



Portrait of Katherine Conolly with her great-niece, Molly Burton, painted by Charles Jervas (c. 1675–1739), formerly attributed to Michael Dahl. Photograph by Davison & Associates courtesy of the Office of Public Works.

THE LETTERS OF
KATHERINE CONOLLY
1707–1747

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IRISH MANUSCRIPTS COMMISSION

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INTRODUCTION

The letters of Katherine Conolly (1662–1752) provide a revealing perspective on the life of a rich, energetic and intelligent Irish woman living in the first half of the eighteenth century. She was born in 1662, the eldest daughter of Sir Albert Conyngham of Mountcharles, Co. Donegal, and Margaret Leslie, of Hillsboro, Co. Down. Katherine Conyngham's grandfather, Rev. Alexander Conyngham, MA (c. 1580–1660), was naturalised as an English subject in 1616, and became the first protestant minister of Inver and Kellymard, Co. Donegal, being ordained prebend of both in 1611. He vacated Kellymard in 1622 and Inver in 1630 when he was installed dean of Raphoe on 22 June 1630. Conyngham settled at Mountcharles, Co. Donegal. He held part of his estate by lease from the earl of Annandale and 320 acres of land in Dromlogheran and Corcama in the barony of Raphoe given by letters patent of denization by Charles I upon his removing to Ireland. As dean of Raphoe he secured the grant of Carrohardvarne, Corleagh-in-begg, Fodrialter, Fanedorke, Tullydonnill and other lands.

Alexander married Marian Murray, grand-niece of the earl of Glencairn and daughter of John Murray, of Wigtownshire, Scotland, who owned the lands of Boylagh and Banagh in Co. Donegal which she brought to the Conyngham family as part of her marriage portion. The couple are reputed to have had twenty-seven children, at least ten of whom – five sons and five daughters – survived into adulthood. Their descendants and collateral relations – the Leslies, Montgomerys, Knoxes, Corrys and Hamiltons – feature among the many cousins referred to in Katherine Conolly's letters. In her letters to her sister Jane Bonnell (c. 1670–1745) after her marriage, Katherine Conolly refers to Conyngham forebears in the Isle of Man;¹ it has not been possible to trace these though there was a later, distant connection through the Sampson and McCausland families.²

Katherine's father, Albert Conyngham (d. 1691), the third son of Rev. Alexander Conyngham (c. 1580–1660) and Marian Murray, was appointed lieutenant-general of ordnance in Ireland for life on 4 December 1660 and knighted. Settling at Mountcharles, he married Margaret Leslie, the daughter of the Rev. Henry Leslie (1580–1661) and Jane Swinton (bap. 1584) of Hillsboro, Co. Down. They had nine children, four of whom survived to adulthood: Katherine (1662–1752), the writer of the letters presented in this edition; Henry (d. 1707) who on 9 December 1696

¹ See letter no. 110.

² Michael Sampson (d. 1719), merchant and sheriff of Dublin in 1710 and brother of Ralph Sampson (d. 1763) who married Katherine Conolly's niece Jane Jones (c. 1717–85), married Jane McCausland (1685–1764) c. 1706. Their son Michael married Ellinor Murray (d. 1769) of the Isle of Man.

married Mary Williams, Lady Shelburne (1673–1710), widow of John Petty, Lord Shelburne (d. 1696), and daughter of Sir John Williams of Carmarthenshire and the Isle of Thanet, Kent, whose lands she brought into the Conyngham family; Jane (c. 1670–1745) who married James Bonnell (1653–99), accountant general of Ireland in 1693; and Mary (1675–1765) who married Richard Jones (1662–1729) of Dolanstown, Co. Meath in 1707.

The Conynghams were a military family; Katherine's father and her brother both died in action. Sir Albert was killed in 1691 at Collooney, Co. Sligo during the Williamite wars, while Lt Gen. Henry Conyngham, who was appointed governor of Lerida, Spain and Lieutenant-General of the king's army in Spain in 1706, was killed at the battle of Almansa (Albacete, Spain) on 25 April 1707 during the war of the Spanish succession.

In 1694 Katherine Conyngham married William Conolly (1662–1729) of Ballyshannon, Co. Donegal, the eldest of ten children of Patrick Conolly and Jane Coan of the same county. When they married, Conolly was already embarked on what was to prove an immensely successful political career. His background was very different from that of his wife. It was claimed in Dublin that he was the son of a publican,³ but it is clear that the reports were misinformed. His father Patrick Conolly had land, paid hearth tax and was a protestant. He was also of sufficient consequence to be attainted by the Jacobite parliament of 1689.⁴

It is possible to detect in William Conolly an early plan to make a career away from his provincial place of origin. He began locally in Co. Donegal as agent to landowners,⁵ qualified as an attorney⁶ and was elected to parliament in 1692. With money from his marriage settlement to Katherine Conyngham, he bought and enlarged his landholdings with estates confiscated from Jacobite sympathisers that were sold from the 1690s onwards. Conolly was first made a commissioner of revenue in 1709, though his Whig politics interrupted this first appointment. He was dismissed in 1710, but reappointed in 1714 on the succession of George I. He was unanimously elected speaker of the Irish House of Commons in 1715. Through a combination of his own extensive landholdings and the interest of his own and his wife's relations, William Conolly was able to distribute favours locally in Counties Donegal and Londonderry by identifying positions in the revenue and elsewhere. As Marmaduke Coghill (1673–1738)⁷ observed when Conolly was nearing death, his personal interests 'made him able to unite and keep people together' by providing for them and their relations in the revenue.⁸ At one

³ In his *DIB* entry for William Conolly Patrick McNally writes: 'the documentary evidence shows Patrick Conolly leasing a substantial portion of Lord Folliott's estate at Ballyshannon, including the manorial mill, suggesting he was the estate miller, a position of some importance'; see also *Conolly archive*, pp viii–xii.

⁴ It has been suggested that the Conolly family's background was catholic, possibly through William's mother Jane Coan. This was used to his disadvantage in the disputed by-election in Co. Westmeath in 1723: see David Hayton, 'Two ballads on the Co. Westmeath by-election of 1723' in *Eighteenth-Century Ireland*, 4 (1989), 7–30; 'William Conolly (1662–1729)' in *DIB*; *Conolly archive*, pp xi–xii.

⁵ Conolly acted as agent for Capt. James Hamilton (later 6th earl of Abercorn), the 2nd duke of Ormond and for two elderly maiden ladies in Co. Donegal.

⁶ Conolly studied law in Dublin and qualified as an attorney in 1685.

⁷ Marmaduke Coghill (1673–1739), MP Armagh borough, 1692–1713, and for Dublin University, 1713–39; judge of the prerogative court and chancellor of the exchequer in Ireland: see *DIB*.

⁸ Marmaduke Coghill to Edward Southwell Sr, 13 Jun. 1728 (D. W. Hayton (ed.), *Letters of Marmaduke Coghill, c. 1700–1739* (IMC, Dublin, 2005), p. 53).

time the extended Conyngham and Conolly families returned thirteen members of parliament.⁹ With his large clientage, Speaker Conolly was an undertaker *par excellence* who could be relied upon to deliver the king's business.

Throughout his lifetime William Conolly continued to enlarge his landholdings and consolidate his political position to the extent that at his death in 1729 he owned land in ten counties yielding an annual rent of £14,926.¹⁰ His income from office and *pourboires* given for offices dispensed were said to produce an additional annual income of £17,000.¹¹ At the height of his career Conolly was thought to be the richest commoner in Ireland.

As commissioner of the revenue, speaker of the House of Commons, and later as one of the lords justices, Conolly required an impressive house in which to receive important officials and to entertain. As a result, in 1707, shortly before he took up his position as a commissioner of the revenue,¹² Conolly purchased a substantial house on Capel Street, Dublin.¹³ It was close to Thomas Burgh's new Custom House, built in 1704 beside Essex Bridge, and part of the Jervis estate, one of the first new large-scale residential developments built away from the medieval city on the north bank of the river Liffey. The area, designed to appeal to a fashionable clientele, became popular; political colleagues such as Marmaduke Coghill and Nathaniel Clements (1705–77) purchased houses nearby. It was from Capel Street that Katherine Conolly would write to her sisters when she was in Dublin. Shortly after moving in she described her parlours, drawing room and her own room as being decorated in a style 'gentill tho not rich'.¹⁴

As well as an impressive house in the city William Conolly required an imposing house in the country not too far from Dublin to which to retire as well as to entertain and court his political connections, while Katherine required a setting befitting her social status. Though he possessed a country residence at Rodenstown, Co. Meath, outside Kilcock, Co. Kildare from 1691, Conolly bought the Castletown estate, twelve miles from Dublin in the same county in 1709,¹⁵ and in 1722 construction of the great Palladian mansion that survives today commenced. Initially Conolly employed the Italian architect Alessandro Galilei (1691–1737) to design the building, but it is now thought that Galilei only worked on the facade and that the rest of the

⁹ Mary O'Dowd, *A history of women in Ireland 1500–1800* (Harlow, 2005), p. 44.

¹⁰ See *Conolly archive* (2010), pp ix–x.

¹¹ This was the amount of William Conolly's private income p.a. at his death: *DIB*.

¹² Jonathan Swift alleged that Conolly paid the whig viceroy Lord Wharton £3,000 for the post. Although cited as fact by some historians, Patrick Walsh points out that Swift's antipathy to Wharton may have been the foundation for this allegation: Walsh, *Making of the Irish Protestant ascendancy*, p. 126.

¹³ William Conolly's mansion was located at the corner of Capel Street and Little Britain Street. In 1758/59, it had 26 taxable hearths. It was demolished c. 1770 and Ralph Ward built a terrace of six houses there (latterly occupied by nos 103–8): TCD, MS 3974/121–125; *Capel Street and environs, draft architectural conservation area (ACA)* (Dublin City Council); Olwyn James, *Capel Street: a study of the past: a vision of the future* (Dublin, 2001), pp 9, 13, 15–17.

¹⁴ Katherine Conolly to Lady Shelburne, 7 Oct. 1707; written on verso William Conolly's letter to Lady Shelburne (NLI, MS 15,549); see letter no. 1 below.

¹⁵ The will of Lt Gen. Henry Conyngham (d. 1707), which was signed in 1704, lists William Conolly as one of his executors and residing at Raydenstown (Co. Meath): see IAA, E/3/21 (21 Sept. 1709) for deed of conveyance of Castletown estate from Thomas Dongan (1634–1715), 2nd earl of Limerick, to William Conolly.

EDITORIAL NOTE

Two hundred and eighty-nine letters from Katherine Conolly, written between 1707 and 1747, survive. There were more, written to correspondents that we do not know of. Others may never have reached their intended recipients since, like other eighteenth-century Irish correspondents, Katherine suspected that her letters were stolen and opened.¹ She may have provided cause as she occasionally sent a coin hidden under the wax seal.² Letters could also miscarry *en-route*, a fact remarked upon by her sister Mary Jones.³ The sisters may also have selectively destroyed some letters. Writing to Jane Bonnell, Mary Jones urged her not to ‘fear your letters falling in to any bodys hands, for I burn them.’⁴ The fact that no surviving family correspondence engages with Williams Conyngham’s two marriages raises suspicions that the archive was at some stage ‘tidied’. The fact that the archive was divided and dispersed to different repositories could also account for missing or lost letters.

The letters of Katherine Conolly printed in this edition provide only one side of her epistolary life, which on occasion makes her intentions difficult to divine. Where this has arisen, similar correspondence from the Conyngham and Conolly families was consulted to provide the editors with a more comprehensive understanding and context. Nonetheless Katherine’s personality and status, which clearly defined her behaviour, are manifestly discernible in the surviving letters printed in this volume. Her correspondence with Frank Burton illustrates her growing reliance on his advice and physical presence, while that with Lady Anne Conolly reflects the vulnerability and loneliness of a wealthy, childless widow, living in eighteenth-century Ireland.

Though Katherine’s spelling is erratic, wrong and inconsistent spelling was not unusual. Women were poorly instructed in literacy; a fact commented on by Jonathan Swift who reproved Stella for her poor spelling and who described ‘a woman of quality’ of his acquaintance as spelling ‘like a Wapping wench’.⁵ Though Katherine’s spelling can appear eccentric, if the text is read aloud it is evident that Katherine’s letters were written phonetically, with a north of Ireland accent and a hint of Scots. For example,

- ¹ See letter no. 46. Katherine Conolly to Charles Delafaye, 3 Dec. 1728, where Katherine expresses her concern that not ‘wan in ten’ of her letters is delivered (TNA, SP 63/390/179); see also letter no. 289.
- ² Bishop Edward Synge suspected that some of his letters between Roscommon and Dublin were stolen in 1750: Marie-Louise Legg (ed.), *The Synge letters: Bishop Edward Synge to his daughter Alicia, 1746–1752* (Dublin, 1996), pp 247, 250.
- ³ Mary Jones to Jane Bonnell, 5 Feb. (*post* 1727, *ante* 1737) (NLI, MS 41,577/3).
- ⁴ Mary Jones to Jane Bonnell, 13 Oct. (n.d.) (NLI, MS 41,577/1).
- ⁵ Cited in Leo Damrosch, *Jonathan Swift: his life and his world* (London, 2013), p. 229.

‘youse’ for use, ‘plase’ for please, ‘sarve’ for serve, ‘gant’ for jaunt, ‘senas’ for since, ‘wick’ for week, ‘whear’ for where, ‘ear’ for are and ‘lave’ for leave. Her use of the word ‘jackolat’ (*chocolat*) for chocolate also suggests some French influence.

To assist the reader the text is liberally annotated and the modern version of words provided where the original is obscure or not immediately recognisable. In editing the text emendation has been kept to the minimum; though Katherine’s spelling and orthography have to an extent been modernised and expanded, particularly her use of ‘Dr’ for Dear, ‘ye’ for you and ‘yr’ for your (see table below). Where a word or letter in the original manuscript is missing or unclear, or the manuscript itself is damaged, square brackets [] have been used. Otherwise spelling has been left as in the original manuscript with notes provided to assist readers negotiate the text.

Unlike her husband’s almost unreadable hand, Katherine’s handwriting is clear. However, she deployed little punctuation. As a result we have added punctuation and introduced paragraphing where this helps to negotiate the original text. In addition capital letters have been amended and abbreviated words silently expanded. Letters are arranged chronologically according to Old Style (Julian calendar, which was eleven days behind the Gregorian calendar) for day and month but according to New Style (Gregorian calendar) for the year, which is treated as starting on 1 January.

In addition, every effort has been made to identify the multiplicity of family members referred to in the text. Because of the personal nature of the correspondence, and the familiar manner to which they are referred to, individuals are identified throughout. Again in order to aid readers to negotiate their way through myriad Conollys, Conyngams, Joneses, Sampsons, Hamiltons and Leslies, full identification is provided on first mention and brief name identification on subsequent appearances. Though this has meant that the apparatus is fuller and longer than is usual in editions such as this, it has been decided to do so to minimise the opportunities, otherwise plentiful, for confusing precisely which family member Katherine refers to.

| Katherine Conolly’s spellings of commonly used words | | | |
|--|-------------------|---------------------|-------------------|
| Manuscript spelling | Standard spelling | Manuscript spelling | Standard spelling |
| adew | <i>adieu</i> | most | must |
| close | clothes | nixt | next |
| ear | are | noot | note |
| forst | first | one | own |
| hear | here | piss | piece |
| heed | head | sarvis | service |
| Ierish | Irish | senas | since |
| jackalet | chocolate | tow | two |
| Layslip | Leixlip | wick | week |
| lick | like | wrang | wrong |

SECTION 1
1707–1729

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LETTERS 1–66

The letters in this section cover the period 1707–1729. They shed light on William Conolly's political career, the building of Castletown House, the rise of the Conyngham and Conolly families and William 'Speaker' Conolly's demise.

1. KATHERINE CONOLLY, DUBLIN,¹ TO LADY SHELBURNE,² 7 OCTOBER 1707³

Dear Madam,

You are much in the right when you think I am in a hurry for truly I am as much so as any person can be at and it will be at least a week still ere I can be other ways. In that time I hope to be at a little ease. I have just got a room to sit in.⁴

Moll⁵ I am afraid is not very well. She has this day something like hives struck out on her. She was hearty and well all day but since she went to bed she is hot and moans through her sleep. But it's a common distemper a many children and I hope in God she will be well in a day or two.

I hope again that you see my new house. You will like my parlours, drawing room and my own room which is all I can possibly complete this year and those I will do gentill[e] tho[ugh] not rich.

Your news of the bishop of Down⁶ is not true. I know not but it may. Its only town talk yet. Mrs Jones marriage⁷ was when I was last in the country. There is now little news stirring only parliamentary affairs. Mrs Naper⁸ is safe landed afte[r] long blowing from their anchor from this last Monday.

¹ The Conollys' Dublin townhouse was located at the corner of Capel Street and Little Britain Street. It was demolished *circa* 1770. The site is now occupied by houses numbered 103–8.

² Mary Williams, Lady Shelburne (1673–1710), widow of Charles Petty, 1st Lord Shelburne, married as her second husband, Katherine's brother, Lt Gen. Henry Conyngham (d. 1707) in 1696. Lady Shelburne was buried in St Mary's Church of Ireland, Dublin, on 10 Dec. 1710: St Mary's Parish Register

³ Dated by reference to postscript to the letter by William Conolly (1662–1729).

⁴ William Conolly purchased their Capel Street, Dublin townhouse in 1707.

⁵ Mary (Missy) Conyngham (d. 1737), the daughter of Lt Gen. Henry Conyngham (d. 1707) and Mary Williams, Lady Shelburne (1673–1710). She married Francis Burton (1696–1744) of Buncraggy, Co. Clare. William Conolly and his wife Katherine acted as guardians to Mary and her brothers following the marriage of the widowed Lady Shelburne to Col Robert Dalaway (1669–1740) in 1707.

⁶ Edward Smyth (1665–1720), bishop of Down and Connor, 1669–1720.

⁷ Mary Conyngham (1675–1765), youngest daughter of Sir Albert Conyngham (d. 1691) and Margaret Lesley of Mountcharles, Co. Donegal, married Richard Jones (1662–1729) of Dolanstown, Co. Meath in 1697. Richard Jones was MP for Donegal borough, 1703–13, but fell out of favour with William Conolly as a result of a disagreement about the price of land in Kilcock, Co. Kildare. Conolly left Mary Jones £400 in his will, describing her as a 'poor relation': William Conolly's will (IAA, A/7); *HIP*.

⁸ Unidentified; possibly a member of the Napper family of Loughcrew, Oldcastle, Co. Meath.

I have not time to say more. Mary and Molly Gore⁹ came last night to town. Col[one]l Wine¹⁰ landed yesterday. I shall write more at large when I have more time.

NLI, MS 15,549

2. KATHERINE CONOLLY'S NOTE CONCERNING LADY SHELBURNE'S JEWELS,

20 OCTOBER 1710¹¹

As fare as I can remember of my Lady Shelborns jewells
 A neckless and crosse
 A payer of pendanas¹²
 A wan stone di[a]mond ring
 A ring set round with brattunes¹³
 8 stay burkells¹⁴ and 8 tags with brillons¹⁵
 A girdell buckell set with di[a]monds
 A girdell buckell set with pearl in gould
 Her wa[t]ch and the cha[i]ne set with garnets and gated hock¹⁶ with a lurg¹⁷ locket
 set a bout with di[a]monds with Gen[era]ll Conyngham's heir¹⁸ and all his childrins
 heir in it and severall seals and lockets at the wa[t]ch
 A gould snuff[f] box
 A gould nick tooth lase¹⁹
 A payer of gould shar buckells
 A gould pic tooth case set with di[a]monds given my Lady by Mrs Hamilten at
 Slean
 A French pearl neckles with garnet cross and garnet pendance²⁰
 A green neckless and cross and pendants.

IAA, Castletown papers, F/4

⁹ Unidentified, but possibly related to the family of Sir William Gore, 3rd bt, of Magherabegg, Co. Donegal (d. 1700) and Hannah Hamilton (1651–1733).

¹⁰ Lt Gen. Owen Wynne II (c. 1664–1737), a professional soldier and political ally of William Conolly (1662–1729). He was MP for Ballyshannon, Co. Donegal, 1715–27, and for Sligo, 1727–37: *HIP*; see also Patrick Walsh, *The making of the Irish Protestant ascendancy: the life of William Conolly, 1662–1729* (Woodbridge, 2010), p. 100.

¹¹ Mary, Lady Shelburne (1673–1710), Katherine's sister-in-law, who had just died. William Conolly noted Lady Shelburne's jewels 'which Capt[ain] Dallaway took away and sold which he had no right' (IAA, Castletown papers, F/4).

¹² *Lege* pendants.

¹³ *Lege* Brighton, a paste stone. Paste jewellery was very popular in the early eighteenth century: see Robert Webster, *Gems; their sources, descriptions and identification* (4th edn, London, 1983).

¹⁴ *Lege* buckles.

¹⁵ *Lege* brilliants.

¹⁶ *Lege* hook.

¹⁷ Lurg, from Manx, meaning 'agate': www.ceantar.org/Dicts/Manx/mx30.htm (accessed 19 Oct. 2014).

¹⁸ *Lege* hair.

¹⁹ *Lege* necklace.

²⁰ *Lege* pendant.

3. KATHERINE CONOLLY'S POST-SCRIPT TO WILLIAM CONOLLY'S LETTER FROM DUBLIN, TO JANE BONNELL,²¹ AT SIR RICHARD HOARE'S,²² FLEET STREET, LONDON, 5 FEBRUARY 1711/[12]

Dear, dear, sister

Your brother²³ has sayd soe much and kindly as to me that I have but littell to say as to that. When my health wants²⁴ my goeing most, my fears of any ill consequences to him by my j[o]urney gives me such une[a]sey thoughts that in spit[e] of myself I resolve to be well and stay whear I am. Tho[ugh] your brother is working like a horse to get his affears and the childrins²⁵ in such order as he may goe, yet God only knows what we shall yet doe. I thank God I am not soe bad as I was last year, yet still the old disorder remeans and I fear is to[o] much rivited to get the better of it by any meddetions.²⁶ I have bine confined this 8 day by a sore thro[a]t and could [have] dyed so sud[d]enly of a sore thro[a]t it fright[en]s every body that has had any leatly.

I am to day prity well of it. Poor brother Person²⁷ has bine much out of order this wick, but I hope is better. The children all well. Poor dear Harry²⁸ goes this wick past to Mr Chamberlins²⁹ and I hope in God will doe well. I am in heast being my dear, dear, sisters, your ever affectionate sister,

K: C:

NLI, MS 41,578

²¹ Jane Conyngham (d. 1745), second daughter of Sir Albert Conyngham (d. 1691) and Margaret Lesley. She married James Bonnell (1653–99), accountant general of Ireland. Following her husband's death Jane spent the remainder of her life in England and the letters from her sister Katherine Conolly form a substantial part of the correspondence printed in this edition.

²² Sir Richard Hoare (1648–1719) was the founder of C. Hoare & Co., one of England's oldest private banks.

²³ In letters to her sisters Katherine always referred to her husband William Conolly (1662–1729) as 'your brother'.

²⁴ *Lege* requires. The Conollys may have been contemplating a journey to Bath, Somerset, to take the waters.

²⁵ William and Katherine acted as guardians to various nieces and nephews. She is probably here referring to settlements made by William Conolly on her brother Lt Gen. Henry Conyngham's children, Williams (1698–1738), Henry (Harry) (1707–81) and Mary (Missey) (d. 1737) and to their inheritance of Williams's estate through their mother Mary, Lady Shelburne (1673–1710).

²⁶ *Lege* medications.

²⁷ Col Thomas Pearson (1678–1736) of Thomas Street, Dublin and Beamore, Drogheda, Co. Louth, married Anne (Jane) Conolly (1684–1749) in 1707. He was MP for Killybegs, 1710–14 and 1715–27; and for Ballyshannon 1727–36: *HIP*.

²⁸ Henry (Harry) Conyngham (1707–81) (later Baron, Viscount and Earl Conyngham), the second and youngest son of Lt Gen. Henry Conyngham and Mary, Lady Shelburne. He was created 1st Baron Conyngham of Mountcharles, Co. Donegal in 1753. He married Ellen Merrett (1724–1816), daughter of Soloman Merrett of London in 1744: see Henry Conyngham to Jane Bonnell, 6 Sept. 1744 (NLI, MS 41,579/4); *HIP*; GEC.

²⁹ Chamberlin, a Dublin schoolmaster.

4. KATHERINE CONOLLY'S POST-SCRIPT TO WILLIAM CONOLLY'S LETTER FROM NEWHALL,³⁰ TO JANE BONNELL, 16 JULY 1713

I was very glad to hear from my dear sister it being the forst this 2 months, but much tr[o]ubled to know you have bine soe extr[e]amly ill and shall be glad to hear you say your disorder is over. You ear much in the right to say you know not whear I have most time to write or any thing eles.³¹ I am sure I have few minnets I can call my one³² senas I came hear. There is now hear Mr Rigs–Jemas,³³ Leslie [from] HillsBrow,³⁴ cousen Hornbys³⁵ and 3 or 4 more fri[e]nds. I am not worse of my old disorder but I thank God rather better tho[ugh] I beli[e]ve I shall never be very well. I shall be glad to hear you answer that part of your brother's letter as to your coming to Ierland. I have not time to say more but that I am my dear, dear, sister, your ever affectionate sister and sarvant, Ka: Conolly

NLI, MS 41,578/1

5. WILLIAM CONOLLY [IN KATHERINE CONOLLY'S HAND], DUBLIN, TO REV. [], DUBLIN, 13 APRIL 1714³⁶

Rev[erend] Sir,

I received both yours of the [] instance and the 30th ult and am sorry upon the whole matter to find my nephew's³⁷ and niece's³⁸ circumstances so bad in all particulars. I shall not enter into the debate how liable my brothers³⁹ small assets are to the debts you mention for I think every just debt ought to be paid, and to prevent anything further then affecting the mortgage, effecting the little estate.⁴⁰ It is but just the [silver] plate etc should be sold and all debts paid and I doubt not but you will take particular care that the debts be justly due and made as easy as possible and the plate sold to the best advantage. When this is done you can in a very narrow compass show what will remain to both my nephew and niece and then I beg Colonel Hewetts⁴¹ and your

³⁰ Newhall was a Conolly house near Newtown Limavady, Co. Londonderry.

³¹ *Lege* else.

³² *Lege* own.

³³ Unidentified but possibly a member of the Riggs-James family from Co. Armagh.

³⁴ Possibly children of Canon Charles Leslie (1650–1722) and Katherine Conyngham (1623–93) or of John Leslie, dean of Dromore, from Hillsborough, Co. Down. The Conynghams intermarried with three related branches of the Leslie families. As a result the positive identification of particular Leslie members can be difficult.

³⁵ Unidentified but possibly referring to Nathaniel Hornby, William Conolly's tenant at Muff (Grocers' Proportion), Co. Londonderry in 1709: *Conolly archive* (2010), p. 282; PRONI, D/2094/18A.

³⁶ This is the first of four letters (nos 5, 6, 24, 37) from William Conolly (1662–1729), Dublin, in Katherine Conolly's handwriting. Two (nos 5&6) are to an unidentified clergyman about the inheritance in England of his niece Frances Conolly (1700–33) and nephew William Conolly (1706–54). The children inherited property in Dunton Bassett, Leicestershire through their mother Frances Hewett. These letters are damaged and/or illegible in places: *Conolly archive* (2010), pp 112–14.

³⁷ Williams Conyngham (1698–1738) and Henry (Harry) Conyngham (1707–81).

³⁸ Frances Conolly (1700–33).

³⁹ Lt Gen. Henry Conyngham (d. 1707) who married Mary, Lady Shelburne (1673–1710) in 1696.

⁴⁰ Dunton Bassett, Leicestershire, England, the Hewett family home.

⁴¹ William Hewett of Dunton Bassett, Leicestershire, brother of Frances Conolly (*née* Hewett).