

# COUNTRY HOUSE COLLECTIONS: THEIR PAST, PRESENT & FUTURE



**CALL FOR  
PAPERS**

**Centre for the Study of Historic Irish Houses and Estates,  
History Department, Maynooth University  
17th Annual Conference, 13-15 May 2019**



**T**he theme for the Seventeenth Annual Historic Houses Conference, to be held at Maynooth in May 2019 will be **'Country House Collections: Their Past, Present & Future'**.

Country houses have been defined by their contents as much as by their architecture and the families who occupied them. They have boasted assemblies ranging from antiquities, paintings, decorative arts, books and manuscripts, to antiquarian, ethnographic or scientific collections. Outdoors their gardens were often adorned with collections of other sorts, monuments, sculpture, and horticultural specimens. Rarely have such collections survived intact – sales, destruction, fire, or theft have been repeated occurrences. Country house collecting has been about dispersal as well as acquisition.

The conference will look at how and why collections were amassed, examine their break up, and consider the afterlife of objects as they moved into the art market, the museum world, or elsewhere. How does the identity of a house change if its contents have been removed? What were the reasons for such dispersal, were these actions chosen or enforced? What happens to a collection once it has begun to be dismembered, and how are objects viewed and understood in new locations by different audiences? The conference will also discuss the role of art in country houses today, particularly how historic collections combine with, or react to, contemporary installations.

Papers on any aspect of the above relating to collections in Ireland, the UK, or Europe, will be considered. **Enquiries and abstracts of no more than 400 words should be sent to Professor Terence Dooley and Professor Christopher Ridgway before 5 January 2019 at the following addresses: [Terence.a.dooley@mu.ie](mailto:Terence.a.dooley@mu.ie), and [cridgway@castlehoward.co.uk](mailto:cridgway@castlehoward.co.uk)**