

An Chartlann Náisiúnta
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A Journey of Reconciliation Trust

Island of Ireland Peace Park
Messines Ridge, Flanders

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From: Paddy Harte
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Joint Executive Chairmen

Date: 12th October 1998

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There appears to be an inclination at official level to use the spelling 'Mesen' rather than 'Messines' in the English and Gaelic text on the plaque in the Peace Park.

We wish it to be known that the spelling 'Mesen' is totally unfamiliar in England, Scotland and Wales especially in Northern Ireland where the spelling 'Messines' has been used by a number of local authorities in naming roads, avenues, parks and housing estates. The spelling 'Mesen' is totally unknown in Northern Ireland and as part of our message reconciliation it would have less of a message and an unnecessary introduction of the spelling of a place name which has no historical or emotional meaning. All of us only became aware of the spelling 'Mesen' when we started to go there, some believed they were separate places.

All of the history books written in the English language use the spelling 'Messines'. In our logo you will notice that we have been using the familiar spelling 'Messines' since the project began.

Furthermore, we have consulted the Office of the Burgomeester in Messines, the Commonwealth War Graves Commission, the British War Graves Commission, the National Archives, the Dublin and Munster Fusiliers Associations in addition to seeking advice from well know historians and people well versed in the history of the First World War and all, without exception, agree that the spelling in the English language and, therefore, in the Gaelic language is 'Messines': The case has been made and the decision of the 'Trust' is that this spelling be used.

It is important that the agreed wording on the plaque be settled in the next 24-48 hours. I know you will understand the urgency of having this done, bearing in mind that the text must be cut into four languages. The plaque must then transported to Messines and time is getting short. I will talk to you about this tomorrow.

Yours sincerely

pp Amy Reilly
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Joint Executive Chairman

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