

**DESCRIPTION OF THE EVENT
SCHEDULED AT KING JOHN'S CASTLE
ON 14 JULY 2019**

Title

France – Ireland: From Limerick's Wild Geese to Bastille Day and Beyond (1st edition of Limerick's annual Wild Geese Festival)

Description

Exactly 230 years ago this year, on 14 July 1789, the people of Paris took to the streets and stormed the Bastille Castle, a symbol of royal despotism. The French Revolution had begun and would change the course of history, not just in France but in most of Europe and beyond. Little known to many is the fact that at least three Irishmen actually played a leading role in the storming of the Bastille on that particular day. They were Joseph Kavanagh (from Co. Wexford), who led the Parisians to the castle, James Bartholomew Blackwell (from Co. Clare), whose contingent led one of the assaults on the building, and Robert O'Shee (from Co. Tipperary) who ended up heading one of the newly formed battalions of the French National Guard on that historical day. The involvement of those three Irishmen is just one of many examples of the significant influence that a number of men and women of Irish origins had over French history. And no other event had a more long-lasting effect in this regard than the one that took place right here, in Limerick, in the winter of 1691, and which became known as the Flight of the Wild Geese. It is this determining episode of the shared history between France and Ireland that the city of Limerick wishes to commemorate annually on or around July 14th while, at the same time, celebrating the national day of one of our eldest allies and closest neighbours.

Programme of the event

1pm – Registration at the castle's entrance

1pm-2pm – Tour of the exhibition and animations in the courtyard (including face painting for kids)

2pm – The public will be invited to gather at the bottom of the North wall and in front of the animations stand

2.10pm – Parade of the marching band, En Garde members dressed up as 18th-century Irish soldier of *Légion irlandaise*, French Foreign Legion Association of Ireland and members of the Irish Defence Forces*

2.15pm Raising of the Irish flag & Irish national anthem performed by the band, followed by the raising of the French flag & the French national anthem

2.25pm – Word of welcome by the Mayor of Limerick City & Council, by the Honorary Consul of France in Limerick and by a representative from Shannon Heritage

2.55pm – Talk by Cornelius O’Sullivan, President of En Garde, on the history of the *Légion irlandaise*

3.10pm – Gun salute by En Garde members. The French national anthem is performed again and sung to conclude the ceremony

3.15pm – Afternoon tea and free crepes served in the courtyard for the audience and guests

5pm – End of the event

***Parading order**

1. President of the French Foreign Legion Association of Ireland
2. En Garde members
3. Defence Forces
4. Boherbuoy band