



Full Press Release

FLY A FLAG FOR THE COMMONWEALTH

Heads of State and Prime Ministers; Lord Mayors and Mayors; Town Councils and Local Authorities; school children and college students; Girl Guides and Boy Scouts; Sea, Army, and Air Cadets; charities and community groups; Commonwealth Ex-Servicemen and major shipping lines, and many others around the world will join to raise more than 730 Commonwealth Flags at 10.00hrs on Monday 9 March 2015 in a shared celebration of this amazing family of nations that encompasses the globe.

This unique initiative, now in its second year, is again catching the imagination of thousands of participants from all walks of life, inspiring them to join with others throughout the Commonwealth. As a collective public expression of commitment to the Commonwealth, it enables participants to show appreciation for the values the Commonwealth upholds, and the opportunities offered for friendship and cooperation with fellow Commonwealth citizens around the world.

Halaevalu Mangisi Palu, Chief Commissioner (GGAKT) said: "In Tonga, where time begins, the Girl Guides Association of the Kingdom of Tonga (GGAKT) are humbled to be granted the honour to be the **first country** in the world to raise the Commonwealth Flag at 10.00hrs on 9th March 2015, leading the youth of the Commonwealth in this unique, historic, global event that morning. We are indeed very happy and look forward to the day, and are determined with the youth of Tonga to embrace with passion our involvement in support of the Commonwealth Charter, which should empower each and everyone of us to be better citizens of the World. We salute the Commonwealth Nations, to which we stay indebted, for all forms of assistance to her family of nations, including our small Island Kingdom. 'Of a atu."

For the first time in maritime history, the Commonwealth Flag will be raised onboard all ships belonging to the fleets of the world's leading cruise lines, P&O & Cunard Line, wherever they may be travelling in the world that morning.

In the capital cities of Commonwealth countries ex-services organisations will raise the Flag at 10.00hrs on Commonwealth Day, including in London led by the Royal Commonwealth Ex-Services League. Their participation will provide stirring scenes of pan-Commonwealth solidarity within the rich diversity of Commonwealth identity.

Scouts in The Bahamas, Belize, Grenada, Jamaica, Malaysia, Maldives, Malta Mauritius, New Zealand, Samoa, Sri Lanka, and Trinidad and Tobago will also be raising the Commonwealth Flag at 10.00hrs local time on 9 March, joining thousands of other young people around the Commonwealth to celebrate and the launch of this year's special theme: 'A Young Commonwealth'.

In Norfolk, UK, all 22 town councils are taking part, and will be raising Commonwealth Flags at significant locations across the county through the generous financial support from *Nwes*.

A personal message from His Excellency Kamallesh Sharma, Secretary-General of the Commonwealth, and a specially written Commonwealth Affirmation, will be read out at each ceremony before the raising of the Commonwealth Flag at 10.00hrs. In a common act of witness around the globe members of this great family of nations will reaffirm the commitment of all Commonwealth member states to democracy, development, and respect for diversity.

In an imaginative international partnership charity teams from 'Fields of Life', a charity linking Northern Ireland and Uganda, will mark the day by taking the Commonwealth Flag to the tops of the four highest national peaks of the United Kingdom: Scafell Pike in England; Ben Nevis in Scotland; Mount Snowdon in Wales; and Slieve Donard in Northern Ireland. They will also raise the Flag in five schools, one in each of the five Regions of Uganda. These endeavours will raise funds and awareness of their worthy cause.

For the first time, Cadets from the Royal Air Force Air Cadets will be participating in 'Fly a Flag for the Commonwealth' on 9th March 2015. Commonwealth Flags will be flown by Air Cadets in each of the six Regions of the Air Training Corps, especially as there are close ties between Air Cadets in the UK and Cadets in other Commonwealth countries, and Cadets will be proud to celebrate the values of the Commonwealth on 9th March 2015.

Commonwealth Flags will be flown at many locations of special significance including at six locations on the Island of the Republic of Malta; in Tristan Da Cunha, the most remote of the United Kingdom Overseas Territory; in St. David's in Pembrokeshire, the westernmost city in Wales; in Carlisle in Cumbria, the northernmost city in England; in Lowestoft in Suffolk, the easternmost town in England; in Unst in the Shetland Islands, the most northerly inhabited island in Scotland; at the Rothera Research Station on the Antarctic Peninsula; at the Halley VI Research Station on the Brunt Ice Shelf; and at King Edward Point and on Bird Island in South Georgia. The list of local Flag raising ceremonies and imaginative locations continues to grow.

Bruno Peek LVO OBE OPR - Pageantmaster, 'Fly a Flag for the Commonwealth', said: "I am amazed how quickly this event has caught the public imagination in so many Commonwealth countries. We are only in our second year, and the involvement of so many people of all ages and from all walks of life shows the enormous potential of this project and of the Commonwealth. It is a positive and uplifting way for people to link with fellow citizens of the Commonwealth in a family that spans across oceans and continents. There is a real sense of promise, and hope for the future.

I am especially delighted that Doodle, a new, and up and coming UK company has joined this project as our sponsor of the Flag Pole and Commonwealth Flag being located outside the Great West Door of Westminster Abbey, London, that will be raised just before the start of the Commonwealth Observance there that day."

Tim Robinson, Chief Executive of Doddle said: “Doddle is proud to be flying the flag for the Commonwealth and involved in the celebrations. The occasion marks our own milestone with the launch of international deliveries, making it easier for people to stay connected by sending parcels within the Commonwealth and around the world. We will be passing on this piece of history, the 2015 Commonwealth Flag, to one of our customers following the event.”

His Excellency Kamallesh Sharma, Secretary-General of the Commonwealth said: “Fly a Flag for the Commonwealth is a most imaginative way for people in local communities – wherever they live, learn or work – to join together with others throughout the Commonwealth in a spirit of respect and understanding to celebrate the variety and unmatched diversity of our global family. I welcome and commend it.”

“All our citizens, particularly the young, can express appreciation for the Commonwealth and the values for which it stands as set out in the Commonwealth Charter, and the rich opportunities it offers for mutual support towards more inclusive social and more equitable economic progress.”

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