

***The Gardiner Family:
Developers of North
Georgian Dublin***

**Teatime Talk
14 Henrietta Street
9 May 2024**

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Portion of Gardiner Estate, Dublin (Tailte Éireann/GeoHive)

**Henrietta Street, with
King's Inns at top of
street**

**Dublin's first great
Georgian street, built by
Luke Gardiner the first,
neglected for many years
but now being restored.**



HENRIETTA STREET CONSERVATION PLAN

Plean Caomhantais Shráid Henrietta

AN ACTION OF THE DUBLIN CITY HERITAGE PLAN
Gníomh de chuid Plean Oidhreachta Chathair Bhaile Átha Cliath

Heritage Council, Dublin City
Council, *Henrietta Street
Conservation Plan*



North Great George's Street

**A successfully conserved
Georgian street, where resides
Senator David Norris.**



**Blessington House, the
Gardiner town house,
10 Henrietta Street**

**Built by Luke Gardiner
the first as his residence
on the street he was
developing. Now part of
the Convent of the
Daughters of Charity,
who provide community
services.**



**Blue Room, 10 Henrietta
Street (Dublin Civic
Trust)**



Staircase, 10 Henrietta Street (Dublin Civic Trust)

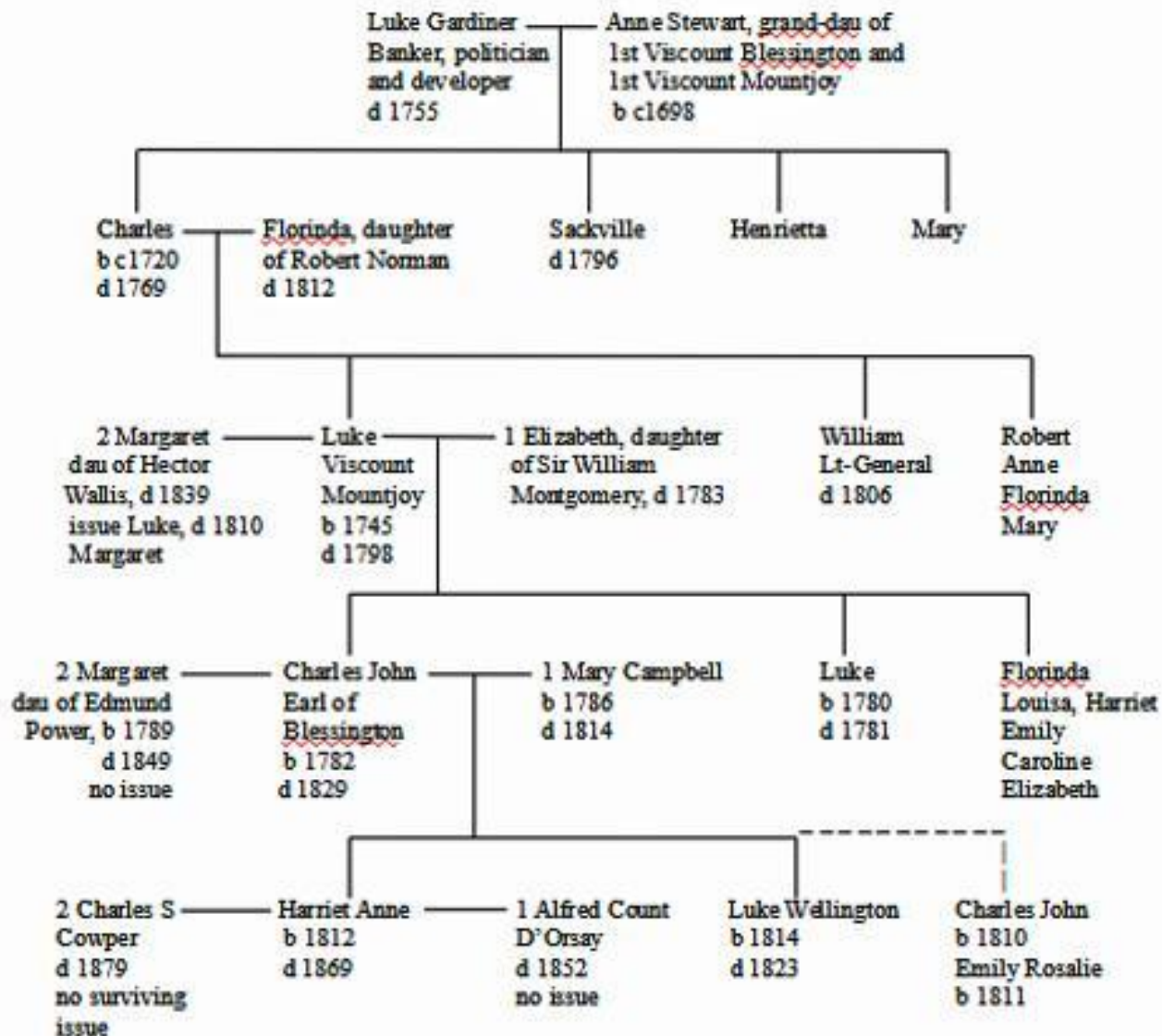


14 Henrietta Street, house of General Richard, Viscount Molesworth, and several other notables

Acquired by Dublin City Council and now a Museum illustrating the history 'from Georgian townhouse to tenement dwelling' (open Wednesday-Sunday).



Gardiner Pedigree



**Luke Gardiner the Elder,
d 1755 (British Museum)**

Of obscure origin, possibly born in Co Kilkenny, started life as a servant and worked his way up to high state offices, banking and property development. Married Anne Stewart, niece of 2nd Viscount Mountjoy. A friend of Henrietta Crofts, who married the Duke of Bolton, and after whom Anthony Malcomson states Henrietta Street is most likely to have been named.



PREMOGATIVE
WILL OF LUKE
GARDINER 1755
NAI T. 13, 251

Extracted from the Registry of Her Majesty's
Court of Exchequer in Ireland.

I The Right Honorable Luke Gardiner of the City of Dublin Esq^r
being Sound of mind and Memory, Do make this my last Will and Testament in manner
following hereby revoking all other Wills by me made and ~~First~~ it is my Will that
my just Debts and funeral Expences be paid with all Convenient speed after my
decease and I Order that I may be buried in the most private manner and that the Exp^{ts}
of my funeral may not Exceed £50 I Devise all my manors Castles Lordships, Town
Sunds Tenements and Hereditaments whatsoever whereof or whereunto I am or shall be any
way seized Interested in or Entitled unto whether in possession Reversion remainder or Expectancy
and all other my real Estate of Intertance together with all my Leases for lives and lease
for years unto John Macarell and Henry Mitchell of the City of Dublin Esquires, the
heirs Executors administrators and assigns for Ever, To the uses intents and purposes and upon the
Trusts and subject of the powers provisions and Limitations hereafter Expressed Concerning
the same (that is to say) as to all my said manors, Castles Lordships Towns Towns and
Tenements and Hereditaments and all other my real Estate ^(save all & every my leases for lives) and
Houses in Great Britain Street Dublin) including Tenements at the Back of Georges Church
my Ground and Houses in Bolton Street Dublin) neither being part of the Lordships of Mary's
Abbey and Grange of Clonliffe) also all my Ground and Houses in Henrietta Street
and in Cavendish Street Dublin, all my Estates and Lands in the County of Wicklow

**Luke Gardiner,
Viscount Mountjoy,
1745-1798 (Sir Joshua
Reynolds, sold by
Christie's in 2010 for GBP
553,250)**

**Luke II Gardiner was a
grandson of Luke the first.
As Luke II's father Charles
was not dependable, Luke I
favoured his grandson over
his son. Luke II continued
building work in Dublin
and managed the estate
well. He was responsible
for acts relaxing Penal
Laws against Catholics in
1778 and 1782. Luke II
died in 1798 while fighting
against the United Irish
rebels at New Ross.**



Elizabeth Montgomery, wife of Luke Gardiner, Viscount Mountjoy (detail from Sir Joshua Reynolds, Three Ladies Adorning a Term of Hymen, Tate Gallery)

Elizabeth was born c1751, married Luke Gardiner 1773, had at least eight children and died 1783. Elizabeth and her sisters Barbara and Anne were noted society beauties. Elizabeth was also a talented amateur actress and her husband constructed a theatre in Mountjoy House in the Phoenix Park.



**Charles John Gardiner,
Earl of Blessington, 1782-1829
(National Portrait Gallery)**

Charles John succeeded his father Luke II as Viscount Mountjoy and was created Earl of Blessington in 1816. He had children before and after his marriage to Mary Campbell. Only a natural son, Charles John, survived and was not eligible to succeed his father. The Earl of Blessington married secondly Margaret or Marguerite Power.



**Margaret (Marguerite) Power,
Countess of Blessington,
1789-1849 (Wallace Collection)**

Margaret and her husband travelled in Britain and Europe, living a high life and causing the Gardiner Estate to become saddled with debt. Margaret had suffered abuse in her family life and during her first marriage. Margaret married Charles, Earl of Blessington, in 1818, but the couple had no children. After the Earl's death Margaret continued as a notable society hostess and developed a successful career as an author, her works including novels and *Conversations With Lord Byron*.



**Alfred, Count D'Orsay
d 1852 (National Portrait
Gallery)**

**A celebrated French dandy
who formed a scandalous
ménage à trois with the
Earl and Countess of
Blessington. The Earl's will
provided that his daughter
Harriet Anne should only
receive an inheritance if
she married d'Orsay.**



**Lady Harriet Anne
Gardiner, 1812-1869**
(Michael Sadleir,
*Blessington-D'Orsay: A
Masquerade*)

**Harriet Anne's marriage
to Count D'Orsay did not
last and she married
Charles Spencer Cowper
in 1877.**



Aftermath

The Blessington/Gardiner Estate was administered by trustees after the Earl of Blessington's death in 1829 and was further crippled by bitter litigation between heirs. Substantial parts of the estate were sold off in the 1840s and a portion was acquired in 1877 by Charles Spencer Cowper, husband of Harriet Anne Gardiner.

It is this unsettled later history which primarily accounts for the rundown appearance of the Gardiner Estate on the northside of Dublin City, as compared with the better managed Fitzwilliam/Pembroke Estate on the southside. Yet amongst the neglect and swathes of less impressive new buildings, there is still much attractive Georgian architecture to be seen on Dublin's northside. This is the best and most enduring legacy of the Gardiners.

Further Reading

Articles on Luke Gardiner the first, Luke Gardiner, Viscount Mountjoy, and Marguerite (Margaret) Gardiner, Countess of Blessington, are in *Dictionary of Irish Biography*, which is freely accessible online at <https://www.dib.ie>

I have an article ‘The Gardiner Family, Dublin, and Mountjoy, County Tyrone’, again freely accessible at <https://www.academia.edu/9307271> (or simply Google ‘gardiner family academia.edu’).

A very interesting recent publication is Melanie Hayes’s *The Best Address in Town* and other books dealing with Henrietta Street are on sale at the number 14 Museum.