

Centre for the Study of Historic Irish Houses and Estates,
History Department, Maynooth University presents

EXPLORING THE MENTAL WORLD OF THE COUNTRY HOUSE



**20th Anniversary Annual Historic Houses Conference
Maynooth University 9-10 May 2022**



The Interior of the Library at Cassiobury, Before 1816, by Augustus Charles Pugin

Cooper Hewitt, Smithsonian Design Museum/Public Domain

The theme of the 20th Anniversary Historic Houses Conference to be held at Maynooth University will be ‘Exploring the Mental World of the Country House’.

Country houses are masterpieces of material culture, they are triumphs of architecture, fine and decorative art, and landscape design, but they are also about the history and transmission of ideas.

In varying degrees their occupants (above and below stairs, indoors and outdoors) thought, conversed, read, and responded to their milieu through books, newspapers, as well as other media and forms of knowledge. In recent years country house libraries and archives have steadily revealed more evidence on how people in country houses fashioned themselves and their views of the world.

The conference will examine the intellectual background to the country house. What is the meaning of all those volumes in bookcases, did they do more than just decorate a room? How were they acquired, read, and put to use? By what means did elite society exchange ideas, absorb new trends, and engage in wider debate, especially when at home in the country? To what degree was this knowledge valued and displayed in terms of decoration or stylish library design, and how did houses preserve, or neglect, their books and other records? How did members of a household entertain or better themselves, what was popular to read with whom – men, women and children? The classics, natural history, literature, genealogy, fiction, and other subjects feature in many country house libraries, and very often a battered, plain copy of a publication will reveal more than the most pristine edition in a lavish ornamental binding. In what ways did books furnish minds as well as interiors?

Beyond the demesne walls how has the world of the country house been perceived and understood in fiction, poetry, and drama and, more recently, film? How have these treatments shaped a far wider understanding of the country house as a cultural and literary phenomenon? *Exploring the Mental World of the Country House* will examine these and other related questions.

The conference will also mark the twentieth anniversary since the first conference in 2002 following the foundation of the Centre. There will be an opportunity to celebrate the work of the Centre, its teaching, publications, exhibitions, and past conferences, as well as bring together together friends and delegates old and new.

After a hiatus of two years the 2022 conference will be a live gathering at Maynooth, where everyone will be welcome. There will be provision to join the proceedings by a link for those unable to attend in person.

IN ASSOCIATION WITH:





Arthur Devis, *Lord and Lady Kildare Laying Out the Park at Carton, 1753*, oil on canvas



George Howard, *Sir David Dundas at his Desk*

Day 1 Monday 9 May, Maynooth University

08.30-09.15 Registration

09.15-09.30 Welcome: Professor Terence Dooley, Director CSHIHE, Maynooth University
Rosemary Collier, Assistant Secretary General, Head of Heritage and Capital Works Delivery, OPW

09.30-10.00 **PLENARY 1**

David Cannadine How Do We Study Country Houses Now – in Ireland and Elsewhere?

10.00-11.10 **SESSION 1**

Anna-Maria Hajba An Intergenerational Chronicle: The Library at Adare Manor, County Limerick

Elisabeth Grass 'The Progress of Civilisation': The English Country House Library as a Colonial Space

Tim Pye The Benevolence of Books: Sharing the Country House Library

11.10-11.30 Tea/Coffee

11.30-12.40 **SESSION 2**

Paul Nash Viscount Carlow and the Corvinus Press

Catherine Thewissen A Forgotten Era: The Big House in Jesse Louis Moore Rickard's First World War Fiction

Ian d'Alton 'An effect rather than a reality?': How the Irish Gentry Perceived Their Houses

12.40-13.45 Lunch

13.45-14.15 **PLENARY 2**

Roy Foster Safe and Unsafe Houses: Architecture and the Irish Literary Imagination



Wellcome Collection/Public Domain



In the Library, by Georg Reimer
National Museum in Warsaw/
Wikimedia Commons

14.15-15.45 **SESSION 3**

Katie Crowther An Industrial Country Residence: Quarry Bank House as Intellectual Hub and Mental Retreat in the Writing of Hannah Greg 1766-1828

Kristina Decker Mary Delany and the Mental and Creative World of Delville

A.J. Solomons Re-Constructing Eighteenth-Century Female Book Collections in National Trust Libraries

James Frazer 'A Persevering Proclamation of Gospel Truth': the 3rd Earl of Roden and Evangelical Christianity at Tollymore Park and Dundalk House, c.1820-70

15.45-16.15 Tea/Coffee

16.15-16.45 **PLENARY 3**

Elizabeth Grubgeld The Moore Brothers and the Intellectual Legacy of Moore Hall, County Mayo

18.00 Reception and Conference Dinner in the Pugin Dining Hall

Day 2 Tuesday 10 May, Maynooth University

09.20-09.50 **PLENARY 4**

Mark Purcell The Country House Library in Ireland, Rise, Decline, and Fall

09.50-11.00 **SESSION 5**

Maeve O'Riordan 'As Stunted as the Trees on the Edge of our Windswept Woods?': The Intellectual Lives of Unmarried Women in the Big House

Cathal Dowd Smith Frances Power Cobbe: Daughter of the Irish Country House

Lucy Brownson These Women's Work: Tracing the Gendered History of Intellectual Discovery at Chatsworth



Duke of Leinster's Library at Carton House, c.1900
Courtesy of Conor Mallaghan



Engraving by Isaac Taylor, 1765
Wellcome Collection/Public Domain

11.00-11.30 Tea/Coffee

11.30-12.40 **SESSION 6**

Kate Retford Reading the Eighteenth-Century Print Room

Deirdre Cullen The Painted Decorations in the Long Gallery at Castletown House – New Light on the Intellectual Lives of Thomas and Lady Louisa Conolly

Elizabeth Jamieson 'Ancient Deeds, Valuable Manuscripts and Private Letters Lie about in Wild Confusion': A History of the Archives at Ham House, Knole and Cowdray Park

12.40-13.40 Lunch

13.40-14.10 **PLENARY 5**

Ray Gillespie Books, Butlers and Bodies: the Irish Country House and its Users, 1600-1800

14.10-15.20 **SESSION 7**

Aileen Spitere Annes Grove's Horticultural and Botanical Library

Jeremy Hill Surprise in an Archive: The Photography of Historian Goddard H. Orpen

Nora Moroney A Sceptical Chemist: the Robert Boyle Collection at the Benjamin Iveagh Library, Farnleigh House

15.30-16.00 **PLENARY 6**

Christopher Ridgway The House of Ideas

16.00 Closing Remarks

16.15 End of Conference

Conference Biographies and Abstracts

Lucy Brownson These Women's Work: Tracing the Gendered History of Intellectual Discovery at Chatsworth

Studies of intellectual life in the country house have tended to emphasise a masculinised, élite tradition, overlooking women's interactions with the collections they lived and worked amongst. In the library and archives at Chatsworth House, Derbyshire, women have left traces of their work everywhere – in legacy finding aids, boxes of uncatalogued material, and in the very fabric of the building itself. This paper will focus on two women who helped to shape Chatsworth into an outward-looking research site, and present a feminist history of intellectual engagement in the country house.

Lucy Brownson is an archivist, educator, and PhD candidate at the University of Sheffield and the Chatsworth House Trust, UK, where she researches the history of archival practices at Chatsworth. Lucy teaches at Dundee University's Centre for Archive and Information Studies, and she is a co-organiser of Sheffield Feminist Archive, a community archive documenting grassroots feminism across Sheffield.

David Cannadine How Do We Study Country Houses Now – in Ireland and Elsewhere?

Sir David Cannadine FBA is Dodge Professor of History at Princeton University, Visiting Professor of History at the University of Oxford, and Editor of the Oxford Dictionary of National Biography. His publications include, *Victorious Century: The United Kingdom, 1800-1906* (2018) and *The County House: Past, Present and Future* (2018).

Katie Crowther An Industrial Country Residence: Quarry Bank House as Intellectual Hub and Mental Retreat in the Writing of Hannah Greg 1766-1828

This paper will explore how Hannah Greg's writings materially and emotionally reflect her endeavour to conceptualise Quarry Bank House, Cheshire, as a mental retreat. Having grown tired of the 'long confinement among brick houses', Greg saw Quarry Bank as a place to 'recover room to breathe and expand after being so imprisoned'.

Katie Crowther is a third-year PhD student at the University of York's Centre for Eighteenth-Century Studies. Her PhD, undertaken in collaboration with the National Trust, explores women's writing, ephemera, and the eighteenth-century country house.

Deirdre Cullen The Painted Decorations in the Long Gallery at Castletown House – New Light on the Intellectual Lives of Thomas and Louisa Conolly

Focusing on the iconographic identification of two hitherto unidentified figurative scenes within the painted scheme of the Long Gallery of Castletown House, this paper will consider the relationship between text and image with reference to the library of the Conolly family who commissioned the decorations.

Deirdre Cullen was awarded an MA in Art History at University College Dublin in 2004 and returned there in 2020 to undertake a PhD on the eighteenth-century painted decorations in the Long Gallery of Castletown House, Co. Kildare. Her research, funded by the Irish Research Council and the Office of Public Works, is being supervised by Dr Conor Lucey. She was joint awardee of the Irish Georgian Society's Desmond Guinness Scholarship 2021.

Ian d'Alton 'An effect rather than a reality?': How the Irish Gentry Perceived Their Houses

Largely through literature this paper interrogates the notion of the Irish country house as almost dream-like, as an extension of the gentry's mental maps of their reason to be. Novels, plays and poetry offer an opportunity to reinterpret the Irish country house as an imaginative construct within which the gentry lived – 'the outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace'.

Ian d'Alton, MA (NUI), PhD (Cantab.), FRHistS, is currently a Visiting Research Fellow in the Centre for Contemporary Irish History, Trinity College, Dublin. He was co-editor (with Dr Ida Milne) of *Protestant and Irish: The Minority's Search for Place in Independent Ireland* (2019).



Kristina Decker Mary Delany and the Mental and Creative World of Delville

As a hive of creative and intellectual activity, Delville was essential to Mary Delany's experience of the Enlightenment during her residence in Ireland. Her extensive correspondence kept Delville at the centre of a network of individuals with shared interests, including the extended Bluestocking circle. This was ultimately reflected in the fabric of Delville as it was transformed by Delany's exploration of these interests in her creative practices.

Kristina Decker is currently completing a PhD in History at University College Cork. She received Irish Research Council funding for her PhD research project, 'Women and Improvement in Eighteenth-Century Ireland: the Case of Mary Delany'.

Cathal Dowd-Smith Frances Power Cobbe: Daughter of the Irish Country House

Frances Power Cobbe (1822-1904) is chiefly remembered today as a leading animals-rights activist, feminist, social reformer, religious thinker, philosopher, and writer. Her life reads as a list of remarkable accomplishments for an unmarried Victorian woman, from travel, to publishing, and political activism. Her early life was spent at her ancestral home, Newbridge House, Co. Dublin where she developed many critical ideas and her unique outlook on spirituality, gender and social justice.

Cathal Dowd-Smith is Curator of Newbridge House and Malahide Castle for Fingal County Council. A graduate of Trinity College Dublin where he studied the History of Art and Architecture and History, Cathal's current research interests are in the Irish country house, and the architectural and landscape history of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

Roy Foster Safe and Unsafe Houses: Architecture and the Irish Literary Imagination

The political implications bound up in Irish architecture and historical memory are potent. Houses appear in Irish fictions representing contested history, privilege insecurely held, the establishment of an ascendant Catholic bourgeoisie, and finally the conflagration of the Revolution. Despite changes in the interpretation of Ireland's architectural heritage, and the remarkable flowering of contemporary Irish architecture today, the subject of our historic architecture remains, in surprising ways, politically sensitive.

Roy Foster is Emeritus Professor of Irish History at the University of Oxford and Emeritus Professor of Irish

History and Literature at Queen Mary University of London. His many books include, most recently, *Vivid Faces: the Revolutionary Generation in Ireland 1890-1923* (2014) and *On Seamus Heaney* (2020).

James Frazer 'A Persevering Proclamation of Gospel Truth': the 3rd Earl of Roden and Evangelical Christianity at Tollymore Park and Dundalk House, c. 1820-70

This paper uses the case study of the 3rd Earl of Roden to highlight the importance of evangelicalism in the Irish country house and how these buildings often allowed the occupants to express their religion in a way that may not have been acceptable in the parish church.

James Frazer is a PhD student at Queen's University Belfast. His research focuses on the public life of Robert Jocelyn, 3rd Earl of Roden.

Ray Gillespie Books, Butlers and Bodies: the Irish Country House and its Users, 1600-1800

In the popular mind at least country house libraries are associated with bodies and butlers, a motif drawn entirely from the detective stories of the 1920s and 1930s. Like many other generalisations there is some truth to it. For some in the past libraries in country houses were simply dumping grounds where inconvenient bodies and servants could be deposited. However, for many (and perhaps the majority) libraries in country houses played an important part in shaping both the image and reality of the house and its occupants. From the origins of the Irish country house library in the late seventeenth century this paper explores the way in which libraries were used over the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

Ray Gillespie is Professor Emeritus of History at Maynooth University.



Elisabeth Grass 'The Progress of Civilisation': The English Country House Library as a Colonial Space

This paper will offer a case study of the lost country house library of Ralph Willett (1719-1795), a plantation owner and slaveholder from the island of St Christopher, who built Merley House in Dorset. The paper will demonstrate how the eighteenth-century country house library was a site of self-fashioning for the colonial arriviste, and will consider how the aesthetic of the library space was in dialogue with Willett's book collection, reflecting his imperial and racist worldview.

Elisabeth Grass is a doctoral candidate in the History Faculty at the University of Oxford, working under a collaborative award with the National Trust/AHRC; her research focuses on the socio-cultural activities of West Indian slaveholders in Britain in the eighteenth century. She is a convenor of the IHR Partnership Seminar, 'World in a (Historic) House: Global Collections and Connections', and is an historical advisor on the Colonial Countryside project.

Elizabeth Grubgeld The Moore Brothers and the Intellectual Legacy of Moore Hall, County Mayo

Constructed in the 1790s, Moore Hall has been the setting of novels, histories, and biographies, as well as playing a prominent role in the multiple memoirs of its final inhabitants, the writer George Augustus Moore and his younger brother, Col. Maurice Moore. My inquiry into the significance of the library and the intellectual legacy of Moore Hall is two-fold: what meaning did it hold for Col. Moore, a civic-minded man who had hoped to live and raise his children at Moore Hall in his elder brother's absence? And as a self-exiled iconoclastic critic of the land system who frankly acknowledged both its abuses and his continuing financial dependence upon it, how did George Moore interpret this legacy as forerunner to the structure and subject matter of his own work, and key to his critique of what Ireland might become in the 20th century?

Elizabeth Grubgeld is Regents Professor at Oklahoma State University. In addition to many articles on Irish literature, autobiography, and disability studies, she is author of three prize-winning monographs, *George Moore and the Autogenous Self: The Autobiographies and Fiction* (1994), *Anglo-Irish Autobiography: Class, Gender, and the Forms of Narrative* (2004), and *Disability Life Writing in Post Independence Ireland* (2020).

Anna-Maria Hajba An Intergenerational Chronicle: The Library at Adare Manor, County Limerick

The library of the earls of Dunraven at Adare Manor, County Limerick, reflects the intergenerational interests

and activities of the family. The 2nd earl, Windham Henry, was a student of architecture and landscape; Edwin, the 3rd earl, assembled tracts on early Christian sites in Ireland; while the 4th earl, Windham Thomas, was an international yacht racer and big game hunter. This contribution explores family papers, diaries and the catalogue of the now dispersed library to illustrate the disparate paths taken by successive earls.

Anna-Maria Hajba is an archivist at the Special Collections and Archives Department, Glucksman Library, University of Limerick. Her PhD research focused on the building activities of Caroline, Countess of Dunraven. Anna-Maria's book, *The Building of Adare Manor: A Family Chronicle*, will be published by Eastwood Books later in 2022.

Jeremy Hill Surprise in an Archive: The Photography of Historian Goddard H. Orpen

Orpen's intellectual curiosity is the basis of 110 photos of Paris in 1899 through which he sought understanding of the medieval essence of buildings which survived the Haussmann destruction of Old Paris. As visual research notes they suggest another attribute to the breadth of his scholarship.

Jeremy Hill is Manager of Monksgrange Archives and Chair of The Edward Richards-Orpen Memorial Trust; he is also a promoter of heritage and of visual and performance arts.

Elizabeth Jamieson 'Ancient Deeds, Valuable Manuscripts and Private Letters Lie about in Wild Confusion': A History of the Archives at Ham House, Knole and Cowdray Park

Before the twentieth century, the estate and family records of the British landowning elite were for the most part un-catalogued and inaccessible. This paper will



City of Prague Museum/
Wikimedia Commons

explore three unique English house archives, setting these large collections of writings against the background of a haphazard and completely unregulated approach to preserving private archives until the end of the Second World War. Each study demonstrates how, if it were not for a few key individuals, much of the written evidence we rely on today to understand these important houses would never have survived.

Elizabeth Jamieson is an independent researcher, lecturer, and art-historian with a specialist interest in material culture. She is Director of the Attingham Study Programmes for the study of the British Country House, and is currently the curatorial advisor to the National Trust on horse-drawn carriages and historic stables.

Nora Moroney A Sceptical Chemist: the Robert Boyle Collection at the Benjamin Iveagh Library, Farmleigh House

This paper considers the significance of the Robert Boyle material in the Benjamin Iveagh library, Farmleigh, from the perspective of both an Anglo-Irish collecting culture, and the history of science in Irish literature. Boyle's published works of progressive scientific thought and Anglican theology are used to show how the Iveagh library expresses a particular vision of ascendancy identity through an examination of twentieth-century collecting, print history and the rare book trade.

Nora Moroney is completing an IRC Postdoctoral Fellowship with Trinity College Dublin and Marsh's Library, on the project 'The Benjamin Iveagh Library: A Cultural History of Collecting in Twentieth-Century Ireland'.

Paul Nash Viscount Carlow and the Corvinus Press

The Corvinus Press was founded in London by Viscount Carlow (George Dawson-Damer) in 1936, shortly after the death of his friend T.E. Lawrence. This paper explores how the Press grew out of a desire to honour Lawrence, and to create beautiful books, like those the two men had admired and collected, and became for Carlow something more than a hobby.

Paul W. Nash is a librarian, bibliographer and printing historian. He has been Curator of Rare Books at the British Architectural Library, and Superintendent of the Bibliography Room at the Bodleian Library, and has written on private presses, architectural books and incunabula, including a bibliography and history of the Corvinus Press (1994), written with A.J. Flavell. He is currently editor of the *Journal of the Printing Historical Society*.

Maeve O'Riordan 'As Stunted as the Trees on the Edge of our Windswept Woods?': The Intellectual Lives of Unmarried Women in the Big House

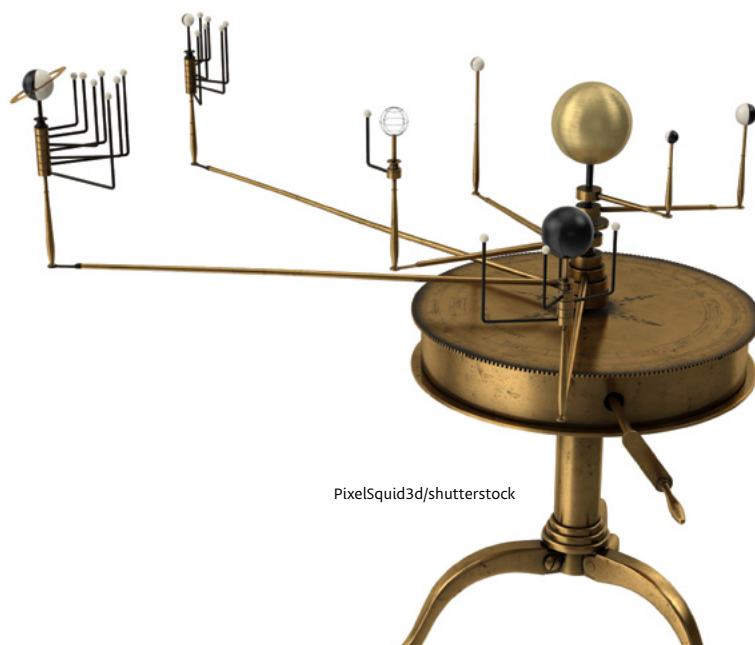
This paper will explore the intellectual lives of single women living in the big houses of their fathers and brothers. It will analyse how they stimulated their minds while living without an official position in the residence. Despite a lack of formal education or support, women found ways to educate themselves.

Maeve O'Riordan is lecturer in Women's and Cultural History at University College Cork. Author of *Women of the Irish Country House, 1860-1914* (Liverpool, 2018), Maeve was formerly Irish Research Council Postdoctoral Fellow at the Centre for the Study of Historic Irish Houses and Estates, History Department, Maynooth University.

Mark Purcell The Country House Library in Ireland, Rise, Decline, and Fall

This paper will attempt to provide a short overview of libraries in aristocratic and gentry houses across Ireland, covering the period from the seventeenth century down to the dispersals and destruction of the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Focussing on questions of assembly, function, and use, it will also touch on architecture and interiors, as well as considering the economic and political underpinnings of these mostly lost collections – and the changes which led to their demise.

Dr Mark Purcell is Deputy Director for Research Collections at Cambridge University Library, a Bye-Fellow at Pembroke College, Cambridge, and a University Proctor. A Fellow of the Royal Historical Society, and a former Vice-President of the Society of Antiquaries, he has a particular interest in libraries in British and Irish country houses, and was Libraries Curator to the UK National Trust from 1999 to 2015. His book *The Country House Library* was published by Yale University Press in 2017.



Tim Pye The Benevolence of Books: Sharing the Country House Library

Although usually perceived as quintessentially private spaces and collections, there is much to suggest that country house libraries were public resources. The survival of evidence such as user guides, printed catalogues and servants' libraries provide invaluable insights into the attitudes of country house library owners regarding the use of books and their role in the wider community. By analysing this history of sharing – with a particular focus on National Trust libraries – this paper will demonstrate the relevance and significance of the country house library far beyond the walls of the crafted library interior.

Tim Pye is the National Curator of Libraries for the National Trust, with oversight of over 170 historic collections in the Trust's care. He has previously worked at the British Library, Cambridge University Library and Lambeth Palace Library.

Kate Retford Reading the Eighteenth-Century Print Room

This paper will explore the intimate relationship between libraries and the print rooms from c.1750 to c.1820, often formed using material taken from portfolios and books in library collections. This case study will focus on the adjacent library and print room at Ston Easton Park in Somerset, created by Richard Hippisley-Cox in the 1770s, and will consider the various ways in which both the imagery of, and knowledge embedded in, eighteenth-century prints moved fluidly between these two spaces in the country house

Kate Retford is Professor of Art History, Birkbeck, University of London. She has published widely on eighteenth-century British art, and her publications include *The Conversation Piece: Making Modern Art in*

Eighteenth-Century Britain (2017) and *The Georgian London Town House: Building, Collecting and Display*, co-edited with Susanna Avery-Quash (2019)

Christopher Ridgway The House of Ideas

Country houses are perceived as triumphs of material culture, with their grand displays of architecture, landscapes, and especially collections. They are filled with things but what role does the immaterial play in this world? Country houses are priceless repositories of ideas, and close study of the thoughts and beliefs of their occupants enables both historians and visitors today to understand the intellectual past of a house and its inhabitants.

Christopher Ridgway is Curator at Castle Howard, Adjunct Professor in the Centre for the Study of Historic Irish Houses and Estates in the History Department at Maynooth University, and Chair of the Yorkshire Country House Partnership. His most recent publication, co-edited with Terence Dooley, is *Country House Collections, Their Lives and Afterlives* (2021).

Aileen Spitere Annes Grove's Horticultural and Botanical Library

The Library at Annes Grove Estate has an important collection of horticultural and botanical works which offers insight into the work carried out by successive generations of Grove Annesleys. It reflects both their knowledge and learning but also their passion to create such unique gardens.

Aileen Spitere is currently a guide at Annes Grove and Doneraile Court in North Cork. She specialised in nineteenth-century history for her Masters degree and then trained as an archivist. She was Head of the London Office of Library and Archives Canada for many years, and upon returning to Ireland has worked as a freelance archivist and historical researcher.

Peter Smith Photography



CSHIHE 20th Anniversary Annual Historic Houses Conference, Maynooth University, 9-10 May 2022

(RIAI CPD approved)

REGISTRATION

TO REGISTER ONLINE (WHERE PAYMENT CAN BE MADE BY CREDIT OR DEBIT CARD) PLEASE GO TO <https://shop.maynoothuniversity.ie/index.php?app=ecom&ns=prodshow&ref=18500331>

BOOKING OPTIONS

Live two-day conference fee	€100 per person
Live two-day conference fee plus conference dinner on Monday 9 May	€150 per person
Online two-day conference fee	€50 per person

PLEASE NOTE: Parking permits are not required for the duration of the conference. Attendees may park on South Campus, outside of the designated pay parking areas without charge.

BOOKING INFORMATION

Places will be filled on a first-come, first-served basis for the conference and dinner. Payment of conference registration fee and/or conference dinner fee must be received to guarantee a booking. Receipt of payment will be acknowledged by e-mail unless otherwise requested. Refunds for cancelled bookings will not be made.

PLEASE NOTE TICKET SALES CLOSE ON 3 MAY 2022

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Cover image:
Allan Ramsay *Emily, Marchioness of Kildare*, 1763
Courtesy of Conor Mallaghan