



Mary McAleese with husband Martin and Orange Order Grand Master Edward Stevenson (left) viewing the memorial window at the opening of the Museum of Orange Heritage

Former President McAleese hails Orange Order museum

Former Irish President Mary McAleese has hailed a new museum charting the history of the Orange Order for promoting understanding between the island's differing traditions.

Belfast Telegraph - Mrs McAleese and her husband Martin were among invited guests at the official opening of the £3.8 million interpretative centre in Belfast.

The museum re-tells the story of the Glorious Revolution and the resultant war between William of Orange and James II which culminated with the Dutch king defeating the Jacobean forces at the Battle of the Boyne in 1690.

It goes on to explain the formation of the Orange Order a century later and how the institution has developed and grown since.

Mrs McAleese said the centre would be a place where those of a nationalist perspective could learn more about the Orange tradition.

"The culture of the Orange is not my culture but it is the culture of my neighbours and we who are the children of the Jacobites and the Williamites we share this space, we share this island," she said.

"We haven't always shared it happily with each other but we have decided that we want to share it happily for the future.

"So it's important to be here because this place is built with a view, first of all, to celebrating Orange culture, but also of explaining it to a wider audience, opening up that culture so we don't live in ignorance and mythology, but we do live with true understanding of each other.

"I like the spirit in which it is being offered - as a place that welcomes those who want to come to learn about the culture. I think it's important that we all do, I think good neighbours should know about each other, should respect each other. Part of that respect is being interested in each other and what each other believes and where we come from and what their values are, what our values are - also to find points of intersection, of which there are many.

"Sometimes history tries to tell us there are no points of intersection and I think what we find here is there are many."

The majority of the funding for the museum - £3.6 million - was made through EU's PEACE III programme, which included contributions from the Northern Ireland Executive and the Irish government.

The Grand Lodge of Ireland contributed £200,000.

Grand Lodge of Ireland's director of services, Dr David Hume, welcomed Mr and Mrs McAleese's attendance.

"It was fantastic to see them here, it was really good they were here," he said.

"They seemed to be very impressed with what they saw and I think it's all to the good.

"I think it is important that they and other people who come from the nationalist community pass on the details and the message of what we have here and we are very much here to outreach to people and explain to people and to do so in a way which I believe is a very non-confrontational way."

The museum is housed in the refurbished Schomberg House headquarters of the Orange Order on the Cregagh Road in east Belfast. More at - <http://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/northern-ireland/mcaleese-hails-orange-order-museum-31327159.html>

Family fun day in Downpatrick

The Lecale Area Mission Partnership (LAMP), comprising fourteen C of I parishes in the diocese of Down, came together for a

wonderful Family Funday at Downpatrick Racecourse on Saturday 20 June.

Well over three hundred people of all age-groups enjoyed a BBQ, chat in the sun, all kinds of activities for children and brilliant live music courtesy of three excellent young jazz musicians from Down High School. The super-efficient team of cooks were from Seaforde Church. Special thanks are due to the Directors of the Racecourse for giving LAMP the venue.

Oireachtas members at Dublin service for Berkeley students

An Taoiseach, An Tainaiste, members of the Cabinet and past and present members of the Houses of the Oireachtas attended an ecumenical Service of Remembrance in St Ann's Church, Dawson Street, on June 24 for those who lost their lives in Berkeley, California last Tuesday.

The service was led by Canon David Gillespie who was joined by Archbishop Michael Jackson, Bishop Éamonn Walsh (Roman Catholic Church), Reverend Chris Kennedy (Presbyterian Church)

and Reverend Andrew Dougherty (Methodist Church) who all participated in the service. Also present were representatives of the Muslim, Jewish and the Quaker communities.

Music at the service was led by the St Ann's Church Choir, directed by Charles Marshall. The Anthem [In Paradisum, Fauré] was accompanied by harpist, Dianne Marshall.

In his introduction to the service, Archbishop Jackson said: "We gather today in this city centre church to give thanks for life itself. We gather also to express sorrow and sympathy to the family members and friends of those who have died. We remember with thanksgiving those who in the time of youth and the prime of life have died at home or abroad, in tragic accidents on our roads, in work-related incidents and when engaged in leisure activities. Most particularly at this time we remember those who have died in Berkeley California both those from Ireland and those from elsewhere. We remember also those who continue to fight bravely and painfully for their lives as we speak. Together and in silence let us ask God for strength in our sadness, for love in our lostness and for hope in our helplessness".

Border walkers pray for peace

Youth With A Mission, a faith based mission organisation with a base in Rostrevor are on a 'pilgrimage' walk from Rostrevor to Derry city.

Impartial Reporter - The cross-community walk sees Protestants and Catholics coming from different parts of the island of Ireland, joined by participants from overseas. It is in its third year.

The walkers made it to Fivemiletown last night where they “enjoyed an amazing time of worship and prayer” in St. John's Church of Ireland Hall.

Carrying two crosses, to date the group have stopped in Newry, Crossmaglen, Darkley, Monaghan, Fivemiletown, Lisnaskea, Derrylin and Kinawley. Tonight they will stay in Belcoo before hitting the road again tomorrow.

Group member Johnny Clark commented on facebook: “For the thirrd year in a row we are organising an 18 day, 200 mile Border Walk. It is a pilgrimage of peace and prayer with many from different nations, different parts of Ireland and from different tribes coming together to bear witness to the Prince of Peace by whose wounds we can be healed. We carry a big cross and seek to bring a spirit of reconciliation and



A cross-community peace group is waling and praying along 200 miles of the Irish border

peace wherever we go. Today we walked to Newry and tomorrow we head to Crossmaglen. If you would like to join a leg of the walk or meet us in the evening for prayer and worship send me a message and I'll let you know where we'll be."

To follow the group's progress, log onto www.facebook.com/ywamireland



The children of Hollymount Church Sunday School and their leaders hold up their prizes after a full and fun Children's Day service they led on Sunday 21 June.

Down and Dromore Theological Working Group membership

Statement issued June 25 - "The diocese is pleased to announce the membership of the Theological Working Group, which will examine the theology of the Royal Black Preceptory and the theology of Bethel Church, Redding, California. It is as follows:

- Canon Dr Christina Baxter (Chair), formerly chair of the House of Laity in the Church of England, and sometime principal of St John's Theological College, Nottingham
- Dr David Shepherd, assistant professor in Hebrew Bible/Old Testament, Trinity College Dublin. Formerly principal of Belfast Bible College. Member of Kill O'the Grange Parish
- Canon Dr Heather Morris, Home Missions Secretary, Methodist Church in Ireland, and former President of the Methodist Church
- The Very Revd John Dinnen, formerly Dean of Down

The Working Group will be gathering information and studying the organisations concerned from a theological perspective, and hopes to be able to conclude its work by the autumn. Bishop Harold Miller has already asked that this be considered a period of 'gracious provisional judgement' about both organisations.

We request that everyone concerned helps the Working Group to progress its work quickly and efficiently, for the sake of all.

If you wish to make any submission, please be in touch with the secretary to the Working Group,

churchnewsireland@gmail.com

Mrs Jan Peach, by writing c/o Church of Ireland House, 61–67 Donegall Street, Belfast BT1 2QH, or by email to theologicalworkinggroup2015@outlook.com “

CNI - This arises from the dispute at Knocknamuckley parish.

Prayers for peace for the 12th July

Divine Healing Ministries has announced that there will be a day of prayer on Saturday, 11th July from 10am to 4pm that this year the 12th of July will be peaceful.

It will be held in three different locations – St Finnian’s Church, Cregagh Road; Shankill Methodist Church (corner of Berlin Street); and Malone Presbyterian Church (corner of Lisburn Road and Balmoral Avenue).

Brother David Jardine, one of the organisers, says: *‘Last year there was a day of prayer on 11th July on the same theme, and police said it was the quietest 12th for years. So prayer definitely changes things.’*

You will be welcome to come and go as you please in any of the three locations.

There will be people to lead each hour, but most of the time will be spent in silent prayer.

Refreshments will be offered throughout the day.

United Reformed Church General Assembly to discuss same-sex marriage

The General Assembly of the United Reformed Church will meet for a one-day, one issue Assembly in Birmingham on 27 June to discuss the marriage of same-sex couples.

The General Assembly is the executive body of the United Reformed Church and usually meets biennially to discuss matters affecting the life of the Church, the nation and the world. This next meeting of General Assembly will be solely concerned with the marriage of same-sex couples. General Assembly first discussed the issue at its July 2014 meeting. Since then, a Church-wide consultation has been held and the matter is returning to General Assembly for a decision to be made.

The main resolution before General Assembly reflects the highly devolved nature of the United

Reformed Church and its decision-making processes. The resolution suggests that it is not appropriate for the denomination to express a single view on the issue of same-sex marriage. The motion therefore proposes that the decision on whether an individual United Reformed Church congregation can host marriages of same-sex couples should lie with each local church.

If passed, the resolution would enable local churches to decide to offer church marriage to same-sex couples if they so wish. Those churches who do not wish to offer marriage services to same-sex couples would not be compelled to do so.

Although it is possible that the resolution will be passed with immediate effect, General Assembly is being recommended to decide that the matter should be referred back to the denomination's 13 synods for a period of further consultation. If General Assembly does decide to refer the matter to the synods, and more than one third of the synods (five or more) vote against the proposal then it falls; otherwise it would be brought back to General Assembly in July 2016, where a two-thirds majority would confirm it as the Church's decision.

The Rev John Proctor, URC General Secretary, said: "This is an important decision and requires wisdom and care from all members of General Assembly. The eyes of the denomination will be on us, and we recognise that any outcome reached next Saturday is likely to cause some to rejoice and others to lament. As Assembly engages in this discussion, we must listen attentively, and remember that whatever our own convictions, there will be many in the United Reformed Church who take opposing views that are as deeply and sincerely held as our own."

Anything the General Assembly decides about the registration of buildings will only apply to United Reformed churches in England and Wales. Marriage law in Scotland is concerned with the nomination of celebrants rather than with the registration of buildings; a separate clause of the assembly resolution refers to the Scottish situation.

The island jurisdictions (Jersey, Guernsey and Man) have no provision at present for the marriage of same-sex couples.

The many United Reformed Church local congregations in England and Wales which share their building with Christians of another tradition (either as a local ecumenical church, or

even through a regular tenancy) will not usually be able to act unilaterally in this matter.

* United Reformed Church <http://www.urc.org.uk/>

Christian Aid welcomes report on climate change health threats

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Dr Alison Doig, Christian Aid's Principle Climate Change Advisor, said climate change threatened to undo much of the health gains made in recent years.

She said: "Climate change is effectively development in reverse. The world has made huge progress in the last 50 years reducing poverty and eradicating disease. But this report shows that climate change has the potential to unravel much of this good work.

“Climate change threatens health directly through heat waves, drought and floods, as well as from secondary impacts such as displacement, malnutrition and mental health problems.

“The report is right to point out though that by tackling climate change by embracing a low carbon world there are huge opportunities for better global health and addressing other concerns such as migration and food insecurity.

“Christian Aid partners have experience of this first hand. In Malawi the use of improved cooking stoves reduce deforestation and take polluting wood smoke out of the house. In Zimbabwe climate resilient agriculture protects against changing rainfall and increases food production, and in the Philippines early flood warning systems save lives and help people recover their livelihoods more quickly after a disaster.

“The health benefits from better air quality through phase out of coal burning are obvious but renewable energy can also enable clinics in remote areas to keep medication refrigerated and provides power and light to allow better care to be given through the night.”

Dr Doig also welcomed the intervention from Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby, who wrote in the New York Times over the weekend with the Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew of the Eastern Orthodox Church about the health implications of climate change.

She said: “With the leaders of the Anglican Communion and Eastern Orthodox Church joining with Pope Francis we now have all three major strands of the Christian church speaking with a unified voice on climate change.

“Justin Welby is absolutely right to highlight the plight of the poor and call for a strong outcome at the UN summit in Paris which will put us on track to decarbonise in the coming years.”

* Christian Aid <http://www.christianaid.org.uk/index.aspx>

Media digest

Silver and Golden Jubilarians - Diocese of Down and Connor

<http://www.downandconnor.org/blog/2015/06/22/silver-golden-jubilarians/>

Gardai ‘knew of paedophile priest’ - News Letter

churchnewsireland@gmail.com

<http://www.newsletter.co.uk/gardai-knew-of-paedophile-priest-1-6815427>

Historical abuse inquiry live: Police in the Republic knew about the activities of Fr Brendan Smyth, inquiry hears - Belfast Telegraph

<http://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/northern-ireland/historical-abuse-inquiry-live-police-in-the-republic-knew-about-the-activities-of-fr-brendan-smyth-inquiry-hears-31326666.html>

Ex-Catholic archbishop sues RTÉ over Mission to Prey show - Irish Times

<http://www.irishtimes.com/news/crime-and-law/courts/high-court/ex-catholic-archbishop-sues-rt%C3%A9-over-mission-to-prey-show-1.2261654>

We've broken the law - prosecute us, over 200 abortion activists challenge - News Letter

<http://www.newsletter.co.uk/we-ve-broken-the-law-prosecute-us-over-200-abortion-activists-challenge-police-1-6813947>

Same-sex marriage bid goes to court in Northern Ireland - Belfast Telegraph

<http://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/northern-ireland/samesex-marriage-bid-goes-to-court-in-northern-ireland-31325888.html>

If 'Satanic Islam' pastor James McConnell goes to jail I will go with him, insists Muslim cleric - Belfast Telegraph

<http://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/northern-ireland/if-satanic-islam-pastor-james-mcconnell-goes-to-jail-i-will-go-with-him-insists-muslim-cleric-31325696.html>

Reuters/Tel

Reports that credit unions need new rules to reflect the broader range of financial services offered by the local loan and savings organisations, the Bank of England has said. The bank's Prudential Regulation Authority (PRA) published proposals to reform regulation of credit unions, which, the reports say, are being promoted by policymakers and the Church of England as a viable alternative to costly payday lenders and a banking sector tarnished by scandals and the financial crisis.

<http://www.reuters.com/article/2015/06/24/boe-creditunions-idUSL8N0ZA1JM20150624>

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/finance/newsbysector/banksandfinance/11696452/Credit-unions-need-more-freedom-to-rival-payday-lenders-and-banks-says-Bank-of-England.html>

IB Times UK

Article focusing on the Church of England's £6.7bn investment fund and climate change, asking if it is an ethical dilemma? It says the Church has adopted a policy of what it calls "intensive engagement" with companies that make a significant contribution to global greenhouse gas emissions, but quotes the Revd Dr Darrell Hannah, of the diocese of Oxford who advocates more radical divestment. It also refers to the Bishop of Salisbury, Nicholas Holtam speaking on the environment.

<http://www.ibtimes.co.uk/focus-church-englands-6-7bn-investment-fund-climate-change-ethical-dilemma-1507683>

Mirror

Report that headteacher, Stephanie O'Grady, at St Patrick's CofE Primary Academy in Birmingham has been sacked following accusations that pupils' answers were changed after their Key Stage 2 maths test had finished. Chair of governors Gemma Gathercole is quoted saying, "We pride ourselves on high standards and high expectations. In this instance, the actions of one individual did not meet those expectations." It states following an investigation a decision was made to annul the mental mathematics test for the whole cohort.

<http://www.mirror.co.uk/news/uk-news/stephanie-ogrady-headteacher-sacked-amid-5943577>

Times

Article examining the issues around the tribunal of Canon Jeremy Pemberton who claims the church discriminated against him in withdrawing his licence following his marriage to his same sex partner. It says the case centres on two competing public policies. One being the prohibition of discrimination on account of sexual orientation that has been enshrined in law since 2003, the other is the freedom of a faith community to conduct its affairs in freedom and without let to its doctrines.

<http://www.thetimes.co.uk/tto/law/article4478953.ece>

Guard

Columnist Anthea Butler writes on how forgiveness is rooted in the Christian faith in the light of the Charleston shootings. It looks at forgiveness and faith and tackling racism.

<http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2015/jun/24/charleston-shooting-church-faith-forgiveness-racism>

Guard/Ind

Articles on the release of an "unofficial sequel" to the Oscar-winning 1981 film Chariots of Fire. *The Last Race* will star Joseph Fiennes as the athlete Eric Liddell, and will be one of the few international films to be screened in China. They state Liddell was born in Tientsin, northern China, to Scottish missionaries, and returned there a year after his victory in the 400m at the Paris Olympics in 1924. He became a hero to the Chinese people, partly due to his athletic achievements, but mostly for his heroics while interned during the second world war at a Japanese prisoner of war camp in 1943. The film appears likely to skirt over Liddell's Christianity due to the Chinese government's antipathy towards religion.

<http://www.theguardian.com/film/2015/jun/24/chariots-of-fire-sequel-greenlit-in-china-joseph-fiennes-eric-liddell>

<http://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/films/news/the-last-race-unofficial-chariots-of-fire-sequel-starring-joseph-fiennes-in-the-running-10340745.html>

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