

PREFACE



Preface

THE KNIGHT OF GLIN

AS ALWAYS, IT GIVES ME ENORMOUS PLEASURE TO MARK THE PUBLICATION OF *Irish Architectural and Decorative Studies*. This is our eleventh volume, and is replete with valuable scholarship on topics from portrait painting in Belfast to shopping in Dublin; from quarrying to travel, collecting, topography, and, of course, architecture. On behalf of the Irish Georgian Society, I thank all the contributors, and especially our editor, for putting together such a stimulating volume. This year, the Journal will be launched in the former Bishop's Palace in Kilkenny, the new home of the Heritage Council, and several of the articles have a Kilkenny focus.

It has become customary for me in this foreword to review recent and forthcoming events and publications of relevance to the scholarship that this Journal promotes. As not all of the aspirations I express here come to pass, it is pleasing to note that the National Gallery of Ireland agreed with my call four years ago for a bicentennial exhibition to celebrate the art of Hugh Douglas Hamilton. Anne Hodge, the show's curator, and the staff of the National Gallery are to be greatly congratulated for this splendid exhibition. Meanwhile, in Cork, the Crawford Gallery – together with our publishers Gandon Editions – are setting new standards for scholarly catalogues with their publication on Daniel Maclise, which elegantly complements their recent book on James Barry. We are still hoping that a major show of the visual and decorative art of Georgian Ireland will be organised, and it is gratifying to note the interest of three American museums in this venture.

The greatly anticipated volume, *Thomas Roberts: landscape and patronage in eighteenth-century Ireland*, by our editor William Laffan and Brendan Rooney, will be published in March. This coincides with a major retrospective on Roberts' work at the National Gallery, which runs until June. All members of the Society are

Fota House, Fota Island, county Cork (opposite and overleaf)

Originally an eighteenth-century hunting lodge, it was extended in the nineteenth-century by

Richard and William Vitruvius Morrison (photographs courtesy Irish Heritage Trust)

urged to hasten to Merrion Square for this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to view almost the entire body of works – many usually inaccessible – by Ireland’s greatest eighteenth-century landscape painter. The remarkable set of paintings of Carton will be on public show for the first time in a generation.

Ronald Lightbown has published what is surely one of the most important books on eighteenth-century Ireland, *The Architect Earl, a life of Lord Aldborough*. This is a joint publication of the Irish Georgian Society and Ossory, Laois & Leinster Group. We heartily congratulate Ronald and John Kirwan, who saw the book through to publication. It is available in the IGS bookshop

In these difficult times it is very pleasing to acknowledge some good news stories and exciting initiatives for Irish art and architecture. Primary among these is the imminent reopening of Fota House, county Cork, which has been immaculately restored by the Irish Heritage Trust and hung with a fabulous collection of eighteenth-century paintings unrivalled outside the National Gallery in Dublin. Members of the Society are entitled to free admission to Fota. It is truly remarkable what the Irish Heritage Trust has achieved in the short years since its inception. Again, I strongly recommend a visit.

On the academic front, Dr Lynda Mulvin is organising an important conference, *The Fusion of Neoclassical Principles: scholars, architects, builders and designers in the neoclassical period*, on 21-22 May at the Irish Architectural Archive. Given the list of distinguished speakers, it will no doubt be a stimulating and rewarding event. The Society is also arranging a conference on the Casino at Marino; more details are available from the IGS office.

We are very grateful to the Irish benefactor who has made the publication of this Journal possible, and, as ever, we appeal for your support in continuing the scholarship that is at the heart of the Society’s activities. We are anxiously seeking further sponsorship for this remarkable Journal.

