

## Letters to the Editor

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6, Iris Grove,  
Mount Merrion,  
Co. Dublin.

The Editor, *Irish Forestry*

Re. Memories of Coole

Dear Editor,

Recently, when my cousin, Michael Carey, handed me a copy of the Journal of the Society of Irish Foresters (Vol 68 No's 1 and 2, 2011) and said I might read part of it I wondered. However, I must say Niall O'Carroll's extract from Lady Gregory's Journal greatly interested me.

My father, Michael O'Beirne, was the State Forester in Gort from 1927-1940.<sup>1</sup> As a child of about six or seven years of age, I visited Coole on several occasions. I remember my mother having afternoon tea with Lady Gregory. They sat underneath a fig tree at the hall door for this. My sister and I were given wooden hoops to roll on the gravel in the front. We also enjoyed a Christmas party in a large room upstairs- a drawing room- with windows facing the lake. It was visible from the house at that time, as the trees had not taken over.

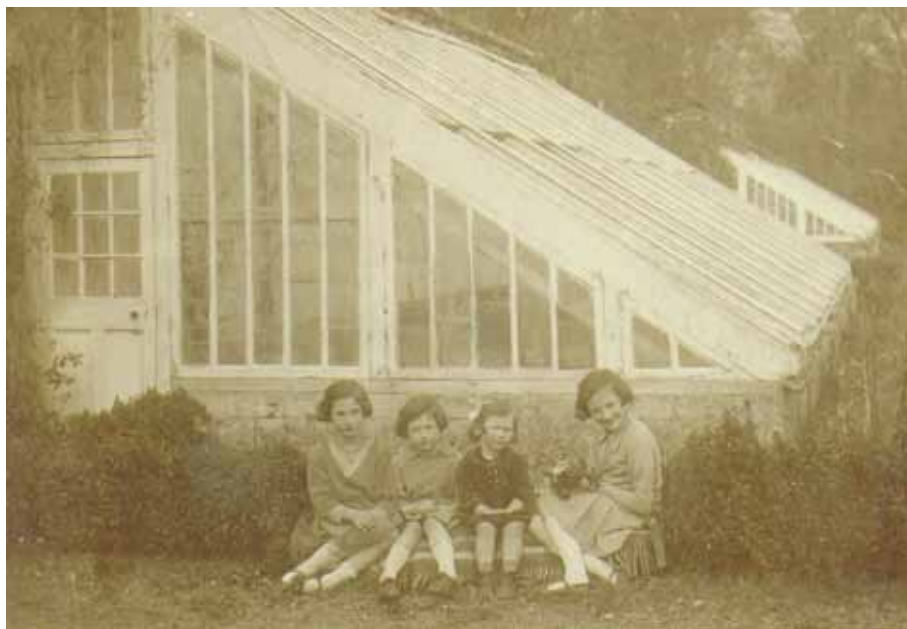
I love Coole, it's full of memories. I visit there at least once a year now. Sadly the Catalpa tree at the entrance to the flower garden is gone, as are the green houses, a wonderful herbaceous boarder on the left and of course the house itself. The autograph tree remains. I still enjoy walking through the seven woods as did my Dad and later my husband. It was certainly an experience to meet with such a famous lady, even if I was too young to realise so at the time. Thank you for rekindling those memories.

Regards,

Theresa Meagher (O'Beirne)

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<sup>1</sup> Michael O'Beirne graduated in forestry from the Royal College of Science in Dublin. After his time at Gort he went on to become Superintendent of the Forestry Training School at Avondale. He was a founder member and a President of the Society of Irish Foresters. He retired in 1949 and died in 1951.



**Photograph:** *Sisters Sheila, Bea, Ann and Theresa O'Beirne (left to right, respectively) in the garden outside the conservatory at Coole Park on 16<sup>th</sup> April 1933.*