
Conservation Grant Scheme

Ashleigh Murray

The Irish Georgian Society is delighted to announce the second successful year of the Conservation Grants Scheme. The London Chapter has made this scheme possible through funds raised from their activities and members' generous bequests. The scheme helps owners of historic Irish structures to fund necessary works which may not otherwise be possible without the support of the IGS.



This year we received over seventy applications from across the country, a higher number than last year, thus highlighting the great need for this type of funding. The Society valued all applicants but, ultimately, it was in a better position to help with certain projects. It was very challenging to determine how this year's limited budget should be spent as it was clear that several projects would really benefit from the Society's help. The London Chapter have, therefore, gone beyond the normal agreed limit of €50,000 and have generously offered €57,000.

Furthermore, each year a core grant is offered for one larger project, considered to be of particular importance and which would especially benefit from the support of the IGS. This year, as several applications were particularly worthy of this support, a core grant of €10,000 has been offered to three structures: the Lion's Gate, Co. Roscommon; Collon Parish Church, Co. Louth; and Donnybrook House, Cork.

The Lion's Gate, attributed to James Gandon (1743–1823), is a 1787 gateway in the Mote Park Estate. The last house on the estate was demolished in 1963, leaving behind several important but vulnerable landscape structures. This arched gateway, flanked by walls and gate lodges, is surmounted by a Coade stone lion, a rare feature to Ireland. Coade stone is an artificial stone that was perfected by Eleanor Coade (1733–1821) in London during the late-18th century. We are working closely with the Roscommon Heritage Group who are taking on the challenge of conserving this important but dilapidated landscape feature. The first priority is to undertake a specialist site inspection of the lion in order to devise a considered conservation methodology. Undertaking a careful inspection before engaging in repair and conservation works is the very sensible approach also being adopted at Collon Parish. The 1811–1815 church was designed by Rev. Daniel Augustus Beaufort (1739–1821),



Main Image Donnybrook House, Cork. a c.1750 country house showing later additions

01 Collon Parish Church, Co. Louth. The 1811–1815 church was designed by Rev. Daniel Augustus Beaufort **02** Ashleigh Murray, London chapter, Michael McMahon, Collon church restoration group and Primrose Wilson, chair conservation grants committee **03** The Lion's Gate, Co. Roscommon. A c.1787 gateway in the Mote Park Estate



an amateur architect and rector. The roof is in poor condition and water leakage is beginning to impact on the striking internal fan-vaulted ceiling). A detailed study of the roof space above the plaster ceiling is required to guide the necessary repair and stabilisation works.

Water ingress can have a detrimental effect on historic fabric and Donnybrook House is a c.1750 country house that also faces this challenge. This single-storey house, with its unusual flanking two-storey end towers, has been in the Crichton family for three generations. Essential roof repairs are required to protect this important structure.

Two other structures also face water ingress problems. Coolattin House, Co. Wicklow, a large c.1800 country residence, now a golf club, was originally designed by John Carr of York (1723–1807). Golf clubs are, unfortunately, still struggling to recover from the economic downturn. Necessary repairs to the roof are required to protect the stairwell's decorative plasterwork, already damaged from water penetration. Similarly, roof repairs are required to the portico and the lantern rooflights at St. Paul's Church (c.1837), Dublin, designed by Patrick Byrne (1783–1864).

The Presbyterian Church Dún Laoghaire (c.1861), Co. Dublin, contains a beautiful stained-glass rose window that is in danger of collapse. The stone mullions' iron pins are rusting and expanding, causing pieces of stone to crack and break away. The works include replacing the stone mullions with new Portland stone, introducing steel pins and re-leading the glass.

We were delighted to receive applications for two thatched cottages as these structures are becoming increasingly rare in Ireland. The Thatched

Cottage (c.1780–1800), Co. Donegal, has belonged to the same family since its construction. Now left empty, a condition report is required to help guide the next generation with the necessary works. The Mall, Co. Cork, is an early-19th-century dwelling belonging to the Irish Landmark Trust. This charity saves small historic buildings by converting them into self-catering holiday homes. We are pleased to help this charity with the re-thatching of this important vernacular house.

An Taisce, who work to preserve and protect Ireland's natural and built heritage, is another charity we are proud to support. Their headquarters are located in Tailors' Hall (1706), the oldest surviving guildhall in Dublin. The southern wall has to be pinned back to prevent collapse and the cracked granite door surround and pediment require restoration.

There is a wide variety of historic structures that require maintenance and conservation which puts a financial burden on owners. The IGS's Conservation Grants Scheme, therefore, helps to fund essential works for the continued protection of these historic assets.

There is a wide variety of historic structures that require maintenance and conservation which puts a financial burden on owners. The IGS's Conservation Grants Scheme helps to fund essential works for the continued protection of these historic assets.

