

Monuments to the Duke of Wellington in nineteenth-century Ireland: forging British and imperial identities

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During the nineteenth century, the first Duke of Wellington's renown was such that the inhabitants of Britain and Ireland funded a number of public monuments to celebrate his life and achievements. Three examples of these works were raised in Ireland, his native country. They were located in Dublin, Meath and Tipperary, respectively. Through unravelling the history of these monuments in the nineteenth century, this article explores how concepts of identity found form and expression, were shaped and reshaped, in and through the Irish landscape. The political and geographic context, combined with the personal associations of the commemorative subject, offer particular opportunity for the exploration of British and imperial identities, their composition and their relative strength and prevalence in the cultural landscapes of nineteenth-century Ireland. The nature and significance of Protestant Ascendancy and Roman Catholic interactions with the monuments are also considered.

Keywords: Duke of Wellington; monument; nineteenth-century Ireland; British identity; empire; landscape

Introduction

The outset of the nineteenth century marked the beginning of a new phase in Irish history when in 1801, the Act of Union brought about for the first time a formal political union of England, Scotland, Wales and Ireland. The result was the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland. Much recent debate has surrounded the issue of whether Ireland's integration into this new state led to the development of a sense of British national identity among the Irish populace. The extent to which Ireland should be included in the history of the development of the British nation has also been a subject of debate. Some historians such as Colley (1992) and Robbins (1988) have excluded Ireland from their treatment of the subject almost entirely, while others such as Kearney (1989), Powell (2002) and Kumar (2003) have taken a 'four nations' approach to the course of British history, attributing equal consideration to the roles of England, Scotland, Wales and Ireland in shaping and defining the British state and the nature of British identity. Ireland's position in the British Empire has also been the focus of a growing level of modern historiography (see, for example, Kenny 2004, McDonough 2005).

One important forum through which identities, national and otherwise, have been formed, disseminated and contested is in the cultural landscape and through its built environment. Ireland during the nineteenth century partook to some extent in that era's

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Europe-wide trend of 'statuemanía', a movement which also prevailed in North America during the same period. Whelan (2001, 2002, 2003), Johnson (1994, 1995) and Hill (1998) are among those who have highlighted the impact of the increased drive to erect public monuments on the nineteenth-century Irish landscape and discussed the potential symbolic significance of the resultant memorials. Of such monuments, three erected in early nineteenth-century Ireland were dedicated to one man in particular: Sir Arthur Wellesley, the first Duke of Wellington.

Arthur Wesley (a surname changed to Wellesley during 1798) (Longford 1971) was born in Ireland in 1769, reputedly in or near the town of Trim, Co. Meath (although there has been some dispute as to the exact location of his birth, with Dublin being another strong contender) (Ellison 1967). A member of the Protestant Ascendancy class, he was raised in Dublin and Dangan (the family estate near Trim) and was educated in the diocesan primary school at Trim (Holmes 2002). His first brush with politics came with his appointment as aide-de-camp to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, a position which he held from November 1787 to March 1793. He also became engaged in local politics during this time when he was admitted as a Burgess for Trim Corporation in 1789. He continued to attend the corporation meetings regularly up until September 1793 (NLI, Pos. 8977, pp. 321–341). In 1790, he was elected Member of Parliament (MP) for Trim (French 1992). He held this seat in the Irish Parliament up until June 1795. It was around this time that he began his military career in earnest. This was the area of his life that was to win him his greatest renown.

Wesley had joined the British army as an ensign in 1787 but did not see his first action until September 1794 at Flanders. He then served in India from 1797 until 1805. After a number of victories that strengthened British power in India, he returned to Ireland where he took up the post of Chief Secretary in April 1807, a position he held until his resignation in April 1809. From 1808 until 1814, he led the British forces across Portugal, Spain and France, gaining many crucial victories over the French and earning him the titles of Viscount Wellington of Talavera and Duke of Wellington from the British Crown. On 18 June 1815, Wellington led the British and Allied forces to victory over the French in the decisive battle of the Napoleonic Wars at Waterloo (Longford 1971).

This brought an end to Wellington's military career in the field, but his political career was soon to undergo a major revival. He settled in England and was elected British Prime Minister in 1828, a post he held until November 1830, and took up again briefly during 1834. Perhaps the most decisive act of his term of office (particularly from an Irish point of view) was the passing of the Catholic Relief Act on 13 April 1829, the culmination of a long campaign for Catholic Emancipation. This Act granted Irish Catholics a number of freedoms previously denied them, most notably the right to hold a seat in parliament. Wellington fought a great deal of opposition from many of his MPs and from the Crown in order to bring this legislation into force. He even went so far as to fight a duel against Lord Winchilsea in defence of the matter (Longford 1975). This was not the first time that Wellington demonstrated pro-Catholic sentiments either. During his time as Chief Secretary, he expressed a desire 'to obliterate, as far as the law will allow us, the distinction between Protestants and Catholics' (Holmes 2002, p. 102), and when invited to join the Orange Order in February 1821, he declined, saying that he '[objected] to belong to a Society from which ... a large proportion of His Majesty's subjects must be excluded, many of them as loyal men as exist' (Longford 1994–1995, p. 60). Yet as this statement also demonstrates, he believed that Ireland's rightful place was as a part of the British Empire.

He was a strong believer in the established systems of class and social order. It was essentially his opposition to parliamentary reform which brought about the fall of his government in 1830. Although he sought to preserve the privileged positions of the monarchy and aristocracy, as Beaton (2008, p. viii) has pointed out, many of the virtues he espoused and practised, such as duty, diligence and thrift, endeared him to members of the middle and working classes. He continued to hold his seat in parliament until his resignation in 1846. He lived out his days still actively involved in public life, retaining the post of Commander-in-Chief of the army until his death in 1852. Such was his fame that an estimated one and a half million spectators lined the streets of London on 18 November 1852 to witness his funeral, an event of such magnitude it had few equals in the history of nineteenth-century Britain (Wolffe 2000).

The Duke of Wellington was a complex figure whose identity can be read along a number of (seemingly contradictory) lines: both Irish and British, Protestant and pro-Catholic, loyalist and conservative, but sometimes reformist. Recent commentators have described him severally as ‘an imperial icon’ (Taylor 2003, p. 8) and ‘a metonym for Britishness’ (Beaton 2008, p. viii). His personality conjures up associations with issues of military and political power, socio-economic divides and religious discrimination. Different memories of him have resulted in different interpretations of his personality and its symbolic implications. Context, both historical and geographical, has often proved a key factor in how people have understood the figure of the Duke. His mark was stamped on the landscape of the nineteenth century in a physical sense through the addition of public monuments and statues dedicated to his name. Up to 37 such structures were erected in Britain (Beaton 2008, p. 190), while further examples of monuments and architectural commemorations may be found across the globe in locations as diverse as Gibraltar and India. A consideration of the three monuments raised to honour him in nineteenth-century Ireland forms the basis of this article. Furthermore, it should be noted that there were many Wellington-named spaces in Ireland, including Wellington Street (Dún Laoghaire), Wellington Road (Dublin) and Wellington Bridge (Carlow).

Symbolic landscapes and the interpretation of public monuments

Over the years, landscape interpretation has been associated with a number of different disciplines. Within the field of geography, the emergence of a new cultural geography in the 1980s saw an increased emphasis on unravelling the symbolic aspects of landscape in order to elucidate prevailing social, cultural and political systems (Seymour 2000, Whyte 2002). The shaping of a landscape expresses certain ideologies that are then perpetuated and supported through that same landscape (Crang 1998). Landscapes are, therefore, repositories of meaning. But the meanings bound up in a landscape are not fixed and immutable; they are subject to change over time. According to Crang (1998), they may be accumulated, contested, erased, reshaped and overwritten; they are, as attested by Carl Sauer (1925, p. 333), ‘in [a] continuous process of development or of dissolution and replacement’.

Attempts to form an interpretation of a landscape also raise issues concerned with power, memory, identity and heritage. There are many different terms in which identity may be defined: gender, class, religious, ethnic, familial, local, regional and national are but a few of these (Smith 1991). According to Barbara Bender (1993, p. 3), ‘landscape ... is part of the way in which identities are created and disputed, whether as individual, group, or nation-state’. Those in power may employ history, memory and heritage in a selective fashion in order to form and propagate specific identity concepts, usually ones

that legitimate their hold on authority (Whelan 2003). But as Withers (1996) has argued, dominant memory is not universally held; it may be resisted through the cultivation of other, different remembered pasts. Similarly, élite-imposed identity concepts may also be opposed and contested by the less powerful in society (Whelan 2003). Through a process of reshaping or overwriting, the voice of the 'other', the voice of those who have been excluded or subjugated, can also be articulated and recorded (Hershkovitz 1993). Place can act as the crucible in which constructs of power, memory, identity and heritage find form and interact with one another. Thus an examination of the symbolic landscape can reveal much about these concepts within our society.

As facets of the symbolic landscape, various authors have attempted to unravel the meanings bound up in monuments and at particular monumental sites (Young 1992, Johnson 1994, 1995, Peet 1996, Atkinson and Cosgrove 1998, Hill 1998, Osborne 1998, Whelan 2001, 2002, 2003, Gordon and Osborne 2004, Larsen 2012). According to Martin Auster (1997, p. 219), 'public monuments are of special interest as focal points of meaning in the landscape' and multiple layers of meaning can be unearthed even within the most abstract of monuments. From a pan-British perspective, Dana Arnold's (2004b) compilation work includes monuments as one component of a broader visual culture constructed to represent empire and national identity. Yet she also recognises these 'high culture' forms as élite expressions of Britishness:

The aesthetics of architecture, landscape, painting, sculpture and literature were used, appropriated and re-appropriated in the furtherance of particular social and political aims. In this way aesthetic culture reinforced the culture of the dominant political and social ideologies; and it re-presented and reconstructed the notion of a national identity (Arnold 2004a, p. 1).

Andrew Thompson's (2005) study on the impact the experience of empire had on British people at home on the mainland and on the formation of British identity gives some consideration to how this was conveyed through architectural forms and in the urban landscape. Touching briefly on various memorials and statues as part of this, he concludes that 'public architecture and the built urban environment offer some support for the idea that British identities drew meaning and strength from the empire' (Thompson 2005, p. 186).

Methodology

In order to unravel the meanings associated with landscape, geographers have developed various methods for decoding it. One of these methods, put forward by Trevor Barnes and James Duncan (1992), is the treatment of a landscape as a text to be read, from which a range of meanings can then be interpreted, as one would with a literary text. An alternative approach, first introduced by Stephen Daniels and Denis Cosgrove (1988b), puts a greater emphasis on the visual nature of landscape and involves the application of the concepts of iconography and iconology to its study. Traditionally employed in the study of art history, iconography refers to the identification of conventional, consciously inscribed symbols in a painting or a sculpture, while iconology involves the interpretation of these symbols to uncover a deeper stratum of meaning indicative of the underlying principles and attitudes that shaped the society in which the work of art was formed (Daniels and Cosgrove 1988a). In the iconographic method of landscape interpretation, a whole landscape can be substituted for the work of art and the concepts of iconography and iconology employed to unravel the attitudes and the principles of the society that

shaped it. The borrowing of methodologies from the various disciplines of art and literature is illustrative of the multidisciplinary approach which Alan Baker (1992) argues must be employed in a geographic study of the landscape.

In effecting this study of the three Irish monuments dedicated to the Duke of Wellington, a number of different methodological approaches were utilised. First, a combination of internet and literature searches was utilised in order to catalogue all the public monuments dedicated to the Duke located within Ireland. The result was the positive identification of three such examples in the counties of Dublin, Meath and Tipperary, respectively. These monuments were studied in the field, during which observable data was compiled and recorded and photographs were taken. This is an approach previously utilised and endorsed by geographers such as Freek Colombijn (1998), who included these techniques as part of a broader ‘anthropological tourism’ methodology devised by Colombijn to undertake an investigation of the symbolic landscape of Australia’s capital city Canberra. Efforts were then made to reconstruct as complete a picture of the monuments’ nineteenth-century life histories as possible, an operation performed through examination of contemporary archival material. Similar approaches to monumental studies have been employed in different forms and to variable extents by numerous scholars in the discipline, for example, Whelan (2001) and Osborne (1998).

In attempting to form an interpretation of the symbolic landscape fashioned by the monuments’ existence, recourse was made both to contemporary, nineteenth-century publications and modern, secondary source literature in order to locate events in the monuments’ lives within the broader social, cultural and historical context on both a local and a national scale. Thus events in their lives were linked to wider societal attitudes, trends and developments. Such a historical and contextual approach to the study of the symbolic landscape has been advocated by many cultural geographers, among them Denis Cosgrove (1989), Alan Baker (1992) and Donald Meinig (1979).

Additionally, the aforementioned theoretical concepts and methods of Barnes and Duncan (1992) and Daniels and Cosgrove (1988a) were employed to variable degrees to assist in decoding the symbolic subtexts of the landscape of the monuments. Yvonne Whelan’s (2001, p. 14) ‘lifecycle of a monument’ diagram provides a framework for forming an interpretation of the subtextual meanings attached to a monument which also served as a useful starting point to guide attempts at interpretation of the Wellington monuments. However, it did need to be adapted to suit the specific circumstances and context of this piece of research and not all the subtexts suggested by Whelan were relevant to this study. Aside from this, close attention was paid to any thematic or more tangible links or interconnections between the various monuments as such commonalities may be indicative of a unified symbolic landscape with an overarching message or subtext. More broadly, the interpretations have been informed by many recent theories in landscape reading and writings on monuments, identity formation, power, memory, nation and empire in cultural and historical geography and other disciplines, a cross section of which have been touched upon in this article.

Dublin

Reaching an imposing height of 234 feet (*Freeman’s Journal*, 20 June 1861), the Wellington Testimonial (Figure 1) dominates the skyline from its location in Phoenix Park, the largest public park in Ireland’s capital city, Dublin. In 1831, the city comprised 265,316 inhabitants, of which 204,155 were within the boundary of the civic jurisdiction



Figure 1. Wellington Testimonial, Phoenix Park.

(Lewis 1837a). Designed by Robert Smirke, the testimonial is still one of the tallest obelisks in Europe today. Of the three monuments under consideration, this is the one whose origins can be traced back furthest. According to *Faulkner's Dublin Journal* (20 July 1813), it was the Earl of Roden who first proposed the erection of a monument to the Duke of Wellington in Ireland (see also Garnett 1952). The Earl was particularly staunch in his religious and loyalist convictions, being an active member and grand master of the Orange Order. He also served as MP for Dundalk from 1810 to 1820 (Hickey and Doherty 2003). He organised what was described as ‘a meeting of several noblemen and gentlemen of the Kingdom of Ireland’ at the Rotunda in Dublin on 20 July 1813 in order to put forward his idea (NLI, Ms. 7778, Doc. 3, Proceedings of the First Meeting on the Subject of the Wellington Testimonial, 20 July 1813, pp. 1–2). The result was the adoption of the following resolution, which sets out the impetus for the monument’s erection:

Being convinced that the ... successes of that Illustrious Irishman, Field Marshall the Marquis of Wellington, in his campaigns against the French intruders of Spain and Portugal not only reflect honour on the country of his birth, but have eminently contributed to the security, prosperity and glory of the British Empire – and the best interests of mankind – we deem it to be a proud duty devolving on his countrymen to record, by some public National Testimonial, to be erected in the Metropolis of Ireland, the exploits he has achieved, in order that he, who has distinguished himself by great services to his country, may enjoy the gratitude and applause of his contemporaries and that our posterity may be excited by emulation of his fame, to the imitation of his example (NLI, Ms. 7778, Doc. 3, pp. 1–2).

The meeting called for a general subscription to be opened in Ireland to fund the monument. Letters were also to be sent to the high sheriff and foreman of every grand

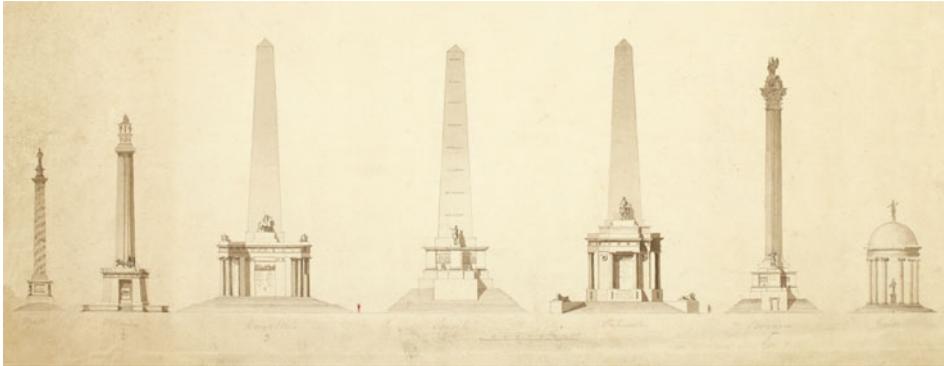


Figure 2. Architectural drawing of the final seven proposed designs shortlisted for the Wellington Testimonial. From left to right, the artists are Wyatt, Wilkins, Hamilton, Smirke, Papworth, Bowden and Hill. Papworth, an English-born architect resident in Ireland, was excluded from the final six designs displayed to the public in model form at the Dublin Society's House on Hawkin's Street. Reproduced courtesy of the National Library of Ireland (NLI, A.D. 1925, c.1815).

jury in Ireland and to those residing in England who possessed extensive property in Ireland in order to inform them of the intentions of the committee and solicit their assistance in the matter. A list of names of the Committee of Managers reveals that 39 of them were members of the titled aristocracy, eight were judges, two were colonels and 30 others were gentlemen of no particular title. (NLI, Ms. 7778, Doc. 3, pp. 2–5). Thus the shaping of the memory to be preserved at the Testimonial was to be directed by a group of social, political and, to a small extent, military élites.

The next step in the development of the monument was the choice of a suitable design and a site upon which to locate it. A large number of potential designs were submitted by artists from all over the United Kingdom (NLI, Ms. 7778, Doc. 1, Extract from Warburton, Whitelaw and Walsh's *History of the City of Dublin*, published 1818). From among these a final six were selected by the Committee of Managers, and models of them were displayed to the public at the Dublin Society's House on Hawkin's Street for a few weeks during November and December 1815 (Figure 2) (*Freeman's Journal*, 20 November 1815, 13 December 1815). Of the artists, at least two were Irish (Hill and Hamilton), but it was an English architect, Robert Smirke, whose design was selected by the committee on 11 December 1815 (*Freeman's Journal*, 27 November 1815, 13 December 1815). The vote in favour of Smirke was unanimous (*Freeman's Journal*, 13 December 1815, Farington [1814–1815] 1984, p. 4752).

Much debate had surrounded the choice of design, with the committee initially appearing to be more in favour of a columnar appearance (RIA, HP 1058/6). A letter by one of the Committee Managers, John Leslie Foster, written five days before the selection of the design indicated that although the committee's taste now lay in favour of an obelisk, Smirke's design was not seen as being particularly preferable to Hamilton's due to any concern of artistic merit (RIA, HP 1077/6). He mentioned that the Commissioners of Stephen's Green (the committee's preferred site for the monument) had recently opposed the idea of an obelisk being located there, but the committee still held hopes of persuading them otherwise (RIA, HP 1077/6, pp. 7–27). He also stated that he believed Smirke's obelisk '[was] considered by the Commissioners of the Green, rather as the more objectionable of the two' (RIA, HP 1077/6, p. 14). Yet despite this, the committee ultimately favoured the design of the Englishman over that of the Irishman.

According to Richard Barnes (2004, p. 141), the obelisk form embodies a subtext of power: ‘Ancient Egypt’s obelisks demonstrated superhuman strength and the Pharaoh’s supremacy’. Thus the choice of this form could be interpreted as a means through which the upper classes, many of whom, like Roden, were members of the Protestant Ascendancy, constructed a landscape of power that served to bolster the position of their social class and that of the British state and Empire they supported and felt themselves closely connected to, within the Irish landscape.

A number of different sites were considered for the location of the monument, with city-centre locations such as Saint Stephen’s Green and Merrion Square being the initial choices of the committee (*Freeman’s Journal*, 13 December 1815). Interest in the competition’s progress and the site selection extended even as far as the Scottish countryside, with the *Kelso Mail* (25 December 1815) reporting on the victory of Smirke’s design and the committee’s hopes to secure Stephen’s Green or Merrion Square as the location for its erection. The same publication took a keen interest in the Marquis of Lothian’s concurrent efforts to raise a monument to Wellington on his estate in Roxburghshire, thus creating something of a link between the two projects.

However, by 20 November 1816, Phoenix Park had finally been settled upon as the site for Dublin’s Wellington Testimonial (Figure 3) (Farington [1816–1817] 1984, p. 4926). Here the monument was to stand in close proximity to the Royal Barracks and Royal Artillery Barracks, both situated outside the confines of the park. Inside the park, it was accompanied by other military-associated structures such as the Royal Military Infirmary, the Magazine Fort, batteries and the Hibernian School for soldiers’ children.



Figure 3. The Wellington Testimonial in Phoenix Park, Dublin. Adapted from Ordnance Survey Map, *Dublin*, sheet 18, 1:10,560, surveyed 1837. Reproduced with the permission of the Board of Trinity College Dublin. The maps used to illustrate this work are all produced using extracts from Ordnance Survey first edition maps. They were selected both to give as close as possible a representation of the contemporary surrounds of each monument at the time of its erection and to present a degree of consistency and continuity in map appearance.

The park was also home to several of the residences of the Crown's key representatives in Ireland, including the Vice-regal Lodge, the Chief Secretary's Lodge and the Under Secretary's Lodge (Ordnance Survey 1837, Lewis 1837a, pp. 544–545). The selection of such a politically significant site for the monument served to further reinforce the messages of military power and adherence to British political and imperial institutions already infused in its form.

Among those who endorsed the adoption of the Phoenix Park site was John Wilson Croker. Writing from London to one of the Committee of Managers, Croker gave a strong recommendation to the placement of the testimonial in that location on account of 'its connexion with the great scene of military exercises ... and its extensive visibility from all points' (RIA, HP 1077/5, p. 19). Croker was an Irish-born politician and a published author on a wide range of topics. He was personally acquainted with Wellington, having been engaged by him to assume the duties of Chief Secretary for Ireland in 1808 during Wellesley's absence while fighting on the Peninsula. These beginnings led to a lifelong friendship between the two (Stephen and Lee 1908). Croker also proposed Trinity College as a potential site for the monument, where he suggested it be situated in an expanded and embellished College Park. However, he cited his reservation against this proposal as being 'that the College Park is, and must continue to be, enclosed from the public, and that a national trophy ought not to be erected in such an enclosure, where every one would not be at full liberty to approach and examine it' (RIA, HP 1077/5, p. 39). Croker was later linked with two projects to commemorate Wellington in Britain: he acted on the committee for the Wyatt Wellington memorial in London which was erected in 1846 (*The Morning Chronicle*, 2 July 1838, 30 September 1846), and while engaged with this undertaking, he was informed of Edinburgh's Wellington testimonial project and sent his best wishes for its success (EPL, YDA 1968 W45, Doc. 45, J.W. Croker to Peter, 27 December 1839).

On 18 June 1817, the Lord Lieutenant, Lord Whitworth, was called upon to lay the foundation stone for Dublin's testimonial at a ceremony held for that purpose. As Lord Lieutenant, Whitworth stood as the Crown's senior representative in Ireland. The *Freeman's Journal* (19 June 1817) reported on the occasion, saying that:

The Lord Lieutenant ... [was] attended by several officers of distinction and an escort of dragoons ... [The ceremony] was attended by a vast concourse of carriages, and of equestrian and pedestrian spectators; the day being particularly favourable there were exhibited considerable beauty, rank and fashion. ... [The Lancers] made a beautiful and warlike appearance... After the ceremony of laying the stone, 21 rounds were fired.

Around 1820, the British Government made a grant of brass cannon captured during the Peninsular Campaign in order that the metal might be used to mould the bas-reliefs that were to adorn the base of the obelisk, as well as an equestrian statue of the Duke and two statues of lions that were originally intended to stand before it (Figure 4) (NLI, Ms. 7778, Doc. 17, Arthur Cane to Lord Raglan, 23 February 1853, Doc. 18, Raglan to Cane, 3 March 1853). Another early design sketch (RIBA Library Drawings & Archives Collections, RIBA21514 or SC93/1(2)) suggests Smirke may also have been considering the addition of statues of winged Victories at each of the corners of the obelisk's base. Further sketches on the reverse of this design show a Corinthian style column surmounted by a statue in place of the obelisk shaft. This may have been a sketch for another project Smirke was engaged upon, or it may represent an alternative design considered by him for the Wellington Testimonial.

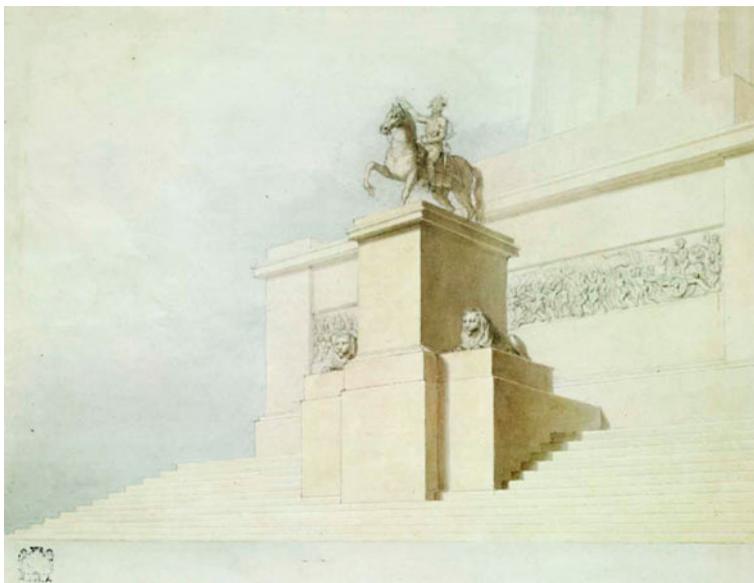


Figure 4. Early design sketch for the Wellington Testimonial by Smirke depicting two lions and an equestrian statue on the steps at the base of the monument. Reproduced with permission from [RIBA Library Drawings & Archives Collections](#), RIBA21512 or SC93/1(3).

In any event, only two of the cannons granted around 1820 were claimed. These were used to inscribe the names of 28 victories in India, Spain, Portugal and France that were associated with Wellington onto the shaft of the obelisk. No further claims were made as funds ran out in 1822 and work on the monument had to be halted (NLI, Ms. 7778, Doc. 17, *Freeman's Journal*, 20 June 1861). The construction of the obelisk alone reputedly cost upwards of £20,000 (NLI, Ms. 7778, Doc. 17). Smirke estimated that over £12,000 more would be required to complete the monument according to his original design specification (NLI, Ms. 7778, Doc. 16, Robert Smirke to Cane, 18 January 1853). These figures make the testimonial one of the most expensive and most highly subscribed to of all the Wellington commemorations in Ireland and Britain. Yet without the additional money required, it was to remain incomplete for almost the next 40 years. An unadorned obelisk with an empty pedestal before it, with no name engraved on it other than that of the 28 victories, it stood as a testament to British might and military achievement. But the messages imbued in the Wellington Testimonial would be altered in line with societal changes.

On 6 May 1829, a public meeting was held at the London Tavern to organise a voluntary subscription to raise funds for the erection of a statue to Wellington in or near Dublin to commemorate his instrumental role in securing the passing of the Catholic Emancipation Act in April of that year (*Freeman's Journal*, 11 May 1829). The meeting was attended by 'about 500 respectable persons' (*Freeman's Journal*, 11 May 1829). Proceedings were directed both by a number of leading Protestants and by a considerable Catholic and Irish nationalist contingent, led most notably by the active involvement of Daniel O'Connell, the Catholic MP and champion of Emancipation (*Freeman's Journal*, 11 May 1829). Ultimately, insufficient funds were raised to carry out the project, but in 1858, the money raised was amalgamated with that leftover from the 1813 Committee's efforts and employed to complete the Wellington Testimonial (NLI, Ms. 7778, Doc. 32,

Duke of Leinster to Lord Carlisle, 14 November 1857, Doc. 61, Leinster to Thomas Larcom, 9 August 1858).

Interest had been revived in finishing the monument after Wellington's death in 1852 (*Freeman's Journal*, 20 June 1861). At this point Patrick MacDowell, a Belfast-born sculptor living in England (Strickland 1968), was contacted by the secretary to the trustees of the Wellington Testimonial, Arthur Cane, for his opinion on how the monument might be completed (NLI, Ms. 7778, Doc. 8, P. MacDowell to Cane, 30 October 1852). MacDowell provided cost estimates and design sketches, but it seems any thoughts of employing him to undertake the work were abandoned (NLI, Ms. 7778, Doc. 8, Doc. 10, MacDowell to Cane, 11 January 1853, Doc. 11, MacDowell to Cane, 21 January 1853, Doc. 12, MacDowell to Cane, 31 January 1853).

It was not until the Earl of Carlisle was appointed Lord Lieutenant in 1855 that any real progress towards finishing the monument began to be made. Carlisle was to play a critical role. He applied to the British Government for a grant to aid in the completion of the monument (NLI, Ms. 7778, Doc. 24, Cane to Carlisle, 10 May 1856, Doc. 25, Lewis to Carlisle, 17 May 1856), resulting in £2000 being allocated by parliament in Westminster for the purpose (NLI, Ms. 7778, Doc. 132, Larcom to Hawes, 22 March 1858). He was also instrumental in securing the funds from the 1829 Committee, proposing to apply the money to inserting a bas-relief dedicated to the Duke's civil and religious services, most notably through Catholic Emancipation, into the monument (NLI, Ms. 7778, Doc. 32). He decided that there should also be two military bas-reliefs and that the fourth side should be devoted to an inscription plate (NLI, Ms. 7778, Doc. 37, Memo of Interview with Trustees of Wellington Testimonial, Thomas Larcom, 4 December 1857). He handpicked Irish sculptors to carry out the work, assigning a subject to each of them (NLI, Ms. 7778, Doc. 44, Carlisle to Larcom, 19 December 1857, *Freeman's Journal*, 20 June 1861). The three artists chosen were John Hogan, Thomas Farrell and Joseph Kirk. Garnett (1952) claims the second artist was actually Thomas Farrell's father, Terence Farrell. However, the *Freeman's Journal* of 18 May 1859 clearly states Thomas Farrell as being the sculptor of the Waterloo bas-relief. A letter proposing a design for the inscription plate is also signed 'Thomas Farrell', proving he had at least some level of involvement in the work (NLI, Ms. 7778, Doc. 173, Thomas Farrell to Larcom, 1 February 1860). Funds were short, so it was decided to jettison the plan for an equestrian statue with accompanying lions in favour of completing the bas-reliefs in the best manner possible (NLI, Ms. 7778, Doc. 21, Carlisle to Cane, 27 August 1855, Doc. 36, Larcom to Carlisle, 4 December 1857).

When pressed to devote the fourth side to another military bas-relief (one dedicated to a Peninsular victory) (NLI, Ms. 7778, Doc. 42, Larcom to Carlisle, 16 December 1857), Carlisle insisted on remaining with his original plan, saying: 'I must cling to only two military Bas reliefs – Asia and Europe; one licking of the French will be quite enough, especially in these days of close alliance, and I think the inscription very material' (NLI, Ms. 7778, Doc. 44). These sentiments indicate that the monument's appearance, and therefore the messages it was intended to convey, were carefully constructed with an awareness of the historical and social context in mind. It also indicates the importance of the inscription in conveying the monument's intentions.

Several potential designs were submitted for the inscription plate, among them one by Kirk (Figure 5) and one by Farrell (Figure 6). But ultimately, these were rejected, and it was left in the hands of an Englishman, Thomas Potter, both to model and cast the plate (Figure 7) (NLI, Ms. 7778, Doc. 185, Larcom to Potter, 30 August 1860). The inscription



Figure 5. Proposed design for the Wellington Testimonial inscription plate by Joseph R. Kirk. Reproduced courtesy of the National Library of Ireland (NLI, Ms. 7778, Doc. 172).

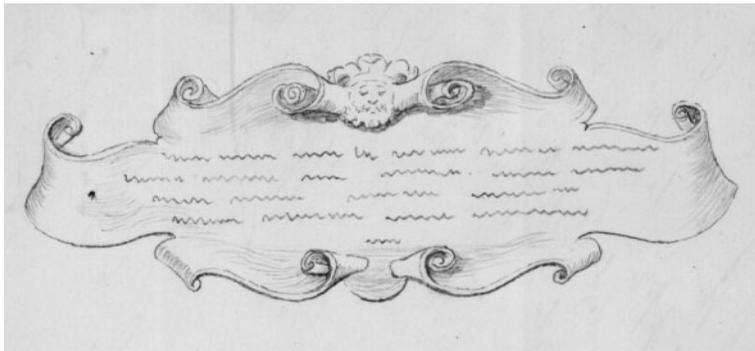


Figure 6. Proposed design for the Wellington Testimonial inscription plate by Thomas Farrell. Reproduced courtesy of the National Library of Ireland (NLI, Ms. 7778, Doc. 173).



Figure 7. Inscription plate on the Wellington Testimonial today.

was decided upon by Carlisle personally (NLI, Ms. 7778, Doc. 38, Carlisle to Larcom, 12 December 1857). In Latin and English, the following words were inscribed:

ASIA AND EUROPE, SAVED BY THEE, PROCLAIM
INVINCIBLE IN WAR THY DEATHLESS NAME,
NOW ROUND THY BROW THE CIVIC OAK WE TWINE
THAT EVERY EARTHLY GLORY MAY BE THINE

A crown and two spears are incorporated into the design of the inscription plate, symbols of military and sovereign power. Two oak branches also appear, reinforcing the image of the ‘civic oak’ referred to in the poem. In later Georgian England, trees were employed symbolically to represent and reinforce conceptions of social order (Daniels 1988). According to Stephen Daniels (1988, p. 48), ‘the oldest, richest and most complex associations adhered to the oak. Like the ideal landed family, oaks were claimed to be venerable, patriarchal, stately, guardian and quintessentially English’. This connects Wellington to both an English and an upper-class, landed-gentry identity. A further inscription was added to a separate stone tablet beneath the inscription plate. It reads in capital letters:

Testimonial to the services of
Arthur Duke of Wellington
Was erected by the private subscription of his countrymen.
The inscriptions were written in honour of his brother by Richard Marquis Wellesley
The sculptures were executed by Irish artists and cast from cannon taken in battle
Begun in 1817 Earl Whitworth P.R., finished in 1861 Earl of Carlisle P.R.
R. Smirke R.A. Architect

The wording of the tablet emphasises the role of Irishmen in creating the work. The artists’ names are not given; it is primarily their Irish identity that matters. Further evidence of the importance placed on having Irish artists carry out the work was given following John Hogan’s death in 1858, when Cane proposed that the commission for a bas-relief should be given to Patrick MacDowell instead, emphasising in his appeal that ‘he is one of the most eminent sculptors of the day and Irish’ (NLI, Ms. 7778, Doc. 46, Cane to Larcom, 4 May 1858). This proposal was overridden by an appeal from Hogan’s son to be entrusted with the completion of his father’s work, a task accomplished with the assistance of a more experienced Italian sculptor, Benzoni (NLI, Ms. 7778, Doc. 75, Hogan to Carlisle, 7 April 1858, *The Nation*, 2 October 1858). Yet the inscription glosses over the role played by this Italian sculptor in completing Hogan’s bas-relief and also omits to mention that Thomas Potter, the Englishman, cast all three bas-reliefs in bronze from the sculptors’ models (NLI, Ms. 7778, Doc. 167, Larcom to Potter, 30 January 1860).

This emphasis on Irish involvement, the incorporation of an Emancipation bas-relief and the rejection of a third military bas-relief brought something of a transformation in the messages instilled in the monument’s form. Previously, the monument was overwhelmingly military themed, preaching from on high a message of British state and imperial power. Now more conciliatory overtones were observable. This may have reflected a British acknowledgement of the rise of separatism and militant nationalism in Ireland at this time (which culminated in a series of Fenian rebellions in 1867) and the necessity of dealing with it in a less confrontational manner, as this only served to increase Irish dissatisfaction rather than suppress it (MacDonagh 1989). These conciliatory sentiments are further reflected in later British attempts at reform through moves such as the disestablishment of the Protestant church in Ireland in 1869 and Gladstone’s Irish land reform act of 1870.

A further emphasis on Irish and British unity can be seen in the Emancipation bas-relief (Figure 8). Here a mixture of Irish and English figures instrumental in gaining Emancipation are depicted standing on either side of the Duke (NLI, Ms. 7778, Doc. 69, John Hogan to Carlisle, 6 October 1857). The Duke himself stands in the middle ground



Figure 8. Emancipation bas-relief designed by John Hogan.



Figure 9. Detail from Emancipation bas-relief. The Duke stands in the centre, Britannia kneels on his right and Hibernia at his left.

between the allegorical figures of Hibernia and Britannia (Figure 9), a point of negotiation between British and Irish national identities, both one and the other. According to Krishan Kumar (2003, p. 134), ‘Britannia symbolized not just the unity of Britain but also recalled the glories of classical Greece and Rome, with their associations of liberty, maritime supremacy, and imperial destiny’. This celebration of Emancipation also served to legitimise the monument for the broader Irish Catholic populace, as did Daniel O’Connell’s involvement in raising the funds that sponsored it.

But the military allusions, though tempered by the addition of other layers of meaning and identity, had not vanished either. Kirk (Figure 10) and Farrell’s (Figure 11) bas-reliefs depict military scenes, and all three reliefs themselves were cast from cannon captured by



Figure 10. Siege of Seringapatam bas-relief, designed by Joseph R. Kirk.



Figure 11. Waterloo bas-relief, designed by Thomas Farrell.

the Empire in battle, which Carlisle procured from the Royal Arsenal at Woolwich via a grant from the British Government (NLI, Ms. 7778, Doc. 131, Hawes to Larcom, 5 March 1858). Thus the monumental space that was created still spoke of the power and greatness of Britain and her Empire, but also forged links between them and Ireland through the figure of the Duke.

On 18 June 1861, 44 years to the day after the laying of the foundation stone, the monument was laid open to the public (NLI, Ms. 7778, Doc. 221, Larcom to Potter, 18 June 1861). Although an inauguration ceremony was intended to be held at a later date to celebrate the event (NLI, Ms. 7778, Doc. 221), no record of such a ceremony has been uncovered. It now stood complete to carry down its message to subsequent generations.

Trim

The historic town of Trim, County Meath, is the location of a second Irish monument to the memory of the Duke. Situated in the province of Leinster, it encompassed a population of 3282 living in about 570 houses around the year 1837 (Lewis 1837b). As previously noted, Wellington himself had a number of personal connections with the town. The site chosen for the monument lay to the south of the town at a crossroads with Dublin Gate Street (Figure 12). A 1909 Ordnance Survey map of the area names the road leading away from the monument to the west as Wellington Place, thereby adding to the commemorative space being created (Ordnance Survey 1909–1911). An infantry barracks lay immediately to the south and was designed to accommodate three officers and 80 non-commissioned officers and privates (Lewis 1837b). A new county gaol, built in 1834 to the east of the site, contributed further to the authoritarian tone of the monument's environs (Lewis 1837b). A building adjacent to the Charter School is named Mornington House on the 1909 map of the area and may have been one of the houses in which Wellington resided for a time during the early part of his career (Ordnance Survey 1909–1911, French 1992). It is certainly named in honour of his family, his father having been created the first Earl of Mornington.

Standing at 75 feet high (French 1992), the monument comprises a Corinthian style pillar surmounted by a statue of the Duke (Figure 13). The column was designed by James Bell (NLI, Joly Collection 12–13, p. 316), a local architect from Navangate, which was situated just on the outskirts of the town in 1837 (Figure 12) (French 1992). The effigy of the Duke (Figure 14) was carved by Thomas Kirk, a Cork-born sculptor of Scottish descent (Strickland 1913, p. 587). A short inscription in raised lettering adorns the base. It reads:

THIS COLUMN
 ERECTED IN THE YEAR
 MDCCCXVII
 IN HONOUR
 OF THE ILLUSTRIOUS
 DUKE OF WELLINGTON
 BY THE GRATEFUL CONTRIBUTIONS
 OF THE COUNTY MEATH



Figure 12. Map showing the Wellington Pillar in Trim. Adapted from Ordnance Survey Map, Meath, sheet 36, 1:10,560, surveyed 1836, published 1837. Reproduced with the permission of the Board of Trinity College Dublin.



Figure 13. The Wellington Column as viewed from Emmet Street (formerly Dublin Gate Street).

No one act of Wellington's is singled out for praise in particular, rather the monument vindicates his personality as a whole, implying that all he has stood for thus far in his life should be held up in esteem. By 1817, the key attributes of his identity would have been his military and political services in advancing the British Empire, and, from a local perspective, his position as a member of the Protestant Ascendancy class, and the leading roles he played in local politics and administration as both a Burgess on Trim Corporation and MP for Trim, roles that came about as a consequence of his privileged social position. Therefore, the implication intended by the monument may be that all the people of Meath (and even all Irishmen) should follow Wellington's example in embracing Britain and the Empire and respect the privileged position of the Protestant Ascendancy class.



Figure 14. Statue of Wellington atop column, by Thomas Kirk.

A ceremony was held on 7 August 1817 to mark the occasion of the laying of the foundation stone for the column. According to the *Clonmel Advertiser* (13 August 1817),

Lord Bective, accompanied by members of the Nobility and Gentry, assembled at the Assizes, laid the first stone of the very beautiful Corinthian Pillar, now erecting in honour of our countryman- the Duke of Wellington.

His Lordship made a very animated and appropriate speech on the occasion- paid a just tribute to the character of that illustrious hero, which was highly gratifying to the assemblage, who gave three most hearty cheers.

Lord Bective was the third Earl of Bective. He was an influential figure both in the Meath locality and on a national scale. He served as MP for the County of Meath from his election in 1812 until his succession to the Marquisate of Headfort in 1829 (*Freeman's*

Journal, 17 October 1812, 27 October 1812, 20 June 1818, 22 December 1829). Unlike the man whom he sought to commemorate, however, he was a member of the Whig Party (Mosley 1999, p. 1362). He held some military connections also, taking over his father's position as Colonel of the Meath Militia in 1825 (*Freeman's Journal*, 6 May 1825). He was a Protestant, but an open supporter of Catholic Emancipation, signing a formal declaration calling for the introduction of legislation on the subject in 1828 (*Freeman's Journal*, 1 October 1828). Following the achievement of that goal, he became actively involved in the 1829 post-Emancipation efforts to raise a statue to the Duke (*Freeman's Journal*, 11 May 1829), the funds from which were subsequently used to erect the civil and religious bas-relief on the Phoenix Park testimonial. Thus the histories of the two monuments are interwoven through the figure of Bective. In a further interesting dimension, his family were closely connected to William Barker, instigator of the Grange Wellington monument, thus forming a link between all three Irish Wellington commemoration projects.

At the time of the statue's foundation laying ceremony, the Assizes usually took place twice yearly in Trim. The Assizes were sessions of the local courts of criminal trial held on a regular basis in every county around Ireland except for Dublin, which had its own court system. According to Connolly (2002, p. 32), 'court business was accompanied by a great deal of the work of local government, managed by county grand juries'. The grand juries were undemocratic, élitist bodies composed of leading landowners (many of whom would have been of the Ascendancy) who were selected by the high sheriff of the county (who was in turn appointed by the Lord Lieutenant, although in practice he was much influenced by local or national political magnates in his choice) (McCracken 1986). Lord Bective was a member of the Grand Jury of Meath throughout 1817 (NLI, Pos. 4692).

The exact source of the monument's funding is unclear. It seems the project was not a local government undertaking as the Grand Jury Presentment Books for the County of Meath make no mention of funds being allocated for the purpose of erecting a memorial to Wellington for the period Lent 1812 up to summer 1819 (NAI, 1C 33 30, 1C 33 31). The County Query Book is also silent on the matter for the period summer 1816 until summer 1819 (NAI, 1C 33 72). An obvious alternative to officially sanctioned grand jury funding would have been the circulation of a subscription list, perhaps under the direction of a committee formed for the purpose of erecting the column. However, no records or explicit evidence of any such committee or subscription list have been uncovered, although the Halls' survey of Ireland published in 1842 describes the monument as being 'erected by subscription in 1817' (Hall 1842, p. 374).

The classical style of the monument serves to mythologise or heroify the figure of the Duke through its allusions to ancient Greek or Roman times (Corinthian being both a Greek and Roman order of architecture) (Curl 2006). Wellington is 'illustrious' and remote, elevated high above the streetscape and the houses of the poor that once surrounded the monument at its location on what was, during the nineteenth century, the Fair Green (*The Illustrated London News*, 7 May 1870, French 1992). The iron railing that encircles the base of the monument, present from at least 1870 and possibly since the time of the monument's erection, while serving the practical function of protecting the monument from damage, may also be seen in a symbolic sense as a further, physical barrier between the monument and the common people who might seek to interact with it (Figure 15).

Interestingly, the message of British and imperial power that could be associated with such a monument is not quite as overt as in the case of Grange or Phoenix Park. There are no direct references to Wellington's military successes or to Britain or the Empire in the



Figure 15. A sketch of the pig fair at Trim. The Wellington Column can be seen in the right of the picture. Its inscription reads as it does today, and there is no sign of a Crimean gun in the vicinity of the monument. From *The Illustrated London News*, 7 May 1870. Reproduced with the permission of the Board of Trinity College Dublin.

inscription. The figure of Wellington in military uniform (*The Illustrated London News*, 7 May 1870) is far from the sight of the spectator on the top of the column. An attempt to strengthen the military associations during 1857 to 1858 was to end in failure. G.A. Pollock of Oatland, Navan, wrote to the Town Corporation on 3 October 1857 to suggest that a Crimean War Trophy be procured to be placed at the base of the column (NLI, Ms. 5819, G.A. Pollock to Commissioners, 3 October 1857, p. 435). Application was subsequently made to the War Office in London, and a cannon used in the Crimean War was dispatched to Dublin on 3 February 1858 (NLI, Ms. 5819, Principal Military Storekeeper, Woolwich to Chairman of the Town Commissioners, Trim, 3 February 1858, pp. 447–448). From there it was due to be transported to Trim, but its proposed site appears to have altered. Today, it stands outside Trim Castle, while pictures of the monument in the years following 1858 (Figures 15 and 16) show no sign of its presence at its intended location at the foot of the column. Clearly, this attempt to add a more forceful message of British and imperial might to the layers of meaning attached to the monumental space was abandoned or rejected.

Perhaps the political climate of rising nationalism influenced this decision. A reporter for *The Illustrated London News* certainly perceived a sense of discontent among the people of Trim in 1870. Reporting on the pig fair, he observed that: ‘The Irish peasantry, eaten up, as they evidently are, with a thorough hatred of England and everything English, while guardedly polite to the ‘Saxon’ stranger who is brought into contact with them, appear to have become the most melancholy of mortals’ (*The Illustrated London News*, 7 May 1870). The failure of the Crimean Trophy may reflect a discourse of resistance being cultivated within the monumental space of the ‘other’. Certainly, the



Figure 16. Photograph of Trim Wellington Pillar, taken c.1865–1914. Noel E. French (1992, p. 24) dates this photograph to ‘about 1900’. Reproduced courtesy of the National Library of Ireland (NLI, L_ROY_07695).

potential of the Trim monument to be perceived as a contested space by the nineteenth-century inhabitants of the town, and of Ireland more generally, is clear.

Grange

The final monument to the memory of Sir Arthur Wellesley in Ireland is the most inaccessible of the three. It is situated in County Tipperary, but lies just over a quarter of a mile from the border with County Kilkenny, a line which also marks the boundary between the provinces of Munster and Leinster. The nearest site of habitation is the tiny village of Grange, located about a mile from the site of the monument. In 1840, the two main features of that settlement were a constabulary and the ruins of Grange Castle. More broadly, the monument was built on the Kilcooly Estate, which at the time of its erection was the property of Sir William Barker, Baronet. His seat of residence was Kilcooly Abbey and around 1837, his lands covered an area in excess of 1600 statute acres (Lewis 1837b). The monument was located on the eastern edge of the estate and within two miles of Barker’s home (Figure 17).

On a more localised level, it stands on a hilltop in the middle of what is now a forest, a circle of trees obscuring it from the road below. Today, the path that leads to it is signposted, but before this, a prior knowledge of its existence and location would have been a requirement for its discovery. It may not always have been so secluded, however, as writing in 1837, Samuel Lewis (1837b, p. 71) described it as ‘a tower built to commemorate the battle of Waterloo, which, being on a high hill, serves as an excellent landmark’, perhaps suggesting that the covering of trees did not conceal it to such a great extent at that time.

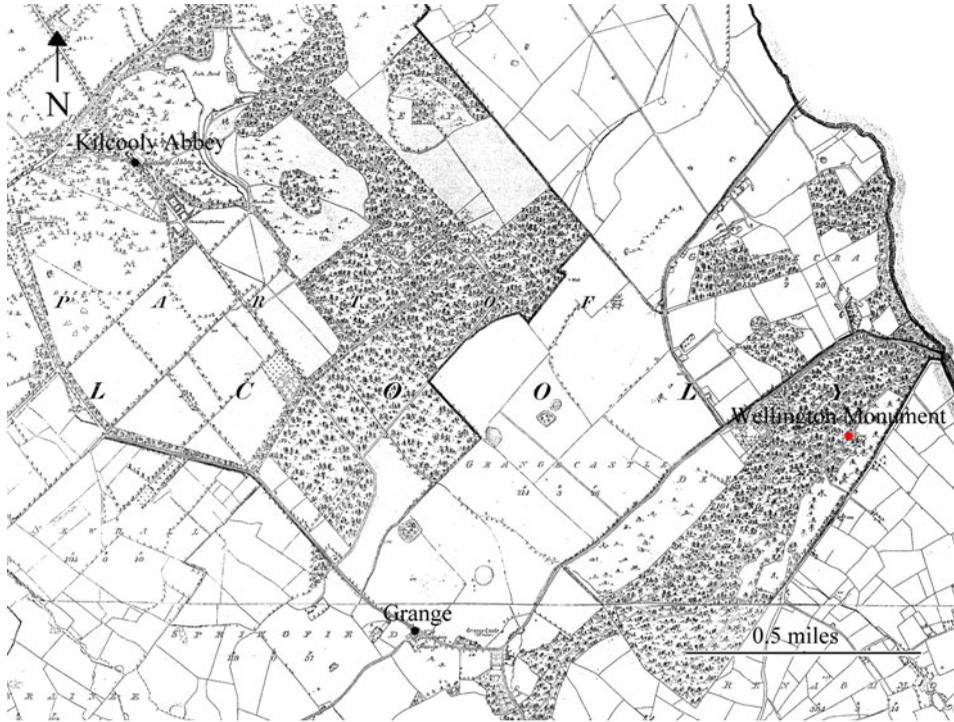


Figure 17. Map of the Wellington Monument and its surrounds. Adapted from Ordnance Survey Maps, *Tipperary*, sheet 43 and sheet 49, 1:10,560, surveyed 1840, published 1843. Reproduced with the permission of the Board of Trinity College Dublin.

Measuring about 40 feet in height, the design of the monument is somewhat unusual (Figures 18 and 19). The front two walls give it a tower-like appearance, but this illusion is destroyed when viewed from the rear. Here a third, shorter wall acts as a bracing wall for the front two. The front walls are adorned with blind windows. Nearer the top, the walls are inlaid with several cross-shaped indentations; two each on the outward facing sides and one each on the reverse sides, making for a total of six.

The unusual design is consistent with the propensity among eighteenth- and nineteenth-century landowners for erecting follies and garden buildings. The practice originated in England and quickly spread to Ireland. They were largely constructed for aesthetic reasons, although they often fulfilled some other function also. According to James Howley (1993, p. 3), ‘these buildings were the privilege of wealth ... One needed land to build on, and sufficient time and money to dispense on projects which, even if functional, were seldom essential’. As such, they allude to a system of class distinction and socio-economic differentiation. The English origins of the form suggest a privileging of an English ideal in the landscape.

A plaque with an inscription is set into one of the blind windows. It reads:

THIS BUILDING
was Erected by
SIR WILLIAM BARKER BAR.
in the year of our Lord
1817



Figure 18. Grange monument, front view.

in the 80th Year of his Age
and dedicated
To His GRACE
THE DUKE OF WELLINGTON
in Commemoration of his Glorious Victory
over the FRENCH at WATERLOO
on June the 18th An. Domi.
1815

As the inscription tells us, the monument was instigated and erected by Sir William Barker. Barker was a member of the Protestant Ascendancy class. He greatly increased the Protestant population of the area by advertising for tenants of that denomination to take up residence on his estate during 1772. One of the surviving leases drawn up for this Protestant colony indicates that tenants were assigned the land on condition that they not



Figure 19. Grange monument, rear view.

relet it to a Roman Catholic or allow any Roman Catholics to graze animals on it. (Neely 1983, pp. 53–56). Barker also donated £413 10s 9d towards the construction of a new rectory in his parish and displayed a keen interest in plans to enlarge or rebuild his parish church, but died before this undertaking could be carried out (TCML, BPEP, P2/5/39, anon. to C.B. Ponsonby-Barker, 4 February 1819, Neely 1983, p. 82).

Barker's choice of Wellington as the subject through which to convey his message may also have been due to personal motivations. His nephew and heir Chambre Ponsonby-Barker (whom he raised from infancy as a son) (TCML, BPEP, P3/1/26, Mary Ponsonby to Chambre B. Ponsonby-Barker, [no date]) was second cousin once removed of both Sir William Ponsonby, who died fighting at Waterloo, and Colonel (later Major General) Sir Frederick Cavendish Ponsonby, who also fought at Waterloo and was personally acquainted with the Duke (Burke and Burke 1846, p. 54, Burke 1883, p. 617, Cokayne 1912, pp. 169–174, Lee 1909, pp. 80–91). In the wake of that battle, the colonel was gravely wounded, but recovered miraculously, after which Longford (1975, p. 23)

tells us that ‘the Duke felt bound to keep a friendly eye on him for the rest of his life, which included lending him a large sum of money’. Barker’s own military associations (he was colonel of the Kilcooley True Blues Volunteer Company) (Neely 1983) and Chambre’s time in the army (he rose to the rank of captain during his service) (TCML, BPEP, P3/2/17, William Barker to Chambre B. Ponsonby-Barker, c. 1783, P3/2/18, William Barker to Chambre B. Ponsonby-Barker, c. 1784, P2/5/77, William Despard to Chambre B. Ponsonby-Barker, c. 1798) may also have encouraged Barker’s affinity with Wellington.

A plaque beside the monument pins down its exact date of erection to August 1817, so Barker may have been influenced by the erection of the Trim and Phoenix Park memorials in his choice of a monument to Wellington as the means by which he would project his message onto the landscape. Further interlinkages between the three monuments are apparent. Barker was a longtime friend of the first Earl of Bective (TCML, BPEP, P3/2/1, William Barker to Chambre B. Ponsonby-Barker, 10 January 1770), Chambre having subsequently married Bective’s daughter in 1791 (Mosley 1999, pp. 264, 1361–1362). Even after the first Earl’s death in 1795, Barker’s personal correspondence indicates that he was still on friendly terms with his son the second Earl of Bective at the start of 1817 (who by that time had been elevated to the rank of Marquis of Headfort) (TCML, BPEP, P1/11/55, Headfort to Sir William Barker, 18 February 1817). He was a member of the Dublin Society during 1815 when the proposed designs for the Wellington Testimonial were displayed in the Dublin Society’s rooms on Hawkin’s Street (Stewart 1815, p. 195). Finally, George Ponsonby, a second cousin of Chambre’s, was one of the Committee of Managers formed on 20 July 1813 to organise the erection of the Testimonial (Burke 1883, p. 617, Mosley 1999, p. 264, NLI, Ms. 7778, Doc. 3, p. 3). Exposure to the Trim and Phoenix Park projects via these sources may have encouraged Barker to emulate their endeavours in his own landscape.

The site of the monument also bears some consideration. There was much unrest in that part of Tipperary leading up to the time of construction. Peter Walsh (Barker’s agent) wrote to Barker at the end of 1810 of the strife in the area, saying: ‘there are new atrocities every week- almost every night in some parts of our disturbed counties. The villains are not very sparing of their gun powder for we hear several shots almost every night- for the purpose I suppose of increasing their system of terror’ (TCML, BPEP, P2/3/9, Peter Walsh to Sir William Barker, 27 December 1810). The years 1814 and 1815 brought further reports of violence, which culminated in the area being put under military law to restore order in 1815. Yet despite this, Barker’s Protestant tenants were to remain particular targets for attack on and off throughout the rest of the century. (Neely 1983, pp. 92–95). Ballingarry, a few miles south of where the monument lies, was even the scene of an abortive Young Irelander rising on 29 July 1848. With the monument occupying an elevated site not far from Barker’s residence, its quest to appropriate the contested space (of the estate, the county and the country in general) is clear. According to Lefebvre (1991, p. 225 cited in Hershkovitz 1993, p. 398) monumental spaces are ‘social condensers’: ‘each monumental space becomes the metaphorical and quasi-metaphysical underpinning of a society’. Through this monument, it can be argued that Barker sought to strengthen his position, and that of his class and his religion, in the minds of the people who observed it; to ingrain in their subconscious an acceptance of their values and their dominance.

Conclusion

According to Yvonne Whelan (2003, p. 12), ‘the thrust of the new cultural geography has been to show how landscape forms an integral, dynamic part of social, cultural and political systems’. Monuments are one facet of the landscape through which this maxim may be illustrated. Power, memory, identity and heritage are key considerations when forming an interpretation of the landscape. Élite groups or individuals may manipulate the symbolic landscape in order to evoke certain memories of the past. These memories promote their ideologies and cultivate identities that legitimate their hold on power. The landscape may also be employed by subversive groups to challenge these dominant memories and identities, thus creating a landscape of contested space and competing ideologies. Time and context are of vital importance as changing political, social, cultural and economic factors have a crucial bearing on how the landscape is shaped and how people have reacted to the messages instilled in it. These factors have all been pertinent to the consideration of the role played by Wellington monuments in Ireland’s symbolic landscape(s).

The three monuments dedicated to the Duke of Wellington in Ireland display a certain unity of themes reflected in the closeness of their origins. All three were initiated within a narrow time bracket towards the end of, or just after, the Napoleonic Wars. As such, they were all most likely undertaken at least partly in response to Wellington’s role in the campaign. This was also just over a decade after the passing of the Act ordaining Ireland’s official union with Britain. Thus the monumental drive came at a key period in the definition of the country’s relationship with the British state and the potential formation of a British identity. Overall, a process of identity creation is apparent, whether consciously or unconsciously intended, though the care with which aspects such as the Phoenix Park inscription, its bas-relief subjects and Irish artists were selected at times clearly suggests the former. The discourse and symbols surrounding the three monuments’ erection and imbued in their very forms convey Britishness. Ireland’s place in the British state as conveyed by the monuments is somewhat unclear, however. At times, their subtexts appear to normalise the conception of Ireland as a partner in the Union and the Empire, though on occasion it may be perceived that England is the dominant partner in this union. At other times, allusions to the power and might of Britain and her Empire in the monuments’ forms seem to add an almost threatening dimension to their messages, perhaps implying that those who decided not to embrace Britain and the Empire would face a formidable enemy. Such complex messages would appear to be derived from Ireland’s new political status in the wake of the Union, a Union which Julian Hoppit (2003, p. 11) has described as ‘conditional and uncertain’, while Alvin Jackson (2004, p. 124) portrays the unique governing structures established by the British in Ireland in the wake of the Union as being ‘partly ... colonial and partly ... metropolitan’.

Yet overall, these monuments are clearly the products of a new phase in Irish history. They display distinct thematic shifts from earlier eighteenth-century Irish monuments celebrating the defeat of ‘popery’ and Jacobism (see Hill 1998) towards more moderate and unifying views. In their celebration of a heroic Irish figure, they may also perhaps be viewed as early precursors to a later wave of Irish nationalist monuments. Despite the physical distance between the sites of the monuments, their stories and histories are interlinked: they form in many respects what could be described as a unified symbolic landscape. This raises many interesting questions regarding the role, importance and impact of space in creating and forming an interpretation of a symbolic landscape. Such

questions would appear particularly pertinent in exploring the connection between these Irish Wellington monuments and other Wellington commemorations elsewhere. Stedman (2012) provides a starting point for such discussions, considering Scottish and Welsh Wellington monuments alongside the Irish examples of the form.

The Irish monuments may also be viewed as reflections of the unique identity of the Protestant Ascendancy class, one that embraced both British and Irish elements. Kumar (2003) is among those who propose that while retaining a distinctly Irish flavour to its identity, the Ascendancy also adopted a British national identity. The evidence of the cultural landscape of the Wellington monuments appears to support this claim. Smith (1991, p. 14) lists the fundamental features of national identity as: 'an historic territory, or homeland; common myths and historical memories; a common mass public culture; common legal rights and duties for all members [and] a common economy with territorial mobility for members'. From the Ascendancy's perspective, the Union with Britain held all these attributes (to a greater or lesser extent). It has been illustrated that the Ascendancy was a key agent in proposing the monuments, shaping their appearance and funding their erection. The melding of Britain, Ireland and the Empire and its presentation as a united front with a common fate in the proposal for the Phoenix Park monument's erection (to take but one example) suggests that the Ascendancy identified with Britain, Ireland and the Empire together as its historic territory or homeland. The figure of Wellington (a member of the Ascendancy) linked it with the historical memories of the Empire's military campaigns and with the myth of the Empire's civilising mission. Finally, the Protestant religion was one major element of mass public culture that it shared with mainland Britain and undertones of this religious affiliation may be detectable at the Grange monument in particular.

The monuments may also be seen as reflective of Irish Roman Catholics' interaction with the concept of a British identity and their relationship with Britain and the Empire in general. For the most part, it seems that Irish Catholics were largely absent from influential roles in shaping the symbolic landscapes of the Wellington monuments, a fact that mirrored their marginal position in British life where they faced discrimination and political exclusion up to and even beyond the Catholic Relief Act of 1829. The one major exception to this was the Catholic involvement in instigating a proposal and raising funds for a monument to Wellington in the wake of Catholic Emancipation, funds that were later to be employed to insert the Emancipation bas-relief into the base of the Phoenix Park monument. Just as Catholics had something to add to this landscape of British and imperial unity, so too did they contribute strongly to British imperial endeavours, as attested by such authors as Bayly (1989) and Kenny (2004). Yet the very necessity of including an Emancipation bas-relief on the monument, of celebrating Catholics attaining what were basic civil rights, highlights the structural flaws in the relationship between Britain and Irish Catholics. As outlined by Colley (1992), British national identity had a strong basis in the shared Protestant religion, which also extended to its defining itself in opposition to a threatening Catholic 'other'. Their religion meant that Irish Catholics shared in a different mass culture and did not enjoy the 'common legal rights and duties' that Smith (1991, p. 14) perceived as pivotal to a national identity. These key barriers were crucial reasons behind the failure of many Irish Catholics to develop a strong sense of British national identity, despite close and advantageous engagements with British interests on some fronts, particularly in the imperial mission.

At the centre of the process of monumental commemoration and identity formation lay the heroic, iconic figure of Wellington. Instantly recognisable to the people of nineteenth-century Ireland, Britain and the Empire, his fame and range of associations

were such that a broad range of identities could be conveyed and contested through a commemoration of his personality. Though not universally acclaimed, there was something in his character or achievements that almost every citizen of nineteenth-century Ireland could find to approve, admire or respect. Perhaps no other figure could have conveyed Britishness through the monumental landscape in a manner potentially palatable to such a wide range of people.

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