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Irish Independent 

IN ASSOCIATION WITH

Thomas F. Meagher
FOUNDATION

THE *People's* FLAG

PRIDE, RESPECT, PEACE

Special
24-page
supplement

INSIDE:

- The amazing life of Thomas F. Meagher
- Your Guide to Flag Day 2017
- Special Contributions from Ceann Comhairle Seán Ó Fearghaíl, the Defence Forces, Trócaire and US Congressman Joe Kennedy

PRIDE
RESPECT
PEACE

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ÉIRE



2017



Pride and respect at Leinster House

Irish flag since it was first introduced by the Foundation's namesake in 1848. I particularly congratulate them on their work in bringing the message of peace and respect contained in the Irish flag to so many schools throughout the country and their fine work last year to mark the centenary of the Easter Rising. The Foundation's work continues apace with further plans to expand their educational mission, and I note with appreciation the contributions of both my Oireachtas colleague Senator Mark Daly and the Reverend Michael Cavanagh in this regard.

I have been pleased as Ceann Comhairle that I and the Foundation have joined forces to promote both the Foundation's educational mission with my own Africa Project which seeks to raise much needed funds for a Trocaire project in Ethiopia. While the Easter Proclamation summoned our people to the flag to fight for our freedom, now that we have achieved that freedom, the peace and friendship represented in the green, white and orange must be recalibrated to find a deeper meaning. Perhaps the flag can summon us now to continue our long established generosity to those less fortunate than us, whether at home or abroad. There is as much dignity in giving as there is in receiving, and with Ireland's long and noble history of self-help empowerment and local activism, I would urge those in a position to do so to consider supporting the Ceann Comhairle's Africa Project and assist those currently experiencing difficulties in this region of Ethiopia to reach the massive potential they can so easily achieve with some assistance from friends in Ireland. Further details on this project can be found on the Trocaire website.

For me, the call to our National Flag is not just to indigenous Irish, but to all those who now regard Ireland as their home and in that regard, the flag represents all that is good about all of us: patriotism, inclusivity, tolerance, fair play and respect. I urge us all to listen to that call, to honour cultural heritage and diversity, and to reflect on the pride and respect that is encapsulated by our Tricolour.

Seán Ó Fearghail, TD
Ceann Comhairle
March 2017



President Michael D Higgins speaking at the Flag Presentation Ceremony

a country welcoming of strangers and respectful of difference.

As Ceann Comhairle, I am conscious of the many who have come to make new lives for themselves in Ireland, be it temporarily or more long term. We welcome the cultural heritage, history and culture these friends from abroad bring to our country, weaving an every more colourful tapestry of shared experience for our small and proud island. The symbolism of our National Flag can continue to educate us and can also assist those making their home here learn more

about us, uniting us in a wish to insist on the dignity of the individual and respect for our neighbour. Furthermore, just as the green and orange can be conjoined with a neutral and peaceful white, so we can extend a hand of friendship to those who may not agree with us on all matters in our public discourse. I have long found that a handshake is far less taxing than a clenched fist.

I commend all those involved in the Thomas F. Meagher Foundation who have undertaken excellent work promoting the meaning and significance of the

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2017 Thomas F. Meagher Foundation and Kerry Group Awards and Scholarship

Kerry Group is pleased once again to be associated with the Thomas F. Meagher Foundation and to sponsor the Kerry Group Awards and Scholarship Programme. Following on from the inaugural flag week in 2016, schools nationwide will again participate in Flag Day — which is today. This encourages post-primary students to explore the meaning of Irish citizenship and an inclusive society, and invites them to participate in local community development initiatives. Similar to last year, Kerry Group encourages schools partaking in Flag Day to enter the Kerry Group Awards and Scholarship Programme. The programme recognises outstanding students who promote pride in and respect for the Irish flag, its true meaning for peace and are active citizens in their communities. Importantly Flag Day in 2017 will see schools across the country celebrate the new, broader and more inclusive definition of Irishness by hosting events throughout their localities.

How to apply:

If you would like to be in with a chance of winning a third-level scholarship or one of our awards, you may submit a 90 — 120 second video documenting your Flag Day success in encouraging active citizenship, celebrating the new Irish and promoting the true meaning of peace of the Irish flag.

Video Application

The 90 — 120 second video application will be required to have a number of elements included to be eligible as a valid application. Points are awarded for each element successfully fulfilled. Each criterion is worth 30 points with 10 points being awarded for full completion of the submission process.

30 Points Footage of your school encouraging active citizenship by selling the flag lapel pins for a project or charity of their choosing.

30 Points Footage of your students celebrating Irishness in its broadest and most inclusive definition and the new Irish

30 Points Footage of your school showing pride in and respect for the Irish flag

10 Points Completing the below Submission process

★ Upload your video to your school's YouTube

★ Email a link of your application to info@tfmfoundation.ie by

You must include in the email subject line of your submission:

1. School name
2. County
3. Roll number
4. Charity/Project name and total amount raised

Right: The first Kerry Group Awards and Scholarship ceremony in association with Ireland's seven universities was held in Leinster House in May 2016; pictured are one of the seven award winners, Schull Community College



Kerry Group is pleased once again to sponsor the Awards and Scholarship programme



Kerry Group CEO Sean McCarthy



Celebrating 'active citizenship' and message of the flag

The Thomas F. Meagher Foundation and Kerry Group are asking schools to offer a renewed vision of the Irish flag. By Anita Guidera

What it means to be Irish in the 21st Century through active citizenship is the theme of the 2017 Thomas F. Meagher Foundation School Awards and Scholarship Programme in Association with the Kerry Group.

While last year's inaugural awards focused on the centenary of 1916 and the birth of the nation, this year, participating schools are being urged to turn their attention towards the next 100 years.

People living in Ireland today no longer necessarily have the same ethnic or cultural backgrounds and the Foundation

is encouraging the young people of Ireland, irrespective of ethnicity, creed or gender, to work together towards common goals.

"As well as celebrating the flag and its origins and its meanings, we are asking schools to celebrate the new Irish," says Foundation board member Senator Mark Daly who is encouraging schools across the country to

**MÓRTAS
MEAS
SÍOCHÁIN**



Thomas F. Meagher
FOUNDATION

take part.

"On St Patrick's Day we celebrate 70 million Irish all over the world but we must also remember to celebrate those who now make Ireland their home, who may not be born in Ireland but who consider themselves Irish.

"That is the key message about Flag Day.

"We must broaden our view of what it means to be Irish in this most challenging time when the ideo of diversity and



acceptance and tolerance are very important as some countries go down a route which is far from tolerant.

"We must understand that our view of Irishness must adapt in the same way that Meagher spoke about an Irishness that was inclusive rather than exclusive," he said.

The project will allow them to work together for a shared vision.

That includes not only learning about the Irish flag and its message of peace and unity but of raising funds to help people in their locality and wider afield.

As of Tuesday March 7, more than 300,000 flag badges had been dispatched to 723 second level schools across the country, which will be sold by students with the proceeds going to assist worthy causes.

"These badges represent pride, respect and peace, respect for our communities, other cultures and reflecting on just how far we have come since the first tricolour was raised," adds Senator Daly.

To have a chance of securing a third-level scholarship on offer, schools are being asked to participate in three ways:

- To promote pride and respect for the flag in their schools and communities and to educate students about the protocol around the flag and its meaning
- To sell badges to support community projects of the school's choice
- To celebrate the New Irish who have made the country their new home.

Once again individual students from the winning schools will be offered the chance of a one year third-level scholarship thanks to the Foundation's education partners.

This year the Foundation has partnered with the Ceann Comhairle's Office in Leinster House which has teamed up with Trocaire to launch Project For Africa to raise funds for a water conservation and irrigation programme in Tigray in Northern Ethiopia. Schools have been given the option of contributing towards the Ceann Comhairle's Project from the funds that are raised.



These badges represent pride, respect and peace

What Is Active Citizenship?



Legacy: Former President Barack Obama speaking in Dublin in May 2011.

When President Barack Obama left the White House this year, he set up a Foundation, one which focuses on developing the next generation of citizens — and what it means to be a good citizen in the 21st century.

He famously said: "In dreams begin responsibility. And embracing that responsibility, working toward it, overcoming the cynics and the naysayers and those who say "you can't" - that's what makes dreams real. That is something we can point to and show our children... That is something we can teach them as they grow up together in a new century side by

side, as it has been since our beginnings"

One of the main aims of the Thomas F. Meagher Foundation is to promote active citizenship in schoolchildren. By supplying lapel pins to schools free of charge we are giving them the chance to sell these pins for a charity or project of their choosing.

Community can be many things, your family, and your neighbour of your school. This community involvement is more important than ever in a society that is becoming more inwardly focused. Groups throughout the world are seeing the benefit and the need to promote Active Citizenship;

INAUGURAL SCHOLARSHIP WINNERS:

Students from seven second-level schools were awarded a one-year third-level scholarship in the inaugural Thomas Meagher Scholarship Programme last year.

The winning schools included St Nathy's College, Ballaghderreen, Roscommon; Glanmire Community College Cork; Stratford College Secondary School, Rathfarnham, Dublin; Colaiste Bride, Clondalkin, Dublin; Schull Community College Cork; Regina Mundi Cork and Presentation Secondary School, Tipperary.

They had been asked to provide a 90-second video presentation of the various initiatives undertaken by their school, during Flag Week.

Daniel Tansey a TY student from St Nathy's, captured the Easter 1916 commemorations at his school as well as his school's fundraising efforts during Flag Week for two charities.

The TY group raised over €2,000 for the

charities, including Dylan's Path to Walk which helped fund surgery to help a local boy with Cerebral Palsy to walk, and Join Our Boys, a Roscommon-based charity established to raise awareness about Duchennes Muscular Dystrophy and to fund research.

Megan O'Sullivan of Glanmire Community College, helped promote the National Flag in her school through video presentations, pin selling and providing information on flag protocol. For their project, second-year students from Stratford College undertook to sell badges and to get to know their community better by hosting a Seachtain na Gaeilge concert in the school. Their efforts earned their school a place as one of the finalists.

Sixth year student Leanne Doherty from Colaiste Bride recorded the historic Flags for Schools Initiative Ceremony in Croke Park and

other 1916 commemorative initiatives by her school to earn a scholarship.

Budding filmmaker, Jacob Goode, a fifth-year student from Schull Community College turned creativity into accomplishment when he was tasked with filming his school's preparation for Proclamation Week (March 10–17) and the flag raising ceremony held at the school.

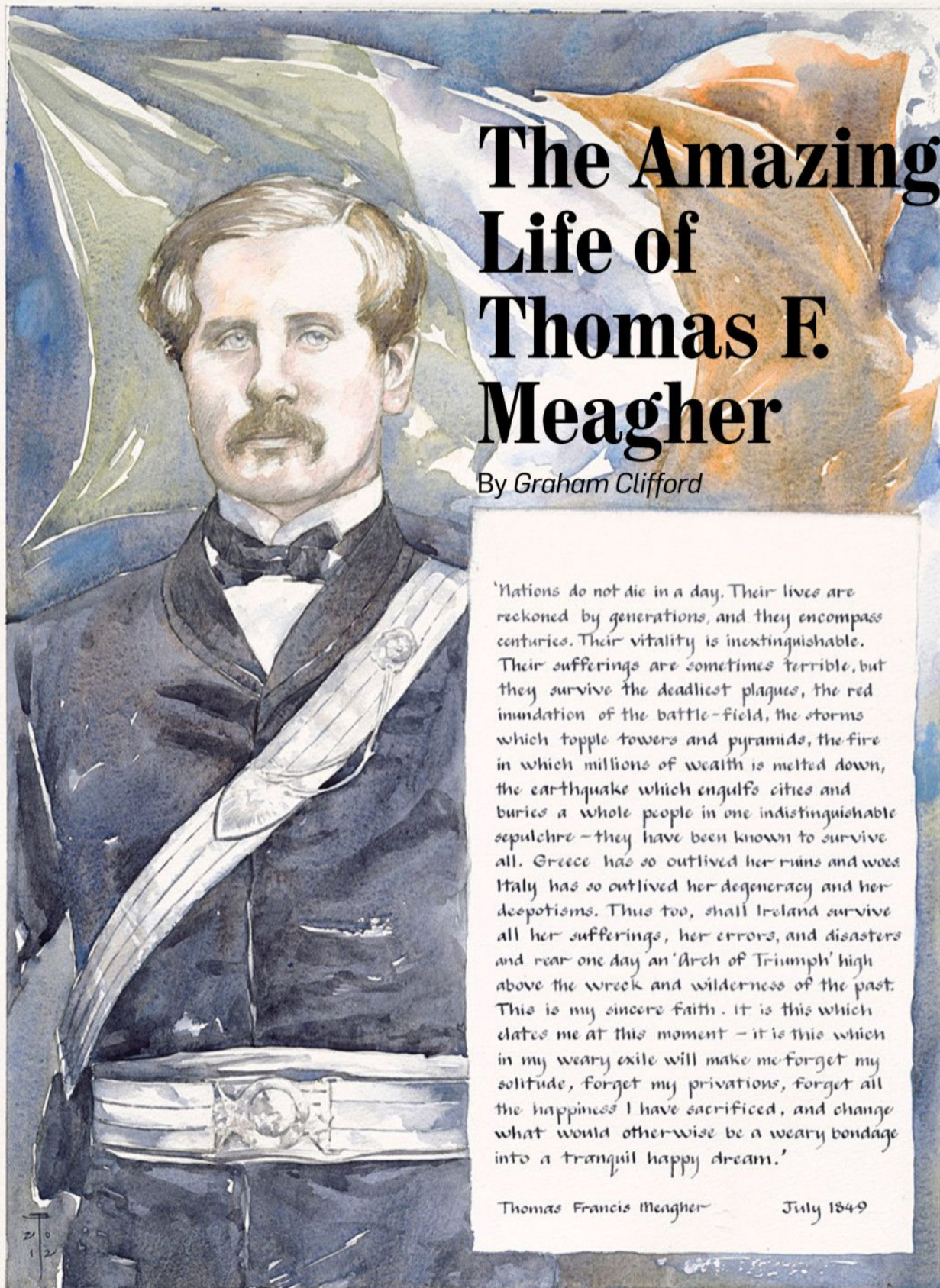
By filming and editing his school's preparation for Proclamation Week, and its flag raising ceremony on March 15th, Jacob was awarded a €3,000 scholarship, one of seven recipients in the country.

Caomhe Sheehan, a fifth-year student in Regina Mundi in Cork, was also one of seven students nationally who was awarded a university scholarship for her entry to The Thomas Francis Meagher Scholarship

Programme as part of National Flag Week 2016.

The winning schools, which also included Presentation Secondary School, Tipperary, received their awards at a prize-giving ceremony held in Leinster House on May 16, 2016 with representatives accepting their scholarship certificates at a special presentation lunch.

Presidents from the Foundation's education partners last year, University of Limerick, University College Cork, NUI Galway, Dublin City University, University College Dublin, Trinity College, Dublin and NUI Maynooth were also in attendance at the gathering which was addressed by the Chairman of the Foundation, Reverend Michael Cavanagh, the Ceann Comhairle Sean O'Fearghail and Senator Mark Daly.



The Amazing Life of Thomas F. Meagher

By Graham Clifford

'Nations do not die in a day. Their lives are reckoned by generations, and they encompass centuries. Their vitality is inextinguishable. Their sufferings are sometimes terrible, but they survive the deadliest plagues, the red inundation of the battle-field, the storms which topple towers and pyramids, the fire in which millions of wealth is melted down, the earthquake which engulfs cities and buries a whole people in one indistinguishable sepulchre - they have been known to survive all. Greece has so outlived her ruins and woes Italy has so outlived her degeneracy and her despotisms. Thus too, shall Ireland survive all her sufferings, her errors, and disasters and rear one day an 'Arch of Triumph' high above the wreck and wilderness of the past. This is my sincere faith. It is this which dates me at this moment - it is this which in my weary exile will make me forget my solitude, forget my privations, forget all the happiness I have sacrificed, and change what would otherwise be a weary bondage into a tranquil happy dream.'

Thomas Francis Meagher

July 1849



What happened to Waterford's Thomas F. Meagher on the night of July 1, 1867 as his steam ship rested on the Missouri River? Was he murdered by enemies or did he simply fall into the depths below? It's highly unlikely, 150 years on, that we'll ever find out – it was a tragic, though intriguing, end to a life that married youthful idealism with political conviction and a never-ending desire for right to prevail.

Meagher's body was never recovered despite exhaustive searches of the river which lasted months – conspiracy theories quickly spread. Some said he was murdered by a Confederate Soldier who he'd crossed during the American Civil War, others by a Native American or maybe even political rivals.

Could he have survived and made it to the banks of the raging river alive? Surely not.

In May, 1913 a man claimed to have carried out the murder of Meagher for the price of \$8,000. According to an article in the New York Times Frank Diamond, who also went by the name 'Pat Miller', made a confession to police: It's claimed he said:

"I killed him on a steamboat at Cow Island, in the Missouri, and threw him in the river. I swam ashore." He said the hit was paid for by Montana Vigilantes. Diamond later recanted his claim.

Author and Columnist Timothy Egan, in his book 'The immortal Irishman: The Irish Revolutionary Who became an American Hero' suggests that Meagher was murdered by political opponents. In an interview with the Seattle Times last year Egan said: "At the time, the world his enemies put out was that a drunken Irishman fell off a boat. I think there is very strong evidence that he was murdered by the very founding vigilante members of Montana society, who conducted the deadliest campaign of vigilante killing in American history. There were no trials, they just pulled out people they didn't like. Meagher (as Governor) pardoned a man, and then they grabbed him (the pardoned man) and hanged him the same day, with Meagher's message in his pocket. I think there is pretty good evidence, without being 100 percent sure, that he (Meagher) was murdered."

The intrigue continued when in an obituary for his second wife Mrs Elizabeth

Townsend Meagher, published in the New York Times on July 8, 1906, it was written: 'Gen. Meagher...fell overboard after being shot by hostile Indians.'

Whatever the reason for Meagher's untimely death his passing was mourned on both sides of the Irish Sea. A larger than life character he'd made his mark on three continents. Meagher's contribution to politics, rebellion and history in Ireland, Australia and especially America was immense at a time when travel was difficult and dangerous – especially if you were a wanted man.

After the 1848 rebellion, Meagher, who was born in the Granville Hotel on the

Quay in Waterford, was transported to Tasmania by the British authorities but he dramatically escaped in 1852 and made his way to America.

His was a life of extremes. Though born to a wealthy merchant class and a graduate of Stonyhurst College in Lancashire, he refused to follow the path of many sons of aristocracy in Ireland at the time. He became a Young Irelander and, following the failed Battle of Ballinacorney in Tipperary, was convicted of sedition and sent to Van Diemen's Land.

Before sentence was passed, and he was shipped to the other side of the world, he told the judge: "My Lord, this is our first offence, but not our last. If you will be easy with us this once, we promise on our word as gentleman to try better next time."

His personal life was complex. When Meagher left Tasmania his first wife Katherine Bennett, whom he met and married there, was in an advanced stage of pregnancy and she remained in Australia. Sadly, the couple's son died at just four-months old. Meagher never got to meet his first son.

“ “ ”

Meagher's contribution to politics, rebellion and history... was immense

Continued on page 8



Following Meagher's escape, Katherine was taken to Ireland. Eventually she was able to spend some time in the United States with her husband but she returned to Ireland pregnant and in poor health.

Katherine gave birth to Meagher's only living child: a boy, Thomas Francis Meagher, named after his father – but father and son would never meet.

Following Katherine's death in 1854 Meagher remarried to Elizabeth Townsend, who came from a wealthy Protestant family in New York, in 1856.

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'.

As an officer in the Union army, Meagher recruited Irish immigrants into the New York militia and rose to the rank of General in command of the Irish Brigade. His soldiers wore sprigs of clover in their hats while marching under a green flag embroidered with an Irish harp and the words 'Erin go Bragh'.

It was to be a bloody union. In the fall of 1862 on a horrific day of the war, Meagher had his horse shot out from underneath him as he led his soldiers on a charge against Confederate forces at the battle of Antietam. The Irish death toll ran into the hundreds.

Three months later he was wounded during the carnage of repeated charges on Marye's Heights in the battle of Fredricksburg. The Irish Brigade was decimated, but Meagher survived the war.

Today, at the state capital in Helena, Montana, the most prominent statue is of Meagher, horseback with saber held high. His memory lives on and in a statement issued earlier this month during Irish-American Heritage Month, President Donald Trump referred to '...Thomas Francis Meagher, the Irish revolutionary who became an American hero after leading the Irish Brigade during the Civil War.'

Whether in Montana or on the Quay in his native Waterford, the impact Meagher made is noted every time an Irish flag dances in the breeze. His life was both joyous and heart-breaking, his achievements and strength of character undoubted in their audaciousness and resolve. His message of unity in Ireland is, like his legend in the United States, simply immortal.





Montana's main man

Thomas Meagher is regarded as a hero in the American state, explains *Mike O'Connor*

One-hundred and fifty years after his death, Thomas Francis Meagher remains a figure of intrigue and influence across the globe. At first glance, Montana may seem like an unlikely place for a statue of an Irish revolutionary, but when you understand Montana, Meagher's role in the development of the state, and the Irish in Montana, his legacy across the state is clear. Meagher's fame and military accomplishments in the Civil War prompted President Andrew Johnson to appoint him Secretary of the Montana Territory in 1865, and after arriving, he became the Acting Territorial Governor.

Meagher saw the opportunity that lay before him. When he arrived in September of 1865, there was a Fenian Hall only a couple miles away from his home in the Territorial Capitol of Virginia City. Meagher had come to a territory with many likeminded countrymen. Irish immigrated to the Montana Territory as veterans, miners, and families. Meagher embraced this Fenian community, and called for his countrymen to do the same so they would be able to shape the State in their own image. On St Patrick's Day, 1866, Meagher said, "the Irish people in America will not, and cannot, forget the land of their birth, their sufferings, their dearest memories, and proudest hopes." Meagher looked not only to heal a war-torn country, but to put together a foundation – Montana would be a homeland for

the exiled children of fire. Meagher's vision was, as the great historian Dave Emmons said: "The West would not be the place where the Irish were turned into Americans: it would be the place where Americans were turned into Irish."

Meagher's tenure as Territorial Governor in Montana was marked by turmoil due to the politics of the times, enflamed by the fervor of the man. Reconstruction-era Montana Territory was a wild and lawless political maelstrom. Outlaws were widespread in these post-war years and they were little worse than the vigilantes who were supposedly protecting the innocent. Additionally, the legislature and the executives were at each other's throats. While, refugees, many who were Irish Catholics, were pouring in, Meagher's rhetoric and desire to bring more of these Irish Catholics into the territory was a declaration of war to the Northern Republicans whose ranks were filled with Freemasons and vigilantes. Meagher rallied against their Americanist and anti-Irish attitudes saying they were "vicious bigots – men of small brains and smaller hearts." The Vigilantes took to spreading rumors about Meagher's penchant for alcohol, to discredit him. This rancor would only increase as Meagher proceeded with early legislation.

In these wild times, Meagher is given credit for leadership in the progress toward statehood. He called for the second legislative session in the state's

history, and summoned a constitutional convention to meet. Ever the powerful orator, Meagher ignited passion within many people and hate from others.

In the midst of such efforts, Meagher's colorful career came to a sudden and still unexplained end. On July 1st, 1867, while in Fort Benton, Meagher mysteriously disappeared from a steam ship docked on the Missouri. There are competing theories about what happened. One theory was Meagher, drunk, fell overboard. Another says he was murdered and thrown from the vessel during the night. Masons, vigilantes, and British nationals have all been implicated, though the full story remains unknown. His body was never recovered.

The Irish of Montana have continued to celebrate Meagher. At the state capital in Helena, Montana, the most prominent statue is of Meagher, horseback with

saber held high. The Irish of Montana privately funded this statue and thousands attended its dedication in 1905. Leading up to the Easter Rising and the War for Independence, many prominent leaders came to Montana such as Douglas Hyde, Eamon de Valera, Countess Markievicz, and many others. When Mary MacSwiney came to advocate against the Anglo Irish Treaty on St Patrick's Day in 1921, her picture was juxtaposed with Meagher in the Anaconda Standard paper. Meagher was a bonafide – the standard of what it meant to be an Irish patriot. The Helena Division of the Ancient Order of Hibernians is the Thomas Francis Meagher Division. On June 28, 2009, the A.O.H. erected a statue in Fort Benton of Meagher, another beautiful tribute to the Immortal Irishman.

This year the celebration of the life and legacy of Meagher continues as the Montana based Thomas Francis Meagher Association will be hosting the first MeagherFest. This festival will include a bus tour to Meagher's cabin in Virginia City, a visit to the historic Fort Benton, and a day-long celebration that will include music, dance, and other cultural events. This exciting festival will take place from June 30 to July 2, in Helena, Montana. We hope you can join us to celebrate this event on the 150th anniversary of Meagher's disappearance. For more information or to get involved please visit us at meagherfest.org.

“ ”

Thomas Meagher was the standard of what is meant to be an Irish patriot



Flag Days

Kenmare Men's Shed made the special hand-crafted wooden stands for schools to fly their National Flags. By *Graham Clifford*

In every secondary school across the state the National Flag hangs from a stand which was made with care by a group of men for whom the task was a labour of love.

The Kenmare Men's Shed was assigned with putting together 800 stands over a ten-week period and rose to the challenge.

"Henry Ford would have been proud of us," jokes Jean Pierre Teroy who was the Chairman of the group during its flag stand assembly phase.

"There was a lot of organisational and assembly work involved," explains John O'Connor, a member of the Men's Shed for whom working with wood is both a passion and a career.

He continued: "The base already came with text lasered into it but we had to install a lead weight. Then there were two lengths of ash, each about a metre in length and a pointed finial at the top. The structure was connected using brass fittings and umpteen screws. It was time-consuming to put each stand together and we had to make sure we had a good assembly line in place."

The text John refers to on the base of the flag stands reads: "This Irish Flag was raised over 33 the Mall, Waterford from where Thomas Francis Meagher flew a tri-colour for the first time on March 7th, 1848 and for eight days and nights thereafter."



Its followed by a quote from the founding father of the flag – "I trust that beneath its folds, the hands of the Irish Protestant and the Irish Catholic may be clasped in generous and heroic brotherhood."

Inside their work station at the Gortamullen Business Park in Kenmare the men joined, turned, sanded and varnished. As the weeks rolled on, and winter started giving way to spring, the finish date drew closer and the assembly line picked up the pace.



The ash wood came from Ballyvourney in County Cork while the Munster Joinery company sourced and delivered the brass fittings.

“Coming near the end we were working five days a week,” explains Jean Pierre, “from 10 in the morning to four in the evening. We operated a rota system and had people on hand delivering the mugs of tea and coffee.”

As the sawdust mounted, the clamour of assembly grew and the stacks of completed flag stands piled up, it became clear that the order would be finished with some time to spare.

It was fitting that the organisational force behind Team Tricolour in Kenmare was a Frenchman. “It was perfect that we had Jean Pierre as our flag, of course, is based on the flag of the French Republic,” explained local Senator Mark Daly who, along with Reverend Michael Cavanagh, initiated the project.

And on March 7th, 2016 in Croke Park representatives of every secondary school in the country converged to celebrate the Thomas F. Meagher Foundation and Ireland 2016’s Flags for Schools initiative.

Kenmare Men’s Shed made 800 specially inscribed stands and wooden poles

There they were presented with a flag of Ireland which had been flown from 33 the Mall in Waterford by the Irish Defence Forces along with the stand made by comrades in arms in the heart of the Kingdom.

As well as gracing every secondary school the stands were presented to Universities and were used, on request of the Department of the Taoiseach, during the Easter Sunday parade through the heart of Dublin City last year.

For Senator Mark Daly the story of the flag stands, and the men behind their construction is highly significant. He explains: “The flags themselves are made by Project Designs off Camden Street in Dublin – they are the same company which make flags for our Defence Forces, Government Departments and the President’s Office. But when we looked for an Irish manufacturer of flag stands we couldn’t find any. We thought it would be inappropriate to use stands that were

made overseas for something so uniquely Irish and so we looked locally.”

For the men of the Kenmare Men’s Shed the completion of their project was hugely satisfying – “We were proud of what we achieved. It was all about team work and we enjoyed the task,” explains Jean Pierre Teroy.

The group was initially formed in 2011 and their first meetings were held in the Adult Education Centre in Kenmare.

Projects in the early years included building a Currach, toys and nest boxes. One man even made a life-size Doctor Who tardis for his daughter so she could stand in it while she was waiting for the school bus.

“You know the slogan of the Men’s Shed is that ‘Men talk shoulder-to-shoulder’ and we really found that as we tackled projects together,” explains member David Farrell, adding: “We have a core of men who are always involved and then others drop in occasionally. It’s been brilliant for us and we’re just eager now to find a new home as we’re currently without a base.”

The search for a new home for the Kenmare Men’s Shed continues. The men there want a regular hook on which to hang their hats...just as flags hang on the stands which they crafted so skillfully.

Protocol for the National Flag

When Bunreacht na hÉireann/the Constitution of Ireland was enacted in 1937 the Tricolour was formally recognised as the Nation's Flag.

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

Article 7 - Constitution Of Ireland

The following guidelines are intended to assist individuals in giving due respect to the National Flag. There are no statutory requirements, so observance of these guidelines is a matter for each person. It is expected that the National Flag will be treated at all times with appropriate respect by those who use it. The Department of the Taoiseach has general responsibility in relation to the National Flag. This responsibility is primarily concerned with the guidelines for the flying of the flag. The Department's role, therefore, is an advisory one. The protocols for the National flag were first adopted by a unanimous resolution of Seánad Éireann on the eve of the 165th anniversary of the first flying of a tricolour by Thomas F. Meagher. In the chamber on that occasion for the ceremony was the Great Great Grandson of Brigadier General Thomas F. Meagher. The resolution was tabled by Senator Mark Daly and was supported by all sides of the house. It was the first time either House of the Oireachtas formally adopted protocols for the National Flag.

Design

- The National Flag is rectangular in shape, the width being twice the depth (measurement from top to bottom). The three colours – green, white and orange – are of equal size and vertically disposed.
- Sometimes shades of yellow or gold, instead of orange, are seen at civilian functions. This is a misrepresentation of the National Flag and should be actively discouraged.
- The Flag should normally be displayed on a staff, the green being next to the staff, the white in the middle and the orange farthest from the staff. Provided that the correct proportions are observed, the Flag may be made to any convenient size.
- The addition of a gold fringe or tassels to a national flag is a long-standing international tradition. A fringe is not considered an integral part of the flag so cannot be said to interfere with its design, unlike say lettering or emblems superimposed on the flag, which should never be used. The fringe is considered to be purely for decorative purposes and can therefore be used when the flag is displayed indoors or on ceremonial occasions outdoors.

Flying, displaying and placing

- No flag or pennant should be flown above the National Flag.
- Only one National Flag should be displayed in each group of flags or at each location. In all cases, the National Flag should be in the place of honour.
- When the National Flag is flown at a building or entrance along with other flags of equal height, it should be first on the right (on an observer's left). See Section 6 for guidelines on flying the National Flag with flags of other nations.
- When the National Flag is carried with another flag or flags, it should be carried in the place of honour: on the marching right – that is, on the left of an observer towards whom the flags are approaching.
- While being carried, the National Flag should not be dipped by way of salute or compliment, except to the dead during memorial ceremonies.
- When the National Flag is used to drape a coffin, the green should be at the head of the coffin.
- When displayed on a platform, the National Flag should be above and behind the speaker's desk.
- When the National Flag is displayed either horizontally or vertically against a wall or other background, the green should be on the right (an observer's left) in the horizontal position or uppermost in the vertical position.
- In the event of a display of crossed staffs the National Flag should be to the right and to the fore, that is to the left of an observer who is facing the flag. Its staff should be in front of the other flag or flags.

Note

Sunrise and sunset are generally deemed to be:

Sunrise

March to October 08:00 Hours

November to February 08:30 Hours

Sunset

January and December 15:30 Hours

February and November 16:30 Hours

March and October 17:30 Hours

April 18:00 Hours

May and September 19:00 Hours

June to August 20:00 Hours

Occasions and times when the National Flag is flown

- The National Flag is flown daily at all military posts and from a limited number of State buildings.
- It is also flown on St Patrick's Day (the National Holiday), Easter Sunday and Easter Monday (in commemoration of the Rising of 1916), and the National Day of Commemoration (on the Sunday closest to 11 July, the date of the Anglo-Irish Truce in 1921).
- On these occasions the National Flag is flown from all State buildings throughout the country that are equipped with flagpoles, and many private individuals and concerns also fly it.
- The National Flag is flown at other significant national and local events such as festivals and commemorations.
- The National Flag is normally displayed in the open only from sunrise to sunset, except on the occasion of public meetings, processions or funerals, when it may be displayed for the duration of such function.

The National Flag may be flown by night as well as by day as long as it is properly illuminated at all times, preferably by spotlight.

Flying and displaying the National Flag with Flags of other Nations

- When the National Flag is flown with the flags of other nations, each flag should have the same width and should fly from a separate flagpole of the same height.
- International protocol prohibits the flying of any nation's flag higher than another in peacetime. If, however, one flagpole happens to be higher than the rest, then the National Flag is flown from that flagpole. In such cases, no additional National Flag can be flown.
- When the group of flags of the European Union are flown, the sequence is alphabetical, based on the first letter of the country's name in its primary local language. The flags should be flown from an observer's left to right with the European Union flag flown from the first flagstaff.
- An alternative order of flags is to begin on the left with the National Flag and place the European Union flag on the far right of the group, as seen by an observer.
- Where either an even or an odd number of flags is flown in line on staffs of equal height, the National Flag should be first on the right of the line (i.e. on an observer's left). Where one of these flags is that of the European Union, the European Union flag should be flown on the immediate right of the National Flag as seen by an observer.
- Where, however, an odd number of flags is displayed from staffs grouped so that there is one staff in the centre and higher than the others, the National Flag should be displayed from the central staff. Where one of these flags is that of the European Union, the European Union flag should be flown from the first flagstaff on the observer's left.

Carrying of the National Flag

- When the National Flag is carried with another flag, or flags, it should be carried in the place of honour: the marching right – that is on the left of an observer towards whom the flags are approaching.
- Where one of these flags is that of the European Union, the European Union flag should be carried on the immediate right of the National Flag as seen by an observer.
- In the event of a display of crossed staffs, the National Flag should be to the right and to the fore, that is to the left of an observer who is facing the flag. Its staff should be in front of the other flag or flags.

"The White in the Centre signifies a lasting truce between Orange and Green. In trust between its folds the hands of the Irish Catholics and the Irish Protestants may be clasped in generous and heroic brotherhood"

Thomas F. Meagher 13th April 1848

Half-masting the National Flag and its display during times of mourning

- The half-masting of national flags is a well-established procedure whereby countries bestow an honour and express a collective sense of sorrow.
- Half-mast means the flag is flown two-thirds of the way up the flagpole, with at least the depth (measurement from top to bottom) of the flag between the top of the half-masted flag and the top of the flagpole. Traditionally, this is considered to leave space for the invisible flag of death. The National Flag is at half-mast in any position below the top of the staff but never below the middle point of the staff.
- When being hoisted to half-mast, the Flag should first be brought to the peak of the staff and then lowered to the half-mast position. It should again be brought to the peak of the staff before it is finally lowered.
- Where the National Flag is flown at half-mast, no other flag should be flown.
- On the death of a national or international figure, the National Flag is flown at half-mast on all prominent government buildings equipped with a flag pole, under advice from the Department of the Taoiseach. The Department may also advise the half-mast display of the flag after other tragic events. The death of a prominent local figure may be marked locally by the National Flag being flown at half-mast.
- A National Flag at half-mast may be displayed, day and night, for the duration of a funeral provided the flag is illuminated.
- While being carried, the National Flag should not be dipped by way of salute or compliment except to the dead during memorial ceremonies.
- When used to drape a coffin, the green should be at the head of the coffin.

Folding of the National Flag

If a coffin has been draped with the National Flag, the military tradition for the ceremonial folding of the National Flag (which may be followed by others) is as follows:

- Once removed from the coffin, the Coffin Bearers (ideally six people) fold the Flag in the following manner:
 - Orange passed under to white - white and orange passed under to green (following this manoeuvre, green is on top, orange in the middle and white underneath) - green, orange and white folded once, with green remaining facing outwards and complete Flag draped over extended left arm of a Coffin Bearer (this assumes the use of a standard size flag; larger flags may need to be folded twice, with green always facing out-wards).
- The folded Flag is then normally presented to the next of kin of the deceased.

Hoisting and lowering

- In raising or lowering, the National Flag should not be allowed to touch the ground.
- When being hoisted to half-mast, the Flag should first be brought to the peak of the staff and then lowered to the half-mast position. It should again be brought to the peak of the staff before it is finally lowered.
- The National Flag is at half-mast in any position below the top of the staff but never below the middle point of the staff. As a general guide, the half-mast position may be taken as that where the top of the flag is the depth of the flag below the top of the staff.

Saluting the National Flag

- On ceremonial occasions when the National Flag is being hoisted or lowered, or when it is passing by in a parade or when the National Anthem is being played, all present should face it, stand to attention and salute. Persons in uniform who normally salute with the hand should give the hand salute. Persons in civilian attire should salute by standing to attention.
- When the National Flag is being carried past in a parade, the salute is rendered when the Flag is six paces away and the salute is held until the Flag has passed by. Where more than one National Flag is carried, the salute should be given only to the leading Flag.

The National Flag and the National Anthem

When the National Anthem, Amhrán na bhFiann, is played in the presence of the National Flag, all present should face the National Flag, stand to attention and salute it, remaining at the salute until the last note of the music.

Respect for the National Flag

- Care should be taken at all times, including when raising or lowering, to ensure that the National Flag does not touch the ground, trail in water or become entangled in trees or other obstacles.
- The National Flag should never be defaced by placing slogans, logos, lettering or pictures of any kind on it, for example at sporting events.
- The National Flag should not be draped on cars, trains, boats or other modes of transport. It should not be carried aloft and free, except when used to drape a coffin; on such an occasion, the green should be at the head of the coffin.
- The National Flag when used as a decoration should always be treated with respect. It may be used as a discreet lapel button or rosette or a small version may be used as part of a centrepiece for a table. When used in the latter context with the flags of other nations, the National Flag should also be displayed in the place of honour on a nearby flag staff.
- Where more than one National Flag is flown on festive occasions, they should be of uniform dimensions. Bunting of the National Colours may also be used on festive occasions.
- When displayed on a platform, the National Flag should not be used to cover the speaker's desk, nor should it be draped over the platform.

Proper disposal of a worn or frayed National Flag

When the National Flag has become worn or frayed it is no longer fit for display, and should not be used in any manner implying disrespect. It should be destroyed or disposed of in a dignified way.

Use in printed or electronic format

When the National Flag is being reproduced in printed or electronic format, the principles of respect outlined in these guidelines apply.

PRIDE RESPECT PEACE



The Thomas F. Meagher Foundation

The Thomas F. Meagher Foundation aims to promote pride in and respect for the Irish flag and its true meaning for peace on this island.

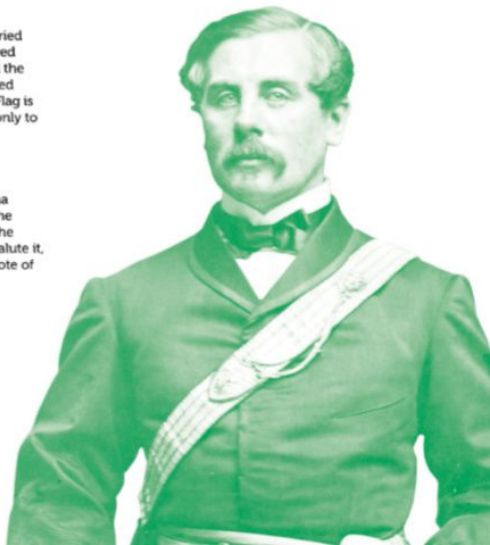
The Foundation is named after Thomas Francis Meagher, Irish patriot and US army general and Governor of Montana, who flew the first tricolour flag on the 7th of March 1848 from 33 The Mall in Waterford at the Wolf Tone Club. The Thomas F. Meagher Foundation strives to ensure that every citizen in Ireland and in particular, every schoolchild knows the history and meaning behind the national flag.

Email: info@tvmfoundation.ie

Web: www.tvmfoundation.ie

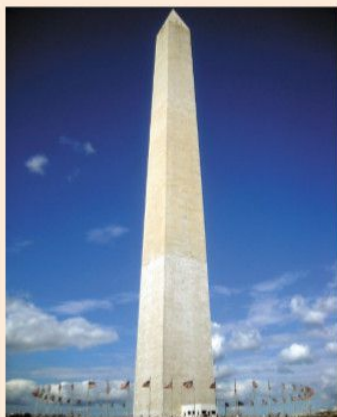
Facebook: [tvm foundation](https://www.facebook.com/tvmfoundation)

Twitter: [tvm1848](https://twitter.com/tvm1848)



A very special honour

Thomas F. Meagher is being honoured with a plaque at the Washington Monument, writes Anita Guidera



WASHINGTON MONUMENT: DID YOU KNOW?

THE Washington Monument, made of marble, granite and bluestone gneiss, is 555 feet and five inches tall, and at the time of its completion was the tallest building in the world. It remains the world's tallest stone structure and the world's tallest obelisk.

IT first opened to the public in 1888, 103 years after it was first mooted, and is visited by more than 800,000 visitors each year.

CONSTRUCTION halted at 152 feet in 1854 due to Civil War and lack of funding and resumed 13 years later.

IT took Mormon missionaries three months to deliver the Utah tablet by ox cart to Washington but the white limestone block had to be replaced in the 1950's due to deterioration and illegibility.

THE Alaska stone was the last State stone to be included in the Washington monument in 1982. It is made from jade and is said to be worth \$3 million.

IN 1854, nine men from the anti-immigrant and anti-Catholic Know-Nothing party stole the Pope's stone—a gift from Pope Pius IX and The Vatican—from the monument, smashed it into pieces and dumped it in the middle of the Potomac River.

A JAPANESE memorial stone from Okinawa was finally installed in the Washington monument in 1989 after it emerged that the original stone donated in 1854, had never reached its destination.

FOR ten hours in December 1982, the Washington Monument and eight tourists were held hostage by a nuclear arms protester, Norman Mayer, claiming to have explosives in a van he drove to the monument's base. U.S. Park Police shot and killed Mayer.

THE monument was damaged during the 2011 Virginia earthquake and Hurricane Irene the same year and was closed to the public for 32 months while it was being repaired. It was closed again in September 2016 and is expected to reopen to visitors in 2019.

No country's history is more interwoven with the United States than Ireland and no individual epitomises the struggle for independence in both countries more than Thomas Francis Meagher, the creator of the Irish tricolour.

Thus was the case made by Senator Mark Daly, the spokesperson for Irish overseas and Diaspora, for Ireland to be given recognition in the iconic Washington Monument alongside the 193 commemorative and memorial stones from the USA and 16 foreign countries.

And who more appropriate to be singled out for special mention than the Waterford-born Young Irishman, who flew the first Irish tricolour during the rebellion of 1848, was a Civil War general in the New York 69th Regiment of the Irish Brigade in the Union Army and later became Governor of Montana?

"Of the millions of Irish Americans who connect the two countries, Thomas Meagher epitomises the struggle for independence in both," explains Senator Daly.

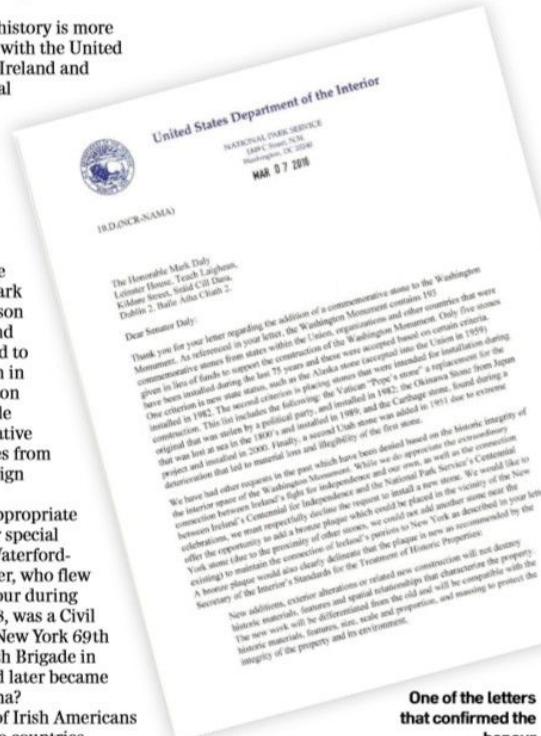
As a child visiting his grandmother Peg Daly in the townland of Greenfingers in Tralee, Mark Daly first heard of Thomas Francis Meagher on a vinyl recording of John F Kennedy's address to Dail Eirermann in 1963, in which the US President regaled members with the colourful story of the Irish Brigadier General who led the Irish Brigade in the Battle of Fredericksburg.

"It was such an exciting life story and he was such an extraordinary character. I listened to it repeatedly. My poor grandmother was driven demented."

For Mark, this was the beginning of a consuming interest in the life of this almost forgotten Irish patriot. Years later when he found the last letter written by Meagher in Ireland in 1849 just before he was shipped off to Tasmania, the words struck him deeply.

"Never was there a country so utterly downcast, so depressed, so pitiful, so spiritless. Yet I do not, could not, despair of her regeneration," wrote the young rebel.

Senator Daly acquired the letter and exchanged it with the Waterford Museum for one of Meagher's battle swords, which was presented by former Taoiseach Bertie Aherne to US Senator Ted Kennedy 45 years after that JFK speech, and is now displayed at the base of the Senate



One of the letters that confirmed the honour



The plaque for the Washington Monument

Undeterred, the Kerry senator wrote an impassioned letter to the National Park Service Director on his return, making a compelling case for an Irish exception, by outlining the many unique interconnections between Ireland and the US.

An estimated 40 per cent of those serving under Washington in the fight for independence including several high ranking officials, were of Irish heritage.

22 US presidents have Irish heritage. Three of the signatories of the American Declaration of Independence were born in Ireland while being New York born, ultimately saved Eamon De

Valera, one of Ireland's most famous republicans and former presidents, from execution for his involvement in the 1916 Rising.

"We also pointed out that the Irish Proclamation talks about summoning the children to the flag, that flag which was created by Thomas F. Meagher who ended up fighting in the 69th regiment in the Union Army. He fought for freedom in both countries. He was the link," said Senator Daly.

Responding and acknowledging "the extraordinary connection" between both countries fight for independence, National Park Service Director, Jonathan Jarvis agreed to the erection of a bronze plaque on the tenth floor of the Washington Monument, close to the New York State stone that would "maintain the connection of Ireland's patriots to New York".

The plaque presented on behalf of the people of Ireland and Irish people everywhere by Michael D Higgins, President of Ireland, contains the words of the Irish Proclamation, and crucially, recognises Thomas Meagher as the embodiment of the strong and enduring links between Ireland and the United States. It will be officially handed over to the National Parks Service, by Minister for State at the OPW, Sean Canney, at the end of June, on the eve of 150th anniversary of Thomas F. Meagher's death.

Senator Daly acknowledges that without collaborative effort on both sides of the Atlantic it would never have happened.

His grandmother, Peg Daly would surely have been proud.



Peg Daly inspired Mark Daly's interest

staircase in Capitol Hill. Fast forward to two years ago and a trip to Washington as guest of Cody Keenan, a speechwriter for President Obama and Nikki Buffa, Deputy Chief of Staff at the Department of Interior, when Senator Daly and his group, were surprised to learn that there was no Irish commemorative stone among the 193 in the Washington Monument.

Furthermore, they learned that the Department of the Interior had to turn down hundreds of requests every month to have commemorative stones added to the monument.

In fact, in the past 75 years just five new stones had been added to the monument, each for exceptional reasons.

150 years after his death, the Irish patriot credited with designing the flag that would later be adopted as the National Flag of Ireland, will finally receive the stamp of approval.

Thomas F. Meagher's epic life took him from the streets of Waterford, into exile in Tasmania, onto the battlefields of the American Civil War and later to Montana where he was appointed Governor.

A gifted orator at a young age, he became leader in the new Ireland movement, planning its 1848 rebellion against British rule.

Inspired by the French flag, Meagher flew the first Irish tricolour in his native Waterford in March 1848 as a gesture and a symbol of independence, explaining that the white in the centre signified "a lasting truce between the 'Orange' and the 'Green?'"

Meagher's immense contribution to American and Irish history has been recognised in various ways throughout the years since his death.

A bronze statue depicting him astride a prancing horse, waving his sword over his head as he urges the Irish Brigade into battle, was erected in front of the Montana State Capitol in Helena in 1905. Almost 100 years later a similar statue was unveiled on Waterford City's Mall.

There is a Meagher County and an Ancient Order of Hibernians Division named after him in Montana.

There's a battle ship, military forts, various busts and plaques as well as a bar, a hotel suite, and even a bridge over the River Suir named in his honour.

A monument at the Antietam Battlefield was dedicated in his honour as was a cenotaph memorial in Greenwood Cemetery in New York.

Now he is to be given the honour of featuring on a formal stamp in what many consider to be the unofficial Irish honours list.

"It has been a long time coming when you consider he was in essence the creator of our flag but the thing about Thomas Francis Meagher is that he is probably the most famous Irishman that most Irish people have never heard about," admitted Senator Mark Daly, a member of the all-party consultation group for the decade of 1916 commemorations and a long time campaigner for the recognition of Thomas F. Meagher.

The newly designed stamp features a portrait of the handsome, mustachioed Irish and American patriot in military attire, with the colours of the Irish flag, created by him, in the background.

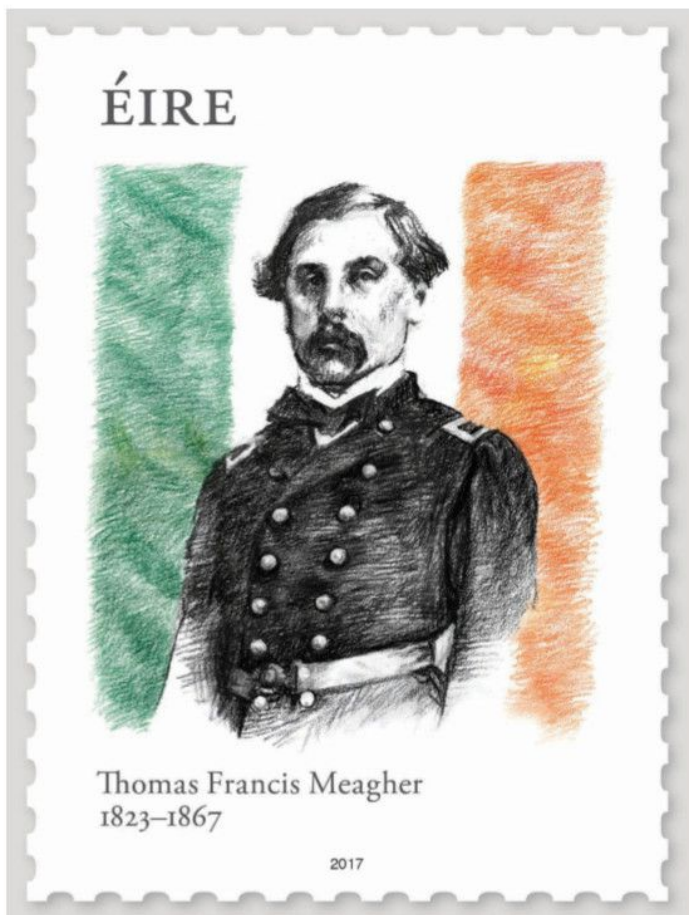
An Post's programme of commemorative stamps, covering a range of subjects from history and sports, to arts, science, nature and more, is planned two to three years in advance.

So with the 150th anniversary of Meagher's death looming, the wheels for honouring him were set in motion almost three years ago when several recommendations were submitted calling for him to be honoured with a stamp.

An Post publishes around 25 new issues of stamps every year and receives over 200



We commissioned artist Charles Cullen



Above: Draft of the An Post stamp honouring Thomas F. Meagher. It's available from June 29

The stamp of approval

Anita Guidera reports on a unique process

suggestions which are considered by an independent Philatelic Advisory Committee (PAC).

Aidan Murphy, Philatelic Manager with An Post who is responsible for the design and production of the annual Stamp Programme, said it became quickly apparent that the honour would be appropriate.

"The fact that he is credited with introducing the Irish flag for the first time in itself is significant but when we started researching him and discovering what an incredibly rich life he led over a relatively short time span, it was obvious that the time was right that he was recognised in our programme."

The PAC puts together a complete list of recommendations, including annual subjects such as Christmas and St Patrick's Day, which, following ratification by the

Board of An Post, is forwarded to the Government for final approval.

Thomas Meagher's name went forward in the 2017 programme of approved subjects, which was then submitted to the Stamp Design Advisory Committee, comprising of people with expertise in graphic design, fine art, typography, assign each to design houses, artists or illustrators.

The artists are briefed, given background information and the terms and conditions. Each stamp must include the price, the year of issue and the word Éire.

"In the case of Thomas Meagher we commissioned artist, Charles Cullen. We gave him the background and he came back with a wonderful illustration of Thomas Meagher and in the background is the tricolour," explained Mr Murphy.

The artist had previously illustrated Irish nationalist, Charles Gavan Duffy for a

SOME STAMP FACTS

Daniel O'Connell became the first individual to feature on an Irish stamp in 1929.

Since 1929, O'Connell is one of a small number of people shown in two issues, including Wolfe Tone and Arthur Guinness. However St Patrick tops the list, for the most times featured.

Less than ten per cent of the 400 or so individuals who have featured on Irish stamps between 1929 and today, have been women.

In 2014, An Post had to withdraw the commemorative stamp for the Citizen Army because of the misidentification of the Army Leader, Captain Jack White. Although the stamp was on sale for less than ten minutes before it was withdrawn, a tiny number were sold which are now worth multiples of their face value.

The word 'philately' was first recorded in 1865.

In 1918, the US postal service sold 100 stamps bearing what looked like an overturned Curtiss Jn-4 or Jenny aircraft, in a printing error. One of the so-called Inverted Jenny stamps sold in 2007 for nearly \$1 million.

An unused Penny Black, the world's first postage stamp, in mint condition can sell for as much as £10,000.

The British Guiana One-Cent Magenta stamp set a new world auction record for any stamp when it was sold for almost \$9.5 million in 2014, nearly one billion times its original face value.

In 1973, Bhutan issued a stamp that could play their national anthem if put on a record player.

In 2013, Belgium issued stamps that smelt and tasted of chocolate.

1,000 rose-scented stamps were issued in the Indian State of Jharkhand to mark St Valentine's Day this year.

stamp marking the bicentenary of his birth.

The work was then passed onto WorkGroup Design House to put the finished design together.

The finished stamp will issue on June 29, 2017, 150 years after the mysterious death of Thomas F. Meagher in the Missouri River in 1867 at the age of 44.



Wherever this flag is flown

Flying the flag with respect and pride is key to the mission of the Defence Forces when overseas, says Commandant *Pat O'Connor*

From the very beginnings of Ireland's involvement in the United Nations (UN) in the 1950s, Óglaigh na hÉireann, the Defence Forces, has been an outward-looking organisation. As an instrument of Irish foreign policy, Óglaigh na hÉireann has helped to project the Irish National Flag – and by extension Irish values – in some of the most troubled spots in the world. The involvement of Óglaigh na hÉireann forces in UN-mandated Peace Support Operations has been continuous since June 1958 when the first group of Officers went to Lebanon as observers with UNOGIL. From 1960 onwards, following changes to legislation to allow for contingents of Irish troops to serve overseas in larger numbers, Irish personnel served abroad in Peace Support roles with UN mandated missions, beginning with the deployment of over 600 men to the Congo in 1960. Overall, the bulk of the tours of duty have been completed by infantry units in major force missions deployed in the Congo, Cyprus



**Irish soldiers
deploying overseas
initially wore a
shamrock insignia
on their uniform,
instead of the current
tricolour with an
Ireland logo**



Mercy mission: LE Samuel Beckett was deployed to the Mediterranean Sea

and Lebanon and latterly in Kosovo, Liberia, Chad and on the Golan Heights. Other commitments have included headquarters and specialist elements, special forces, logistical units, military police units and military observers. Theatres for such elements have included Afghanistan, Western Sahara, East Timor, Honduras and Sierra Leone.

Irish soldiers deploying overseas initially wore a shamrock insignia on their uniform, instead of the current tricolour

with an IRELAND logo. Nevertheless, the Irish tricolour has been the key identifier of these personnel through all of that time, whether flown from the formal flagstaff on the parade square of an operational camp in the desert, or from the hull of an armoured personnel carrier, on the decal of a military transport aircraft or from the mast of a naval vessel conducting humanitarian relief and rescue in the Mediterranean Sea. In the time-honoured tradition of military respect for the flag,



Help: Irish humanitarian mission in the Mediterranean Sea



Flag party: the 109 Infantry Battalion on parade and, right, flag flies on LE Samuel Beckett



Salute: Major General Beary, Head of Missions and Force Commander of UNIFIL, salutes the national colours of International Peacekeepers Day



We continue to uphold our respect for the Irish National Flag and for our own values

one which is carried out at home and overseas, the flag is ceremonially hoisted and lowered according to the hours of daylight. All personnel in view of the flag come to a halt and stand to attention while this intimate ceremony of respect – often unobserved by any outsider – takes place, seven days a week and 365 days a year.

As well as with the United Nations, the Defence Forces have flown the Irish flag with missions conducted by the European Union, the Organisation for Security

and Cooperation in Europe and NATO. Personnel have also been committed in less visible but no less effective ways on secondment to humanitarian work in places such as Somalia and Rwanda.

This impressive record of overseas service under the Irish flag has been of enormous benefit to the organisation in underpinning professional standards and development.

Oglaigh na hÉireann has amassed a wide range of skills and experience in

Peace Support Operations, remaining abreast of developments through constant interaction with other armies on courses, exchanges and on missions overseas. The EU Battlegroups continue to offer Irish personnel the opportunity to serve alongside their European counterparts. The United Nations Training School, established in the Defence Forces Training Centre at the Curragh in 1993, conducts courses for all missions abroad and for students from other armed forces. At

home, training and education to the highest standards has been achieved through innovative partnerships and accreditation from civilian institutions, which has served to better prepare our soldiers, sailors and aircrew for what they are likely to face in hostile environments. Oglaigh na hÉireann continues to serve the Irish people under our flag more than 100 years after the Irish Volunteers – our military forbears who fought for Independence – were first founded, in November 1913. The organisation is increasingly a reflection of the changing Ireland that it serves – providing full opportunities for both women and men and attracting Irish people from a variety of backgrounds and ethnicities.

Inspired by the example of the men and women who served before us for almost a century, we continue to uphold our respect for the Irish National Flag and for our own values of loyalty, integrity, respect, physical courage, moral courage and selflessness.

A special year for the Defence Forces

Commandant Stephen MacEoin reflects on a year of pride in presenting schools with flags

A key component of the Ireland 2016 State Centenary Programme was the National Flag for Primary Schools Initiative. Between September 2015 and March 2016, members of Óglaigh na hÉireann carried out the significant and logistically challenging task of performing some 3,300 individual ceremonies at every primary school in the country.

Tasked by Government to execute this unprecedented initiative, units from the Army, Air Corps and Naval Service covered thousands of kilometres visiting these schools. It is truly astounding to remark that a primary school-going population of some 500,000 children were educated by Óglaigh na hÉireann on the true meaning of our National Flag and the symbolic peace between the two dominant traditions on our island that it represents.

Each visit saw Officers and NCOs present a half-hour ceremony, in which an Irish-made National Flag, a copy of the 1916 Proclamation, a copy of Amhrán na bhFiann (the score for which was originally set by the Army School of Music) and a formal certificate from Óglaigh na hÉireann were delivered as part of a set-piece ceremony.

Personnel were often visibly touched by the experience of the welcome they received, with an overwhelming feeling of achievement in helping to inspire pride amongst our young people. For many Officers and NCOs, the ceremony was a deeply personal one, since personnel were often scheduled to attend their alma mater in their own communities, or found themselves presenting the flag to their own children.

Many of the teams delivering the ceremonies reported that young people now had a renewed understanding, and respect for, our national flag and were anxious to show off their knowledge about the tricolour to their visitors. Every school, including private and island community schools was visited. Serving personnel with proficiency in *Gaeilge* visited the *Gaelscoileanna* both inside and outside

the *Gaeltacht*.

All of the printing, including a purpose-made folder for the commemorative documents, was undertaken by the dedicated staff of the Defence Forces Printing Press. Staff from J4, the DFHQ logistics directorate, planned and controlled the significant logistical effort while staff from J6, the DFHQ Communications and Information Services directorate, mapped the entire operation across the electronic WAN (wide area network – the DF information and knowledge online sharepoint based system) using geographic information



systems.

In many ways, it can be said that the idea to have Óglaigh na hÉireann carry out the National Flag for Schools Programme in late 2015/early 2016 acted as something of a primer for the crescendo of commemorative and celebratory events

which were to take place over Easter weekend. Unprecedented numbers – estimated at more than one million – turned out on the streets of Dublin over Easter Sunday and Monday.

The Easter parade was the largest military parade since 1966 (the 50th



Celebration: scenes from Flag Day in Croke Park on March 16 last year when members of the Defence Forces helped the Thomas F. Meagher Foundation to hand out flags to schoolchildren from across Ireland



Congressman Joe Kennedy: Thomas Francis Meagher deserves his place among Ireland's heroic pantheon

I grew up in a family where we thought of Ireland as the neighbouring parish. Standing on the beach at Cape Cod and looking out over the Atlantic, it was easy to imagine the crowded ships that brought our family to these shores.

My family was from Wexford, just next door to Waterford, whose most famous son, Thomas Francis Meagher, led an astonishing life, crossing not just the Atlantic but seas around the globe in pursuit of liberty and prosperity for all.

To be a part of the Meagher Foundation and its work to teach the history of the Irish Tricolour and Meagher's extraordinary contribution to the great causes of his time and ours - freedom, equality and justice - is a great privilege.

While the story of Meagher's trip to France in 1848 and his return with the Tricolour - uniting the Orange and the Green between the white stripe of truce - is often told, he crossed the Irish Sea not in search of a flag but liberation itself.

Movements of working people were sweeping away the old order with economic and social reforms. Meagher went to France as leader of the Young Irelanders in hopes of bringing the same revolutionary message back to Ireland.

About the time Meagher's role in the failed 1848 Irish uprising led to a death sentence, commutation, exile to Australia, and escape to America, my grandfather's great-grandfather Patrick Kennedy was leaving New Ross in Wexford for a new life in Boston.

Unfortunately, their paths never crossed. Patrick died of tuberculosis in 1858, three years before Meagher appeared at the Boston Music Hall to urge the city's burgeoning Irish population to defend the union.

Meagher stood up against the Confederacy and everything it stood for, not just with words but with deeds, marching with the Fighting 69th with sprigs of clover in their hats.

My great-uncle, President John F. Kennedy, presented the brigade's bullet-riddled banner of the Irish Brigade during his famous trip to Dublin in 1963. My grandfather, Robert F. Kennedy, spoke with pride of the New York regiment as the US senator from the state.

Meagher went on to become Montana's first governor after surviving some of the bloodiest battles of the Civil War. My



Proud: Congressman Joe Kennedy and, below, scenes from JFK's 1963 visit to Ireland



great-uncle, Senator Ted Kennedy, loved history and traded stories of Meagher's heroism with his close friend Senator Mike Mansfield, whose statue now stands near Meagher's at the state capital in Helena.

As the world year last year honoured the martyrs of the 1916 Easter Rising, it was important to recall the names of those who came before. Thomas Francis

Meagher well deserves his place in the pantheon of Irish heroes. He deeply embraced the rights of man. He deeply understood that aspirations toward freedom and justice were universal - whether among the serfs of Europe, the peasants of Ireland, the slaves of America's south or the impoverished immigrants of its northern cities.

Being Irish is not just the songs we love - and we know how much the Kennedys love the rebel ballads - but the causes we embrace.

And the truth is that anyone who stands for racial equality and social justice is an honorary member of Meagher's Irish Brigade.

Congressman Joe Kennedy is a member of the US House of Representatives from Massachusetts's 4th district

Anniversary) and included, in addition to all three services and members of the Reserve Defence Forces, our Veterans organisations, colleagues from An Garda Síochána and detachments representing the various other 'blue light' emergency services. While that parade and the incredible footage of Dublin taken by RTÉ from the air (courtesy of Air Corps helicopter assets) will live on in the public imagination, there were many other flag ceremonies of a smaller scale which were also important in their own right.

A visitor to the GPO on any other day during 2016 would notice, at exactly 12.00hrs, the National Flag being raised by members of the Óglaigh na hÉireann in the centre of O'Connell Street. This ceremony was quietly performed by military personnel every day from January 1 until New Year's Eve 2016. It is worth pointing out that the flag raising ceremony, although unique under the public gaze at the GPO throughout this special year, is an honour that is paid to the flag every day in every barracks and military post at home, and one that is indeed replicated by our personnel who are currently serving overseas, on land and at sea, in 16 different countries.

Outside of Dublin, the National Flag was also raised by personnel of Óglaigh na hÉireann at 31 individual civic ceremonies last year - one for each local authority county area. Together with the flags for Schools initiative, this has allowed the many communities in which our personnel live and work to experience our professionalism at first hand and indeed to engage in commemorative ceremonies of their own with all of the dignity and solemnity that Óglaigh na hÉireann brings to formal ceremonial events at any level.

‘Our valuable work will go on’

The Thomas F. Meagher Foundation will continue to inspire young people about the flag’s true meaning, its founders tell *Graham Clifford*

Seven thousand pairs of excited eyes fixed on student Lily Whelehan, a direct descendant of Thomas F. Meagher, as she lit up Croke Park with her electric smile and addressed her peers on a day of celebration.

Two years after being established the Thomas F. Meagher Foundation, in conjunction with Ireland 2016, presented flags to every second-level school in the country on March 7 last year – on the 138th anniversary of the day the tri-colour first flew at 33 the Mall, Waterford in 1848.

“It was a sensational highlight for all of us involved,” explains Reverend Michael Cavanagh who along with Senator Mark Daly first championed the Foundation. He continued: “The words of President Higgins during the Croke Park ceremony, with all the students in the stands, were inspirational and re-enforced what we had been saying about the flag and its symbolism. And the ceremony itself was so moving.”

Though born and brought up in Manchester Michael’s connections to the Thomas F. Meagher story are stronger than most. Now based in the beautiful town of Kenmare for many years he tells me of why he got involved in the

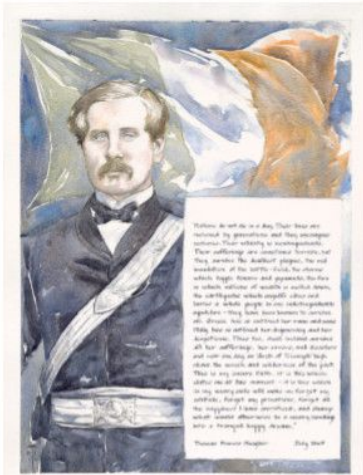
Foundation and how he stumbled across an unexpected revelation during his research of Meagher.

“I’d seen the way that the St George’s flag had been hijacked for political purposes in the UK. I didn’t want to see that happen with the tri-colour. Meagher’s flag design expressed a longing for acceptance, equality and respect between both communities on the island of Ireland. His message concerned different Christian groupings but the same message applies today in a multi-ethnic and multi-faith society.

“As I was researching Meagher I came across his authorised autobiography penned by another Michael Cavanagh, a friend and confidant of Meagher at the time. I started to put two and two together and recalled old stories of my Uncle Mick who went off to America around the same time. It was amazingly co-incidental that I discovered I was most likely related to Meagher’s right-hand man.”

Reflecting on the successes of the first three years of the Foundation, Reverend Cavanagh believes it’s made a valuable contribution to Irish society and our sense of ourselves.

“For sure I think we made a difference.



Flying the flag: Reverend Michael Cavanagh and Senator Mark Daly will continue the work of the Thomas F. Meagher Foundation



Teaching young people about the flag’s symbolism was so important, about the inclusivity and values of equality instilled in the design. So many of our young people are oblivious to difference and it’s up to older generations to support that and celebrate it.”

And the Foundation must look forward too as Senator Daly explains.

“2016 was about celebrating how far we have come as a nation. Now the challenge we face is looking at how far we’ve yet to travel to fulfil the aims of the Proclamation. Central to that is

making sure that the flag, and its peaceful symbolism, is embraced.”

The Foundation, in partnership with the Office of the Ceann Comhairle, has contacted secondary schools asking that they become involved in a new initiative beginning today.

Mark Daly explains: “On St Patrick’s Day each year we celebrate the global Irish family, in places like Australia, Canada and America. Many of those who are celebrating may never have stepped foot on Irish soil but what about those immigrant families who are in Ireland



Ireland needs educationalists of action and vision, says Cathnia O Muircheartaigh

Why Thomas Meagher was a visionary

The National Association of Principals and Deputy Principals was delighted to be involved with the Thomas F. Meagher Foundation last year and with the response from our second level schools nationwide that participated so willingly in ensuring that National Flag is seen as a symbol of peace. In 2016, the state recognised those that had given their lives to bring about our freedom. Their sacrifice was celebrated and acknowledged. This year we are placing the emphasis on defining the meaning of what it means to be Irish in the 21st century. Not only to include our own language and culture but to respect all languages and culture. This year Flag Day seeks to encourage the young people of our nation, irrespective of ethnicity, creed or gender to work together to proclaim and live the message of peace and unity under the Irish Tricolour. Our schools must be beacons of hope and promise where our students choose to live for Ireland in a way that celebrates our Irishness in its broadest sense.

There is a real love of education in Ireland going back to the time when Ireland was known as the land of saints and scholars. Our new Irish bring the richness of cultural diversity and a longing for education, which when matched with the traditional grá we Irish have for education has the possibility of making Ireland an educational powerhouse for generations to come.

Unfortunate commentary from across the Atlantic seeks to portray immigrants in a negative light. Feedback from my colleagues emphasise that while initially, immigrants may have language difficulties, within a short time theirs is a very positive contribution to school life particularly in the area of languages and the STEM subjects. The celebration of national identity whereby the wearing of national costumes, cooking of national recipes, flying of national flags to show the diversity of different nationalities in our schools has become a key feature of school life showing a welcoming and inclusive side to Irish hospitality and culture.

NAPD sponsors the Best School in Ireland Competition in the BT Young Scientist and Technology Exhibition and the contribution of the new Irish by way of projects and prize winners is amazing. So our education system has a key role to play in supporting newcomers, in making them feel welcome in our schools, in including them in our language, in our sports and extracurricular activities, in identifying, recognising and celebrating the talents they bring to Ireland and acknowledging their willingness to share these with us to make our country greater. As a nation we cannot waste our talented students or our passionate and professional teachers! Our Education Department policy is to have inclusive schools (and it's very difficult to argue with this concept) but if we're honest, inclusive schools are for "other people's kids" – I want my kids to go to the



NAPD president Cathnia O' Muircheartaigh

best school. But how do we characterise the best, how do we adapt to make our system the best for all students.

It's such a pity that the Junior Cycle reform debate has been reduced to a row over assessment with insufficient discussion about learning and teaching styles. At the heart of the reform is the devolution of greater autonomy to schools to develop and resource a curriculum which meets their particular students' needs and context. The changes to teaching and learning which will come about as a result of Junior Cycle reform will enhance the high satisfaction levels expressed by the Irish public in our education system in a recent OECD reports. Thomas Francis Meagher was a man of action and of vision keen to promote all that is good in the new generations. What we need are

educationalists of action and of vision, individuals who can spot but also harness the tremendous talent latent in our youth and enable it to grow, to flourish and to prosper.

Agus sinn i lár seachtain na Gaeilge tá sé an fheiceálach an obair atá á dhéanamh ar ár dteanga agus an slí ina féidir í a úsáid ar bhonn dearfach chun cur le ár sochaí agus cur le ilteangachas agus le forbairt ár bpobail uile.

Flag Day, which falls today just before our national holiday, can be the day when this message of peace and unity as well as the abiding hope for our future as a multi-cultural, inclusive society of all the talents is celebrated. Gach rath orainn ar fad.

The author is President National Association of Principals and Deputy Principals

now – be they born here or somewhere else? To be here on St Patrick's Day must be a very odd experience for them – we must broaden our definition of what it means to be Irish in order to be more inclusive. We also have to celebrate the new Irish. So, today, on March 16, on the eve of St Patrick's Day we're asking schools to hold events, a flag day, where students can celebrate their own cultures, language and flags. Because identity must evolve, it can't remain static."

Not only is the Foundation making its mark in school corridors across Ireland but in the corridors of our National Parliaments too.

"We're delighted that, in conjunction with the Ceann Comharile's office, we will provide a flag to fly over Leinster House, another in the Dail and another in the Seanad. All have been flown by the Defence Forces from 33, the Mall," explained Senator Daly.

And building on the success of achievements to date Daly, the Fianna Fáil Seanad Spokesperson on the Irish Overseas and Diaspora, said the focus must be on the years ahead now rather than those which have already passed.

"Those who signed the Proclamation wanted us to look forward, that's what we're doing. We want to make sure that our work is not something that happened solely in isolation to mark the centenary of the Rising but rather has a wider and more progressive scope. We want to make events, such as the March 16th flag day, permanent fixtures in Irish society and will be doing all we can to make that happen."



Trócaire staff being welcomed to a community in northern Honduras and, right, staff and local workers at Trócaire's offices in Nicaragua



A Symbol of Hope

The National Flag is a powerful symbol for Trócaire's work overseas, writes *Sean Farrell*

Sitting in a camp in northern Myanmar, surrounded by people who have had to flee their homes due to violence, there are constant reminders of how far you are from home.

This is a remote part of a country that was until recently almost entirely cut off from the outside world. The sights and sounds are very different from what we are used to back in Ireland. One thing is familiar, however: the names of the people.

Standing outside one

makeshift home is Patrick. At the home next to him is Mary. In every camp we visit, we meet people with Irish names; people who have never travelled beyond their province of Myanmar but who are named after the people who have for many years delivered education and healthcare to them.

People in that region have benefited enormously for decades from the support of Irish people. Many of them name their children in tribute to our country.

It is just one example of how Irish people have had an extraordinary impact across the world and how our country and our flag are known for the goodwill they inspire.

When I lived in Uganda and Zimbabwe, where I oversaw Trócaire's projects, nothing gave me more pride than seeing the Irish flag proudly displaying on posters and billboards outside projects that had transformed people's lives.

I would visit communities where water wells and irrigation systems were allowing people to grow food. People would ask me where I was from and when I replied their eyes would immediately smile.

For families living in these communities, the Irish flag came to represent hope. It often flies at projects that are giving families a chance to lift themselves out of poverty.

Trócaire is enormously proud to be partnering with the Ceann Comhairle's office and the Thomas F. Meagher Foundation to build even stronger links



Former president Mary Robinson in northern Ethiopia with Trócaire Executive Director Éamonn Meehan. The Thomas Meagher Foundation supports Trócaire's work in the region

between the Irish flag and our projects overseas.

The Ceann Comhairle's Africa Project is supporting our work in northern Ethiopia, and the Foundation has generously come on board to support those efforts. Communities we work with in northern Ethiopia are impacted by very severe droughts, so, with the help of the Ceann Comhairle's Africa Project and the Thomas F. Meagher Foundation, we are building irrigation and other systems to improve



water access.

The Irish flag itself is a powerful symbol of what Trócaire works for across the world. The green, white and orange represents peace and co-existence between people. Trócaire brings that message to the communities where we work; communities who have often suffered enormously because of conflict and where healing and mutual respect is needed.

I have just recently returned from South Sudan, where over three million



People need the message of hope that Ireland's tricolour signifies

people have had to flee their homes due to conflict between political leaders. The conflict has led to a famine in parts of the country, with the lives of millions of people hanging in the balance over the next few months.

How badly people in South Sudan need the message of hope Ireland's tricolour signifies. Ireland is a small country but our flag is known around the world as a symbol of peace, hope and compassion. Trócaire works with the poorest

communities in the poorest countries on Earth. Many of these people would never have heard of Ireland were it not for the support being given to them. They do not know much about Ireland, but what they do know is that Irish people are filled with compassion and generosity. When we look at our flag today, we should take enormous pride from that fact.

Sean Farrell is Director of Trócaire's International Division. See: trocaire.org

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