

PRESS RELEASE FROM *HISTORY IRELAND*

‘1916 and all that . . .’ *History Ireland* Hedge School will ask how the centenaries of Home Rule, the First World War and the 1916 Rising should be commemorated

Summary:

Event: *History Ireland* Hedge School will discuss: ‘How should the forthcoming centenaries of Home Rule, First World War and 1916 Rising be commemorated today?’

When: Wednesday, 12 January at 7pm

Where: National Library of Ireland, Kildare St., Dublin.

Admission: Free but advance booking required by phoning Linda at 01-60 30 229

***History Ireland’s* hedge school debates are lively events where a panel of historians grab a long-buried or much revered historic event, strip away all assumptions about it, and assess its meaning and relevance today. Sacred cows are apt to be skewered in the process.**

‘1916 and all that . . .’ is the next topic for debate by the Hedge School ‘masters’. As the hundredth anniversary of the 1916 Rising approaches, historians **Kevin Whelan** (Notre Dame), **Roisin Higgins** (UCD), **Fearghal McGarry** (QUB) and **Edward Madigan** (TCD) will probe what, if anything, 1916 means in Ireland today; whether it should have taken place at all; and how the 1916 Rising as the key foundation myth of the Irish state eclipsed the very real sacrifices made by Irishmen in the First World War.

‘1916 and all that: How should the forthcoming centenaries of Home Rule, First World War and 1916 Rising be commemorated today?’ will be discussed at the next *History Ireland* Hedge

School, which will take place on Wednesday, 12 January at 7pm in the National Library in Kildare St. The debate, which is held in association with the National Library of Ireland, will be hosted by the editor of *History Ireland*, **Tommy Graham**.

This is an open event with free admission but places need to be booked in advance. Phone Linda at 01-6030229 to book a place.

The Hedge School debates hark back to the unofficial hedge schools of 18th and 19th century Ireland, where travelling teachers taught people in the open, before there was an official education system. *History Ireland's* Hedge School series aims to bring history alive for today's audiences by providing lively, unfettered debate on topics of interest to national and local communities. In 2010 four Hedge Schools took place at the Electric Picnic Festival, the Phibsboro Festival and the Back to Our Past Exhibition at the RDS.

For further information, please contact Tommy Graham, editor@historyireland.com,

087-6889412. Tommy Graham is available for interview from Monday 10 January.

Note to the Editor

In style and presentation, the *History Ireland* Hedge Schools mirror, in some aspects, The Brains Trust of the 1940s and 1950s in the UK. The Brains Trust was a popular informational BBC radio, and later television, programme. The concept was simple. Viewers would send in questions on subjects ranging from practical conundrums to moral dilemmas and the panel members would answer them. The conversation was free-wheeling and totally unscripted or rehearsed, relying on the skills of the presenters to fashion a cogent response in the time available. This produced an 'edge-of-the-seat' feel to the performance. It became one of the most popular informational programmes. The radio programme ended in May 1949 and transferred to BBC television in the 1950s. These Brains Trust programmes were often reproduced at a local level in community and institutional settings throughout the UK during the 1950s and 1960s.

Issued by History Ireland 5 January 2011