

NEW ACQUISITIONS



Cecil Galbally (1911-1985) *Evening in Achill*
Oil on board — 38.5 x 51.5 cms — €3,700 —
de Vere's. Presented to Galway City Art Collection.



Richard Westall (attrib.) (1765-1836) *Christ Casting out Demons* — oil on canvas — 457.2 x 914.4 cms.
To be presented.



Christopher Campbell (1908-1973)
St. Ita - drawing, pencil on paper — 710
x 235 cms — €900 — Frederick Gal-
lery. Presented to Wicklow County
Council.



Sir Martin Arthur Shee PRA (1769-1859)
The Postman — oil on canvas — 21.5 x 19
cms — €5,907 — Adam's. To be presented.



19c Irish/English School *Portrait reputed to be Sir Benjamin Wall Morris* — oil on canvas —
74 x 61 cms — Mealy's — €1,062. Presented to
Waterford Treasures Museum and Art Gallery
at the Granary, Waterford.

FNCI NEWS

FNCI
The Friends of the National Collections of Ireland

Issue No. 13 Autumn 2005

Message from the President

Dear Friends,

Mist and mellow fruitfulness of autumn are upon us again, bringing renewed activity for the Friends. I refer to our forthcoming visits to Cork, European City of Culture and our expedition to Edinburgh, which is our second tour out of Ireland this year. Such tours have not occurred for almost 20 years and entail a great deal of organisation.

I should like to look back with you at the various happenings in the Society since the beginning of the year.

The Council were invited to visit the University at Galway (NUIG) in July. On that occasion we held the first FNCI Council meeting ever outside Dublin in the university. We were also given

lectures on aspects of Irish archaeology and art by the department of archaeology staff, Professor John Waddell, Mr. Conor Newman and fellow Council member Dr. Kieran O'Connor. We also had a tour of the university art collection by Arts Officer Ms. Fionnuala Gallagher. Our great thanks to our colleague Dr. O'Connor for so admirably organising with his colleagues such a memorable day in Galway.

In June our members visited Glendalough House, in Wicklow, former home of Robert Barton, one of the signers of the Treaty and a member of the famous Barton family. We also went to Luggala to see the extraordinary Gothick house of the Hon. Garech Browne, now being extended in 2005 Gothic design. This work is reminiscent of William Beckford's 18th century labours at

Fonthill. Here, a historic eighteenth century La Touche hunting lodge is being transformed by the present owner, the Honourable Garech Browne and seconded by his able lieutenant Count Randall McDonnell of the Isles. Both were present to receive us and show us the house and talk about the project. We took tea before leaving this fascinating house for the distinctive décor and fine restoration works at Tinna House, Kilpedder, our last port of call, where owners Claus and Iris Michel took us around and

regaled us with wine and delectable food.

In May the officers of the Society went to Clondalkin, where we presented to South County Dublin Mayor, Mr Robert Dowds, a painting of the Liffey by the uniquely gifted but sadly short-lived Clondalkin artist Jonathan Wade.

Our former President Mr. John Ross has generously donated

through the Friends to the National Gallery of Ireland a superb piece of stained glass by Evie Hone depicting St. Christopher. This gift is being given in memory of our former Council member the distinguished scholar and long a senior curator at the National Gallery, Dr. Michael Wynne. It is to be on permanent display. Our Council member Dr. Abdul Bulbulia arranged for an important oil painting by Richard Westall R.A. entitled *Christ Casting out the Demons* to be donated to the Friends and it will be presented at a later date.

Our visit to Buxton for the Opera Festival was considered an outstanding success, the result of much hard work on the part of officers and Council

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Acknowledging the assistance Of our Corporate Members

We acknowledge with gratitude the enormous support which we receive from our growing number of Corporate Members, including the following organisations:

- Allied Irish Bank
- ESB, 29 Lower Fitzwilliam Street
- Athlone Town Council
- The Bank of Ireland
- Sligo County Library H.Q.
- Brennan Insurances
- Treasury Holdings
- Cavan County Council
- Whyte & Sons, Auctioneers

Visit to Primrose Hill in Lucan

On Saturday, 20 January we visited Primrose Hill, by kind permission of Mr. C.M. Hall to enjoy the famous Snowdrop Gardens. His Excellency, Signor Alberto Schépsi, Italian Ambassador to Ireland and his wife Signora Sofia Schépsi, kindly greeted us at the residence, Lucan House, a Palladian villa dating from the 1770s.

29
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members involved. Just one of several meetings to arrange the tour started at two in the afternoon and ended at 8.30 that evening! Dr. Patricia McCabe gives us an account of this wonderful tour on page 3.

A recent Council meeting was preceded by an extraordinary meeting to discuss the difficult question of whether to amend our policy of buying non-living Irish artists to include live artists. There are those on Council who consider we should buy living Irish artists and international artists. Thankfully a compromise was reached on that occasion, which will allow us to depart from our traditional stance under certain conditions approved by Council.

We have been invited by the Irish Architectural Archive to hold our Council meetings in the austere elegance of the restored (La Touche) palatial house in Merrion Square. For this we are grateful to the Director David Griffin and his colleagues.

Interesting acquisitions are currently being considered and ideas for new tours and events. We are always glad to have your ideas, suggestions and criticisms so that the Society may continue its upward momentum, "per ardua ad astra".

John Maiben Gilmartin, President



Members of the audience at the AGM.

Future Events

October 2005 We will be visiting Cork to see the James Barry and William Blake exhibitions and visit St. Finbarr's Cathedral.

Comments Welcome

Comments on FNCI News and the website to: Aidan O'Flanagan
28 Grosvenor Park,
Rathmines,
Dublin 6.
Email: aoflanagan@eircom.net

Annual General Meeting held in April

The 81st Annual General Meeting was held at the Bank of Ireland Arts Centre on 27 April. After eight years of service, Ms. Carmel Kelly resigned as Honorary Secretary and was succeeded by Mrs. Jennifer Waldron-Lynch. Lady Broadbent made a floral presentation to Carmel. The guest of honour for the evening was M. Olivier de Rohan, Vicomte de Chabot, who is the President of the Friends of Versailles. His address was entitled, *My Work for Versailles*. This was a unique opportunity to learn about the palace of Versailles, the art collections there and its role in history. A reception followed, courtesy of the Bank of Ireland.



Outgoing Honorary Secretary Carmel Kelly.

Presentation at Clondalkin Library

On Tuesday, 17 May the President and members of Council were in Clondalkin to present a painting to the people of Clondalkin by Jonathan Wade (1941-1973), who lived for some years in the area.

Afterwards those in attendance enjoyed the warm hospitality provided at Clondalkin Library, which will now be the permanent home for this outstanding work entitled *Bridge Over the Liffey, Dublin*.

Pictured at the presentation were, from left: Mr. Vincent Allen, Senior Librarian, Clondalkin Library, Ms. Teresa Walsh, County Librarian, Ms. Doreen Mellon, Mr. Robert Dowds, Mayor of South County Dublin, and President Dr. John Maiben Gilmartin.



Historic visit to Galway University



Members of the FNCI Council photographed in the grounds of NUI Galway on 28 July after an historic meeting of the Council, held at the kind invitation of Council member Dr. Kieran O'Connor, who is a member of the Archaeology Department. The meeting was the first ever held outside of Dublin.

Glorious summer visit to County Wicklow

The outing to Wicklow took place on 12 June. The afternoon began with a visit to Glendalough House. Set at the heart of a 1,500 acre estate, it dates from the eighteenth century, and was for many years the home of Erskine Childers (1870-1922). The location is stunning, pure 'Garden of Ireland' scenery of lowland woods and pastures. After a short talk on the history of the house the group had time to explore the magnificent gardens planted with rare shrubs and trees from all over the world.

We were warmly welcomed at Luggala by its genial owner, the Honourable Garech Browne. We enjoyed a special tour of the house, replete with a magnificent fine art and furniture collection. At present Luggala is being restored to its former glory and we were all particularly impressed with the superb Gothic work in the library. The afternoon was brought to a delightful conclusion with a fascinating visit to Tinna Park Kilpedder, hosted by owners Claus and Iris Michel.

Dr. Síghle Bhreathnach-Lynch



Members enjoying a visit to Luggala, Lough Dan, Co. Wicklow, in the gothic drawing room admiring one of A.W. Pugin's most opulent wall paper designs. From left: Mrs. Ausitn Dunphy, Miss Phillipa Quinlan, Mr. Harold Clarke and Mr. Brian Coyle.

Over 30 members visit Buxton



Mrs. Mary Bowe (back to camera), Mrs. Carmencita Hederman, President Dr. John Maiben Gilmartin, Mr. Aidan O'Flanagan, and Mr. William Hederman (seated).

In July over 30 members headed for the spa resort of Buxton in Derbyshire, a town which boasts a crescent to rival Bath, splendid assembly rooms and an extant pump house. From there a visit was made to Chatsworth, seat of the Dukes of Devonshire, where before exploring the baroque mansion and its extensive gardens, the members were graciously welcomed by the present Duke. A contrasting aspect of architecture was viewed at Kedleston Hall, a masterpiece of neo-classicism, designed by Robert Adam. The gardens at Kedleston were also the inspiration of Adam.

Both great houses hold outstanding collections of paintings, sculptures and appropriate period furnishings, and President John Maiben Gilmartin, authoritatively wearing his planter's hat, acted as guide. John's extensive fund of knowledge was ably assisted by Jeremy Williams where architectural elements needed emphasis. Evenings were spent at the Opera House, where the enjoyment of operas by Handel, Mozart and Nicolai was enhanced by pre-opera talks. Afterwards, everyone dined at the Old Hall Hotel, a hostelry of ancient origin where there are suggested hauntings by Mary Queen of Scots, who is known to have taken the waters at Buxton.

Cróine Magan must be congratulated for her overall organisation of a motivated event of estimable content, where value exceeded the cost involved.

Dr. Patricia McCabe



Mr. Jeremy Williams, President Dr. John Maiben Gilmartin and The Duke of Devonshire at Chatsworth House.