

FIELD of VISION

rites of passage summer school led by

GILLY ADAMS JOHN FOX and SUE GILL

of **Dead Good Guides** www.deadgoodguides.com

Tuesday 31st May – Saturday 4th June 2011

The Stables Workshop, Falkland Centre for Stewardship

Falkland Scotland [35 miles NE of Edinburgh]

Most of us have a profound need to mark important events in our lives with some kind of ceremony. Frequently these are the occasions that our culture finds easiest to celebrate – for example, births, marriages and deaths, yet there are many other significant life experiences that demand attention. In our changing social and cultural environment where confidence in traditional religion has often diminished the challenge is to create appropriate, new rites of passage that can be witnessed by friends and family.

This challenge is the starting point for an intensive 5 day workshop which will examine the Hows and Whys of ceremony and celebration in a practical and experiential way. Beginning with an exploration of the way that rites of passage have already featured in our own lives, we will look at what else might require special attention: - beginnings and endings; gains and losses; transitions. We will examine how both positive and negative life events can be distilled into myth and poetry and create meaningful rituals to contain them. We will also look at how music, visual art and carefully chosen words can be used to enhance ceremony.

Gilly Adams, John Fox and Sue Gill will offer insights into the cognitively rich world of the secular celebrant, sharing their experience, offering theory, information, and – they hope – inspiration. Most importantly the week will be shaped to fulfill the needs and aspirations of participants so there will be plenty of **opportunities to learn and practise many aspects of the craft of creating ceremony** – both public and private - in a safe environment. Listening, participating, pooling ideas, writing, hands on making and whatever else arises.

One full day will be spent in the superb landscape of the Falkland Estate, with its stone, water, hills and forests – a place where people are learning how to live and work more sustainably. We shall spend time exploring both the woodland walks, the formal gardens of the Castle and other sites to assess and rig as potential outdoor ceremonial spaces.

Our working day will be 10 – 6pm, finishing 2pm on the last day.

Gilly and Sue have been working together in this field for more than 20 years, first as part of Welfare State International and latterly under the banner of Dead Good Guides. Gilly is a director and workshop leader who specialises in the development of text for performance as well as in ceremonies and storytelling. Sue was a founder director of WSI, co-author of the Dead Good Funerals Book and also the Guide to Namings and Baby Welcoming Ceremonies. They both work as independent, secular celebrants, guiding families and individuals who wish to create their own distinctive ceremonies.

Slightly peripheral to the main field of vision this year is our artist in residence John Fox. Along with Sue Gill, John was the founder and artistic director of Welfare State International 1968 – 2006 www.welfare-state.org Since archiving WSI he has re-invented himself as a visual artist. Throughout the week he will be around to offer simple making techniques. As a passionate believer in creativity John will encourage us to use the brains in our fingers and offer opportunities to discover, or re-discover our artistic aptitude.

There are 12 places available, at a range of fees:

4 Earlybird places @ £295 paid up in full by 28th February

Next 4 bookings @ £325 per place

Remaining places @ £350

Fees include tuition, all materials, teas and coffees throughout.

Falkland has a range of accommodation close to the venue from guest houses and camping to hotels. Pillars of Hercules is the renowned organic smallholding and café within walking distance of the Centre. Good cycle routes. Nearest train stations Ladybank and Markinch check Travel Line Scotland. From England, East Coast lines have some bargain [single] fares if you book early.

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