

August 8

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## **Walkers invited to journey along five ancient routes and pick up their 'Pilgrim passport'**

People are gearing up for Ireland's first fully guided pilgrim journey, which will take place during Heritage Week, from 19 – 26 August, The Journal.ie reports.

August 8

The week-long event sees walkers taking part in guided journeys along the country's passported pilgrim paths.

The five ancient routes included on the Irish Pilgrim Passport are: Tochar Phadraig, Co Mayo; St Kevin's Way, Co Wicklow; Cosán na Naomh, Co Kerry; St Finbarr's Pilgrim Path, Co. Cork; and Cnoc na dTobar, Co Kerry.

The passport involves walkers collecting a pilgrim stamp at the end of each walk. They are then awarded the full passport when they arrive at Ballintubber Abbey, after completing Tochar Phadraig in Mayo.

The walks will each be led by knowledgeable local guides, who will outline the story of the route and explain how medieval penitents coped with their arduous journeys. Time will be allowed for personal contemplation during the walks.

Chairman of Pilgrim Paths Ireland John G O'Dwyer gave some insight into the background of these walks. He said that participants are free to complete all five paths over the week or undertake a lesser number.

"The medieval pilgrimage was originally a journey combining prayer and sacrifice – with an element of physical discomfort," he said.

August 8

“Recently, there has been a renewed interest in following the footsteps of these pilgrims past and over the last number of years Ireland’s penitential trails have echoed to ever-increasing footfall.”

For example, [National Pilgrim Paths Week](#) takes place over the Easter period every year. O’Dwyer previously told *TheJournal.ie* that the paths are not just for religious people.

They are from the time before the Reformation, when everybody was Christian. We are a non-denominational organisation – we make the paths available to people of any religion, anyone can take anything from it.

He said the pilgrim journey “is not just for those who enjoy exploring Ireland’s ancient tracks, but also the growing numbers seeking to escape the daily grind of life and take time out to reflect and meditate a little while enjoying the outdoors”.

Want to take part? Advance booking is essential and must be made individually to each pilgrim path. More information on how to book can be found on [www.pilgrimpath.ie](http://www.pilgrimpath.ie).

Pilgrim Paths Ireland was founded in 2013 as the umbrella association for the community groups

August 8

representing the 10 principal pilgrim paths in Ireland

## **Keeping the dying art of ringing church bells alive in Ireland**

Bell ringing isn't the most common of pastimes, but small teams across the country are trying to keep the dying art alive, The Journal.ie reports.

One such group meet in Christ Church Taney in south Dublin. They see the hobby as a combination of a music, exercise, and teamwork.

They are appealing for new members as numbers dwindle across the country – in two churches in Dublin which have a functioning set of bells, there's no regular meetings, and the same is the situation in several others across the country.

Although most of the churches belong to the Church of Ireland, being Protestant or even religious isn't a set requirement, and they're appealing for anyone with an interest to give it a go.

If you're interested in bellringing, you can contact the group in Taney at [iigcctv@gmail.com](mailto:iigcctv@gmail.com)

August 8

Watch the full report above. Video at <http://www.thejournal.ie/bell-ringing-ireland-3530851-Aug2017/>

## **American choir performs in Baldoye at benefit concert**



**Susan Moore and Catrice Mays, from South Main Baptist Choir, warm up in advance of their performance at Baldoye Community Hall.**

Members of an American choir paid a visit to the Northside last week to take part in a benefit

August 8

concert for a local award-winning choir. The 60-strong South Main Baptist Choir from Houston, Texas, led by Director Carey Cannon, is on a musical tour of Ireland and Scotland, the Dublin People group reports.

After hearing about the Forget-Me-Nots, they got in touch and offered to hold a benefit concert at Baldoyle Community Hall for the choir. Baldoyle Forum kindly arranged seating for approximately 200 people and the event was a big success.

The Forget-Me-Nots Seniors Choir, inspired by The Unforgettables Chorus in New York, is a dementia-inclusive choir for carers and family as well as those suffering from memory loss conditions.

Set up in 2014, it now has a membership of over 100 drawn from the local community, and includes residents of local nursing homes and enthusiastic volunteers.

The choir's mission is to offer a socially inclusive and challenging quality arts pursuit within the Dublin North East community so the lives of seniors, including those suffering from memory loss, their carers, family, friends and neighbours are enhanced through the joy and reward of choral learning and public performances –

August 8

drawing from a wealth of nostalgic and remembered songs of old.

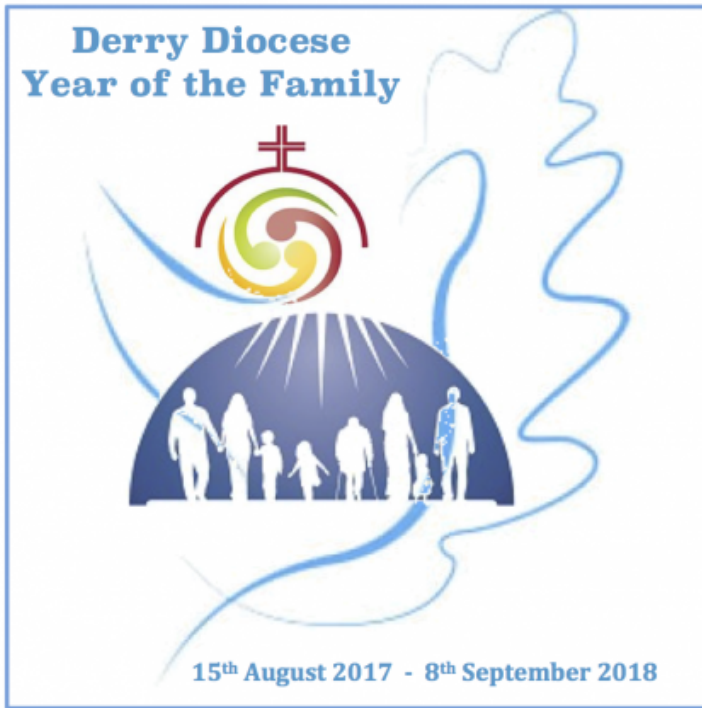
Under the direction of wonderful Choral Director, Norah Walsh, Forget-Me-Nots has continued to grow in popularity and reputation and has featured in RTE's 'Doc on One' and RTE's social media documentaries as well as being chosen to feature in a choral documentary on RTE's Lyric FM later this year.

Past public performances include carol singing on Ireland AM, The Dementia Elevator Roadshow in the Helix, Dementia Understand Together caroling in Busáras, Sutton Methodist Church Singathon in aid of St Francis Hospice, AONTAS Adult-Learning Star Awards 2015, Age-Action Ireland Marigold Festival 2016, 1916 Centenary Plaque Unveiling Baldoyle and regular performances in local nursing homes and local community meeting places such as Insomnia, Sutton.

Founder of the choir, Órla Horn, was the 2016 recipient of the Pride of Ireland Award for her tireless efforts to help enrich the lives of some of our most vulnerable citizens. The Forget-Me-Nots Organisation became a registered charity in May.

August 8

## **Derry Diocese to celebrate a 'Year of the Family' from 15th August 2017**



In preparation for the World Meeting of Families which will take place in Dublin from 21 - 26 August 2018, the diocese of Derry will celebrate a *Year of the Family* which will be launched at all the Masses for the Feast of the Assumption (14/15 August 2017)].



August 8

The Year of the Family will conclude on 8 September 2018, the Feast of Our Lady's Birthday.

The Year of the Family aims to encourage families to pray together at home, as well as reminding each person that the Church is "the family of families" (*Pope Francis, Amoris Laetitia/ The Joy of Love, paragraph 87*), and helping every one to grow as a diocesan and parish family, communities of faith, hope and love.

## **Oldest Catholic Church in Belfast to re-open for Mass at end of August**

The oldest Catholic Church in Belfast is set to re-open for Mass at the end of August, with all renovation work due to be completed by next month, the Irish News reports.

St Mary's in the city centre has been undergoing both external and internal restoration since May.

The Living Youth building, beside the church in Chapel Lane, has been the venue for Mass since July 17.

August 8

Fr James Boyle, the administrator of St Mary's, said that it is hoped that Mass will be celebrated in the church once more on the Bank Holiday weekend.

In an update to parishioners in the bulletin, Fr Boyle said: "This work will continue for an additional period of three weeks allowing the church to be re-opened (we hope) for Mass on Sunday 27 August."

The total renovation work, expected to total more than £300,000, was initially due for completion by Friday August 18, but a delay of three weeks to allow for the remaining amendments to the church exterior is now likely.

The work includes the complete replacement of the main roof coverings and the repairing and re-pointing of walls and stonework.

Additional paving is to be installed around the grotto outside the church, where Mass was first celebrated in 1784, and the grass area is to be re-designed.

The St Mary's administrator said: "The storm glazing to the windows to the front elevation has been removed and will be replaced.

August 8

"The statue of Our Lady of the Garden, which is currently located in front of St Mary's Hall, will be relocated to this grassed area and will be placed on an elevated base."

Fr Boyle added: "These additional external works will also extend beyond the projected completion date of 18 August by a period of 2-3 weeks. Therefore, all additional work should be fully complete by Friday 8 September."

## **Northern Ireland champion of the arts in Canada has died**

An Anglican cleric and notable former pupil of Royal Belfast Academical Institution has passed away in Vancouver, Canada., the Belfast Telegraph reports.

The Rev Andrew Wilhelm-Boyles died last week after a battle with cancer. He was 74.

Rev Wilhelm-Boyles was born in Belfast in 1943 and first went to Canada as a teenager because of his father's business connections to the Beldam asbestos engineering company.

The family returned to Ireland, Andrew completed his teacher training studies, and went

August 8



**Rev Andrew Wilhelm-Boyles was born in Belfast in 1943**

back to Canada to pursue a career. He taught both English and drama in Newfoundland.

However, after a change of professional direction he was employed by the Canadian Broadcasting Company and managed a television station in Churchill, Manitoba.

It was here that he had the scope to develop his true passion for music and the arts, becoming a national figure in the field, producing and hosting many network programmes from Winnipeg and Toronto.

Rev Wilhelm-Boyles went on to found the Yukon Arts Centre as well as holding positions with the Royal Winnipeg Ballet, the Winnipeg Arts

August 8

Council, the Saskatchewan Arts Board and the Creative City Network of Canada.

He was also the executive director of the Greater Vancouver Alliance for Arts and Culture.

The passion he held for choral music and conducting was evident when he found the Whitehorse Community Choir in the 1990s, and he was also the choral director of Maple Ridge Choral Society.

Rev Wilhelm-Boyles developed a late vocation for religious service and in 2008 was ordained as a minister in the Anglican Church.

He was appointed Deacon at St Agnes' church in Vancouver, where he remained until 2012 before being attached to Christ Church Cathedral in the city. Around 18 months ago Rev Wilhelm-Boyles developed lung cancer and entered hospice care on July 21.

In his last days he was surrounded by his family and friends from across the Diocese and beyond.

Before his passing the Women's Schola of the Christ Cathedral Choir sang for him at his bedside.

August 8

He is survived by his wife Carrie, sister Hazle, brother Alastair, brother-in-law Stephen Richardson and sister-in-law Sally.

He will be laid to rest following a service at Christ Church Cathedral, Vancouver on Saturday, August 12.

## **Church of England ditches collection plates for contactless donations**

The Church of England is trialling 'tap-and-pay' contactless payments in churches across the country, in a bid to modernise the ways in which congregations can donate.

St Nicholas' Cathedral in Newcastle is among the first churches to trial the technology, which will see a standing terminal capable of processing payments of up to £30 installed towards the back of the building. Around 40 churches will participate in the trial in the next few weeks, with around 10 opting for the static terminals aimed at visitors to larger buildings, and 30 others testing out handheld machines which will be passed around the congregation.

August 8



**St Nicholas' Cathedral in Newcastle is one of the first churches to accept contactless donations**

If the trial proves successful when it concludes at the end of the year, contactless terminals of both kinds could become common sights in the nation's spots of Christian worship. "We know that more and more people tend not to carry cash, so we would like to respond to that," said Chris Dalliston, dean of the cathedral. "Bearing in mind we have a running cost of £2,000 per day, but don't charge an entrance fee, we hope that introducing contactless payment will make it easier for people to give as much or as little as they want, in the way that they want," he added.

August 8

“At this stage though we’re looking at the contributions we receive from visitors, which is why we’ve opted to trial the standing contactless device.”

Card payments surpassed cash and coin transactions in the UK for the first time last year, with contactless cards accounting for around a third of all card purchases, according to the British Retail Consortium (BRC). Cards now account for 42.6 per cent of all transactions in the UK, compared to notes and coins’ 42.3 per cent. Contactless payment was introduced in 2007, and has since expanded beyond debit cards to include mobile payment systems such as Apple Pay and Android Pay.

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August 8

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