

**8<sup>TH</sup>**  
**8**

# Irish Military Seminar



**Riverbank Arts Centre  
Newbridge, Co. Kildare**

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GREAT EPISODES IN IRELAND'S HISTORY

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**The Spanish Civil War  
World War II  
Elizabethville Ambush (1961)  
Richard II's invasion of Ireland  
The Nine Years' War**

**10-11  
MAY  
2024**

# Cllr. Darragh Fitzpatrick

## Cathaoirleach of Kildare County Council



**It gives me great pleasure to welcome everyone to the 8th annual Irish Military Seminar at the Riverbank Arts Centre, Newbridge.**

Ireland has a long, proud military tradition, while Co. Kildare's military heritage stretches back to Fionn MacCumhaill and the Fianna who played for sport on the Curragh Plains.

The seminar begins at 19.00 on Friday, 10 May, with the launch of *THE COLOUR OF KILDARE 1913-1923*, by James Durney, Mario Corrigan and John O'Byrne. This will be followed

by a presentation 'Missing in Action: The 50-year search for Ireland's lost soldier' by journalist Ralph Riegel.

Saturday's seminar has several renowned speakers who will examine a range of subjects and episodes in Ireland's military history: the Spanish Civil War, Irish doctors in World War II, Richard II's invasion of Ireland, and The Nine Years' War.

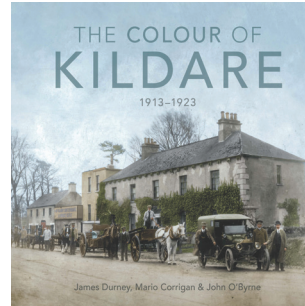
The 2024 programme has something to offer all those interested in Irish and military history.



# Book Launch

**Friday, 10 May at 19.00**  
**Riverbank Arts Centre foyer**

Launch of a ground-breaking colourised photo book of Co. Kildare during the revolutionary period: *THE COLOUR OF KILDARE 1913-1923* (Orpen Press), by James Durney, Mario Corrigan and John O’Byrne.



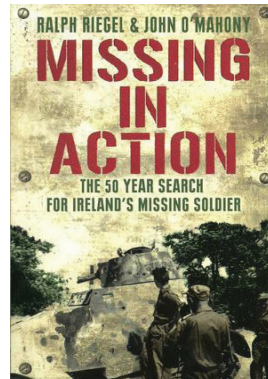
**Riverbank Arts Centre | 20.00**  
**MISSING IN ACTION:**  
**THE 50-YEAR SEARCH FOR**  
**IRELAND’S LOST SOLDIER**

**Ralph Riegel**

In almost 70 years of Irish peacekeeping missions with the United Nations only two soldiers have died on overseas operations whose bodies have failed to be repatriated.

*MISSING IN ACTION* is the story of the 50-year search for one of those soldiers, Trooper Pat Mullins, from Kilbehenny, Co. Limerick, who was killed in an ambush at Elizabethville, in the Congo. Ralph Riegel is the southern correspondent for the *IRISH INDEPENDENT*, *EVENING HERALD*, *SUNDAY INDEPENDENT* and other Mediahuis titles.

He is a regular contributor to RTÉ, BBC, Newstalk and Virgin Media, and author of ten books.



## Saturday, 11 May | Riverbank Arts Centre

### This land of ire. The Nine Years' War in Ireland, 1593-1603

9.40-10.20

Dr. James O'Neill worked in archaeology in Northern Ireland, where he specialised in battlefield archaeology and 20th century defence heritage. He received his doctorate at Queen's University Belfast in 2013 and has published extensively on the Nine Years' War including a monograph titled *THE NINE YEARS' WAR 1593-1603: O'NEILL, MOUNTJOY AND THE MILITARY REVOLUTION*. He is Collections Officer at the Northern Ireland War Memorial Museum in Belfast.



### In Spanish Trenches: The Mind and Deeds of the Irish in the International Brigades in the Spanish Civil War

10.25-11.05

Emmet O'Connor studied at University College, Galway and St John's College, Cambridge. Since 1985 he has lectured in the School of History in the University of Ulster. He has published widely on labour history, including, with Barry McLoughlin, *IN SPANISH TRENCHES: THE MIND AND DEEDS OF THE IRISH WHO FOUGHT FOR THE REPUBLIC IN THE SPANISH CIVIL WAR*.



### Refreshments | 11.05-11.30

### Art MacMurchadha Caomhánach at war with Richard II, 1394 & 1399 'Nothing venture nothing have.'

11.35-12.15

Darren McGettigan from Wicklow Town received a PhD from the School of History in UCD in early modern Irish history. He has published extensively on the early modern history of Co. Donegal, and a trilogy of medieval books: *THE BATTLE OF CLONTARF, 1014* (2013), *RICHARD II AND THE IRISH KINGS* (2016), and *THE KINGS OF AILEACH AND THE VIKINGS, C.800-060 AD* (2020). Darren currently works as a civil servant in the Department of Foreign Affairs.





## **World War Military Structures in Co. Kildare**

**12.20-13.00**

Stephen Callaghan is an independent historian, whose research is primarily concerned with Birr Barracks, the Leinster Regiment and social histories of Offaly families who served in the British Army.

**Lunch (NOT PROVIDED) | 13.00-14.20**

## **Irish Doctors in the Second World War**

**14.25-15.05**

Joe Duignan graduated from UCD in 1970 MB, BCh, BAO (Hons), interned in St Vincent's hospital and then went to Montreal where he trained as a general surgeon in the McGill Residency Programme. He returned to Ireland in 1978 becoming senior registrar, tutor and senior lecturer and later a consultant general surgeon in St Michael's hospital in Dun Laoghaire. He has a lifelong career of teaching surgery and medical history.



## **Seán Keating and the Art of Revolution**

**15.10-15.50**

Dr Éimear O'Connor is an honorary member of the RHA and the RUA, and Director of Collections and Access with the National Museum of Ireland. Éimear is author of *SEÁN KEATING: ART, POLITICS, AND BUILDING THE IRISH NATION* (2013), and *ART, IRELAND, AND THE IRISH DIASPORA. CHICAGO, DUBLIN, NEW YORK: CULTURE, CONNECTIONS AND CONTROVERSIES* (2020), which was awarded the inaugural Lawrence J. McCaffrey Prize for a book on Irish America by the American Conference of Irish Studies (2021).



# 8th Irish Military Seminar | 10 May | Riverbank Arts Centre, Newbridge

- 19.00**      **Book Launch:** *THE COLOUR OF KILDARE 1913-1923.*  
James Durney, Mario Corrigan and John O'Byrne.
- 20.00**      *MISSING IN ACTION: THE 50-YEAR SEARCH FOR IRELAND'S LOST SOLDIER,*  
with Ralph Riegel. In almost 70 years of Irish peacekeeping missions  
with the United Nations only two soldiers have died on overseas op-  
erations whose bodies have failed to be repatriated. *MISSING IN ACTION*  
is the story of the 50-year search for one of those soldiers, Trooper Pat  
Mullins, who was killed in an ambush at Elizabethville, in the Congo.

## Saturday | 11 May | Riverbank Arts Centre

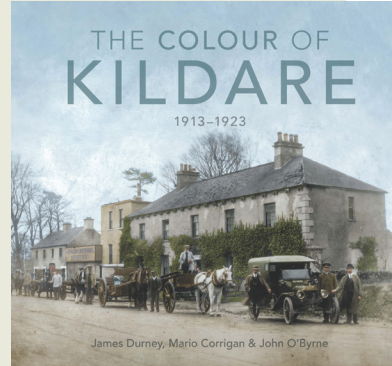
- 9.00-9.30**      Registration, Refreshments and Bookshop
- 9.30**              Welcome
- 9.40-10.20**      **This land of ire. The Nine Years' War in Ireland, 1593-1603**  
**Dr. James O'Neill**  
The Nine Years' War was one of the most traumatic and bloody  
conflicts in the history of Ireland. Encroachment on the liberties of the  
Irish lords by the English crown caused Hugh O'Neill, Earl of Tyrone,  
to build an unprecedented confederation of Irish lords.
- 10.25-11.05**      **In Spanish Trenches: The Mind and Deeds of the Irish in the**  
**International Brigades in the Spanish Civil War.**  
**Emmet O'Connor**  
The Connolly Column – the Irish who fought for Republican Spain  
– is a window on 1930s Ireland. This presentation examines what  
they did in the war, how International Brigades operated, and what  
their command systems meant for the life, and death, of ordinary  
brigadistas.
- 11.05-11.30**      Refreshments

- 11.35-12.15** **Art MacMurchadha Caomhánach at war with Richard II, 1394 and 1399 ‘Nothing venture nothing have.’**  
**Darren McGettigan**  
 The English king Richard II made two expeditions to Ireland in 1394 and 1399. Ireland in his time was the scene of a Gaelic Irish revival where Irish kings in numerous parts of the island rolled back the Anglo-Norman conquests of previous centuries. The Gaelic Irish of south Leinster also produced one of the most remarkable and successful leaders of the late-medieval period, Art MacMurchadha Caomhánach.
- 12.20-13.00** **World War Military Structures in Co. Kildare.**  
**Stephen Callaghan**  
 This presentation will examine the results of a recent report compiled by Archaeology Plan on the surviving First and Second World War era military structures and landscapes in County Kildare, with a focus on the Curragh Camp. The presentation will also give context of their importance in a nationwide setting.
- 13.00-14.20** **Lunch (not provided)**
- 14.25-15.05** **Irish Doctors in the Second World War.**  
**Joe Duignan**  
 At least 2,000 Irish doctors joined the British military forces during the war. This conflict was truly global and the doctors who were involved were in every theatre of war. Most joined the Royal Army Medical Corps (1,147) followed by the Royal Air Force (407) and the Royal Navy (253). A total of 72 Irish doctors died during the war.
- 15.10-15.50** **Seán Keating and the Art of Revolution**  
**Dr. Éimear O’Connor**  
 This presentation focuses initially on Seán Keating’s politically motivated paintings between 1915 and 1924, for which he is well-known. It will then examine the rest of the artist’s long career during which time he used both metaphor and images of ordinary people to question and critique the post-Treaty ruling classes.
- 16.00** **Close of seminar**

## Book Launch

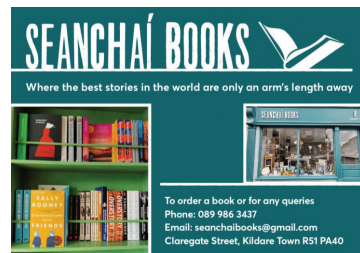
The aim of this book is to bring the history of Co. Kildare to life using hand-coloured images, showcasing the experiences of ordinary people who played a significant role in shaping the county.

This publication is the final production of the Co. Kildare Decade of Commemorations programme, which aims to create a legacy of research and cultural material for future generations. It focuses on the social and political changes that occurred during 1913-23, including the role of women in the suffrage movement, the abolition of workhouses, and the emergence of tractors in the countryside. It also highlights the military presence in Kildare as a garrison county, as well as its role as a centre of internment before and after independence. Sport, particularly horse racing and Gaelic football, is emphasized as a defining aspect of Kildare's culture during this period. The book pays tribute to the individuals who fought and made sacrifices for the cause of independence, as well as the commemorations that continued until the passing of that generation.



## Seminar Bookshop

We are delighted to welcome Seanchaí Books, Kildare Town, as the Irish Military Seminar Bookshop for 2024. Seanchaí Books will be offering a wide range of local, national, and international history publications, including books by our seminar speakers on Saturday.



[www.kildare.ie/ehistory](http://www.kildare.ie/ehistory)



Kildare County Archives & Local Studies



An Roinn Turasóireachta, Cultúir,  
Ealaíon, Gaeltachta, Spóirt agus Meán  
Department of Tourism, Culture,  
Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media