

MONDAY, MARCH 14, 2016

Irish Independent 

IN ASSOCIATION WITH

Thomas F. Meagher
FOUNDATION

THE *People's* FLAG

PRIDE, RESPECT, PEACE

ALSO INSIDE:
Double-sided
poster pullout –
Flag Day at Croke
Park – Scholarship
programme

Field of Dreams:

Hurling legend Henry Shefflin
on Irish identity

Battle Tales:

The incredible story of Ireland's
Fighting 69th

Wild Geese:

The French minister and
her Irish background



TEN FLAG FACTS

- Edward Hollywood, a Huguenot silk weaver who lived in the Liberties, made the first official Irish tricolour. He travelled to France with the Young Ireland Movement in 1848, where he acquired the richest of French silk.
- The Irish flag has an article all to itself in the constitution. Article 7 simply states: The national flag is the tricolour of green, white and orange.
- In 2006, an Irish tricolour purporting to be the flag that had flown from the GPO during Easter week 1916 was sold to an unidentified bidder for €600,000.
- Four years later, a flag also purporting to be the original tricolour, flown from Dublin's GPO during the 1916 Rising was withdrawn from auction in New York after failing to reach a similar asking price.
- The Ivory Coast flag, also modelled on the French tricolour, is identical to the Irish flag except the colours are in reverse.
- The Irish tricolour was raised for the first time at the Olympic Games in July 1928 when Dr Pat O'Callaghan became the first citizen of an independent Ireland to win a gold medal in the hammer event at the games in Amsterdam.
- An Irish tricolour travelled to the moon and back on board the Spacecraft America during the Apollo XVII mission in December 1972.
- Bob Geldof says he will take the tricolour with him when he becomes the first Irishman in space.
- There is a cocktail called the Irish Flag which consists of 2cc of mint spirit, 2 cc of Irish cream and 2 cc of Grand Marnier. The ingredients are poured in this order and very gently down long spoons so they don't mix together.
- One Direction's Irish member Niall Horan claims he keeps a tricolour by his bed when he is on tour.

One man, one flag and key 1916 role

By GRAHAM CLIFFORD

It was on March 7th, 1848 when Meagher unveiled what is now our national flag at the Wolfe Tone Confederate club on the Mall in Waterford. He was just 24.

Within six months he was arrested, tried and convicted of sedition.

Thomas Francis Meagher was born on August 23rd, 1823 in the Granville Hotel on the quay - at the time the mansion was the family home.

His father was the wealthiest merchant in the city having made his fortune in Newfoundland before moving to the Irish South East.

While Thomas Sr was a moderate nationalist his eldest son was more radical and ambitious.

Thomas Francis studied at Clongowes Wood College in Co Kildare and then at Stonyhurst in Lancashire mixing with English aristocracy.

But strongly influenced by revolution in Europe, especially in France, he returned to join the Repeal Movement (established to repeal the 1800 Act of Union). He soon grew frustrated with its endless debates and lack of action.

He joined the Young Irelanders group made up of idealistic young middle-class men who wanted more than a home Parliament in Dublin - complete independence.

The first 'tricolour', it is claimed, was actually made in France but presented to Meagher.

Many viewed it's symbolism as bordering on the politically naive given the fraught relationship between Catholics and Protestants at the time - and coming during the Great Famine.

However it allowed some to dream of both freedom and unity on our island.

Following the Young Irelander Rebellion of 1848 Meagher was sentenced to be 'hanged, drawn and quartered', but due to a public outcry the death sentence was commuted to transportation for life to Van Diemen's Land (Tasmania).

He left Ireland never to return. Meagher was given his own territory in Tasmania and, after a short marriage, escaped to South America.

He made his way to New York City and went on to become a Brigadier General in the Army leading a fierce Irish brigade in the civil war.

He re-married Elizabeth Townsend, from a family of wealth, in New York, and became an American civil war hero and the father of 'Irish-Americanism'. He was a pallbearer at the funeral of President Abraham Lincoln in 1865.

After the war, Meagher became Acting Governor of Montana. He attempted to create a working relationship between the territory's Republicans and Democrats but

failed, making enemies in both camps. On the night of July 1st, 1867 while on a steamboat on the Mississippi, he mysteriously fell overboard, his body was never recovered.

In 1916, the green, white and orange flag was hoisted aloft as a signal of both national freedom and unity.

A green flag of the 'Irish Republic' was flown over the GPO also.

The emergence of the 'new' flag of unity was seen as a major statement by the Republican movement - a flag for a new, strong, unified nation.

The making of the 1916 flag was the responsibility of Sean MacDiarmada - secretary of the Irish Republican Brotherhood.

It was secretly made from Irish linen with three sections or 'fields', coloured 'green, white and orange'.

However it's claimed the drapers MacDiarmada commissioned for the job made an error and got their colours mixed up.

When the 29" x 63" flag arrived at the GPO, the three fields had to be hastily unstitched, rearranged and re-stitched.

Shortly before the Proclamation of the Republic was read out, Willie Pearse, the younger brother of Patrick Pearse, made his way to the rooftop of the GPO with two flags in his hand.

He handed the green flag with the words 'Irish Republic' on it to the Argentinian-born Eamonn Bullfin to hoist up the flag pole while it's said the tricolour was hoisted by a member of the Kimmage Exile Unit.

It's unclear who hoisted the tricolour up the flagpole but the majority of historians feel Quartermaster General Michael Staines may have carried out the task.

Later that day, James Connolly dictated a message to his soldiers in which he told them, 'For the first time in 700 years the flag of a free Ireland floats triumphantly in Dublin City'.

Since Thomas Francis Meagher first unveiled the flag in Waterford some 68 years earlier the green, white and orange design had laid dormant but now, as it flew over the GPO, it captured the banner of the new revolutionary Ireland and was quickly acclaimed throughout the country as the national flag.

Since the flag celebrated unity, it was quickly adopted by all and continued to be recognised by official usage during the period 1922-1937. Its position as the national flag was formally confirmed by the Constitution of 1937, Article 7 of which states: 'The national flag is the tricolour of green, white and orange.'



Academic and former president, Mary McAleese

The flag is a statement of intent. It holds aloft our aspiration to be a peaceful country where all traditions are respected and reconciled. It flies high to remind us we are not there yet but it is the mission of each generation to bring us nearer to permanent peace one heart at a time.

Catherine McGuinness, retired Supreme Court judge and activist

The flag is really important and has ceremonial function. There are certain rules about how the flag should be flown and when it should be flown but in recent times, I think some people haven't really been showing respect for the flag. I honestly think we should show more respect for our national flag.

Eamon Ryan, Green TD and former minister

I love our flag. For me it evokes a sense of national pride. I have a love of this country and the democratic Republic we have. The flag represents that. Whether I see it at a Celtic match in Glasgow or if I see it at a U2 Concert, it's fine by me. It's part of what I am and it's not something I have ever felt uncomfortable about.

Charlie McGettigan, singer songwriter, former Eurovision winner

In school in Ballyshannon, Co Donegal the De La Salle Brothers were quite a Republican bunch of people and the flag was all-important. My reasons have certainly changed for having a pride in the flag. Now it's all those things like sport, culture and music. When we won the Eurovision in 1994, it took on a huge pride thing. Riverdance was that year and to see Riverdance for the first time, and to say, 'this is Ireland, this is Irish culture, look at what we can do'.

Brian Hanley, Historian, Author

From a personal point of view the Irish republicanism are in the European revolutions. I think the importance of what republicanism meant at the time the tricolour flag originated has been forgotten to some extent. In the 19th century, republicans were people who believed in, not just an end of monarchy, but also the separation of church and state and a more egalitarian society

Liz O'Donnell, former government minister

Having served as a TD and a Minister in an Irish Government, the Irish Flag has deep significance for me. When I represented Ireland abroad as Minister, the tricolour fluttered nearby on cars and buildings, like a formal appendage to my presence. It reminded me and others instantly that I was representing my country. As a symbol of allegiance and identity, national flags should be cherished and always respected. To see the national flag raised as the national anthem is played always brings a lump to my throat.



Linda Bireathnach, actor

No matter how much I try to intellectualise my relationship with our flag, ultimately there is a visceral experience which occurs when I see it raised. It connects with a sense of belonging deep within me. It connects with an undeniable sense of self and nationality. Our flag is a reminder that though we may be far from home, we still belong.

Adi Roche, International Aid Worker

Flags have always been a part of my life, as my family were proud to be Irish with a strong Fenian history and so every Easter we took out our 'green, white and gold' for all to see! Many times since then I have waved my own flag, most regularly in the Cork St Patrick's

It's good being part of something bigger than ourselves



In many ways, the colours we wear help to define us – our football team, our heritage, even our beliefs – and while we treasure our individuality, it's also a good thing to be part of something bigger than ourselves and acknowledge our membership. The freedom to do so has sometimes been denied – perhaps most strongly in our country of Ireland, when at one time wearing the colour green was regarded as a seditious act resulting in severe punishment. We have moved a long way from those days, when now it is possible to wear all the colours of the rainbow without shame or fear of retribution. Or have we? Sadly, not always. All too often, colours have been hijacked, not to proclaim an identity, but to promote sectarian values, encouraging antagonism between different groups. In 1848, to address that very issue, Thomas Francis Meagher, explained the inspiration behind the design of the flag:

"The white in the centre signified a lasting truce between Orange and Green. I trust that beneath its folds the hands of the Irish Catholic and the Irish Protestant may be clasped in generous and heroic brotherhood."

Our current reality is not so polarised – we live in a society of many faiths and none. But the principle remains, and is possibly even more relevant today than it was then. Thomas F. Meagher was no physicist – but his choice of white as the central symbol of reconciliation was inspired, white light being the product of the combination of every single colour in the spectrum. When we raise the flag, we make a statement not of separation, but of unity. We fly it with pride, to proclaim that the years of conflict in this land, if not over, are receding into the past, and that the Irish nation, hands clasped together irrespective of colour, race or creed, can set an example to the world that difference does not necessitate division, and that working together in generous and heroic brother and sisterhood, we shall shine a light into a dark and conflicted world.

By Reverend Michael Cavanagh, Chairman of the Thomas F. Meagher Foundation

A marker of identity and culture

Our tricolour is an emblem of peace, a call for solidarity, mutual trust, sisterhood and brotherhood, said President Michael D. Higgins in a speech given last week at the Flag Day event for schools in Croke Park.

It is so impressive to see pupils from hundreds of schools across Ireland come together to share in this very special occasion. Today each of your schools will receive two important symbols of our Irish nation – the Tricolour and the 1916 Proclamation. Today we will recall the ideas, the hopes, the dreams, of those men and women from our past who decided to fight for the freedom of Ireland. We will reflect, together, on what it was that motivated around a thousand women and men to take part in the Rising of Easter 1916 – some of them, members of the Fianna, or boys from Padraig Pearse's school, Saint Enda's, who were no older than those of you who are in fifth and sixth year.

On that Bank Holiday, when many Dubliners were making for trains to bring them to the races, the seaside, or the country, this determined group of men and women were getting ready, then, to strike against the British Empire and proclaim an Irish Republic.

These rebels had concluded that the parliamentary path advocated by many others within the nationalist movement had little real prospect of delivering independence for Ireland, and they were willing to sacrifice their lives in an exemplary way for the greater cause of Irish freedom.

It is important to recognise that those men and women who were "out" in 1916



were selfless in their aspirations for Irish independence. They may have differed in the ideals they emphasised: some gave priority to workers' rights, others to the rights of women, yet others were concerned with Ireland's cultural identity and the revival of the Irish language. Yet all of them, with their different ideas for the future of the nation, came together to pursue what they shared, a dream of independence, and they did so at an enormous personal cost for themselves and their families.

The Proclamation of the Republic, which Patrick Pearse read out at around 1 o'clock that same Monday from under the porch of the GPO, offers elements of a generous social and political vision that can still inspire us.

Just before Pearse started reading out this Proclamation, a green, white and orange banner – the Irish Tricolour – had been hoisted by the insurgents onto the roof of the GPO, alongside another large green flag inscribed with the words "Irish Republic". It is testament to the enormous success of the Easter Rising in capturing the imagination of the Irish people that the Tricolour flag which, at the time, was little known even among the rebels, rapidly became accepted as the unquestioned symbol of the Irish independence movement. Two decades later, when our Constitution was adopted, it stated, in Article 7, that:

"The national flag is the tricolour of green, white and orange."

But what is the meaning of this flag around which we are gathered today? Where did it come from? The Irish Tricolour was flown for the first time by a member of the Young Ireland movement, Thomas Francis Meagher, in Waterford, on 7th March 1848.

Modelled on the French Tricolour, a symbol of the French Revolution and the principles of freedom, equality and fraternity that it proclaimed, the Irish Tricolour takes us back to the roots of



President Michael D Higgins



The Irish tricolour, then, is a powerful emblem of brotherhood and peace. It is a symbol of our generous, inclusive Irishness

the modern democratic movement. It connects us to the seminal year of 1848, that extraordinary period of effervescence when, throughout Europe, ideas about democratic participation, freedom of the press, workers' rights, and the political and

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The President speaking at the launch of the Foundation's programme last year

should continue to inspire us. While we acknowledge the motivations that led the rebels to act as they did a hundred years ago, we recall, too, the human suffering associated with this armed rebellion. We remember, not just the rebels, but also the many civilians who lost their lives during that Easter Week, the children who were wounded or killed in the crossfire, the families who were grief-stricken by the loss of a loved one. And in doing so, we must also commit to ensuring that, never again, is such loss of life allowed to take root in our country.

Today the Irish Tricolour is recognised everywhere, both inside and outside of Ireland, as a distinctive marker of Irish national identity and culture. It is a symbol we exhibit to manifest our pride at sporting events, and we all look forward to witnessing, later on, the presentation of our national flag to some of our sporting heroes. The Tricolour is also an emblem of generous, inclusive Irishness – we readily share with others, for example on Saint Patrick's Day, when so many people around the world wear the Irish colours.

May I say, once again, how pleased I am to share with you in this special day of celebration and remembrance. Conscious

of our history, we are invited to care for the things that were handed down to us by the generations who preceded us – our institutions, our towns and villages, our landscape, our beautiful Irish language – so as to be better able to imagine alternative futures.

In this task, our young people have a great part to play. We need your ideas, your enthusiasm, your dreams, to continue the work of building, together, a society in which all of our citizens can flourish. We need your creativity, your generosity and energy to respond to the great challenges of our time, such as climate change, global poverty and hunger, or the ongoing refugee crisis.

The Easter Rising of 1916 can, in many ways, be described as a stunningly ambitious act of imagination. Today it is up to our young people to take charge of change and imagine what Ireland might yet become.

Go raibh míle maith agaih go léir

Michael D. Higgins

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President Michael D Higgins addresses students at Croke Park



Honorary board members of the Thomas F. Meagher Foundation and flag presenters, from left: Senator Mark Daly; Rev. Michael Cavanagh; Mickey Ned O'Sullivan, former Kerry footballer; Corporal Gemma O'Connor, Cork camogie player; rugby player Johnny Hayes; goalkeeper Páckie Bonner; General Kieran Brennan; rugby player Niamh Briggs; Robbie McCarthy, Naval Service; Dora Gorman, gaelic football player; Colonel James P. Tierney, 69th Infantry Regiment US Army; John Treacy, Olympic medalist; Corporal Paul Murphy, Kilkenny hurler; Sean Kelly, Fine Gael MEP and former GAA president.



Senator Mark Daly with schoolboy Gerard Brady



Students from Castleblayney School, Co Monaghan with Captain Gleeson

Flag Day at Croke Park

More than 700 schools were given a national flag by members of the Defence Forces

By PAUL MELIA

They came in their thousands to honour the Irish flag which flew high above the hallowed ground of Croke Park, the home of the GAA.

Some 6,000 students from more than 700 schools and 100 outreach programmes across the country gathered at the National Flag Presentation Ceremony, where a student from each school was presented with a tricolour and copy of the Proclamation.

Held in partnership with the Thomas F. Meagher Foundation, National Flag Day forms part of the year of commemorations. An actor representing Thomas Meagher explained the significance of the flag.

Born in Waterford, in what is now the Granville Hotel, he visited France in 1848 during the Great Famine and was presented with a tricolour, which inspired him to create a version for Ireland.

"The white in the centre signified a lasting truce between Orange and Green," he told delegates.

"I trust that beneath its folds the hands of the Irish Catholic and the Irish Protestant may be clasped in generous and

heroic brotherhood."

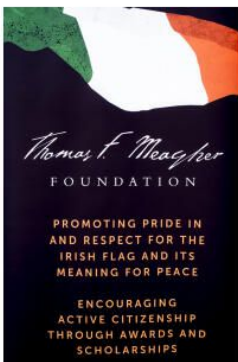
Senator Mark Daly, a member of the All Party Consultation Group on Commemorations and director of the Foundation, explained the thinking behind the event.

"The idea of presenting the flag was one of the ideas brought to the Government's all-party consultative group on 2016.

"1848, at the Wolfe Tone Club at 33 The Mall in Waterford, is the first reported event of a tricolour being flown. We know this because the Mayor of Waterford wrote to Dublin Castle asking what he should do with it. It flew for eight days and eight nights."

The flag was brought to Dublin prior to 1916 by Irish Volunteers from Waterford City, and every school and outreach programme in the State was invited to celebrate.

All of the flags presented were flown at 33 The Mall before being presented, and were made by Prospect Design in Dublin, which also makes them for the Defence Forces.



An outline of the Foundation's mission

Schools started to arrive from 9am, along with some 140 specially invited guests drawn from local authorities, government departments, sporting organisations, the education sector, charities, the Defence Forces and private sector.

President Michael D Higgins and



General Kieran Brennan presenting a copy of the 1916 Proclamation



It was a wonderful day of celebration

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his wife Sabina inspected the Guard of Honour formed by the 12th Infantry Battalion, before he spoke of the need for the next generation to champion and cherish the vision of the rebels of Easter 1916.

"In this task, our young people have a great part to play," he said. "We need your ideas, your enthusiasm, your dreams, to continue the work of building, together,



Foundation chairman Rev. Michael Cavanagh chats with broadcaster Ryan Tubridy

a society in which all of our citizens can flourish.

"The Easter Rising of 1916 can, in many ways, be described as a stunningly ambitious act of imagination. Today it is up to our young people to take charge of change and imagine what Ireland might yet become."

Master of Ceremonies was RTE broadcaster Ryan Tubridy, and the first flags were presented to sporting heroes Paddy Barnes, the Olympic boxer; Monaghan footballer Conor McManus and Ailbhe Kelly, a 5th student who will make her debut for Ireland at the Rio Paralympic Games this summer.

Some 12 flag presenters, which included Olympians, stars from men's and women's teams in rugby, GAA and soccer, and Colonel James P. Tierney from New York, of the 69th Infantry Regiment of the United States Army – the regiment joined by Thomas Meagher's during the



Three students from Sion Hill College, Blackrock, Dublin

American Civil War – presented the schools with the flag and copy of the Proclamation.

In a change to the updated Irish Flag Protocol, produced this year by the Department of an Taoiseach with assistance from the Thomas F. Meagher Foundation, the flag can now be flown past sunset as long as it is illuminated.

Students said it was a "privilege" to be

WHAT IS FLAG WEEK

Running from March 10 until March 17, Flag Week is among the highlights of the Thomas F. Meagher Foundation's activities in the Year of Commemorations.

The initiative is aimed at inspiring young people to take the lead and promote both peace in their communities and respect for the flag, and to raise funds for worthy causes at home and abroad.

The creator of the national flag, Thomas F. Meagher, created an enduring symbol of peace where the white on the tricolour unifies the nationalist (green) and unionist (orange) communities.

Hundreds of schools signed up to the initiative, and each was presented with a fundraising pack which included lapel pins, posters and information about what was required.

This allowed students to begin their own fundraising campaigns for a cause of their choosing.

Pupils were also asked to decorate their schools and communities with the colours of green, white and orange, in keeping with the aims of the Foundation to promote peace in the community, and to encourage local businesses to raise the colours.

Senator Mark Daly, a member of the All Party Consultation Group on Commemorations and director of the Foundation, said the idea of flag week tied in with the idea of active citizenship.

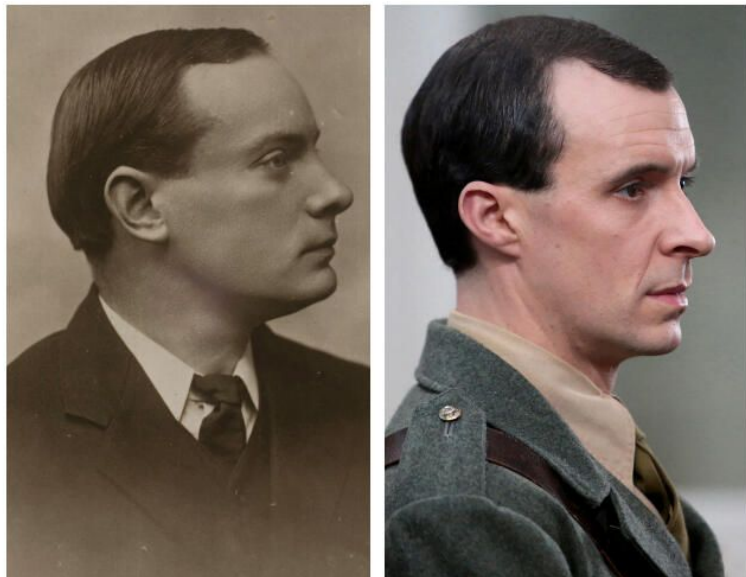
"We bought lapel pins which have the message of pride, respect and peace," he said.

"The students, who are in around half of all schools across the country, can pick a project and sell the lapel pins to help raise money.

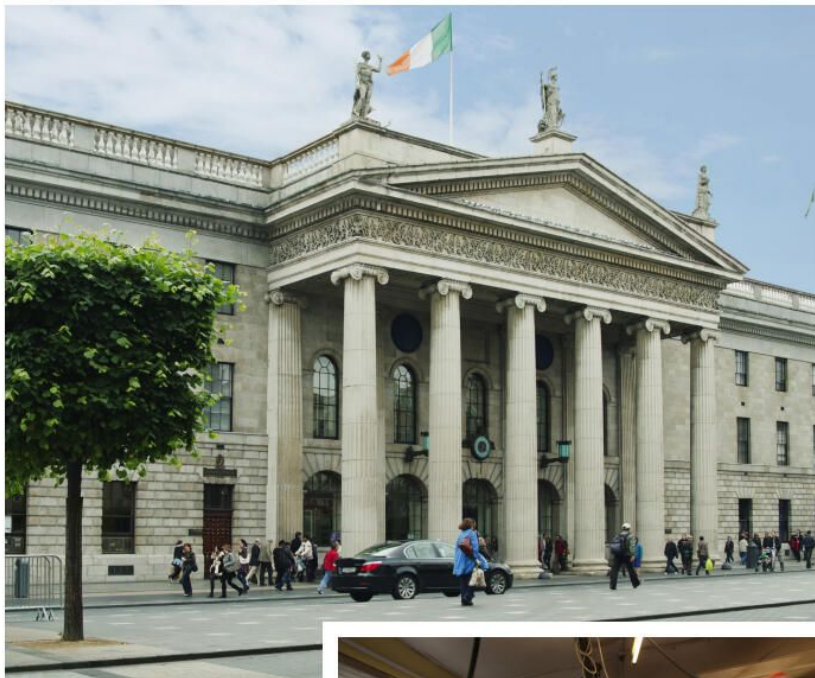
"All the money they raise goes to a project of their choosing – it could be suicide prevention, or promoting active retirement, or a project within the school to help an overseas aid agency."

invited to the event.

Anastasia Klemanska, from Scoil Carmel in Limerick, added: "The great thing about Ireland is its people and today was a celebration of Irish people then, and now, and in the future."



Padraig Pearse pictured before the 1916 Rising and, right, the actor Tom Vaughan-Lawlor as Pearse in TV3's 'Trial of the Century'



Centre of the 1916 action: the GPO

POBLACHT NA H EIREANN.
THE PROVISIONAL GOVERNMENT
OF THE
IRISH REPUBLIC
TO THE PEOPLE OF IRELAND.

IRISHMEN AND IRISHWOMEN: In the name of God and of the dead generations from which she receives her old tradition of nationhood, Ireland, through us, summons her children to her flag and strikes for her freedom.

Having organised and trained her manhood through her secret revolutionary organisation, the Irish Republican Brotherhood, and through her open military organisations, the Irish Volunteers and the Irish Citizen Army, having patiently perfected her discipline, having resolutely waited for the right moment to reveal itself, she now seizes that moment, and, supported by her exiled children in America and by gallant allies in Europe, but relying in the first on her own strength, she strikes in full confidence of victory.

We declare the right of the people of Ireland to the ownership of Ireland, and to the unfettered control of Irish destinies, to be sovereign and indefeasible. The long usurpation of that right by a foreign people and government has not extinguished the right, nor can it ever be extinguished except by the destruction of the Irish people. In every generation the Irish people have asserted their right to national freedom and sovereignty: six times during the past three hundred years they have asserted it in arms. Standing on that fundamental right and again asserting it in arms in the face of the world, we hereby proclaim the Irish Republic as a Sovereign Independent State, and we pledge our lives and the lives of our comrades-in-arms to the cause of its freedom, of its welfare, and of its exaltation among the nations.

The Irish Republic is entitled to, and hereby claims, the allegiance of every Irishman and Irishwoman. The Republic guarantees religious and civil liberty, equal rights and equal opportunities to all its citizens, and declares its resolve to pursue the happiness and prosperity of the whole nation and of all its parts, cherishing all the children of the nation equally, and oblivious of the differences carefully fostered by an alien government, which have divided a minority from the majority in the past.

Until our arms have brought the opportune moment for the establishment of a permanent National Government, representative of the whole people of Ireland and elected by the suffrages of all her men and women, the Provisional Government, hereby constituted, will administer the civil and military affairs of the Republic in trust for the people.

We place the cause of the Irish Republic under the protection of the Most High God. Whose blessing we invoke upon our arms, and we pray that no one who serves that cause will dishonour it by cowardice, inhumanity, or rapine. In this supreme hour the Irish nation must, by its valour and discipline and by the readiness of its children to sacrifice themselves for the common good, prove itself worthy of the august destiny to which it is called.

Signed on Behalf of the Provisional Government,
THOMAS J. CLARKE,
SEAN Mac DIARMADA, **THOMAS MacDONAGH,**
P. H. PEARSE, **EAMONN CENNITT,**
JAMES CONNOLLY, **JOSEPH PLUNKETT**

Sign here please: the Proclamation with the seven names attached



Keeping up with demand: the flag is a popular item these days



Kodak moment: Thomas F. Meagher

Proclaiming a brighter future for all the people

Proclamation Day has given students all across Ireland an opportunity to rewrite and reimagine the ideals of the men and women of 1916

Sixty-eight years after Thomas Francis Meagher first flew the green, white and orange flag of Ireland from the second-floor window of the Wolfe Tone Club at number 33 the Mall in Waterford, it was hoisted aloft on the Henry Street corner of the GPO to symbolise the Irish Republic on Easter week 1916.

And it was fitting that as rebel leader Padraig Pearse stepped out from beneath the pillars of the GPO and onto Sackville Street to read aloud the Proclamation of Independence that the flag flew above his head.

For the flag almost certainly influenced Pearse when he formulated the words to match the aspirations for our nation-to-be.

The white in the centre of our flag, of

By **GRAHAM CLIFFORD**

course, signifies a lasting truce between the two cultures on our island, namely Republican and Unionist and the hope that both could live together in peace. It was, and is, intended to symbolise the inclusion and hoped-for union of the people of different traditions on the island of Ireland to be part of the independent Irish nation, regardless of ethnic origin, religion or political conviction.

This same pivotal theme and egalitarian message is so clearly contained in the Proclamation when Pearse writes: "The Republic guarantees religious and civil liberty, equal rights and equal opportunities to all its citizens,

and declares its resolve to pursue the happiness and prosperity of the whole nation and of all its parts, cherishing all the children of the nation equally, and oblivious of the differences carefully fostered by an alien government, which have divided a minority from the majority in the past."

It is generally accepted that the Proclamation was drafted by Padraig Pearse, with some input from James Connolly and Thomas MacDonagh.

Inspired by the Irish language, culture and traditions, Pearse believed an equitable Ireland was possible and that the flag encapsulated that message.

Meagher and Pearse concurred that the only way to gain Irish independence was by making it clear that one section of

FLYING THE FLAG FOR IRELAND AS A FRENCH MINISTER

A French government minister is bringing a unique Irish perspective to her job looking after France's diaspora



By KIM BIELENBERG

Hélène Conway-Mouret enjoyed a spectacular rise in French politics after a career as an academic in Dublin.

She was appointed as a Minister in the government of President Francois Hollande soon after her election to the French Senate in 2011.

As a Minister of State in the Foreign Ministry, she was given responsibility for the French abroad.

It was Ms Conway-Mouret who suggested to Eamon Gilmore when he was Tanaiste and Minister for Foreign Affairs that it would be a good idea to have a Minister for the Irish Diaspora in our own government. This led to the appointment of Jimmy Deenihan as the first minister in the role. "I felt there was so much potential for the Irish abroad to have an input, because it is much larger than the French diaspora.

"What Ireland did went far beyond what we were able to achieve in France and I think the diaspora played an active part in the Irish recovery."

Ms Conway-Mouret lived for three decades in Dublin, and maintains strong Irish links. Her son was born in Ireland and still lives here.

She has spent most of her life here. She admits that during the recent France-Ireland rugby international in Paris she sometimes found herself cheering for Ireland.

Before her return to France to pursue her full-time political career, she served as head of the school of languages at Dublin Institute of Technology.

She was involved in plans to move the campus of DIT to its new site in Grangegorman on the Northside of Dublin.

"I was very enthusiastic about the project and its role in rehabilitating that part of the Northside of Dublin."

The academic, who joined Hollande's Socialist Party in 1997, started in politics as a representative of the French community in Ireland and Britain, before her election to the senate to represent the French global community of 2.5m people.

Ms Conway-Mouret is a member of the honorary board of the Thomas F. Meagher Foundation, and welcomes its work promoting pride and respect for the Irish flag.

On a visit to Ireland as part of a French delegation she was presented with an Irish flag by Senator Mark Daly.

"Bringing back an Irish flag to France had real meaning for me, because I spent so much of my life in Ireland.

"The flag is a very important symbol, given what we are going through in France at the moment.

"Those symbols mean something to



Conway-Mouret: a Trinity graduate and DIT head of languages

people. It's part of the pride and respect of the country that nourishes them.

"People are more attached to the flag in France now. When I was at the France-Ireland rugby match, small French flags were given out to the crowd.

"When the crowd was happy, they waved their flags. People wouldn't have done that a few years ago, because they thought it was old-fashioned, but now it actually means something."

The senator believes it is a good idea to distribute Irish flags to schools.

"It's a very good thing. I look at what happens in the United States, where they raise the flag in the morning.

"It might seem from a distance to be

something that you smile at.

"But then when you feel the significance of the flag and all the symbols that are linked to our history, you realise that it is not something to smile at. People are proud of it and it's part of what they are.

"It's a way for people to be together. In France, we call it 'Vivre Ensemble' (live together).

"That means we have the same symbols and abide by the same rules. We are able to respect our differences, but at the same time there are rules imposed on us that help us to be together."

Moving to France to pursue a political career proved to be something of a culture shock for the former language lecturer.



Initially, she stayed on in Ireland, flying between Dublin and Paris.

"I was only nine months in the senate before I was appointed a minister. I had no preparation.

"Moving back to France was a big change - I was learning to live in a country that I had left as a student and I went back as a senator.

"I am not a Parisian. It was difficult at first. The Parisians are not always easy. In Ireland people are different - generous and good fun."

Ms Conway-Mouret was born in Algeria, and grew up in Lyon.

She came to Ireland as a student to learn English and worked as an au pair in Dublin.

After completing her undergraduate studies in France, she returned to Ireland to study for a Higher Diploma in Education at Trinity College.

"I loved my time in Trinity and I believe it is a fantastic university. I would always be a big defender of Ireland and have strong sentimental links with the country."

She started her career in DIT in 1984 before eventually being appointed as Head of the School of Languages. She served as Minister for the French Abroad from June 2012 to March 2014, before resuming her role as a senator.

She says the past few months in Paris have been difficult after the terrorist attacks of November 13.

"For a time afterwards, the streets were almost deserted. It was very strange.

"It was like a ghost city, but people have gradually got back to a certain normality. Nobody will ever forget what happened, but people have to live their life."

Having served under Francois Hollande, she believes he has grown in stature since the terrorist attacks.

"He has done well during the awful times we have gone through. He has been able to prove that he has the stature of a leader, and led his country through the crisis.

"The economic times are very difficult in France. France has not pulled out of the crisis in the same way as Ireland."





The 69th New York Infantry was known as the 'Fighting 69th'

The 69th: a regiment with a rich story to tell

The Fighting 69th brigade was led by Thomas F. Meagher. Its ties to Irish and American history continue to bind



Left: The St Patrick's Day parade in New York



The flag is hung inside Leinster House



Into battle: the flag saw action in the American Civil War

In the remarkable 43 years that the enigmatic Thomas Francis Meagher walked this earth, his contribution to politics, rebellion and history in Ireland, Australia and America was immense, all at a time when travel was difficult and dangerous – especially if you were a wanted man.

While we, on this side of the Atlantic, recall his vision for a new Ireland as encompassed in our national flag, he is best remembered in the United States for his role in recruiting and leading the Irish Brigade in the American Civil War – known as the 69th New York Infantry or

'The Fighting 69th'.

After the 1848 rebellion, Meagher was transported to Tasmania by the British authorities but he dramatically escaped in 1852 and made his way to America.

In lectures, including a famous speech made at the Boston Music Hall in September 1861, Meagher implored the Irish of the North to defend the Union.

He began recruiting and advertising in local newspapers to form Company K of the 69th Regiment.

One of Meagher's adverts in the New-York Daily Tribune read: 'One hundred young Irishman – healthy, intelligent and

active – wanted at once to form a Company under command of Thomas Francis Meagher.'

In late May during the Battle of Fair Oaks, Meagher saw his first battle as a brigadier general. The Union won a defensive victory and the Irish Brigade furthered their reputation as fierce fighters. Over time this reputation was solidified. The New York printmaker Currier and Ives published a lithograph depicting Meagher on horseback leading his brigade at bayonet charge. Though he had no military training, Meagher could do no wrong on the battle field... to that point.

But the 'Fighting 69th' suffered huge losses at the Battle of Antietam and lost 540 men to heavy volleys before being ordered to withdraw. During the battle, Meagher was injured when he fell off his horse and suffered criticism for his actions during the fierce conflict. More tragedy was to unfold at the Battle of Fredericksburg, Virginia, with massive numbers of fearless Irishmen killed in action in what was one of the bloodiest battles of the war.

In the Bishops Palace Museum on the Mall in Waterford, across the street from where Meagher lived and unveiled the national flag, visitors can find a faded sprig of boxwood (to represent a spring of green) which Meagher asked his Irish brigade to wear on their uniforms as they rode into the battle of Fredericksburg in 1862.

Following the Civil War, Meagher, a U.S. patriot, was appointed acting governor of



JFK addresses both Houses of the Oireachtas in the Dail chamber in 1963

6677

In 1963 JFK gifted a Fighting 69th flag used in battle to Ireland

the Montana Territory.

The University of Notre Dame founded in 1842 adopted the moniker 'The Fighting Irish' in memory of the 'Fighting 69th'. Fr William Corby, the son of an Irish immigrant to Michigan and the third president of Notre Dame, served as chaplain of the Irish Brigade and granted general absolution to the troops in the midst of the battle.

In 1963 President John F. Kennedy gifted a Fighting 69th flag used in battle to the Irish Houses of Parliament saying: "Today, in recognition of what these gallant Irishmen and what millions of other Irish have done for my country, and through the generosity of the Fighting 69th, I would like to present one of these flags to the people of Ireland."

When addressing the combined houses of the Oireachtas in '63 President Kennedy said: "It is truly extraordinary that the man associated with the creation of the Irish tricolour should be resurrected in modern consciousness by an equally enduring flag resonant of bravery, freedom



Salute: Thomas F. Meagher

and democracy in the most powerful nation in the world."

And members of the 69th Infantry Regiment (New York) have been coming to Waterford City in large numbers in recent years to take part in the annual 1848 Tricolour Celebration in the city – amongst

them Lieutenant Col Sean Flynn – the Commanding Officer of the 1st Battalion of the 69th infantry.

In 2014, a Waterford City delegation marched proudly at the head of the St. Patrick's Day parade alongside the 69th Infantry Regiment.



Students from St Joseph's Secondary School in Co Mayo



Defence Forces Guard of Honour preparing for duty at Croke Park

On March 7, the Thomas F. Meagher Foundation and 'Ireland 2016' hosted National Flag Day for schools. Nick Cavanagh was on hand to capture images of the big day at Croke Park.



More than 5,000 people attended the event



Pupils from Jesus and Mary College in Dublin are photographed by teachers



Staff and students of St Benidus College, Dublin, with members of the Defence Forces



The Flag Day programme



President Higgins inspecting a Guard of Honour



Ireland legend Packie Bonner with other members of the honorary board



Colonel James P. Tierney with the Rev. Michael Cavanagh



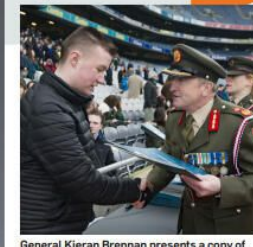
Flag presenters from the Defence Forces



Smile! Ryan Tubridy poses for photos



RTE's Ryan Tubridy speaking at Flag Day in Croke Park



General Kieran Brennan presents a copy of the Proclamation



Contemplating the seating options



Pupils from schools that registered to take part in Flag Week can take part

Lasting legacy in our awards programme

Students are invited to take part in the scholarships and awards administered by the Thomas F. Meagher Foundation

By PAUL MELIA

One of the enduring legacies of Flag Week is the school awards and scholarship programme run by the Thomas F. Meagher Foundation in association with seven universities and the Kerry Group.

The initiative aims to reward and recognise outstanding students who promoted pride and respect in the tricolour during Flag Week, and who also demonstrated they were active citizens in the community.

books or living expenses. The only criteria were that schools must have been registered for Flag Week to take part. As part of that process, the school must have nominated and appointed a student leader.

This student must demonstrate and understand the true meaning of the Irish flag, and encourage participation in Flag Week in their school and across their community. They might not be the eventual winner of the scholarship, but they do lead the team.

To secure the award, active citizenship must also be demonstrated through a short video.

"The students can enter the awards and scholarship programme by doing a 90-second video to demonstrate their activities including the fund raising and how they educated people in their communities during Flag Week," Senator Mark Daly, a director of the Thomas F. Meagher Foundation, said.

"This video is their application, and which will be reviewed by the foundations'



Citizenship: schools played a huge role in celebrating our identity

education and advisory board." Judges are looking for video applications no less than 90 seconds, and no longer than two minutes, which document how students and their school showed citizenship in the community. It could relate to promoting pride and

respect for the flag, or promoting peace. It could be providing a community service such as meals on wheels, or visiting a local nursing home and entertaining the residents with stories.

Other suggestions could include working with the Society of St Vincent

Giving back: young people are encouraged to apply for awards and scholarships

de Paul, or encouraging local businesses to fly the flag – or change to a new one if the tricolour is of poor quality. Helping a local animal trust at weekends would also count.

Progress during Flag Week should be uploaded to the schools' Facebook page, and shared with the Thomas F. Meagher Foundation on St Patrick's Day, March 17. This is aimed at promoting pride and respect in the flag on the day we celebrate our national saint.

The final video should be uploaded to YouTube before the April deadline, and a link sent to info@tjmfoundation.ie. It should also be uploaded to Twitter, accompanied by the hashtag #raiseourflag. Full details are at the foundation's website.

But the video is only the first step. "The judges will ask for a further submission from the best applicant in each county in the State," Senator Mark Daly said.

"Each county winner will be invited to Dublin to the Mansion House for an event celebrating the awards and scholarship programme.

"There will be one winning school per

county, and seven of those will receive a scholarship. It's up to each school to decide how to use it."

The education partners are Trinity College Dublin (TCD), University College Dublin (UCD), Dublin City University (DCU), University College Cork (UCC), University College Limerick (UL), National University of Ireland Galway (NUIG) and the National University of Ireland Maynooth (NUIM).

"We were honoured to receive a scholarship to each of the seven national universities," Senator Daly said. "It will be the first year registration fee paid, or benefit in kind. They will get the fee, or credit in the college for expenses which could include accommodation or books. It's worth around €3,000."

He added that the school would decide the worthiest student.

"The response has been phenomenal. It's really about promoting active citizenship – the important thing is the message of the flag."

SEE: tjmfoundation.ie

Message from Paul Byrne, President of the National Association of Principals and Deputy Principals (NAPD)



The National Association of Principals and Deputy Principals is proud to be associated with the Thomas F. Meagher Foundation and would like to think it gives an opportunity for us to look to the past to see where we have come from and what lessons we have learned on the journey from the time of brave patriots like Thomas Francis Meagher who inspired the leaders of the 1916 Rising and the influence they had on the education system of the present. Flags have been presented to every primary school in the country and the flag ceremony in Croke Park on the 7th March was truly memorable.

2016 is a very significant year for our country and our education system. Many events this year will commemorate those who gave their lives for the freedom to determine our future as an independent nation. We will commemorate and honor the courage and vision of all those who fought in rebellion. Patrick Pearse and Thomas McDonagh were both teachers.

In Pearse's essay entitled "The Murder Machine" he drew together his thoughts on education, both positive and negative. It was first published early in 1916. In "The Murder Machine" Pearse looked at the prevailing education system of his time and compared it to a machine which was killing education and "creating a nation of slaves". He outlined his vision for a new education system for a New Ireland. The first prerequisite which Pearse demanded for any education system was freedom, – freedom for schools, for teachers and for pupils. Pearse found it absurd that the education provided in schools did not reflect local needs, local conditions or local aspirations. He urged that individual teachers should be free to impart their own

individuality, their own gifts, and their own enthusiasm to the work of education and a century on Pearse advocated freedom for pupils to be able to follow their own strengths, interests and capacities. In this vision he outlined how the education system needed to foster the learning of the pupils and that teachers needed to inspire students – something which is very close to the key skills at the centre of junior cycle reform. The 1919 Democratic Programme of the First Dáil stated "It shall be the first duty of the government of the Republic to make provision for the physical, mental and spiritual wellbeing of the children, to secure that no child shall suffer hunger or cold from lack of food, clothing or shelter." In 2016 we live in a society far removed from that which Meagher, Pearse and McDonagh knew. We have a different education system in many aspects to the murder machine but unfortunately worryingly similar in others. Teaching is still dictated, by and large, by a terminal exam. Individual talent in students can go undiscovered, unacknowledged, unrewarded and undeveloped because it can't be measured for exam purposes. But we must ask this question? Are we doing all that we can to provide for the needs of our children as envisaged by men of vision like Meagher, Pearse and McDonagh?



Ten times a winner: Henry Shefflin's Kilkenny All-Ireland medal haul made him an idol

My pride for the tricolour

Henry Shefflin is proud to be an honorary member of the Thomas F. Meagher Foundation

In those still, fleeting seconds they say you can hear your heart beat. Standing tall with arms by your side and a bead of sweat running down your cheek. Fists clenched, eyes fixed on a fluttering flag in the corner of the stadium and with the sound of 82,000 voices as one, this is your time; your calm before the storm.

Most mere mortals would give anything to go through that experience once. To stand there belting out the national anthem on the hallowed turf of Croke Park with eyes fixed on our national flag which rises and falls with the gentle September breeze. To stand resolutely amongst comrades representing your friends, your family, your club, your county in an All-Ireland final. Henry Shefflin went through it an incredible 15 times in the black and amber and more often than not he enjoyed the calm before exquisitely taming the storm.

"Those quiet moments are so intense, they help you focus and you feel as though you're alone with your thoughts. They don't last long but there's nothing like



By GRAHAM CLIFFORD

walking around after the Artane band with the national and county flags in front of you or belting out Amhrán na bhFiann. For any GAA person, the feelings of pride in that moment are indescribable," said the Kilkenny hurling legend, known affectionately as 'the King'.

He continues: "Like so many others I, as a child, dreamt of representing my county in an All-Ireland final standing to attention when the referees whistle blows for the anthems. The flag, the anthem, the feeling of national pride – they are all so interlinked with the game of hurling and our identity as a people. Since the time of Cuchulainn hurling has been something of a symbol for the independent state and the



flag we hold so dear."

I point out to Henry, an honorary board member of the Thomas F. Meagher Foundation, that he and the founder of the flag of our nation have something in common – they're both Waterford men by birth – Henry having been born in the Regional Hospital in the city in 1979 and Meagher in the Granville Hotel on the Quays over 150 years earlier.

A Cat to the core, Shefflin replies with a smile: "that's about the only bit of me that's Waterford!" The Ballyhale Shamrocks man won everything the game had to offer and surpassed all previous records in an astonishing career. He is the only man in the history of GAA, in either hurling or Gaelic football, to have an incredible ten All-Ireland winner's medals

and, with a tally of 27 goals and 484 points, he is the top scorer of all time.

And yet for all the glory and all the fame, Henry Shefflin is quintessentially a GAA man who is so proud of his club, his county and his country.

He tells me: "I've been fortunate enough to have travelled the world with hurling. And no matter where I've been or what I've done I always get such an enormous sense of pride and warmth when I see the Irish flag flying. The flag is ever present at GAA clubs in far flung places across the world from Argentina to Australia and it represents home for all those living and working away from their families and loved ones. And in this, the centenary year of 1916, he says the importance of the GAA in the quest



Proud: Henry says the the Irish flag fills him with warmth and pride. DYLAN VAUGHAN

for Irish independence is something we cannot forget. "So many of those involved in the Rising were, of course, members of the GAA. As an organisation, it played a pivotal role as a cultural and sporting body in strengthening and reawakening

our notions of identity and independence I think. So this year when I'm at a game and stand for the anthem and face the flag I'll look at it and think of those who went before me and gave their all for the country they loved."



Setting standards: Gaelic football star Cora Staunton is a role model for young people

'Make Ireland equal for all'

GAA star Cora Staunton wants the country to be a place of welcome

In those still, fleeting seconds they say you can hear your heart beat. Standing tall with arms by your side and a bead of sweat running down your cheek. Fists clenched, eyes fixed on a fluttering flag in the corner of the stadium and with the sound of 82,000 voices as one, this is your time; your calm before the storm.

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JFK was an Irish-American icon. Right: The president speaks in front of the 'Fighting 69th' flag



The link with the Kennedys is being continued



Former Taoiseach Bertie Ahern, the late Senator Edward Kennedy and Senator Mark Daly study Thomas F. Meagher's sword.



JFK drew enthusiastic crowds during his 1963 visit to Co. Wexford.

Ireland's great symbol of hope

The Kennedy family continue to have a strong affinity with Thomas F. Meagher

When the Thomas F. Meagher Foundation was looking to form their honorary advisory board to help with their aims of promoting pride in and respect for the Irish flag and its meaning for peace, one man and his family embodied all of this.

Congressman Joe Kennedy, grandson of Robert F. Kennedy and grandnephew of President John F. Kennedy and Senator Edward Kennedy and the only member of the famous and historic family to currently sit in Congress was the ideal choice.

The Foundation were delighted when the Congressman agreed to be a part of the Honorary Board and were honoured that the legacy and link with the Irish flag and the Kennedy family is being continued.

Congressman Kennedy's granduncle on his visit to Ireland in 1963 presented the joint siring of the Oireachtas with a flag of the 69th Regiment of which Thomas F. Meagher was a general.

As he presented this flag, President Kennedy spoke of the 69th and the long and enduring links between Ireland and America "The 13th day of September, 1862, will be a day long remembered in



Congressman Joe Kennedy, grandson of Robert Kennedy and grandnephew of President John F. Kennedy

American history. At Fredericksburg, Maryland (sic), thousands of men fought and died on one of the bloodiest

battlefields of the American Civil War. One of the most brilliant stories of that day was written by a band of 1,200 men who went into battle wearing a green sprig in their hats. They bore a proud heritage and a special courage, given to those who had long fought for the cause of freedom. I am referring, of course, to the Irish Brigade. General Robert E. Lee, the great military leader of the Southern Confederate forces, said of this group of men after the battle: "The gallant stand which this bold brigade made on the heights of Fredericksburg is well known. Never were men so brave. They ennobled their race by their splendid gallantry on that desperate occasion. Their brilliant, though hopeless, assaults on our lines excited the hearty applause of our officers and soldiers." Of the 1,200 men who took part in that assault, 280 survived the battle. The Irish Brigade was led into battle on that occasion by Brigadier General Thomas F. Meagher, who had participated in the unsuccessful Irish uprising of 1848, was captured by the British and sent in a prison ship to Australia, from whence he finally came to America".

The Kennedy family's links to Ireland

are well known and well loved, with Senator Ted Kennedy not only visiting Ireland but playing a vital part in the peace negotiations. In an address at the University of Ulster in 1998, he spoke of his family's great affinity to Ireland "My family has a great love for this island from which we come and which for us will always be a home."

On the 30th of April 2008, 10 years after Senator Kennedy's speech in Northern Ireland Taoiseach Bertie Ahern alongside Senator Mark Daly presented Senator Kennedy with the Sword of Thomas F. Meagher, at a ceremony on Capitol Hill.

In this significant year for Ireland, 53 years after President Kennedy's historic visit to Ireland, it is hugely important to see the continuation of the Kennedy family legacy to Ireland with Congressman Kennedy's role in the Thomas F. Meagher Foundation. As his father and uncles before him, he is a symbol throughout the world of not Ireland but also of peace. There is no better person to represent Thomas F. Meagher and the Foundation that bears his name than Congressman Joe Kennedy.



Kerry's connection to the 9/11 memorial

Navillus (Sullivan spelt backwards) is a US construction firm with a big Irish heart, writes Erin Fox

Since it was founded in 2014, The Thomas F. Meagher Foundation has attracted many patrons and partners including the American firm Navillus Contracting.

The founder of Navillus, Donal O'Sullivan, left Ballinskelligs in south Kerry 30 years ago to work in construction in New York. Soon after, he founded Navillus (Sullivan spelt backwards) which now employs over 1000 workers, many of them from Ireland, with several from Kerry.

While New York has been his home for 30 years, Mr O'Sullivan's roots remain important to him and he regularly travels home to visit family. In September 2014, he met with Senator Mark Daly who introduced him to the Thomas F. Meagher Foundation.

Impressed by the Foundation's aims and mission, Navillus became a partner. "Promoting pride in and respect for the Irish flag, and its meaning for peace, is very important to us all to ensure our Irish heritage and culture continues for many generations to come and we feel this is especially important for schoolchildren,"



Donal on site at the 9/11 project and, right, with Senator Mark Daly at Navillus HQ in New York

said Mr O'Sullivan.

"We believe that being a part and contributing to such a worthy foundation that promotes our pride and respect for our flag and its meaning for peace, encouraging active citizenship through schools, awards and scholarships where we live and work is not only our responsibility, but our duty."

The Irish flag carries a special meaning for everyone and, for Donal, it symbolises "our freedom and everything Irish". Mr O'Sullivan carries that meaning with him in New York and the Irish flag flies alongside the American flag in the reception of Navillus.

As well as supporting the Thomas F. Meagher Foundation and St Patrick's College in Maynooth, Navillus supports and sponsors many Irish organisations and associations in New York.

These include the Irish Arts Centre; the New York GAA; the Kerry football team; the New York Senior team, the New York Féile teams that travel to Ireland annually and the underage newly-formed Rockaway Gaelic football Club.

Navillus is the main private donor to the development of Phase 1 of the Field of Dreams at Frank Golden Park for Shannon Gaels GAA, a state of the art Gaelic playing fields. It also plays host to many Irish students who come to New York to work and who are looking to experience US culture.

Since it was born, Navillus has established itself as a leader in the construction industry, having contributed to the city skyline for the last 24 years. Most notably, Mr O'Sullivan was proud that Navillus was involved with the construction of the 9/11 Memorial at the



Main and above: the 9/11 memorial in New York which Navillus worked on



Donal was grand marshal of the St Patrick's Day parade in Queen's, New York, in 2014

World Trade Centre.

"We were deeply honoured and especially proud to have been involved in the construction of The National September 11th Memorial and Museum at the World Trade Centre and to be involved with so many other contracts in the rebuilding of the World Trade Centre Area," he said.

"Epic in scope and globally significant, this momentous project called to build the decks, the walls and enclosures of the memorial waterfalls and pools set within the footprints of the fallen Twin Towers and houses a museum, a train station and many other facilities."

Navillus won the contract to build the Memorial from the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey and has won several more contracts at the World Trade Centre site since. The project took over five years to complete; with so many workers from Kerry working on it, it was nicknamed "Kerry Tower".

With the many events and ceremonies commemorating Ireland's 1916 centenary now in full swing, Navillus will be embracing its Irish pride and joining in the celebrations.

"We will be attending and supporting as many of these events celebrating the 100th Anniversary of the sacrifice and contribution of the men and women of the Easter Rising 1916 to ensure that the ideas and actions of the patriots of 1916 will not be forgotten in the 21st Century," added Mr O'Sullivan.