

have now been removed to a specially designed grotto in a little circular garden.

The De Vesce Family were unusual landlords.

The mansion of Abbey Leix is a handsome and capacious building, faced with cut stone and ideally situated on the right bank of the River Nore.

It contains many beautiful features, gracious apartments and interesting portraits. There is a portrait of George Augustus Herbert, 11th Earl of Pembroke, whose first wife, Catherine Horozow, youngest daughter, was destined to become, forty-eight later, the third Viscountess de Vesce. Count Horozow was Russian Ambassador to the Court of St. James in the days of Napoleon. To his family belonged the historic Palace of Yalta and also the Palace of Aloupha. The terraced gardens of Abbey Leix (mansion) are a model in miniature of those at Aloupha. Another interesting portrait is a charming child study of Frances Louisa Kaye, Viscountess de Vesce (Vesey), whose love and care for beautiful gardens have been skillfully foreshadowed by the artist, May.

Mr. Anthony Armstrong-Jones Lord Snowdon - husband of Princess Margaret of England, is related to the de Vesce family. (A bit of gossip - I hear they're not hitting it off so well.) March 1976

The noble demesne around the Manion comprises over 700 acres covered with forest trees of indigenous growth, with a variety of exotics, whose splendid avenues and beautiful vistas lead the visitor to wander. One comes suddenly, upon a beauty spot that tempts one to rest a while to admire the profusion of flowers.

When you are in Abbeyliss, be sure to visit the Gardens of Abbeyliss Estate - open to the public from about Easter to September. A very attractive Cafe or Coffee Shop and an Art Shop are in the Gardens.

The chapel of the Penal times (1691-1860) belonging to the district of Abbeyliss was at Red Hill. It was destroyed by Baron Knapton after an encounter with the native Irish at Lady's Hill on a day of pilgrimage. In reparation, perhaps, for the chapel that had been destroyed, Lord de Vesce gave a site and help towards the erection of the chapel in Old Abbeyliss. This has been abandoned when in 1850 the new Town of Abbeyliss was laid out by Lord de Vesce. It comprises a fine main street, many pleasant houses and an ornamental and memorial fountain erected to the founder, John William, Fourth Viscount de Vesce. The most enduring monument is the Church of the Holy Rosary, for which de Vesce gave the site, with a large piece of land for a cemetery.

BALLYROAN

(21)

The town of Ballyroan, which is now considered a part of the parish of Abbeylisp is of historical interest. To the left, while coming from Abbeylisp, there is a large moat where it is likely the Castle of Ballyroan, built by the O'Moores once stood. There are no ruins of the castle now, but in Ballyroan is the scene of the famous battle of the "Pass of the Plumas." One of the earliest religious foundations in Leix appeared to have been the Church of Killokelan, or Cill-Faolan, which derived its name from St. Faolan of Leix. The site of the Church is about a mile and a half north of Ballyroan. The Earl of Essex's army passed near Killokelan.

(I think Mayor Martin Scully came from Ballyroan)

Gortnaclea Castle, situated a few miles north-east of Abbeylisp, is a fine old relic of Elizabethan or Cromwellian days. The Earl of Ormonde had been confined for a time by Rory O'Moore.

A Diversion

Did you hear what Daniel O'Connell said about Robert Peel, Secretary of Ireland in 1817?

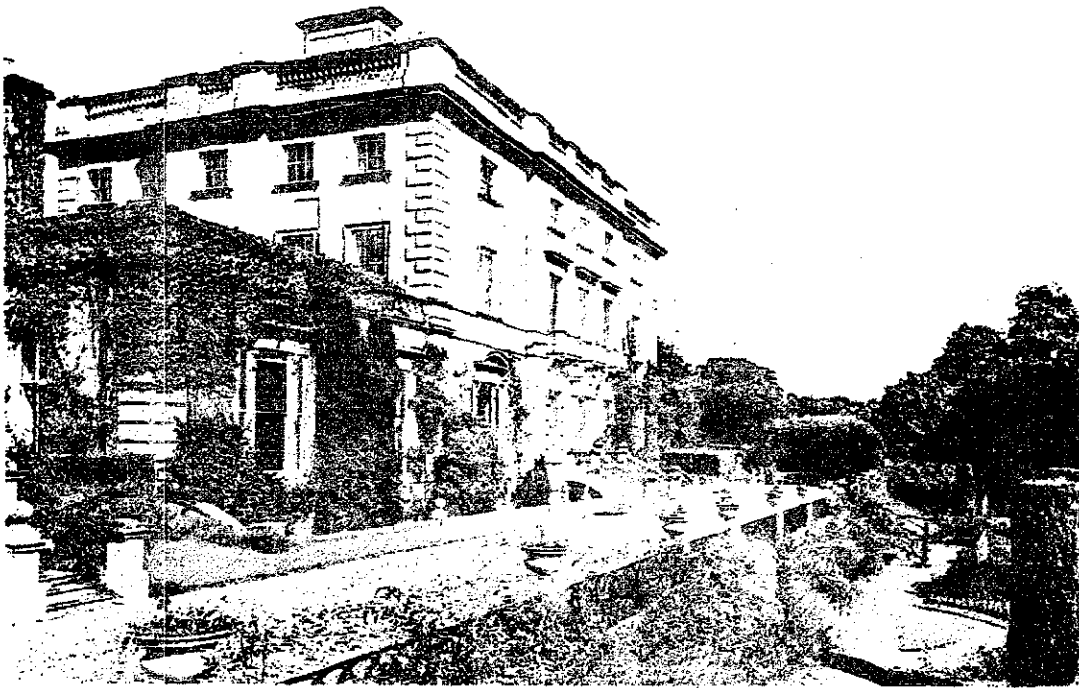
He dubbed him "Orange Peel" and said that his smile was like the silver plate on a coffin.

Abbeyleix Today

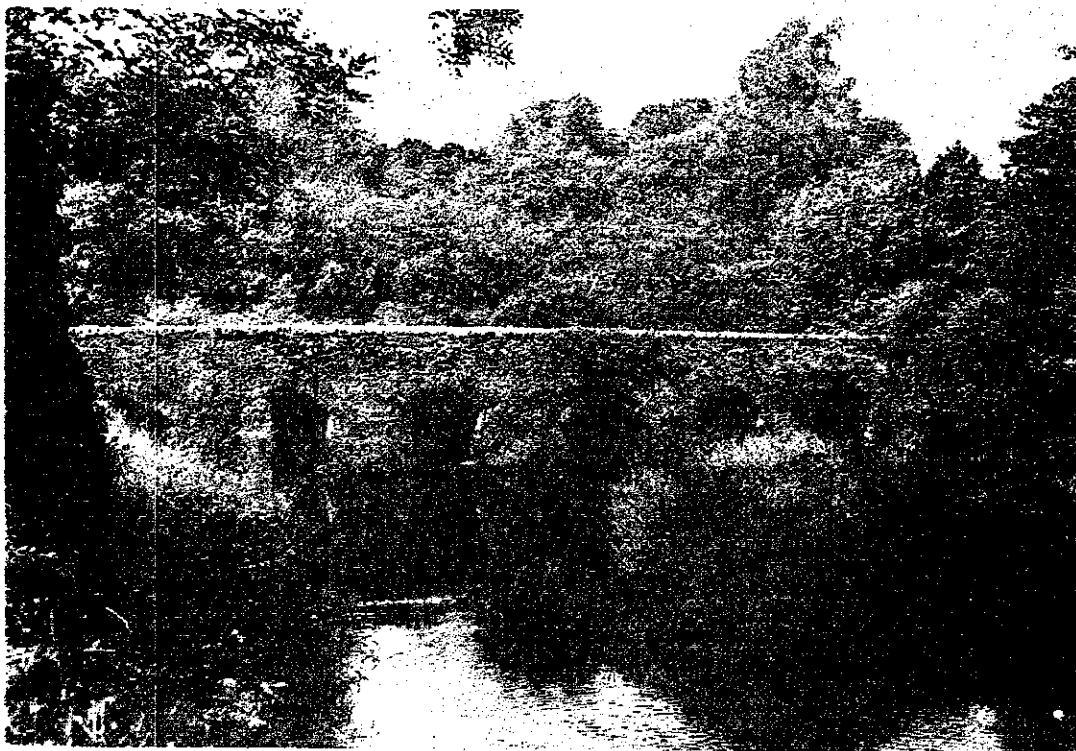
In 1850 the town of Abbeyleix built around the River Nore, with its Mills, fell into decay, and the present town was laid out on land given by the then Vicount de Vesce (Vessey)

The Church of Ireland, at the lower end of the town was built in 1831, and since then has been enlarged and renovated. The Roman Catholic Church, the Church of the Most Holy Rosary was built in 1893 on land given by Vicount de Vesce. There is also a Methodist Church on the Main Street. When Mr. Ray Fanning spoke of this street he said, "It is a one street town with a few short side streets that seem to tire and quit a short distance off the main street."

The Brigidine Convent was first opened in 1842, and the Nuns have charge of the Secondary School. They also operate one of the three National Schools of the town. One National School is in charge of the Patrician Brothers. The third school is the Church of Ireland National School at the lower end of the town. There is also a Vocational School in the Town for both boys and girls.



Abbey Leix Built in 1773
The Terrace



Monk's Bridge. Built by the Cistercian
Monks of the original Abbey in the
13th Century



Abbey Leix from the
River Nore
De Vesci Mansion



Marriage
To End
Mar. 20-
1976

Lord Snowdon
has
Relatives in
Abbey Leix
Mansion

LORD SNOWDON arrived today at airport in Sydney, Australia from Hong Kong. In London, Buckingham Palace sources said Princess Margaret and Snowdon have decided to legally separate.—UPI.

Princess, Spouse OK Separation

LONDON (AP) — Princess Margaret, younger sister of Queen Elizabeth II, and her husband Lord Snowdon have agreed to separate but a divorce is not planned, an official announcement said today.

The brief announcement, issued from the couple's Kensington Palace home in London, gave no details of any settlement between the 45-year-old princess and her globe-trotting photographer husband, Antony Armstrong-Jones. They have been married nearly 16 years. There was no word on who would get custody of their two children, aged 11 and 14.

Immediately after the statement was issued, a spokesman for Queen Elizabeth said: "The queen is naturally very sad at what has happened."

He added that "there has been no pressure from the queen on either Princess Mar-

garet or Lord Snowdon to take any particular course."

The official statement said: "Her Royal Highness, the Princess Margaret, Countess of Snowdon, and the Earl of Snowdon have mutually agreed to live apart. The princess will carry out her public duties and functions unaccompanied by Lord Snowdon. There are no plans for divorce proceedings."

Just 20 years ago Margaret decided against marrying Royal Air Force Group Capt. Peter Townsend because he had been divorced. But a veteran observer of palace affairs said her decision in that case was the result of "thumbscrew techniques" applied by Buckingham Palace and the archbishop of Canterbury.

Margaret is fifth in line to the throne, and her separation will have no effect on her \$70,000 yearly allowance, knowledgeable officials said.

Joined Guard 50 years ago

March 21, 1976

St. John becomes a general

The St. John family has roots in Abbeyleix

By CLARK JOHNSTON

Fifty years ago, William St. John of Waterbury joined the Connecticut National Guard as a private. Friday, after stepping on every rung of the military ladder, he became a general.

St. John got the one star of a brigadier-general in ceremonies conducted by Gov. Ella T. Grasso and Major-Gen. John F. Freund, adjutant-general of Connecticut.

St. John, a one-time Democratic candidate for mayor of Waterbury, is the property and procurement officer of the state Military Department. He also is assistant to the adjutant general responsible for the care of all military property in the state.

For many years, St. John served as a member and as chairman of the state Reserve Forces Facilities Board which reports to the U.S. Department of Defense. The board makes recommendations for construction of Army, Navy, Marine Corps, National Guard and Coast Guard reserve force facilities in Connecticut. He is a member of the American Society of Military Engineers.

St. John has been the military construction officer for the state and was project officer for the construction of new armories in Enfield, Naugatuck, Norwalk, New London, Stratford and Southington.

Currently, St. John is involved in a project to provide the first solar energy armory in the country to be built in Norwich.

St. John received various citations in World War II, including a decoration from the Republic of China while attached to a Chinese army unit in Burma in 1944-1945.

The American National Red Cross cited him for "outstanding services" as disaster chairman in this city during the floods of 1955. He is a member of the American Society of Military Engineers.

In 1958, St. John was campaign manager for U.S. Rep. John S. Monagan. He has served as delegate or alternate to a number of Democratic conventions.

St. John retired from the state National Guard in 1969, but this doesn't affect his as-

signment as procurement officer. He originally joined the Guard in 1926.

At one time he was a partner in the now defunct St. John and Creem clothing store on South Main Street. He also served on the Waterbury City Plan Commission.

He attended local schools, Brooklyn Polytechnic Institute, University of Connecticut and is a graduate of the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College.

He and Mrs. St. John live in Waterbury and have four sons and three grandsons.



Star of the show

Getting the star of brigadier-general in ceremonies at Hartford is William St. John of Waterbury, center, property and procurement officer for the state Military Department. He is flanked by Major-Gen. John F. Freund, adjutant-general of Connecticut and Gov. Ella T. Grasso.

A lifelong Democrat, St. John served for many years on the Waterbury Democratic Town Committee.

In 1953, he came close to defeating Republican Mayor Raymond E. Snyder and, two years later, he was campaign manager for the late Edward D. Bergin who won the mayoralty in 1955.

Navy
Brother - Lieutenant
Raymond St. John
Stamp Columnist in Sunday
Sisters Paper

Barbara O'Loughlin - nurse
Betty Lewis (Florida)
Margaret Flaherty

Father from Thurles,
Tipperary

His mother came from
Abbeyleix

A large Public Library is maintained by the County Council in the Town Hall, a fine stone building standing in the Square in the center of Abbeyfeis. There is also a District Hospital on the edge of the Town, built as a Fever Hospital in 1936, and later adapted for the accommodation of ordinary medical cases. There are two Banks on the Main Street, one formerly the Munster and Leinster Bank, (now a branch of Allied Irish Banks) and the other is the Hibernian Bank, (now a branch of the Bank of Ireland).

The Court House for hearing of various kinds of Law cases, at the upper end of the Town, is no longer used as such, the Courts now being held monthly in the Parochial Hall at the lower end of the Town.

Many of the former owners of the General Trading Shops in the Town have passed on, the trading being now carried on by new hands. One of the few shops in the Town, and in the same family for close on two hundred years is Merrissey's, a large Grocery Store and licensed Bar. The fact that it still retains its old-time style of trading makes it

attractive to many in this modern age of Supermarkets. The Licensed Bar attached to the premises is operated now as it has been for many years, without any musical trimmings which has become popular in the more modern Lounge Bars. The sons of old-timers who frequent this Bar find it quiet and peaceful, with its discreet "Snug" nearby for those who like a quiet chat with a drink too. There is also Fryffe's Drapery Store on the Square which has been in the family for three generations, and Mc Donnell's general Groceries and Hardware. If you like a modern Lounge Bar go to "Benny's Lounge" owned by Brendon O'Garman. (Nora Barber's cousin)

Abbeyleix was once a thriving market town where weekly markets of farm produce were held, and a monthly Pig Fair. These markets have, regrettably, almost disappeared with the changing pattern of life in the surrounding districts. There are however markets provided in other towns within a few miles of Abbeyleix, such as Portlaoise (Maryborough) Mountrath, Ballinaskill, and Rathdowney, called Marts, where sale of livestock takes place by Auction.

On both sides of the Town there are some fine trees including flowering Cherry. The Saw Mills operated by the Abbey Farm Estate Co. on the outskirts of the Town, provides considerable employment for a number of people. There is also a factory for processing of Animal Foods. Several buses go through the Town and provide connections at Portlaoise and Kilkenny with the cities and towns through the country.

There is an Abbeyfarm Development Association which is working very hard to attract industry to the Town. (Patrick O'Gorman)

The most common names at present ^{there} in the Town and of some generations are Phelan, Carroll, McEvoy, Lalor, Byrne, Burke, O'Gorman, Delaney, Morrissey, Thornton, Keeley, Taylor, Brophy, McDonnell, Deegan, Maher, and Walsh.

Thornberry District near the town, is now an attractive built-up area and with many new Bungalows nearby on the Carlow Road. It was in Thornberry Lodge, that Mr. Wesley Bailey was born about a 100 years ago. He was Founder of the Mission for Lepers in India.

There is a fine 9-hole Golf Course about a mile from the town on the Ballymore



Road set in scenic surroundings. The Town also holds an annual Show in September for display of modern machinery, flowers and flower arrangements, Hand Crafts, livestock, and Horse Jumping. The Show is held in the Park after a parade through the Town of the participants with many Bands and gaily decorated Floats.

The area is a fisherman's Paradise. Pike, Perch, Bream, and Tench, Salmon, and Trout. There is shooting for Duck, Pheasant, Dove, Snipe and Grouse. Of course there are Tennis Courts, too. Every Sunday there are Gaelic Football Games and Hurling. The Kilkenny Beer Festival is held each May and includes Folk Dancing, Peat Groups, Dancing, Horse Racing and Greyhound Racing.

We are told a new Motel rivals the old Hotel, run by a Mrs. Powers who once was a proprietor of a tavern in Brooklyn, N.Y.

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The above information was sent by Patrick S. Mulhall - Preston House Abbeyleix to Winifred Caine 63 Harpers Ferry Road Waterbury, Conn.