

Groomsport House

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A little bit of Groomsport history from

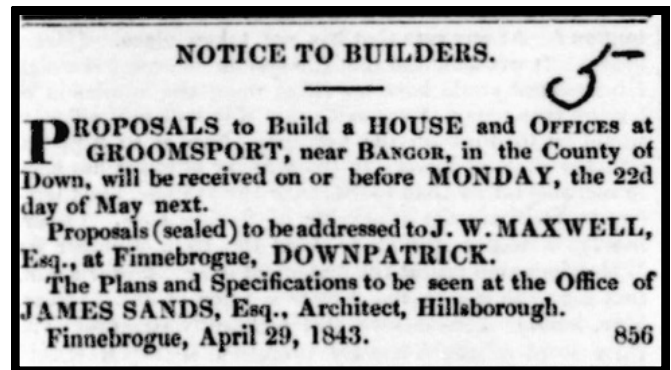


DISCOVER
GROOMSPORT

Groomsport House

In May 1843, this advertisement appeared in several newspapers.

Newry Telegraph 16 May 1843



Groomsport House was designed by James Sands and was completed in 1848. It has been described as being in the “Tudor Revival” or “Jacobethan” (ie Jacobean / Elizabethan) style. The sandstone used in its construction was shipped from Ayrshire. It cost over £6,000 to build – much more than the initial estimate of £3,420.

John Waring Maxwell (1788-1869), of Finnebrogue, Downpatrick owned some 4,500 acres of land in Groomsport and the surrounding townlands. He was childless and built the house for his nephew and heir, Robert Perceval-Maxwell (1813-1905).

A Family Home for 21 Years

In May 1848, Robert, his wife Helena, and their growing family (they would eventually have 12 children) moved from Waterford to live at Groomsport House.

The house sat in 7 acres of grounds and its 127 acre farm extended up both sides of the Springwell Road. Records show that Groomsport House had 33 rooms and that there were 44 out-buildings on the grounds and farm. 40 staff, mostly people from the village, were employed in the house, grounds and farm.

In 1869, Robert Perceval-Maxwell inherited the Maxwell estates, when his uncle died. He moved to live at Finnebrogue and Groomsport House then became a summer residence.

When Robert Perceval-Maxwell died in 1905 he left Groomsport House to his two unmarried daughters for their lifetimes. Isabella and Anna (known as the Misses Perceval-Maxwell) took an active interest in village life until they died in 1923 and 1928.

Groomsport House in World War Two

Like many large houses, during World War Two Groomsport House was used by the armed forces. The Royal Engineers 515 Field Survey Company was based there from 1940 to 1943.

Five of the Royal Engineers met and married local women and settled in Groomsport after the war. Arthur Moulson, from Liverpool, met Betty Heyburn. They married in December 1941.



Arthur Moulson and
Betty Hayburn

In March and April 1944 the 166th Signal Photography Company of the US Army was at Groomsport House. After they left Groomsport, they went on to film and photograph the Third Army as they fought to liberate Europe after D Day in June 1944.

After World War Two

The Perceval-Maxwell family returned to Groomsport House in 1951. Gavin Perceval-Maxwell restored the house and part of the grounds became a caravan park. Later, from 2001, the Cove Bay development replaced the caravan park.



Groomsport House and the caravan park in the 1960s

Groomsport House was sold in 1968. It became the Groomsport House Hotel which had the popular Whispers nightclub.

Following the closure of the hotel, around the year 2000, the house was converted into apartments and additional apartments were built on the site.

Find out more about the history of the village and Groomsport Digital Archive at: www.discovergroomsport.com.
Contact us at discovergroomsport@gmail.com



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