THE FIELD DAY ARCHIVE

CORMAC O DUIBHNE

Field Day Publications
Dublin 2007
for Marion and Seamus, and for Norah
SFX

1. Simon grab Jones arm
Sarah kneel - clap Jones knee
Jones shake off Simon

2. Sally pretends herself across stage
Sally also - Lyle, Mdm enter followed
by Simon & Bake - all bow

3. Lyle with hand to face
Lyle, Bake, enter
Bake stand behind him - light wig

4. Lyle take off sword - touch up make
take old wig - hard sword, wig block
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Thug Seamus Deane, Brian Friel, David Hammond, Seamus Heaney, Thomas Kilroy, Tom Paulin agus Stephen Rea tacaíocht agus dea-thóil don tógra seo ón túis.


Gabhaim buíochas croí leo go léir.

CÓD
Iúil 2007
INTRODUCTION
INTRODUCTION

A Brief History of Field Day

The Field Day Theatre Company was founded in September 1980 by playwright Brian Friel and actor Stephen Rea. The immediate objective was to stage Friel’s latest play, Translations. The name of the company is a play on the surnames of its two founders, although the phrase’s other resonances were undoubtedly also in mind. Four new directors were named in August 1981 – academic and poet Seamus Deane, folk singer and filmmaker David Hammond, poet Seamus Heaney, and academic and poet Tom Paulin. The board of directors expanded to seven members in 1988 with the co-option of playwright and novelist Thomas Kilroy. From 1981 to 1999 Field Day maintained an administrative office in Derry that coordinated the various contributions of the directors and the many others involved in the company.

The primary business of Field Day at its inception was theatre. In all, the company staged 16 productions in the period 1980 to 1998. The first three were plays by Friel: Translations (1980), Three Sisters (1981, adapted from Anton Chekhov) and The Communication Cord (1982). Friel also contributed Making History in 1988. The opening of Translations in September 1980 set a pattern for nearly all future productions to open in that month and continue into late December or early January. In 1983, Boesman and Lena, by the South African Athol Fugard was staged. 1984 saw Field Day’s only double bill, with Tom Paulin’s The Riot Act (based on Sophocles’ Antigone) and Derek Mahon’s High Time (based on Molière’s School for Husbands). Subsequent productions were Thomas Kilroy’s Double Cross (1986) and The Madame MacAdam Travelling Theatre (1991), Stewart Parker’s Pentecost (1987) and Northern Star (1998), Terry Eagleton’s Saint Oscar (1989), Seamus Heaney’s The Cure at Troy (1990, after Philoctetes by Sophocles), and Frank McGuinness’s adaptation of Chekhov’s Uncle Vanya (1995). Stephen Rea either directed or played the lead role in all but two of these plays (High Time and The Madame MacAdam Travelling Theatre). Field Day also produced two rehearsed readings – David Rudkin’s Cries from Casement as his Bones are Brought to Dublin (1992) and John Berger and Nella Bielski’s Goya’s Last Portrait (1994).

Field Day has also been a publishing company since 1983, when Heaney’s Sweeney Astray and the first set of three Field Day Pamphlets were published. Four more sets of pamphlets followed, the last appearing in 1988. While three of the directors contributed pamphlets, most were written on a once-off basis by outside contributors, including academics, lawyers and cultural critics. Some of the pamphlets have also been published in book form. Field Day’s publishing activity was largely separate from its theatrical productions, although two plays were published as books – Eagleton’s Saint Oscar (1989) and Heaney’s The Cure at Troy (1990). A book of essays to mark the 75th anniversary of the Easter Rising, Revising the Rising, was brought out in 1991. Also published in that year were the first three volumes in the large-scale Field Day Anthology of Irish Writing, edited by Deane. A further two volumes devoted entirely to women’s writing, co-edited by a panel of eight, came out in 2002 to address perceived short-
comings in the first three volumes. The other major publishing venture embarked on by Field Day is the Critical Conditions series of 16 monographs and collections of essays on aspects of Irish culture and history, published between 1996 and 2006. The Field Day Review, an annual journal of Irish studies was launched in 2005. The first two monographs of the Field Day Files series were published in 2006, as were the first two books in the Field Day Music series. Publication dates of 2007 and beyond have been set for new editions of several English- and Irish-language works dating from the seventeenth to the nineteenth century.

The early 1990s saw a decline in Field Day’s theatrical activity and the beginning of the end of the first phase of the company’s existence. For various personal and professional reasons, participation and commitment among the directors dropped and a series of resignations ensued. The result is that since 1999 Field Day has continued with only two active directors on the board: Deane and Rea. No theatre has been produced between 1999 and 2007, the time of writing. The company closed its Derry office in 1996 and had no dedicated administrative home from then until 2004, when an office for Field Day Publications opened in Dublin in partnership with the Keough Institute for Irish Studies at the University of Notre Dame. For the time being at least, all of Field Day’s energies are concentrated on publishing.
What the Archive Contains

The material that makes up the Field Day Archive covers all aspects of the company’s activities, in many cases in minute detail. The material came from three main sources. First, by far the majority of the material was held on file by administrators and other staff at the Derry office and elsewhere from the company’s foundation in 1980 until 1999. Secondly, a smaller amount of material was donated to the Archive from Seamus Deane’s personal records and from Stephen Rea’s personal papers. Finally, some material was recovered from the Dublin office in the period 2004 to 2006. While the material from Deane has been arranged in a separate section of the Archive (section IX), all the other material has been integrated into other sections.

The distances that separated the company directors from the office and from each other influenced not just the way that the company conducted its business (for example, it was often difficult to convene all directors), but also the form that the Archive has taken (for example, letters and faxes were the main modes of communication). None of the directors lived in Derry; Deane and Heaney have permanent homes in Dublin, Friel lives in Donegal, Kilroy lives near Galway and Paulin lives in Britain, while Rea lived in London in the early years of Field Day and then later on in Dublin.

Approximately three quarters of the Field Day Archive comprise paper documents, notably letters and associated documents, faxes, proofs for publications, theatre scripts, design material and printed matter (flyers, handbills, etc.). Among these are hundreds of original documents produced by the seven Field Day directors. The regular-format paper documents, including nearly all Field Day publications, fill around 50 archival boxes.

A small proportion of these documents have been transferred to digital formats and are available in section IV.xv of the Archive. Items that have been digitized in this way are indicated throughout the Detailed Listings section of this catalogue.

The Field Day archive is unusually rich in non-paper items. These include:

- comprehensive set of cuttings from Irish national and local press, sorted by date (1980 to 1992 and 1995)
- 27 quarter-inch audio tapes; recordings of various theatrical productions
- 24 audio cassette tapes; recordings of press coverage, etc.
- 12 film reels (16mm); recordings of BBC Arena documentary and of Double Cross (1986); film transcripts
- 10 VHS video tapes; recordings of performances, TV documentaries, etc.
- approximately 300 posters, flyers, etc. for Field Day productions and other events
photographic prints, almost all black and white, mostly of theatrical productions; also literary events and portraits

The audio tapes and film material were transferred to digital format in their entirety and are made available in the Archive. No posters or newspaper cuttings have been transferred, although some miscellaneous printed matter has. A large number of photographs are included in digital format in the archive, but most of the original prints are not part of the Archive.

CHRONOLOGY
FIELD DAY CHRONOLOGY

1980–2007

Note that while the information given here is as correct as possible, a lack of solid sources for some dates may have resulted in inaccuracies in the following.

1980
19 Aug. Field Day founded at first meeting of the board of directors. Directors are Brian Friel and Stephen Rea. Company secretary is Paddy Woodworth.


1981
1 Feb. Paddy Woodworth resigns and Noel McKenna takes over as company secretary.

3 Aug. Extraordinary meeting of company to pass a special resolution to gain charitable status and to appoint four new members: Seamus Deane, David Hammond, Seamus Heaney and Tom Paulin.

8 Sept. Premiere of Three Sisters by Brian Friel, adapted from Anton Chekhov, dir. Stephen Rea.

14 Feb. Screening of Sean Ó Mórdha documentary on Brian Friel and Field Day on RTE.


10 Nov. Publication of Sweeney Astray by Seamus Heaney.

1982

10 Dec. Noel McKenna resigns.

1983
9 Jan. Julie Barber becomes company secretary.

1984


1985
24 Jan. Seamus Deane delivers lecture on Field Day at Magee College, Derry.

17 May Publication of The Protestant Idea of Liberty,

Oct./Nov. *Ireland’s Field Day* published in association with Hutchinson.

1986


17 Jan.–12 Mar. Fiona McMillan employed as publicity officer for *Double Cross*.


Spring/Summer Colette Nelis starts as secretary/administrator at Field Day office.

8–31 May *Double Cross* in Royal Court, London.


1987


Sept.–Dec. *Carthaginians* by Frank McGuinness scheduled for this period but cancelled.

1988

29 Feb. Administrator Julie Barber leaves Field Day.

1 Mar. Maureen Loughran becomes company secretary.

9 May Tom Kilroy becomes Field Day board member.


1989

28 Jan. Reading by Seamus Heaney at Guildhall, Derry, *Yeats: A Fifty Year Salute*.


unspecified date: Script of *Saint Oscar* by Terry Eagleton published.


1990

18 June Gary McKeone takes over from Maureen Loughran.

22 Sept. *Speaking of Translations* (10th anniversary reading), with Seamus Heaney, Tom Paulin and Carol Ann Duffy at Royal Festival Hall, London.


unspecified date: Publication of limited edition of *The Cure at Troy* by Seamus Heaney.

1991

12 Mar. The Laurence Olivier Award/The Observer Award for Outstanding Achievement presented to Field Day.

30 Apr. Certificate of Incorporation issued for Field Day Publications.


11–27 Nov. Several launches of *Field Day Anthology* in US and UK.

2 Dec. Launch in Dublin of *Revising the Rising* edited by Máirín Ní Dhonnchadha and Theo Dorgan.

1992

11 Jan. Field Day Literature Series No. 1: *Field Day Anthology*, readings by Seamus Deane, Seamus Heaney and Tom Paulin (part of series of readings in Derry as part of *Impact 92 Festival*).

15 Feb. Field Day Literature Series No. 2: C. K. Williams (part of series of readings in Derry as part of *Impact 92 Festival*).

31 Mar. Field Day Literature Series No. 3: Jayanta Mahapatra (part of series of readings in Derry as part of *Impact 92 Festival*).

9 Apr. Tom Kilroy resigns as Field Day director.

11 Apr. Field Day Literature Series No. 4: Liz Lochhead (part of series of readings in Derry as part of *Impact 92 Festival*).

7 May Field Day Literature Series No. 5: Michael Longley (part of series of readings in Derry as part of *Impact 92 Festival*).

8 June Gary McKeone resigns as Field Day administrator.

10 June Soundings No. 1: Local Writers, featuring Frank Galligan and Anita Robinson (part of series of readings in Derry as part of *Impact 92 Festival*).

22–25 June Field Day readings at Expo 92, Seville.

1 July Prudential Award for Theatre presented to Field Day.

9 July Soundings No. 2: Local Writers (part of series of readings in Derry as part of *Impact 92 Festival*).

10 Sept. Soundings No. 3: Local Writers (part of series of readings in Derry as part of *Impact 92 Festival*).

24 Sept. Soundings No. 4: Local Writers (part of series of readings in Derry as part of *Impact 92 Festival*).

13 Oct. Field Day Literature Series No. 6: Ted Hughes (part of series of readings in Derry as part of *Impact 92 Festival*); Tom Kilroy’s resignation is announced.

13–15 Nov. Field Day rehearsed reading of *Cries from Casement as his Bones are Brought to Dublin* by David Rudkin, dir. Judy Friel.

27 Nov. Field Day Literature Series No. 7: Robert Creeley (part of series of readings in Derry as part of *Impact 92 Festival*).

1994

31 Jan. Brian Friel resigns as Field Day director.


ANN HASSON AND MICK LALLY IN TRANSLATIONS
BY BRIAN FRIEL (1980).
1995

9 Oct. Tom Paulin resigns as Field Day director

1996

late 1996: Derry office closes.

1998
1 May Publication of four volumes in Critical Conditions series: No. 5: *Crazy John and the Bishop and Other Essays on Irish Culture* by Terry Eagleton; No. 6 *The Keeper’s Recital: Music and Cultural History in Ireland, 1770–1970* by Harry White; No. 7 *The Present Lasts a Long Time: Essays in Cultural Politics* by Francis Mulhern; No. 8 *Poets and Politics: Reaction and Continuity in Irish Poetry, 1558–1625* by Marc Caball.

14 Nov. Field Day premiere of *Northern Star* by Stewart Parker, dir. Stephen Rea.

1999
18 Mar. David Hammond resigns as Field Day director.

20 Nov. Colette Nelis resigns.

2000
31 Jan. Publication of Critical Conditions No. 9 *Ireland after History* by David Lloyd.

2001
1 Sept. Publication of Critical Conditions No. 10 *Ireland’s Others: Gender and Ethnicity in Irish Literature and Popular Culture* by Elizabeth Butler Cullingford.

2002
1 Mar. Publication of Critical Conditions No. 11 *Circe’s Cup: Cultural Transformations in Early Modern Ireland* by Clare Carroll.


2004


2005
13 May Launch of *Field Day Review, 1*, Verbal Arts Centre, Derry.

20 May Launch of *Field Day Review, 1*, O’Connell House, Merrion Square, Dublin.


2006
Apr. Publication of *Field Day Review, 2*.

Oct. Publication of first two volumes in Field Day Files series: *Outrageous Fortune: Capital and Culture in Modern Ireland* by Joe Cleary and *Colonial Crossings: Figures in Irish Literary History* by Marjorie Howes; Publication of first two volumes in Field Day Music series: *Aloys Fleischmann* by Séamas de Barra and *Raymond Deane* by Patrick Zuk.

**2007**

May Publication of *Field Day Review*, 3.

July Publication of *The Field Day Archive* by Cormac Ó Duibhne.
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