



## HISTORY OF BALLYBEG

### BALLYBEG HOUSE

The history of Ballybeg House dates back to the early 1700s when Rev. Michael Symes, the first in a long line of Trinity College educated Clergymen, leased from the Earl of Marlton, the lands at Ballybeg and surrounding countryside.

During the 1798 Rebellion the original house was burned to the ground by the local insurgents. The occupancy of Ballybeg remained in the Symes Family until 1873 when on the death of Arthur Rowley Symes, a major George Newton became the new tenant of Ballybeg House under Lord Fitzwilliam of Coollattin Estate.

Major Newton became a well-known local magistrate and very active in the Anti Home Rule movement and had many a lively verbal exchange with the pro Parnellites of the day. He died on the 19th June 1910 and was succeeded in Ballybeg by his eldest son James Hibbert Newton. James Hibbert Newton lived a quiet and unassuming lifestyle at Ballybeg until poor circumstances forced him to sell Ballybeg House and farm to a well-known circus family called Fossetts.

The Fossett Family used the extensive farm buildings as their winter training quarters and being suspicious that the main residence was haunted, levelled it to the ground in 1948 and built in its place the colonial style residence that remains today.

Shortly after the completion of this residence Ballybeg was purchased by the present owner's mother, Molly (Ayers), who with her husband Pat O'Toole carefully and lovingly maintained and enhanced the surrounding gardens and arboretum. So today guests of Ballybeg will experience the unique atmosphere and charm of the delicately restored residence and the surrounding gardens with extensive parklands rising high above the 'Wicklow Way' to the Mottee Stone where majestic views of the surrounding countryside can be savoured and enjoyed.



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### JUDGE MARY O'TOOLE

Hanging proudly on the wall in the library room of Ballybeg House today are both the original portrait and seal of office presented to Judge Mary O'Toole when she became the first woman to be appointed a judge in the USA – representing Washington DC.

The late Mary O'Toole was born in 1884 and grew up on a small farm along with her twelve siblings close to Ballybeg House in County Wicklow. As a teenager she emigrated to America in order to seek out a better life for herself. And so she did...Mary rose to prominence when she became the first female judge in the United States. Not only that but she went on to officiate the first ever civil ceremony wedding! Coincidentally, Mary O'Toole is a grand aunt of the O'Toole family who owns Ballybeg House, where civil ceremonies are an altogether familiar sight in the Ayers ceremony room today.

The complete life story of this fascinating lady is quite remarkable and we look forward to regaling it all to you in Ballybeg House when you decide to come and stay for a while in this most beautiful and unspoilt part of the Emerald Isle!