

Irish Studies Guest Lecture Series 2021



Prof. Paul Rouse (University College Dublin)

'Hurling and Ireland: A Photographic History'

Thursday, 9 December 2021, 19.00-20.00 (Rijeka/Ljubljana time zone)

This online lecture will take place on Zoom

Register in advance for this lecture: <https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZltcuCpqzspGtHDltlyOwGN-hA8lkB9xpY>

Paul Rouse is professor of history at University College Dublin. He has written extensively on the history of Irish sport and, more broadly, on modern Irish history.

Using 50 original photographs, this lecture will tell the story of the making of the modern modern form of hurling - which now thrives as the 'national game' of Ireland. Hurling was codified in the 1880s with the establishment by Michael Cusack of the Gaelic Athletic Association (GAA) in 1884. By then, hurling was surviving only on the margins of modern life in Ireland, played in traditional ways by a handful of rural communities in areas such as north Tipperary and east Galway. Before the 1880s, there was no agreed set of rules, no clubs, no governing body, no structure. Part of the modern appeal of hurling is the history and mythology which surrounds the game. The construction of this history and mythology was a conscious decision. Back in the 1880s, Michael Cusack was at pains to set out this idea that hurling 'grew out of the soil of Ireland', and an assertion of Irishness in the face of British cultural imperialism. Indeed, the game of hurling was presented as one of the great symbols of distinction between the Irish and the rest of the world. For hurling's modern propagandists, this was a distinction that had existed through all of history. Séamus Ó Ceallaigh, a long-standing GAA official, wrote in 1937: 'Hurling is indeed a game for the gods.... Hurling, which can claim to be the parent of every game played with a stick and ball, stands still unapproached as the greatest game ever devised for the diversion of men. Like the race that begot it, it is old, yet young, virile and fascinating.' This lecture will examine how a traditional game was remade as a modern sport, how this remaking was interwoven with myth and history, and how the desire to shape a national identity was fundamental to its codification.

This guest lecture series is a collaboration between the Filozofski fakultet u Rijeci and Filozofska fakulteta (Univerza v Ljubljani), and is kindly sponsored by the Embassy of Ireland in Slovenia and the Embassy of Ireland in Croatia.



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