an invitation to think of dinner.

It is easy to see where the Oakroom gets its name. As Guillaume leads the way to the table, soft light shimmers in the polished wooden wainscot that clads the wall. Passing other diners while they eat reveals hints of what is to come: Partridge and turbot, roulades and salsify, all arranged as if by some master painter who chose



food for his paint and plates for his canvas. At the table in the candlelit colonnade, Guillaume recommends a taster menu. 'Why limit yourself?' he asks candidly. 'The head chef, Mark, has had some of the best reviews in the country.' For the next while, the food and exactly chosen wines that come in fragrant waves to the table show that these plaudits are no idle boast. It is a sensual siege. Flavours melt, blend, balance, linger and flood across the palette. This food is all about impressive harmony.

There is nothing quite so seductive as a nightcap after good food. In the Tack room below, the heavily arched ceiling echo with laughter of late night carousers. These are people who like to take their time over a story, and tell it well. This is clearly a place of revels, which has seen in more than a few dawns before closing. It's easy to imagine how. Someone is being urged towards the piano by his friends, he looks reluctant, says he can't play, then he pauses. He puts his hands up with a grin and sits before the keys. It might be a long night.



## A QUICK REFERENCE

### ACCOMMODATION AT ADARE MANOR

62 Bedrooms in the Manor House, 46 Villas

### DINING

The Oakroom Restaurant at Adare Manor. Located in the Manor House this fine dining restaurant is open for dinner from 6.00pm each evening. Afternoon tea is served in the Drawing Room in the Manor House each day from 2.00pm - 5.00pm.

The Carriagehouse Bar & Restaurant, located in the golf clubhouse this casual bistro style restaurant is open from 7.00am daily with food served all day until 9.30pm.

### ESTATE ACTIVITIES

Guests of Adare Manor can partake in a collection of daily scheduled activities - A Historical Tour of the Manor House, an Irish Whiskey Tasting or Wine Tasting. These activities are offered to guests of the Manor House on a complimentary basis.

### OTHER ACTIVITIES

- Golf on our 18 hole Robert Trent Jones Senior designed golf course
- Fishing on the River Maigue • Bicycle Hire • Elemis Treatments
- Hot Air Ballooning • Falconry • Clay Pigeon Shooting • Archery
- Horse Riding • Indoor heated swimming pool, fitness room

### LOCATION

Adare Manor is situated in the heart of the picturesque village of Adare, Co. Limerick and only a 25 minute drive from Shannon International Airport





# Adare Manor



Adare, Co. Limerick, Ireland

Telephone: +353 61 396566 • Fax: +353 61 396124

email: [reservations@adaremanor.com](mailto:reservations@adaremanor.com)

[www.adaremanor.com](http://www.adaremanor.com)

USA OFFICE

Telephone: 561 7765850

Toll Free: 800-462-3273 (800 GO-ADARE)

*A member of*

*The Leading Small Hotels  
of the World*