

Ashleigh Murray

Lexlip Boathouse, Lexlip
Demesne, Co. Kildare
(1874 photograph)



The Irish Georgian Society (IGS) is delighted to announce that we have completed a fifth year of the Conservation Grants Scheme, which has been funded by the Irish Georgian Society London since 2014. Although last year was to be the final year of the scheme, its importance is very much recognised and London has, therefore, extended it by a further year, due to part funding received from our American Chapters. The €50,000 available funding this year was distributed among thirteen successful projects, which ranged from small landmark structures to large country houses.

We are pleased to support the boathouse on the grounds of Lexlip Castle, Co. Kildare, which belongs to the Hon Desmond and Penelope Guinness. Lexlip Castle was originally built in 1172 (rebuilt in 1837) by Adam de Hereford, a follower of Strongbow. The boathouse structure was erected in the late-18th century and represents the expansion of the estate as part of a gentleman's residence. The domed boathouse roof with its striking brick chimney is a distinctive feature that was originally clad in copper. The works involve the revival of this important landmark structure with the reinstatement of a metal roof, in addition to other repair works.

Assistance is also being provided to the repair of another landscape structure, the seven arched bridge in Co. Meath. This stone bridge is believed to have been erected in the late-17th century or early-18th century and likely functioned as a pack-horse bridge to allow the carriage of aggregate from Bearmount Quarry to Trim. Funds will support the restoration of the stone arches, which will be undertaken by Scurlogstown Olympiad, a community organisation.

A number of other notable organisations also require assistance. The independent charitable organisation, Dublin Civic Trust is restoring two adjoining townhouses in Dublin city centre. In 2016, this scheme supported the reinstatement

of missing windows at 18 Upper Ormond Quay, while this year the Trust is restoring and part reinstating a Rococo cornice that originally served a double-height space in the adjacent 67 East Arran Street (c.1760–1770). This space, now subdivided, is believed to have been a retail floor, designed for the display of high-status goods.

Financial support is also being offered to Irish Landmark Trust, a non-profit organisation that is currently converting the unoccupied gate lodges of Saunderscourt, Co. Wexford, to short term holiday use. The main house was erected in the late-17th century but abandoned in c. 1809 and demolished in the late-19th century. However, two late-18th-century gate lodges connected by a triumphal arch survive, which fell into disrepair as early as c. 1809.

Undertaking initial investigations and assessments of historic buildings is vital before any works take place. Two-staged funding is proposed at the 18th-century Bantry House, Co. Cork (remodelled in the early-19th century). The artificial-stone capitals of the pilasters decorating the building's exterior are to be inspected to support conservation recommendations, followed by the appropriate restoration of these important features. At the former Christ Church, Rathcormac, Co. Cork, a Conservation Assessment and Condition Report of this 1775 church with its 1828 vestry will be produced, to establish the significance of the building and inform the conservation approach.

Several other church buildings require help this year. Abbey Leix Old Church, Co. Laois, is a c.1750 church (later extended) on the site of a pre-Reformation church that is one of the few surviving indicators of the relocation of the town further northeast by the first Viscount de Vesce (1735–1804). A limcrete floor is proposed to address damp issues affecting the effigy tomb of Emma, Viscountess de Vesce (d. 1884). Other churches are undertaking window repairs, including the 1809 Ardahan Church, Co. Galway and St Carthage's Cathedral, Lismore, Co. Waterford, a major religious site dating from the early Christian era.

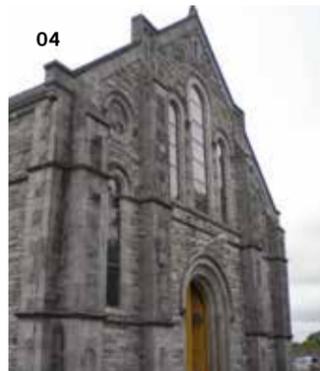
The repair of an oriel window is required at Myrtle Grove, Youghal, Co. Cork, a rare example of an

unfortified 16th-century Irish house. This window faces the medieval St Mary's Collegiate Church and is where Sir Edmund Spenser is said to have written the 'Faerie Queen'. Works will also take place at another early building, the c. 1680 former hunting lodge of Ballyarthur, Ballanagh, Co. Wicklow, where it is necessary to extensively repair a gable wall.

Furthermore, we are also pleased to support the c.1750 Bridge House, Westport, Co. Mayo. Previously we helped with roof repairs, while this year works include the repair of ceilings and floors. Ceiling repairs are also required in the impressive entrance hall of Curraghmore,

Portlaw, Co. Waterford. This country house was continually developed since medieval times and comprises a classical c.1755 house incorporating earlier fabric.

As demonstrated above, this important scheme helps owners of historic structures to fund essential works, which can often incur financial pressures. Therefore, we would like to thank all our London members and our friends in America for making this year's scheme possible. It is very much hoped that, subject to available funding, we can extend the scheme beyond 2018 to continue this particularly worthy cause.



01 Entrance of Myrtle Grove, Youghal, Co. Cork (Image courtesy of Bord Fáilte). 01 Lexlip Boathouse, during conservation works. 03 Bantry House, Co. Cork. 04 Abbey Leix Old Church, Co. Laois. 05 Saunderscourt Gate Lodges, Crossabeg, Co. Wexford. 06 St Carthage's Cathedral, Lismore, Co. Waterford.

Mary Bryan: A Tribute Dr. Edward McParland



Mary Bryan's death on 26 October 2017 was a great loss to her family, friends and acquaintances across many areas of life: sporting, academic, architectural and conservationist. Over a long life—she was born in 1936—she was brave (she fought and vanquished her first cancer in the 1990s), distinguished as a sportswoman (in both tennis and badminton), deeply committed as a conservationist (her work for the Irish Georgian Society was invaluable), and an hispanophile (she lived in Spain with her family from 1974 to 1981). And through all this, her family came first.

Born Mary O'Sullivan in Tralee, she was schooled by the Dominicans in Sion Hill, after which she took a degree in Architecture from UCD. While she was a keen tennis player—she won the Junior Irish Open Championship in 1954, and played in singles and mixed doubles in Wimbledon—she was reckoned to be among the top five badminton players in the world: she was the first lady captain of badminton in Ireland, and had many international caps.

After graduating, she worked as an architect for Guinness in both London and Dublin. On marrying Eddie Bryan, she devoted herself to home and family. The move to Spain in 1974 stimulated new commitments: the children were sent to Spanish, not international, schools, and her three surviving children have all settled in Spain. Mary's paella parties (even

those in the rain of Kill O' the Grange) will be remembered happily.

The mid-1990s brought her back to the academic life, with the award of the degree of Master of Urban and Building Conservation from UCD in 1995. As part of her degree she prepared an important dissertation on Fitzwilliam Square.

By this time she was already involved with the Irish Georgian Society, helping to organise a tour of the Czech Republic with Jeremy Williams, and sharing some of the administrative work of the Society and Foundation with Jane Fenlon. In 1995 she succeeded Jane and was appointed as Executive Secretary and Conservation Officer.

Ten years later she retired from the IGS upon her appointment as a member of An Bord Pleanála, on which she served until 2010. In that year she joined the Committee of Management of the Irish Georgian Foundation, acting as its chairwoman until 2013. Following the usual rules of rotation and retirement of directors, she left the board in 2016.

It was in Irish Georgian circles, and as a personal friend, that I knew Mary and came to value her remarkable qualities. She was a great friend of the Knight, and he relied heavily on her judgement. She was level-headed during contentious discussions, and decisive—if discreet—in her opinions. She was wise in foreseeing and avoiding unnecessary problems. She was patient with, if not approving of,

the wilder currents of opinion that washed around the Georgian board room. She enjoyed the company of colourful people, whose help she sometimes effectively solicited for the Society. She was full of energy, and up to a year or two ago she organised the IGS Conservation Awards Scheme, enjoying to the full the fun of travelling around the country to view all the short-listed submissions. There was a directness about the way she conducted meetings, a straightforward integrity, that rose above personalities and eased the conduct of business.

She was much loved by an unusually wide variety of friends. And she was fun! We all remember, and always will remember, her laughter. The bar in The Merrion Hotel will forever be for me the rendezvous where Mary and I met every month or two to discuss Georgian affairs in the company of the friend we called 'Padre Pinot Grigio'. And whatever confidences were shared on those merry occasions, no malicious or gossipy word ever passed her lips.

The Georgians and Mary Bryan's friends owe her a great debt for having enriched their lives. The Simon Community and Dogs for the Blind have lost a generous supporter. All we can do is to hope that her family will somehow manage to find some consolation in their loss.