

ST JOHN'S EVE: A CELEBRATION OF RIGHTS OF WAY

23rd June 2012

Royal Hospital Kilmainham / Irish Museum of Modern Art

Field Walk at 7.00pm

Fireside Celebrations from 8.00pm

Access will be via the west gate entrance to the Royal Hospital (near Kilmainham Gaol).

Weather permitting, this outdoor event will take place in the Hospital Meadow. Please bring appropriate clothing and footwear.

ROYAL HOSPITAL KILMAINHAM

Kilmainham (Irish Cill Mhaigheann meaning St. Maigheann's church) takes its name from a seventh century monastery established by St. Maingean. On that site a priory was founded in 1174 for the Knights Templars by Richard Strongbow, Earl of Pembroke. In the fourteenth century these lands were given to the priory of the Knights of St. John of Jerusalem. These buildings were demolished to make way for the Royal Hospital Kilmainham which was founded in 1648 by James Butler, Duke of Ormonde and Viceroy to Charles II, as a home for retired soldiers. The Royal Hospital Kilmainham now houses the Irish Museum of Modern Art.

IRISH MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

The Irish Museum of Modern Art is Ireland's national cultural institution for the collection and presentation of modern and contemporary art. The Education and Community Department devises and implements access programmes to engage the public with modern and contemporary art with an emphasis on

creating opportunities for the public to have direct access to artworks and artists.

Culturstruction is a collaborative art and design practice of Jo Anne Butler and Tara Kennedy. The 'St John's Eve' project is an ongoing partnership between Culturstruction and the Education and Community Department at IMMA. www.culturstruction.com

PROJECT TEAM

Culturstruction (Jo Anne Butler and Tara Kennedy); Lisa Moran, Curator: Education and Community Programmes; Janice Hough, Artists' Residency Programme Co-ordinator and Jen Phelan, Artists' Residency Programme Co-ordinator (maternity leave).

Thanks to Gale Scanlan, David Duff, Helen O'Donoghue, Damon Vidal-Hadley, Mary Conden, The Kilmainham Arts Club, The Patriot Inn, Gearóid Muldowney, Mark Wickham.



Fireside Conversations include contributions from poets, visual artists, musicians, historians and geographers, each responding to the site, place, history and experience of the Royal Hospital Kilmainham and its environs from their own perspective. These stories will unfold over the course of the evening and will hopefully contribute to an opening up and reconsideration of the idea of what it means to have a right of way to the Royal Hospital Kilmainham.

7.00pm Field Walk led by Gerry Kearns

What is the texture of the urban footprint? What is distinctive about the historical dimensions of the social geography of the Kilmainham district? How does it relate to the rest of the city? What spatial logics animate Kilmainham? How are nature/culture, public/private, open/closed, horizontal/vertical articulate within this landscape? Gerry Kearns is a professor of Geography at NUI Maynooth. His main areas of research are all concerned with Public Geographies; these are the geographical ideas that are part of our public conversation. His work includes studies of geographical ideas in international relations (*Geopolitics and Empire*, Oxford University Press, 2009), in Irish identities, in sexuality, and in disease. His work generally has a historical dimension and he has a particular interest in the historical geography of cities (*Urbanising Britain*, Cambridge University Press, 1991; and *Selling Places*, Pergamon, 1993).

8.00 to 11.00pm Music and Fireside Conversations. Contributions by Ronan Foley, Leeann Lane, Ailbhe Murphy, Eilis McDonald, Nell Regan and Micheal Wardick.

Ronan Foley is a lecturer in Geography at NUI Maynooth and teaches courses on GIS and medical/health geography. He is especially interested in research that connects water, health and place and current research themes include the history of swimming, auxiliary hospitals and the development of a holy wells website called *Slaine*. ie. Most accounts see holy wells as a primarily rural form. But the city and county of Dublin had many wells and the histories of those wells, along with their practices, cures and wider local significance still remain part of the city's story. The choice of site for tonight's event is in part due to its proximity to St. John's Well, originally part of the wider military complex but now buried under the railway bridge. Based on legends of holy breadcrumbs, old street-names

and sacred eels, the flowing relationships between wells and wellness in the city will be recounted under the crackling mid-summer light.

Leeann Lane is Head of the School of Humanities and Head of Irish Studies at the Mater Dei Institute of Education: a college of Dublin City University. She was involved in the Women's History Project which was initiated in 1997 to survey, list and publish historical documents relating to the history of women in Ireland. Her recent publication *Rosamond Jacob: Third Person Singular*, (2010), explores the impact of Irish politics and society on the middle classes of the early twentieth century through the life of one female, Rosamund Jacob. Leeann is a member of the government appointed advisory group on Centennial Commemoration which will be in place for the duration of the commemoration programme 2012-2016.

Ailbhe Murphy is a visual artist based in Dublin. Early projects include *Unspoken Truths* (1991 – 1996) and *Once is Too Much* (1995 – 2004) which developed as collaborations between the Lourdes Youth and Community Services project Dublin 1, the Family Resource Centre, St.Michael's Estate and the Education and Community Department of IMMA. Following on from *Tower Songs* (2003- 2006) with City Arts, her doctoral research with the University of Ulster focused on critical co ordinates for collaborative arts practice within the spatial politics of urban regeneration: she was awarded her PhD in 2011. She is co founder of the interdisciplinary arts and research platform *Vagabond Reviews* with independent researcher Dr. Ciaran Smyth.

Eilis McDonald is a Dublin based visual artist who creates installations using sound, video, found objects and the internet. For this event she will present an untamed playlist of songs for fire, fields and bright summer nights.

Nell Regan is a big fan of bonfires, midsummer and St Johns Eve. For the rest of the year she works as freelance writer and educator based in Dublin. Her poetry collections include *Preparing for Spring* (shortlisted for the Glen Dimplex, Strong and Patrick Kavanagh Awards) and her latest collection *Bound for Home*, Arlen House. She was an International Fellow at the University of Iowa and Fulbright Scholar at UC Berkeley. See also www.nellregan.com

Michael Wardick has considerable experience in the Aviation Industry and now works as a guide at the Royal Hospital Kilmainham (RHK) and as a Mediator with the Irish Museum of Modern Art (IMMA). Drawing on his diverse knowledge and experience he will talk about the links between the Royal Hospital Kilmainham and St John.

Originally the site of St. John's monastery, the tradition of celebrating St. John's Eve (Midsummer Bonfire Night) at Bully's Acre, Kilmainham became noted for its 'nocturnal revels'. Journals of the time make reference to what are described as 'raucous' celebrations. In 1680, following the building of the Royal Hospital, Bully's Acre (an area of commonage land and later a pauper graveyard) and the tradition of rowdy celebrations there on St. John's Eve, became the pinch point of tensions between the local 'Liberty Boys' and the Royal Hospital governors. Efforts by the hospital governance to put an end to the annual celebrations were thwarted by the public right of way which ran through the hospital fields. The St. John's Eve celebration then became an event through which the local population annually exercised and activated a public right of way through the Royal Hospital Grounds.

'St. John's Eve (A Celebration of Rights of Way)' is an annual event through which this public right of way and tradition of public bonfire is temporarily uncovered. In 2012 'St John's Eve' will comprise a field walk, outdoor fireside conversations and music. Some refreshments will be served. BYOB welcome.

The 'St John's Eve' project is an ongoing partnership between Culturstruction and the Education and Community Department at IMMA. The project was initiated by Culturstruction (Jo Anne Butler and Tara Kennedy) in 2011 as part of a research residency exploring public engagement with the place of IMMA and the Royal Hospital Kilmainham.

Fire Braziers made by blacksmiths Michael Calnan and Gunvor Anhoj.