Ireland 2016 Programme begins with Flag ceremony

Today, Monday 7 March, Croke Park will play host to the first in a series of official State events in the Ireland 2016 Centenary Programme. The ceremony is the culmination of the work of the Ireland 2016 Flags for Schools programme that started last year.

Over 6,000 secondary school students, made up of representatives from every secondary school in the country, plus some of their teachers, will attend the ceremony. A keynote address will be delivered by President Michael D. Higgins, and will be hosted by Ryan Tubridy. This will be followed by an official presentation in which representatives from each school will receive a handmade tricolour flag and a copy of the Proclamation, presented by the Defence Forces.

The day is a collaborative effort between the Defence Forces and the Department of Education and Skills, and the Thomas F. Meagher Foundation.

The Flags for Schools initiative saw 3,200 schools receive a handmade tricolour and a pack which included details on how to care for the flag, and a copy of the Proclamation.

Speaking ahead of the ceremony, Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht, Heather Humphreys TD said, “The Flags for Schools programme has arguably been the most important of Ireland 2016 to date, bringing history to life for young people in an exciting and interactive way. It has allowed our school children to reconnect with our National Flag and fully understand its peaceful message.”

Further, she noted, “This is the start of what will be a very busy few weeks of commemorations, when I hope people right across the country will come together to remember our shared history, reflect on our achievements and re-imagine our shared future”.

NSAI finds that 1 in 3 do not feel appreciated at work

A new survey done by the National Standards Authority of Ireland (NSAI) found that a huge portion of workers feel undervalued in their work.

The survey was released just ahead of World Employee Appreciation Day last week. Of the 219 respondents, 156 were employees, 45 were managers, and 18 were employers. Some of the main findings include:

- Over one-third of respondents said they did not feel appreciated at work;
- Around 32% said that they were not offered any kind of upskilling or training;
- One-quarter said they were never given the opportunity to give their manager feedback;
- Some 75% of workplaces don’t provide regular team-building activities;
- Commitment to health and safety was questioned in 21% of organisations; and
- Half of all respondents said that they did not know their organisation’s strategy for the next three years.

The NSAI will be running information seminars throughout the year for organisations that wish to improve these stats in-house. More information on these seminars can be found on their website, nsai.ie.
Supreme Court Justice has died

The Court Service has confirmed the death of Supreme Court Judge Mr Justice Adrian Hardiman.

Hardiman was born in Coolock, Dublin in 1951. He was educated at UCD and King’s Inn. He was called to the Bar in 1974 and practised as a barrister until taking Silk in 1989. In 2000, he was appointed directly to the Supreme Court. He played a role in many major court cases and tribunals during his tenure on the Supreme Court.

Chief Justice Susan Denham described Justice Hardiman as “a man who had made great and courageous efforts on behalf of those who sought justice … He neither favoured nor feared any interest - and went about his work with great integrity, grit and dedication”.

Professionally, he was known to be protective of civil liberties and openly challenged the State on any over-extension of the limits of its role.

In his personal life, he was an avid historian and spoke fluent Irish. He was due to speak at NUI Galway today, Monday 7 March, on the issue of the decline of the Irish language.

Irish Catholic files free to access for month of March

A wealth of new records have been digitally released this week, just in time for the 2016 centenary programme. These Irish Catholic records date from the Cromwellian era to the beginning of the Twentieth Century. The archive includes baptismal, marriage and death certs, both in English and in Latin.

The Catholic Parish Registers 1655—1915 was indexed from digital images created by the National Library of Ireland. Some 373,000 files, including images and data files cover 1,000 parishes and more than 3,500 registers. The archive will be hosted on Ancestry.

The beauty of the archive is that the information contained within these files has been transcribed, so that the digital images and files can be searched. This makes it an invaluable tool for historians and those wishing to trace their heritage.

Among the figures the archive includes are Irish history giants such as James Joyce, Arthur Griffith, and James Hoban, who designed the White House in Washington DC. Previously, Hoban’s year of birth was under great speculation due to his obituary. However, with the new information provided by the digitised record of his baptismal cert, it has now been established that he was in fact born in 1755.

Access to the Catholic Parish Registers 1655—1915 is free on ancestry.ie for the month of March. From 1 April, only those with an Ancestry subscription will be able to access the files.
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The 31st Dáil has been dissolved by the President.

The 32nd Dáil will convene at 10:30am on Thursday, 10th March 2016.

There are two pieces of business for the day – the election of Ceann Comhairle and the election of Taoiseach.

Seanad Éireann adjourned sine die.

Following the dissolution of the Dáil, Dáil committees and Joint committees are also dissolved.