



Thomas Ashe of Moone

Reference documents

- (1) Query: Ashe of Moone (Journal of the County Kildare Archaeological Society: 1891, Vol. I, page 41);
- (2) Replies to Queries (Journal of the County Kildare Archaeological Society: 1892, Vol. I, No. 2, page 150-151);
- (3) Pedigree to illustrate the Diary of Anne Cooke (Journal of the County Kildare Archaeological Society: 1916, Vol. VIII, No. 3, facing page 219);
- (4) Marriage of the widow of Abraham Swift to Thomas Ashe (Journal of the County Kildare Archaeological Society: 1966-1967, Vol. XIV, No. 2, page 97).

Location

[Moone](#) is a small village on the N9 south of Kilcullen in County Kildare, Ireland.

History

An important Anglo-Norman Borough was established at Moone. The Charter outlining the privileges granted to the burgesses, was drawn up by William Marshal circa 1223. Moone had a castle, a hospice, bugage tenements, corn mills and a weekly court.

The manor of Moone consisted of a messuage with its curtilage, and one hundred and thirty four acres. There were two water mills at Moone. In 1305, John Wogan was granted the lands and tenements at Moone.

The manor of Moone had passed to the Eustace family, and when the lands were surveyed in 1654-6, there were two castles and a mill, which are shown on Petty's map of county Kildare, dated 1685.

(Journal of the County Kildare Archaeological Society: 1998-99, Vol. XVIII, Part IV).

Parts of Moone, Kilkea and Dunlost, five miles south-east of Athy, came to the Eustaces in 1447 as part of the Wogan inheritance Oliver Eustace of Moone and Mullaghcash, an important man in the county, was born in 1566 and married Mary, daughter of Maurice Fitzgerald of Glassrealy and his wife Honora O'Toole. Honora outlived her husband and in 1615 bequeathed half her estate to

Mary. Oliver had a son, William, a juror in 1608, and grandsons Thomas, Oliver and Roland, who lost their lands in 1641. Moone was bought by William Ashe, a rich Dublin Alderman.
(*Journal of the County Kildare Archaeological Society: 1960, Vol. XIII, No. 8*).

High Sheriff of County Kildare, 1741: Ashe, Thomas, of Moone [he died in office and was succeeded, July 4, 1741, by McManus, James, of Maynooth].
(*Journal of the County Kildare Archaeological Society: 1896, Vol. II, No. 1*).

Relationship between the Ashe and Swift families

The essence of the information presented in the Journals of the County Kildare Archaeological Society depends much on the relationship between the Ashe and Swift families. Let us first, therefore, review what is known about that.

The friendship between [Bishop St. George Ashe](#) (1657-1718) and Jonathan Swift (1667-1745), Dean of St. Patrick's Cathedral in Dublin and celebrated author, is well known. When Jonathan Swift entered Trinity College, Dublin, in 1682, St. George Ashe was his tutor, and subsequently his life-long friend. The "[Dictionary of National Biography](#)" by Sir Leslie Stephen (1885) has this to say:

"St. George Ashe is best known from his intimacy with Swift, who was his pupil at Trinity College, and who became his life-long friend. Frequent references to him in the "Journal to Stella" show that Swift was his constant correspondent, and consulted him on many matters of business".

What is perhaps less well known is that Jonathan Swift was also friends with St. George's two other brothers -- [Thomas Ashe](#) (1656-1722) and [Rev. Dillon Ashe](#) (1668-1716). Sir Leslie Stephen goes on to say:

"St. George Ashe was one of three brothers: Tom Ashe, the eldest, was a squire with an estate of 1,000/. a year in Meath; Dillon Ashe, a clergyman, was Vicar of Finglas from 1694 to 1716. All three were friends of Swift, and joined in his favourite amusement of making execrable puns at Lord Pembroke's vice-regal court."

This friendship between Swift and the three Ashe brothers is confirmed in "[Jonathan Swift: A Literary Reference to his Life and Works](#)" by Paul J. Degategno and R. Jay Stubblefield (2006), where it is written:

"These puns and linguistic oddities form the basis of an extended conversation among a small group of friends, including Swift, Thomas Ashe, the Lord Lieutenant Thomas, Earl of Pembroke, Dr. Ralph Howard, Dr. Thomas Molyneux, Sir Andrew Fountaine, Reverend Dillon Ashe, Dr. Thomas Milles, and Bishop St. George Ashe of Clogher— all would gather at Dublin Castle during Pembroke's residence and, for entertainment purposes, play word games. His use of verbal quips or puns was matched in the speech and entertainment of Captain Thomas Ashe, one of three brothers who had all become his friends (or in the case of St. George Ashe, his tutor at Trinity College, Dublin)."

A description of the three brothers is given later in the book:

“Ashe, Dillon (c. 1666–1718): One of three brothers, including Thomas Ashe and St. George Ashe; a contemporary of Swift whom he met when both were students at Trinity College, Dublin. Ashe had a successful career as a clergyman in the Church of Ireland (due in part to his brother St. George’s influence), becoming vicar of Finglas; promoted to archdeacon of Clogher in 1704 and chancellor of Armagh, 1706. Swift later enjoyed his company in London but found his inveterate punning, excessive drinking of wine, and love of the theater tiresome. “Just such a puppy as ever; and it is so uncouth, after so long an intermission” (The Journal To Stella, 303–04). But Swift’s complaints masked his loneliness for Stella (Esther Johnson), and seeing “Dilly,” whom Stella knew and liked, brought out his desire to return to Dublin, leaving London to the ambition of others.

Ashe, St. George (c. 1658–1718): Irish bishop who successively advanced from Cloyne (1695) to Clogher (1697), and finally Derry (1716–17). First a student at Trinity College, Dublin, Ashe became a fellow in 1679, professor of mathematics in 1685, and provost in 1692. A published writer of sermons and pamphlets, fellow of the Royal Society, and secretary to the Irish Philosophical Society, he and his two brothers, Thomas Ashe and Dillon Ashe, were friends of Swift. St. George Ashe, who had been Swift’s tutor at Trinity, became particularly close to the dean despite his Whig tendencies. Stella (Esther Johnson) respected the bishop, and a false story circulated that he had performed a marriage ceremony joining Swift and Mrs. Johnson. Swift depended on Ashe for business advice but mainly accepted his friendship and hospitality.

Ashe, Thomas (c. 1656–1719): Older than the other Ashe brothers, St. George and Dillon, he was a convivial squire, known as “captain,” with an estate of £1,000 a year in County Meath, Ireland; his home Ballygall, near Dublin, served as a frequent vacation residence for Swift. He appears as Tom A. in “A Dialogue in the Castilian Language and in “The Dying Speech of Tom Ashe,” a fictional account of Ashe’s death written as an extended joke on the man’s constant punning, a habit Swift often practiced.”

The difference in ages between Thomas, the older brother, and St. George Ashe is due to the fact that their father, [Thomas Ashe](#), of St. John’s (d. 1671), married twice. “[The Irish & Anglo-Irish Landed Gentry](#)” by John O’Hart (1884) indicates that his first wife was Jane White, daughter of Walter White, of Dublin, and they had one son, Thomas. Thomas Ashe, of St. John’s, married, secondly, Mary St. George, daughter of Captain Richard St. George, of Athlone. Burke’s “[A Genealogical and Heraldic History of the Commoners of Great Britain and Ireland: Vol. II](#)” (1835) reports the other two sons, St. George and Dillon.

Abraham Swift

Having established the close relationship between the Ashe and Swift families, let us now look at an uncle of Jonathan Swift, Abraham Swift, who was a son of Rev. Thomas Swift (1595-1658). Jonathan’s father, also named Jonathan, died in April 1667. The son, Jonathan, was born seven months later in November 1667.

Appendix IX of “The Correspondence of Jonathan Swift, D.D., Vol. VI” by F. Elrington Ball (1914) is titled “Swift’s Paternal Relations”, and has the following to say:

“The Rev. Thomas Swift, who was born in 1595 and died in 1658, is said in Swift’s autobiography to

have left, by his wife Elizabeth Dryden, ten sons and three or four daughters. Of only seven sons, Godwin, Dryden, Thomas, Abraham, William, Jonathan, and Adam, and one daughter, Elizabeth, is anything known.

Abraham Swift, the fourth son of the Rev. Thomas Swift, was a merchant in Dublin. His will is dated 23 August, 1686, and was proved 2 September following. He married Martha, daughter of Sir William Billington, and left one son, Abraham. Abraham was born in 1685 and entered Dublin University in 1702."

["A Catalogue of Graduates who have proceeded to Degrees in the University of Dublin"](#) (1869) confirms that this Abraham, the son of Abraham Swift and Martha Cooke, graduated in 1707: Swift (Abraham), B.A., *Vern.* 1707.

The next piece of the jig-saw puzzle can be found in the "Journal of the Co. Kildare Archaeological Society and Surrounding Districts, 1916, Vol. VIII, No. 3, 1916", which has a pedigree of the Cooke Family [see reference document (3)], which shows George Cooke married, in 1656, to Deborah Morgan, widow of Mr. Hutcheson, who married 3rd in 1669, Sir William Billington, Lord Mayor of Dublin in 1696, and who had a daughter, Martha. Thus, this Martha Cooke, daughter of George Cooke, was also the step-daughter of Sir William Billington (as mentioned above in the "Correspondence of Jonathan Swift").

The pedigree of the Cooke family also shows that Martha Cooke married, first, in 1680, Abraham Swift, and, secondly, Thomas Ashe, of Moone, County Kildare.

IGI Records show a marriage of Abraham Swift to Martha Cooke (b. circa 1659) on 22 June 1680 at St. Catherine's, Dublin, Ireland.

Online Irish church records indicate the burial of Abraham Swift on 28 August 1686 at St. Catherine's Church, Dublin.

The final link is revealed in the 1966-1967 Journal of the County Kildare Archaeological Society, Vol. XIV, No. 2, page 97 [see reference document (4)], where it is written that, after the death of Abraham Swift in 1685, his widow (Martha Cooke) married Thomas Ashe, brother of St. George Ashe.

The pedigree of the Cooke family also shows that Deborah Ashe, daughter of Thomas Ashe, of Moone, Co. Kildare, married, in 1734, Alderman Thomas Cook, of Dublin (d. 1767). This Deborah links in to the "Replies to Queries on Thomas Ashe of Moone", where she is also mentioned as one of the children of Martha Cooke.

One Thomas Ashe, of Moone, or two?

Let us now turn our attention to both the "Query" [see reference document (1)] and the "Replies to Queries" [see reference document (2)] concerning Thomas Ashe, of Moone. From the "Query", we glean the following facts:

- Thomas Ashe was buried 9 feet deep;
- His burial date was 30 June 1741;
- He had three sisters -- Mary, Deborah and Martha.

From the "Replies to Queries", we are told (NB: much of it was written in the old family Bible):

- Abraham Swift and Martha Cooke were married on 24 June 1680;
- Martha Cooke subsequently married a Mr. Ashe;
- Martha Cooke died between 1715 and 1717;
- Martha Cooke was the mother of Thomas Ashe, who was buried 9 feet deep;
- Martha Cooke had two brothers, Daniel and Samuel (NB: this is confirmed in the Cooke pedigree);
- Martha Cooke had 5 children -- Thomas, Mary, Deborah, and Martha Ashe, and her son Abraham Swift;
- Deborah Ashe was married on 23 June 1734 to Thomas Cooke (NB: this is confirmed in the Cooke pedigree);
- Thomas Cooke-Trench, the writer, who was a descendant of Sir Samuel Cooke, Martha's brother, had in his possession a drinking cup engraved with the Ashe arms;
- Thomas Ashe was an Alderman of Dublin;
- Thomas Ashe purchased the manor of Moone in 1703;
- Thomas Moone (of the 9 feet) died in 1741, when he was high sheriff for co. Kildare with properties both in Moone and in Dublin.

Burke's "A Genealogical and Heraldic History of the Commoners of Great Britain and Ireland: Vol. II" (1835) tells us that Thomas Ashe married, in 1685, Mary, daughter of Thomas Carr. This is confirmed in "[The Register of the Parish of St. Peter and St. Kevin, Dublin, 1669-1761](#)" issued by the Parish Register Society of Dublin in 1911, where it is recorded:

"August 1685: Mr Thomas Ash of St. John's near Trim in Meath and Mrs Mary Carr of St. Stephen's Green maryed Friday, Aug. seaventh in St. Kevin's Church".

The same Register also records the birth of their son, Thomas, as follows:

"Thomas, ye son of Mr. Thomas and Mrs Mary Ash of St. Stephen's Green, baptised ye 12 of May 1686."

We can thus assume that Burke is correct in recording the marriage of Thomas Ashe with Mary Carr in 1685, and the birth of their son, also named Thomas, in 1686.

However, Burke also records that Thomas Ashe married, secondly, Sarah Bligh, although I have so far been unable to find any other confirmation of this. Could Burke have been wrong? Or was Martha Cooke a third wife?

In any case, it seems clear from reference document (2) that there were two Thomas Ashe's -- the father married to Martha Cooke and the son who was buried nine feet deep.

The abstract from the Prerogative Wills for Thomas Ashe, of St. John's, which was dated 17 January 1721 (he died 11 days later on 28 January 1721) does not mention the name of any wife, nor of his son, Thomas, but mentions Richard Ashe, of Ashefield in co. Meath, who apparently

inherited all of his estate according to "[The Works of Dr. Jonathan Swift, Dean of St. Patrick's, Dublin, Vol. XVII](#)".

I suppose it is possible that the Meath estate was kept separate from the Moone estate. It is also possible that Burke is mistaken about the second marriage of Thomas Ashe to Sarah Bligh, since we have encountered other errors in Burke's work. However, given that the Cooke family Bible indicates that Martha Cooke had three daughters with Thomas Ashe, of Moone, it is more likely that she would have been the second wife of Thomas Ashe and, if there was a third wife, that she was Sarah Bligh, of whom there seems to be no record (other than Burke) and no indication of any children with her.

Counter Arguments

Having made the case above that Thomas Ashe, of Moone, was one and the same as Thomas Ashe, of St. John's, let me present some counter arguments.

- (1) Burke's "A Genealogical and Heraldic History of the Commoners of Great Britain and Ireland: Vol. II" (1835) asserts that the second wife of Thomas Ashe, of St. John's, was Sarah Bligh. There is no mention of Martha Swift (née Cooke), nor of any children other than Thomas, son of the first wife, Mary Carr.
- (2) Although the various documents about Jonathan Swift seem to confirm that Abraham Swift married Martha Cooke, only the Journals of the County Kildare Archaeological Society present a claim that Martha Cooke married, secondly, Thomas Ashe, brother of Bishop St. George Ashe.
- (3) The online [Registry of Deeds Index Project](#) provides a summary of some Deeds dated 26 January 1709, which provide the following comments:
 - Martha Ashe, widow of said Thomas Ashe, sole executrix & trustee for their children;
 - Thomas Ashe, only son of said Martha & Thomas Ashe;
 - Abraham Swift, first husband of said Martha Ashe;
 - Abraham Swift, son of said Martha & of said Abraham Swift;
 - Thomas Ashe, dcd, Esq.The implication of these deeds is that Thomas Ashe, second husband of Martha Swift, was dead by 1709.
- (4) Thomas Ashe of St. John's died in 1722 (the Abstract of Prerogative Wills shows that his will was dated 17 January 1722, and Burke states that he died on 28 January having made his will eleven days previously), and he appears to have left his entire estate to his kinsman, Richard Ashe, of Ashfield, whereas Thomas Ashe, of Moone (the son who was buried 9 feet deep) died in 1741. If Thomas Ashe (senior), of Moone, was the same person as Thomas Ashe, of St. John's, why did he not leave at least some of his estate to his son, Thomas Ashe, of the 9 feet?
- (5) An article in the 1902 Journal of the County Kildare Archaeological Society, Vol. III, No. 7, page 461, titled "Notes on Furness, or Great Forenaghts" by Nicholas J. Synnott says: "I cannot trace any connection between this family of Ashe and that of Ashe, of Moone, in this county, referred to in a former volume of this Journal (vol. i, pp. 40 and 150), nor, again, between them and the Ashes, of Ashfield, County Meath, who at various times from 1585 were M.P.s for Trim

(see "Dictionary of National Biography," sub tit, "Ashe," and Burke's "Commoners of Great Britain and Ireland," edition of 1834," vol. iii, p. 578)." Similarly, in an article in the 1969 Journal on Furness Church by Pierce Synnott (Vol. XIV, No. 4, page 460), which discusses the Ash(e)s of Naas, it says: "They do not seem to have any connection with the more prominent families of Moone, Co. Kildare, or Trim, Co. Meath." Such statements also imply that the Ashe family of Moone is not related to the Ashe family of Trim in co. Meath.

As we read at the beginning of this paper, Moone was bought by William Ashe, a rich Dublin Alderman, sometime after 1641. (Journal of the County Kildare Archaeological Society: 1960, Vol. XIII, No. 8). Was he related to Thomas Ashe of Moone?

Conclusion

While it would be nice to believe that Thomas Ashe, of St. John's, was the same person as Thomas Ashe, of Moone, I think the jury is still out until and unless more evidence comes to light. What is interesting is that the descendant of George Cooke, Thomas Cooke-Trench, who inherited the family Bible of Martha Cooke, had in his possession a drinking cup with the Ashe arms engraved -- Argent, 2 chevronels sable; Crest, a cockatrice -- which is how the arms of the Ashe family in Devon are described (see [Ashe Arms](#)). Was Thomas Ashe, of Moone, therefore an as-yet undiscovered new branch of the family descended from [Nicholas Ashe](#), of Clyst Fornyson, who also emigrated to Ireland?

I think the question is still unanswered but, from the above, we can deduce the following:

- (1) Thomas Ashe, of Moone, was married to Martha Cooke, widow of Abraham Swift.
- (2) Thomas Ashe, of Moone, is linked to Dublin; and
- (3) The presence of the drinking cup with the Ashe arms, in the possession of Thomas Cooke-Trench in 1892, probably means that Thomas Ashe, of Moone, is somehow linked to the Ashe family from England.

[Robert Ashe](#)

Lombok, 16 July 2011