

## **‘Paramilitaries have had their day’: Shankill pastor**



### **Pastor Jack McKee from New Life City Church in Belfast**

A church pastor in the Shankill area of Belfast has issued a plea to paramilitaries and drug dealers to stop inflicting their

criminal behaviour on the community, the News Letter reports

Prayer vigils and walks of Christian witness are among a range of events planned to mark the 25th anniversary of the New Life City Church – with a special emphasis on the need for a society free from “intimidation, threats, punishment beatings and exclusions”.

Pastor Jack McKee said the church plans 40 days of “positive activities” between February 19 and March 30, made up of 39 days of worship and one “special” day to end the initiative on Good Friday.

“Most people believe that paramilitarism has had its day and it should now go away,” he said.

“Both communities now recognise that when it comes to any residue of paramilitarism, that those communities

themselves are more likely to suffer as a result of their existence than anyone else.”

Pastor McKee added: “How do you deal with criminality, even in other major cities, whether it’s London, New York or Chicago? The fact is that people within a community, those who live there and work there, find it difficult to speak out because their lives are then put at risk.”

## **Bishop sends letters to parishes and schools warning them of 'dangerous paedophile priest' living in the area**

Bishop of Waterford and Lismore Phonsie Cullinan sent a letter to a number of schools and parishes warning them that a convicted paedophile former priest is residing in the area, the Independent, Ireland, reports.

It is understood that the Bishop sent the letter just before Christmas to warn parishes and schools that former priest Oliver O’Grady was living in the Waterford City area.



**Oliver O'Grady pleaded guilty to possessing and importing child pornography.**

O'Grady admitted to sexually abusing children while serving as parish priest in California from 1973 onwards.

In 1993 he was convicted of molesting two brothers over a 10-year period and was sentenced to 14 years in prison in the US but served seven before he was paroled and deported back to Ireland in 2000.

In the letter, which has been seen by Independent.ie, Bishop Cullinan warned that O'Grady is an "extremely dangerous paedophile" and urged that "those working in any way with children" be alert.

He wrote: "If this man is seen in your parish please notify Bishop's House as soon as possible."

The Communications Officer for Bishop Cullinan said they will "not be commenting on the matter further".

O'Grady was arrested again in 2012 when thousands of explicit images of children stored on computers and USB drives, some depicting victims as young as two.

The images were discovered after O'Grady left his laptop on an Aer Lingus flight. A staff member examined the computer and alerted gardai after coming across the files.

He was sentenced to three years in prison at Arbour Hill but was released in 2014.

O'Grady is not in any way associated with the Diocese of Waterford and Lismore.

Previously, O'Grady featured in documentary Deliver Us from Evil in which he admitted abusing 25 children while in the US.

## **Muslims are as much a part of community as I am, says DUP MP**

A DUP MP has spoken out strongly about the need to understand and celebrate minority faiths in Northern Ireland, the Belfast Telegraph reports.

Strangford MP Jim Shannon also said he was disheartened at the thought of far-right group Britain First operating here.

Mr Shannon was speaking after attending an inter-faith celebration in Omagh at the weekend for greater understanding towards religious minorities.

The 138 guests at the event included representatives of the main political parties and the PSNI, as well as religious leaders from the local Churches, and the Muslim, Hindu, Sikh and Baha'i faiths. The audience included people from different ethnicities and diverse professions, such as doctors, nurses and teachers.



## **Strangford MP Jim Shannon**

It comes after pig meat was thrown through the door of Belfast Islamic Centre before Christmas - one of several racist attacks on the Muslim community here in 2017.

"Saturday was a chance to raise awareness and educate people who didn't know as much about the faith of Muslims, Hindus, Sikhs and Baha'is," the DUP MP said. "That also goes for those that don't know a lot about the Protestant or Catholic faiths as well.

"I despair when I hear about Britain First trying to build a profile in Northern Ireland.

"There's a mosque in my home town of Newtownards. They've been living here for 30-

odd years, have businesses and have brought up their families here. They're as much a part of this community as I am.

"There have been incidents against them but I am quite convinced it's people coming from outside the town. Those people have absolutely no idea about their own future, it's completely skewed. The future we have should be a shared one."

Dr Nauman Iftikhar from the Ahmadiyya Muslim Association Ireland organised the Omagh gathering, and described such events as vital to improving community relations.

The anaethetist, who lives in the Co Tyrone town, said: "Religion can sometimes wrongly be a source of hatred. I believe this can be caused by misunderstanding, which leads to fear, chaos and unrest.

"So the pathway to peace is dialogue and communication. That's what we stand for and the audience in Omagh loved it and found it very educational."

## **Open day before Derriaghy's historic spire is dismantled and re-built**





Christ Church Parish, Derriaghy, is holding an Open Day on Saturday January 27 and is inviting local people to visit and learn more about the work needed to maintain the historic spire.

The Grade A listed church was built in 1872 and the 120 foot spire is showing signs of age. The spire needs to be dismantled, stones need to be repaired or replaced, and then the spire has to be rebuilt.

The parish has received a grant from Heritage Lottery Fund towards the estimated £600,000 cost of the renovation work, and is keen to share



the beauty and history of the church with people in the area.

In addition to the Open Day, the parish is proposing to host musical events to attract people in to enjoy the church and its surroundings.

The Open Day will take place from 11am until 3pm on January 27. Visitors are welcome to partake of refreshments which will be provided.

## **UK government begins bell-ringer recruitment drive ahead of Armistice Centenary**

Two British government departments are working with the UK's Central Council of Church Bell Ringers to recruit 1,400 new campanologists ahead of the centenary of the First World War armistice on 11 November 2018. As part of commemorations in the UK, bells will ring out from churches and cathedrals in cities, towns and villages across the UK. Some 1,400 bell ringers lost their lives in the First World War, and the Ringing Remembers campaign is designed to "keep this traditional British art alive in memory of the 1,400 who lost their lives – linking together past, present and future," the government said in a statement.

The campaign is being run by the Departments of Communities and Local Government, and Digital, Culture, Media & Sport, in collaboration



## **Six bellringers from Edington Priory Church in Wiltshire lost their lives in the First World war**

with Big Ideas Community Interest Company and the Central Council of Church Bell Ringers.

Big Ben – the famous bell at the top of Britain’s Parliament – will also strike at 11 am to mark the centenary. The iconic clock tower is currently enveloped in scaffolding while major works take place, and the bells have been silenced to protect the workforce. But they will be switched back on again on 11 November this year to mark the centenary.

The event will mark the end of five years of commemorations of the First World War. Church bells across the UK remained restricted throughout the course of the war and only rang freely once Armistice was declared on 11 November 1918.

“The Ringing Remembers campaign will be a fitting end to our projects, events and activities that have marked the end of the First World War and a tribute to the heroic men and women who sacrificed so much for the freedoms we enjoy today,” the Communities Secretary Sajid Javid. “As the centenary commemorations draw to a close, our priority is to make sure we continue to keep the history of the First World War alive for generations to come, even as it falls out of living memory.”

The Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, Karen Bradley, said that during the course of 2018, “we will look at how we went from the German offensive in spring 1918 to peace, and I have no doubt the public will once again help us tell this important story and share their own connections to the First World War.

“On 11 November 1918 the ringing of church bells erupted spontaneously across the country, as an outpouring of relief that four years of war had come to an end. I am pleased that to honour that moment and the 1,400 bell ringers who died in the war, we will be recruiting 1,400 new bell ringers to take part in the commemorations”.

When the war came to an end, the Central Council of Church Bell Ringers wrote to all bell towers to compile a Roll of Honour of ringers who were killed in the war. At the time 1,100 men were recorded. During the First World War centenary events, the Council has reviewed the list and discovered a further 400 bell ringers who died in service.

Two bell towers – Edington in Wiltshire and Bamburgh in Northumberland – lost six ringers each during the war.

The commemorations on 11 November will begin at the Commonwealth War Graves Commission cemetery at St Symphorien near Mons, Belgium. This is where the war began in 1914, and where the war's first and last casualties lie. Britain's first commemorations of

the centenary took place here in 2014. “It offers a fitting place to reflect on the cost of the war,” the Government said.

The national commemorations will conclude with a service at Westminster Abbey on the evening of 11 November, at which the congregation will be invited to reflect on the centenary and recognise the impact of the war after the Armistice; as well as giving thanks to all those who were affected over the course of the conflict.

## **‘Power of words’ theme for Holocaust Memorial Day**

Churches, parishes and chaplaincies are being invited to mark Holocaust Memorial Day later this month.

The day, on January 27, remembers, not only the Holocaust of the Jewish people at the time of World War Two, but subsequent Genocides from the more recent past: Cambodia, Rwanda, Bosnia and Darfur. As well as being a day on which the dead are remembered, it’s also a day when the living can learn lessons for the future,

with a view to preventing the recurrence of such atrocities in our own lifetimes.

This year's theme is The Power of Words and its focus will be helping people to reflect on the role words play, both to harm and to heal, to destroy and to build, in society today.

As well as the National Ceremony in Cardiff City Hall, many other organisations – schools, colleges and universities, voluntary associations, local authorities, youth organisations, the police, libraries, prisons – will be holding events to mark the day, ranging from simple candle-lighting ceremonies, to postcard-writing activities, conferences, concerts, plays, reading events and exhibitions.

Because religious identity has often been used to foment division and discrimination in past genocides, the HMD Trust encourages faith organisations, in particular, to use the day as a means of presenting the positive values and practices they share together. Whether the resulting event be a simple gathering of two or three for quiet contemplation, or a more ambitious venture, it would mark an important point of resolution at this, the start of the New Year, and be a powerful symbol of our hopes and efforts to make a better, kinder, society.



Richard Spencer, HMDT Wales support worker, urges churches to get involved. He says, "HMDT provides a wide range of free resources to help in planning and arranging such commemorations, and these can be ordered directly on-line (see below) or downloaded – they are all free. I am also available to help for any aspect of any event that you may arrange, so please do be in touch. HMDT would very much like to receive news of your plans, or to receive reports of the events that do take place. Your event does not have to be held on January 27th itself, but ideally, should take place in the week before or following January 27th."

#### Useful Links:

Activity Packs for Organisers: <http://www.hmd.org.uk/content/order-or-download-activity-pack>

Get Involved – the HMDT guide for faith/interfaith groups : [http://www.hmd.org.uk/sites/default/files/faith\\_and\\_interfaith\\_groups\\_get\\_involved\\_guide\\_for\\_hmd\\_0.pdf](http://www.hmd.org.uk/sites/default/files/faith_and_interfaith_groups_get_involved_guide_for_hmd_0.pdf)

The Council of Christians and Jews (CCJ) and Churches Together in Britain and Ireland (CTBI) resource pack of liturgical and homiletic material

for use in worship for HMD 2018, based on the theme 'The Power of Words': [http://www.hmd.org.uk/sites/default/files/ccj\\_ctbi\\_liturgical\\_and\\_homiletical\\_resources\\_for\\_hmd\\_2018.pdf](http://www.hmd.org.uk/sites/default/files/ccj_ctbi_liturgical_and_homiletical_resources_for_hmd_2018.pdf)

Faith Resources: <http://www.hmd.org.uk/page/faith-resources>

School/Education Resources: <http://www.hmd.org.uk/content/for-educators>

## **Derry Central Library to mark Holocaust Memorial Day 2018 with poetry reading**

Derry Central Library will mark Holocaust Memorial Day 2018 with a special poetry session for adults on Wednesday 24 January from 12:30pm until 1:30pm.

Poems can capture a range of emotions in just a few words and can also help people understand complex issues. As the theme for this year's Holocaust Memorial Day is the Power of Words, members of the Derry Central Library Poetry Group will be reviewing a number of poems that



## **Derry Central Library**

represent a variety of experiences from the Holocaust and more recent genocides.

Norma Millar, Service Development Manager with Libraries NI explains: “Libraries NI is proud to support Holocaust Memorial Day and hope that the existing members of Derry Central Library’s Creative Writing Group, as well as newcomers, come along to help keep alive the memories, stories and more importantly the never to be forgotten lessons.”

Holocaust Memorial Day is remembered each year on 27 January, when Auschwitz-Birkenau concentration and death camp was liberated in 1945. On and around this time the destruction

caused by the Holocaust, together with more recent genocides and persecutions, are remembered around the world.

The theme of this year's Holocaust Memorial Day, The Power of Words, explores how language of the past has been shaped by propaganda, memoirs and words of resistance. The theme also shines a light on words of today on social media, newspapers and the conversations we hold.

The session in Derry Central Library is open to the public and admission is free. To book a place contact the library on telephone 028 7122 9990 or email [derrycentral.library@librariesni.org.uk](mailto:derrycentral.library@librariesni.org.uk)

For more information about Holocaust Memorial Day (HMD), go to <http://hmd.org.uk>

For details on all events in libraries go to [www.librariesni.org.uk](http://www.librariesni.org.uk)

# CNI

## **Foyle College prepares for move to Waterside**

One of only four seventeenth century schools in Northern Ireland will make an historic move from Londonderry's cityside to the opposite bank of the River Foyle on Monday. Foyle College, a predominantly Protestant but nondenominational grammar school, will move to a newly constructed campus in the city's Waterside, marking the first time in its 400-year history it will have left the mostly Catholic west bank of the Foyle.

Read more at: [https://  
www.newsletter.co.uk/news/education/  
foyle-college-prepares-for-move-to-  
waterside-1-8317100](https://www.newsletter.co.uk/news/education/foyle-college-prepares-for-move-to-waterside-1-8317100)

# CNI

## **Shankill Presbyterian Mission building to be hotel**

The charity behind a planned four star hotel on the Shankill Road has said that they want to create a legacy for the community. The £8million proposed redevelopment of the historic Presbyterian Mission building, which opened in 1898, could bring 150 jobs to the area.

Argyle Business Centre is now seeking funding across various organisations for the project.

Plans for the The Mission Hotel Belfast include:

- 48 bedrooms
- 4-star rating
- Ground floor cafe, bar and restaurant
- Banquette space with dining for 220 people
- Rooftop bar, restaurant and terrace with views across the city

## **Brexit and the border: Views of Donegal Protestants**

Protestants living in the Irish border county of Donegal give their views on life post Brexit.

Border life has long influenced opinion and challenged identity in this area.

Stewart McClean is from the Donegal border village of Newtowncunningham, just a few miles from the Northern Ireland counties of Londonderry and Tyrone.

He is a member of the Protestant Orange Order and has always had an allegiance to Britain; he says the implications of Brexit will not change that.

"We are governed by the laws of the Republic of Ireland but we continue to have an allegiance to the United Kingdom," he said.

When the UK leaves the EU, this area of rural Donegal will be part of a new frontier, where the UK and EU meet. More at -

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-northern-ireland-foyle-west-42491577>

## **Tuam survivors: ‘We want that site fully excavated’**

Survivors of the Tuam mother-and-baby home, where the remains of hundreds of babies were found last year, have renewed calls for a complete excavation of the site and DNA testing on all the bodies .

The Commission of Investigation into Mother-and-Baby Homes last year confirmed that “significant” quantities of human remains had been found buried under the site of the former institution for unmarried mothers, which was run by the Sisters of Bon Secours.

The remains belonged to children aged from about 35 foetal weeks to three years.

A report by an expert group published by Minister for Children Katherine Zappone last month outlined five options, including the creation of a memorial, and continuing examinations on the site. More at -

<https://www.irishtimes.com/news/social-affairs/tuam-survivors-we-want-that-site-fully-excavated-1.3345910>



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