



Painted open base dresser of pine with dark red paintwork, perhaps eighteenth century, from the Kelly family's farm in Coolderry, Co. Tipperary. Courtesy of Damer House, Roscrea. *Photo Peter Jefferies*

Damer House, Roscrea

Damer House was built within the walls of Roscrea Castle by John Damer, a wealthy businessman, in the early eighteenth century. There is a magnificent hand-carved pine staircase with Corinthian newel posts, fluted balusters and a goose-neck handrail. The house was saved from demolition in the 1970s by the Irish Georgian Society because of the quality of the staircase.

We took the back stairs to the third floor to see the Kelly Collection. The Kelly family worked a small mixed farm of 46 Irish acres in Coolderry, Co. Tipperary from 1891 to 1981. Thomas Kelly kept a unique record of the



Low wash tub or keeler bound by an iron hoop. Courtesy of Damer House, Roscrea. *Photo Peter Jefferies*

daily activities on the farm and this was continued by his son, Hubert, who worked the farm until his death in 1981.

Claudia showed us the dresser that was found in the Kelly's shed. It is an open base dresser, perhaps eighteenth-century. It would have been built *in situ* and was painted dark red to mimic mahogany. The sides are each made of a single board with three shelves to the top half and three drawers to the bottom. The open base is decorated with a balustrade profile which is well worn where storage pots were pushed in and out. There was also a coopered low washtub, a type which rarely survives.

We saw a glazed three-corner press probably made in the nineteenth century and used in the parlour for the display of glass or china. It was painted in two-tone orange-brown and cream.

In the basement kitchen a cauldron in the fireplace was identified by Roderick Butler as made by Thomas Sutton 1st c. 1630–52 at the Sturton Foundry in South Petherton, Somerset. Made of copper and lead alloy, it bore the 'T' founders' mark and the 'Four Arches' foundry mark.