

Star gazing in Sligo



‘A Gentleman’s Observatory’

Markree Castle

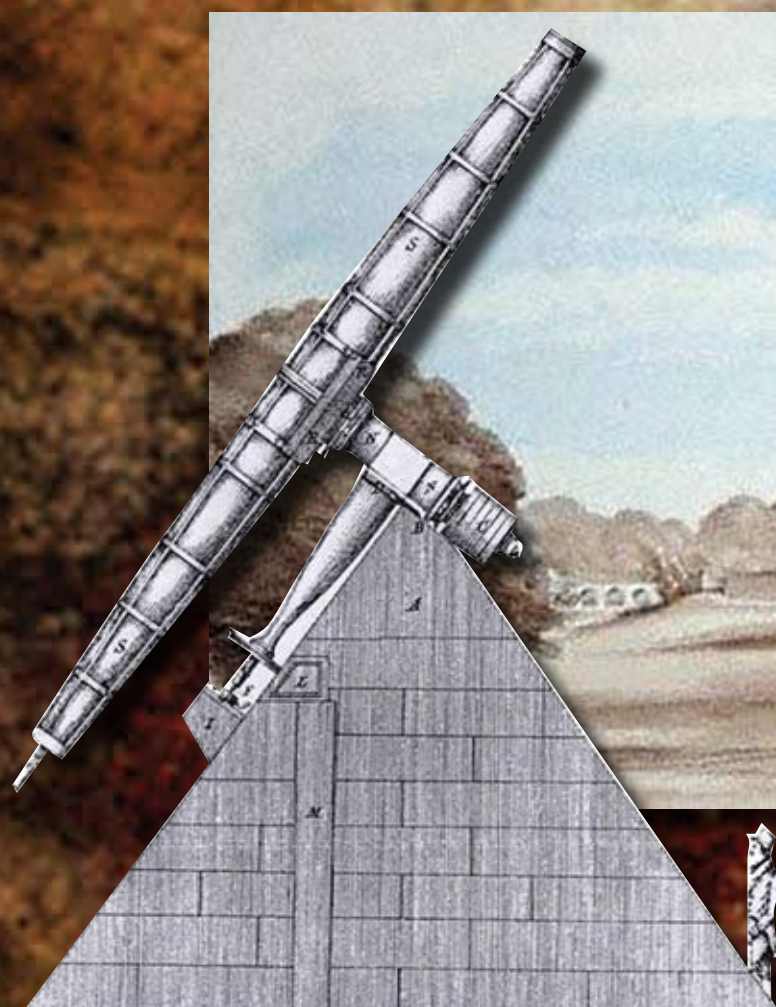
In the mid 1800s, Markree Castle was home to Edward J.Cooper – an enthusiastic (and wealthy) amateur astronomer, who set up and supported an observatory.

It was a type of ‘gentleman’s observatory’ - which wasn’t uncommon in Ireland in those days - there was also one in Birr and one in Armagh.

The Markree Observatory is significant because it was home to one of the largest telescopes in the world at the time - a 13.3 inch refracting telescope.

When Edward Cooper died in 1863, the observatory was left idle for a number of years, until his nephew Colonel Cooper reactivated the observations.

Colonel Coopers interests were mainly meteorological, and the observatory at Markree was later described in the monthly notices of the Royal Astronomical Society as “...one of the best meteorological stations in Ireland”.



The telescope mounted at Markree in 1834 by Thomas Grubb, who went on to make telescopes for the world’s greatest observatories. ©Sligo County Library

Telescope Holder, Markree Observatory. Note the size of the telescope holder compared to the car to the left of the picture. ©Buildings of Ireland.



Markree Castle. Drawn on the spot for Colonel Cooper by William Frederick Wakeman. ©Sligo County Library

‘Book post to Victoria Street’

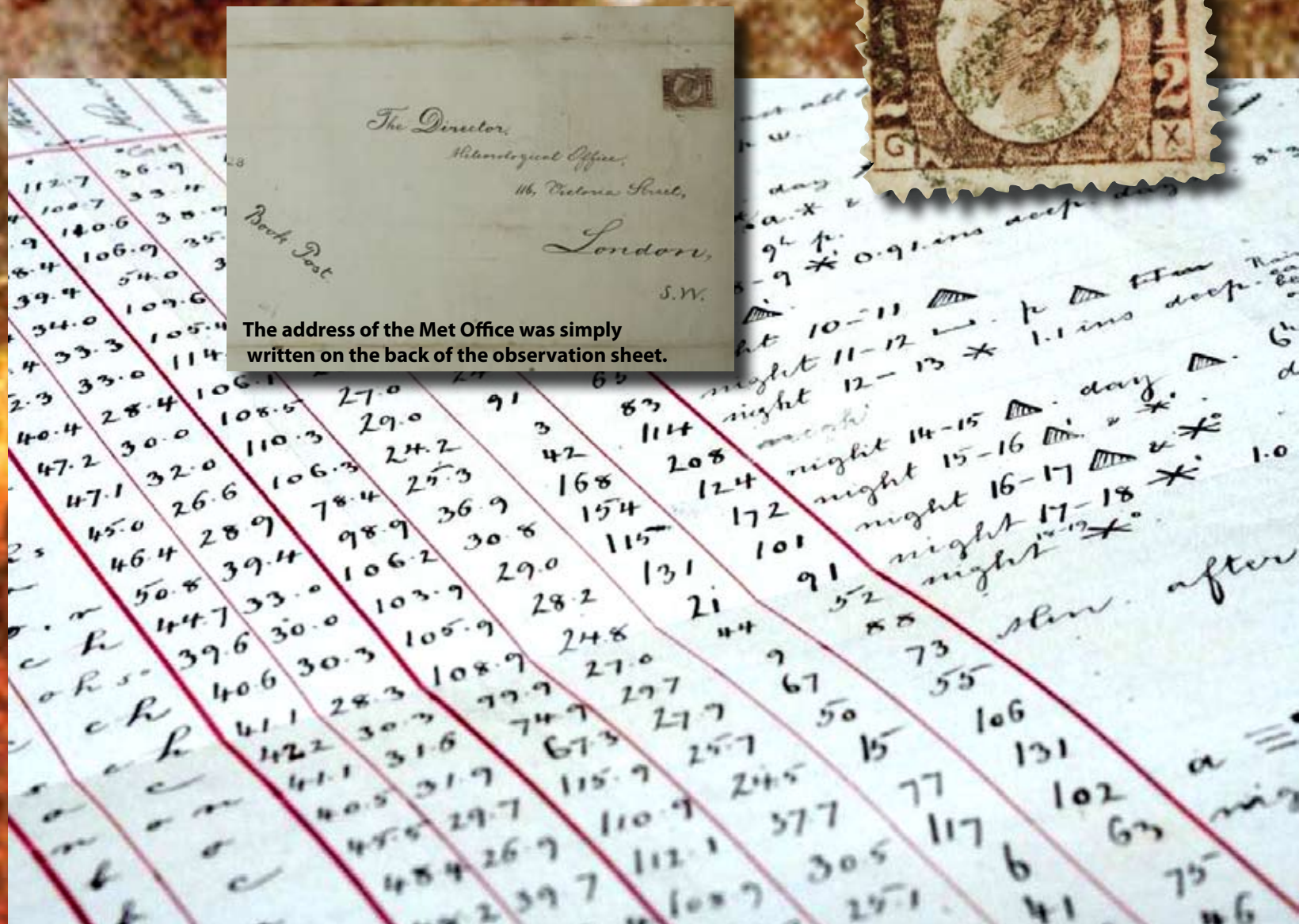
The Meteorological Records

The Met Éireann Library holds meteorological records from Markree Castle from 1869 to 1968.

The records give readings of atmospheric pressure, temperature, wind direction, wind speed, cloud cover and rainfall (among other data).

Observations were made at 9 a.m. and 9 p.m. every day. The records were handwritten on broadsheet-sized templates which were issued by the Meteorological Office in London.

At the end of each month, the pages were folded into the size of an envelope and posted to London. The picture to the right shows the postage stamps and the address of the Met Office, written on the reverse of the observation sheet. You can also see the creases where it was folded into the size of an envelope.



Meteorological Observations taken at Fort Longueville, Sligo											
Year	Month	Day	Time	Temp.	Wind	Cloud	Humidity	Pressure	Barometer	Barometer	Remarks
1869	Jan	1	9 a.m.	32.4	W	100	80	30.0	30.0	30.0	
1869	Jan	1	9 p.m.	32.4	W	100	80	30.0	30.0	30.0	
1869	Jan	2	9 a.m.	32.4	W	100	80	30.0	30.0	30.0	
1869	Jan	2	9 p.m.	32.4	W	100	80	30.0	30.0	30.0	
1869	Jan	3	9 a.m.	32.4	W	100	80	30.0	30.0	30.0	
1869	Jan	3	9 p.m.	32.4	W	100	80	30.0	30.0	30.0	
1869	Jan	4	9 a.m.	32.4	W	100	80	30.0	30.0	30.0	
1869	Jan	4	9 p.m.	32.4	W	100	80	30.0	30.0	30.0	
1869	Jan	5	9 a.m.	32.4	W	100	80	30.0	30.0	30.0	
1869	Jan	5	9 p.m.	32.4	W	100	80	30.0	30.0	30.0	
1869	Jan	6	9 a.m.	32.4	W	100	80	30.0	30.0	30.0	
1869	Jan	6	9 p.m.	32.4	W	100	80	30.0	30.0	30.0	
1869	Jan	7	9 a.m.	32.4	W	100	80	30.0	30.0	30.0	
1869	Jan	7	9 p.m.	32.4	W	100	80	30.0	30.0	30.0	
1869	Jan	8	9 a.m.	32.4	W	100	80	30.0	30.0	30.0	
1869	Jan	8	9 p.m.	32.4	W	100	80	30.0	30.0	30.0	
1869	Jan	9	9 a.m.	32.4	W	100	80	30.0	30.0	30.0	
1869	Jan	9	9 p.m.	32.4	W	100	80	30.0	30.0	30.0	
1869	Jan	10	9 a.m.	32.4	W	100	80	30.0	30.0	30.0	
1869	Jan	10	9 p.m.	32.4	W	100	80	30.0	30.0	30.0	
1869	Jan	11	9 a.m.	32.4	W	100	80	30.0	30.0	30.0	
1869	Jan	11	9 p.m.	32.4	W	100	80	30.0	30.0	30.0	
1869	Jan	12	9 a.m.	32.4	W	100	80	30.0	30.0	30.0	
1869	Jan	12	9 p.m.	32.4	W	100	80	30.0	30.0	30.0	
1869	Jan	13	9 a.m.	32.4	W	100	80	30.0	30.0	30.0	
1869	Jan	13	9 p.m.	32.4	W	100	80	30.0	30.0	30.0	
1869	Jan	14	9 a.m.	32.4	W	100	80	30.0	30.0	30.0	
1869	Jan	14	9 p.m.	32.4	W	100	80	30.0	30.0	30.0	
1869	Jan	15	9 a.m.	32.4	W	100	80	30.0	30.0	30.0	
1869	Jan	15	9 p.m.	32.4	W	100	80	30.0	30.0	30.0	
1869	Jan	16	9 a.m.	32.4	W	100	80	30.0	30.0	30.0	
1869	Jan	16	9 p.m.	32.4	W	100	80	30.0	30.0	30.0	
1869	Jan	17	9 a.m.	32.4	W	100	80	30.0	30.0	30.0	
1869	Jan	17	9 p.m.	32.4	W	100	80	30.0	30.0	30.0	
1869	Jan	18	9 a.m.	32.4	W	100	80	30.0	30.0	30.0	
1869	Jan	18	9 p.m.	32.4	W	100	80	30.0	30.0	30.0	
1869	Jan	19	9 a.m.	32.4	W	100	80	30.0	30.0	30.0	
1869	Jan	19	9 p.m.	32.4	W	100	80	30.0	30.0	30.0	
1869	Jan	20	9 a.m.	32.4	W	100	80	30.0	30.0	30.0	
1869	Jan	20	9 p.m.	32.4	W	100	80	30.0	30.0	30.0	
1869	Jan	21	9 a.m.	32.4	W	100	80	30.0	30.0	30.0	
1869	Jan	21	9 p.m.	32.4	W	100	80	30.0	30.0	30.0	
1869	Jan	22	9 a.m.	32.4	W	100	80	30.0	30.0	30.0	
1869	Jan	22	9 p.m.	32.4	W	100	80	30.0	30.0	30.0	
1869	Jan	23	9 a.m.	32.4	W	100	80	30.0	30.0	30.0	
1869	Jan	23	9 p.m.	32.4	W	100	80	30.0	30.0	30.0	
1869	Jan	24	9 a.m.	32.4	W	100	80	30.0	30.0	30.0	
1869	Jan	24	9 p.m.	32.4	W	100	80	30.0	30.0	30.0	
1869	Jan	25	9 a.m.	32.4	W	100	80	30.0	30.0	30.0	
1869	Jan	25	9 p.m.	32.4	W	100	80	30.0	30.0	30.0	
1869	Jan	26	9 a.m.	32.4	W	100	80	30.0	30.0	30.0	
1869	Jan	26	9 p.m.	32.4	W	100	80	30.0	30.0	30.0	
1869	Jan	27	9 a.m.	32.4	W	100	80	30.0	30.0	30.0	
1869	Jan	27	9 p.m.	32.4	W	100	80	30.0	30.0	30.0	
1869	Jan	28	9 a.m.	32.4	W	100	80	30.0	30.0	30.0	
1869	Jan	28	9 p.m.	32.4	W	100	80	30.0	30.0	30.0	
1869	Jan	29	9 a.m.	32.4	W	100	80	30.0	30.0	30.0	
1869	Jan	29	9 p.m.	32.4	W	100	80	30.0	30.0	30.0	
1869	Jan	30	9 a.m.	32.4	W	100	80	30.0	30.0	30.0	
1869	Jan	30	9 p.m.	32.4	W	100	80	30.0	30.0	30.0	
1869	Jan	31	9 a.m.	32.4	W	100	80	30.0	30.0	30.0	
1869	Jan	31	9 p.m.	32.4	W	100	80	30.0	30.0	30.0	

9 F.M.										Ratio Observations (F.m)	
Wind	Cloud		Weather		Minimum Temperature		Maximum Temperature		Remarks		
Time (H.M)	Amount (H.M)	Form	Direction of surface wind	At time of Observation	Wind last Observation	Minimum Temperature	Maximum Temperature	Remarks			
1	10					38.9	56.9	56.9	27.0		
1	10					38.9	56.9	56.9	27.0		
1	10					38.9	56.9	56.9	27.0		
1	10					38.9	56.9	56.9	27.0		
1	10					38.9	56.9	56.9	27.0		
1	10					38.9	56.9	56.9	27.0		
1	10					38.9	56.9	56.9	27.0		
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