

Foreword

SIR DAVID DAVIES

ONCE AGAIN, IT GIVES ME GREAT PLEASURE TO INTRODUCE THIS, THE NINETEENTH volume of *Irish Architectural and Decorative Studies*, the wonderful Journal of the Irish Georgian Society. For producing this fine volume I thank Finola O’Kane our editor, our distinguished editorial board who work with her, our publishers Gandon Editions, and of course our contributors. This volume contains some essays that follow the classic tradition of the Journal, with Melanie Hayes’ exploration of Gustavus Hume’s networks of architectural connoisseurship in Dublin and London, and Anne Casement’s examination of Lady Londonderry’s design accomplishments at Garron Tower, county Antrim. The volume also sheds light on areas not overly researched in eighteenth-century Irish scholarship, such as the harpsichords and harpsichord-makers – so vividly described and pictured by my old friend Alec Cobbe – that established Dublin as a burgeoning centre of Baroque music. Jessie Castle and Gillian O’Brien, meanwhile, introduce us to the hidden world of the intrepid Corkwoman, Nano Nagle, whose ambition and success in building convents at the height of the penal era was quite extraordinary. Livia Hurley explores what the design of a non-denominational nineteenth-century Dublin graveyard, and its attendant mortuary chapel by the architect Patrick Byrne, might entail.

We are also delighted to finally publish, exactly 240 years after he wrote to Lord Charlemont for advice on Dublin’s publishing world in 1777, Arthur Young’s own unpublished illustrations for *A Tour in Ireland 1776-1779*, a seminal publication for any aficionado of eighteenth-century Ireland. Young’s own extra-illustrated single-volume quarto edition was acquired by the National Library of Ireland in 2010, and its views, sketches and plans have never before been published in their entirety. This is a remarkable piece of research by Finola O’Kane, and it illustrates the whole gamut of Irish building typologies, from a humble cabin to an early drawing of Castletown. The essay continues our initiative of publishing previously unpublished sources relating to Ireland’s visual, architectural and decorative culture. Finola offers an analysis of why some views were selected for publication over others, and also explores the complex editing process that resulted in the very few finished and published plates. As this volume goes to press, word

comes that Finola has been elected to membership of the Royal Irish Academy, an honour which those who know her publications will agree is richly deserved. On behalf of the Society I offer our warm congratulations.

The past year has seen the publication of such noteworthy books as Nicola Gordon Bowe's *Wilhelmina Geddes: Life and Work*, Michael Brown's *The Irish Enlightenment* and Ellen Rowley's edited first volume of *More than Concrete Blocks: Dublin city's twentieth-century buildings and their stories*. Christine Casey's *Making Magnificence: architects, stuccatori and the eighteenth-century interior* and Toby Barnard's *Brought to Book: print in Ireland, 1680-1784* will undoubtedly expand our understanding of different aspects of Irish culture and creativity and set them in international contexts, while this autumn Livia Hurley and Edward McParland bring to press the study by the late Arthur Gibney in *The Building Site in Eighteenth Century Ireland*. Amidst all these works (available from our bookshop) I hope I will be forgiven for singling out for special mention the elegant and scholarly volume by William Laffan on my home in county Laois, *Abbey Leix, An Irish Home and its Demesne*, which we launched with a series of events in Palm Beach and Charleston, Dublin and London.

Special mention must also be made for the pioneering exhibition *Burning Books* at Dublin Castle organised by Philip Maddock in conjunction with the Office of Public Works. Dr Maddock's years of research into the tools of Dublin's bookbinders has allowed for the reproduction of fourteen volumes of the Irish Parliamentary Journals which were destroyed during the Civil War in 1922. We congratulate Philip, a longstanding member, for the triumphant success of his exhibition, and I am pleased to say that, in a most generous gesture, he has donated six volumes to the Society which will be placed on loan to the Office of Public Works for display in Dublin Castle. Nicely closing a circle, in 1987 the Irish Georgian Society published Volume 1 of *Studies in the History of Irish Bookbinding*, which explored the gold-tooled bookbindings commissioned by Trinity College, and so we are delighted all these years later shortly to be publishing the follow-up catalogue to this seminal exhibition.

The Irish Georgian Society has long punched above its weight in the fields of scholarship and education in architecture and the decorative arts, and I hope you greatly enjoy this volume, which continues this distinguished tradition.
