

500 look on as Irish Tricolour is raised

By Claire Quinn

THE 166th anniversary of the conception and unveiling of the Irish Tricolour was marked by the attendance of up to 500 people at a flag raising ceremony and military parade held on Sunday.

The ceremony, held at the front of the House of Waterford Crystal building, commemorated Waterford and American hero Thomas Francis Meagher, who first flew the Tricolour from 33 the Mall, and proved to be a fitting end to this year's 1848 Tricolour celebration, which ran from March 7-9.

It was attended by dignitaries from home and abroad including Mayor of Waterford city Cllr. John Cummins, City and County Manager Michael Walsh, Senator Maurice Cummins, other mayors and representatives from across the country, Members 69th Regiment New York, and members of the Thomas Francis Division Ancient Order of Hibernians.

Men and women from the Irish Naval Service Reserve performed a guard of honour as Mayor Cummins, first Rear Admiral in the history of State and head of the Irish Defence Forces Commodore Mark Mellett and Minister Paul Kehoe, Government Chief Whip and Minister of State at the Department of the Taoiseach and Defence arrived.

The ceremony began with an address from Nicola Beresford, who acted as MC for the event, followed by a rendition of 'Let there be Peace on Earth' by the Omagh & Waterford Peace Choir.

In the meantime, National



Cian & Martin Brennan, at the 1848 Tricolour Celebrations. Photo: Joe Evans

Flag Colour Party with Thomas Francis Meagher, played by Kieran Doyle, marched past 33 The Mall and on to the House of Waterford Crystal to the sounds of the Thomas Francis Meagher Fife & Drum band and Barrack Street Band.

The national Irish flag was presented to the National Flag Officer along with the United States of America and French national flags.

To the low sounds of a drum roll the Irish Tricolour was raised high into the air on a flag pole in front of the House of Waterford Crystal, followed by the French and American flags. The Australian and Canadian flags were also hoisted in unison across the road at The Bishop's Palace.

As the National Anthem

resounded across The Mall, military personnel saluted and the entire crowd stood to attention with their shoulders held high, while some proudly sang along in our native tongue as the Tricolour billowed in the breeze.

A national favourite 'Danny Boy' was then sung by the Omagh & Waterford Peace Choir.

Addressing the crowd Mayor Cummins as a proud Waterford and Irish man said, "I been delighted to see the revival and interest in our history in recent years and that culminates this year with the various celebrations to mark the city's 1,100th birthday. The rekindling of civic pride and the interest in where we have come from doesn't happen by accident. Great credit is due to all the volunteers, who give so gen-

erously of their time and talents to deliver events like the 1848 Tricolour Celebration."

The Mayor thanked the groups that provided music on the day and commended the "colourful and disciplined" guard of honour and the bugle and drummer from the Army Southern Command band.

He said it is an ambition to present a flag that has flown at least once at 33 The Mall to 700 secondary schools and 4,000 primary schools across Ireland. "We aim to promote civic and national pride among our youngest citizens, who will of course be the leaders of the future."

Minister Kehoe said he was honoured to represent the Government at the historic event and said Waterford city has never been far from the centre of Irish history.

"Over its 1,100th year history Waterford has always been at its heart a maritime city linked to the sea and sea faring people. Given that link it is appropriate the Rear Admiral Mellett is present to celebrate the history of the city. It is a very proud moment for me and all gathered here to witness the raising of the Irish National flag and to celebrate in the most appropriate way possible the memory of one of our great Irish patriots Thomas Francis Meagher and the designation of the Tricolour of our national flag," he said.

The event came to a close with the presentation of Tricolours to each visiting mayor and the reading of farewell letter by Thomas Francis Meagher to his friend, which is on display in the Bishop's Palace.



Thomas Francis Meagher (Kieran Doyle), at the 1848 Tricolour Celebrations. Photo: Joe Evans



Thomas Francis Meagher (Kieran Doyle) presents the Tricolour to Ray Carroll, at the 1848 Tricolour Celebrations. Photo: Joe Evans



N.E. ex service members at the 1848 Tricolour Celebrations. Photo: Joe Evans



Pictured at the 1848 Tricolour Celebrations. Photo: Joe Evans