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Impact 2019: CMS Ireland Roadshow begins

Over the coming weeks, CMSI (Church Missionary Society Ireland) is taking to the road for its annual series of Impact events across Ireland and will visit two of our parishes.

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Each event includes a short, engaging presentation of stories from the global Church and updates from CMSI's work. There's also a chance to chat with CMSI staff members over a cuppa and to meet other friends and supporters of the society.

The nine roadshow events also offer a chance to pick up the latest CMSI resources, including the 2019 Children's Resource, *Outside In*, which focuses on Nepal and the Church's role in caring for those on the margins.

The *Impact* events are open to all and will be of particular interest to anyone with a connection with CMSI or a wider interest in global mission.

The series kicks off with the **Impact Belfast** event in St Stephen's (Millfield) on Monday 21 January at 7.30 pm.

Impact Dromore – Thursday 24 January at 7.30 pm in Dromore Cathedral Halls

Impact Dublin - Monday January 28, beginning at 8pm in Kill O' The Grange Parish Halls

Impact Bangor – Monday 11 February at 7.30 pm in Ballyholme Parish Halls

Details of the other events are available on the [CMSI website](#) or by contacting info@cmsireland.org.

Recommissioning of CMSI mission partners

On Thursday evening CMS Ireland, in conjunction with St George's Parish, Belfast, hosted a recommissioning event

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At the CMSI recommissioning service on January 10 are, back row from left: The Rev William Odling-Smee, the Rev Adrian Dorrian, the Rev William Jeffrey, the Rev Roger Thompson. Front row, from left: Lyn Scott, Keith Scott, Jenny Smyth, CMSI Mission Director, and Gillian Maganda.

for mission partners Keith and Lyn Scott, serving in Northern Zambia.

Keith worked in ministry in Northern Ireland before leaving for Africa in 2002. He spent three years in St Matthew's Parish, Shankhill Road, and 14 in the Glens of Antrim.

Keith is now part of the teaching staff at St John's Theological Seminary, Kitwe, and is involved in ministry in

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local parishes around Kitwe. Lyn teaches English at the college as well as helping develop study and preaching skills. She's also involved with the local Mothers' Union.

The couple will return to Zambia on January 21 for their second term of overseas service.

CMSI urged everyone to pray for the Scotts to know God's enabling power and protection as their time in Ireland draws to a close, and thanked everyone who came along and supported Keith and Lyn on Thursday.

Four years after being shot by bandit, missionary Maud Kells makes one last trip to Africa

A missionary who survived being shot by a bandit in the jungle of the Democratic Republic of Congo has said she will make her final visit to the war-torn country without fear after the man who almost killed her died.

Maud Kells (79) has spent five decades providing maternity care to Congolese women and working to build a hospital and nursery in the rainforest village of Mulita.

Despite being shot and wounded four years ago at the age of 75, just days after she was awarded an OBE by the Queen for her work with WEC International, the former midwife from Cookstown astounded many with her determination as she continued her selfless aid work.

Now Maud is preparing one final delivery of medical supplies and baby clothes to the hospital, maternity ward

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Maud Kells will deliver medical supplies and baby clothes during her trip

and nursery in the rural Mulita area she spent most of her adult life helping to build.

The memory of the incident that almost cost Maud her life is still fresh. Shot in the chest by robbers at her Mulita home on January 4, 2015, the bullet passed through her ribs, narrowly missing a major blood vessel.

"I thought the gun was just a bit of wood to frighten me, so I went to grab it and he just pulled the trigger," she said.

"I got quite a shock when the shot went out. The bullet went straight through and came out my back.

"I could feel the blood trickling down my back, so I put my back to the wall.

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"I stood against the wall to try to stop the bleeding and I think that saved my life, because I had to wait at least seven minutes for help.

"The man who shot me died last year. That's one fear that will not travel with me."

Crowned Belfast Telegraph Woman of the Year for 2015 after surviving her ordeal, Maud is almost ready to tell her story in a book.

"People have always told me I must have so many stories to tell about my time in Africa," she said. "I'm working on it with a friend and I hope to launch it after I get back on February 19.

"Before that I'll do whatever I can to help in Mulita one final time. I'll be praying things are quiet when I get there."

Maud is making the trip with another Cookstown woman, Lorna Glasgow, whose daughter lives in Uganda.

"It was in the back of my head that I might like to make one final trip," Maud said. "And when Lorna told me she was going to visit her daughter and asked me if I'd like to come along, I prayed hard for a few days. In the end it felt like the right thing to do.

"I have so many friends over there and to see them one final time was too good an opportunity to say no to.

"I know it won't be easy to say goodbye to so many good people. We booked the flights before I could change my mind!"

Maud heads off on January 20, flying from Dublin to Amsterdam, then Nairobi and finally on to Kampala, where

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she will spend a few days with Lorna and her family before making the lone journey to Mulita.

"I tell everyone this will be my final trip and they just smile at me," said Maud. "But the years are catching up with me now."

Over the course of 16 years she has spent six months a year working in the village since her first trip in 2002 - and before that had been a frequent traveller to Africa after starting her missionary work in 1968.

She explained: "I have heard from friends over there that things are tense as elections have been happening. That's always a time you need to be careful, so I'm not too sure what the atmosphere will be like.

"Elections could make it difficult for me to get into the country, and there has been a recent confirmed case of Ebola, which is a worry." Report courtesy the Belfast Telegraph

Jonathan Swift and the Ulster Presbyterians - Union College public lecture

As part of its series of public lectures, this Tuesday (15 January) the Presbyterian Church in Ireland's Union Theological College will welcome the distinguished Oxford historian - and expert on Jonathan Swift - Professor Ian McBride, who will give a lecture on Swift's attitudes to and relationship with Presbyterianism, particularly in Ulster.

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Professor Ian McBride, who grew up in Keady, County Armagh, is the Foster Professor of Irish History at the University of Oxford and a fellow of Hertford College

Looking forward the lecture, which is entitled ‘The making of the Hibernian Patriot: Jonathan Swift and the Ulster Presbyterians’, College principal Professor Stafford Carson said that Professor McBride was one of many external academics who come to teach and lecture at the College.

“This an excellent opportunity for the College’s students to engage with some of the most up-to-date scholarship in the field of Irish religious history, as they will be with Professor McBride during the day.

“The evening lecture, which is open to all, will be a must for anyone who has an interest in Jonathan Swift, who is regarded as one of the literary giants of Irish history. The topic under discussion will be the attitudes of the famous

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Anglo-Irish Anglican clergyman, author, and satirist towards the Presbyterians of Ulster,” he said.

Ian McBride, who grew up in Keady, County Armagh, is the Foster Professor of Irish History at the University of Oxford and a fellow of Hertford College. His research interests include the history of Ireland and his most recent book *The Princeton History of Modern Ireland* (2016), edited with Richard Bourke, was selected by both RTÉ Radio and *The Irish Times* as one of their best books of 2016. He is currently completing a volume on Swift’s Irish Political Writings for the Cambridge Edition of the Works of Jonathan Swift.

Union College’s Lecturer in Historical Theology, Rev Dr Martyn Cowan, explained that although Swift is perhaps best known for his 1726 book *Gulliver’s Travels*, this was only a small part of his writings that spanned half a century during which time he served as a priest in the Church of Ireland, most notably, as Dean of St Patrick’s Cathedral Dublin.

“Described by his publisher as ‘The Hibernian Patriot’, Swift had a lifelong hostility towards both Roman Catholicism and Presbyterianism. This was already established when, as a young clergyman, Swift had been appointed to the living of Kilroot. Here he found himself ministering to a small congregation in a dilapidated building surrounded by a strong Presbyterian community,” Dr Cowan explained.

“Swift’s consuming antipathy towards Presbyterians would only increase, something exemplified in his satirical works such as *A Tale of a Tub* in 1704, which poured scorn on

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‘Jack Presbyter’ of the North. Given that Swift is an author skilled in employing shock, sarcasm and comedy, this is sure to be an interesting and stimulating evening. It is also is a great opportunity to support the College and its work.”

Professor McBride’s lecture ‘The making of the Hibernian Patriot: Jonathan Swift and the Ulster Presbyterians’ starts at 7.30pm at Union Theological College, Botanic Avenue, Belfast. No booking is required.

EU Peace funding for churches in Pomeroy

The County Tyrone village of Pomeroy is to receive more than £5 million in funding to “encourage greater levels of cross-community contact within the local area.” The funding is part of a €32.4m (£29.1m) EU package being offered to create five new “shared space” projects four in Northern Ireland and one in County Monaghan. The money is being offered by the Special EU Programmes Body (SEUPB).

Communities continue to live and socialise separately, with many lacking access to a shared environment where they feel safe enough to meet and learn from one another. The absence of these spaces serves only to maintain division and increase social tension.

In order to help address this approximately €6m worth of funding has been offered, under the European Union’s PEACE IV Programme, to the Connecting Pomeroy project which will encourage greater levels of cross-community contact within the local area.

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Three core elements form the focus of the project which will enhance the look and feel of the centre of the village, create a suite of new community facilities, and boost outdoor and tourism opportunities through the development of a 'magic forest'.

A total of £2m has been allocated to the forest scheme to develop a visitor centre and enchanted trail in Pomeroy Forest, featuring innovative interactive artworks through which visitors and locals alike can explore the area's rich natural heritage, while also creating opportunities for shared learning experiences with school, youth and community groups.

New £1m community facilities will open up shared spaces for local people to enjoy, including a hall at the Church of Ireland, a 3-G multi-use games area at the Presbyterian Church and a new gym at the Pomeroy Plunkett's GAC.

Pomeroy will also benefit from a public realm upgrade, enhancing footpaths, lighting and planting and helping to connect the top and bottom of the village, which have previously been considered to be divided by 'invisible' peace walls. The £1m investment in this element of the project will also establish physical linkages between each of the new facilities.

Supporting the capital investment is a 3 year engagement programme to generate contact across the community, particularly among children and young people, encouraging respect and understanding, and leading to the formation of sustained friendships.

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News briefs

Bishop thankful to government for 'listening' on universal credit

The Church of England has welcomed a government U-turn on the Universal Credit benefit system.

A controversial plan to extend the two-child benefits cap retrospectively - affecting those born before April 2017 - is to be scrapped.

Work and pensions secretary Amber Rudd says she wants to "reset" the public perception of Universal Credit.

Speaking following the announcement, Bishop of Durham Rt Rev Paul Butler said it was good news for families and it showed that the government was listening to those concerned.

Calling for further action, he said: "I hope this also signals a willingness to look at the two child limit more fully.

"It's a policy the Church of England have always had major questions about because it undervalues the life of every child."

Currently families who have had their third child since April 2017 aren't able to claim benefits for them.

Nuns on the run: Vatican residents swap robes for tracksuits

Residents at the Vatican are swapping robes and clerical collars for tracksuits and trainers.

An athletics club for the Holy See has been launched.

The 60 members include nuns, Swiss Guards, a 62-year-old professor and even refugees who live there.

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The club's President, Monsignor Melchor Sanchez told Premier's News Hour the Vatican is trying to use sport to promote peace and dialogue.

"First and foremost it's to strengthen friendship and community life," he said. "Secondly [to help] all the cultural, spiritual and ecumenical initiative that we've been doing." While the dream is to see the Vatican flag at the Olympics opening ceremony, the team hopes to soon compete in small competition soon.

Sanchez said they were looking for events where "the symbolic or the cultural dimension is more important than the athletic".

Church offers £1,000 wedding for couples struggling with big day costs

One church in Cheshire is bucking the trend of extortionate wedding costs by arranging every aspect of the service for £1000 and church members offering their skills.

St John the Baptist Church in Hartford in Cheshire will offer the 'Grand Service' to three couples in 2019 who otherwise would not be able to afford a church wedding.

The vicar, Rev Mike Smith told Premier's News Hour: "It was an idea that came a few years ago now, when we had a couple who cancelled their wedding in church for cost reasons. That was followed by a couple more who did the same thing. It was about that time the Church of England decided to put a massive hike on its wedding fees and I felt uncomfortable with that and so began to put together a team of volunteers with the idea that we could do somebody's whole day for an affordable price."

The average cost of a wedding in the UK this year has now risen to over £30,000.

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The offer at St John the Baptist includes an organist who will play for free, someone to make a two-tiered cake, a photographer, a lady who is offering dress alterations and flowers.

The package includes a catered reception in the Church Centre for up to 30 guests including a two course meal. A further 20 guests can be added at pro-rata cost.

Rev Mike said the church have been willing to chip-in with their gifts: "This is a group who very much share the belief that marriage is one of God's great gifts and we want to help people get on that track".

The church have had eight couples apply for the three dates this year, one of which has already been booked and whom Rev Mike and his curate went to visit this week.

January 12 in Christian history

January 12, 1167: Aelred, the Anglo-Saxon abbot who became one of the Middle Ages' best-known devotional writers, dies.

January 12, 1588: John Winthrop, a lawyer who became the first governor of the Puritans in Massachusetts, is born in Suffolk, England

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