

# John F Kennedy Visits Ireland: British Pathé (1963)

John F. Kennedy visits Ireland, 1963. [British Pathe newsreel](#)

Narrator: The wheels of the Presidential airliner were running on Irish soil. The cheers of Berlin were still ringing in his ears. But how different it all was now.

John F Kennedy was in the land of his forebears. And there to bid him welcome was President De Valera, himself no less a fighter for freedom than the chief executive of the United States.

This youthful man who has revived the government of the great republic across the ocean had a firm determined step as he went to inspect the guard of honour of 187 men drawn from the 5th Infantry Battalion. Soldiers, these men, who have known active service, for the battalion served the cause of the United Nations in the Congo.

Mr Kennedy is the first American president ever to visit Ireland during his first term of office. That alone would make this a memorable occasion. But there is more to it than that. For as many reflected while President De Valera made his speech of welcome, this is the man whose grandfather Patrick Kennedy somehow scraped together the 4 pounds for a sailing ship passage and emigrated to the United States.

In the hungry years of the mid-19th century, when adversity drove hundreds of thousands to leave their beloved Ireland, they used to call it seeking their fortune. And the man now driving to Dublin has achieved fortune beyond their wildest dreams. He was coming to the capital of Eire as the head of the greatest nation in the world.

Already thousands were converging upon O'Connell St. For several days the Kennedy visit had been the number one topic of conversation. At last the President was in Dublin. Ireland and America, warm friends for 100 years share in this dynamic man a symbol of their common faith and liberty. The motorcade was cheered by fully a quarter million people.

Wexford beckoned Mr Kennedy on a sentimental pilgrimage. At nearby Dunganstown is cherished the family homestead on which Patrick Kennedy turned his back 100 years ago. The hostess today was a second cousin of the President, Mrs Mary Ryan, who farms there now. Many Kennedys are to be found in the district, several of them the President's cousins. Scores of people who could claim no relationship had come from near and far to be present. Even to see this teaparty was something none of them will forget.

Mr Kennedy was spending four days in Ireland but the programme was crowded. So all too soon the time came for him to bid Dunganstown and its friendly people goodbye. And there to whisk him away was something few of them had seen before. Certainly not on the doorstep. A helicopter!

Wexford shared with Dunganstown in the President's homecoming. They could hardly muster the enormous crowds who had cheered him in Germany, but this was a different kind of warmth. Welcoming one in whose veins there's not a drop of blood that's not Irish. The Mayor presented Mr Kennedy with a casket containing the scroll of freedom, making him the 13th freeman of an historic borough.

The President then left to return to Dublin. And what a crowd there was in the grounds of the Presidential Residence for the garden party Mr De Valera gave in the visitor's honour. The film star June Thorburn got close enough to see Mr Kennedy, which is probably more than hundreds there were able to do. Everywhere Mr Kennedy, went they could apply that famous old saying:

It was a great day for the Irish.

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# Michael D Higgins: Acceptance Speech

Michael D Higgins was elected ninth President of Ireland on October 27, 2011. You can view a visualization of the key words from the speech [here on the Many Eyes website](#), based on a transcript by [Molonesi](#).

Watch the Youtube video for the full speech including [the introduction in Irish](#).

I will be a president for all the people and from this moment I will cease to be a member and president of the Labour Party, a party which has informed my thinking and the ethos of my life, a party the centenary of whose founding by James Connolly and James Larkin will be celebrated next year.

For the presidency is an independent office and the Irish people, which I appreciate so much and I take with such responsibility, have given a very clear mandate on a very clear set of ideas to me as the ninth president.

I would like to thank, as I said, sincerely those who voted for me, but also I acknowledge those who voted for the other candidates who during a long and difficult campaign offered many valuable suggestions which I hope to include and encompass over the next seven years.

And I want to be a president too for those who didn't vote, whose trust in public institutions I will encourage and work

to recover. And always in my mind too will be those who have gone away, and I will be their president too.

The oath I will take when I'm inaugurated, 'Mo lándícheall a dhéanamh ar son leasa is fónaimh mhuintir na hÉireann – I dedicate my abilities to the service and welfare of the people of Ireland', is a great responsibility.[Irish: "and I accept this challenge fully in these difficult times we are experiencing."]

The mandate I have received and for which I will seek with heart and head to implement over the next seven years had its four pillars in an inclusive citizenship, which is about equality, participation and respect. In a creative society, creative and excellent in everything we Irish do, making an Irishness to be proud of in a real republic.

This was a vision of a real republic where life and language, where ideals and experience, have the ring of authenticity, which we need now as we go forward.

And during a long campaign, which for me, as I have said, was almost 14 months since I first sought a nomination from the Labour Party, I saw and felt and feel the pain of the Irish people.

I recognise the need for a reflection on those values and assumptions often carelessly taken that have brought us to such a sorry pass in social and economic terms, for which such a high price has been paid and is being paid.

I recognise the righteous anger but I also saw the need for healing and to move past recrimination.

I love our shared island, our shared Ireland, and its core decencies. I love it for its imagination and its celebration of the endless possibilities for our people.

That are there for the achieving as we leave behind a narrow

individualism that valued the person for what was assumed to be their accumulated wealth but neglected the connection between the person, the social, the community and the nation.

That is what we all leave behind now, for which a million people gave me a mandate. Now we must respond collectively and co-operatively to what we all must recognise as our shared problems, be it unemployment, mortgage distress or any form of exclusion.

We must now work to our strengths at home and abroad, not only co-operatively and collectively but sustainably for the benefit of all of our present generations and those to come.

The necessary transformation of which I speak and of which my presidency will be a part is built on turning creative possibilities into living realities for all our people, and I believe – this was the wonderful thing about going round the country so often – I believe and recognise that that transformation has already begun.

I saw it in one community after another, be it in those who are creating strategies with and for the unemployed; those working in care, those working in pre-school and after-school class, those great citizens. Everywhere good people have commenced a journey to a version of Irishness of which we can be proud.

And this campaign, we must never forget, involved a choice as to which version of Irishness we would choose for the next seven years, as what we wanted as ourselves at home and abroad. This necessary transformation, which has now begun, will I hope result in making the values of equality, respect and participation in an active citizenship the characteristic of the next seven years. The reconnection of society, economy and ethics is a project we cannot postpone.

I have encountered in this long campaign an enthusiasm for an Irishness that will be built on recognising again those

sources from which spring the best of our reason and curiosity.

But even more important is the powerful instinct for decency which must be at the heart of a real republic: the celebration of the power of the collective in pursuit of the best of ourselves.

And based too on the power of culture, science and technology, delivered through the contemporary genius of our people.

Ireland has made its choice for the future and it has chosen the version of Irishness it will be. I know and I will work with head and heart to be part with all of you in creating that future, one in which all of us can be part of and proud too.

Go raibh míle maith agaibh...[Thank you very much]

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## **Queen Elizabeth II: Dublin, 2011**

Queen Elizabeth II [visited Ireland](#) in May 2011, the British first monarch to do so in a century.

A Uachtarain agus a chairde [President and friends].

Prince Philip and I are delighted to be here, and to experience at first hand Ireland's world-famous hospitality.

Together we have much to celebrate: the ties between our people, the shared values, and the economic, business and cultural links that make us so much more than just neighbours,

that make us firm friends and equal partners.

Madam President, speaking here in Dublin Castle, it is impossible to ignore the weight of history, as it was yesterday when you and I laid wreaths at the Garden of Remembrance.

Indeed, so much of this visit reminds us of the complexity of our history, its many layers and traditions, but also the importance of forbearance and conciliation. Of being able to bow to the past, but not be bound by it.

Of course, the relationship has not always been straightforward; nor has the record over the centuries been entirely benign. It is a sad and regrettable reality that through history our islands have experienced more than their fair share of heartache, turbulence and loss.

These events have touched us all, many of us personally, and are a painful legacy. We can never forget those who have died or been injured, and their families. To all those who have suffered as a consequence of our troubled past I extend my sincere thoughts and deep sympathy. With the benefit of historical hindsight we can all see things which we would wish had been done differently or not at all.

But it is also true that no-one who looked to the future over the past centuries could have imagined the strength of the bonds that are now in place between the governments and the people of our two nations, the spirit of partnership that we now enjoy, and the lasting rapport between us. No-one here this evening could doubt that heartfelt desire of our two nations.

Madam President, you have done a great deal to promote this understanding and reconciliation. You set out to build bridges. And I have seen at first hand your success in bringing together different communities and traditions on this island.

You have also shed new light on the sacrifice of those who served in the First World War. Even as we jointly opened the Messines Peace Park in 1998, it was difficult to look ahead to the time when you and I would be standing together at Islandbridge as we were today.

That transformation is also evident in the establishment of a successful power-sharing executive in Northern Ireland. A knot of history that was painstakingly loosened by the British and Irish Governments together with the strength, vision and determination of the political parties in Northern Ireland.

What were once only hopes for the future have now come to pass; it is almost exactly 13 years since the overwhelming majority of people in Ireland and Northern Ireland voted in favour of the agreement signed on Good Friday 1998, paving the way for Northern Ireland to become the exciting and inspirational place that it is today.

I applaud the work of all those involved in the peace process, and of all those who support and nurture peace, including members of the police, the gardai, and the other emergency services, and those who work in the communities, the churches and charitable bodies like Co-operation Ireland.

Taken together, their work not only serves as a basis for reconciliation between our people and communities, but it gives hope to other peacemakers across the world that through sustained effort, peace can and will prevail.

For the world moves on quickly. The challenges of the past have been replaced by new economic challenges which will demand the same imagination and courage.

The lessons from the peace process are clear; whatever life throws at us, our individual responses will be all the stronger for working together and sharing the load.

There are other stories written daily across these islands which do not find their voice in solemn pages of history

books, or newspaper headlines, but which are at the heart of our shared narrative. Many British families have members who live in this country, as many Irish families have close relatives in the United Kingdom.

These families share the two islands; they have visited each other and have come home to each other over the years. They are the ordinary people who yearned for the peace and understanding we now have between our two nations and between the communities within those two nations; a living testament to how much in common we have.

These ties of family, friendship and affection are our most precious resource. They are the lifeblood of the partnership across these islands, a golden thread that runs through all our joint successes so far, and all we will go on to achieve.

They are a reminder that we have much to do together to build a future for all our grandchildren: the kind of future our grandparents could only dream of.

So we celebrate together the widespread spirit of goodwill and deep mutual understanding that has served to make the relationship more harmonious, close as good neighbours should always be,