

Church News Ireland



Image of the day – VJ 80 events and Remembrances

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VJ 80 events and Remembrances

On Saturday afternoon, a VJ 80 event at Killymoon Castle was brought to a close with a service of Remembrance conducted by Canon Norman Porteus.

During the service two Poppy Wreaths were laid as Piper Eric Mitchell played a hymn.





The first wreath was placed on the special memorial by Angela Barker whose father served in Burma and fought in, and survived the Battle of the Admin Box, accompanied by Lorraine Averell, whose father was captured and held prisoner by the Japanese until the end of the Second World War. The second wreath was laid on behalf of the local Army Cadet Force by one of their number.





Aghadowey Branch of the Royal British Legion movingly hosted RBL Group 10 at a Service for VE80 in St Guaire's Parish Church conducted by the Rector, Rev Louise Crawford McCafferty.

Afterwards led by HM Lord Lieutenant a wreath laying ceremony was held at the War Memorial in the presence of family of a serviceman who survived the Japanese POW camps.

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Last chance to vote for EBM Refresh Team

The East Belfast Mission's Refresh Cafe has been nominated for the Consumer Facing Award at the Social Enterprise NI Awards 2025!

Please vote for them using this link - [https://](https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/C9HSS3J)



www.surveymonkey.com/r/C9HSS3J

Local success in Northern Ireland International Organ Competition

St Sinian's Church in Tyrrellspass in in Meath and Kildare diocese is celebrating the success of parishioner Gavin Lawrence, who was recently awarded third place in the Northern Ireland International Organ Competition. Here, he shares his thoughts on the experience.

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“On the 12th of August, I took part in the Northern Ireland International Organ Competition (NIIOC) in the Intermediate Category. This is an event which is in its 13th year and is part of the Charles Wood Festival of Music. In this competition I got the chance to play the brilliant 3



manual organ in St Patrick’s Cathedral Armagh. Competitors from between ages of 12 and 21 from both Ireland and the UK take part each year. I was honoured to come third in this years competition.

“This competition was the most major accomplishment of mine as part of the Christ Church Cathedral Outreach program which my tutor trained me for the last two years. Over the last two years I have learnt techniques and styles from a cathedral organist which have given me the ability to

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take part in competitions like these. I am so grateful for the opportunity in which I got to improve my organ playing significantly

“As my scholarship for the Outreach Programme in Christ Church Cathedral nears its end I can really see how far

I’ve come with both technique and the wide range of pieces I’ve learnt but also the huge amount of opportunities that have arisen for me like this competition but also what’s to come in the future.”



Different kind of conversion as Exeter Cathedral hosts Women’s Rugby World Cup ceremony



Exeter Cathedral has hosted a Women's Rugby World Cup Opening Ceremony for the French and Italian teams.

The two teams will be based in Exeter for the month-long tournament, which begins on 22 August.

The teams were accompanied by the Bishop of Exeter, Rt Rev Dr Mike Harrison, the Dean of Exeter Cathedral, Very Rev Jonathan Greener and members of the Exeter Chiefs women's team as they processed into the cathedral.

They were greeted with cheers and applause from the hundreds of representatives of local women's and girls' rugby teams who had been invited to the Cathedral from across the region.

Very Rev Jonathan Greener said “I’m thrilled to have hosted the opening ceremony for the Women’s Rugby World Cup. It’s the first time in 975 years that the Cathedral has ever hosted a world cup event, so that’s a huge excitement and joy and privilege for us all.”

Before the ceremony the Bishop of Exeter, supported by the Bishop of Crediton and Bishop of Plymouth, hosted the Exeter Chiefs Women’s team and other rugby representatives for a celebration event at the Bishop’s Palace.

Emily Robinson, a player for Exeter Chiefs Women, said: “This is really exciting, Exeter’s a rugby city and a sporting city and it’s a brilliant place to host the World Cup. People here really love sport, and I know the support for the teams and for the games will be really immense, which will be brilliant for those taking part in the World Cup.”

Bishop Mike and the Dean were each presented with a commemorative world cup rugby ball by the Lord Mayor, Cllr Ann Jobson.

The Bishop of Crediton, Rt Rev Moira Astin, said “It’s so exciting to have this competition here in Exeter and to meet the women’s teams.

“When I was in my teens and twenties no-one could even contemplate that women would be allowed to play rugby. It’s so wonderful to see women fulfilling their potential in rugby as well as in other sports. I think we are finding those who said women would not be as good as men are eating their

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words. It's good that girls are getting to see that sport is for them."

During the cathedral ceremony the French and Italian teams were officially welcomed and presented with commemorative caps.

The team captains made speeches thanking the people of Exeter for their welcome and said they were looking forward to the start of the tournament.

France and Italy will play each other at Exeter's Sandy Park on Saturday 23 August.

Priest attacked in Downpatrick making 'slow, steady' progress

An update on Father John Murray was shared with parishioners - report by Andrew Madden in The Belfast Telegraph, 18/08/2025.

A priest who was attacked in Downpatrick earlier this month is making "slow and steady progress" towards recovery, parishioners have been told.

Father John Murray was struck in the head with a bottle during an attack at St Patrick's Church in the town last Sunday.

He was hospitalised and a man has since been charged with murder and attempted murder after the body of another

man, Stephen Brannigan (56), was found at a nearby property on the same day.

Fr Eugene O'Neill led mass at the church yesterday morning — a day after the funeral of Mr Brannigan took place — and provided the congregation with an update on the wounded cleric's condition.

He said the community “continues to be shocked” by the terrible events, which will “echo for a very long time”, particularly for the families involved.

“On this day we remember particularly the soul of Stephen Brannigan,” Fr O'Neill said.

“We are consoled that Canon Murray is comfortable and moving quietly and prayerfully, as is his characteristic manner, towards recovery.

“I have been in touch with Canon Murray and some members of his family are here this morning.

“Canon Murray is in good spirits. He and his family have asked me to express their thanks to everyone from the great diversity of backgrounds who have reached out to them in this last week with their love, their support and their prayers.

“Canon John is making slow but steady progress. For the time being, visits have to be confined simply to immediate family to allow him time to heal.”

Fr Murray was due to retire as parish priest of St Patrick's to be succeeded by Fr O'Neill.

Mourners attending the Requiem Mass for Mr Brannigan at St Bridget's Church in Downpatrick on Saturday were told that the greatest love of his life was his late wife Dorena.

Fr Timothy Bartlett, a relative of the Brannigan family, said the couple's "greatest pride and joy in life" was their daughters Ciara and Gemma.

"And through them, their beloved grandchildren Sophie, Lily, Conor, Clodagh, Holly and Ruairi," he added.

Fr Bartlett also expressed concerns over the perceived increase of violence in society.

"Over recent days, I was struck by the number of local people who said things on the news like: 'Violence, it is all you hear about nowadays.' Or 'Nothing is sacred any more. People have no respect,'" he said.

"Am I the only one who feels that there is a growing culture of aggression and violence creeping like a cancer through the bones of our families, our towns and our society, in which nothing and no one is sacred any more?

"Am I the only one who yearns for a little more gentleness, a little more civility, a little more courtesy, a little more neighbourliness and community, and a little more compassion and care?

"It is time to ask ourselves the hard questions about why this is happening in our society, all too frequently.

"One thing is certain, to address these issues, our elected representatives cannot do it on their own. To build strong,

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cohesive local communities and a safe, healthy society involves all the sources of social capital in a society working together.”

Mr Brannigan was laid to rest in Struell Cemetery following the service.

Cathedral Calls

Have you noticed this stoic little fellow in Limerick Cathedral grounds?

If you've wandered through the grounds of Saint Mary's Cathedral, you might have paused to admire the striking sculpture of Donal Mór O'Brien, standing tall and proud.

Sculpted by Will Fogarty, this impressive sculpture was carved from the wood of a once-popular tree that stood right here on the cathedral grounds.



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Donal Mór O'Brien wasn't just a 12th-century ruler, he was a fierce defender of his kingdom, keeping invaders and rival clans at bay. But his most lasting legacy isn't found in battle; it's in stone. In 1168, Donal Mór O'Brien founded Saint Mary's Cathedral on the site of a former Viking palace, shaping Limerick's spiritual and cultural landscape for over 850 years.

Next time you're at the cathedral, take a moment to reflect on the man behind the legacy, captured in this beautiful sculpture. His vision and generosity continue to resonate through the heart of Limerick.

Saint Mary's Cathedral – where history lives on!

Clergy and ministry

A Heartfelt Farewell to Fr. Damien

After seven wonderful years of faithful service to St. Eunan's Cathedral parish community, we bid a bittersweet farewell to Fr. Damien.

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Throughout his time with us, Fr. Damien has been a source of spiritual guidance, comfort, and inspiration. His dedication to our parish family, his compassionate



pastoral care, and his unwavering commitment to our faith community have touched countless lives.

From celebrating our joys to comforting us in times of sorrow, Fr. Damien has walked alongside us with wisdom, kindness, and grace. His homilies, his pastoral visits, and his genuine care for

each parishioner will be deeply missed.

While we are sad to see him go, we are grateful for the seven years of blessings he has brought to St. Eunan's Cathedral. We wish Fr. Damien all the best in his new assignment and pray that God continues to bless his ministry.

Thank you, Fr. Damien, for everything. You will always hold a special place in our hearts and in the history of our parish.

May God bless you abundantly in your future endeavours.

From Dungiven to Ardress

Revd Mark Loney held his final service on Sunday morning as Rector of the Parishes of Dungiven, and Bovevagh.

The service of Holy Communion in Dungiven Parish Church was a significant event for the church community, marking the end of Mark's ten years of leadership, and pastoral ministry.

The event was accompanied by tearful farewells and expressions of gratitude.

Rev Loney is moving to St Mary's Church of Magheraculmoney (Ardess), Co Fermanagh. a service of introduction will take place in Ardess Parish Church, Kesh on Thursday 4th September at 7.30pm.

Events



European Heritage Open Days (EHOD)

(Northern Ireland) **promises to be exciting this year with over 200 FREE openers and events to choose from.**

The hugely popular European Heritage Open Days will once again take place this year on the weekend of 13th and 14th September 2025!

EHOD is a great opportunity for you and your family and friends to see behind the scenes of some of our historic buildings many of which are not usually open to the public. The luxury of EHOD is that you will get to explore local cultural heritage that you wouldn't normally get to see.

Look out for some of the highlights taking part this year!

EHOD is an annual event organised by the Department for Communities, Historic Environment Division.

A digital brochure including a list of venues and events can be found at: <https://tinyurl.com/4axs966n>

You can also map out your weekend using the EHOD WebApp here: <https://tinyurl.com/yzn7pctr>

Whilst all events are free, some require pre-booking. To avoid disappointment, check out:

<https://tinyurl.com/23athahw>

The poster for European Heritage Open Days 2025 features a large, stylized map of Ireland in the background, colored with a rainbow gradient. Overlaid on the map is a historical architectural drawing of a building, likely a station, with labels such as 'Droghda Station', 'Platform', and 'Elevations'. The text on the poster includes 'European Heritage Open Days 2025', 'Free Entrance', 'ONE WEEKEND OVER 300 PROPERTIES AND EVENTS', 'Saturday 13 and Sunday 14 September', and 'Architectural Heritage: Past Structure, Future Connections'. Logos for 'Love HERITAGE NI', 'Department for Communities', 'An Roinn Pobal', and 'Department for Communities' are also present, along with the Twitter handle '@LoveHeritageNI' and a silhouette of a city skyline at the bottom.

European Heritage Open Days 2025

Free Entrance
ONE WEEKEND OVER 300
PROPERTIES AND EVENTS

Saturday 13 and Sunday 14 September

Architectural Heritage:
Past Structure, Future Connections

Love HERITAGE NI | Department for Communities | An Roinn Pobal | Department for Communities

@LoveHeritageNI

“Come and Play!” with Belfast Temple Salvation Army Band

BELFAST TEMPLE BAND
Bandmaster David Catherwood

presents

COME AND PLAY!
Conducted by Dr. Jonathan Corry

Wednesday 3rd September, 2025
8pm Session
Tea/Coffee included

Music will be approximately Grade 5 standard
For more information contact: +44 7596 379040

 **The Salvation Army, Belfast Temple, 110 Cregagh Road, Belfast BT6 9ES**

Belfast Temple Salvation Army Band have invited top quality brass and percussion players to join them on Wednesday 3rd September to play some of the best music from the Salvation Army's repertoire including works by Edward Gregson, Wilfred Heaton, Eric Ball, Peter Graham and William Himes.

This evening will be led through by 10B MD Jonathan W. Corry and will be a fantastic walk through some SA music by someone with a passion and deep insight into SA music.

Heritage

Chaplain Michael Bergin from Tipperary

He was a 35 year old school teacher at the Holy Family College, Fagala, Cairo, Egypt when he was accepted into the 3rd Light Horse Regiment as a Chaplain 4th Class on 13 May 1915.

While serving with the 5th Light Horse Regiment at Gallipoli, he was taken ill in September and evacuated to England for medical treatment.

On recovering, he returned to Egypt in December 1915 and transferred to the 51st Battalion. He proceeded to France in June 1916 and although attached to the 51st Battalion, ministered to men of the whole 13th Brigade.

He spent a lot of time with soldiers in the front line and was killed by a shell on 12 October 1917 near Broodseinde Ridge, Belgium. Chaplain Bergin is buried in the



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL

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Reninghelst Churchyard Extension, Belgium and was posthumously awarded a Military Cross for distinguished service in the field.

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

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www.churchnewsireland.org

Link in Monday through Saturday from early morning

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