



At the launch of Cork LGBT Awareness Week 2015 were (l-r) Chief Superintendent Mick Finn, Valerie Mulcahy, and Bishop Paul Colton

Bishop of Cork Attends Launch of Cork LGBT Awareness Week 2015

This week the Bishop of Cork, the Right Reverend Dr Paul Colton attended the launch, in Cork City Hall, of the 2015 Cork LGBT Awareness week. The speakers this year included the Deputy Lord Mayor of Cork, Cllr

Kenneth O'Flynn, Chief Superintendent Mick O'Flynn of *An Garda Síochána*, and this year's guest of honour, Valerie Mulcahy, of the Cork Ladies' Football team.

Cork LGBT Awareness Week is organised to acknowledge and demonstrate that LGBT individuals are family members, community residents, constituents, citizens, visitors, service users and service providers. The purpose of the week is to advance Objective 86 of the Cork City Plan: "The gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender communities will be enabled to fully participate in the social, cultural and economic life of Cork City."

LGBT Awareness Week is supported by an inter-agency group made up of: Cork City Council, HSE South, Cork ETB, Dept. of Social Protection, An Garda Síochána, Cork City Partnership, LINC, Gay Community Development, Cork Trans Support Group, Ballyphehane Togher CDP and Sexual Health Centre.

Bishop Colton said:

This is a week organised by our partner groups in civic society in Cork. I'm glad to support to support these partners, not least because the week also aims to tackle the homophobia that

still, shockingly, exists in our society. In addition, it is important, from a Christian perspective, to acknowledge that many LGBT people are also people of faith, taking part to the full in the life of our churches, as they have been for centuries; they make a significant contribution in our spiritual and religious life. More generally, as a Church, we want to affirm that our doors are open to all people, whoever they are, and wherever they are on their journey of faith.

C of I parishioner celebrates 105th birthday as PCI Adelaide House resident

Born at her parent's house on Belfast's Donegall Avenue at the end of the 20th Century's first decade, Eileen has lived in the city all her life, making Adelaide House her home in 2008. Her 84-year-old son Ernest also lives there.

One of Ireland's oldest living people, the year 1910 was a turbulent time. A constitutional crisis over the 'People's Budget' led to stalemate after two General Elections, leaving the Irish



Parliamentary Party holding the balance of power at Westminster.

It was also the year that saw Dublin MP, Sir Edward Carson, elected Parliamentary leader of the Irish Unionists and the death of King Edward VII, three days before Eileen was born. Not that she was aware of any of this. But one of the great-grandmother's earliest memories is of members of her family going off to the First World War; her brother was in the Royal Navy.

“My grandparents were from Ballymena and came to Belfast to find work. My father was an antique cabinetmaker on Sandy Row and my mother looked after my brother and me. I

remember the rationing during the first war and my mother ripping out my brothers outgrown jumpers so she could knit jumpers for me with the wool,” she said. Talking about her oldest resident, Norma Picking, who manages Adelaide House, said, “Eileen is a lovely genteel lady who has the graciousness of a queen and that is her to a tee.

“She has a great sense of humour and an infectious twinkle in her eye and will really enjoy the party. She’s a lifelong Linfield supporter and loves the fact that her son Ernest lives here too. She loves to watch him from her window doing the garden. They are both real assets to the home.”

Adelaide House caters for 44 residents of all denominations, providing residential accommodation that offers care and support to older people within a Christian environment.

Worship services take place on a regular basis, which is important to Eileen, as her faith is important to her. Until she was unable to go out, she attended St Simon’s Church of Ireland on Donegall Road her whole life.

But what does she put down to the secret of her long life? Two things: Her Christian faith and the love of her family.

New UK health minister under fire for opposing abortion

The Government's new health minister has come under fire from pro-abortion lobby groups because he has previously declared his opposition to the practice.

Catholic Ipswich MP Ben Gummer, who has been appointed Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Health, said in a [Guardian](#) interview in 2008: "I am personally and principally opposed to abortion."

Mr Gummer told the Guardian: "I think abortion is too high in Britain and that something does need to be done about that. I would vote for a reduction [in the upper limit of 24 weeks], though I would have to make that decision after reviewing the evidence. I am personally and principally opposed to abortion but I don't think it would be responsible to try and ban it outright."

Following Mr Gummer's appointment this week Clare Murphy, director of external affairs at the British Pregnancy Advisory Service (Bpas), told the [Independent](#): "It is concerning that ministers

with roles that involve women's health and equality apparently oppose abortion – their stance does not reflect the view of their electorate.”

She said: “The last Parliament sadly saw a number of attempts to introduce fresh restrictions on abortion.”

Mr Gummer responded to the comments by saying: “Change to abortion law has always been a matter for Parliament, not for the government. It is accepted parliamentary practice that proposals for changes in the law on abortion come from backbench members, not ministers, and that decisions are made on the basis of free votes, as with all matters of conscience.”

Rowers circumnavigate Singapore Island to support The Mission to Seafarers

The epic maritime endurance challenge ‘Mission RASI’ [Row Around Singapore Island], which took place 22 and 23 April as part of Singapore's 50th Anniversary [of independence] celebrations,



was successfully completed in 23 hours and 15 minutes – within the tough target time of 24 hours.

The rowers survived a violent storm at sea overnight, and half way through the daring challenge, which threatened to halt the race altogether.

The RASI team rowing boats Singapore Spirit 1 & 2 were followed during the challenge by a large flotilla of support vessels with crew and volunteers including the spectacular Royal Albatross Tall Ship which carried families of the rowers, supporters and the press and media.

The event that started and finished at Resorts World Sentosa has raised over S\$750,000 for global charity The Mission to Seafarers who provide help and support to the 1.5 million men and women who crew the world's merchant fleet. Over S\$550,000 was raised in cash donations with a further S\$200,000 being given as gifts and services in kind. Fundraising continued at several post-RASI celebration events until 9 May so the final figure is expected to be higher.

More at -

<http://www.anglicannews.org/news/2015/05/rowers-circumnavigate-singapore-island-to-support-the-mission-to-seafarers.aspx>

Church Times overview of C of I General Synod

In this week's Church Times, the 'international newspaper' of the Anglican Communion - Gregg Ryan reports from the Church of Ireland's General Synod meeting

Human sexuality

The church select committee established at the Church of Ireland's General Synod in 2013 to report on human sexuality - which includes the issue of same-sex marriage to be voted on by referendum in the Irish Republic later this month - has been given a further two years to complete its work after a motion was passed at the Synod.

This is despite a widespread concern in the Evangelical wing of the Church that there could be lasting division, largely along North-South lines, among the episcopate, on the issue that was described by one speaker as "the elephant in the room"; and the forebodings of an unnamed "senior member" of the hierarchy, predicting a possible schism in a comment to a Northern newspaper.

In a room next to the venue for the Archbishops' annual press conference, members of the pro-gay group Changing Attitude Ireland were listening to the retired Archdeacon of Dublin, the Ven. Gordon Linney, explain why he had changed his mind in favour of a "Yes" vote, while the Archbishop of Armagh, Dr Richard Clarke, was dismissing the idea of schism to the media, pointing out that there were always divergences of opinion within the Church, but that this did not stop members' agreeing to disagree agreeably.

"We are not a church community which, for the most part, makes official declarations as to how people should vote," Dr Clarke said. He went on to say that churchpeople needed "to decide before God what they believe will truly be for the common good, the good of all."

The Archbishop of Dublin, Dr Michael Jackson, said that Irish Anglicanism did not work in a prescriptive way. "It is not our way of working. I wouldn't in any way go as far as to say that the absence of a public statement [on the referendum] betokens internal division."

The acceptance, without debate, of the motion allowing the select committee two more years did not succeed in holding back the ongoing tide of comment. A week before the Synod, 43 clergy signed a joint letter to *The Irish Times* endorsing same-sex marriages, a move openly supported by the Bishop of Cork, Cloyne & Ross (the Rt Revd Paul Colton), and the Bishop of Cashel & Ossory (the Rt Revd Michael Burrows).

They were rebuffed by two Belfast priests: the Revd Dr Alan McCann (Connor), and the Revd Tim Anderson (Down) in a letter to the *Church of Ireland Gazette* accusing them of "teaching error". The two priests called on them "to repent

of this, and to teach what the Church has taught about marriage according to scripture".

They referred to the 2012 affirmation of the General Synod that "The Church of Ireland affirms, according to our Lord's teaching, that marriage is in its purpose a union permanent and lifelong, for better or worse, till death do them part, of one man with one woman, to the exclusion of all others on either side, for the procreation and nurture of children, for the hallowing and right direction of the natural instincts and affections, and for the mutual society, help, and comfort which the one ought to have of the other, both in prosperity and adversity."

The resolution further states: "The Church of Ireland recognises, for itself and of itself, no other understanding of marriage than that provided for in the totality of Canon 31. The Church of Ireland teaches therefore that faithfulness within marriage is the only normative context for sexual intercourse. Members of the Church of Ireland are required by the Catechism to keep their bodies in 'temperance, soberness and chastity'. Clergy are called in the Ordinal to be 'wholesome examples and patterns to the flock of Jesus Christ'."

Dr McCann and Mr Anderson wrote: "By this resolution, the General Synod declared very clearly that heterosexual marriage was and is the God-ordained sphere for sexual relationships, and is alone the 'normative' context for such relationships.

"In recent days, two Irish bishops have publicly declared and taught contrary to the plain teaching of scripture and to the teaching of the Church of Ireland. This is despite the vows and promises made at their ordination and consecration to uphold the Church's teaching and to refute error."

VAT is 'punitive'

A motion submitted by the Very Revd Maria Jansson (Cashel & Ossory), and proposed by Bobbie Symes (Cashel & Ossory), called on both jurisdictions to reduce or eliminate VAT on restoration works relating to buildings deemed of importance to the cultural heritage of the nation. The VAT on all renovation and structural work for listed buildings was punitive at 23 per cent, it stated. "This situation will become untenable."

The motion was carried unanimously.

Charter indignity in church life adopted

The Church of Ireland has adopted a charter, "Dignity in Church Life", after a process initiated by the House of Bishops to create a statement reflecting the importance of Christian values in interpersonal relationships.

The charter was developed by a group composed of clergy and laity, and will lead to the implementation of policies ranging from long-term illness among clergy to a procedure for clergy grievance.

The Bill was proposed by the Bishop of Derry & Raphoe, the Rt Revd Ken Good, and Kevin Bowers (Meath), and states that "In the knowledge that relationships in church life . . . can be imperfect, the Church of Ireland is committed to building and supporting harmonious relationships in church life across all its structures, upholding the right of all equally to be treated with dignity and respect."

Bishop Good described the charter as a "statement about Christian discipleship. It is aspirational in nature, expressing the need for harmonious relationships and dignified behaviour in church life.

"It also acknowledges that disagreements can occur. . . When such difficulties become

apparent, it states that attempts at reconciliation must be actively pursued."

More at -

<http://www.churchtimes.co.uk/articles/2015/15-may/news/world/church-of-irelands-sexuality-report-is-allowed-more-time>

'Thanks and Praise' Roadshows

'Thanks and Praise', the new supplemental to the C of I's Church Hymnal, will be presented at a number of roadshows throughout the country.

On Wednesday 17th June at 7.30pm the roadshow will take place at St Macartin's Cathedral in Enniskillen for a 'Come and Sing' event which will provide an opportunity to hear some of the contents of the new book which contains 227 hymns and songs.

The event is open to everyone, church musicians are particularly encouraged to attend.

The book will be published in September, and there is a special discount offer for those who pre-order copies before the end of June.

Ballymena bells ring out for VE anniversary



The Ballymena Bellringers outside St Patrick's Church on VE Day 2015.

On Saturday last, May 9, the bells of cathedrals and churches throughout the United Kingdom rang for the 70th Anniversary of VE Day.

In Ballymena the bells rang out from the tower at St Patrick's Parish Church at 11am, as they had done 70 years ago.

Saturday's ring was a joyous occasion as it commemorated the ending of World War II in Europe. Former ringer Jean Letters, who remembers the VE Day celebrations, was taught to ring after the war, as the bells throughout the United Kingdom were silenced during the hostilities and were only to be rung if there was an invasion.

Jean, whose father was also a ringer, was taught to ring along with her brother Sam, Tower Captain at Ballymena, and their brother Robert.

Media digest

Westminster 'world's most gay Parliament'

<http://www.newsletter.co.uk/westminster-world-s-most-gay-parliament-1-6745218>

Bono has become the latest Irish public figure to endorse a Yes vote ahead of next week's marriage referendum.

<http://www.irishmirror.ie/news/irish-news/politics/bono-backs-yes-vote-ahead-5695078>

FT

Feature on the Church Commissioners Annual Report 2014. The article covers the total return of 14.4 per cent for 2014 and the key

performance drivers of the diversified portfolio. There is reference to the ethical investments of the Church Commissioners and the charitable donations of £215 million.

<http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/10eeca1c-fa4d-11e4-a41c-00144feab7de.html?siteedition=uk#axzz3aBnAqJpL>

BBC

Report that no one has been appointed to become the new Bishop of Oxford after the Crown Nominations Commission, CNC met this week. A [note from the Archbishop of Canterbury](#) said the CNC had "been unable to discern the candidate whom God is calling at this stage". Colin Fletcher will continue to serve as Acting Bishop and the Oxford CNC will reconvene on 4 February, 2016.

<http://www.bbc.com/news/uk-england-oxfordshire-32742105>

Tel

Article by the Archbishop of Canterbury's daughter, Katharine Welby-Roberts, on depression. She talks frankly about what really goes on in your head when you've been fighting depression for 10 long years as a strong woman.

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/women/womens-life/11604963/Katharine-Welby-on-depression-Im-not-brave.html>

ITV

Report on a man who suffered a catalogue of sexual abuse by a West Yorkshire vicar. It states the victim has just won a six-figure payout from the Church of England. It says his abuser, the Reverend Terence King, took his own life in his retirement home in York.

<http://www.itv.com/news/calendar/update/2015-05-14/six-figure-payout-for-man-abused-by-yorkshire-vicar/>

Mail/ITV

Article on ITV Tonight special programme last night, *How To Get Into A Good School*, states polls revealed that 35 per cent of parents said they either had already or would pretend they were religious (get their child baptised) and more than 40% would move catchment area. The Revd Nigel Genders, chief education officer for the Church of England, is quoted in articles and gives a longer interview in the programme.

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/femail/article-3080567/How-far-child-good-school-Nearly-40-parents-admit-faking-religion-secure-better-spot-25-lie-address.html#ixzz3aBlzG5Ab>

<http://www.itv.com/news/2015-05-14/tonight-how-to-get-into-a-good-school/>

ITV

Item that Britain's oldest surviving stained glass is going on display at Canterbury Cathedral,

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after touring the world, so visitors can see it up close for the first time in an exhibition called *The Ancestors*. It states the glass had been in the Cathedral's Great South window but had to be taken out when the stone frame began to crumble. The Dean of Canterbury, Dr Robert Willis, is interviewed.

<http://www.itv.com/news/meridian/update/2015-05-14/want-to-meet-the-ancestors-once-in-a-lifetime-chance-to-see-800-year-old-stained-glass/>

Mail

Article stating that one of the country's senior judges said atheist militants who try to silence Christians are as intolerant as the murderous monarchs of the Tudor dynasty. Sir Michael Tugendhat, who retired from the High Court last year, compared suppression of Christianity today to the way Elizabeth I and her chief minister Lord Burghley prevented Roman Catholics from following their faith. It says he warned that human rights laws did not guarantee protection for religion and the right of believers to speak up for their faith.

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3082503/Atheist-militants-silence-Christians-bad-Tudor-tyrants-says-judge.html#ixzz3aBFAwaZX>

Times

Article looking at what it's like to live near some of the country's historic cathedrals. It says for those who don't mind having their Sunday mornings interrupted by bells ringing, or tourists within close proximity, living next to a cathedral offers the chance to be at the heart of community life. It looks at homes near several cathedrals including Exeter, Winchester, Salisbury and Norwich.

<http://www.thetimes.co.uk/tto/life/property/historichomes/article4440144.ece>

BBC

Report that organisers of Christchurch food festival have said they will review seating issues after visitors were pictured picnicking on church gravestones. It says families were photographed using tombs as tables in the Christchurch Priory, graveyard during the Dorset town's food festival. Reverend Charles Stewart, of Christchurch Priory, is quoted asking people to be sensitive of their surroundings, although the churchyard hasn't been used as a graveyard for many years.

<http://www.bbc.com/news/uk-england-dorset-32735300>