

John F Kennedy High School Band from La Palma, California, performing in Nenagh.

Warm welcome for American marching band



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On Wednesday, March 20, the John F Kennedy High School Shamrock Regiment Band from California were welcomed to Nenagh by Cathaoirleach, Cllr John 'Rocky' McGrath and paraded from the Railway Station to Castle Field where there was a short recital.

The sun came out to greet the visitors and the people of Nenagh lined the streets and made their way to the Castle Field to enjoy the wonderful spectacle and appreciate the musical talents of the 65 band members.

There was a particular cheer when they played their arrangement of 'Body of An American' by The Pogues. And it was noted how fitting it was that the John F Kennedy Band played in the grounds of Nenagh Castle beside what was once the former banquet hall of the O' Kennedys.

The John F Kennedy High School Shamrock Regiment is celebrating the 50th anniversary of their first trip to Ireland at the request of the Irish Tourism Board in 1974. The group has travelled to Ireland approximately every three to four years since, with the notable exception of March 2020. The band was about to depart Los Angeles when the trip was cancelled due to the Covid pandemic. The students, parents, and staff were thrilled to be back this year and, in total, a group of 137 visited Nenagh.

The high school opened in 1964 and was the first to be named after the late president. The Shamrock Regiment Band and Pageantry has been a part of campus life since the opening of the school. The Shamrock Regiment is comprised of students in grades 9-12 from the school, as well as some high achieving 7th and 8th grade students from Walker Junior High School. They regularly perform and compete in the Southern California School Band and Orchestra Association throughout the school year. This includes field show tournaments, parades, wind band festivals and jazz festivals.

There was a presentation of gifts by Nenagh & District Chamber of Commerce and Nenagh Municipal District on behalf of the people of Nenagh to Dr Joshua Parsons, band director; David Peters, logistics co-ordinator; Karen Griffin, travel co-ordinator.

Following the recital, representatives of the band visited Nenagh Tourist Office and posed for photos under the 'I Love Nenagh' sign. They went on to enjoy refreshments in the Kenyon Bar before their departure for Belfast – thanks to Dermot Kinane and the staff of The Kenyon.

The event was co-ordinated on behalf of Nenagh Municipal District by Nenagh Tourist Office and Nenagh Live and is part of the ongoing efforts to make Nenagh a destination town with something for everyone to enjoy. The assistance of David Carton of Grand Tours, Malahide, in making this happen is very much appreciated.

<https://www.nenaghguardian.ie/2024/03/28/warm-welcome-for-american-marching-band/>