

Sam Maguire to ring out in his hometown of Dunmanway



Plans to honour the memory of Sam Maguire in his hometown of Dunmanway are gathering pace with a unique community bells project, writes Jackie Keogh in The Southern Star.

Sam Maguire was a member of the Church of Ireland and one of the heroes in the fight for Irish independence, having played a central role in the Irish Republican Brotherhood in London.

But when he returned to Ireland, after the Treaty was signed, he ended up at Malabracka, the family home, and it was here in 1927, at the age of 49, that he died in sickness and in poverty.

Standing at his graveside in the churchyard of St Mary's in Dunmanway, Rev Cliff Jeffers described how Sam Maguire was, at that time, considered by some to be a divisive figure, a traitor.

Rev Jeffers said there were not enough men in his community willing to stand up for him and shoulder his coffin out of the house and that women were called on to help.

But, after his death, friends raised £300 and erected a Celtic cross at his grave at St Mary's Churchyard in Dunmanway.

With the balance of the money, they commissioned a cup in the style of the Ardagh Chalice – a cup that has been awarded to the winners of the All-Ireland Senior Football final every year since 1928.

There is a small commemoration ceremony in Dunmanway, every year on the Sunday before the All-Ireland Football final, in memory of Sam Maguire, but it was at the 1916 celebrations at Boland's Mill in Dublin, last year, that Rev Jeffers was struck by the fact that the Church hadn't done anything to remember him during the centenary celebrations.

Rev Jeffers resolved to remedy the situation and show how Sam Maguire is now, through the passage of time, a unifying figure – a man with whom everyone has a connection.

'Sam Maguire did go against the traditions of the place he came from, but a hundred years have passed,' said Rev Jeffers, 'it is time to move on and celebrate Sam Maguire's contribution towards the struggle for Irish freedom.'

Rev Jeffers came up with the idea for the Sam Maguire Community Bells project and with the support of the parish approached the GAA in Dublin.

The GAA was happy to support the project and has, so far, contributed almost half of the €60,000 cost of Phase One.

Rev Jeffers said six of the eight bells that were installed in the bell tower of St Mary's on Monday, July 17th last, came out of a church in Wales, but two of the new bells that have been installed by Martin Hough of Drinagh have Sam Maguire's name, his date of his birth, and the date of his death, inscribed on them so every time they ring out over Dunmanway his story will be remembered.

'Initially,' Rev Jeffers said, 'we were going to give each of the eight bells a name after historic figures, but we decided to give each bell a theme instead and through them tell the story of Sam Maguire and Dunmanway town.'

Phase One of this project involves the installing and the naming of the bells on the following topics: sport, wars and revolution, agriculture, the people of Dunmanway, migration, religious traditions, education and arts, and industry and commerce.

Phase Two will involve the publication of a booklet and the creation of storyboards that will be put on public display.

In this respect, the local historical association is lending its assistance, as is Kieran Connolly, a former DIT lecturer from Dunmanway, whose book about Sam Maguire will be published on September 22nd next.

Phase Three will, in time, see the development of a visitor's centre because, as Rev Jeffers believes, the home of Sam Maguire could become a major tourism destination, particularly for school tours and history groups.

Local primary school students have already visited the churchyard and engaged in a bell-ringing session using a small set of eight bells that are on loan and are being used for practice every Wednesday night.

'I want the bells at St Mary's to be a place where people can come together to learn a new skill because when people learn together they get to know one another that is why we have called it the Sam Maguire Community Bells project.

'I am hoping more people will share the vision and develop more ideas and aspects of the Sam Maguire story.

'I am also hoping that everyone will feel free to come to our open day from 2pm to 8pm on Sunday, September 3rd next when the church

and the tower will be open to the public and they can see how the bells are rung.'

The following weekend – at 2pm on Saturday, September 9th – the Sam Maguire Community Bells project will be officially opened by the President of the GAA, Páraic Duffy.

'One of the main aims of this project,' said Rev Jeffers, 'is to provide an amenity that can be used by all of the people of Dunmanway.'

Anyone interested in learning to ring the bells is welcome to come along to St Mary's on Wednesday nights between 8pm and 10pm. People are welcome to come and watch too.'

From September 9th onwards, the new bells will be rung on Sunday mornings and to mark events like St Patrick's Day and New Year's Eve, as well as weddings and funerals, and special occasions in the life of the town.

Devolution has a bleak future: former Moderator

The Very Rev Dr Norman Hamilton, a former Moderator of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland, in a letter to the press poses five questions and

concludes that he thinks devolution has a bleak future.

Dr Hamilton states: A year ago, in an article for the Uncomfortable Conversations series in An Phoblacht, I asked the following five questions.

I was careful to add that I wrote the piece not as a political or social commentator, but as an ordinary Presbyterian minister with some experience of living in a deeply divided part of Belfast.

1. Given that both republicans and unionists are sharing power together at Stormont, is it agreed that to build for the future we need to make Northern Ireland work well as an entity distinct from the Republic of Ireland?

2. Are we agreed that violence, from whatever source or with whatever alleged rationale must be off and stay off the agenda – permanently – for the future of our people and our island?

3. Are we agreed that effective citizenship can be nurtured and developed within the complex identities involved in being Irish and/or British and/or Northern Irish and/or of belonging to one of the incoming communities?

4. Are we agreed that we need to stop looking to others to sort out our problems, and apply ourselves to the need to build consensual and coherent public policy ourselves?

5. Can we agree that to deal adequately with the toxic legacy of our past requires a lot more than what governments/ agencies/institutions/the judiciary or politicians can deliver? Clearly they can and should play a hugely important role, but on their own, and even together, they cannot plumb the depths of ongoing and profound pain, distress, grief, mistrust and anger.

There has been no response to these questions, but in the current climate, it looks as if few, if any, of them could be answered with an enthusiastic 'Yes'. This makes me think that devolution has a rather bleak future. Hope may still be there, but is being steadily eroded.

Gay nurse's challenge to Derry pastor 'who cures homosexuality'

A gay man has challenged a controversial pastor who claims God can cure homosexuality to try and make him straight, the Belfast Telegraph reports.



Emmette Dillon says Pastor Mark Bradfield's claims are insensitive

Model, nurse and former Mr Ireland contender Emmette Dillon (29) has laid down a challenge to Pastor Mark Bradfield from Londonderry's Bethel Baptist Church. He said: "If you think your treatment will work, sign me up and we will document the process".

Foyle Pride 2017 takes place on Saturday, and Pastor Bradfield, whose church is based at Campsie, plans to be there with his megaphone.

He claims gay people's lifestyle is "physically, mentally and spiritually harmful".

But Emmette has hit back at his comments.

"Coming out or coming to accept who you are is mentally and emotionally challenging as it is, without this frankly insensitive pastor suggesting that there is some kind of cure," he said.

"Does he not realise that people coming to terms with their sexuality need to be supported, not vilified?

"Believe me the internal self-loathing and conflict that I and others go through before we reach acceptance is pain enough without this gentleman waving a miracle cure in our faces."

Emmette said that coming out as gay for him "was almost like a grieving process" as his mind battled with what is deemed 'normal'.

He added: "While I respect the pastor's right to express his religious views, I feel it is downright disgusting that he promotes and endorses what is in fact a non-existent cure for homosexuality.

"Love is love, it does not discriminate, being gay or of any sexual orientation is not a choice, but inciting hatred and intolerance is.

"So I say to the pastor, I will take great pleasure in meeting you face to face and proving you wrong. If you honestly believe this treatment will work, sign me up and we will document the

process and give you the soap box you so obviously desire."

Pastor Bradfield said he was willing to meet with Emmette to "discuss how he can help".

"I can't cure homosexuality," he said. "But I know a man who can. The Lord can, if someone really wants to be cured. It's like every bad habit that we would want to change or anything that is ingrained in our psyche; it can take work to change it. But the Lord can help a person do that."

Pastor Bradfield said he would like to talk to Emmette and "see if I can help him".

He added: "But it's like everything, he's not going to be changed against his will. None of us ever are."

Bishop to lead worship at gay pride event

The Bishop of St Davids is to lead a Communion service at Pride Cymru (Wales) this weekend. Rt Rev Joanna Penberthy will join with the thousands attending the three day festival in Cardiff.



After taking part in a discussion on faith and sexuality she'll then lead Pride's first ever Communion service.

It's the first time a bishop has taken part in the event.

Rev Delyth Liddell is running the festival's #FaithTent.

She said: "The importance of being out in the community, sharing God's love and acceptance for all, regardless of our sexuality or gender, cannot be underestimated.

"Year on year we have stories of people who come to the #FaithTent believing that God does not want them. The #FaithTent is there to show them that they can have faith in God because God has faith in them."

"We are delighted to be welcoming our first ever Bishop to the #FaithTent."

Earlier this year the Bishop of Liverpool became a patron of his city's Pride event.

Rt Rev Paul Bayes told Premier at the time he wanted to tell LGBT people they were made by God and are loved by God.

Novel by Fr Shay Cullen highlights human rights violations in Phillipines

"Ricky and Julie – a story of courage and survival in the Philippines," is the name of a novel just published by Irish Columban missionary, Fr. Shay Cullen.

The book is a fiction story that is based on real events. It is an adventure set mostly in Mindanao, Manila and Olongapo in the Philippines. It is about the lives of street children and in particular Ricky, Boyet and Julie - all targeted and hunted by the deadly Davao Death Squad that kills street children.

Describing the purpose of the book, Fr. Shay says: “It is to raise awareness of the human rights violations and social conditions that give rise to poverty. People can read a story and be inspired more easily in a novel form. They can be involved in the characters, understand the lives of the poor and the street children, and know what good people are doing to help them and to expose the evils of drugs, human trafficking, and the sex trade”.

The story is set during the presidential election campaign when the outsider, a maverick law and order candidate threatens to kill thousands of suspected drug pushers and users, and he wins the election. The harsh social injustice and exploitation of children in the sex trade and victims of human trafficking and the suffering and hardship they endure is revealed. The resilience and the resistance of the women and children against their oppressors are told.

The story is centered on a village girl Julie, mother of Ricky. She lives with her parents and siblings in a dirt hovel in a small village on the estate of the Ortega family. The rich son wants her as his sex slave and her family resist. She is abducted by the rich corrupt landowning Ortega family who are involved in crime. She is brought to a brothel and abused by the son of Dom

Ortega. Julie becomes pregnant and is forced to have an abortion but she resists and makes a dramatic escape.

The author develops the story based on real life events of intrigue and mystery that he is familiar with through his work with Preda which he set up in 1974. PREDA is active in the rescue and caring of abused children from jails, abusers, and brothels and giving victims of abuse a safe home with protection, education, values formation, affirmation, empowerment and healing therapy to restore their self-esteem. It is engaged in defending human rights and promoting justice for the marginalised, as well as running Fair Trade to support mango-growing farmers.

Fr. Shay, who has received several awards recognizing his work, is an internationally known human rights advocate, popular international speaker, media commentator, and writer. In 2006, he published a book – Passion and Power – with an introduction by Mary Robinson, former President of Ireland, and an endorsement by the Hollywood actor and human rights supporter, Martin Sheen.

Rickey and Julie – a story of courage and survival in the Philippines is free to download

from <http://www.preda.org/>. Donations to support the inspiring work of Preda will be appreciated and can be made easily on the website.

Death of oldest Presbyterian cleric who visited Belfast blitz sites during war

The last remaining Presbyterian clergyman in Ireland to be ordained during the Second World War has died. His funeral took place earlier this week.

Raised in Londonderry, Rev Borland was licensed as a minister in his home congregation at Great James Street Presbyterian Church in the city in June 1940.

On the very weekend he entered religious life thousands of soldiers in the British Expeditionary Force were being evacuated from the beaches of Dunkirk.

During the Second World War, Rev Borland spent a period at Westbourne Presbyterian Church on the Newtownards Road in Belfast and had the dreadful duty of touring the city's



morgues after the Nazis' blitz on the city, which claimed around 900 lives.

Speaking last year, ahead of his 100th birthday, he recalled: "It was a very difficult time, with stiff restrictions in place and half the city evacuated every night. Hundreds of people just left the Newtownards Road and other parts of the city and headed to the hills to avoid the bombs. They watched the raids there, hoping their houses would still be there in the morning.

"I couldn't leave. I had to stay in case the church caught fire. Fortunately, they missed the church but hit the hall, which was destroyed.

"One of my duties was to go around the public mortuaries and see if people belonging to Westbourne were there. It was a very difficult time.

"We lived just a few doors down from the church in Great James Street and all seven of us attended as a family. Home had a big influence on me. Both my parents were good churchgoers and in those days it was expected that church became a part of your life.

"My father, a Donegal man, was in the choir and taught in Sunday school. He was a strong Presbyterian and was asked to be an elder."

The clergyman professed his faith at the age of 14, crediting his family and TS Mooney of the Belfast Savings Bank, who founded the Crusaders in Derry.

The faith of youth was a theme that remained important to Rev Borland.

When asked was there anything of significance that remained a constant in his time in service, he recalled: "Seeing young people make a profession of their faith. It always made me feel very humble that I should be used in this way. But very happy about it too."

In his time as a clergyman Reverend Borland also served in Downpatrick, Bangor, north Belfast and Burnside Church Extension in Portstewart.

He arrived in the seaside town in 1978 and retired whilst in that position in 1983, but was still minister emeritus for the church. Rev Eric Borland will be buried after a service at St John's Church today.

He is survived by his wife of almost 70 years, Muriel, his daughter Lois and son-in-law Nicholas, grandchildren Robert, Heather and Philip and great-grandchildren Daniel and Toby.

May Jesus' gaze also illumine our relations, Pope to Methodist synod

“May Jesus’ gaze also illumine our relations, so that they are not only formal and correct but fraternal and lively”, says Pope Francis in his letter to the Methodist and Waldensian Churches, on the occasion of the opening of their Synod, underway at Torre Pellice, Turin, from August 20-25, 2017.

“I keep alive in my memory our recent meetings at Turin and Rome, as well as those in Argentina,” the Holy Father wrote. “I am grateful for the beautiful testimonies I have received and for the many faces I cannot forget.

“I hope that these days of sharing and reflection, which are taking place on the 500th anniversary



of the Reformation, are animated by the joy of putting yourselves before the face of Christ; may His gaze, which is turned to us, be the source of our peace, so that we feel ourselves beloved children of the Father and makes us see others, the world and history in new way.”

Here is a translation of the Letter which was written in italian-

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

On the occasion of the opening of your annual Synod, I wish to express the Catholic Church's and my own closeness to you. I greet you fraternally and assure you with much cordiality of my remembrance in prayer.

I keep alive in my memory our recent meetings at Turin and Rome, as well as those in Argentina. I am grateful for the beautiful testimonies I have received and for the many faces I cannot forget. I hope that these days of sharing and reflection, which are taking place on the 500th anniversary of the Reformation, are animated by the joy of putting yourselves before the face of Christ; may His gaze, which is turned to us, be the source of our peace, so that we feel ourselves beloved children of the Father and makes us see others, the world and history in new way.

May Jesus' gaze also illumine our relations, so that they are not only formal and correct but fraternal and lively. The Good Shepherd wills us to be on the way together, and His gaze now embraces all of us, His disciples that He desires to see fully united.

It is so important to walk towards full unity, with a look of hope that acknowledges the presence of God stronger. It is so especially today, in a world marked by violence and fear, of lacerations and indifference, where the egoism of affirming oneself at the expense of others darkens the simple beauty of welcoming, sharing and loving one another. However, our Christian witness cannot yield to the logic of the world: together

we must help one another to choose and live the logic of Christ!

I thank you with fraternal affection and ask you, please, not to forget to pray for me and for all of us your brothers and sisters.

From the Vatican, August 10, 2017

Francis

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