

Samuel Townsend of Whitehall [400]

Portrait of Samuel copied from An Officer of the Long Parliament



Portrait of Samuel by an unknown artist





Whitehall



The house has the most wonderful view over Roaring Water Bay but has been spoilt by the modern windows



The Front door



Rincolisky (Whitehall) Castle

To the south of Kilcoe castle and across Roaring Water Bay stands Rincolisky castle on a hillock near the shore, to which the ground descends fairly steeply. It was built in 1495 by the O'Driscoll clan which was one of the strongest at that time, and during following centuries, especially around Baltimore and the islands.

Following the battle of Kinsale, the English began their sweep of all castles in West Carbery and Rincolisky fell to Sir Walter Copinger on 29th of April 1602. He changed the name to Whitehall after the name of the townland on which the castle was situated. Sometime later the Copingers removed the upper floors of the castle to build Whitehall House. In 1690 the Copinger's forfeited their land, because they had supported James II and Whitehall passed to Samuel Townsend. Since then, the castle has remained untouched. All that now remains is the lower portion of a standard five storey tower house of that time. Entry to the residential part of the building on the first floor is through a carved door above the basement entry. From this stairs lead to the main hall. The floors above this are severely damaged and the castle is truncated from the second floor.

Reputedly a tunnel leads from Whitehall House to the castle but it has never been found and local legend tells of a member of the Townsend family sending his little page boy down the passage to see if it was clear, but the boy was never seen again.

Extract from Samuel Lewis' Topographical Dictionary 1837

AUGHADOWN, or **AGHADOWN**, a parish, in the East Division of the barony of WEST CARBERY, county of CORK, and province of MUNSTER, 3 1/4 miles (W. S. W.) from Skibbereen; containing, with several inhabited islands, 5419 inhabitants. This parish is situated on the north bank of the river Ilen, and comprises 7063 statute acres, as apportioned under the tithe act, and valued at £5400 per annum. Its surface is very uneven; in some parts, especially towards the north, it is rocky and unproductive; but near its southern boundary, towards the Hen, the land is good and produces excellent crops. About two-thirds of it are under cultivation; the remainder is rocky ground and bog, of which latter there is a considerable extent near Newcourt. The state of agriculture is not much improved; the old heavy wooden plough is still used, and some of the land is cultivated by spade labour; the fences are everywhere much neglected. Several good roads intersect the parish, one of which is a new line from Skibbereen to Crookhaven, likely to be of considerable advantage. The Ilen is navigable for vessels of 200 tons' burden nearly to its eastern extremity: a quay and storehouses have been constructed at Newcourt, but are entirely neglected, and the harbour is only frequented by a few sand boats, which discharge their cargoes there for the convenience of the farmers. The principal seats are Aughadown House, that of H. Becher*, Esq., occupying an elevated

site in the midst of flourishing plantations, and commanding a fine view of the western coast; Lake Marsh, of Hugh Lawton, Esq.; **Whitehall, of S. Townsend***** (*Samuel Townsend [405]*) Esq.; Newcourt, of Becher Fleming**, Esq.; the glebe-house, the residence of the Rev. T. D. Moore; and Holly Hill, of the Rev. J. Copinger, P.P. . Fairs for the sale of cattle, sheep, pigs, &c., are held on May 6th and Oct. 2nd. A manor court is held monthly by a seneschal appointed by Lord Carbery, for the recovery of debts under 40s; and here is a constabulary police station. The living is a vicarage, in the diocese of Ross, and in the patronage of the Bishop; the rectory is partly impropriate in Lord Audley and partly forms the corps of the archdeaconry of Ross. The tithes amount to £600, of which £300 is payable to the impropiator and appropriator, and £300 to the vicar. The church, situated on the margin of the river, is a small neat edifice with a square tower, and was built by aid of a loan of £500, in 1812, from the late Board of First Fruits. The glebe-house is handsome and commodious, and is situated on a glebe of 45 1/2 acres. In addition to the parochial schools, there are schools at Whitehall and near Newcourt, also a pay school. In the demesne of Whitehall are the ruins of Rincolisky castle, built by the O'Driscols in 1495; and on the grounds of Lake View are some picturesque remains of an ecclesiastical edifice, called by the people of the neighbourhood the Abbey of Our Lady.

* *Becher connections with Horatio Townsend [104] and Richard Townsend [201].*

** *Fleming connections with John Sealy Townsend [333], Eliza Townsend [5D05] and Horatio Townsend [6B05].*

*** *Samuel's grandson.*

Extract from the
Irish News 8 June 1999
Flatley and friend view £2m seaside hideaway
by Tommy Barker

THE EGO has landed.

The all-singing, all-dancing and very much All Cash Michael Flatley, flew into Skibbereen in Cork over the Bank Holiday weekend to view a £2m seaside home up for sale. He dropped from the skies courtesy Celtic helicopters, on Sunday to meet with a local auctioneer and visit the most expensive house to come up publicly for sale outside Dublin, historic Whitehall House on Roaringwater Bay.

The world-class property, owned for many years by a German family, has its own beaches, a ruined castle, the 16th century Rincolisky Castle, and 100 acres of land as well as two walled gardens. The house has six bedrooms, separate staff quarters, a farm yard, a stunning setting with sea views around the headland from Baltimore, a jetty and moorings - but does not have a ballroom.

The former Riverdancer, who grossed more than \$100m with Lord of the Dance, has said on several occasions he wants to buy a home in Ireland. The £2m asking price on Whitehall will hardly bother the dancer, who last year claimed he was making £1m a week. He already has a base in Dublin and houses in the US, in London and in France, along with a 131' yacht called the Lord of the Dance.

Boston-born Flatley, now in his early 40s, touched his precious size 8 feet down on West Cork soil lunchtime Sunday, and was then seen getting into the almost humble VW Passat of Skibbereen auctioneer Charlie McCarthy. Mr McCarthy is a joint agent on the house with Ian Finnegan of Finnegan Menton of Dublin. Last summer, Mr Finnegan bought the £3m Reen na Furrira estate near Sneem in Kerry for a client.

Whitehall House has portions dating back to the early 1600s, but most of it is 19th century and is in excellent repair. The vendors are the Schmitz family from Cologne, who bought it in 1962.

Mr Flatley was accompanied by a young woman companion who was not identified. He spent about one hour visiting the house and flew out in the early afternoon from Ilen Rovers GAA grounds.