

County Kildare Decade of Commemorations Committee

2023 Programme Of Activities

Below is a summary of the principal activities planned as part of the Decade of Centenaries/Commemorations programme for County Kildare in 2023.

The 2023 programme is supported by the County Kildare Decade of Commemorations Committee (Kildare County Council), the five municipal districts of Kildare County Council and the Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media under the Decade of Centenaries 2012-23 initiative. The Programme is administered by the Local Studies, Genealogy & Archives Department of Kildare Library & Arts Service.

Centenary Activities

A number of activities will take place in 2023 to mark the 100th anniversary of key events, including:

- An event in Palmerstown House Estate in late January 2023, in association with the County Kildare Archaeological Society, to mark the centenary of the burning of Palmerstown House in January 1923. Professor Terence Dooley of Maynooth University will be the keynote speaker.
- The death of noted antiquarian Lord Walter Fitzgerald in July 1923 will be marked with an event in Kilkea Castle in late July 2023, in association with the County Kildare Archaeological Society.
- A new publication on the controversial killing of National Army soldier Private Joseph Bergin in late 1923 by local historian Mark McLoughlin will be published in late 2023 and made available for free online and through the public library network.
- Library staff will continue to highlight centenary activities by contributing articles to local media, www.kildare.ie/ehistory, Decade of Commemorations social media channels and by participating at public events. Examples include content on the 1923 Punchestown Races, the visit of Jim Larkin to Newbridge in June 1923, the role of Cumann na mBan and at public events throughout County Kildare in 2023.

The 7th Irish Military Seminar

The 7th Irish Military Seminar will take place in Riverbank Arts Centre on Friday 19th and Saturday 20th May 2023 as part of the Decade of Centenaries/Commemorations Programme. The seminar includes six talks on a range of topics, along with the launch of a new biographical dictionary of those involved in the revolutionary struggle in County Kildare in the Decade of Centenaries period. Dr Siobhra Aiken will provide the keynote address titled *Breaking The Silence: Writing the Civil War*. The full programme and details on how to book (all events are free) will be available on www.riverbank.ie

Programme of Talks

A series of talks will be organised throughout County Kildare in 2023. Historian John Dorney will talk on aspects of the Civil War in Maynooth and Celbridge in the Spring of 2023, while Myles Dungan of the RTÉ History Show will present an online talk on land issues during the War of Independence and Civil War in April 2023. Details will be circulated on social media, to local history groups and to the local media. A talk by Dr Eoin Kinsella on the centenary of the Defence Forces will take place in association with Newbridge Local History Group in early June 2023. Further talks will take place in the second half of 2023.

Primary School Essay Competition

A primary school essay competition for 5th/6th class students in County Kildare is taking place in 2022/23, following a pilot project in the Celbridge-Leixlip Municipal District. Prize-giving events will be organised, with all participants receiving certificates.

Library-Led Collaborations & Working With Community Groups

The Decade of Commemorations Programme will continue to work with Kildare Library & Arts Service & Kildare County Council Heritage Officer in delivering activities. Workshops aimed at families and continued collaboration with the Kildare Readers Festival are all planned to take place during 2023.

The Programme will also continue to work with local history groups throughout County Kildare, including the County Kildare Federation of Local History Groups & the County Kildare Archaeological Society.

Conservation & Digitisation Of Collections

Kildare Local Studies, Genealogy & Archives Service plan to arrange conservation work and digitisation of items in their collections, relevant to the 1912-23 period. This will facilitate increased access to these collections to the wider public. The digitisation of the County Council minute books, Poor Law Union material and Curragh Internment Camp autograph books has taken place in previous years. Further volumes of the Journals of the County Kildare Archaeological Society (covering the 2007 to 2019 volumes) will be made available on an open access basis in 2023 also. These include several original research contributions to the history of County Kildare in the 1912-23 period. Titles relating to the 1912-23 period will also be purchased for the Library Service, making them available to the entire community.

Creative & Artistic Bursary Awards

Kildare Decade of Commemorations advertised these funding opportunities for creative and artistic bursary awards again in early 2023, with a deadline of 10th March 2023. Following consideration by an external panel of adjudicators, the following individuals and projects were awarded funding as part of the 2023 Programme:

- Ag Fanacht – art project on World War I Widows, including workshop and exhibition in Athy in late 2023 (Angelina Foster)
- Enemy of the Republic Play by local dramatists, Focusing on importance of art and culture in defining our identity and place in the world, centenary of William B Yeats Nobel Prize & anti-Treaty IRA anti-entertainments order. (Lianne O’Shea)
- The Connaught Rangers – The Kildare Connection. Public cultural event and e-book. (Valerie Malone).

Community Grant Awards

Kildare Decade of Commemorations advertised these funding opportunities for community heritage grant awards again in the first quarter of 2023. Following consideration by an external panel of adjudicators, the following individuals and projects were awarded funding as part of the 2023 Programme:

- Telling the story of Celbridge from 1912-23 (Revolution to Free State). An Educational Video Production) [Irish Military Heritage Foundation]
- 8 paintings by artists, in the Celtic Revival mythological styled portraits, of each of the men in the Rathbride Flying Column on bread boards. [Greg Hallahan]
- Greening the postboxes in 1923 and making the role of Athy Industrial Vehicles Ireland in this [Anne Murphy/Athy Photographic Society].
- Grant towards publication of history of The Irish Forestry Society 1901-23 (implementation of a State Forestry Scheme in this period), including community talk [Hugh Crawford].
- Grants towards *Stand you now for Ireland's Cause. A biographical dictionary of County Kildare republican activists 1913-23* , including community talk [James Durney].
- Grant towards *On the Banks of the Liffey: a History of Newbridge College*, including history of school in 1912-23 period and the attitude of school staff and authorities to World War 1, 1916 Rising and War of Independence. [Raphael Ryan/Newbridge Local History Group].

Publications

A new publication on County Kildare in Colour during this period, published by Merrion Press, will be published in October 2023. John O’Byrne, James Durney and Mario Corrigan are the editors of this publication.

Cultural Event Finale

A cultural event is provisionally planned for November 2023, to mark the conclusion of the Decade of Centenaries national programme of events.

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The Programme is administered by the Local Studies, Genealogy & Archives Department of Kildare Library & Arts Service.



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



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