

Church News Ireland



Image of the day – Raft Race for Portrush RNLI

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News -

Battle of the Atlantic remembrance service in Derry
Presbyterian Women - 'a focus beyond ourselves'
Ulster Orchestra concert Bangor Abbey
Illumination St Mary's Church Westport
SEFF Remembrance service, Derry
Counterpoint Choir concert Coleraine

Education -

Northern Ireland pupils building lasting links with a school near the front lines in Ukraine
St Columb's College Pennyburn leavers told keep the College close to their hearts
120+ Duke of Edinburgh Awards at Foyle College

Cathedral Calls -

Joint Pilgrimage marks 800th Anniversary of Canonisation of St Laurence O'Toole

Clergy and ministry -

Debate on Marriage Council report at C of I Synod raises need to address changing scenario of marriage

In the media -

Church of Ireland school in Mayo is being 'blaggarded' - Western People

Heritage -

Handel's 'Messiah' - the Lurgan connection

Speaking to the soul -

Short reading and a prayer daily on this site

Image of the day

Raft Race for Portrush RNLI

Following the excitement of last weekend's North West 200, Portrush is preparing to welcome visitors once again for the highly anticipated Portrush Raft Race, taking place on the West Strand on 24th May.

Organised by the Portrush Yacht Club, this long-standing event has been raising funds for the Portrush RNLI for over 40 years.

Spectators can look forward to a lively and entertaining display of creativity, as dozens of homemade rafts take to the water—some successfully completing the course, others perhaps less so.

The Raft Race will start at 3.30pm

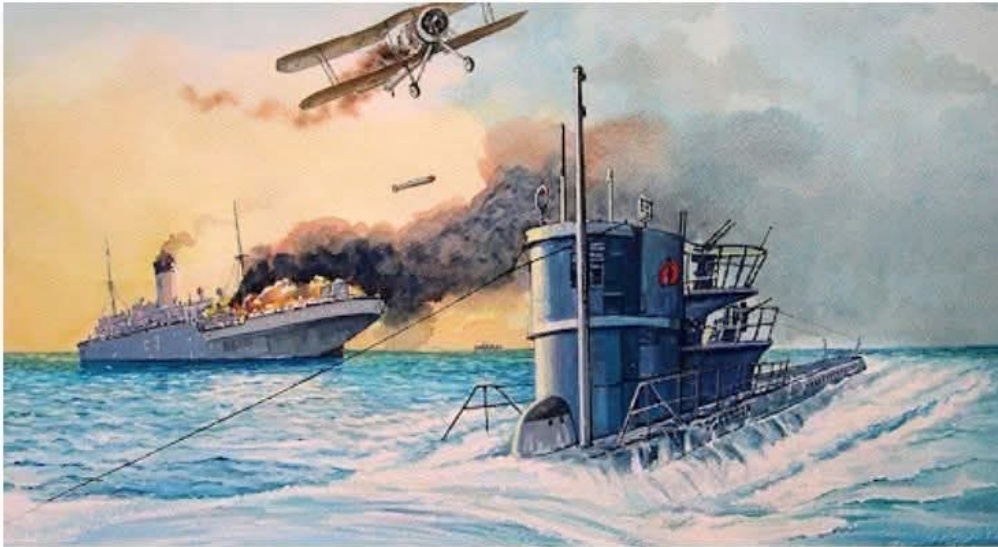
News

Battle of the Atlantic remembrance service in Derry

A service to commemorate the 80th anniversary of the end of the Battle of the Atlantic, will take place at All Saints' Church Clooney on Sunday 18th May 2025 at 11am.

ALL SAINTS' CHURCH CLOONEY

BATTLE OF THE ATLANTIC REMEMBRANCE



SUNDAY 18TH MAY, 11AM

We will be joined for this special service by the Lord Lieutenant, representatives of the Armed Forces, veterans, and those who served in the Royal Navy. A parade to the church, led by a specially organised band, will precede the service, setting a tone of dignity and reverence. The band will also assist in leading our worship.

We warmly invite all parishioners and members of the wider community to attend this important event. Your presence is a powerful gesture of respect and gratitude to those who served, gave their lives or who were physically and emotionally affected by the conflict.

Everyone Welcome.



Presbyterian Women - 'a focus beyond ourselves'

The new President of Presbyterian Women (PW), Mrs Linda Beattie of Joymount Presbyterian Church in Carrickfergus, has said that she felt 'extremely privileged and honoured' to be stepping into the role.

She was speaking at the organisation's annual conference, which took place at the Presbyterian Church in Ireland's (PCI) **Assembly Buildings in the heart of Belfast** on Saturday (10 May).



The new president also praised the ‘incredible generosity’ of women across the organisation’s 450 groups - which are a part of PCI’s women’s ministry - when it was announced that last year, they had raised around £350,000 (€415,000) to support the development of women’s ministry in PCI, and the all-Ireland denomination’s overseas mission and mission at home.

Speaking at the event, which has become one of the largest annual gatherings of Christian women in Ireland with upwards of 1000 attending, Mrs Beattie said, “After taking early retirement seven years ago, I imagined a slightly slower pace of life, but God had different ideas and plans for me. I have really felt God’s presence and guidance and I know He will be with me throughout this incoming year.”

During the conference, one of the invited guests, PCI's **Moderator, Right Reverend Dr Richard Murray**, gave a short address of welcome. The conference, which is the largest event organised by PCI after its General Assembly, also heard from **Siân Wyn Rees, Head of The Bible Society, Wales**, who spoke on the theme for the year - 'God...ever present', which is taken from Psalm 46:1 which says 'God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble.'

There have been women's organisations within PCI for over 150 years. Speaking about the event, **Mrs Pauline Kennedy**, PCI's Women's Ministry and Presbyterian Women Development Officer, said that, this year sees the 120th anniversary of the creation of two of those organisations, the Women's Association for Home Mission and the Presbyterian Women's Union. "Both are part of the DNA of today's organisation, which has always had a focus beyond the women themselves, either through supporting mission overseas, or mission at home."

Mrs Kennedy explained that today, Presbyterian Women supports **the work of PCI's deaconesses**, the training of new student deaconesses, and the work of South Belfast Friendship House, alongside PCI's global mission workers. Alongside these are the Home and Overseas Special Projects.

On Saturday, the conference heard that this year's **Special Home Project** will come alongside the work being undertaken in **Sligo Presbyterian Church** through 'Haven'. Mrs Kennedy explained that it was, "A multicultural outreach ministry of the congregation, that seeks to respond to the



practical, emotional and spiritual needs of people from all backgrounds in the local area. It is an amazing ministry and we hope to raise £15,000 (€18,000) to support it. This will include the purchase of digital translation equipment to help further its work of reaching out to others with the good news of the gospel.”

An active member of PW for over 15 years, in February of this year as **PW overseas vice president, Mrs Beattie travelled to Hungary and Ukraine** with her predecessor as president, Mrs Ellen Hillen, and Rev Uel Marrs, Secretary to PCI’s Council for Global Mission. Together they saw for themselves the ongoing work of the **Hungarian Reformed Church**, PCI’s partner in Transcarpathia, western Ukraine, in order to determine how Presbyterian Women could best support its work in Ukraine.



Ards and North Down Borough Council

Ulster Orchestra Midsummer Concert

Summer, Shimmer, Perfect Days

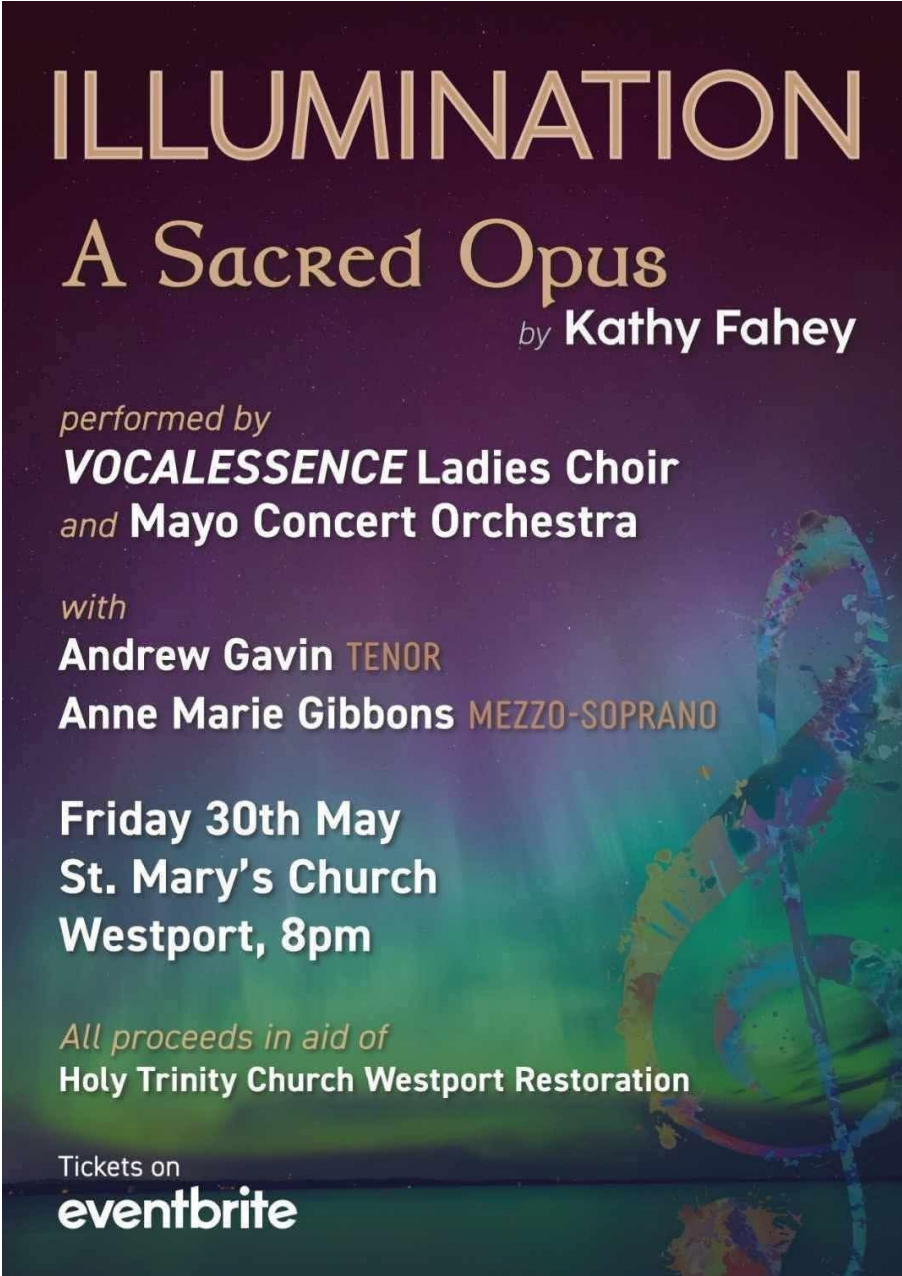
Bangor Abbey | Friday 20 June | 7pm | Tickets £12 adult/£8 child

“We spent two of those days in Ukraine, and my overriding memory is undoubtedly the people. In the midst of living in a country at war and the lack of hope for an end date, the people that we met showed great resilience. Their passion and dedication for helping and encouraging others, their graciousness and their strength was astonishing. Their love and reliance on God are what keep them going, a faith so strong, we have much to learn from them,” Mrs Beattie said. On the back of the visit, the conference also heard that this year’s **Special Overseas Project** would focus on Ukraine.

May 15, 2025

“While there are many areas of need in this war-torn country, one area of great need is the Church’s crisis centre, based in the town of Berehove, which we visited.

“Twenty-two families live there in very cramped conditions, sharing a kitchen and bathroom facilities. The bathroom area is in the greatest need of updating, so we hope to raise £15,000 to help provide families with new and improved facilities. A small but practical thing to do, we hope and pray that this will add to a better sense of well-being, as well as



ILLUMINATION

A Sacred Opus
by **Kathy Fahey**

performed by
VOCALLESSENCE Ladies Choir
and **Mayo Concert Orchestra**

with
Andrew Gavin **TENOR**
Anne Marie Gibbons **MEZZO-SOPRANO**

Friday 30th May
St. Mary's Church
Westport, 8pm

All proceeds in aid of
Holy Trinity Church Westport Restoration

Tickets on
eventbrite

helping to ease other financial strains for the Church's Diaconal Centre," Mrs Beattie said.

Talking of the year ahead, the new president said, "There is nothing more inspiring than to meet and come alongside a group of women, eager and keen to worship together, expand their knowledge of God together, and use the gifts and talents they have been given. I am looking forward to joining with many of them as we take on our theme of 'God...ever present', getting into his Word and being

**SEFF's 2nd Anniversary Service of
Remembrance and Thanksgiving**



Taking back control, Reclaiming our Voice

**Recognising the impact of 'The Troubles' upon
the people of the North West.**

All Saints Clooney, Church of Ireland

Derry/Londonderry

Sunday 18th May 2025 @ 3pm

Conducted by Canon David McBeth



encouraged as we realise His presence with us at all times, especially in group settings or at PW services.

Mrs Beattie concluded by saying, “Presbyterian Women is not a stand-alone organisation, as it contributes so much to church life, and many of our women serve in so many ways within our congregations, creating effective women’s ministry, reaching out across the generations and sharing God’s love with all. My go to verse for this year will be Isaiah 41:10 ‘Fear not, for I am with you, be not dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, I will help you, I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.’ I am looking forward to sharing this year with as many of our groups as possible, and pray that we can face it with boldness and courage, and in the knowledge that God is and ever will be...ever present.”

Education

Northern Ireland pupils building lasting links with a school near the front lines in Ukraine

This inventive programme pairs up 50 schools from both the UK and Ukraine through a common passion for literature.

A quaint school in the Northern Irish countryside has announced a pioneering international link-up with a school close to the turbulent front lines in Ukraine.

May 15, 2025

Kilmoyle Primary School, nestled in the village of Ballybogey, Co Antrim, has proudly joined the **UK–Ukraine School Partnerships Programme**, courtesy of a British Council scheme backed by funding from the UK Government.

This programme pairs up 50 schools from both the UK and Ukraine through a common passion for literature. The initiative aims to cultivate cultural ties, bolster resilience, and enhance the wellbeing of students.



DIRECTED BY
LESLEY MAGEE

WITH SPECIAL
GUESTS:

HELEN HUTCHINSON
(MEZZO SOPRANO)
GWYNETH REID (CELLO)
TIM CAIRNS (FLUTE)
INTRODUCING MAX MCGINLEY

SUPPORTING THE WORK OF
LOCAL FUNDRAISING & CHARITIES

COUNTERPOINT CHOIR
SUMMER CONCERT

14 JUNE 2025
AT 7:30 PM

ST PATRICK'S CHURCH
COLERAINE

SUGGESTED
SUBSCRIPTION :
£10 AT THE DOOR



ALL
VERY
WELCOME

FOR MORE INFO, FOLLOW
US ON SOCIAL MEDIA :



Motivated by the arrival of Ukrainian students amid the war in 2022, Kilmoyle Primary School embraced this initiative as a means to both provide support and enrich mutual comprehension among its students. Courtesy Belfast Live

St Columb's College Pennyburn leavers told keep the College close to their hearts

Year 14 leaving students from St Columb's College congregated on St. Patrick's Church, Pennyburn on Thursday evening with their parents to mark their Valedictory Mass and heard Principal, Mrs. Caroline McLaughlin asked them to 'keep the College close to their hearts.'

The students were greeted at the door of the church by Principal, Mrs. Caroline McLaughlin and Year 14 Head Mr. Michael McLaughlin before Mass was celebrated with a packed congregation by School Chaplain, Fr. Sean O'Donnell.

In her opening address, Mrs. McLaughlin asked both pupils and parents to keep St Columb's close to their hearts and reminded the leaving students how proud she and everyone involved with the College, were of them as they prepare to take their leave and continue on life's journey beyond St. Columb's. Courtesy Ireland Live

120+ Duke of Edinburgh Awards at Foyle College

Congratulations to the very many pupils who have recently completed their Bronze, Silver and Gold Duke of Edinburgh Awards.

“We are so proud of the 10 Gold, 55 Silver and 56 Bronze Award recipients!

“Well done on your commitment and determination to your respective DofE Northern Ireland Awards”

Cathedral Calls

Joint Pilgrimage marks 800th Anniversary of Canonisation of St Laurence O'Toole

A joint pilgrimage for the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Dublin and Church of Ireland Dioceses of Dublin and Glendalough in honour of St Laurence O'Toole, the Patron Saint of Dublin, whose seat as Archbishop of Dublin (in 1162) was in Christ Church Cathedral took place over the weekend.

The pilgrimage left Dublin Airport on Saturday morning (May 11) led by the two archbishops, **Archbishop Dermot Farrell and Archbishop Michael Jackson**. Significantly, both the rector and the parish priest of Castledermot, where Laurence O'Toole was born, were participants in the pilgrimage.



Archbishop Michael Jackson and Archbishop Dermot Farrell.

The pilgrims' first stop was in **the cathedral of Rouen** where they were guests of the Archbishop of Rouen. The highlight of the visit was Vespers in Rouen Cathedral at which Archbishop Jackson was President.



The resting place of St Laurence O'Toole.

They travelled to Eu in Normandy, where Laurence died in 1180, early on Sunday.

They were received by the Mayor and participated in the Eucharist on Sunday morning in the Collegiate Church of St Laurence where the pilgrims were joined by the **Irish Ambassador to France Mr Niall Burgess** and his wife.

May 15, 2025

This commemorated the 800th anniversary of the Canonisation of Laurence O'Toole. In the afternoon they



Archbishop Michael Jackson and Dean Dermot Dunne.

joined a procession of the relics of St Laurence at Vespers and went from there to the hillside chapel overlooking Eu and the sea where, as they are told, Laurence on his way to negotiate with King Henry II, looked out over Eu and said it was where he wished to be laid to rest. And so it happened.

Monday gave the group an opportunity to tour the Chateau d'Eu and to consolidate friendships with the citizens of Eu.

“The group returned home late on Monday evening happily satisfied by how generously we had been received, by how our ecumenical horizons had been broadened and by how

committed the people of Eu are to the living memory of Laurence – a saint for reconciliation of the powerful, for simplicity of life and for compassion for the disadvantaged,” Archbishop Jackson commented.

The Archbishop thanked **Father Ivan Tonge, PP** of Ringsend, **Dean Dermot Dunne** and all who organised the trip. He also paid tribute to his fellow pilgrims. In 2028 the people of Dublin will mark both 900th anniversary of birth of Laurence O’Toole and the millennium of Christ Church Cathedral, Dublin.

Clergy and ministry

Debate on Marriage Council report at C of I Synod raises need to address changing scenario of marriage

The report of the Marriage Council was presented to members of General Synod meeting online on Tuesday evening May 13.

Proposing the report, the **Revd Dr Leonard Madden**, on behalf of the Revd Carlton Baxtor to whom he extended get well wishes. He thanked Bishop Pat Storey for her time as chair of the Marriage Council stating that her leadership and enthusiasm had been pivotal in shaping the council’s ethos and direction of travel. He also thanked the Revd Jonny Campbell Smyth for his contribution.

He highlighted the council's counselling services and urged clergy not to feel alone in their ministry as trained and professional counsellors were there to help.

He also drew members' attention to the Clergy Retreat to be held in the coming months. He said that the retreats had become a feature of the council's work and had proved popular.

Encouraging clergy and their spouses to take part he said: "The focus of the retreats is on you, the married couple, and giving you space to be you away from the demands of parish life, as well as the freedom to explore issues that may be relevant to your marriage at the time."

Dr Madden also encouraged members of Synod to take up available spaces on the Marriage Council board.

Bishop Pat Storey formally second the report.

Speaking to the report, **Bishop Paul Colton** (Cork, Cloyne and Ross) appealed for a new attitude to couples when they come to our churches seeking to be married. He said the scenario of marriage had changed.

He pointed out that the old marriage laws inferred a number of conditions which had since been eroded. He said he was concerned that without an openness and a spirit of hospitality the church may be pushing young people away into the arms of others. That in part may be the cause of Church of Ireland weddings amounting to 1.1% of the total, he suggested. Meanwhile, he said Spiritualists were doing 7.9% of marriages.

“We have a very strong tradition in the Church of Ireland that people get married in their own church and that’s that. Sometimes people want to get married in a church where they met, or where they got engaged. I would like us to be more open to people getting married in churches other than the church they [traditionally] attended. We’re stuck in a rut and may push people away. So I’m appealing that when couples come and say ‘yes we are from somewhere else but we fell in love on Howth Head’ or wherever that we are open and hospitable to them,” Bishop Colton said.

A motion relating to the terms of reference of the Marriage Council, removing the need for a bishop to be among the membership, was proposed.

Opposing the motion, the **Revd Jonny Campbell-Smyth** said that role of the bishop at the council brought a special spirit of guidance to proceedings. He also asked why every other committee of General Synod had a representative from the House of Bishops and why should their presence be removed now.

Archdeacon Mark Harvey agreed with the Mr Campbell-Smyth stating that leadership was very important in this area and asked to see an episcopal representative on the Marriage Council.

The **Archbishop of Armagh** said that the bishops had considered this and they felt that the bishops did not have to be there of necessity and that they would, of course, be present to speak about marriage in the public space and to offer support.

The motion was defeated meaning that members of Synod felt that there should be a bishop on the Marriage Council.

In the media

Church of Ireland school in Mayo is being 'blaggarded' - Western People

Works are ongoing at the former Scoil Pádraig site in Westport, which was originally earmarked for Holy Trinity NS, Keith Bourke writes in the Western People 13/05/2025

Councillors believe religious discrimination is at play in the treatment of a Church of Ireland national school in Westport.

Holy Trinity NS has been blocked from progressing its plans for a new school. Parents, teachers and pupils from the school previously held a protest on a site they say was promised to them for a new building, but it is instead being allocated to another school in the town.

The former Scoil Pádraig site is being allocated to the Sacred Heart Secondary School, which the department says is in urgent need of temporary accommodation.

Planning concerns have recently been raised around development at the Altamont Street site.

Complaints have been made about alleged unauthorised development at the site by the Department of Education. However, Mayo County Council has said the complaint has no basis and has closed an enforcement file on the matter. [Learn more](#)

Cllr Peter Flynn hit out at the council's Director of Services with responsibility for planning Catherine McConnell for not attending last Friday's meeting of Westport-Belmullet Municipal District, either in person or remotely.

"Honestly, it is simply not acceptable," he remarked.

Municipal district manager Seamus O'Mongáin explained that Ms McConnell was not available that day but had furnished councillors with a report on the issue.

"I am certainly not in any way satisfied with the report," replied Cllr Flynn. "Here you have a situation where you have a complaint made to planning enforcement in January. You could issue a report in four weeks saying there was no issue there. In normal circumstances, if you get a response in four years you are doing well.

"You actually have a building on Altamont Street, which is an architectural area of conservation and nobody seems to care. You also have a situation where new vehicular access has been created out onto a regional road, and nobody seems to care. You have a situation where windows and doors were pulled out of a building which is an architectural area of conservation and nobody seems to care within Mayo Co Council," he added.

May 15, 2025

Cllr Flynn asked if the Department of Education is exempt from planning regulations and requested that the council write to the Department.

“Is it a religious situation that we have here? Are you treated differently if you are not a Catholic? Because that’s what it seems like in this particular scenario,” he said.

Heritage



Handel’s ‘Messiah’ - the Lurgan connection

William Brownlow and Handel’s “Messiah”

William Brownlow (1726 – 1794), son of William and Elizabeth Brownlow, at the age of sixteen, played the harpsichord in the first performance of Handel’s “Messiah.”

William was a talented musician. He spent time in Florence, Italy where he honed his harpsichord skills under the training of the Abbé Felice Dona. He also studied in Naples and Rome. (The photograph is of a painting which hangs in Brownlow House depicting William, Elizabeth and young William playing the harpsichord).

Handel's "Messiah" was first performed in the New Musick Hall in Fishamble Street, Dublin on 13 April 1742 as a charity concert benefitting three charities – prisoners' debt relief, the Mercers Hospital and the Charitable Infirmary. Handel was given permission from St. Patrick's and Christ Church cathedrals to use their choirs and he even had his own organ shipped to Ireland for the performance. To ensure that the audience would be the largest possible, gentlemen were asked to remove their swords and women were asked not to wear hoops in their dresses.

The following is a quotation from an old edition of **"Donnybrook Parish Magazine"**:

"The orchestra are seated, looking very important, so let us glance at them. Matthew Dubourg, Handel's friend and associate is the leader of the band, Lord Mornington is the President of the Society, Lord Belamont and Dean Burke are the violoncellists, Lord Lucan plays the flute, Lady Freke, the Hon. William Brownlow, and Dr. Quin the harpsichords, and Mr. Maclaine the organ.

The four soloists are: Signora Avolio, soprano, Mrs Cibber, contralto and Messrs. Church and Rosingrave.

May 15, 2025

The Choir (Members of both Cathedrals): Rev. William Taverner, John Phipps, John Church, John Mason, Rev. J. E. Smyth, Rev. J. Worrall, Rev. W. Jones. William Lambs, Robert Hill, Ralph Rosingrave, Robert Woffington, Joseph Ward, John Griffiths, John Hill and James Bailys.

The Boys: William Cooley, William Williams, George Magee, Samuel Murphy, George Betts and John Marsh.

Mr Handel, portly and gracious, is seated nearby in the high old wooden chair which Robert Woffington, Choral of St. Patrick's, borrowed for this important occasion."

The takings from the concert were around £400 and each charity received about £127 which secured the release of 142 indebted prisoners.

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

May 15, 2025

Church News Ireland

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**Link in Monday through Saturday from
early morning**

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