



The Mountmellick Methodist Yarnbombers strike again - Report in this issue

Rector quits after removing Royal British Legion flags from churches

A rector who removed and destroyed Royal British Legion flags from two churches has apologised and resigned.

Belfast Telegraph - The Reverend Kingsley Sutton said he "utterly regretted" his "inappropriate and unacceptable" decision to take down the legion standards hanging in St Patrick's and St Mary's churches in Newry, Northern Ireland.

Mr Sutton, who was Church of Ireland rector of Newry, said his actions had been motivated by a desire to make the places of worship "accessible to all people" and free from "vestiges from the past". He replaced the standards with white peace themed flags emblazoned with a red heart.

The minister, who defied instructions of a senior bishop in taking down the flags, had already been asked to step back from ministry amid the fallout from the episode.

He has now formally offered his resignation, which has been accepted by the Bishop of Down and Dromore, the Right Reverend Harold Miller.

Mr Sutton said: "In the light of the unfolding events here in Newry since I unwisely and forcefully removed the Royal British Legion Standards from St Patrick's and St Mary's

churches, I wish to make a full and unreserved apology.

"In my haste to provide worship areas in Newry that are more accessible to all people and free from what I perceived as the vestiges of the past, I completely underestimated the depth of meaning and present day value of the Royal British Legion Standards.

"I truly wish I had sought advice at the time and avoided all the damage I have caused. In my misguided thinking and zeal, not only did I remove the standards, but I also made my decision irreversible by destroying them. I utterly regret this inappropriate and unacceptable action. I repent, and wish to make a full and deeply felt public apology to all those I have insulted, undermined and offended by my actions.

"I apologise to the Royal British Legion, to its members and supporters, and anyone else I have hurt in my ignorance, especially those for whom the standards hold particular meaning and connection. If I can ease the hurt I have caused, even at this late stage, I here commit myself to doing so.

"I apologise to the Select Vestry members and parishioners of St Patrick's and St Mary's, Newry, for abusing my role as their leader and for causing them deep embarrassment and tremendous stress.

"I apologise to the bishop for disobeying his leadership and have since fully resubmitted myself to the structures of authority within the Church of Ireland."

The rector said he also apologised to members of Protestant loyal orders, in particular the Apprentice Boys of Derry, for making what he described as "insensitive remarks" about their traditions and values.

"I also apologise to my family and friends for the difficult and serious situation that I have put them in," he added.

"I commit myself to learning from my mistakes.

"My desire and heart has only ever been to make Jesus known and to draw as many people as possible to Him, to advance the hope of peace and love in this troubled land. As I got this so blatantly wrong with my actions, I feel I can do no

other at this stage than to offer my resignation as rector of Newry."

Bishop Miller said the situation around the flags' removal had been "very painful indeed".

"I welcome the statement of apology from the rector, Revd Kingsley Sutton, which was issued last night (Wednesday) to the local Royal British Legion and the Select Vestries of St Patrick's and St Mary's," he said.

"The rector also offered me his resignation and sadly, I feel I must accept it.

"I have been in touch with the Royal British Legion, the Select Vestries and the Apprentice Boys of Derry, to arrange to meet with them as we seek a way forward, and would like to thank all concerned for their helpfulness and graciousness."

<http://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/northern-ireland/rector-quits-after-removing-royal-british-legion-flags-from-churches-34131849.html>

New look Angelus on RTE a step too far for Kerry TD

A new look Angelus designed to be “conductive to prayer or reflection for people of all faiths and none” has attracted the ire of a Kerry TD.

Deputy Michael Healy-Rae has condemned the change in the fifty-one year running minute slot which occurs each day at 12 noon and 6pm.

“The Angelus has been with us for decades and any watering down of it should not be allowed, it is a small bit of time out of peoples’ lives to reflect on things that are important and it should be retained on its present format,” the TD criticised.

This Friday the national broadcaster begins running what it has called the People’s Angelus.

This once weekly slot at 6pm on Fridays will showcase the work of aspiring filmmakers and artists in communities across Ireland.

Already eight episodes are available to view on the RTÉ player.

Each episode lasts a minute accompanied by the familiar gong of the Angelus. The first eight episodes come from Limerick school of Art and Design and range from a stylised and interesting animation of a man waking up, playing a game

and ending in a high mountain range to a single shot pan around an autumn wood.

So far RTE has received 20 submissions and it is asking for more. On broadcast, the producers receive €250. (The public can email peoplesangelus@rte.ie to request a commissioning brief).

The public will be invited to vote for a favourite episode, which will receive an award and be shown again on RTÉ One.

The Angelus has been broadcast on RTÉ television since 1962, but the national broadcaster says in recent years there have been a number of calls for it to be changed “in light of evolving attitudes to religious practice”.

The one minute slot is extremely popular.

“If people get a whiff that this is going to be scrapped or changed then they suddenly get terribly exercised,” said Roger Childs, Genre head of Religious Programming RTE.

Research by *Audience Insights* shows that two thirds of the population wish to retain the Angelus chimes on the national broadcaster.

According to Mr Childs there is also widespread support from minority religions – Jews, the Muslim Council of Ireland, the Irish Sikh Council and non Catholic Christian denominations.

The radio Angelus will remain the same, and even with the new look People's Angelus, there "is absolutely no reason why someone can't still say the Angelus at that point if they choose to. And I'm told, I get anecdotal feedback, that a surprising number still do."

Outside the Friday 'People's Angelus' the newly revamped Angelus will feature a new set of short films, commissioned from Kairos Communications following a competitive tendering process.

Belfast Choir to celebrate US city's kinship with Ireland

More than 100 members strong, the Belfast Community Gospel Choir will perform in concert in Massachusetts on Friday, Oct. 23, at 7 p.m., in an event at Lowell High School's Cyrus Irish Auditorium celebrating Lowell's kinship with the people of Northern Ireland.

Called "The Soul of Belfast," the choir will sing stirring renditions of contemporary favorites under the direction of the ensemble's founder Marie Lacey and perform selections with the UMass Lowell Gospel Choir and Lowell High School Choir.

The event is presented by the Cultural Organization of Lowell (COOL) and UMass Lowell's Center for Irish Partnerships. The concert is open to the public and admission is free.

The Mountmellick Methodist Yarnbombers strike again

Every Autumn the Yarnbombers of Mountmellick strike at dawn. An army of women and children cover the town with woolly pieces of local artwork. They fasten tailored covering to public railings, seats, post boxes, shop fronts, monuments and hedgerows. Their mission is to bring smiles and colour to the town.

The Yarnbombers meet every Tuesday evening throughout the year chatting, knitting, crocheting and making friends in the town's Methodist Church hall .

The group feels the initiative is overwhelmingly positive and all inclusive. Nina Horan one of the group's founders said *"The social aspect of the meetings, the camaraderie, the joie de vivre was super."*

The reaction from passers by and locals is positive. Nina said *"It brings a smile to everyone's face, we are thrilled with the feedback..... Everyone loves it.....It puts a positive spin on the town."* The payback for the businesses of the town is an increase in turnover and more visitors with word spreading that something unusual is afoot in Mountmellick.

The meetings at the Methodist church will continue with the group planning a bigger, better and more colourful festival next year. A "Thoptught for the Week" is now left on the church's message board for all to see.

Yarn Bombing is an international movement and happens everywhere from New York to Paris and the concept behind Yarn Bombing is to reclaim sterile public places.

If you want to find out more and view some beautiful pictures visit the [Yarnbombers of Mountmellick's Facebook page](#).

A place of shalom in north Belfast

From small seeds scattered in the 1970's. An interdenominational grow of Christians has seen a rich harvest grow in north Belfast and beyond. This weekend the Lamb of God Community will mark another significant milestone, writes William Scholes in The Irish News.

Even in a city littered with churches - many thriving, some struggling and others already empty and closed - there is little to mark out Dhaom House as a place of worship in the traditional pulpit-and-pews sense.

Yet this large, double-fronted house, built of Belfast brick and standing proud at the start of the Cliftonville Road in north Belfast, is just that - and so much more.

Home to the Lamb of God Community, it should help challenge our ideas about what 'church' is. Is it a building? A denomination? A label?

Yet for for the folk involved in the Lamb of God Community, the key word is 'community'. Here is a group of believers who, although drawn from different denominational and credal backgrounds,



Liam Cluskey at Shalom House on Cliftonville Road, Belfast. Picture by Ann McManus

are like-minded and united in their goal to practise their faith and be a practical help within the area in which they live and serve. At heart, it isn't about building a 'new' church or denomination; instead, it hopes to not only enrich the area in which it is based but also encourage and equip people to serve elsewhere.

The community's roots lie in the 1970s and the burgeoning movement which eventually became known as charismatic renewal.

The Catholic Church, in the spirit of the Second Vatican Council, was exploring how to develop relationships with other believers, an olive branch that was in places reciprocated with enthusiasm.

In Troubles-era Northern Ireland, this new spirit of inter-denominational and ecumenical endeavour required courage.

As Liam Cluskey, current leader of the Lamb of God Community, recalls, "people from across the main Christian Churches were coming together in a new way".

"This was happening worldwide and was widely acknowledged as the renewing and reconciling work of the Holy Spirit breathing new life into the Church, through the re-awakening in our time of the charisms or gifts of the Spirit of God.

"In Ireland, particularly at this time of unrest and anguish for many people, it was seen as a force for reconciliation, hope and healing."

Among the groups popping up all over Ireland was one in north Belfast which began to meet in Mater Dei on Limestone Road. Numbers grew, and via Fortwilliam College's library, the group eventually found a home at Shirley Hall, attached to St James' Church of Ireland at the corner of the Cliftonville and Antrim roads.

Charismatic renewal was finding favour in Rome at the time and Pope Paul VI said the movement



The view of St James' Church of Ireland in north Belfast from one of the windows in Shalom House.

was a "chance for the Church and the world". He urged a renewal in the heart of the Church.

From this fertile soil, in 1977 around 20 members of the north Belfast group felt challenged to grow their commitment and formed the Lamb of God Community, under the leadership of Larry Kelly, a father of four who answered God's call by leaving his job as a customs and excise officer to guide the new community.

"We committed ourselves to work together for renewal as an ecumenical community," says Mr Cluskey.

"The intention was to develop a two-fold approach - being a practical help within the north Belfast area, while practising our Christian values."

The community bought a property at Duncairn Gardens in 1979 as its base. There were calmer parts of the city at the time - "this was a very troubled interface area at the time," as Mr Cluskey puts it, with understatement - but soon the house "became a place of prayer and peace open to all".

The idea was always to be more than just a meeting place for a 'holy huddle' - involvement in the peace-line community was key, so a hairdressing salon on the ground floor was kept going and the upstairs rooms became a drop-in centre.

"We named the house 'Shalom', which is a Hebrew word meaning peace," said Mr Cluskey.

"Our primary purpose was to be a prayer presence and we made a big commitment to pray for the Duncairn, New Lodge and Tiger's Bay area and its people.

"The house was also a centre for the Lamb of God Community and soon it became very busy - as time went on we introduced group activities with educational, recreational and spiritual programmes."

Having outgrown the Duncairn Gardens premises, the hunt was on for a larger facility to extend and develop the work of Shalom House.

"After a long search we found our present premises at 12 Cliftonville Road, and we moved here in October 1990," said Mr Cluskey.

The community is this weekend celebrating the 25th anniversary of the present Shalom House, with an open day on Sunday between 1pm and 5pm, followed by a charismatic prayer meeting in the Shirley Hall opposite at 7pm.

Other initiatives the community has been involved in include classes in maths, English, Spanish and art, a thrift shop - "run by some wonderful local women volunteers in the community" - and a variety of other schemes to provide employment.

A befriending service, for example, developed into a domiciliary service called Shalom Care, giving employment to 40 workers.

A crèche, described in a Social Services report as "a hidden gem on the Antrim Road", is another valuable contribution the group has made to the community.

The community has also been instrumental in supporting other prayer groups and has ran missions and days of renewal with leaders such as the Rev Ruth Patterson of Restoration Ministries, Fr Jim Burke, the Rev Cecil Kerr and his wife Myrtle from the Christian Renewal Centre in Rostrevor and Fr Pat Collins.

"We worked with Christian Fellowship Church in east Belfast for many years and continue to work with Transformations Ireland," said Mr Cluskey.

"Many peace and reconciliation projects have been developed and carried out by the Lamb of God Community, often in conjunction with other groups across the religious spectrum.

"Classes on different aspects of spirituality are held in Shalom House with Jesuits, Passionists

and church ministers, and we also have courses on self-development and family support.

"The house is open to many social groups for meetings."

As the group nears its 40th birthday and marks 25 "rewarding and grace-filled years" on the Cliftonville Road, Mr Cluskey says the community's prayer remains the same today as it did when the seed from which it grew was scattered: "That we will continue the work of helping to build peace and reconciliation, and to offer people a warm and inviting space with a welcoming atmosphere."

:: The Lamb of God Community celebrates 25 years of service at Shalom House at 12 Cliftonville Road with an open day on Sunday between 1pm and 5pm. A charismatic prayer meeting in Shirley Hall, opposite Shalom House, begins at 7pm. All are welcome. The community has a website at www.shalomhouse.org.uk

<http://www.irishnews.com/lifestyle/faithmatters/2015/10/22/news/a-place-of-shalom-in-north-belfast-300674/>

Confidence, Courage, Creativity and Compassion necessary for christian witness - Archbishop Richard Clarke

The Archbishop of Armagh and Primate of All Ireland, The Most Revd Dr Richard Clarke, spoke on the themes of confidence, courage, creativity and compassion in the Christian journey and in witness to the world in his Presidential Synod Address yesterday morning at Armagh Diocesan Synod in Church House, Armagh.

The Archbishop also talked about ‘living in a society, in a world indeed, that seems to have lost its compass, its bearings’. Archbishop Clarke said: ‘There are different compasses in the life to which we are called. There is a moral compass, which gives us an understanding of right and wrong. There is the spiritual compass, which enables us to follow the call of God to us. There is the compass of the mind, which gives us discernment and understanding of complexity and of subtlety. All are gifts of God, if we will receive them humbly. It is God who urges us to love him with our hearts and with our souls and with our minds. None are to be ignored, and yet

all too often they are swept aside in a public culture that seemingly wishes to exist only in a world of sound-bites, of populist emotion, and of cowardly factional and sectional self-interest. We, as disciples of Jesus Christ, must be ready to show that there is indeed a better way if we are to offer anything to our communities and this world.'

Archbishop Clarke also commented on responding with compassion to the current refugee crisis as well as to those living in deprived circumstances across the island of Ireland. He said, 'One of the most disturbing chapters in the Bible is Matthew 25, where we are reminded that if we do not have compassion on those without homes, without food, without the means of survival, it is Christ himself on whom we turn our back. And so, if our Church communities are places that are so smug in their own self-righteousness that they do not truly wish others, outside their walls, to find God's love for all and God's acceptance and God's care within our communities, then we are indeed a pitiable pretence of the word "Christian". We are living at a time when the world is facing a real crisis in regard to refugees as tens of thousands of people are fleeing their homeland in search of

shelter and safety. Even here in Ireland, north and south, there are many areas of real deprivation. In that context, may I again urge all our political leaders here in Northern Ireland to work together for the sake of those in our society who are suffering deeply at this time and who feel that there is no hope for them.'

C of I historical society's autumn meeting

The next meeting of the Society will be held in the Music Room, Christ Church Cathedral, Dublin (directly above the Chapter Room) on Saturday 7 November 2015

PROGRAMME

10.30am Coffee and registration

11am Dr Jarlath Killeen: 'The Irish Protestant Gothic tradition'

12pm Ms Jessica Cunningham: 'For "Decency and Order": The Church of Ireland's acquisition and use of altar silver in the seventeenth century' [Research Paper]

12.45 Lunch (in the cathedral crypt)

2pm Dr Jennifer Redmond: 'Protestants in Free State Ireland: Perceptions of identity'

and belonging in the post-revolutionary period'
3pm Dr Ian d'Alton: 'Navigating the minefield:
how *The Irish Times* and the *Church of
Ireland Gazette* approached the Tilson case and
the dogma of the Assumption in 1950'
Speakers:

- Dr Jarlath Killeen is associate professor in the School of English at Trinity College, Dublin. His research focuses on literature and culture of Victorian Britain and Ireland, although he also has a longstanding interest in eighteenth-century Ireland and especially the history and pre-history of Gothic literature on this island. He has written five monographs, the most recent of which is entitled *The Emergence of Irish Gothic Fiction* (Edinburgh University Press, 2013).

- Ms Jessica Cunningham is a doctoral student at Maynooth University. Her thesis examines the history of silver in seventeenth-century Ireland. She is joint recipient of John Hume Scholarship and Irish Research Council postgraduate scholarship. She lectures on the history of silver, design

and material culture at the Institute of Professional Auctioneers and Valuers and at DIT.

- Dr Jennifer Redmond lectures in twentieth century Irish history in the Department of History at

Maynooth University. She has written a number of articles examining issues on migration, women's

history, Irish social history and digital humanities. Her PhD focused on the discourses surrounding Irish female migration to Britain during the first decades of Irish independence, which she is currently drafting as a monograph.

- Dr Ian d'Alton is an historian primarily of southern Irish Protestant social and cultural history

from the eighteenth to the twentieth centuries. He was a Senior Research Associate at Peterhouse College, Cambridge. He was also a Visiting Research Fellow at Trinity College, Dublin, 2014-15.

He is author of *Protestant society and politics in Cork, 1812-1844* (Cork, 1980).

Registration:

You can register online at <http://churchofirelandhist.org/membership/> If you wish to

become a member the annual subscription was fixed last year at €40 (or £35). This includes admission to our bi-annual conferences, lunch, book discounts, and exclusive access to the Society's podcasts. Non-members are most welcome. They are asked to subscribe €10 (or £7) at the door to assist with conference expenses (lunch not included).

Queries may be either addressed to the honorary secretary, Dr Adrian Empey, by email at:

secretary.coihs@gmail.com or visit the society's website: <http://churchofirelandhist.org/>

The Church of Ireland Historical Society meets twice a year: in the Public Library, Armagh, in April, and in Christ Church Cathedral, Dublin, in November. It exists to promote scholarly interest in the history of the Church, and to facilitate publication.

Lynda Bryans speaking in St Anne's Cathedral

The well known former television presenter



Lynda Bryans will be speaking at the Monday evening healing service in St Anne's Cathedral on Monday, November 16th at 8pm. Her theme on this occasion will be 'My Path of Faith'.

On previous visits Lynda has spoken of her healing from depression. No doubt, she will mention that this time as well, but will also talk about how she grew in faith and how it impacts her whole life.

Personal prayer and the anointing with oil will be available at this service.

C of I archbishops join in international call for prayers for political leaders under pressure on refugee crisis

The Church of Ireland's two archbishops of Armagh and Dublin were present at a meeting of



***Primates and Presiding Bishops of the Porvoo
Communion of Churches meeting in Edinburgh -
Photo Scottish Episcopal Church***

church leaders - the primates and presiding bishops of the Porvoo Communion of Churches - which has called for prayers for political leaders as they recognise the “pressure” they face in trying to reach a solution to the refugee crisis. The church leaders made the call in a [communiqué](#) issued after their biennial meeting this week in Edinburgh as guests of the Scottish Episcopal Church. The Porvoo Communion brings together Anglican and Lutheran churches

from northern Europe to “share a common life in mission and service.”

The primates and presiding bishops met under the theme of Prayer, Spirituality and Pilgrimage, and discussed issues ranging from national identity to the refugee crisis.

On refugees, the primates said in their communique, that “On a daily basis people risk their lives to cross the Mediterranean Sea; people walk long distances to cross into Europe because they do not have any other choice; also in parts of Europe, for example, houses have been set alight, so that refugees do not find a home; and there is a rising anxiety in some parts of Europe that democracy is being eroded by intimidation towards strangers seeking refuge and security. . .

“We should not stand back and remain silent, but must both speak and act, remembering the words of Jesus; ‘For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me’ (Matt. 25:35).”

The leaders also expressed their unanimous concern and prayers for Christians and other

minority groups threatened by extinction in the Middle East.

The primates and presiding bishops recognised the pressure faced by political leaders as they sought to find a solution to the crisis; and they called for prayers for political leaders “and for those who resist the destructive calls of extremist groups that reject all support for the migrant stranger and those seeking refuge.”

“The Scottish Episcopal Church is honoured to host the meeting of the primates of the churches of the Porvoo Communion,” the Bishop of St Andrews, Dunkeld & Dunblane, the Most Revd David Chillingworth, Primus of Scotland, said. “We have been enthusiastic members of the Porvoo Communion from the beginning of its life and we look forward to a strengthening of relationships during our meeting this week.”

The Porvoo Primates and Presiding Bishops will next meet when they gather as guests of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Lithuania in October 2017.

- [Click here](#) to read the full communiqué from the Porvoo Communion Primates and Presiding Bishops

Closing borders and cold weather compound refugees' miseries - Christian Aid

With thousands of people once again stuck at the Serbia-Croatian border overnight in harsh weather conditions, Christian Aid partner Philanthropy is scaling up its response to meet the growing humanitarian needs.

Since Hungary shut its borders with Serbia last month and with Croatia last weekend, increasing numbers of refugees have been forced to change their route to travel through Serbia and Croatia.

With up to 10,000 people a day entering Serbia, the authorities in neighbouring Croatia have been trying to control the number of people crossing between the two countries by sporadically shutting the border over the last five days. With only small groups of around 150 people allowed to enter Croatia at a time, there are growing queues of refugees waiting in abysmal conditions.

As their numbers rise, Philanthropy has stepped up its response over the last month to reach

three times as many people as before with food, blankets, warm clothes and raincoats, as well as showers, toilets and hygiene items. They have also begun helping to rehabilitate old buildings to create temporary accommodation for the refugees.

Marija Vranesevic, programme manager for Philanthropy, both based in Serbia, explained:

“Numbers have doubled in the last week from 5,000 to up to 10,000 people per day crossing the border to Serbia from Macedonia.

Additionally, nearly 1,000 people a day are entering Serbia from Bulgaria.

“We are seeing people arrive in the thinnest of basic clothing, some with shoes, some barefoot. They arrive exhausted, hungry, some have been beaten or robbed along the way and almost all are traumatised. Many I have met have travelled for months and have no savings left.

“When they arrive at the border to cross into Croatia they are forced to camp in muddy fields. Wet and freezing they wait with thousands of others, for hours or even all night for the border to open.

“Stalling the flow of refugees and causing a bottleneck situation is very concerning as Serbia has limited capacity to cope. It is a deeply distressing time for these people who have been through so much. But organisations such as UNHCR, MSF and Philanthropy are there, to meet the needs of these people.

Ms Vranesevic added: “The refugees have fled desperate circumstances in the Middle East and now face a winter of uncertainty. The humanitarian needs of such a large number of refugees are huge and as winter approaches they will increase.

“As Philanthropy has been working on the ground for months, we know the situation well and have been able to scale up our response efficiently to reach many more people with much needed items such as blankets and warm clothes. Knowing we can continue to scale up is particularly important, especially through the difficult winter months ahead of us.”

Christian Aid appeals to all EU Member States to deal with the rapidly worsening humanitarian crisis as a matter of urgency.

More than 643,000 people arrived in Europe via the Mediterranean Sea this year. UNHCR estimate that 9,000 people arrived in Greece yesterday alone and with the recent government offensives within Syrian, the outflux of refugees persists.

Frances Guy, Head of Middle East Region at Christian Aid noted: “With intensifying conflict in Syria, this humanitarian tragedy across the Middle East and Europe is set to continue.

“It is now time to prioritise peace. The UK government and other global leaders have a shared responsibility to work harder to find political solutions to the conflict in Syria. Until this happens, we will continue to see the desperation of those forced into impossible choices, risking their lives and that of their families to reach safety.”

Christian Aid continues to urge the UK and other EU member states to undertake without further delay proportionate resettlement across Europe.

Christian Aid is working with our ACT Alliance partners in supporting humanitarian efforts taking place in Europe, as well as with on the ground with partners in the Middle East. Christian Aid

has sent £100,000 to support ACT's work in Europe, which includes the work of Philanthropy in Serbia and the International Orthodox Christian Charities (IOCC) in Greece. The agency will continue to support Philanthropy and IOCC scale up their work as the humanitarian needs increase. To find out more or to donate please visit the [website](#)