

1995

A Sea - Grey House, the History of Renvyle House

Guy St. John Williams

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*a
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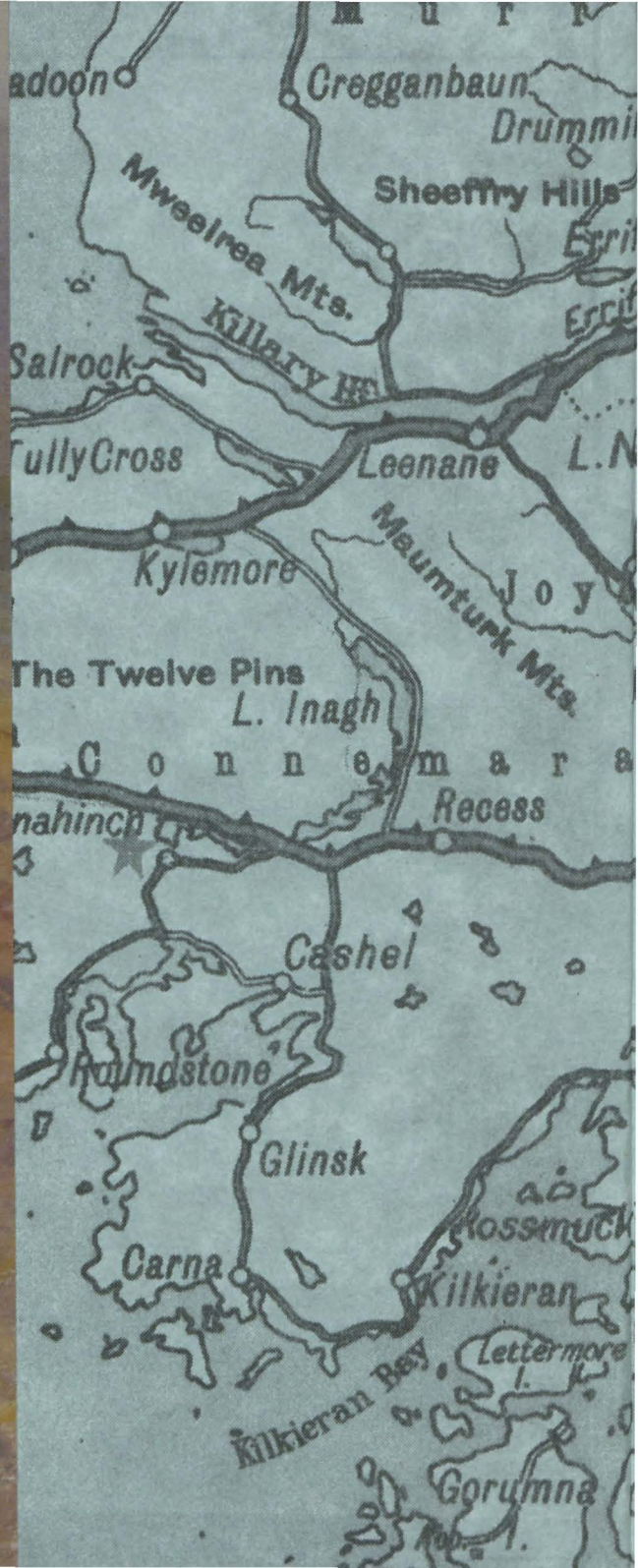
the history of renvyle house

Guy St. John Williams

On the verge of Ireland's West coast, overlooking on one side a small peaceful lake, and on another the vast wild Atlantic, stands a long, low, grey house. Over several centuries it has been built, pulled down, rebuilt, burnt to ashes and rebuilt once again. Its often turbulent history has mirrored the vicissitudes of the troubled history of Ireland, but its most precious asset has been its resilience, its capacity to survive.

Renvyle House has been the home of the chieftains of one of the oldest and most powerful Gaelic clans in Connacht. It has been the seat of an early nineteenth century landowner and littérateur. It has been a country house hotel, run by a formidable Victorian widow. It has played host to celebrated literary travellers of varying degrees of eccentricity, who have left their impressions for posterity.

It has been the country residence of a famous Dublin poet, wit, statesman and surgeon. It has been a focus for the Irish Literary Renaissance of the early 20th century, a meeting place for the poets and writers who helped to create the new Irish Free State. It has been the haunt of a resentful family ghost, who stalked its corridors and moaned about its chimneys. It has been the scene of attempts to exorcise that ghost, sometimes with unforeseen results. It has been a source of inspiration for painters, who have marvelled at the beauty of its landscape and captured it immortally on canvas. It has borne its share of trouble from the Famine, the Land League and the Civil War. It has been and is today, a successful modern hotel, retaining its own unique character and sense of history.



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Illustrations

a sea-grey house

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Guy St. John Williams

DIT Library Cathal Brugha Street

Renvyle House Hotel 1995

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