

Meagher and Irish tricolour celebrated at 1848 festivities



A well attended 1848 dinner and banquet took place on Saturday last in the Granville Hotel, which was formerly the home of TF Meagher, whom they were honouring in the annual tricolour celebration.

The event is now in its 9th year, after a cancellation last year due to snowy weather in March 2018.

It now takes place in June and 14 Americans from the famous Fighting 69th American army regiment travelled over to Waterford from New York for the occasion with partners also.

The tricolour launch in Waterford happened in March 1848, 171 years ago, explained Waterford Mayor John Pratt.

The Island of Ireland Peace Choir put on a brilliant singing prelude to the meal with Kirsten Maher, the 2018 Rose of Tralee and others with Phil Brennan and his wife Elaine, singing some wonderful songs like Wild Irish Thyme. Tenor Dominic McGorian, a new addition to the choir, did a brilliant version of the famous ballad Danny Boy, then a Dixie song Glory Glory Hallelujah, which the Americans loved. Wish I was in Dixie Land drew a parallel with the talks earlier that day on Meagher and the American civil war.

One of the 69th regiment American soldiers, James Gonyo spoke on stage about how he and his wife had been in Waterford before and met Kirsten Maher as she was just a baby. They were in Ireland on honeymoon with his wife Karen Fitzgerald.

Karen had Waterford relations and Kirsten was a newly born cousin at the time to one of her relations here.

This was a remarkable coincidence and showed how close Waterford is to the USA and New York, how the two countries are so interlinked. Kirsten was delighted to see them too and learn the story, as she was just an infant at the time of first meeting.

Mayor Pratt welcomed the American visitors and all at the event, including sponsors, who keep the event going like the Granville Hotel, Tom Murphy car sales, Munster Bar, Waterford Partnership and Council, Waterford Treasures and Jim Falconer cars.

He also praised the Peace Choir and how peace is so important in Ireland today as Brexit looms.

The national flag is most sacred for us with the white, green and orange,

Phil Brennan of the Peace Choir said the white part was the most important for him, connecting green with orange. Their choir started after the Omagh bombing in 1998. They would perform again on the Sunday on the Mall, when the Tricolour flag would be flown again.

Willie Donnelly, president of WIT spoke for over 10 mins after the dinner. WIT had hosted a citizenship ceremony earlier on the Friday and he was guest speaker and spoke on jobs progress and technology advance in Waterford industry and also mentioned the Crystal Valley tech initiative.

Final speaker at the dinner was Minister Defence, Paul Kehoe from Wexford who was going to Croke Park for the Leinster final and would miss the flag ceremony. He hoped that Waterford would back Wexford on the day against old rivals Kilkenny, in the end they would win by a goal.

He also noted the importance of the flag in Irish history. Meagher was one of a long line of patriotic Irish people who helped deliver freedom for Ireland in previous centuries.

He named also Connolly, Pearse and McDermott too. The path was difficult, and Ireland overcame many adversities that were far more serious than Brexit challenges of today. He also noted the white on the flag as a mark of truce with Nationalists and Protestants.



The Mayor of Waterford City & County Council, Cllr. John Pratt pictured with Prof. Willie Donnelly, President, WIT, Prof. John Wells, WIT, Dr. Jennifer Kavanagh, WIT, Dr. Eugene Broderick, Ann Cusack, Chairperson and Janet Carey.

Today, politics are unfolding in the UK, and we should look again at the values in the flag and peace between orange and green, to maintain peace in Ireland, added our Defence Minister Kehoe.

“We should also reach out our hands in friendship to all citizens and to the UK in what is a difficult period, but we should still show pride in our nation and flag.” he added.

“Now we also fly the European flag too on state occasions”.

He also noted how the Irish Tricolour has a huge place overseas on UN peace keeping missions going back to 1958 and now is in the Lebanon, Golan Heights, Mali and elsewhere as Irish troops, serve as peace keepers in tense war like situations. They have done their work professionally and well and raised the reputation and respect for Ireland. A number of Irish defence forces reps were present at the dinner as well as the Navy. Some navy personnel told us that they are short of recruits and would welcome new ones from places like Waterford. They would raise the flag the following day.

The French flag would also fly in the Mall the day after with Lionel Paradisi representing the French embassy there.

Meagher was originally given the green, white and orange flag in Paris in 1848, by French seamstresses there, after he visited there in the wake of the 1848 rebellion there.