

SILVER IN GEORGIAN IRELAND



National Museum of Ireland, Collins Barracks • Wednesday 30th May 2018

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Venue: The Palatine Room, National Museum of Ireland - Decorative Arts & History, Collins Barracks, Benburb Street, Dublin 7, Ireland

Date: Wednesday 30th May 2018

Price: €125 (to include lunch)

The Irish Georgian Society, Maynooth University and the National Museum of Ireland are partnering to deliver a symposium on Wednesday 30th May 2018 focusing on silver in Georgian Ireland. The symposium will showcase new research by established and emerging scholars, and examine the circumstances in which silver objects were made, used, valued and displayed in Georgian Ireland.

The symposium will appeal to both a specialist audience of academics and collectors, and the general public. It seeks to offer a variety of engaging perspectives on one of Dublin's foremost artisanal trades during a period when new commodities, novel technologies and fashionable imports were transforming the market for luxury goods. The programme of talks will be complemented by a tour of the National Museum of Ireland's silver galleries, an unrivalled display of Irish silver from the period, which will allow both experienced and novice silver scholars the opportunity to consider the artefact evidence at first hand.

2018 marks the 21st anniversary of the opening of the silver galleries at the National Museum of Ireland, Collins Barracks. It thus represents a timely moment to reflect on one of the highlights of the decorative arts collection, which has not been explored before in the context of such a focused study day. The inclusion of speakers from the United Kingdom and Europe allows for a nuanced view of silver in Georgian Ireland, considering how the movement of people, patterns, and plate in the early modern world affected what was crafted and coveted in Irish towns and cities.



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Silver in Georgian Ireland has been made possible through sponsorship from an anonymous donor, Ecclesiastical Insurance, Paul Mellon Centre for the Studies in British Art and Weldon of Dublin.

The symposium has been convened by Dr Alison FitzGerald, Lecturer, Maynooth University, who is responsible for providing the academic programming, Emmeline Henderson, IGS Assistant Director and Conservation Manager and William Laffan, IGS Committee Member. The symposium forms an action of the Irish Georgian Society's Conservation Education Programme, which is supported by Merrion Property Group and Heather and John Picerne.



Rare six compartment snuff box by Benjamin Stokes (Dublin, c.1750) (Photograph courtesy of Weldon of Dublin)

PROGRAMME

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- 9.30 am Registration
- 10.00 am Welcome, **Dr Audrey Whitty**, Keeper of the Art and Industrial Division (Decorative Arts and History), National Museum of Ireland

SESSION ONE

Chair: **Dr David Fleming**, Irish Georgian Society Committee Member & Lecturer, Department of History, University of Limerick

- 10.10 am ***Changed Utterly? Continuity and change in Dublin's silver trade during the long eighteenth century***
Dr Alison FitzGerald, Lecturer, Department of History, Maynooth University, Ireland
- 10.35 am ***"Making the Grand Figure": the social currency of silverware in Georgian Ireland***
Dr Toby Barnard, FBA, Emeritus Fellow in History, University of Oxford
- 11.00 am ***Smaller Cities: Irish provincial silver in the Georgian Era***
John R Bowen, Master Warden, The Company of Goldsmiths of Dublin
- 11.25 am Questions & Answers

11.40 am - 12.05 pm: Coffee Break

SESSION TWO

Chair: **Donough Cahill**, Irish Georgian Society, Executive Director

- 12.05 pm ***"The Metal stamp'd by honest Fame": the production and consumption of gold and silver boxes in Georgian Dublin***
Damian Collins, Postgraduate student, Department of History, Maynooth University
- 12.30 pm ***Marks of Craftsmanship? An historical view on the politics of branding and hallmarks***
Keynote speaker: Professor Bert De Munck, Department of History, Centre for Urban History, University of Antwerp
- 1.05 pm Questions & Answers

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1.20pm – 2.50pm Lunch & Tour of the NMI silver galleries with Michael Kenny, former curator in the NMI's Art and Industrial Division. (Delegates divided into two groups with 45 mins allocated for lunch & 45 mins allocated for tour)

SESSION THREE

Chair: **Dr Alison FitzGerald**, Lecturer, Department of History, Maynooth University

- 2.50 pm ***Plate Inventories as Evidence: the Dukes' of Ormonde plate***
Dr Thomas Sinsteden, Independent Scholar
- 3.15 pm ***'Taken or Destroy'd': the household silver of Castlecomer House, 1798***
Dr Jessica Cunningham, Independent Scholar
- 3.40 pm ***The Magnetism of Fine Gems: jewellery in eighteenth-century Ireland***
Dr Zara Power, Independent Scholar
- 4.05 pm ***Elite Gift Exchange: a case study of Emily Lennox's christening bowl***
Dr Tessa Murdoch, Deputy Keeper, Department of Sculpture, Metalwork, Ceramics and Glass, V&A
- 4.30 pm Questions & Answers
- 5.00 pm Close and thank you, **Emmeline Henderson**, Irish Georgian Society, Assistant Director & Conservation Manager



Emily Lennox's Christening Bowl, 1731 by Edward Feline (copyright V&A)

SYMPOSIUM ABSTRACTS

Silver in Georgian Ireland • Wednesday 30th May 2018

***“Making the Grand Figure”*: the social currency of silverware in Georgian Ireland**
Dr Toby Barnard, FBA, Emeritus Fellow in History, University of Oxford.

Barnard’s talk will concentrate on developments in writing and research on material culture in Ireland since his *Making the Grand Figure* was published more than a decade ago, and suggest possible new directions. In particular it will consider the little known evidence of possessions (including precious metals) in seventeenth-century Dublin, soon to be published in a volume of the Tholsell court records.

Smaller Cities: Irish provincial silver in the Georgian Era

John R Bowen, Master Warden, The Company of Goldsmiths of Dublin

Irish silver made in Dublin in the Georgian period (1714-1830) is widely known for the quality of its design and execution and in many cases is comparable with fine London work of the period. This should not be surprising as up to 1800, Dublin was the seat of the Vice-Regal Court. Competently wrought silver was a feature of not only Dublin, but of several and in some cases surprising smaller cities and towns in Ireland. This presentation explores some of this history, and tells the fascinating stories behind a few chosen items. Silver items were produced to meet demand from ecclesiastical, civic, and domestic buyers, all essentially local to the town of production.



Coffee Pot (c. 1735) by William Newenham (Copyright A.C. Harris Ltd)

Peaceful domestic conditions through the eighteenth century saw progress in many aspects of society and the emergence of a prosperous middle class in the towns and cities. These people increased the demand for luxury goods, including silver, to show off their prosperity. The lack of confidence in contemporary banking systems also meant that a proportion of people’s wealth was physically held by its owners in the form of wrought plate. As well as silver being made in Dublin, Cork and Limerick and Galway, people may be surprised to learn that Kinsale, Youghal, Waterford, Kilkenny and Clonmel also produced silver in the Georgian period.

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“The Metal stamp’d by honest Fame”: the production and consumption of gold and silver boxes in Georgian Dublin

Damian Collins, Postgraduate student, Department of History, Maynooth University

Among the goldsmiths of Georgian Dublin, there was a small cohort that specialised in the production of gold and silver boxes, many of which were presented as gifts by the corporations of Dublin and other towns and cities and by civic institutions. These boxes have survived in significant numbers, along with some records of their procurement and presentation by the gifting institutions. What can these sources reveal about charges in the structure and organisation of the goldsmiths’ trade in Georgian Dublin? How did the emergence of luxury retailers in the city alter the status of specialised goldsmiths and the nature of their relationships with consumers?



Silver box presented by the city of Dublin to John Pentland by James Kennedy, Dublin, 1795. (Private collection)

‘Taken or Destroy’d’: the household silver of Castlecomer House, 1798

Dr Jessica Cunningham, Independent Scholar

In June 1798 Castlecomer House was plundered and destroyed by the United Irishmen during the uprising of that year. Home to the Countess of Ormonde, heir to the Wandesforde Estate, both Castlecomer House and the village of Castlecomer in County Kilkenny were, according to the *Freeman’s Journal* reporting that month, ‘consumed to ashes’ by the attack. In the aftermath of the house’s destruction, the countess had an extensive inventory drawn up to account for the enormous losses of furniture, paintings, books, linens, equipment and silver. Within this context, this paper centres on the Countess of Ormonde’s efforts to piece together the extensive list of plate which was taken or destroyed and her ensuing directives to replenish her collection of silver. Using inventories, bills and letters, particularly the countess’s correspondence with the Dublin goldsmith Edward Egerton, this paper explores this unique episode while also highlighting the essential role of silver in the late-Georgian Irish household.

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Marks of Craftsmanship? An historical view on the politics of branding and hallmarks
Professor Bert De Munck, Professor, Department of History, Centre for Urban History, University of Antwerp

While art historians have often used hallmarks to identify the producer of an object, economic historians currently reduce them to instruments for solving problems of information asymmetry. This presentation will connect early modern hallmarks and practices of branding to the issue of the perception of skills and the repertoires of evaluation regarding craftsmanship. It will be argued that hallmarks can be used as a source to tackle questions about the historical connection between labour and skills on the one hand, and a product's value on the other. Looking at them from a long-term perspective and addressing them as instrumental in objectifying product quality, they open up a space to examine the construction of product qualities and the ways in which skills and craftsmanship were implicated in this.

Changed Utterly? Continuity and change in Dublin's silver trade during the long eighteenth century

Dr Alison FitzGerald, Lecturer, Department of History, Maynooth University

This paper will consider continuity and change in Dublin's silver trade during the long eighteenth century. It will investigate the impact of British imports on the Dublin trade and the inevitable tensions between manufacturers and retailers at a time when innovative technology, new luxuries and associated advertising strategies were transforming the market for luxury goods. The paper will also address the historiography of Irish Georgian silver, highlighting potential directions for further research.



Soup tureen and cover by Thomas Walker (1751) (Photograph courtesy of the National Museum of Ireland)

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Billhead of the goldsmiths Richard and Jeremiah D'Olier (Photograph courtesy of The Trustees of the British Museum)



Trade card of William Law (Photograph courtesy of The Trustees of the British Museum)

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Elite gift exchange: a case study of Emily Lennox's covered Christening bowl

Dr Tessa Murdoch, Deputy Keeper, Department of Sculpture, Metalwork, Ceramics and Glass, V&A

The unusual form of the Christening gift from George II to his goddaughter Lady Emily Lennox presented in 1731 and supplied by London-based Huguenot goldsmith Edward Feline will be the subject of Dr Murdoch's presentation. This will encompass the subsequent history of the gift and the context for its use both in England and Ireland, at Richmond House, London; Goodwood House, Sussex during Emily's childhood; and subsequently at Carton, County Kildare and Leinster House, Dublin.

The Magnetism of Fine Gems: jewellery in eighteenth-century Ireland

Dr Zara Power, Independent Scholar

Studies on costume in eighteenth-century Ireland do not describe or illustrate jewellery as a part of fashion. This is not only incongruous, but entirely unreflective of the 'way we wore'. Recovering traces of jewellery from a wide variety of sources, this lecture will highlight that a dazzling array of it was made and worn in eighteenth-century Ireland.

Plate Inventories as Evidence: The Dukes' of Ormonde Plate

Dr Thomas Sinsteden, Independent Scholar

A closer look at some 22,000 oz of silver over 40 decades: What was fashionable, what fell out of fashion, what happened to it all?



Emily Lennox's Christening Bowl, 1731 by Edward Feline (copyright V&A)

BIOGRAPHIES

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Toby Barnard has been a fellow of Hertford College, Oxford, since 1976 (emeritus from 2012). His first book, *Cromwellian Ireland*, appeared in 1976, and has been followed by *A New Anatomy of Ireland* (2003), *Making the Grand Figure: lives and possessions in Ireland, 1641-1770* (2004), *Irish Protestant ascents and descents* (2004); *A guide to the sources for the history of material culture in Ireland, 1500-2000* (2005); *Improving Ireland? Projectors, prophets and profiteers, 1641-1786* (2008) and most recently in 2017 *Brought to Book: Print in Ireland, 1680-1784*.

John R Bowen, Master Warden, The Company of Goldsmiths of Dublin, is a Chartered Engineer by profession. Bowen has a life-long interest in the study of Irish Provincial Silver. He curated the celebrated *Airgeadoir* exhibition of Cork Silver during Cork's tenure as European Capital of Culture in 2005, and led the team which presented *A Celebration of Limerick's Silver* at the Hunt Museum in 2007-8. He was appointed Master Warden of The Company of Goldsmiths of Dublin in 2017.



Sugar bowl (c. 1755) by Joseph Johns (Copyright Janice O'Connell)

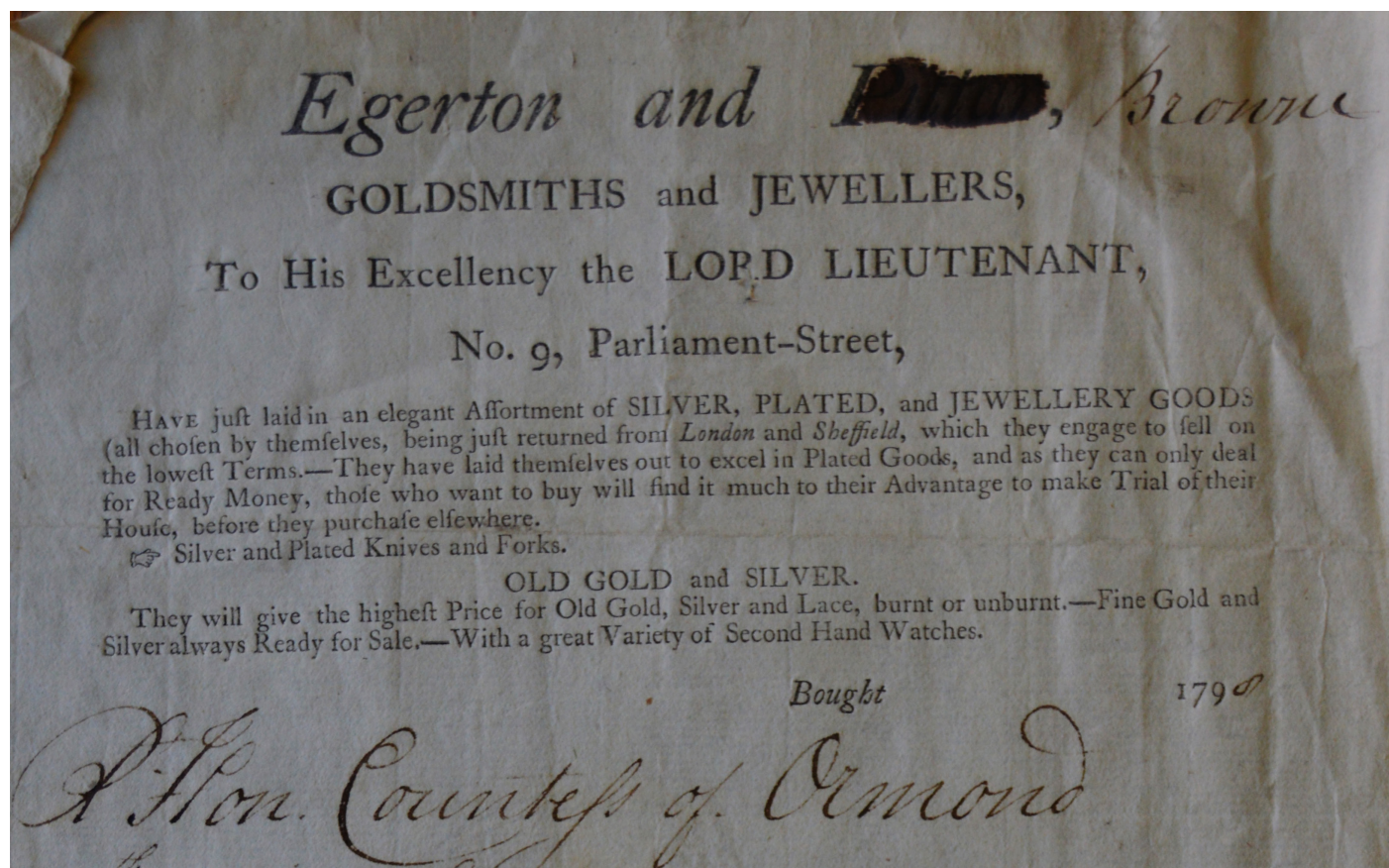
Donough Cahill is the Executive Director of the Irish Georgian Society, where he oversees its strategic and day-to-day operations. He works with the Irish Georgian Foundation's Committee of Management, its sub-committees and working groups and with the Society's North American and UK based membership in promoting the appreciation and protection of Ireland's architectural heritage and allied arts. Most recently he is responsible for overseeing the restoration of the City Assembly House, which now serves as the Society's headquarters and as a hub for promoting heritage and culture in the heart of the Georgian city.

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Damian Collins is a graduate of the University of Dublin and the European University Institute (Florence). He is currently undertaking postgraduate research under the supervision of Dr Alison FitzGerald in the Department of History, Maynooth University.

Jessica Cunningham completed her PhD in Maynooth University's History Department in 2016. Her thesis was entitled 'Craft and culture: the design, production and consumption of silver in seventeenth-century Ireland'. Jessica is the recipient of Maynooth University's John and Pat Hume Scholarship (2011-14) and the Irish Research Council's Government of Ireland Postgraduate Scholarship (2014-15). She is currently working as a researcher for the forthcoming book: *Great Irish Households: inventories from the long-eighteenth century* (John Adamson, Cambridge, 2018).



Bill head for Dublin goldsmiths Egerton and Browne, 1798 (Photograph courtesy of the National Library of Ireland)

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Bert De Munck is Professor at the History Department of the University of Antwerp, Belgium, teaching 'History of the early modern period', 'Theory of historical knowledge', and 'Public history'. He is a member of the Centre for Urban History at the same university and director of the Scientific Research Community (WOG) 'Urban agency, The historical fabrication of the city as an object of study' and of the interdisciplinary 'Urban Studies Institute'. While he has worked on apprenticeship, craft guilds, labour and social capital, his current research interests include the circulation of technical knowledge, guilds and civil society, repertoires of evaluation regarding products and skills, and conceptual and theoretical approaches to urban history and urban studies.

Alison FitzGerald lectures in the Department of History at Maynooth University. She has published extensively on the market for silver in eighteenth-century Ireland, including articles in *Apollo*, *Irish Architectural and Decorative Studies* and *Silver Studies*. Her monograph *Silver in Georgian Dublin: Making, Selling, Consuming* was published by Routledge in 2016. She is a Director of the Castletown Foundation, a member of the academic advisory board for *Irish Architectural and Decorative Studies*, The Journal of the Irish Georgian Society, and Secretary to the Antique Plate Committee of the Company of Goldsmiths of Dublin. Her current research project examines the history of popular entertainment in Ireland during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

David Fleming is a lecturer in the Department of History at the University of Limerick and course director of its MA Local History. He is a historian of eighteenth-century Ireland. On completing his undergraduate studies at the University of Limerick, he was awarded, in 2006, a DPhil from the University of Oxford, where he had been a senior scholar at Hertford College and an Arts and Humanities Research Council postgraduate awardee. His research concentrates on the social and political development of eighteenth-century Ireland, and he has published on topics ranging from provincial politics, poverty, religious conversion, associational behaviour and prostitution. In addition to his academic career, he is treasurer of the Group for the Study of Irish Historic Settlement, secretary of the Eighteenth-Century Ireland Society, a trustee of the Hunt Museum's Trust and a committee member of the Irish Georgian Foundation.

Michael Kenny joined the staff of the National Museum in 1975 and worked as a curator in the Museum's Art and Industrial Division until his retirement in 2012. He curated numerous Museum exhibitions over the years, including the Museum's 75th and 90th anniversary exhibitions for 1916 and the 200th anniversary of the 1798 Rising. He also curated the Museum's exhibitions of Irish silver and Irish coinage, both still in place. He has published a number of historical works based on the National Museum's collections, including *The 1798 Rising*, *The Fenians* and *The Road to Freedom*. He has also published articles on Irish coinage and Irish silver in various journals and periodicals.

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Tessa Murdoch's PhD 'Huguenot artists, designers and craftsmen in Great Britain and Ireland, 1680-1760', University of London, 1982 fed into the Museum of London exhibition *The Quiet Conquest: The Huguenots 1685-1985*. Elected Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries in 1988, she joined V&A Furniture and Woodwork in 1990 assisting with research for the acclaimed British Galleries. In 2002 she was appointed Deputy Keeper, Sculpture, Metalwork, Ceramics and Glass and Head of Metalwork.

She was lead curator for the V&A's 2005 Sacred Silver and Stained Glass Galleries and the 2009 Rosalinde and Arthur Gilbert Galleries. Publications include *Noble Households: Eighteenth-Century Inventories of Great English Houses* (2006) and *Beyond the Border: Huguenot Goldsmiths in Northern Europe and North America* (2008). *Going for Gold: Craftsmanship and Collecting of Gold Boxes* (2014) the proceedings of a V&A/Wallace Collection conference held in 2010, was co-edited with Heike Zech.

Zara Power completed her PhD at the University of Limerick in 2016. Dr. Power currently works as an assistant curator at Dacorum Heritage Trust Ltd. in Berkhamsted, Hertfordshire. She was awarded the Desmond Guinness Scholarship by the Irish Georgian Society in 2014 and a Government of Ireland Postgraduate Scholarship by the Irish Research Council from 2014 to 2016.

Thomas Sinsteden is an independent scholar (Trinity College Dublin MD), who has been academically interested in Irish silver since the 1990s.

Audrey Whitty has been Keeper of the Art and Industrial Division (Decorative Arts and History), National Museum of Ireland since January 2015. From 2001 to 2013 Whitty was Curator of Ceramics, Glass and Asian collections, Art and Industrial Division, National Museum of Ireland. A graduate (B.A.: History and Archaeology) and postgraduate (M.A.: Archaeology) of University College Dublin, she also has a doctorate from Trinity College Dublin in History of Art as a result of her thesis, 'The Albert Bender (1866-1941) Donations of Far Eastern Art to the National Museum of Ireland in the context of his Cultural Interests in Ireland and California'. She has authored many publications to include, *The Albert Bender Collection of Asian Art in the National Museum of Ireland*, which was published by the National Museum and Wordwell Books in 2011.

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Billhead of Arthur Keen, goldsmith and jeweller, 67 Dame Street, Dublin (Bodleian Library, John Johnson Collection, album 143)



Billhead of Michael Cormick, 22 Parliament Street, Dublin (Bodleian Library, John Johnson Collection, album 143)



SILVER IN GEORGIAN IRELAND - BOOKING FORM

Venue: The Palatine Room, National Museum of Ireland - Decorative Arts & History, Collins Barracks, Benburb Street, Dublin 7, Ireland

Date: Wednesday 30th May 2018 **Price:** €125 (to include lunch)

Pre-booking with the Irish Georgian Society is essential as places are limited. Bookings can be made online through the Irish Georgian Society website www.igs.ie or by post using the booking form below.

Booking forms should be returned to:

Irish Georgian Society
58 South William Street, Dublin 2
ph. 01-679 8675
Email: info@igs.ie

Cancellation Policy

Bookings cancelled more than 14 days in advance will be refunded, less an administration fee of €10 per person.

Cancellations within 14 days will not be refunded.

Delegate names can be changed up to 7 days in advance.

Delegate(s) name and if desired name of organisation represented:

Address:

Telephone:

Email*:

No. of places required (€125 each):

Cheque amount: _____ (All cheques made payable to Irish Georgian Society)

Visa Card / Mastercard No.: _____

Name on card: _____

Expiry Date (MM/YYYY): _____

Security Code (last 3 digits on reverse of card): _____

Purchase Order No. (if relevant): _____

Dietary requirements: please circle: Vegetarian Vegan Coeliac Dairy Intolerant

* Please ensure you provide the IGS with your email and phone number in order that we may contact you in the unlikely event of a change to the programme.