

NEW ACQUISITIONS



JOHN LUKE (1906-1975)
The Bell Tent, Watercolour, 24 X 33.5cms
 FNCI grant £1,500
 Down County Museum



RALPH CUSACK (1912-1965)
The Way of the World, Oil on Canvas, 100 X 81cms
 Presented to IMMA by the Cusack family



EVIE HONE (1894-1955)
St Christopher, Stained Glass, 21 X 41 x 1cms
 Presented to The National Gallery of Ireland in memory of Dr. Michael Wynne by Mr. John N. Ross



NATHANIEL HONE (1718-1784)
Portrait of a man in a pink suit, Presented to Royal Hibernian Academy



LAURENCE CAMPBELL RHA (1911 - 1964)
 5 female studies in charcoal and sanguine chalk, 39 X 28 cms (each) €1,600 Adams - to be presented.

Message from the President

Spring is officially here, despite the recent arctic weather. Spring always ushers in not only a host of daffodils but also attractive events for "The Friends". This Spring is no exception. We held our A.G.M. which was a huge success by kind invitation of the E.S.B. in their Headquarters at Fitzwilliam Street Dublin which proved an excellent venue. Beside the charming Georgian house which the E.S.B. so laudably maintain as a Museum of Life in Georgian Dublin. Our great thanks to Mr. Brendan Delaney of the E.S.B. as well as Pauline Holland and Ken Dunne for an impeccably arranged evening. We had as our distinguished lecturer for the occasion Count Otto Stolberg Stolberg, a noted Lawyer, Historian and Conservationist. He is a member of the committee that has accomplished the restoration of the great Church of our Lady (Die Frauenkirche). The lecture was hugely successful, Count Stolberg Stolberg gripped our attention as he recounted the story of Dresden from its 18th century splendours to the dreadful destruction of World War II, and then the ethics of the wonderful restoration were discussed and the aspect of reconciliation which the Frauenkirche, our Lady's great Lutheran Church represents. The cross on the dome being given by the city of Coventry, the altar made from stone given by villagers in Poland who lost their menfolk to German firing squads in the war. Four Ambassadors honoured the meeting with their presence, they were the Ambassadors of Germany, Austria, Poland and the Czech Republic, all from parts of Europe linked to Dresden. Thus completing the classical profile of Dresden ruined in the devastation of World War II. He has been active too as Honorary Secretary of the Friends of the Green Vault Museum. This new addition still to be completed to the cultural riches of Dresden displays the amazing art treasures amassed mainly by the great 18th century ruler of Saxony Augustus the Strong who was also King of Poland. We heard of the restoration of 18th century streets of houses, of Palaces and Churches, Art Galleries and the great Semper Opera House. Truly amazing achievements so that Dresden is now again one of the important cultural centres of the world. Count Stolberg Stolberg's wife, Countess Stephanie nee Matushka, is a near relation of the late Mrs. Mariga Guinness, and was brought up in Dublin, where their sons have been educated. This was a fascinating and inspiring PowerPoint illustrated lecture, entitled "The Restoration of Dresden-from Ashes to Splendour". It was admirably structured and of high academic standard. Many remarked afterwards that it was the best they had heard at an A.G.M.

A Garden Party by the Dargle is in store for us on Saturday May 27th next when we visit Mr. and Mrs John Ronan who have very kindly invited us. We shall see the extraordinary "cottage ornée" designed for our hosts by Council member Jeremy Williams.

Our next most exciting visit will be to Galway on the 10th June. The highlight will be seeing the interior of Loughrea Cathedral. This is by cathedral standards a relatively modest Gothic revival Church. However within it is like a jewel casket enclosing many important treasures of Art Design from the Irish Celtic Revival era at the end of the 19th century. The Cathedral of St. Brendan at Loughrea is a veritable treasure house of the Celtic revival in Stained Glass, Wood Carving, Sculpture, Metalwork and Textiles. By the time that this Cathedral was completed in 1902 the Arts and Crafts movement, which had begun with Ruskin, the Pre-Raphaelites and William Morris was having an effect on the arts in Ireland. The Leader newspaper had been launched by D.P. Moran and others were prime promoters of innovative native artistic endeavour. Also a second circumstance of major importance was Edward Martyn's birth in the Parish of Loughrea. One of his grandfathers was James Smyth of Masonbrook, a rich self-made man, owner of a large Galway estate, Martin himself was owner of Tullira Castle Ardrahan County Galway which we will also visit and be entertained in by the present owner, Edward Martyn, descended from one of the famous "Tribal" families of Galway. Despite being Roman Catholic the Martyns had survived Cromwellian and Williamite confiscations leaving them with substantial inheritances. Although personally a man of ascetic habits Edward Martyn devoted himself to the development of every phase of the Irish Cultural Revival.

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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:

- AIB Groups
- ESB, 29 Lower Fitzwilliam Street
- The Bank of Ireland
- Sligo County Library H.Q.
- Brennan Insurances
- Treasury Holdings
- Whyte & Sons, Auctioneers
- Galway City Council
- Independent News & Media plc



Hamwood House

Our programme of outings this year looks particularly interesting. On Saturday 1st April we visited Hamwood an elegant palladian house with wonderful interiors and contents. Followed by that great favorite of last year, Lucan House ending with the extraordinarily atmospheric decor of Leixlip Castle.

Martyn was involved with the Gaelic League, Sinn Féin, The Literary Theatre, Irish Music and he founded the world famous Palestrina Choir which is still flourishing in the Pro Cathedral Dublin. As well Martyn tried to promote and raise standards in Church Art. With great business acumen and cultural knowledge he saw to it that the new Cathedral at Loughrea would respect his views.

Martyn was fortunate to have the extraordinary priest Father Jeremiah O'Donovan as Administrator of the Church. He was an ally also and a sympathetic Bishop, Dr. Healy among the leading figures who took an interest in the project. W.B. Yeats was interested and he came and stayed with Jeremiah O'Donovan at the time. Regrettably Fr. O'Donovan got involved in the Modernist crisis, left the priesthood and subsequently led a colourful career as a British agent in Italy and he also became a writer. Suffice to list some of the sights we shall see in this marvellous church, the Ascension window by Michael Healy arguably the greatest achievement in Irish stained glass, a literally stunning achievement, the magnificent stone carvings by Michael Shortall, the Nativity window by Sarah Purser and A.E. Child, the Virgin and Child by John Hughes, the St. Brendan window by Sarah Purser, the founder of our society became deeply involved in the project. Though primarily a painter and set in her painterly ways Sarah Purser here accomplished attractive work. Knowing her limitations Purser did not continue but did provide drawings for the two large windows in the East Transept. Another aspect of the revival is seen in the major contributions of Evelyn Gleeson, founder of the Dún Emer Guild, who saw that Lily and Elizabeth Yeats were given the task of providing the embroidery for the Cathedral hence a range of superb banners and textile work. The architect W. Scott designed the furnishings, Stations of the Cross are by Ethel Rhin. As we shall see this is a remarkable monument to the Irish art of the period. Near to the Cathedral stands

a medieval Gate House converted into an admirable small museum displaying some important medieval works of arts and textiles. This should be a memorable visit to County Galway for the society, seeing some splendid and under appreciated works as well known as should be the case.

Our primary purpose as a Society is to continually enrich the public collections of Ireland. This work we continue to do with the presentation of the Clermont Book of Maps to Monaghan County Museum. The presentation of an important work by Ralph Cusack entitled "*The Way of the World*" to IMMA, the presentation of an exquisite miniature by Nathaniel Hone to the National Gallery.

Events in retrospect are firstly our heavily subscribed visit to Cork which was a resounding success. This visit was made to mark the year of Cork as European Capital of Culture celebrations. Visits to the Glucksman Gallery and to St. Fin Barre's Cathedral were highlights of this occasion.

The Hon. Treasurer, Geraldine O'Connor (Tel: 490 1570) has asked me to remind members of our new membership rates (Ind. €40 and Family €60). If you are still paying at the old rate please send the difference to her at G-3 Beaumont House, 60 Terenure Road East, Dublin 6.

In conclusion it remains for me to express my thanks and appreciation to all those colleagues on the Council who have so unstintingly given of their time to doing the onerous work that keeps our Society moving along. Whether it be stuffing 500 envelopes or organising the basic aspects of our "trips" and all that goes on in between a heartfelt "thank you", and to our members who so loyally turn up and support our activities, many thanks and good wishes.

John Maiben GilMartin, President

Clermont Book of Estate Maps, 1791

Monaghan County Museum recently acquired a book of maps illustrating the estate of the Earl of Clermont dating to 1791. The Book was purchased from a private dealer and is one of the most important acquisitions that the Museum has made in recent years.

The Book, which contains over 80 exquisitely detailed maps and depicts the demesne of the Clermont estate, which later became the Rossmore estate in 1827. The maps cover the greater North Monaghan region and contain a vast array of information about the land and the people who lived there, which makes it an invaluable tool for those studying this area during the late 1700's.

The land belonged to Frances Murray, wife of William Henry Fortescue, the 1st and only Earl of Clermont from 1764 until her death in 1820. William Fortescue was a landowner in County Louth whose only connection to Monaghan was his marriage to Frances Murray. However, it was through this marriage that he was able to attain the highest office in the county, that of Governor or Lord Lieutenant.

The Museum approached the Friends of the National Collections of Ireland in order to source funds to help with the purchase of the book. The response was an extremely generous €5,000, which helped pave the way for the Museum to eventually purchase the Maps. This very important record will now remain permanently in the keeping of Monaghan County Museum for the benefit and enjoyment of both visitors and members of the local community.

St Christopher by Evie Hone (1894-1955)

In April 2005, this stained glass panel (41 x 21 cm) was presented by John N. Ross, through the FNCCI, to the National Gallery of Ireland, to be on permanent display, in memory of Dr Michael Wynne, who had served on the Council for many years and died in Autumn 2003. He joined the NGI in 1965, when he was the only full-time researcher and remained there until 1997, forced to retire due to a heart condition that progressively weakened him. Under James White he was for a time Assistant Director, until becoming Keeper of the Collection, a tribute to his extensive knowledge in the fields of Italian baroque and Irish art. Those who met him will recall a gentleman scholar, vastly informative, if inclined to wander in conversation, with an 18th century addiction to scented snuff. When I was his tenant in Dundrum, there were lengthy kitchen discussions on art and the daily opportunity to see pictures he owned, by Thomas Frye and Evie Hone, on whom he published numerous key articles. His great passion was for Irish stained glass, co-writing gazetteers in 1968 and 1988 and receiving a doctorate from Trinity College in 1975 for his ground-breaking rediscovery of its story from 1760-1963, especially the great revival at *An Túr Gloine* (the stained glass co-operative founded in 1903). His interest led to the gift of many original designs in 1966 after they were saved from a skip and subsequent acquisition of cartoons and studies by Evie Hone. She had taken a different path, with her background in cubism and visits to see glass in the great French cathedrals. *St Christopher* was made in the 1940s, possibly intended for the entrance porch of a church (as at St Thomas', Foster Avenue). It has the traditional composition used to portray this 3rd century martyr, who, according to legend, found he had taken on the weight of the world, when he unknowingly carried the Christ Child across a river. He has long been the protector of travellers and resisted attempts to suppress devotion to him. Hone typically sets off the draperies of the figures, against a deep blue background, in the style of an early medieval window. A fish symbolizes the river. Inspired by her study of Irish medieval tomb figures (of which Michael had an ink drawing of *St Patrick* and published an article in 1967), there is a strong use of line, while colours are bold and striking. It is a most appropriate piece to remember Michael Wynne by.

Adrian Le Harivel, Curator of British Paintings, NGI

Visit of F.N.C.I to Edinburgh.

On Friday 14th October 20 Friends flew to Edinburgh. 10 stayed in the New Club and the other 10 stayed in the Royal Overseas club only a few doors from each other on Princes Street.



Kinross House

That evening we all attended a reception at the Irish Consulate by kind invitation of Mis Cliodna Manahan the charming Irish Consul. This was a splendid party and our President Dr. John Maiben GilMartin went around introducing us all to the Scottish guests. The Consulate is in a charming Georgian house in Randolph Crescent.

Saturday morning Desmond Hodges, the Dublin born son of a C of I Bishop of Limerick, formerly Director of the New Town Conservation Committee, led an excellent walking tour of the delightful streets, squares and crescents of the Georgian New Town. In the afternoon we drove to Kinross House, a splendid 17th century house, where Elizabeth Montgomery showed us around her beautiful home. The house had been vacant for many years until the present owners gallantly took it on and restored it to its original splendour. She and her husband hosted a generous reception in their spacious hall. Supper followed in Blair Adam, home of the famous Adam family and still lived in by his descendants. Many fascinating Adam memorabilia were on view here.

Sunday morning we visited the Royal Scottish Museum to view "Nicholas and Alexandra" an exhibition of Romanov Jewels and memorabilia. After lunch we drove to Gosford House, home of the Earl and Countess of Wemyss and March. Designed by Robert Adam but greatly altered



Arriving at Gosford

subsequently, the house contains a remarkable art collection including works by Botticelli, Murillo and Rubens and much Regency furniture made in Edinburgh.

Monday morning we visited The Royal College of Physicians with its wonderful Adams interior and had an interesting talk on the history of the college. After a visit to see the works of Phoebe Traquair, the Dublin born Arts and Crafts artist we all headed home.

Carmencita Hederman



Mr. & Mrs. Cornelius Smith, Dr. Pat McCabe, Dr. Hilary Carey.

AE Portrait of Sadhbh Trínseach



Portrait of Sadhbh Trínseach

As the commemorative celebrations of 1916 draw near, it is interesting to reflect on the oil portrait painted by George Russell (AE) one year after the Rising, which the Friends of the National Collections presented to the National Gallery of Ireland in 1973. The sitter, Frances Georgiana Chenevix Trench, was generally known as Sadhbh Trínseach, the name she used as a nationalist activist and with which she signed her paintings. AE painted her portrait as a wedding present prior to her marriage to Diarmid Coffey. Both had been involved in the Volunteers, Diarmid "a moderate" as assistant to Colonel Cotter who was in charge of military organisation, and Sadhbh Trínseach, who was overtly passionate in her nationalism, taking a leading role in the executive of Cumann na mBan.

She was conscious that her love for Ireland surpassed everything, even her dedication to her art. She kept a diary of political developments

from 1913 to 1916, in which she noted and discussed every event of significance, notably the Howth Gun running and the events of Easter Week, at both of which she was a close witness. Even while at art school in the Ménard Academy in Paris she kept in close touch with political happenings in Dublin and Belfast (where her sister was working). She compared notes with art students from other small repressed European countries, took an interest in their national languages and managed to arrange Irish classes in the Sorbonne.

The Rising had been quashed when AE represented her in October 1917 as a mystic rather than as an insurgent. Her adopted ancient Irish name Sadhbh means goodness. AE no doubt had a vision of a creative future when when married to Diarmid (who played so great a part in attempting to find a peaceful solution to the Home Rule question), and shows her against a background of rising light, beneath a drape of the spiritual blue that so often coloured her national dress.

Sadhbh Trínseach's drawings and paintings are to be found in the collections of the National Gallery, National Library and National Museum in Dublin, and in the collection of University College, Galway. Her painting career was cut short when she died, six months after she was married, in the Great Flu of 1918.

Hilary Carey