

Church News Ireland



Image of the day – Eyes up at Ely

Image of the day

Eyes up at Ely and other cathedrals

Visitor numbers are on the rise in England's cathedrals

Visitor numbers at England's cathedrals are showing a strong return towards pre-pandemic days with many recording more than a 100 per cent increase on 2021 figures.

Figures collected by the Association of English Cathedrals (AEC) from 24 Church of England cathedrals and Westminster Abbey paint a picture of cautious optimism with an increase in visitor numbers across cathedrals rising from



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2.9m in 2021 to 5.7m in 2022 - a growth of 197%.

Westminster Abbey alone welcomed 3m total visitors in 2021 and 6.8m visitors in 2022.

“We celebrate the significant increase in visitor numbers to our English Cathedrals and these statistics confirm what our cathedrals’ staff and volunteers have been observing on a daily basis over the last year”, commented the Very Revd Jo Kelly-Moore, Dean of St Albans and chair of the AEC.

People and places

Past Chorister running Belfast Marathon to Help Youth Brass 2000

Stephen Bell , formerly from Drumbeg where his late father Canon John Bell was rector, is running the Belfast Marathon on the week he turns 60, to raise funds to enable a group of young brass players to take part in the European Championships in May.

Stephen is the Resident Conductor with the top Youth Brass Band in the UK. Working with their artistic director Chris Jeans they aim to travel to Malmo in May 2023 to represent GB at the European Championships.

Commenting on his coming effort on Sunday, April 30th., Stephen said, “This marks a return to the Belfast Marathon which I first did some 42 years ago (the very first Belfast Marathon) when I was 19 in a time of 4 Hours 17 Minutes and 24 Seconds.



Furrows in Ballintoy, County Antrim, photo by Gary Burnett

“Crazy as it may seem I’m trying to beat that 1982 time at the age of 60. It’ll be a very (*very*) tough ask but this year I’ve trained more than ever - with some 60 runs this year and clocking over 415 miles this year alone. I can’t say I’ve not put in the work: because I have and I don’t mind telling you it’s been tough at times.

“I’m raising money to help fund the Youth Brass 2000 trip to the European Championships in May 2023. We’ve won the UK 🇬🇧 National Title for the last 10 years in a row and we now want to win a European Title. It’s costing £12500 and each player is contributing financially of course but to get us over the line we need another £2500.

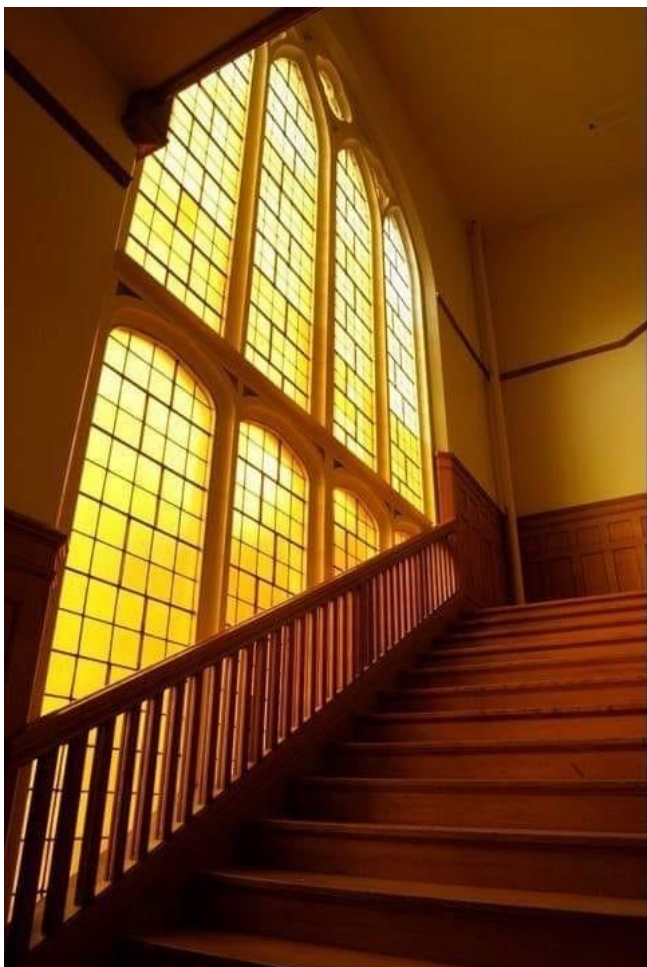
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“If you feel you can support us I’d be very grateful. It’ll help me get round the 26.2 miles on April 30th. If you’re happy to use the link below that helps enormously (or if not the traditional sponsorship method works too. Just let me know).

“It’s ok if it’s not for you: a cheer along the way will be much appreciated, especially after mile 18 when my entire psychology is likely to collapse into a delirious mush. Many thanks and best wishes.”

Please consider helping Youth Brass 2000. All money raised goes straight to them (as a registered Charity).

See - GoFundMe, <https://gofund.me/f2be0539>.



Father, as a new day comes to bring its unmarred opportunity, help me to use it better than I used yesterday. While yet there is time, I would remember the special temptations which have overcome me before, and can overcome me again unless I am better armed against them.
~ Walter Russell Bowie 1882-1969



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Even a small donation could help Stephen Bell reach their fundraising goal. And if you can't make a donation, it would be great if you could share the fundraiser to help spread the word.

Listen to Youth Brass on You Tube
[<https://youtu.be/05JpXqYlubE>]

Stephen also conducts the Nottingham Male Voice Choir. He is a former student of RBAI and a past Chorister of Belfast Cathedral.



Church volunteer recipient of the Royal Maundy

Warmest congratulations to Dr Irvine Lavery MBE, who was one of this year's recipients of the Royal Maundy.

Accompanied by his wife, Sandra, Irvine received his Maundy purses from His Majesty King Charles III at the special service last week at York Minster Cathedral.

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Bishop David McClay nominated Irvine for his contribution over many years to the life of the Church of Ireland. He said:

“Irvine has volunteered in a variety of roles over many years, however, much of what he does is done quietly and unseen. As a Diocesan Lay Reader in the Church of Ireland, he single-handedly held a church community together during the years of COVID. He is particularly passionate about caring for young people and for many years has been involved with the Summer Madness all-Ireland youth festival.”



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Irvine's career was spent in the transport sector, as a lecturer in transport planning and as Transport Development Manager with Translink. He was awarded the MBE for "Services to "Transport Planning in Northern Ireland" and was a key person in the campaign for free public transport for Senior Citizens.

Irvine said that he felt greatly honoured and astounded at being a Recipient of Maundy Money. "Gob-smacked would be the most appropriate expression! I was humbled to be amongst so many worthy servants of our Lord.

"Sandra and I both feel that the service itself was one of the highlights of our lives. We will treasure the memory for ever.

"The ceremonial aspect of the service was awesome and almost overwhelming: music, singing, the splendour of the

The Cathedral Church of Saint Patrick, Armagh



The Dean and Chapter invite you to

CHORAL EVENSONG & THE INSTALLATION

of

The Venerable Dr Peter Thompson

Archdeacon of Armagh

&

The Reverend Matthew Hagan

as Prebendary of Mullabrack

on Sunday 23rd April 2023 at 3.15 p.m.

Refreshments will be served in the Alexander Synod Hall immediately after the service.

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Minster, the processions, the colour. And Beefeaters and the King and Queen in a church service that we were attending!

“Two things in particular stand out: the spirituality and depth of faith in the worship and in the actual service; and the sincerity and graciousness of the King. He had a personal word for each of the recipients and thanked each person for their service to the church and the community.”

Larne Choral Society



Elaine Hawthorne Memorial Concert

*Featuring Larne Choral Society,
Police Male Voice Choir,
Mossgrove Singers
plus solo musicians Jude Kingston
and Hannah Calderwood*

1st Larne Presbyterian Church

Friday 21st April 2023 at 7.30pm

Suggested Donation £15

Proceeds will be split between Choir Funds and Marie Curie Cancer Care.

Light refreshments after the concert in the church hall.

Tickets available from choir members



Retrofitting historic buildings

The [Institute of Historic Building Conservation Northern Ireland Branch](#) is hosting an event on 3 May on retrofitting – the process of making changes to existing buildings so that energy consumption and emissions are reduced.

This event is useful for those who look after places of worship, especially if you are embarking on a repair project and want to include an element of retrofitting.

IHBC NI say: “We all need to take action to cut energy use and emissions to help mitigate climate change...

“Faith buildings can benefit from retrofitting which can help reduce carbon emissions, save money, improve comfort and reduce worry about fuel bills and supply.

“Historic Faith Buildings, whether listed or unlisted, were built using traditional methods and materials and require guidance on retrofitting to ensure there is no negative impact on the historic fabric of the building leading to costly problems in the future.”



Details

At Retrofit for the Future, three speakers will share their experiences of working with historic buildings.

The event takes place in The Majestic, 208 Lisburn Road, Belfast, BT9 6GD, from 9.30am – 2.00pm. Tickets are £25–£30.

Book via Eventbrite at [THIS LINK](#)

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/ihbc-ni-branch-retrofit-for-the-future-tickets-594619391607?>

In the media

Joe Biden says his Catholicism a ‘private matter’ but it is a big part of his political ideology

Irish Times - Visits to Sanctuary of Our Lady of Knock and speech at St Muredach’s Cathedral in Ballina show importance of faith to US president.

Fr Rolheiser: Struggling to give birth to hope – Page 33

The Irish Catholic

MARY KENNY

Faith or faiths – which will Charles 'defend'?
Page 5



SPECIAL GOOD FRIDAY AGREEMENT EDITION

Marking 25 years of peacebuilding
Pages 10-25



Thursday, April 13, 2023

€2.50 (Stg £2.20)

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President Joe Biden's Mayo visit highlights 'wrecked' rural parishes

Chai Brady

The visit of US President Joe Biden is an opportunity to highlight how Government policy has led to "wrecked families" in rural parishes, according to a Mayo priest.

Fr Kieran Holmes in Ballina parish spoke to *The Irish Catholic* ahead of President Biden's visit to St Muredach's Cathedral on April 14, where baptismal records of some of the president's ancestors are kept.

Fr Holmes said: "Ballina, and the West of Ireland generally, has remained under a shadow. People don't know about it, that's the reality."

"This is why [President Biden's] visit is so important, for the west to showcase we are here, we do exist, because in the minds of many in Dublin we don't exist. All over we have magnificent tourist attractions but because our infrastructure is poor people don't come."

President Biden will speak outside the cathedral at 7pm, a building his great-great-great grandfather Edward Blewitt helped to create by selling bricks in 1827.

More than 20,000 people are expected to attend, and it's believed some 500 journalists from around the world are accredited to cover President Biden's various engagements.

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Blessing an Easter bounty...



Fr Rafal Zielonka blessed the Easter food for the Polish community in Clonakilty parish church, Co. Cork, on Holy Saturday. Fr Zielonka is pictured with Natalia Makowska and Robert Szymial and their family Nicolas, Olivia and Adam with their Easter basket on April 8.

DAVID GIBSON

Easter begins in light and hope
PAGE 31-32



DAVID QUINN

Time to defend the Church's legacy
PAGE 8



DOUBTING THOMAS

'Doubt no longer, but believe'
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KNOCK
Ireland's International Eucharistic and Marian Shrine
www.knockshrine.ie e: info@knockshrine.ie t: 094 93 88100

Patsy McGarry writes - It has already been visited by two popes, two saints and, soon, a US president.

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The White House confirmed late on Monday that President Joseph Biden would visit the Sanctuary of Our Lady of Knock, better known as the Knock Shrine, during his trip to Co Mayo later this week.

Pope St John Paul II was there in 1979 to mark the centenary of the Virgin Mary's appearance in 1879. Mother Teresa, now also a saint, was there in 1993. Pope Francis visited in August 2018.

On Friday, the shrine will have another high-profile visitor in Biden, just the second Catholic to be elected US president. The first was John F Kennedy, elected in 1960, who visited Ireland 60 years ago.

<https://www.irishtimes.com/ireland/social-affairs/2023/04/12/catholic-joe-biden-puts-stops-at-knock-and-mayo-cathedral-on-irish-itinerary/>



Lebanon: Church head calls for Syrian refugees' deportation

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BBC - A senior Christian cleric in Lebanon has called for Syrian refugees to be deported from the country.

Patriarch Bechara Boutros Al-Rai, who heads the Maronite Church, made the call in his Easter service message.

He said Syrian refugees, thought to number as many as 1.5 million, were "draining the state's resources".

An independent monitoring group, the Syrian Network for Human Rights, accused him of using inflammatory speech against vulnerable people. More at-

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-middle-east-65258811>

Webinars, music, resources, broadcasts, and books

The Search Colloquium - A New Look at the End Times - is on Saturday 22 April

Speakers include: Dr Julia McKinley (NBSI) on the apocalyptic texts; Revd Mark Gallagher and Paudie Holly on perspectives of science and theology; Dr Allison Campbell (psychologist) on young people's issues today; Revd Chris Mac Bruithin and Revd Sean Hanily on pastoral insights regarding hope and fear; with Profs Maureen Junker Kenny, Cathriona Russell and Prof Keith Suckling joining for the final plenary session.

Everyone welcome! Booking details below



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A NEW LOOK AT THE END TIMES

FEATURING YOUNG IRISH THINKERS ON THE
RELEVANCE OF BIBLICAL APOCALYPTIC TODAY

**22
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10:15_{AM} - 5:00_{PM}

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subscriptions@searchjournal.ireland.anglican.org
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Christian Aid and Churches Together in Britain and Ireland launch Stephen Lawrence legacy conversations videos

Christian Aid and Churches Together in Britain and Ireland (CTBI) have brought together over a dozen leading Christian thinkers and theologians to discuss the legacy of Stephen Lawrence's racist killing, and the current state of race-relations in church and society in Britain and Ireland. The results of these conversations are available in a stunning series of videos that can be found on the CTBI and Christian Aid websites.

The 22 April 2023 marks the 30th anniversary of Stephen Lawrence's murder in Eltham, southeast London, which remains a watershed moment for race equality in Britain, and it can be argued, helped to set the tone for what was to follow over the following decades. (As a result of the Metropolitan Police's flawed investigation into Stephen's killing it was subsequently labelled as 'Institutionally racist' by the 1999 McPherson Report. Indeed, the recent Baroness Casey Report into the same organisation still asserts that it is institutionally racist, as well as misogynist and homophobic.)

From a church perspective, that tragedy kick-started a great deal of the racial justice work that still takes place today. With that in mind, CTBI's Richard Reddie and Christian Aid's Dr Lisa Adjei assembled an ethnically mixed, age-diverse, panel of Christians to explore the impact of this death on British and Irish Churches and society, and what, if anything, has been the legacy of that event.

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CTBI's Richard Reddie says: It's hard to believe that Stephen's death was 30 years ago, but its impact still looms large over the body-politic of British society in particular. One only has to look at the police and its struggle to address racism within its structures, and difficulties with engaging with Black communities. We thought that this anniversary was an important moment to discuss how the churches on these shores engaged with Stephen's killing at the time, and whether this has informed any of the racial justice work that has taken place since.

Those who took part in the filmed session, which took the format of a roundtable discussion that saw participants discuss everything from Stephen's death to racial justice and the Bible, were from a range of Christian denominations and groupings. Some of the participants were involved in racial justice work at the time of Stephen's passing, while others were either not born or too young to remember that event. According to Dr Lisa Adjei, it was important to get a range of perspectives on this issue. She states, 'Akin to me, several of our participants were very young at the time of Stephen's killing. However, as time passed and our interest grew regarding justice matters, we became aware of the significance of that event and how it has informed many prevailing attitudes and behaviours. What was great about our filmed session was that we had people who were around at that time who spoke about their experiences, alongside those who could talk about what it is like to be a younger Christian who is committed to ending the work they started all those years ago.'

The aforementioned videos that capture these powerful conversations feature Pat White, Karen Campbell, Revd Arlington Trotman, Ben Lindsay, Linbert Spencer, Dr Garrick

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Wilson, Revd Dr David Wise, Jacqueline Gray, Richard Zipfel, Joshua Hudson-Roberts, Dr Elizabeth Henry, Yogi Sutton, Anne-Marie Agyeman and Revd Kumar Rajagopalan.

Perspective

SEFF remembers Ian Sproule who was murdered by Provisional IRA terrorists - 13th April 1991

Ian was a 24-year-old Protestant civilian, who was from Lisleen Road, Killen near Castlederg.

Ian was shot by the Provisional IRA as he was parking his car outside his house. It later emerged that his photograph was among a list of loyalist suspects in Garda files.

The Provisional IRA's possession of the Gardai documents caused a major security row.

The Sproule family, UVF and Police have consistently dismissed claims of Ian's involvement in loyalist terror activities.

Ian was one of a number of members of Castlederg First Presbyterian Church who were murdered by The Provisional IRA. The Minister said that Ian Sproule's funeral was the 23rd Provisional IRA victim to pass along Main Street in the



Ian Sproule 13 April 1991

town. He said he had buried nine of those dead and that ‘no one has been charged for any.’

In 2019 Ian’s brother, John, took part in an historic meeting with a Cabinet Minister in the Republic of Ireland - Simon Coveney. He has subsequently met with senior members of An Garda Síochána and the former Taoiseach Micheal Martin.

Speaking after the meeting with Mr Coveney John advised the News Letter that Mr Coveney told him that after the

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murder, Chief Supt - later Garda Commissioner - Noel Conroy interviewed over 100 Gardai about apparent collusion in the shooting.

But Mr Coveney told John that none of the Gardai were put under caution before being interviewed. This, John believes, shows that it was not a serious investigation.

John said: “We heard from Mr Coveney that over 100 statements were taken. But as none of the officers were put under caution, I feel this was more of a box-ticking exercise than a serious investigation into how the Provisional IRA came to have a Garda file accusing my brother of being in the UVF.

“Mr Coveney also said this report has never been released and made no suggestion that he would let us see it. But if there is nothing to hide then why not give it to us?”

The existence of the report on Ian’s murder first came to light in 2012 under questioning of Mr Conroy at the Smithwick Inquiry into Garda-IRA collusion in Dublin.

Counsel for the inquiry, Mary Laverty, sharply criticised Mr Conroy for not volunteering the existence of his “major” collusion report when he had first appeared before the inquiry six months previously.

SEFF continues to support the Sproule family as they pursue justice and accountability, to have Ian’s name cleared as being associated with the UVF and also secure accountability from the Irish State concerning related matters which culminated in Ian’s brutal murder.

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Alike so many other families they have received no justice for the sectarian and ethnic fueled terror campaign of The Provisional IRA within that area.

SEFF's thoughts and prayers are with all innocents impacted by the brutal murder of Ian.

[<https://www.facebook.com/SEFF.Victims>]

Speaking to the soul

Short reading and a prayer - daily on this site

Church News Ireland

The publication of Church News Ireland is overseen by Very Rev Dr Houston McKelvey OBE, QVRM, TD. He may be contacted at houstonmckelvey@mac.com