



The remains of Dublin's Metropole Hotel after the Easter Rising. The Metropole was adjacent to the seat of the Rising at the General Post Office. The site is now home to a department store

NI First Minister to attend C of I 1916 Centenary Event : Ordinary People in Extraordinary Circumstances

The present First Minister, Arlene Foster MLA, has indicated that she will attend the event which has been organised by the Church of Ireland's Historical Centenaries Working Group the Anglican Communion News Service reports.

The C of I Press Office state - The Church of Ireland Historical Centenaries Working Group will mark the centenary of the Easter Rising with an evening of engaging presentations by leading Irish historians, with an opportunity for discussion, in Christ Church Cathedral, Dublin, The title of the presentation is '*A state of chassis*' – *Ordinary People in Extraordinary Circumstances in Dublin in 1916*

The keynote speakers: are Dr Fearghal McGarry (QUB) and Dr Jason McElligott (Marsh's Library, Dublin)
Chair: Dr John Bowman, historian and broadcaster

The event is on Wednesday 17th February 2016 at 7.30pm in Christ Church Cathedral, Dublin

The organisers state - This event will provide an opportunity to consider the lives of the 'ordinary' people of Dublin at the time of the Easter Rising, living at a time when, as Sean O'Casey put it,

many felt they were living through a confusing 'state of chassis'.

The keynote speakers are engaging and respected communicators in this field. Dr Fearghal McGarry is based in the School of History at Queen's University, Belfast, and is an historical consultant for several projects to mark the centenary of the Easter Rising. He will set the Easter Rising in context and also focus on what new sources and research tell us about the experience of rank-and-file rebels and ordinary Dubliners during Easter Week.

Dr McGarry's themes will include the confusion experienced by many rebels about what was happening and the rebellion's purpose; the involvement and treatment of women in the rebellion; and the extent to which the event included a strong religious dimension – with discussion of Church of Ireland experiences, as well as the Roman Catholic ethos of the rebellion.

Dr Jason McElligott, Keeper of the famous Archbishop Marsh's Library, Dublin, will speak on the theme of: 'Tales from The Other Side: the experience of curating a 1916 exhibition which may cause offence'. Marsh's Library is a cultural institution which played a cameo role in the 1916

Easter Rising and it is preparing an exhibition to mark 1916 entitled 'Tales from The Other Side'. The exhibition will focus on changes in identity in Ireland during the Irish Revolution, and the choices which individuals made, or were forced to make, about who they were and what they wanted to be. 'The Other Side' is a deliberately ambiguous phrase that can be taken to refer to political, cultural or religious differences. It can also be applied to those who decided not to kill for their beliefs, and decided to live heroically ordinary lives.

Dr McElligott will discuss what happened in the Library during 1916 and look at the ways in which the institution and its personnel dealt with unfolding events. He will display a number of objects which bring the events of Easter Week to life. The experience of a number of men and women hitherto unknown to history will be examined in situations which shed broader light on the nature of the Irish Revolution.

Admission will be free and refreshments provided. It would be helpful if those wishing to attend would indicate in advance by emailing: peter.cheney@ireland.anglican.org

Order of the Golden Wellie for Black Santa at St Anne's

More than 220 charities received a share of the money raised during the 2015 Black Santa Sit-out at the annual Good Samaritans Service in St Anne's Cathedral on Sunday February 7 past.

The 39th annual Sit-out raised £195,000 and at the service well-loved local comedians John Linehan, Jimmy Cricket, Gene Fitzpatrick and William Caulfield gave up their time to present cheques to charities and community groups who strive to make life better for others.

This was Dean John Mann's fifth Christmas Sit-out as he maintains a tradition established by the late Dean Sammy Crooks almost 40 years ago.

The Good Samaritans Service takes place on the first Sunday in February each year, which the Dean said was "always a happy day in St Anne's Cathedral."

Smiles were definitely guaranteed this year with the line-up of special guests, who shook hands, posed for photographs and chatted to grant recipients.



Dean John Mann, with Jimmy Cricket, John Linehan, Gene Fitzpatrick, and William Caulfield.

The service, which was led by the Dean and featured music from the Cathedral Choir and organist Ian Barber, was signed throughout by a volunteer from Action Deaf Youth, one of the many local charities to receive funding from the 2015 sit-out.

Dean Mann said: “More than 200 charities are benefiting, representing a huge amount of voluntary and community work. This must be one of the most comprehensive gatherings anywhere in Northern Ireland of a spectrum of charitable work taking place, from organisations aiding young people to those supporting the

elderly, from those struggling with medical conditions to those working in reconciliation and healing in its broadest sense. They include many cross-community initiatives and those working in places of social deprivation.

“It is a celebration of much that is good and praiseworthy in our community, and an opportunity to thank those who turn money into action and goodwill into improving the lives of others. It is a privilege to be part of it.”

Thanking Dean Mann for his commitment to the annual charity sit-out, Jimmy Cricket told the congregation: “It is heart-warming to see so many charities being honoured in St Anne’s today.”

He presented the Dean with a coveted ‘Golden Wellington Award’ for the good work he and his predecessors as Black Santa have done for the community.

Jimmy also read a ‘letter from his Mammy’, much to enjoyment of everyone in the Cathedral. During the service a collection was taken for the 2016 Black Santa Appeal – which will mark its 40th year in December.

Christians unite to campaign for LGBTI equality in C of E

A group of Christians have come together to form the LGBTI Mission, which will campaign for the full acceptance and affirmation of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex people within the Church of England.

The group, which is made up of LGBTI people and straight allies, including both clergy and lay people, will seek to remove all barriers to full participation for LGBTI people within the church. It launches during LGBT History Month, which this year is focused on the theme of Religion, Belief and Philosophy.

The priorities of the LGBTI Mission are centred on three key pillars:

- **Living:** the belief that all LGBTI people, heterosexual friends and family, should be welcomed and affirmed by the Church of England
- **Loving:** the belief that God is love, and that life-long, faithful, stable same-sex relationships, and the relationships of those who undergo gender transition, should be celebrated by the Church of England

- **Serving:** the belief that God calls LGBTI people to serve the world through the Church of England, and their ministries should be recognised and authorised

Within these pillars, the Group has nine concrete objectives that it will be working to achieve, which will deliver positive outcomes for LGBTI people within the Church of England. These include ensuring that LGBTI people are never denied access to baptism, confirmation, Holy Communion and funerals, as well as allowing those in same-sex marriages to become clergy.

Simon Sarmiento, Chair of the LGBTI Mission, said: “We believe that now is the time for the Church of England to practice what it preaches and show love towards its LGBTI neighbours. Often an assumption is made that there is a disconnect between LGBTI people and people of faith, when in fact we know that many LGBTI people are religious, and many faith groups support LGBTI equality. We’ve seen the church make huge strides towards equality in recent years, most notably through the 2014 legislation enabling women to become bishops, and it’s now essential that LGBTI equality is similarly cemented in our institution. We know that this is what most people in the Church of England want.

“We believe that each of the asks we’ve outlined is achievable and, frankly, essential. We hope that others who feel passionate about equality will help and join our campaign. People are people and should be treated equally and fairly; this is a fundamental part of what the church teaches us and it’s time we took tangible steps to ensure full acceptance and affirmation of LGBTI people.”

Members of the LGBTI Mission include: Simon Sarmiento, Vicky Beeching, Tracey Byrne, Canon Giles Goddard, Ruth Harley, Savi Hensman, the Rev Chris Newlands, the Rev Canon Steven Saxby, Jeremy Timm and Bishop Alan Wilson.

SEE News Focus - here on CNI today

* LGBTI Mission <http://lgbtimission.org.uk/>.

Religious education is being squeezed off the timetable in England

The Economist reports - Last year in one large London school, all 200 pupils taking their GCSE exams—standard tests sat at age 16—were entered for a qualification in religious education (RE), and emerged with results as good as in the

other humanities. Yet, according to a teacher there, the school has just announced that its



GCSE course in RE will be scrapped and replaced with a one-hour class every fortnight.

More schools are smiting their RE lessons. Nearly 1,200 put forward no pupil for an RE qualification in 2014, five times as many as in 2010. Some cite increased pressure on the timetable from other subjects; the fact that RE does not count towards the “English Baccalaureate”, a newish measure for assessing schools, also reduces the incentive to offer it.

Two reports by Ofsted, the education regulator, have criticised schools’ attitudes. The quality of the RE curriculum was rated “good” or better in

fewer than two-fifths of secondary schools; teaching of Christianity was one of the weakest aspects, it said.

This represents a turnaround. For centuries the church ran most education in England, with the state getting involved only in the 19th century. In 1944 the government brought church schools into the state system and began funding them. In return, RE was made compulsory.

Since then, the RE syllabus has been set by local religious advisory councils. In 1988 a single national curriculum for schools was introduced, but RE, with its special status, was not included. Alone among school subjects, it is still set by those councils. This means that, in principle, there are 152 different RE syllabuses around England, though in practice many overlap. The subject is still obligatory until the age of 18, though in reality this requirement is ignored, or watered down.

[Read here](#)

Pope Francis 'considering Scotland visit'

Pope Francis could make a flying visit to Scotland in September, according to reports.

The Pope has “pencilled in” a short visit to St Andrews to sign a charter calling on all faiths to unite against extremism, [the Sunday Times reports](#).

Mario Aguilar, professor of religion and politics at St Andrews University, received a letter from Rome, via the Vatican embassy in London, saying that the invitation to the Pope was being considered.

“My understanding is that Pope Francis is interested and has put [the event] on his agenda of activities and that further arrangements will be discussed,” Aguilar, who has met Francis on several occasions and wrote a biography of the Pontiff in 2014, told the Sunday Times.

He added: “I have had an indication that his visit is being considered. If he agrees to come, it will be in a private capacity in response to an academic invitation. It would not be a pastoral visit.”

The Pope has regularly spoken out against religious extremism. Last year, after the shootings at the Charlie Hebdo offices in Paris, he urged “religious, political and intellectual

leaders, especially those of the Muslim community, (to) condemn all fundamentalist and extremist interpretations of religion which attempt to justify such acts of violence.”

Pope Francis’s trip to Scotland, which would probably take place over the course of one day, would follow Benedict XVI’s visit to the country in 2010.

St Andrews has designated 2016 as a “year of inter-faith dialogue”, with a programme of lectures and events scheduled.

New British ambassador to the Holy See appointed

Sally Axworthy has been appointed Britain’s Ambassador to the Holy See, taking over the role from Nigel Baker.

Axworthy, who joined the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) in 1986, will take up the position in August. During her career, she has headed up the FCO’s Great Lakes, East Africa and Somalia department and its Somalia unit.

Axworthy, who is married with four children, worked as the FCO's head of financial skills and, most recently, was joint head of the North Africa department.

Baker, who has been in the post since September 2011, will be transferring to another role in the diplomatic service.

News links to reports on faith, politics and education

NIO is letting down Troubles victims, claims David Ford

Belfast Telegraph

<http://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/northern-ireland/nio-is-letting-down-troubles-victims-claims-david-ford-34431858.html>

£70m deal struck to build 1,200 student rooms in Belfast city centre

Belfast Telegraph

<http://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/northern-ireland/70m-deal-struck-to-build-1200-student-rooms-in-belfast-city-centre-34431606.html>

Islamic Centre among UK sites opening doors amid weekend of anti-Muslim demonstrations

Newsletter

Belfast Islamic Centre was among a wave of Muslim places of worship which have opened their doors across the UK, on the same weekend that anti-Islamic demonstrations have been taking place.

<http://www.newsletter.co.uk/news/northern-ireland-news/islamic-centre-among-uk-sites-opening-doors-amid-weekend-of-anti-muslim-demonstrations-1-7202374>

Belfast Islamic centre opens its doors to 'dispel myths'

Irish News

<http://www.irishnews.com/news/2016/02/08/news/belfast-islamic-centre-opens-its-doors-to-dispel-myths-about-islam-410239/>

Aid organisations to receive 60 million euro in Irish government funding

Belfast Telegraph

<http://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/republic-of-ireland/aid-organisations-to-receive-60-million-euro-in-government-funding-34432308.html>

Guard

About 800,000 people will still be hit by tax credit cuts from April because of a little-noticed change, 'income-rise disregard' which survived the government's U-turn on the policy last year, Labour has said. Mr Osborne was forced into a climbdown over tax credits in his autumn statement in November following a defeat for the proposed measures in the House of Lords. A briefing from the Children's Society is quoted in the article.

<http://www.theguardian.com/money/2016/feb/07/tax-credit-cuts-escaped-osbornes-u-turn-hit-800000>

BBC/Mail/Mirror/Express/Even Stand/Tel

The Duchess of Cambridge has made her first appearance as royal patron of the RAF Air Cadets for a 75th anniversary service in London. The event, at the RAF church of St Clement Danes, saw 500 cadets, veterans and volunteers take part in a thanksgiving service. The duchess became Honorary Air Commandant in December, taking over from the Duke of Edinburgh who had the role for 60 years. There are 42,000 air cadets in the UK.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-35516698>

[http://www.dailymail.co.uk/femail/article-3435752/Kate-s-flying-high-Duchess-Cambridge-steps-pale-blue-Alexander-McQueen-marks-75th-anniversary-RAF-Air-Cadets.html?](http://www.dailymail.co.uk/femail/article-3435752/Kate-s-flying-high-Duchess-Cambridge-steps-pale-blue-Alexander-McQueen-marks-75th-anniversary-RAF-Air-Cadets.html?ITO=1490&ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490)

<http://www.mirror.co.uk/news/uk-news/prince-george-obsessed-planes-wants-7327683#ICID=nsm>

<http://www.express.co.uk/news/royal/641819/Kate-dazzles-Alexander-McQueen-coat-RAF-Air-Cadets-Duchess>

<http://www.standard.co.uk/news/london/duchess-of-cambridge-attends-special-service-to-mark-75th-anniversary-of-the-air-cadets-a3174811.html>

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/kate-middleton/12144987/Duchess-of-Cambridge-Kate-celebrates-Air-Cadets-75th-anniversary.html>

BBC

A flood-hit church known for its tall tower is to reopen on Tuesday after a temporary closure to install a new

heating system. St Botolph's Church, known as Boston Stump, was badly damaged following a tidal surge in 2013 that hit the Lincolnshire town of Boston. The church reopened soon after the floods but work has been on-going to repair the damage. The Revd Alyson Buxton is quoted.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-lincolnshire-35516844>

Guard

Cities around Australia hosting a second day of rallies calling on the federal government to let the 267 asylum seekers stay in Australia, following a high court ruling that the country's offshore detention regime on the remote island of Nauru had been lawfully established. The sites of Monday's protests include St John's Cathedral in Brisbane, St John the Baptist Church in Canberra, and St George's Cathedral in Perth.

<http://www.theguardian.com/australia-news/2016/feb/08/daniel-andrews-offer-to-resettle-asylum-seekers-is-not-political-grandstanding>

BBC

Clowns from across the globe have gathered for an annual service in honour of the man credited with popularising the act. The International Circus Club service celebrates "father of modern clowning" Joseph Grimaldi, who died in 1837. This year marked the 70th outing of the colourful congregation and was held at the Holy Trinity church in Dalston, east London.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-london-35516706>

Comment

Telegraph (*scroll down*): Charles Moore writes about

February 9

former bishop George Bell under the headline; 'Secret justice is no justice at all'.

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/europe/eu/12145497/Would-Margaret-Thatcher-have-backed-Brexit.html>

GET CNI HEADLINES EACH DAY

Facebook and Twitter

Click on logo at CNI Home page

www.churchnewsireland.org

+ Please share CNI with your friends

www.churchnewsireland.org