

# GREAT IRISH HOUSEHOLDS

*Inventories from the  
Long Eighteenth Century*

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*Inventories from the  
Long Eighteenth Century*

FOREWORD BY TOBY BARNARD

PREFACE BY LESLIE FITZPATRICK

CONSULTANT EDITOR TESSA MURDOCH

*A*  
John Adamson



# GREAT IRISH HOUSEHOLDS

## *Inventories from the Long Eighteenth Century*

**Inventories of fourteen great Irish country houses, three Dublin town houses and one London town house yield remarkable insights into the lifestyle of leading families across Ireland and the households that supported them. With startling directness, they record in detail the goods and chattels inherited, accumulated, or acquired for enjoyment or everyday use.**



Pompeo Batoni (1708-1787): *Wills Hill, 1st Earl of Hillsborough, later 1st Marquess of Downshire (1718-1793)*, 1766, oil on canvas (Private Collection)

THE VALUE OF INVENTORIES in charting how houses were arranged, furnished and used is now widely appreciated. Typically, the listings and valuations were occasioned by the death of an owner and the consequent need to deal with testamentary dispositions. That was not always so. The inventory for Castlecomer House, Co. Kilkenny, for example, was drawn up to make a claim following the house's devastation in the 1798 uprising.

Mostly hitherto unpublished, the inventories chosen give new-found insights into the lifestyle and taste of some of the foremost families of the day. Above stairs, the inventories show the evolving collecting habits and tastes of eighteenth-century patrons across Ireland and how the interiors of great town and country houses were arranged or responded to new materials and new ideas. The meticulous recording of the contents of the kitchen and scullery likewise sheds light on life below stairs. Itemized equipment required for the brewhouse, dairy, stables, garden and farmyard reflects the at times significant scale of the communities the houses supported and the remarkable degree of self-sufficiency at some of the demesnes.

A comprehensive index facilitates access to the myriad items within the inventories, while the books listed at three of the houses are tentatively identified in separate appendices. A foreword, together with preambles to the inventories, sets the households in their historical context. The book will appeal to historians of interiors, patronage, collecting and material culture, as well as to scholars, curators, collectors, creative designers, film directors, bibliographers, lexicographers and historical novelists.

**Two eight-page colour sections feature likenesses of most of the owners or householders of the properties at the time, including portraits by Pompeo Batoni, Michael Dahl, Thomas Gainsborough, Godfrey Kneller, Thomas Lawrence, Joshua Reynolds, as well as the Irish artists Hugh Douglas Hamilton and Charles Robertson.**

**This collection is an essential work of reference** *Country Life*

## THE INVENTORIES

*Lismore Castle, Co. Waterford, 1702/3*

THE ORMONDE INVENTORIES

*Kilkenny Castle, Co. Kilkenny, 1705*

*Dublin Castle, 1707*

*The Duke of Ormonde's House, St James's Square, London, c. 1710*

*Bishop's mansion house, Elphin, Co. Roscommon, 1740*

*Captain Balfour's town house, auction sale, Dublin, 1741/2*

*Hillsborough Castle, Co. Down, 1746 and 1777*

*Kilrush House, Freshford, Co. Kilkenny, 1750*

*No. 10 Henrietta Street, Dublin (Luke Gardiner's house), 1772*

*Morrinstown Lattin, Co. Kildare, 1773*

*Baronscourt, Co. Tyrone, 1782*

*Castlecomer House, Co. Kilkenny, 1798*

*Killadoon, Co. Kildare, 1807-29*

*Shelton Abbey, near Arklow, Co. Wicklow, 1816*

*Borris House, Co. Carlow, 1818*

*Carton House, Co. Kildare, 1818*

*Newbridge House, Co. Dublin, 1821*

*Mount Stewart, Co. Down, 1821*



One of a set of four pincushion dishes, c. 1765, maker's mark of John Laughlin (fl. 1745-75), silver, Mount Stewart, Co. Down (National Trust, Bryan Rutledge)

FRONT William van der Hagen (fl. 1720-45): *An extensive view of Carton House, County Kildare, with Maynooth in the distance*, detail, oil on canvas (© 2017 Christie's Images Limited)

BACK One of a set of Irish George III mahogany hall chairs from Killadoon, Co. Kildare, painted with the crest of the Clements family (Sotheby's Archive)

Background detail of a page from the Dublin Castle inventory, 1707 (Ormonde Papers, ms. 2521, courtesy of the National Library of Ireland)



John Brooks (fl. 1730-56): *Right Reverend Dr Robert Howard (1683-1740), Lord Bishop of Elphin (1730-40)*, mezzotint after a painting by Michael Dahl (1656/1659-1743) (Bequest of Rev. Wm. A. Reynell, B.D., 1906, RCB Library, Dublin)



Henry Brooke (attributed): *A New System of Fairery*, book published in Dublin in 1750: title page of volume II, Newbridge House, Co. Dublin, 1821 inventory (Cobbe Collection, courtesy Alec Cobbe)

Toby Barnard, FBA, is Emeritus Fellow in History at Hertford College, University of Oxford, and a specialist in the political, social and cultural histories of Ireland and England, c. 1600-1800.

Leslie Fitzpatrick was formerly the Samuel and M. Patricia Grober Associate Curator, European Decorative Arts, at the Art Institute of Chicago.

Tessa Murdoch, FSA, is an independent scholar after forty years as curator at the Victoria and Albert Museum.