

# THE GERALDINES AND MEDIEVAL IRELAND

## THE MAKING OF A MYTH

The Inaugural **Medieval Ireland** Symposium

Marking the 500th anniversary of the  
death of the 'Great Earl' of Kildare



FRIDAY 13 AND SATURDAY 14 SEPTEMBER 2013

THOMAS DAVIS LECTURE THEATRE  
(ROOM 2043 ARTS BUILDING)  
TRINITY COLLEGE DUBLIN

Featuring a keynote public lecture  
by **Professor Steven Ellis** on  
Friday 13 September 2013 at 7pm

**ADMISSION FREE • ALL WELCOME**

**REGISTRATION:**

[www.tcd.ie/history/geraldines](http://www.tcd.ie/history/geraldines)

[medieval.ireland.symposium@gmail.com](mailto:medieval.ireland.symposium@gmail.com)



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OF DUBLIN



# Programme

**FRIDAY 13 SEPTEMBER 2013**

**13.45**

**WELCOME AND OPENING  
REMARKS**

**14.00–15.30**

**Session 1**

Ciaran Brady

‘The myth of the Geraldines’

Seán Duffy

‘The origins of the Geraldines’

**16.00–17.30**

**Session 2**

Huw Pryce

‘Giraldus and the Geraldines’

Colin Veach

‘The Geraldines and the conquest  
of Ireland’

**17.30**

**Reception**

## **Keynote Lecture**

**19.00**

**Thomas Davis Lecture Theatre, TCD**

Steven Ellis

‘The “Great Earl” of Kildare’



## SATURDAY 14 SEPTEMBER 2013

**9.00-10.30**

### **Session 3**

Brendan Smith

'The Geraldines and the expansion of Anglo-Norman Ireland'

Paul MacCotter

'The dynastic ramification of the Geraldines'

**11.00-12.30**

### **Session 4**

Robin Frame

'The "rebellious" first earl of Desmond?'

Katharine Simms

'The Geraldines and Gaelic culture'

**14.00-15.30**

### **Session 5**

Linzi Simpson

'The built heritage of the Geraldines'

Sparky Booker

'The Irish in the Geraldine lordships'

**16.00-17.30**

### **Session 6**

Peter Crooks

'The Geraldines in the late-medieval English world'

David Edwards

'The Geraldine rebellions of the Tudor era'





## Keynote Address, Friday 13 September at 7 pm

The keynote address (which takes place appropriately in the Thomas Davis Lecture Theatre, TCD) by **Professor Steven Ellis** will examine the career of the 'Great Earl' of Kildare, once dubbed by a twentieth-century historian the 'all-but king of Ireland'. Professor Ellis read History at Manchester University before working at the Institute of Irish Studies, Queen's University, Belfast. He joined the History Department in Galway in 1976, was awarded a personal chair in 1991, and was appointed to the established chair of History in 2009. He became Head of History in 2004, and is presently Head of the School of Humanities. Among his many publications are: *Ireland in the age of the Tudors* (1998); *Tudor frontiers and noble power* (1995); and *Reform and Revival* (1986).

### SPEAKERS' AFFILIATIONS

- Sparky Booker (TCD) • Ciaran Brady (TCD) • Peter Crooks (TCD)  
• Seán Duffy (TCD) • David Edwards (University College Cork)  
• Steven Ellis (NUI Galway) • Robin Frame (Durham)  
• Paul MacCotter (UCC) • Huw Pryce (Wales, Bangor)  
• Katharine Simms (TCD) • Linzi Simpson  
• Brendan Smith (Bristol) • Colin Veach (Hull)



# The Geraldines and Medieval Ireland

## Overview

The inaugural Medieval Ireland Symposium marks the 500th anniversary of the death in September 1513 of Gerald FitzGerald (Gearóid Mór), the 'Great Earl' of Kildare, by exploring the theme of **The Geraldines and Medieval Ireland - The Making of a Myth**.

The Geraldines (or Fitzgeralds - descendants of Gerald of Windsor, constable of Pembroke, fl.1100) were perhaps the most important of the dynasties established in Ireland at the time of the Anglo-Norman invasion of the late 1160s. The family gave Ireland two of its most famous noble houses, the earls of Desmond and Kildare, as well as a host of later historical personalities.

From the earliest moments of their involvement in Ireland the Geraldines became shrouded in myths, often of their own creation, and these were consciously cultivated by the family in the later Middle Ages to enhance its prestige and power. This fund of mythology was later appropriated for political and polemical uses by writers across the post-medieval centuries from the Elizabethan age to the early decades of the Irish Free State, most famously in the nationalist verse of Thomas Davis (d.1845):

***Ye Geraldines! Ye Geraldines! - How royally ye reigned  
O'er Desmond broad and rich Kildare, and English arts disdained.***

The symposium examines the 'myth of the Geraldines' in these two senses: first the literary and historical evidence from the Middle Ages and its reception from the sixteenth century onwards; and second the myths and misconceptions that have encrusted around aspects of the family's history in the professional historical scholarship up to the present day.

# The 'Medieval Ireland' Symposium

## A Biennial Symposium Promoting Accessible Medieval Scholarship

'Medieval Ireland' is a new series that seeks to make cutting-edge historical scholarship accessible to all persons interested in researching, teaching or learning about the history of Ireland in the Middle Ages. The focus of the initiative is a biennial symposium at which leading historians from Irish and international universities will be invited to examine aspects of a specified theme or historical problem. Papers delivered at the symposium will be pitched so that non-specialists such as students, teachers and history-lovers can appreciate the nature of the historical problem under discussion and the significance of the findings. This will promote a wider public understanding and enjoyment of medieval Irish history. The symposium seeks also to become a means of setting the agenda and research trajectory for Irish medievalism.



All events take place in the Thomas Davis Lecture Theatre (Arts Building Room 2043), Trinity College Dublin.

Admission to all events is open to the public free of charge.

Please **register** for the daytime sessions and the evening lecture online at [www.tcd.ie/history/geraldines](http://www.tcd.ie/history/geraldines).

### FURTHER INFORMATION:

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