

# Foreword

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SIR DAVID DAVIES

I AM VERY PLEASED TO INTRODUCE THIS, THE EIGHTEENTH VOLUME OF OUR JOURNAL, *Irish Architectural and Decorative Studies*. As the new president of the Irish Georgian Society, it is an immense honour to succeed my illustrious predecessors, Desmond Guinness, Desmond FitzGerald, Knight of Glin, and Patrick Guinness. On behalf of the board and the Society, I would like to thank Patrick, in particular, for the huge amount of good work he accomplished in the comparatively short time he held the office – notably, overseeing the Society’s move to the City Assembly House on South William Street – and for handing over an organisation in such good shape. Tribute must also be paid to the sterling work of our colleagues in America, notably Beth Dater and Michael Kerrigan, to our energetic chair, Dr David Fleming, and, of course, to the office team in Dublin, led so capably by Donough Cahill and recently augmented by Róisín Lambe and Zoë Coleman, who contributed an essay to the last issue of the Journal. As ever, we are grateful to the efficient professionalism of Gandon Editions for the design and production of the Journal.

It bears frequent repetition that education and scholarship sit at the very heart of the Irish Georgian Society, and nowhere is this better epitomised than by the Journal. The high standard pioneered by a series of editors is being maintained by our distinguished new editor, Dr Finola O’Kane, of the School of Architecture, Planning & Environmental Policy at UCD. Ireland’s leading scholar of the designed landscape – urban, suburban, demesne and picturesque – her recent *Ireland and the Picturesque* has won several prizes, including the J.B. Jackson book prize and a Society of Architectural Historians (USA) book award. Finola offers us here a tempting selection of essays, including Ruth Musielak’s work on Lord Charlemont’s bathing spaces, William Laffan’s insights into George Barret, Gábor Gelléri’s identification of ‘The Gentleman from Oxford’, Rachel Finnegan’s work on the 3rd Earl of Bessborough’s material and visual displays, and Claudia Kinmonth’s exploration of the overlooked noggin. Sinéad Gargan and Laura Johnstone analyse aspects of Dublin’s great Monck and Longford de Vesci estates, work drawn from their MUBC theses and supported by the UCD/OPW ‘Framework for

Cultural Significance’ project. Finally, the ‘short dissertation on planting’ that John Walker wrote for Lady Louisa Conolly in 1809 is published under a new initiative of bringing previously unpublished primary sources relating to Ireland’s architecture and landscape design to a wider audience.

As has become customary in this preface, it is my pleasure to highlight a selection (and it can only be a selection) of recent and forthcoming publications. Foremost among these must be Patricia McCarthy’s *Life in the Country House in Georgian Ireland*, which looks certain to become one of the most important contributions to the field in recent years, while on a personal level I am pleased to report that William Laffan’s book on my home at Abbey Leix is nearing completion. Other recent noteworthy publications include Diarmuid Ó Gráda’s *Georgian Dublin: the forces that shaped the city*, Nigel Everett’s *The Woods of Ireland: A History, 700-1800* and A.P.W. Malcomson’s *Nathaniel Clements (1705-77): politics, fashion and architecture in mid-eighteenth-century Ireland*. All of these books are, or will be, available at our bookshop in the City Assembly House, which has rapidly become one of the finest stockists in Ireland of titles in our area of interest.

In October 2016 the Society will be holding a conference on the Irish walled garden in conjunction with the Royal Horticultural Society of Ireland, while in November we will be holding a study day dedicated to the art, landscape and collections of Newbridge House, county Dublin, home to the Cobbe family for more than 250 years. Organised in collaboration with Fingal County Council and involving a team of Irish and international scholars, it should be a memorable occasion and is one of a series of such conferences we have organised over the past few years covering such topics as the Casino at Marino, Westport House and, most recently, Art in the Irish Country House. Meanwhile work continues on the major exhibition celebrating the City Assembly House’s origins as the purpose-built exhibition room for the Society of Artists in the 1760s. Curator Dr Ruth Kenny is preparing a magnificent visual treat which will recreate the displays of art that hung here in the eighteenth century. More news on this immensely exciting project will follow, and it is planned that this will be only the first of many such major exhibitions that the building will host once it has been completely restored.

I hope you enjoy the treats of scholarship that this volume offers, and will continue to support the work of the Society in its mission to promote and preserve Ireland’s architectural and artistic heritage.

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