

# JAMESON FAMILY AND PORTMARNOCK

The long association between the Jameson family and Portmarnock begins when John Jameson III, the grandson of founder of the Jameson Distillery at Bow Street, moved to St. Marnocks in 1847. He and his wife Anne had 5 children, the youngest of whom, Willie, was born in the house in 1851.

He brought with him two magnificent portraits by the Scottish artist Sir Henry Raeburn of his grandparents, John and Margaret Jameson, these portraits are now on display at the National Gallery of Ireland, while reproductions hang in the hotel bar.

The move to what was then the countryside was made possible by the advent of the railway, which meant John could travel easily into the centre of Dublin where he oversaw all operations at the Distillery. John died in 1881 when the house was inherited by his eldest son John Jameson IV. In 1895 he began rebuilding it to the design by Sir Robert Stodart at a cost of £12,000. Gate Lodges and other buildings were added in 1896 at an additional cost of £2,000. At that point it had 10 bedrooms. John also took the opportunity to have the Jameson family crest, a ship in full sail and the motto 'Sine Metu', Latin for 'Without Fear' incorporated into the building decoration. Part of the crest can still be seen today on the exterior wall. Today every bottle of Jameson produced carries the same motto 'Sine Metu'.

John, who became president of the local Golf Club at Portmarnock, along with being patron of the local school, was married twice, in 1870 to Elizabeth Collins and 2ndly to Mary Elizabeth De Pree, but had no children, and on his death in 1920 the house was left to his brother Willie Jameson (1851 -1939).

He and his first wife Henrietta Haig (d. 1928), lived between St. Marnocks, England and the Continent. Henrietta was a famous society hostess and St Marnocks would have been the scene for many convivial parties and gatherings. Willie was also keenly interested in horse breeding and kept extensive stables at the house. His horse, Come Away, won the Grand National Steeple Chase in 1891.

As well as being a socialite and a sporting man, Willie was one of Europe's leading yachtsmen during the golden age of yachting, 1880 -1890. Friend to the Prince of Wales, later Edward VII, Willie persuaded him to build a royal racing yacht to stimulate interest in big class racing, and the Britannia was built to Willie's specifications. Gifted with a sparkling wit and quick tongue, Willie became close friends with the British Royal Family and frequently dined on the Royal Yacht as guests of the King, and later his son George V. In 1907, King Edward VII, along with his wife, Queen Alexandra visited Portmarnock as guests of the Jameson's.

After the death of his first wife Willie married again in 1931 to the Dublin artist Flora Mitchell and St. Marnocks became a regular visiting spot for Dublin's artistic community, Walter Osbourne the painter was a frequent visitor to Portmarnock where he came in the summer months to paint. The painting by Osbourne 'The Ward Hunt', now in the National Gallery of Ireland, features Willie Jameson as one of the hunting figures.

After Willie's death Flora sold the house in 1945, and the formal link between the Jameson's and Portmarnock ended.