

# 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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# **John F. Kennedy: Ask not what your country...**

Inaugural address of President John F. Kennedy, 20 January, 1961 (conclusion only).

All this will not be finished in the first one hundred days. Nor will it be finished in the first one thousand days, nor in the life of this administration, nor even perhaps in our lifetime on this planet. But let us begin.

In your hands, my fellow citizens, more than mine, will rest the final success or failure of our cause. Since this country was founded, each generation of Americans has been summoned to give testimony to its national loyalty. The graves of young Americans who answered the call to service surround the globe.

Now the trumpet summons us again – not as a call to bear arms, though arms we need; not as a call to battle, though embattled we are – but a call to bear the burden of a long twilight struggle, year in and year out, “rejoicing in hope, patient in tribulation” – a struggle against the common enemies of man: tyranny, poverty, disease, and war itself.

Can we forge against these enemies a grand and global alliance, North and South, East and West, that can assure a more fruitful life for all mankind? Will you join in that historic effort?

In the long history of the world, only a few generations have

been granted the role of defending freedom in its hour of maximum danger. I do not shrink from this responsibility – I welcome it. I do not believe that any of us would exchange places with any other people or any other generation. The energy, the faith, the devotion which we bring to this endeavour will light our country and all who serve it – and the glow from that fire can truly light the world.

And so, my fellow Americans: ask not what your country can do for you – ask what you can do for your country.

My fellow citizens of the world: ask not what America will do for you, but what together we can do for the freedom of man.

Finally, whether you are citizens of America or citizens of the world, ask of us here the same high standards of strength and sacrifice which we ask of you. With a good conscience our only sure reward, with history the final judge of our deeds, let us go forth to lead the land we love, asking His blessing and His help, but knowing that here on earth God's work must truly be our own.

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## **John F. Kennedy: We Choose to go to the Moon**

John F. Kennedy speech at Rice University, Texas, 12 September 1962.

But why, some say, the moon? Why choose this as our goal? And they may well ask why climb the highest mountain? Why, 35 years ago, fly the Atlantic? Why does Rice play Texas?

We choose to go to the moon. We choose to go to the moon in this decade and do the other things, not because they are easy, but because they are hard, because that goal will serve to organize and measure the best of our energies and skills, because that challenge is one that we are willing to accept, one we are unwilling to postpone, and one which we intend to win, and the others, too.

But if I were to say, my fellow citizens, that we shall send to the moon, 240,000 miles away from the control station in Houston, a giant rocket more than 300 feet tall, the length of this football field, made of new metal alloys, some of which have not yet been invented, capable of standing heat and stresses several times more than have ever been experienced, fitted together with a precision better than the finest watch, carrying all the equipment needed for propulsion, guidance, control, communications, food and survival, on an untried mission, to an unknown celestial body, and then return it safely to earth, re-entering the atmosphere at speeds of over 25,000 miles per hour, causing heat about half that of the temperature of the sun—almost as hot as it is here today—and do all this, and do it right, and do it first before this decade is out—then we must be bold.