



Foreword

THE KNIGHT OF GLIN

THIS, THE TWELFTH VOLUME OF *IRISH ARCHITECTURAL AND DECORATIVE STUDIES*, WILL be launched at the No. 1 Pery Square hotel in Limerick, next door to the Georgian house preserved by the Limerick Civic Trust. In this context, it is sad to note the recent death of Denis Leonard who did so much to save this fine example of domestic architecture, and, indeed, so much else in the city of Limerick. His enthusiasm and commitment will long be remembered.

As usual, there is great variety to the contents of the Journal, which reflects its deliberately wide scope, from architecture, painting, sculpture and the decorative arts to patronage, travel and the history of demesnes. As often, one of the themes running through the articles is, perhaps surprisingly, a fluid tale of migration – of individuals, styles and motifs. We have the sad story of a Mayo artist and an American poet on Capri; the monument in Florence to the Italian architect of Castletown; the French goldsmiths of Dublin, and the influence of the antiquities of Asia Minor and Iberia on Ireland. Highly appropriate, given our launch in the city, is the piece by Judith Hill on Plassey House just outside Limerick, which commemorates an Indian battle and is now owned by the University of Limerick.

This is the last of five issues of the Journal to be edited by William Laffan, to whom I, and the Society, are very much indebted. I am very pleased to announce that Conor Lucey has agreed to take over as editor. Dr Lucey, who lectures at University College Dublin and at National College of Art & Design, was awarded the Desmond Guinness scholarship in 2005, and has already served on the editorial board of the Journal. His study of Michael Stapleton, published by Churchill House Press, was acclaimed by my old friend John Harris – praise indeed! Dr Lucey is a founding editor of the new journal *Artefact*, and is contributing to the new *Art and Architecture of Ireland, Vol. IV* (Royal Irish Academy) as well as other forthcoming publications. We are delighted that a young scholar of his calibre has agreed to take over the reins.

Part of the stairway at Huntington Castle, county Carlow (photo by Patrick Prendergast)

Several forthcoming publications and events might be flagged, in particular two collections of essays. One, *The Eighteenth-Century Dublin Town House*, is edited by Christine Casey, who is also organising a seminar on stuccowork in Trinity College Dublin in April 2010. In addition, Lynda Mulvin is editing a volume on neoclassicism, which will be of great interest to members of the Society. In the early summer, the remarkable photographs by Patrick Prendergast of Irish country house interiors will be on show at the Irish Architectural Archive in Merrion Square. Twenty years ago, at the behest of Lord Belmore, Prendergast travelled around Ireland photographing houses still in the possession of the families of the builders. This resulted in an archive of some 2,000 intimate ‘behind the scenes’ shots of the Irish Big House, a selection of which will be on show. Having seen these photographs, I know that they will be a revelation to all those interested in the topic.

In difficult economic times, which the Society feels acutely, it is pleasing to welcome the happy diversion that the erudite contents of this Journal offer. However, the scholarship that the Journal embodies also has a very serious purpose which goes to the very heart of the Society. The understanding of Ireland’s past as manifested in her art, architecture and material culture must permeate our activities and inform our decision-making processes. Despite its manifest importance, it is proving increasingly difficult to attract funding for this Journal, though I am extremely grateful to the Esmé Mitchell Trust and the late Sir Alfred Beit’s Apollo Foundation for very welcome grants. I ask that members and supporters do all you can to help this invaluable publication, by subscribing and encouraging others to do so.
