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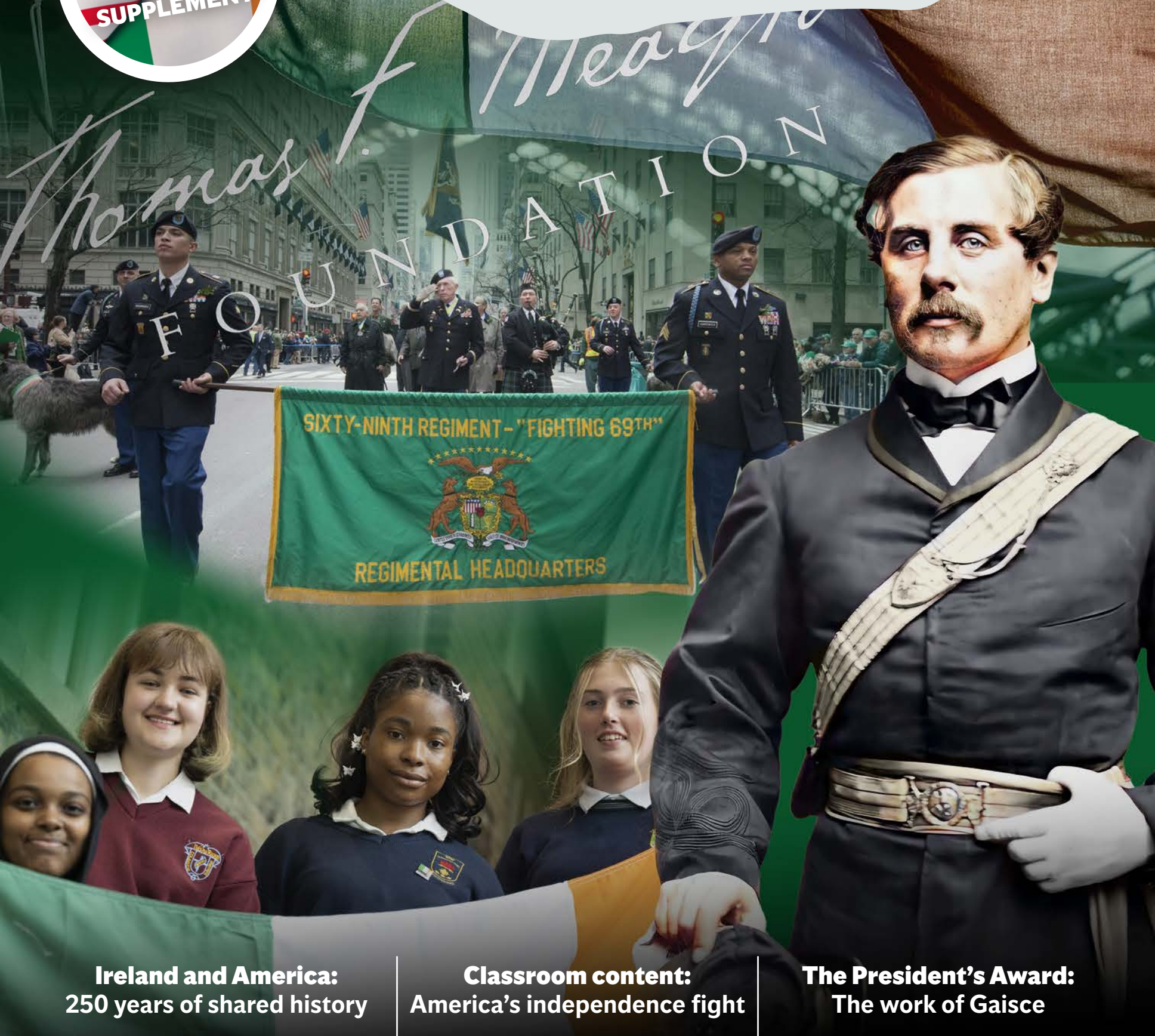
Thomas F. Meagher

FOUNDATION

#FlagDay2025

THE *People's* FLAG

PRIDE, RESPECT, PEACE



Ireland and America:
250 years of shared history

Classroom content:
America's independence fight

The President's Award:
The work of Gaisce

Introduction

Neale Richmond
Minister of State at the Department of Foreign Affairs with special responsibility for International Development and Diaspora



A flag is a powerful and evocative object that can fuel many emotions, a flag will take its place in history and often, in itself, a flag can define periods in time. A flag can also lay out a vision for the future. Now, that might strike one as a particularly peculiar thing to say about a series of shapes and colours adorning a piece of cloth to be raised on a pole but it is particularly true of the tricolour, the flag of Ireland. Inspired by the French tricolore, the design was crafted by the great Thomas Francis Meagher following a visit to France.

The design is simple, three vertical rectangles on a larger rectangle. Green, white and orange. The green to symbolise the Roman Catholic population, the white to symbolise the peace between communities and the orange to symbols the Protestant population.

It truly is a flag of vision, a vision that to this day holds strong but in many ways remains unfinished. History has proven that the design of this vision came from a man, in Thomas Francis Meagher, who always operated on a different plain to many other patriots.

As a person, Meagher embodies a deep connection between Ireland and one of its closest and most trusted allies in that of the United States and it is fitting that we look at the role that Meagher, the man who gave us the Irish flag, played in the histories of two great nations. These histories are shared ones and give us the opportunity to reflect on this important 250th anniversary of the start of the American War of Independence.

During the US Civil War, Meagher recruited for the Union army and formed a company under his command, the 69th, which in turn led to the creation of the Irish Brigade. All in all, seven Union generals were Irish-born while an estimated 150,000 Irish-Americans bravely fought for the Union during the Civil War. After the end of the war, Meagher went on to be the Governor of Montana.

Meagher's military activity in the Civil War gives us cause to look at the role so many Irishmen played in so many global conflicts, but particularly the American War of Independence that started 250 years ago.

Irish Americans sided with the patriots against the British Army in overwhelming numbers, at Lexington and Concord, in the Battle of Bunker Hill, and at every significant military battle during the course of the war. Irish Americans were present at every level of the Union Army; generals, colonels, soldiers, even spies.

George Washington had two Irish-American aides, Doctor James McHenry and John Fitzgerald; after the war, McHenry became the United States' third Secretary of War under President Washington.

These are mere snapshots of the deep relationship between the people of Ireland and America. Nearly 40 million Americans claim Irish ancestry with Irish-American communities in each of the 50 States.

Our ties today are deep in terms of commerce, culture, sport, history, education and politics but they are deep ties built on people, people like Thomas Francis Meagher. Ireland remains one of the USA's best friends and closest allies. The work to maintain that requires constant attention.



Pride and respect: promoting the Irish flag and its meaning.



Two nations: lasting Irish American links were forged by Thomas F. Meagher.

Telling the story: the work of the Foundation benefits our young people.



Next year's 250th anniversary of America's Declaration of Independence is a chance to to showcase history of Thomas Meagher and the Irish flag

Ireland's relationship with the United States has endured for a quarter of a millennium. This year's independence commemorations are an opportunity to celebrate our links

BY ROBBIE BRENNAN

The Thomas Meagher Foundation (TMF) is proud of its achievements over the past 12 months, but its focus is already turning to next year, when the charity is planning celebrations to coincide with the 250th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence in the United States.

The Foundation believes that events in the US next year will help to not only highlight Thomas Meagher's personal history with the US, as a

former Union soldier in the American Civil War and the governor of Montana, but also the spirit of peace and reconciliation embodied in Meagher's most famous cultural contribution: the Irish flag, which he brought to Ireland in 1848 before flying it for the first time above the Wolfe Tone Confederate Club on The Mall in Waterford city that same year.

"Eight signatories of the Declaration of Independence had Irish heritage so there's an opportunity for the Foundation and Ireland to be part of the 250th anniversary celebrations to showcase the deep historical connection

between Ireland and the US along with Thomas Meagher's own role in that epic story," says Cathaoirleach of Seanad Éireann, and co-founder of the Thomas F Meagher Foundation, Senator Mark Daly.

"Meagher escaped to the US from prison in Australia. He would later go on to fight in the Civil War with the Union army's Irish Brigade, rising to the rank of Brigadier General. After that, he was designated the governor of the territory of Montana. Despite dying at the age of 43, he led the most amazing life.

"I'll soon be meeting with Congressman



Mark Daly: role of diaspora is key.

“We want to highlight the cause of freedom across the world”

Brendan Boyle, the Democratic representative from Philadelphia and the only member of congress whose two parents were born in Ireland, to discuss how we might best celebrate the Irish American relationship, tell the story of Thomas Meagher, and highlight the cause of freedom and independence across the world. Indeed, Mr Boyle's district is home to Independence Hall, where the declaration was signed, so there's a special significance there. Senator Daly points to the success of a recent



Celebrating Irishness: Foundation sporting ambassador Zak Moradi.

TMF initiative as an example of what can be achieved by engaging the Irish American community in the effort to promote the positive messages embedded in the Irish flag.

He continues: “We've linked up the American Irish State Legislators to supply all 50 states with Irish flags so that they can fly them over their State Capitols. Each of them was first flown over The Mall in Waterford city before being brought to America.

“This facilitated not just the telling of Thomas Meagher's story, as a revolutionary hero and defender of freedom, but helped to highlight the story of the flag itself and the symbolism of the white panel of peace binding together the green and orange of Ireland's two prevailing religious traditions. We even got Ryan Meagher, a legislator from South Dakota and a distant relative of Thomas Meagher, to contribute to the campaign. It seems like there's a lot of politics in the Meagher blood!”

Senator Daly insists that the grassroots work will continue at home, with focus on spreading the history of Thomas Meagher and the significance of the flag across secondary schools around Ireland.

“We want to continue celebrating the Irish flag and the flags of all children from all

communities and backgrounds across Ireland. That's something that we've had going since the centenary celebrations of 2016 and it's really paid dividends so that's something we're staying focused on,” he says.

Reverend Michael Cavanagh (COI) may have ended his 10-year stint as chairman of the Thomas Meagher Foundation last year, but he remains President of the Organisation and a committed advocate to the sentiment behind the Irish flag.

“Ireland is a small country that punches well above its weight. That's down to the Irish diaspora who have gone all around the world but maintained their Irishness by contributing to independence in other countries. Young people are very much attracted to that history and that's why we such a tremendous response to our initiatives in the schools,” he says.

“Ireland's is the world's most inclusive flag and it all centres on the white panel in the middle. It stands for reconciliation. The flag and the foundation remain relevant because there's an ongoing need for reconciliation in the world – between people who are ostensibly different in terms of creed, nationality, sexuality and so on. But we're one people under God. We can be reconciled. And the flag shows that.”

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IRISH AMERICAN
PARTNERSHIP



Former U.S. Ambassador Claire D. Cronin with students at Scoil Eoghain in Moville, Co. Donegal. Ambassador Cronin's forebears hailed from the Inishowen Peninsula.

Irish American Partnership - Investing in Ireland's Future

For this unique transatlantic charity that is based on education, the future of Ireland is all about its youth

BY MICHAEL QUINLIN

That maxim was on full display last autumn when the Irish American Partnership led a three-day Leadership Mission to Ireland to distribute \$600,000 in grants to primary schools, universities and community groups, with a particular focus this year on rural schools in counties Galway and Mayo. The grants brought the Partnership's year-to-date funding for Ireland to more than \$2.5 million. In addition to targeted awards to primary schools through the O'Neill Schools Grants Program, monies were distributed to Atlantic Technological University Mayo campus in Castlebar, University of Galway, Druid Theatre and President Mary Robinson Centre in Ballina. The awards were announced at a reception in Ireland with former United States Ambassador Claire D. Cronin. President and CEO Mary Sugrue said the trip "allowed us to evaluate our funding and gave

us a vital understanding of the great impact giving has on youth and communities across Ireland. We had the chance to meet the young people benefiting directly from Partnership investment, gaining insight into the grassroots efficacy of our work." Giving donors the chance to witness firsthand the impact of their donations is an integral part of the Partnership's mission. Operating at 100% efficiency, targeted giving lets donors determine how and where their money is spent, and very often, their gifts are directed to their ancestral counties. Donors are inspired that their investments in Irish classrooms and educational programs provide to succeed locally and in the global economy. Since its launch in 1986, the Boston-based non-profit group has distributed more than \$57 million across the island of Ireland. And while the Partnership has supported various programs in jobs and investment, peace initiatives and cultural enrichment, education



US Congressman Joseph P. Kennedy III with Partnership President and CEO Mary Sugrue, FIT CEO Peter Davitt and Board Member Sir Bruce Robinson, during a visit to Belfast.



Irish American Partnership Patron and internationally renowned golfer Padraig Harrington

has emerged as the main appeal for thousands of Irish Americans who contribute each year to the Partnership.

"In Ireland, education has always been central to many of our ambitions," says Sugrue. "And at the Partnership we believe in the power of education to open doors for individuals."

Sugrue herself gets due credit for helping to center the Partnership's focus squarely on education. The native of Cahersiveen, County Kerry was a primary school teacher for several years in Ireland before emigrating to Boston in 1989, where she joined the Partnership. When President Joe Leary stepped down and became president emeritus in 2016, Sugrue took over and has spearheaded the organization ever since.

Be Part of Ireland's Future

Job creation and economic investment were certainly needed when the Partnership came into being during the 1980s, a tumultuous decade on the island of Ireland. The North of Ireland was wracked by political turmoil, economic instability and violence in the

streets. The Republic of Ireland had the highest unemployment rate in Europe, a struggling economy and rampant emigration by an entire generation of young Irish.

As Irish Americans wondered aloud how they could help, the Partnership put forth the premise that economic development and education would be the most effective way for Americans to help the people of Ireland.

“““
In Ireland, education
has always been
central to many of our
ambitions



Partnership President and CEO Mary Sugrue, Partnership Ambassador and decorated Irish golfer Leona Maguire, Principal Mary Warren of Ballycar National School, and students at the 2022 KPMG Women's Irish Open at Dromoland Castle.



Former U.S. Ambassador Claire D. Cronin, Principal Liam McDermott, and Partnership President and CEO Mary Sugrue with students at Scoil Eoghain in Merville, Co. Donegal.

Its original message, "Ireland – It's Part of your Past – be Part of its Future," became a direct appeal to Irish Americans who sincerely wanted to help.

The Partnership's credo has since evolved to read, "Honoring Our Heritage – Investing in Ireland's Future," says Clodagh Boyle, vice president of external engagement.

US House Speaker and Congressman Thomas P. 'Tip' O'Neill of Cambridge, MA was an early supporter of the group, writing, "I am convinced that the Partnership is on the right track. After many years of observing

Ireland, I believe that the best and surest way to resolve that country's problems is to help build a strong, dynamic Irish economy with opportunities for all. I urge you in the strongest terms to become a member of the Irish American Partnership."

A National Network in America

From its headquarters in Boston, the Partnership has cultivated a national profile, receiving donations from all 50 states through ongoing campaigns and in New York, Chicago, Philadelphia, Washington, DC, Albany, and



Members of the Irish American Partnership team pictured in Chicago, 2024, with magazine publisher and Cork native Samantha Barry and former President of Ireland Mary Robinson.

Newport, where active Partnership committees help to organize networking events, speakers' series and golf tournaments throughout the year.

The Golf Championship Series has been a staple of Partnership fundraising for 35 years, bringing donors together through top level golf tournaments at Newport Country Club in Rhode Island, Beverly Country Club in Illinois, and Schuyler Meadows Club in New York. In addition, the Partnership's Irish Invitational Golf Tournament is a three-day outing at world-renowned golf courses in Ireland. In 2025, the Invitational includes rounds at Royal Portrush Golf Club in County Antrim, Royal County Down Golf Club and Ardglass Golf Club, also in County Down.

A popular initiative is the Young Partners Program, which encourages young professionals to connect to modern Ireland and continue the generosity of previous generations. Throughout the year, Young Partners chapters in Boston and New York host social and networking events that bring together like-minded Americans interested in Ireland.

A popular event on the Partnership calendar is the Nollaig na mBan Women's Leadership Celebration, held each January in Boston, Chicago, and Washington, DC. The inaugural Chicago event in 2024 featured Ireland's former President Mary Robinson, a seminal figure in Irish leadership and international diplomacy. In 2025, US Ambassador Cronin was a featured speaker, who recently called the Partnership "an organization that has become very near and dear to my heart since I became U.S. Ambassador to Ireland. The Irish American Partnership's impact is felt where it is needed."

As the Irish American Partnership approaches its 40th anniversary in 2026, education remains central to its mission. President Robinson has called education a human right and has spoken enthusiastically about the critical role of pre-schools, schools and universities "to give young people the capacity for leadership." The Partnership's help in shaping the next generation of Irish leaders is an investment in Ireland's future well worth making.

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L to R: Mental Health Commission Director of Regulation Gary Kiernan; CEO of YAP Ireland, Siobhán O'Dwyer; Danielle O'Sullivan, Independent Mental Health Advocate at YAP and John Farrelly CEO Mental Health Commission.

Wisdom of the young is key to positive mental health

The promotion of pride and respect in the Irish flag has many positive benefits for our young people including the development of belonging and inclusivity, writes **John Farrelly**

The Mental Health Commission is an Irish State body which promotes, encourages and fosters high standards of mental health services. As Chief Executive of the Mental Health Commission, I really appreciate and acknowledge the work of the Thomas Francis Meagher Foundation and their supporters, such as the Irish American Partnership.

By promoting pride in and respect for the Irish Flag and its meaning for peace among young people irrespective of ethnicity, creed or gender, the foundation is part of a large swathe of organisations and people building an inclusive Ireland. Indeed, the Foundation's permanent exhibition in the GPO, the strong links with the President Gaisce Awards, and partnerships with NAPD (the association of principals and deputy principals) points to a unique foundation that works with young people to create a better Ireland.

I was privileged to be invited to the foundation's national celebration in Waterford in 2021. At the event, I met the Taoiseach and Ireland's Minister for Mental Health, Mary Butler TD. We had the pleasure of speaking to many of the 3,000 students who attended from towns and villages right across the country.

That day, the students consistently raised



John Farrelly, CEO, Mental Health Commission

the issue of mental health and told me that organisations which facilitate young people getting involved and speaking about their experiences makes a difference to their mental

wellbeing. They told me they work hard to maintain their own mental health but also need support within their community, especially when times are hard and they are not in a good

TAMHI works with young people in schools.





School's role in shaping young minds



As school leaders in NAPD, we are proud to support the Thomas Meagher Foundation in its mission to promote and celebrate the Irish flag, the Tricolour, first flown by Thomas Francis Meagher in 1848. The flag remains a powerful symbol of peace, inclusion, and respect—values that are at the heart of our schools today.

Schools play a vital role in shaping young minds, and through initiatives like 'Flag Day,' we have the opportunity to instil in our students a deep understanding of what our national flag represents. By raising the Tricolour alongside the flags of the many nationalities within our school communities, we reinforce the message of unity and respect for all traditions.

The Thomas Meagher Foundation has been instrumental in supporting schools through the donation of flags and educational resources, ensuring that the significance of the Tricolour is both understood and celebrated. Additionally, the Foundation's Awards and Scholarship Programme encourages young people to engage with the values of active citizenship and inclusivity.

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Our flag is as
relevant today as it
was in 1848 when
it was first flown
in Waterford

On behalf of school leaders across the country, I extend my best wishes to the Thomas Meagher Foundation as it continues its important work. The message of peace and unity is as relevant today as it was in 1848, and we remain committed to passing on this legacy to the next generation. Ar Aghaidh Le Cheile

Anton O Mahony
President
National Association of Principals and
Deputy Principals

space mentally.

The wisdom of the young people I met that day was not lost on me. Indeed, the World Health Organisation estimates that one in four of us will experience a mental illness at some point in our lives. We also know that young people and marginalised groups, such as those with a mental illness, can avoid unnecessary mental distress when supported early in their own communities.

Since that event in Waterford, I have made a point of meeting organisations across the island that are dedicated to supporting young people to maintain their mental health. We are

“
The wisdom of the
young people I met was
not lost on me

fortunate to have so many groups like Jigsaw and Spunout that are dedicated to youth mental health, while general sports and youth groups are increasingly seeing the value of supporting young people in this area.

One of the fondest memories I have from my career is a visit I made to Ardoyne in North Belfast in 2022 where I met TAMHI, which stands for Tackling Awareness of Mental Health. This mental health charity, led by Joe Donnelly, works at grassroots level by using sport to raise awareness of mental health and resilience. Although based in the north, TAMHI provides workshops, talks, training, and innovative activities and games across the entire island to promote positive mental fitness. At a broader country level, we are also seeing change. National organisations such as the Youth Advocacy Programme (YAP) are building partnerships between vulnerable young people, their families and communities. Last year, I had the pleasure of listening to many of these young people when the Mental Health Commission launched the 'Headspace Toolkit' at Croke Park at the YAP National Conference. This toolkit was developed in consultation with young people to support and empower those of their peers who need to use mental health services.

Being in the presence of hundreds of young people and their families and listening to the wisdom of their collective and individual experience was inspiring, particularly as a key value of the Mental Health Commission is to promote person-centred support; to empower young people and their supporters, and to be co-creators in their own mental health care, recovery and decision-making.

Experiencing mental health difficulties can be a worrying time, sometimes even more so when you are young, and especially if it is a young person's first experience of mental health difficulties. I know there are many organisations and young people working hard to help each other. I want to thank all in the Thomas Francis Meagher Foundation and their supporters, who gave me the opportunity to meet and listen to the voice and experiences of thousands of young people.

I want to thank all of the organisations who I have met across Ireland who continue to listen to and work with young people, but most of all I want to thank all the young people who have the courage to speak about mental health.

They are wise beyond their years.

John Farrelly is Chief Executive of the
Mental Health Commission



Thomas Francis Meagher.

In the history of Ireland's long struggle for freedom, few figures stand as tall as Thomas Francis Meagher. A revolutionary, a statesman, a soldier, and an exile, Meagher's life was filled with adventure, hardship, and unwavering patriotism. His legacy is perhaps best known for introducing the Irish tricolour flag—a symbol of unity and hope that still flies proudly today. But Meagher was much more than a flag bearer; his life's story is one of courage, resilience, and an unbreakable love for Ireland.

Early Life and Education

Born in Waterford on August 3, 1823, Thomas Francis Meagher was raised in a privileged but politically conscious household. His father, Thomas Meagher Sr., was a successful merchant and served as the city's mayor. Despite this comfortable upbringing, young Meagher was deeply moved by the injustices he saw around him, particularly the oppression of Ireland under British rule.

Educated at Clongowes Wood College and later Stonyhurst College in England, Meagher was a bright and articulate student. He developed a passion for history and politics, and his powerful oratory skills would later make him one of the most inspiring voices of the Irish nationalist movement.

A Voice for Irish Freedom

During the 1840s, Ireland was gripped by the Great Famine, a devastating period of starvation and emigration. The British government's failure to provide adequate relief deepened nationalist sentiment, and a new generation of young radicals, known as the Young Irelanders, emerged to challenge British rule.

Meagher quickly became one of the movement's most dynamic leaders. In 1843, he joined Daniel O'Connell's campaign for Repeal of the Act of Union but grew frustrated with its strictly non-violent approach. By 1848, inspired



A monument to Meagher at the State Capitol in Montana.

Thomas Francis Meagher: The Irish Patriot Who Gave Us the Tricolour

A to Z of Thomas Francis Meagher

A

Activist: Meagher was a passionate advocate for Irish freedom, dedicating his life to the nationalist cause.

B

Ballingarry: The site of the failed 1848 Young Irelander Rebellion where Meagher fought against British rule.

C

Clongowes Wood College: Where Meagher was educated, honing his intellect and oratory skills.

D

Death Sentence: After the rebellion, he was sentenced to death for treason, later commuted to exile.

E

Escape: Meagher fled Van Diemen's Land (Tasmania) in 1852, making his way to America.

M

Missouri River: The river where he mysteriously drowned in 1867.

N

Nationalism: Meagher championed the idea of an independent Ireland free from British rule.

O

Orator: Known for powerful speeches that stirred nationalist sentiment.

P

Patriot: His love for Ireland and its freedom never wavered.

Q

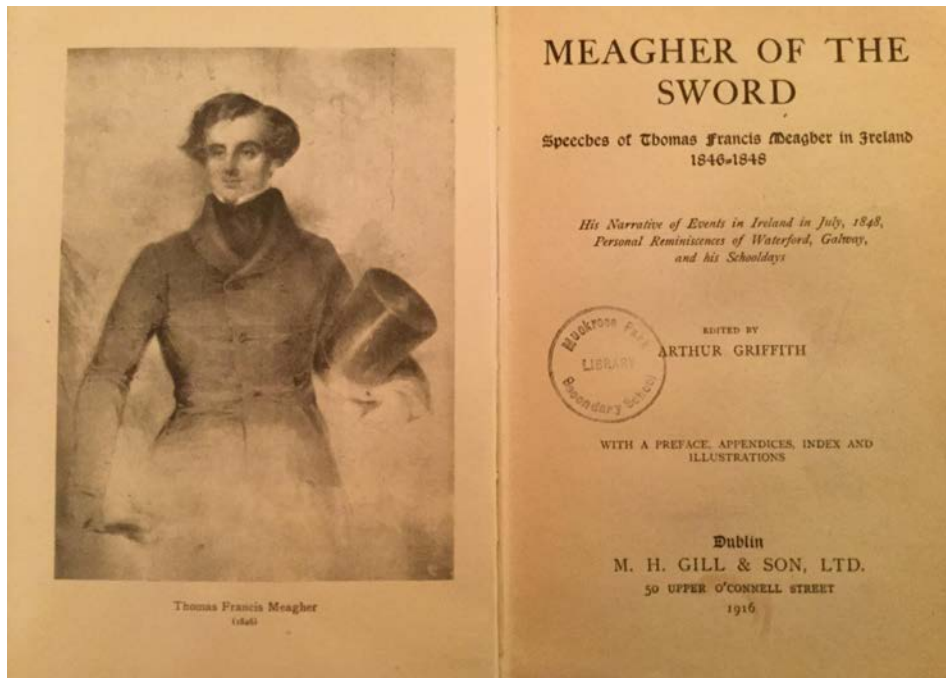
Questionable Death: His drowning remains a mystery – accident or assassination?

R

Rebellion: The 1848 revolt against British rule defined his early career.

S

Symbol: The Irish tricolour, introduced by Meagher, became Ireland's national flag.



Meagher's speeches captured in a book.



Meagher's military medals.



Museum items in Waterford.



by revolutionary uprisings across Europe, Meagher and his fellow Young Irelanders decided that armed resistance was the only way forward.

The Birth of the Irish Tricolour

It was during a visit to France in March 1848 that Meagher was inspired by the French revolutionary flag. Determined to create a new symbol for Ireland, he presented a tricolour of green, white, and orange to the Irish people, explaining that the colours represented a hopeful future—green for the Catholic nationalists, orange for the Protestant unionists, and white as a symbol of peace between the two traditions.

On March 7, 1848, Meagher unfurled the tricolour for the first time on 33 The Mall, Waterford. Though it would take

many decades before it was officially adopted as the national flag, Meagher's vision of unity endures to this day.

The Rising and Exile

Later that year, Meagher and the Young Irelanders staged a failed rebellion in Ballinacorney, County Tipperary. The rising, poorly organised and lacking support, quickly collapsed. Meagher was arrested, convicted of treason, and sentenced to death. However, due to public pressure, his sentence was commuted to transportation for life to the penal colony of Van Diemen's Land (modern-day Tasmania) in 1849. In exile, Meagher remained defiant. After

several years in Australia, he managed to escape in 1852 and made his way to the United States, where a new chapter of his life began.

A Soldier in America

Arriving in the U.S., Meagher became a prominent public speaker and advocate for Irish immigrants. When the American Civil War broke out in 1861, he took up arms for the Union, leading the Irish Brigade—a regiment of Irish-born soldiers fighting for the North.

Meagher's leadership on the battlefield was legendary. His troops, many of whom had fled famine and oppression in Ireland, fought with incredible bravery. Despite suffering heavy

losses, the Irish Brigade earned a reputation for fearlessness, particularly in battles such as Antietam and Fredericksburg.

Mysterious Death

After the war, Meagher was appointed acting governor of the Montana Territory, a vast and untamed land in the American West. However, his time there was short-lived. On July 1, 1867, he mysteriously disappeared after falling from a steamboat into the Missouri River. His body was never recovered, and to this day, the circumstances of his death remain unknown.

Meagher's Enduring Legacy

Although Meagher did not live to see an independent Ireland, his contribution to the cause of freedom was immense. The tricolour he introduced is now the official flag of Ireland, a powerful reminder of the unity he dreamed of. His speeches and writings continue to inspire, and his name lives on in both Ireland and the United States, where statues and monuments honour his memory.

For today's young Irish people, Thomas Francis Meagher's life is a story of resilience, bravery, and unwavering belief in a better future. He proved that even in the face of failure and exile, the fight for justice and national pride must never be abandoned. His legacy is not just in history books—it flies above our heads every day, in the green, white, and orange of our national flag.

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F

Famine:

The Irish Great Famine fueled Meagher's nationalism and desire for self-governance.

G

Governor:

He was appointed acting governor of the Montana Territory in 1865.

H

Hero:

His leadership of the Irish Brigade in the American Civil War earned him this title.

I

Irish Brigade:

He commanded this unit, known for its bravery and heavy casualties.

J

Journalist:

Meagher used newspapers and speeches to advocate for Irish and immigrant rights.

K

Kilkenny:

A stronghold of nationalist support where he gave influential speeches.

L

Legacy:

His vision endures in the Irish tricolour, a lasting symbol of unity.

T

Tricolour:

Inspired by the French flag, he presented the green, white, and orange as a sign of peace.

U

Union Army:

Meagher fought for the North in the American Civil War.

V

Van Diemen's Land:

The penal colony where he was exiled before escaping to the U.S.

W

Waterford:

His birthplace and the site where the tricolour was first raised in Ireland.

X

Xenophobia:

Meagher stood against anti-Irish sentiment in America, defending immigrants' rights.

Y

Young Irelanders:

The nationalist group that sought Irish independence in 1848.

Z

Zeal:

Meagher's unwavering passion for Irish freedom made him a legend in history.



Gaisce Youth Ambassador Panel (with extended caption):
The recently established Gaisce Youth Ambassador Panel is an exciting new initiative. Bringing together a group of Gaisce Awardees from all over Ireland representing a diverse range of backgrounds allows the organisation to ensure that young people have an active voice and can act as advocates for the Award amongst their peers. As Avril Ryan says: "We're excited to have such an amazing group of young people representing Gaisce on our first Gaisce Youth Ambassador Panel. It's so important for us to champion the voices of young people. As we celebrate Gaisce's 40th anniversary this year, this panel of accomplished and enthusiastic young people will be able to be advocates for the Gaisce Award amongst their peers, in their community and nationally."

Gaisce – The President's Award celebrates 40 years of partnership transforming young people's lives

Gaisce – The President's Award has proudly maintained a longstanding and meaningful partnership with the Thomas Meagher Foundation through their annual Flag Day initiatives as a Gaisce Challenge Partner. This collaboration celebrates the rich heritage and impact of our national flag while promoting the values of inclusion, connectedness, and empathy.

As Ireland's National Youth Award celebrating our 40th anniversary in 2025, we are indebted to the many partners that have all played their part in contributing to the transformative impact that Gaisce has had on the lives of young people aged 14-25 since 1985.

Avril Ryan, Chief Executive of Gaisce, recognises the value of partnerships for the organisation. "Gaisce would not be possible without partnerships with national and international organisations, and the consistent connections we have forged with Gaisce Award Partners, Gaisce participants and President's Award Leaders past and present. We value these relationships enormously. As a national organisation committed to helping all young people throughout Ireland to dream big and realise their potential, having a broad network of partners who engage with young people from diverse backgrounds, including those

Relationship with the Thomas Meagher Foundation has helped to educate people about the true meaning of our national flag while promoting important and meaningful values

who may be experiencing marginalisation, is incredibly important. The essence of the Gaisce Programme is that it brings increased recognition and value to the work of so many organisations in our community. The Award showcases the work and commitment of others by recognising the expertise not just of Gaisce and our team but of our dedicated partners who believe in young people's potential".

Since its inception, Gaisce has worked closely with our friends in The Duke of Edinburgh's Award, particularly The Duke of Edinburgh's Award Northern Ireland. Following the Good Friday Agreement, young people in Northern Ireland were given the opportunity to gain access to the Gaisce Award through the Joint Award Initiative (JAI), a partnership between Gaisce, The Duke of Edinburgh's Award and The Duke of Edinburgh's International Award. In many ways, the Joint Award initiative is an example of the vision that Thomas Meagher dream of where the two communities come together to work in harmony for a shared vision. Last year we joined with The Duke of Edinburgh's Award Northern Ireland in

celebrating 25 years of this ground-breaking partnership, and we look forward to continuing to develop this relationship into the future.

Our partnership with The Duke of Edinburgh's Award has also extended to the international community, with strong partnerships forged with the Award in many countries. Most recently Gaisce staff members and President's Award Leaders took part in several Learning Exchanges with our partners in The Duke of Edinburgh's Award Finland with delegations travelling to each other's countries.

As well as our international partners, Gaisce is fortunate to have fostered beneficial partnerships with a range of organisations at home who share similar values and commitments to Ireland's young people. We work closely with many national organisations such as the National Youth Council of Ireland, Leave No Trace, Belong To, Jigsaw and Spun Out, developing initiatives and supporting programmes that Gaisce participants can undertake as part of their Award challenges.

When young people are undertaking their Gaisce Award, whether it's Bronze, Silver or

Gold, they complete Physical Recreation, Personal Skills and Community Involvement Challenges to achieve their Award. Gaisce works with a range of Challenge Partners, located throughout the country, to provide inspiration and ideas of what challenges they can undertake for their Award.

Another important part of the Gaisce Award experience is the Adventure Journey. Our Approved Adventure Journey Providers initiative allows us to work in partnership with various outdoor recreation centres to ensure that participants get a quality outdoor experience that meets the Award Adventure Journey requirements. This partnership gives peace of mind and support to many President's Award Leaders who value the expertise these centres provide to enable them to support their participants Award experience that is safe, organised and tailored for group needs.

The Adventure Journey experience has played a central role in Gaisce's new partnership with the leading outdoor apparel provider, Craghoppers. Craghoppers has come on board as an official partner of Gaisce's



A group of Gaisce participants from Youthreach Bettystown, taking part in the 25th Anniversary celebrations of the Joint Award Initiative at Crawfordsburn Scout Campsite in Bangor, Co. Down, alongside groups of young people from Northern Ireland.



A group of young people receiving their Scouting and Gaisce Awards as part of the Gaisce Dual Award Programme at a recent Scouting Ireland awards ceremony.

40th Anniversary, and as Glenn Sheridan, Craghoppers Account Manager for Ireland says: "Our partnership with Gaisce supports young adventurers and promotes a shared love for the outdoors and responsible exploration". The collaboration aims to highlight responsible outdoor practices, encouraging young people to explore nature while being mindful of their impact.

Gaisce operates under the aegis of the Department of Education and Youth. That support, since 1985, has enabled over 480,000 young people to participate in the Gaisce programme. While the majority of young people start their Gaisce journey in school settings, there are many pathways to undertake the Award, including through youth services, disability organisations, third level institutions, second-chance and further education services, sporting organisations, uniformed organisations, youth diversion, prison and probation services, organisations working with young refugees and asylum seekers, and more.

Gaisce's work with the Irish Prison Service, Youth Diversion and Youth Probation projects has gone from strength to strength, with a dedicated team in Gaisce working with the sector. Working closely with the Irish Prison Service, we have established a National Steering Committee and staff led implementation teams in every prison operating the Award, supporting young people in custody to achieve their Bronze, Silver and Gold Awards. A new partnership with the Department of Justice now reimburses youth diversion projects directly for the cost of registering young people for Gaisce, reducing barriers to participation.

Lorraine Higgins, Lorraine, teacher and Gaisce PAL in The Education Unit, Cork

Prison: "For me, Gaisce provides a fantastic opportunity for the school to engage and motivate students. Gaisce promotes student's personal development and encourages them to engage in a wider number of activities across the school. Since my involvement in Gaisce, I have seen students achieve huge successes which has helped them throughout their sentence as well as supporting their post release experience".

Gaisce collaborates with Scouting Ireland,

2025 marks the 40th anniversary of Gaisce – The President's Award, with a programme of events, activities and initiatives planned to mark this significant milestone in the organisation's history.

One of the flagship events of the year will be a 40th Anniversary Challenge, with everyone invited to take part. We will also be hosting a special conference for our President's Award Leaders later in the year.

We are delighted that An Post have returned as partners for our 40th anniversary, having previously supported us as part of our 35th anniversary. This partnership has flourished due to the fantastic support of Anna McHugh in An Post, and they will be helping to spread the word about our celebrations with a Gaisce 40 postmark this May.

Details of this exciting event will be announced in April, so make sure to visit www.gaisce.ie or check out our socials (@GaisceAward) to find out more!

Irish Girl Guides and the Catholic Guides of Ireland through our Dual Award Programme, which allows their participants to earn a Gaisce Award while undertaking the awards of each of their respective organisations.

Sean Sheehan is the CEO of Scouting Ireland: "Scouting Ireland and Gaisce are united by a powerful mission: to empower young people through transformative challenges that foster their growth and development. We deeply value our partnership, which is rooted in a shared vision of nurturing young citizens who lead with integrity and embody and promote human decency. We are excited for the future of this impactful partnership, committed to further enriching the lives of our youth members and shaping the leaders of tomorrow."

Gaisce also enjoys fruitful partnerships with the Irish Defence Forces, who every year deliver a Gaisce Defence Forces Adventure Challenge, with a group of young people from all over Ireland taking part in four days of outdoor pursuits and survival skills.

Encouraging young people to start or continue on their Gaisce journey into third or higher level is an important commitment for Gaisce, and our partnership with Student Volunteer Ireland (studentvolunteer.ie) plays an important part in this area.

Dr Lorraine Tansey, Student Volunteer Ireland Programme Manager explains: "Gaisce and Student Volunteer Ireland (StudentVolunteer.ie) collaborate on a grand scale to build the next generation of great civic leaders and professionals. We tap into the hunger young people have for life experiences that build their confidence and make a positive impact on the world. Gaisce and Student Volunteer Ireland are ambitious for our future across not only our partner universities but for all students to pour into Gaisce information workshops, chat at Volunteering Fairs, connect at volunteer recognition awards and join a

movement. This is important as young people's ideas of success extends beyond one's position in the world to a more empathetic and open community in solidarity with others."

While Gaisce enjoys many partnerships, the most important of all is our partnership with our President's Award Leaders (PALs). Our PALs work on a voluntary basis in the organisations supporting, encouraging and guiding young people who undertake their Gaisce Award each year. "Gaisce would not be the successful, non-formal education programme that it is without the dedication and trojan efforts of PALs", Avril Ryan emphasises.

Avril Ryan reflects on the importance of all these partnerships to Gaisce. "In 2024, almost 27,000 young people registered for the Gaisce Award, the highest number of registrations in the history of the Award. We are committed to ensuring that every young person in Ireland has the opportunity to participate in the Gaisce experience, and having such a strong network of partners ensures that we can deliver our programme successfully. We have worked hard to build these partnerships over the past 40 years, and we look forward to seeing these partnerships continue to develop and flourish transforming young people's lives and ensuring that Gaisce is a rite of passage across all Award levels for every young person in Ireland aged 14 to 25".

Finally, Gaisce celebrates our treasured partnership with our President Michael D. Higgins. One of the annual highlights of the Gaisce calendar is the Gold Award ceremony, which the President hosts in Áras an Uachtaráin. The President's championing of young people and his dedication to the Gaisce Award during his 14 years in office is hugely appreciated. The enduring success and value of the Gaisce Awards by and for the young people of Ireland represents a significant legacy of his presidency.



Members of the Gaisce Council at the 2024 Gaisce Gold Award Ceremony in Áras an Uachtaráin.

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
Airteagal 7 - Bunreacht Na hÉireann.

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 Seanad 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

1. 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.
2. 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.
3. 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

Occasions and times when the National Flag is flown

1. The National Flag is flown daily at all military posts and from a limited number of State buildings.
2. 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).
3. 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.
4. The National Flag is flown at other significant national and local events such as festivals and commemorations.
5. 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

1. 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.
2. 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.
3. 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 (see appendix). The flags should be flown from an observer's left to right with the European Union flag flown from the first flagstaff (figure g).
4. An alternative order of flags is to begin on the left with the National Flag and place

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

1. The half-masting of national flags is a well-established procedure whereby countries bestow an honour and express a collective sense of sorrow.
2. 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 (figure l). 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.
3. 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.
4. Where the National Flag is flown at half-mast, no other flag should be flown.
5. 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.

6. A National Flag at half-mast may be displayed, day and night, for the duration of a funeral provided the flag is illuminated.
7. While being carried, the National Flag should not be dipped by way of salute or compliment except to the dead during memorial ceremonies.
8. 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:

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

1. 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.
2. The National Flag should never be defaced by placing slogans, logos, lettering or pictures of any kind on it, for example at sporting events.
3. The National Flag should not be draped on cars, trains, boats or other modes of transport. It should not be carried flat, but should always 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.
4. The National Flag when used as a decoration should always be treated with due 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.
5. 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.
6. 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

may be made to any convenient size.

4. 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

- 1.** No flag or pennant should be flown above the National Flag.
- 2.** 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.
- 3.** 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.
- 4.** 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.
- 5.** While being carried, the National Flag should not be dipped by way of salute or compliment, except to the dead during memorial ceremonies.
- 6.** When the National Flag is used to drape a coffin, the green should be at the head of the coffin.
- 7.** When displayed on a platform, the National Flag should be above and behind the speaker’s desk.
- 8.** 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.
- 9.** 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 European Union flag on the far right of the group, as seen by an observer.

5. 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.

6. 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

- 1.** 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.
- 2.** 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.
- 3.** 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.

- 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

- 1.** In raising or lowering, the National Flag should not be allowed to touch the ground.
- 2.** 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.
- 3.** 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

- 1.** 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.
- 2.** 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.

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

“The White in the Centre signifies a lasting truce between Orange and Green. I 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





Fig
1.0



Fig
2.0



Fig
3.0



Fig
4.0

Tracing the History of Ireland's National Flag

XXXXXXXX

BY DR. SHANE BROWNE

The creation and adoption of symbols plays an important role in the construction of national identities. Visual symbols connect people to a cause, with flags in particular representing the soul of a movement or nation. In the Irish case, the Tricolour of green, white and orange has been in existence as a national symbol for over 170 years. Most associated with Waterford native, Thomas Francis Meagher, the Tricolour was first flown in the city on 7 March 1848, after Meagher had returned to Ireland with a Tricolour flag modelled on the French version. A member of the Young Ireland movement, which was an organisation dedicated to Irish independence, one of Meagher's key objectives was to unite the religious denominations of Ireland under one banner.

To Meagher, the Tricolour signified 'a new life' for Ireland. 'The white in the centre', he noted, represented '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'. However, while the Tricolour was envisioned as a new national flag for the country, it would fade from view in the aftermath of the abortive Young Ireland rebellion of July 1848. Though it is hard to imagine today, the Tricolour did not, in fact, become a nationally recognised symbol until after the 1916 Easter Rising, a week-long insurrection launched against British rule in Ireland. As will be examined, a variety of flags existed throughout this time, some of which were very popular, meaning widespread recognition of the tricolour was slow to come about.

1. The long history of the 'Green Harp flag'
One of the most important symbols associated with Ireland's independence struggle from

the seventeenth century onwards was the uncrowned harp on a green background standard [Fig 1.0]. Significantly, a crowned harp existed as an official symbol in Ireland as early as the 1540s when it was utilised on coinage. However, it was the uncrowned harp that would come to represent Irish nationalist ambitions. In terms of its historical resonance as a symbol, the use of the 'Green Harp flag' can be traced to the 1640s. According to historian and poet, Emily Cullen, a traditional Irish harp in yellow on a green field was utilised by famed Irish soldier, Owen Roe O'Neill, as early as 1642.

The 'Green Harp flag' had become a symbol of both rebellion and constitutional nationalism by the end of the eighteenth century. Utilised by Wolfe Tone's United Irishmen during the 1798 Rebellion, it also featured during Robert Emmet's abortive 1803 Rising, while it was later associated with Daniel O'Connell's campaign for Catholic Emancipation in the 1820s, as well as his Repeal movement of the 1840s [Fig 2.0]. It was even linked to Meagher's Young Ireland movement before the tricolour was ever introduced, and later became a symbol of the Fenian uprising of 1867 [Fig 3.0].

What can be seen is that the 'Green Harp flag' held an important place in Irish history, but what truly pushed the tricolour to the side after its introduction in 1848 was that the 'Green Harp flag' became the emblem of the Home Rule movement. Home Rule, a form of legislative independence, was the demand of the overwhelming majority of the Irish electorate from the late 1800s onward. Thus, when the Irish Nationalist Party, later known as the Irish Parliamentary Party (IPP), employed it as a symbol in the 1870s [Fig 4.0], the 'Green Harp flag' became synonymous with the drive for Irish self-government.

The historian Peter Alter has noted that the green flag with or without the harp was popularly identified in both the press of the time, as well as Home Rule literature, as 'the



National banner', 'the National standard', 'the national colours', 'the Irish national flag', or simply 'the Irish flag'. In particular, it was associated with popular IPP leader, Charles Stewart Parnell, who led the Home Rule movement between 1880-1891. It was later championed by John Redmond, leader of the IPP from 1900-18 [Fig 5.0]. During the First World War, Irish soldiers would famously present Redmond with the flag when he visited the front.

By the early 1900s, then, the 'Green Harp flag' was generally accepted as Ireland's national flag. Writing in March 1915, Patrick Pearse, future leader of the Rising and Director of Organisation of the Irish Volunteers, a nationalist paramilitary force launched in November 1913, would instruct companies throughout the country to provide themselves with an 'Irish Flag'. But it was not the

tricolour that members of the Irish Volunteers were being asked to carry at parades and demonstrations. According to Pearse, 'The authorised flag was a plain gold harp on a green ground, and no other flag, except authorised regimental colours, is to be carried by bodies of Irish Volunteers'.

2. The Sunburst flag
Of course, numerous other flags were utilised during this time. The Irish republican youth movement, Na Fianna Éireann, launched in 1909, used the sunburst on a green/blue background flag. The gal gréine (sunburst) flag was designed by feminist, socialist and republican activist, Constance Markievicz, who was vice-president of Na Fianna Éireann. This particular flag contained the image of a pike [Fig 6.0], a traditional weapon in Irish history, whereas other iterations simply went with a



Fig
9.0



Fig
10.0



Fig
11.0



Fig
12.0



Fig
5.0



Fig
6.0



Fig
7.0



Fig
8.0



sunburst on a blue background, such as this one [Fig 7.0] designed by Na Fianna instructor, Cornelius 'Con' Colbert. The sunburst emblem itself boasted a long history, as it was the standard of Irish hero Fionn Mac Cumhaill.

3. The 'Starry Plough' flag

The early twentieth century also saw the unveiling of another renowned flag [Fig 8.0] in the form of the 'Starry Plough'. First unveiled in 1914, this flag was the emblem of the Irish Citizen Army (ICA), a socialist militia founded to defend striking workers during the 1913 Dublin Lockout. The ICA was later led by 1916 Rising leader, James Connolly, who was executed for his role in the insurrection. The flag depicts a yellow plough and seven silver stars outlined in dark blue on a green field. Uniquely, the stars are arranged to represent the constellation Ursa Major (the Great Bear or



Plough). Though later iterations simply depict seven stars on a blue background, it was this particular flag that flew over the Imperial Hotel on Sackville Street (O'Connell Street) during the Rising.

4. The Irish Tricolour, 1916-21

What is interesting to note is that the Connolly also utilised the 'Green Harp flag'. Flown above Liberty Hall during the Rising, the headquarters of the I.C.A., he regarded this symbol as the 'embodiment' of their hopes and dreams for Ireland. Given both its historical resonance and contemporary usage during this period, why was the tricolour [Fig 9.0] chosen as the official emblem of the insurrection? There was no real inclination this would be the case in the months prior to the outbreak of the Rising, but it is the tricolour that is flown above the General Post Office (GPO) on 24 April 1916. One of the main reasons for this was that, as Cullen documented, the combination of both the tricolour and 'Irish Republic' banner [Fig 10.0] being displayed above the GPO 'helped to "decode" the meaning of the Tricolour for those who might have expected to see a Green Harp flag in its stead'. Essentially, the tricolour stood

for an Irish Republic.

The actions of the British government in executing the leaders of the Rising subsequently paved the way for the growth of Republicanism in its aftermath. This in turn led to the tricolour becoming extremely popular across Ireland by 1917. Colloquially known as the 'Easter Week flag', the explosion in popularity for the tricolour was sufficient evidence that Republicanism had gained ground on the Home Rule movement. It was during this period that the newly reinvigorated Sinn Féin party, previously led by Arthur Griffith, but now under the leadership of 1916 Rising veteran, Éamon de Valera, officially adopted the tricolour [Fig 11.0].

While the tricolour's transformation into a national flag began during the revolutionary period under Sinn Féin, this transformation was very far from complete by the end of the war of independence, the conflict fought between the Irish Republican Army (IRA) and the forces of the British crown between 1919-21 [Fig 12.0]. Though the tricolour represented full independence, this was not what the IRA achieved when the Republican side entered into negotiations with the British government in late 1921. In place of the ill-fated Republic, an Irish Free State for twenty-six counties was won, which effectively gave Sinn Féin control over a Dominion state within the British Empire.

5. The Union flag and the Ulster Banner

It is important to note that Republicanism was not popular with everyone on the island. The six counties of Northern Ireland, controlled by a Unionist government, had already been

partitioned under the Government of Ireland Act 1920, but this was cemented when the Anglo-Irish Treaty was signed in December 1921. Significantly, Irish Unionist sentiment, particularly in Ulster, could never reconcile with the tricolour. Thus, the Union flag, otherwise known as the Union Jack [Fig 13.0], became the de facto national symbol of the Northern Irish state given its historical resonance with the Protestant Unionist community in Ireland.

Having been originally adopted as a symbol by members of the Unionist community after the 1801 Act of Union, the Union flag was honoured by nearly all Unionists. In 1920-21, its usage reflected a conscious decision by the new government to publicly link Northern Ireland with Great Britain. Interestingly, the Northern Irish government would also appropriate the ancient standard of the O'Neill clan of Ulster for a separate flag. This design, known as the 'Ulster Banner' [14.0], featured a St Georges Cross with the Red hand of Ulster beneath a crown, and was utilised as another de facto flag of Northern Ireland for a number of years.

6. The Irish Tricolour, 1922-24

A split over the Anglo-Irish Treaty within the Republican movement ultimately resulted in a disastrous civil war between 1922-23. Consequently, the tricolour became a contested symbol with Irish nationalism. For anti-Treaty Republicans, it was a mark of deep disrespect that the Free State utilised the tricolour. Once the new Free State administration took over the reins of government in 1922, however, it quickly moved to incorporate the tricolour [Fig 15.0] as the flag of the new nation. While it was not recognised as the national flag in the Free State constitution, it was established as such through usage rather than statutory recognition. Significantly, the tricolour would make its first appearance at the League of Nations in 1923, with international recognition of this kind proving hugely important.

While it would be another thirteen years before the green, white and orange standard was recognised in the constitution of the state, its status as a national emblem was fortified in 1924. With the Civil War having come to an end, the Irish Free State emerged onto the world stage with the tricolour in tow. Pivotaly, an Irish team would fly the tricolour [Fig 16.0] at the Paris Olympics that summer. Seventy-six years after Meagher had returned to Ireland from France, Irish athletes unfurled the green, white and orange on French soil once again. Though Ireland was partitioned, and the flag remained a contested symbol on the island, this one act cemented the tricolour as our national flag in the eyes of the world.

**The author is Occasional Lecturer and Research Assistant, UCD*

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Fig
13.0



Fig
14.0



Fig
15.0



Fig
16.0



Above: Members of the Boundary Commission after their first hearing in Armagh on 9 December 1924—Francis Bernard Bourdillon (secretary to the Commission), J.R. Fisher (Northern Ireland representative), Justice Feetham (chairman), Eoin MacNeill (Irish Free State representative) and C. Beerstacher (private secretary to Justice Feetham). (Hogan/NLI)

First meeting: The Boundary Commission gathered for the first time in Armagh in 1924.

The Centenary of the Boundary Commission 1925

The report that led to the partition of Ireland was published 100 years ago and its recommendations continue to reverberate.

BY DEIRDRE MAC MATHÚNA, HISTORY TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION OF IRELAND

*'Even before the ink was dry on the Treaty signatures, the interpretation of Article 12 was widely contested—not surprisingly, given its ambiguous wording.'*¹

The Article in question was part of the Treaty of 1921 which agreed to the establishment of a Boundary Commission that would determine the boundary between the Irish Free State and Northern Ireland. This did not mean the abolition of the Northern Ireland State as set down in the Government of Ireland Act of 1920. Rather its aim was to redraw the border while recognising that Partition was, and would remain, a reality once it was *'in accordance with the wishes of the inhabitants'*.²

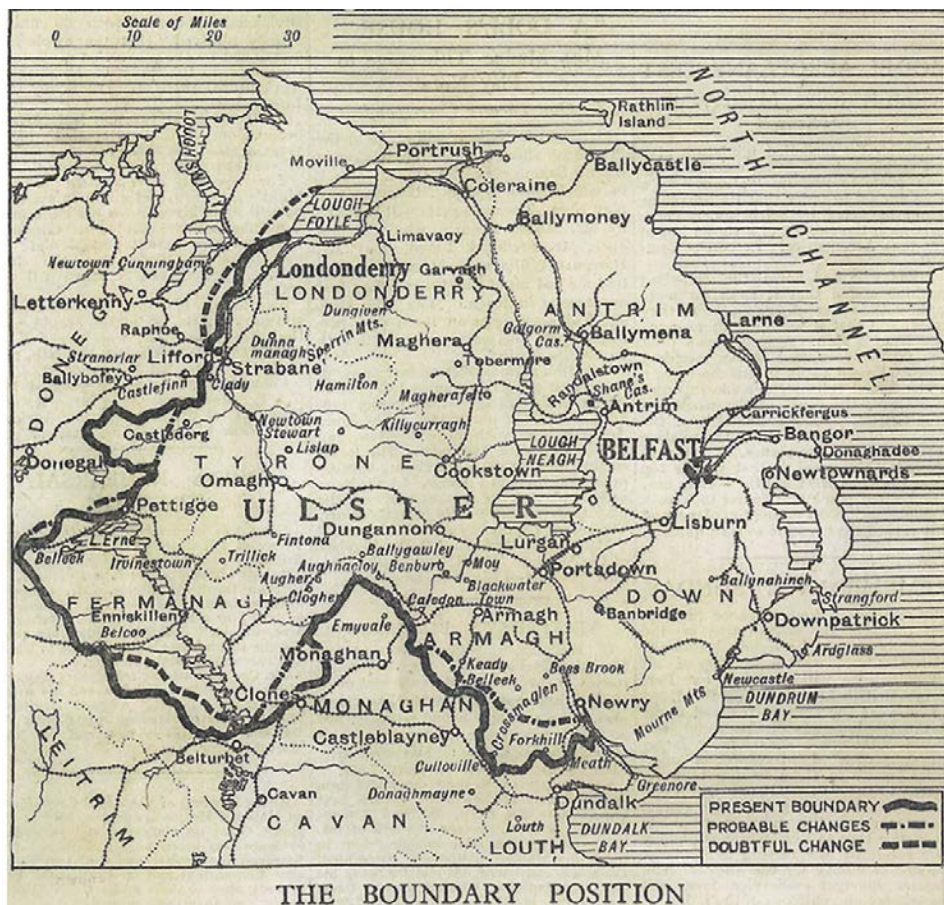
So, how did the issue of redrawing the border between North and South make its way into the Articles of Agreement during the Treaty negotiations of 1921?

It could be described as a tactical device on Lloyd George's part when he offered the founding of a Boundary Commission to be recommended to the Irish delegation as a way of navigating an alternative path to 'essential unity'. But as far as the Northern Unionists were concerned any concessions towards Irish unity was out of the question and this was summed up in James Craig's phrase *'what we have we hold'*.

Background to the Boundary Commission:

During the Treaty negotiations the British Government was intent on securing a settlement to the Irish Question. However, central to that question was Ireland's future relationship with the Crown and the British Empire. On the Irish side, sovereignty and Irish unity were the critical issues. Any Irish willingness to accept a formal relationship with the crown depended on securing concessions on the partition of Ireland. On the other hand, James Craig, the Unionist Prime Minister of Northern Ireland had enough support in London to ignore the suggestions that he make concessions towards Irish unity.

During the negotiations, Lloyd George secured a commitment from Arthur Griffith not to reject a proposal that Northern Ireland would have a right to vote itself out of a prospective Irish parliament and that a Boundary Commission could then adjudicate on the border. This protected Lloyd George who was balancing a fragile coalition dominated by the Conservative Party who insisted on maintaining the integrity of the Empire. After the threat of immediate and terrible war if the terms were rejected, the Irish plenipotentiaries signed the Articles of Agreement between Great Britain and Ireland. Michael Collins justified his signing of the Treaty claiming that it was a 'stepping stone' to Irish unity and that it gave the Irish the 'freedom to achieve freedom' in the longer term. After all, the primary focus of the Irish delegation was the 'essential unity of Ireland' even though the partition of Ireland was already a reality since 1920. Griffith and Collins were assured by Lloyd George that the decisions of the Boundary Commission would transfer large parts of Northern Ireland to the South and that the remainder would be too small to survive economically. This was accepted as the best solution to the issue of partition.



Drawing a line: The Boundary Commission's map.

The Boundary Commission – 'The root of all evil'. (James Craig)

Article 12 of the Treaty stated:

'...a Commission consisting of three persons, one to be appointed by the government of the Irish Free State, one to be appointed by the government of Northern Ireland and one who shall be Chairman to be appointed by the British Government shall determine in accordance with the wishes of the inhabitants, so far as may be compatible with economic and geographic conditions, the boundaries between Northern Ireland and the rest of Ireland.'

The President of the Irish Executive Council W.T. Cosgrave appointed Eoin Mac Neill to be the Irish representative. He described Mac Neill as 'the best person to represent Saorstát as our nominee on the Boundary Commission'. James Craig refused to appoint a Unionist representative to the committee. He argued that by sending a representative he would be giving credibility to a body whose aim was to undermine the legitimacy of the Northern Ireland State as established by the 1920 Government of Ireland Act. Therefore, the British Government appointed Joseph Robert Fisher, a journalist and prominent member of the Ulster Unionist Council, to represent Northern Ireland. He was also a close friend as well as political ally of James Craig. The Chairman was Justice Richard Feetham, a Judge of the Supreme Court of South Africa who was born and educated in England.

The first meeting of the Boundary Commission took place on 6th November 1924 – three years after the signing of the Treaty. In Ireland, the early years of the Free State were dominated by a vicious Civil War that caused widespread political and social unrest. In the UK, three general elections and four changes of government between December 1921 and December 1925 led to political instability and uncertainty. Therefore, the work of the Boundary Commission was delayed.

The work of the Commission was to take evidence and make recommendations on whether the border between NI and the Irish Free State should be altered. Many assumptions were made about possible transfer of territory. For instance, it was assumed that areas that had a Nationalist majority would be transferred to the South. The areas in question were Tyrone and Fermanagh, Newry, South Armagh and Derry city. It was therefore argued that the reduced

Northern jurisdiction would be economically unviable and that the north would be forced economically to come into the Irish Free State. With the fledgling Northern State diminished, the expectations were that the remaining territory would be embraced into the South and unity would be achieved based on the 'economic and geographical conditions' as set down in Article 12 of the Treaty.

The final drafts of the report of the recommendations of the Boundary Commission were leaked to the Morning Star on 7th November 1925. According to the Dictionary of Irish Biography, Joseph Robert Fisher 'did not respect the strict secrecy obligation agreed by members of the Commission, sharing letters with political allies, he set in motion the events that led to a crisis and the Commission report being buried.'

Some have argued that his work on the Boundary Commission was not Eoin Mac Neill's 'finest hour'. He did not keep the Cabinet informed of the Commission's meetings and focused on balancing his duties as Minister for Education in the Free State government and the demands of being a Boundary Commissioner. When accounts of the recommendations were published, Mac Neill resigned from the Commission and from public life to concentrate on his academic work in UCD and the Irish Manuscripts Commission.

In the end, after disagreements and the final leaked report, the Commission's recommendations were never published. After the breakup of the Boundary Commission, the border between Northern Ireland and the Irish Free State was left unchanged. This was a bitter blow to the Nationalist minority. As one Nationalist M.P. who entered the Northern Parliament to represent Nationalist grievances said:

'We have been abandoned to Craig's mercy.'

Deliberations of the Boundary Commission were not released until 1969 – a significant year that marked the beginning of the Troubles that ushered in another tortuous chapter in Anglo-Irish and North-South relations.

¹ Cormac Moore, historian.

² Article 12 of the Treaty.

Deirdre Mac Mathúna
History Teachers' Association of Ireland
27th February 2025



GPO Museum: Witness History

The GPO (General Post Office) is one of Ireland's most famous buildings and the award-winning GPO Museum is a must-see on any day-out in Dublin. Witness Ireland's history from revolution to modern times dramatically unfold before your eyes!

The building was the headquarters of the 1916 Easter Rising which set in motion a chain of events which would ultimately lead to the creation of the Irish republic.

In 2018, the GPO Museum, in association with the Thomas F. Meagher Foundation, launched the first ever exhibition on the Irish flag, which was flown for the first time in Dublin at the GPO on Easter Monday April 24th 1916.

Our experienced tour guides share some of their most frequently asked questions below:

Q. How old is the GPO?

A. The GPO first opened its doors on O'Connell Street in 1818, 205 years ago. It is one of the longest still functioning postal headquarters anywhere in the world!

Q. Where was Michael Collins during the 1916 Rising?

A. Michael Collins was based in the GPO as aide-de-camp to rebel leader Joseph Plunkett.

Q. Which flags were hoisted above the GPO during the 1916 Rising?

A. The Irish tricolour flag was hoisted above the Henry Street corner and the green 'Irish Republic' flag was raised on the Princes Street corner of the GPO. The Starry Plough was raised above the Imperial Hotel (now Clerys) on Sackville Street opposite the GPO on Wednesday of Easter week.

Q. What do the colours of the Irish flag represent?

A. Green represents Catholics, Orange represents Protestants, and as Thomas Francis Meagher said, "the white in the centre signifies a lasting truce between the Orange and the Green."

Q. What is your favourite/most interesting artefact in the museum?

A. Tom Clarke's diary and wallet. Found on his person after he was executed, the contents included his father's memorial card, a harp embroidered by his wife Kathleen, and a lock of his son Daly's hair.
A. A boat hook from the Asgard. The ship was involved in the Howth Gun Running, 1914.
A. Bridget McKane's scrapbook. 15-year-

old Bridget lived at 10 Henry Place and died surrounded by the rebel leaders following their escape from the GPO. She was one of the 40 children that died during the Rising.

A. Baby shoes made by Kathleen Clarke. Clarke made the baby shoes while in prison during the Irish Civil War. An estimated 400 anti-Treaty women were imprisoned because of their anti-Treaty stance.

A. Rory O'Connor's dagger. Made while imprisoned for commandeering the Four Courts during the Irish Civil War, O'Connor was later executed by the Irish Free State. Minister for Justice Kevin O'Higgins reluctantly signed O'Connor's execution order. Close childhood friends, O'Connor had been best man at O'Higgins' wedding in October 1921. O'Connor's story epitomises the divisions that emerged during the Irish Civil War.

More than 100 artefacts are on display in GPO Museum, which offers immersive and interactive educational experiences for students of all ages. Visits are linked to the Primary school, Junior and Senior history curricula. Students get the opportunity to explore the key events of modern Irish history including the 1916 Easter Rising, The Irish War of Independence, the signing of the Treaty, the Irish Civil War, the 'Troubles' and resulting peace process in Northern Ireland.

For school tour enquiries, email info@gpowitnesshistory.ie, Tel: 01 872 1916.



Ireland and the United States – Chronology of the ‘Soft Power’ of the Shamrock!

BY NIAMH CROWLEY, HTAI

This year there have been lively debates about the Taoiseach visiting the White House for St. Patrick's Day. The very valuable platform for Ireland has been weighed against the need to call the U. S. to account for its statements and policies relating to international crises in Gaza and Ukraine.

Over the decades Irish diplomats and politicians have made productive use of this unique opportunity to further Ireland's interest, progress the peace process and even make American Presidents aware of Ireland's stand on American foreign policies. This will continue when Micheal Martin visits the White House for St. Patrick's Day. It is interesting to look at the way in which this event began and has evolved over the decades.

1950 – Following the Declaration of the Republic in 1949, Ireland's first full Ambassador to the United States, John Hearne was appointed. He was the Waterford born lawyer, civil servant and diplomat who played a key role in the drafting of the 1937 Bunreacht na hÉireann. He had just completed a 10 year term as Ireland's High Commissioner in Canada.



1952 – Two years later, in his role as Ambassador, John Hearne brought a box of shamrock to the White House on St. Patrick's Day. In doing this he hoped to forge good relations between Ireland and the U.S. At the time President Seán T. Ó Ceallaigh, who had been elected in 1945, hoped to secure an invitation to the U.S. and was anxious to improve Ireland American relations. Ireland's policy of neutrality during World War II had not been popular in the U.S. and this negative

view of Ireland had been exacerbated by Taoiseach Eamonn deValera signing the book of condolences following the death of Adolf Hitler. John Hearne was given the job of trying to build better diplomatic relations between the two countries and this simple gesture by him was part of the beginning of a charm offensive. On the day President Truman was away, and Hearne left the box of shamrock at the White House. President Truman wrote to both Ambassador Hearne and President Ó Ceallaigh to thank them, stating in his letter that he hoped that "relations between the two countries will continue to be on good and effective level for generations".

1953 – The following year John Hearne again brought the shamrock, this time in a bowl, which had been made and gifted by Waterford Crystal and he did meet the new President Eisenhower for 15 minutes in the White House.

1956 – Three years later, Taoiseach John A. Costello was the first Taoiseach to present the bowl of shamrock. Ireland had just joined the United Nations and again the Irish Government was anxious to highlight the way in which Ireland was playing its role in international affairs.

1959 – Three year later President Ó Ceallaigh eventually secured his invitation to the United States. When he arrived he was greeted at the airport by President Eisenhower. Ó Ceallaigh realised the potential of the photo opportunity and he pinned a little bunch of shamrock on Eisenhower's lapel!

1960 – The following year, when John F. Kennedy was elected the first Catholic Irish



Caption



Caption

American President, the St. Patrick's Day ceremony took on even greater significance for Irish people at home and abroad. At this stage the ceremony became a much more high profile media event. Irish Ambassador Thomas Kiernan on this occasion ordered the shamrock from Kennedy's ancestral county of Wexford and the Waterford Crystal bowl had an engraving of the White House.

1980s – During the 1980's it became the practice for the Taoiseach to make the visit to Washington every year. This was started by Garrett Fitzgerald, who was anxious at the time to open up discussions with President Reagan about peace in Northern Ireland.

1983 – During this decade while President Reagan was in office the celebration of St.

Patrick's Day in Washington was expanded when the Irish American, Speaker of the House, 'Tip' O'Neill started the 'American Friends of Ireland' lunch on St. Patrick's Day, which provided more opportunities for Irish Politicians and officials to interact with their American counterparts. Tip O'Neill, Senator Edward Kennedy and other Irish American politicians worked behind the scenes in Washington to further the cause of peace in Northern Ireland, the St Patrick's Day shamrock ceremony and lunch provided great opportunities for such back channel discussions. The tradition of the lunch continues to be a part of the St. Patrick's Day celebrations today.

1990s – In the decade of the 1990s, during the presidency of Bill Clinton, the White House St.



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Patrick's Day celebrations provided an ideal forum for Taoiseach Albert Reynolds, who was determined to progress the peace process about which he was consumed during his time as Taoiseach. He used the opportunity provided by the White House shamrock meetings to involve President Clinton in supporting that process and president Clinton was very willing to be supportive of the efforts.

1993 – At the shamrock ceremony President Clinton spoke about his hopes for peace in Ireland and that he was prepared to help and assured Albert Reynolds that Ireland had a friend in the White House, not just on St. Patrick's Day, but on every day. His announcement at the ceremony of the appointment of Jean Kennedy Smith as his Ambassador to Ireland was also very significant. In his speech Albert Reynolds said "I have always believed that that the constructive support and interest of the United States has the potential to be uniquely helpful in finding a solution to the situation in Northern Ireland."

1995 – President Bill Clinton invited Gerry

Adams to the White House celebrations and publicly shook hands with him, in a very significant piece of political choreography. Albert Reynolds knew that Gerry Adams wanted to visit to U.S. in order to meet with Irish American republicans and bring them on board with the peace process, but he was on a black list for a U.S. visa. Reynolds made Clinton aware of the importance of this and Clinton intervened and supported Adam's visa application and later invited Adams to the White House celebrations on St. Patrick's Day. Such an outcome would have been unthinkable

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Caption

without the soft power of an event like the St. Patrick's Day celebrations and it helped to iron out the possible ripples of objection from British authorities

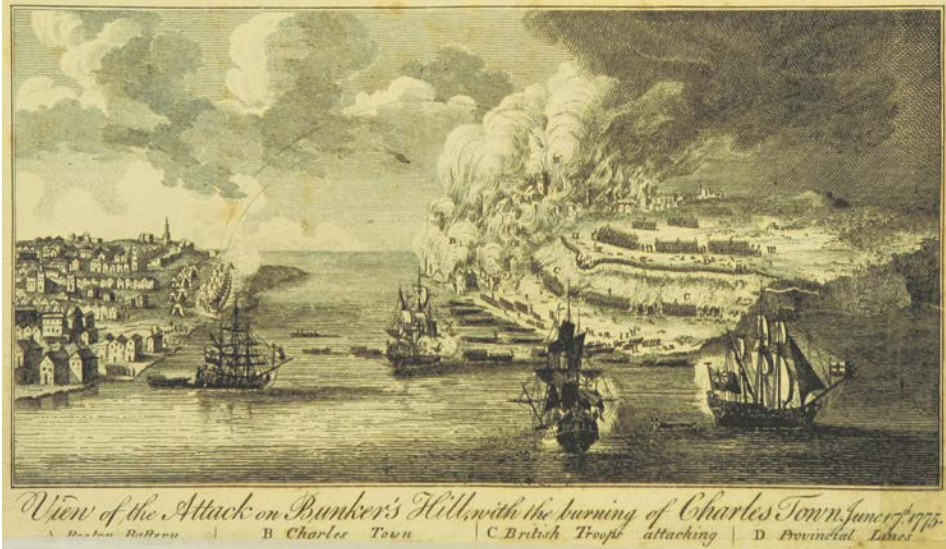
1998 – Bertie Ahern made his first visit as Taoiseach when the ceremony took place just weeks before the peace agreement (later named the Good Friday Agreement) was signed (although it was not known at that stage that an agreement would be reached). President Clinton used the opportunity of the St. Patrick's day celebrations to bring together all the parties involved in Northern Ireland in the hope that it would help to progress the discussions towards agreement.

2018 – Bringing the story around full circle, the man who started it all, was remembered and honoured in recent years. A bronze bust of John Hearne was commissioned and unveiled in in 2017 in his native city of Waterford. The bust was made by Liz O'Kane and replicas were also made for Iveagh Gardens in Dublin and the Irish Embassy in Washington, where in April of 2018 it was unveiled by Irish Ambassador Dan Mulhall, another proud son of Waterford!



➤ The annual Shamrock ceremony in the White House symbolises the profound kinship between Ireland and the United States. The ceremony first began in 1952, when the Irish Ambassador John Joseph Hearne sent a box of shamrock to President Truman at the White House. In 2013, the U.S. Embassy in Dublin produced a short film for its YouTube channel showing how the ceremony has developed through the years and has become a great tradition in Washington D.C. on the feast of St. Patrick. Every year the U.S. Embassy in Dublin wishes a happy St. Patrick's Day to everyone celebrating in Ireland, in the United States and all over the world. Lá fheile Pádraig sona daoibh!

See the video here:
<https://www.youtube.com/@paodublin>



Bunker Hill: the battle took place in June, 1775.

The Siege of Boston (April 1775 – March 1776) was significant because it was the first major military engagement of the American Revolutionary War and resulted in a decisive victory for the Patriots. Here's why it happened and why it mattered.

How the Siege of Boston Came About

The Siege of Boston began immediately after the Battles of Lexington and Concord on April 19, 1775—the opening conflicts of the Revolutionary War. Following those battles, colonial militias from Massachusetts, Connecticut, New Hampshire, and Rhode Island surrounded the British-controlled city of Boston. The British, led by General Thomas Gage, found themselves trapped inside the city, dependent on naval supply lines from the British fleet. Meanwhile, American forces, though lacking experience and supplies, effectively cut off all overland routes, aiming to force the British to surrender or evacuate.

Why the Siege of Boston Mattered

First Major American Victory – The successful siege forced the British to evacuate Boston on March 17, 1776 (Evacuation Day), proving that the colonial forces could stand up to the British army.

– **Boosted Patriot Morale** – The victory strengthened the resolve of the revolutionaries and encouraged more support for the independence movement.

– **Secured New England** – With British troops expelled from Boston, the American forces gained control of a key city and port, allowing them to focus on other battlefronts.

– **Rise of George Washington** – Washington took command of the Continental Army during the siege (July 1775) and demonstrated effective leadership, establishing his role as a strong military commander.

– **Artillery from Fort Ticonderoga** – The successful transport of cannons from Fort Ticonderoga (led by Henry Knox) was a key moment in forcing the British retreat, showing American ingenuity and strategic planning.

– **Set the Stage for Independence** – The siege was an early proof that Britain's control over the colonies was not absolute, paving the way for the Declaration of Independence in 1776.

The Battle of Bunker Hill and its Role in the Siege

The Battle of Bunker Hill (June 17, 1775) was part of the Siege of Boston. It was one of the most significant battles of the early Revolutionary War, fought on Breed's Hill, despite its name. Here's how it fitted into the narrative of the siege:

British Attempt to Break the Siege

The British, realising they were trapped in Boston, tried to take control of strategic high ground (Bunker and Breed's Hills) to strengthen their position.

Costly British 'Victory'

The British won the battle, forcing the colonial militias to retreat, but they suffered heavy casualties—over 1,000 killed or wounded, including many officers. This showed that colonial forces could stand up to the British Army.

Impact on the Siege

While the British technically won, the battle did not break the siege. Instead, it strengthened American resolve and proved the need for better organisation and supplies.

Washington's Arrival

After the battle, George Washington arrived in Boston in July 1775 to take command of the



Fire! Re-enactments of revolutionary battles are very popular in the United States.

Continental Army, improving discipline and strategy.

The Role of Irish People in the Battle of Bunker Hill

Irish people played a significant role in the Battle of Bunker Hill, fighting on both the Patriot and British sides.

On the American (Patriot) Side

– **Irish-Americans in the Colonial Militias** – Many Irish immigrants and Irish-descended colonists were part of the New England militias that defended Breed's Hill.

– **Colonel John Stark's New Hampshire Regiment** – Stark, of Irish descent, led troops who played a crucial role in defending the left flank of the American position, helping slow the British advance

– **Irish-American Patriot Leaders** – While not directly commanding at Bunker Hill, John Sullivan (of Irish descent) was an emerging

Revolutionary leader in New England, contributing to the growing resistance movement.

– **Irish Support for the Revolution** – Many Irish in Boston and surrounding areas were strong supporters of independence, as they had long-standing grievances against British rule in Ireland.

On the British Side

– **Irish Soldiers in the British Army** – The British forces included Irish-born soldiers, especially in Irish regiments like the 47th Regiment of Foot, which saw action in Boston.

– **Reluctant Irish Fighters** – Many Irishmen serving in the British Army were poor conscripts who had little loyalty to the Crown. Some would later desert to the American side as the war continued.

Significance of Irish Contributions

– **Irish-Americans fighting for the Patriots**

The Siege of Boston, the Battle of Bunker Hill and the role of the Irish...

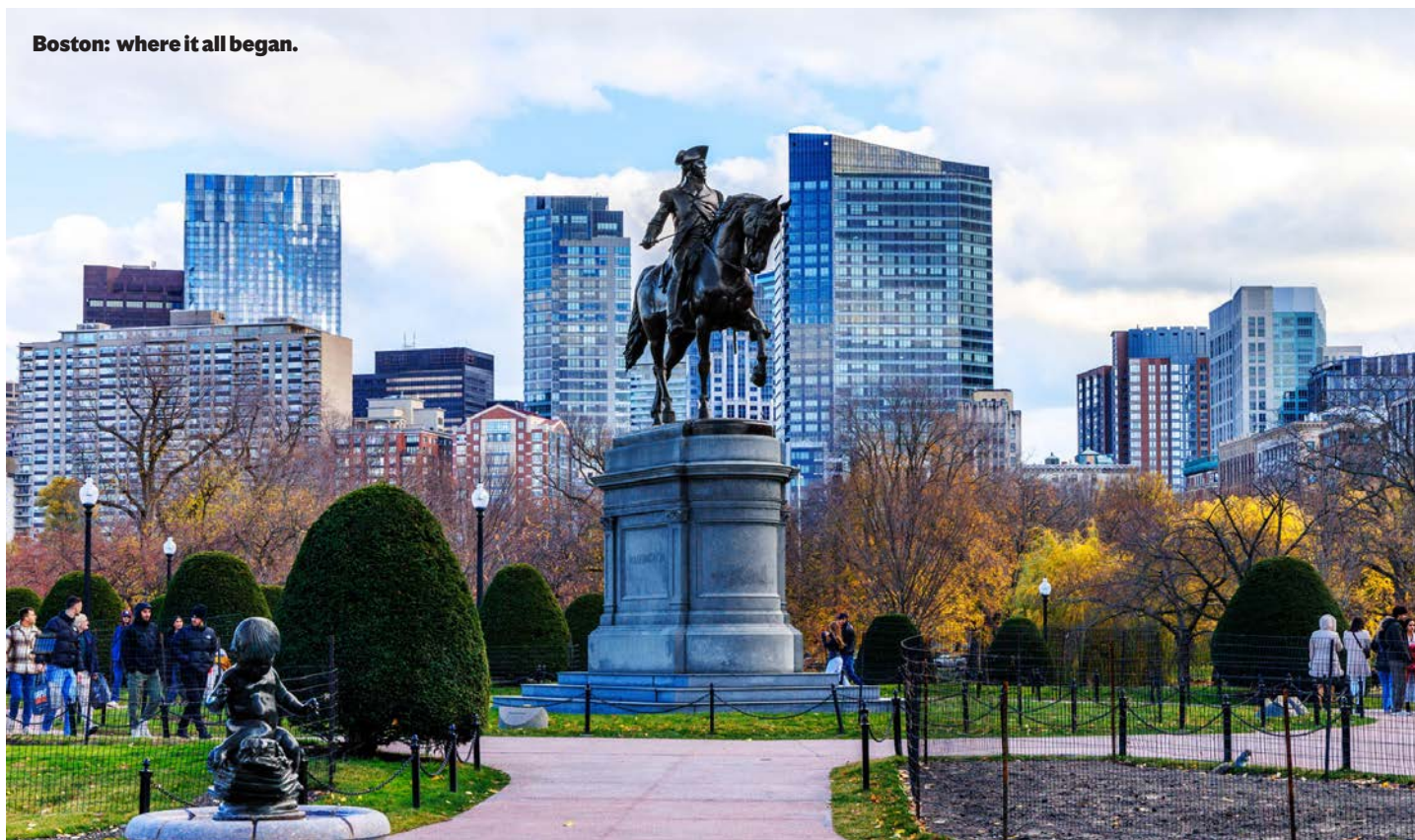
A string of commemorations will this year mark the seismic events that shaped America – with lots of Irish involvement



The Bunker Hill monument in Charlestown, Boston.



Boston: where it all began.



helped prove the effectiveness of colonial militias.

- The battle fueled anti-British sentiment among Irish immigrants, strengthening their commitment to the Revolution.
- Irish soldiers in the British ranks demonstrated the complex and divided loyalties of the time. Ultimately, Irish fighters on both sides shaped the outcome of Bunker Hill, contributing to the broader Siege of Boston and the growing Revolutionary movement.

Discover More!

Commemorations for the Battle of Bunker Hill and Siege of Boston (2025-2026)

In 2025, several significant commemorations are planned to mark the 250th anniversaries of pivotal events in the American Revolutionary War, particularly the Battle of Bunker Hill and the Siege of Boston.

Battle of Bunker Hill 250th Anniversary Events

■ Revolution Ignited Festival (June 13-17, 2025):

A weekend-long series of events in Charlestown, MA, honoring the legacy of the Battle of Bunker Hill. Activities include a battlefield archaeological trench, exhibitions, and storytelling, culminating in a special commemoration on June 17, 2025. Website: <https://www.bunkerhill250.org/>

■ Bunker Hill Day Parade (June 15, 2025):

An amplified version of the traditional parade, celebrating the historic Charlestown neighborhood and commemorating the battle. Website: <https://www.bunkerhill250.org/events>

■ Bunker Hill Monument 200th Anniversary (June 16, 2025): Celebrating two centuries since the monument's establishment, featuring a reenactment of the cornerstone laying, visits to historical sites, and ceremonial events. Website: <https://www.bunkerhill250.org/events>

■ 250th Battle of Bunker Hill Reenactment (June 21-22, 2025): Hosted at Stage Fort Park in Gloucester, MA, this event aims to accurately portray the battle through reenactments, public demonstrations, and educational outreach. Website: <https://www.battleofbunkerhill250.com>

Siege of Boston 250th Anniversary Tours

■ Siege of Boston Special Anniversary Tour (May 14, 2025): A 2.5-hour walking tour along Boston's Freedom Trail, exploring life during the British occupation and the efforts of Provincial forces led by General George Washington. Website: <https://massachusetts250.org/event/siege-of-boston-250th-special-anniversary-tour>

■ Battle of Bunker Hill Special Anniversary Tour (May 28, 2025): This tour delves into the military conflict between Provincial forces and British troops, placing the battle in the broader context of the American Revolution. Website: <https://massachusetts250.org/event/battle-of-bunker-hill-special-anniversary-tour>

Additional Resources

■ Revolution 250: A consortium of organisations collaborating to commemorate the 250th anniversary of events leading to the American Revolution. Their website offers a comprehensive list of events and educational resources. Website: <https://www.revolution250.org>

■ MA250: Massachusetts' initiative to commemorate the 250th anniversary of America's founding, highlighting various events and programs across the state. Website: <https://massachusetts250.org>

These commemorations provide an opportunity to reflect on the significant contributions and sacrifices made during the early stages of the American Revolution.

Memory Lane!

The Thomas F. Meagher Foundation has enjoyed a decade of green, white and orange memories



Witness history: Visitors to the GPO Museum in Dublin.



Flag: reflecting on the man who started it all.



Discovering the past: the GPO Museum is open to visitors Monday to Friday.



True colours: a spectacular Flag Day montage in 2028



Centenary: President Michael D. Higgins speaking at the Foundation's Flag Day event in 2016.



Respect: more and more young people understand the true meaning of the flag.



Prizes: the Foundation has awarded scholarships to students every year.



Presentation: Flag Day awards given to students in 2017.



Flying the flag: a Foundation publicity photograph from 2016

Thomas F. Meagher

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Pride - Respect - Peace

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- Cora Staunton *9 Times Ladies Gaelic Football All Ireland winner*
- Henry Shefflin *10 Times All Ireland Hurling Medal winner*
- Brian Schweitzer *The 23rd Governor of Montana*
- Vice Admiral Mark Mellett *Ireland's 31st Chief of Staff of the Defence Forces*
- Congressman Brendan Boyle
- Maria Walsh *2014 Rose of Tralee, Member of the European Parliament*
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- Adam Byrne *Professional Rugby Player*
- Colm Cooper *5 Times GAA Football All Ireland Winner & 8 All Star Awards*
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