



## **Blessing of Bikes and Bikers in Burt**

An Inter-denominational Service will take place in St. Aengus' Church, Burt (on the N13 near the Derry Bridge Border) on Sunday 3rd September 2017 for 1.30pm –ish.

The Collection on the day will be for R.N.L.I. The Service will be followed by a 'Ride Out' to Ned's

Point R.N.L.I Station, Buncrana where light refreshments will be served.

Fr. Gerry Sweeney will be leaving the Sacred Heart Church, Derry Road, Strabane, after Mass at 12.30pm to travel to Burt Chapel – all are welcome to join in the journey to Burt.

## **Whitehead churches support yarnbombing of town today**

Whitehead Railway Station will be “yarnbombed” on Saturday August 5 to welcome visitors to the province’s first “yarnfolk” festival.

The prestigious event will be held at venues in the seaside town from 10.00 am until 6.00 pm including the community centre, St. Patrick’s Church of Ireland church hall and Whitehead Methodist Church Hall. A spokesperson for Translink said: “We are encouraging people travelling to the Whitehead Summer Festival to use our regular train services. Details of our timetables can be found on our website: [www.translink.co.uk](http://www.translink.co.uk)

“Whitehead station will be ‘yarn bombed’ on Saturday as part of the Yarn and Wool Festival.” Visitors can expect demonstrations, workshops

and more, led by the most renowned experts in the field of fibre, including Skein Queen Debbie Orr, and Travel Knitter who are just two of the legendary fibre companies taking part.

The organisers say that the festival is the “ultimate fibre creative day out, with focus on appreciating the beauty, quality and variety of hand-crafted products”. The aim of Yarnfolk aim is to “showcase the best of both local and international fibre arts”. In addition, designers and crafters will “promote an enviable range of unique and exclusive materials with amazing products to purchase”. An exclusive pattern has been designed by Carol Feller, of Stolen Stitches, for a “knitalong” on the day.

Exhibitors will include Bear in Sheep’s Clothing; Dublin Dye; DyeCandy; Ellie and Ada; Emerald Fibres; EweMomma; Fine Fish Yarns; Green Elephant; Hawthorn Cottage Craft; LoopyKate Fibres; Love Creative Therapy; Mina Loves Designs; Rebecca Denley Textile Artist; S Twist Wool; The Fibre Kitchen; Townhouse Yarns; Yarn with Joanne; Wee Yarn Designs.

The event will also support the Autism NI; Children’s Heartbeat Trust and Belfast SOS charities.

## Northern Irish unionist parties alienating young Protestants, study says

Younger pro-union Protestant voters in [Northern Ireland](#) are increasingly turned off unionist politicians due to their parties' social conservatism on issues such as gay rights and abortion, according to a post-election survey, Henry McDonald writes in The Guardian.

While support among Protestants aged under 40 for staying in the UK remains solid at 82%, a majority of them no longer vote in elections for the Northern Ireland assembly or Westminster.

On [liberalising the region's strict anti-abortion laws](#), [legalising gay marriage](#) and supporting mixed religious marriages, the pro-unionist under-40s are far more liberal than the ultra-conservative Christian-influenced Democratic Unionist party, according to the University of Liverpool.

The research concludes there is a much broader divide between generations, with the most liberal sections of Northern Irish society not voting in local elections.

The university's Institute of Irish Studies interviewed 1,155 voters across Northern Ireland's 18 Westminster/Stormont constituencies. The Economic and Social Research Council Northern Ireland general election survey was carried out directly after voting in June.

Ahead of the climax of Northern Ireland's Pride week and Saturday's mass LGBT rally in Belfast, the survey found a huge majority of younger pro-unionist Protestants in favour of same-sex marriage. Northern Ireland is the only part of the UK where [gay couples cannot marry](#) due to the continued vetoing of legislation by the DUP in the Stormont assembly.

Among the under-40 voters, 63% are in favour of same-sex marriage. For 18- to 40-year-old Protestants who don't vote, the level of support is 72%.

On abortion, 52% of under-40s who do not vote are in favour of lifting the near total [ban on terminations in Northern Irish hospitals](#).

Overall, 71% of 18- to 40-year-old pro-union Protestants would have no problem with a close relative marrying someone from the opposite religion.

One of the survey's authors, Dr Peter Shirlow, said the findings showed a "massive inter-generational gap" between younger Protestant pro-unionists' social attitudes and those of the traditionally conservative unionist parties in Northern Ireland.

Shirlow said the results should be a "wake-up call to the DUP" in terms of alienating younger unionists who are "far more liberal and tolerant on issues like gay rights and abortion".

He said one of the major paradoxes of the survey was the disjunction between support to remain within the UK and indifference towards unionist political parties in the assembly.

More at : <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2017/aug/04/northern-irish-unionist-parties-alienating-young-protestants-study>

## **Week of inspiring music making at Armagh choral and organ festival**

The annual Charles Wood Festival of Music and Summer School, which will take place in Armagh on August 20-27, is brimming with top-quality events. This year's festival promises to be a fresh, varied and inspiring week of music-making.



A special highlight will be the Come and Sing event led by the internationally renowned choral composer John Rutter. Equally special will be a workshop by leading British jazz composer, Will Todd, and a seminar entitled 'How the voice works' by the Royal Opera House's vocal coach Paul Farrington.

Another highlight will be some of the world's finest choral music performed by the Charles Wood Singers. They will be conducted by the festival's artistic director David Hill, who is chief conductor of the BBC Singers. In addition to leading worship at various services, the Charles Wood Singers will perform at the enchanting

Concert by Candlelight and the showcase Gala Concert.

The line-up will also be introducing the new Charles Wood Girls' Choir, supported by Ulster Carpets and Arts & Business NI. They will be making their debut in St Mark's Parish Church Portadown on Wednesday August 23.

Full details of the programme, which also includes the Northern Ireland International Organ Competition and guest appearances by Regent House School Choir, Senior Winner of the BBC Radio Ulster School Choir of the Year, and Sam Kane, Northern Ireland Young Musician of the Year, are available at

[www.charleswoodsummerschool.org](http://www.charleswoodsummerschool.org).

Bookings can be made online at

[www.armagh.co.uk/charleswood](http://www.armagh.co.uk/charleswood) or by

contacting Armagh Visitor Information Centre on 02837 521800.

## **British Legion concert in aid of Limerick playground halted by Republicans**

Armed gardaí were called to defuse a heated situation at a playground fundraiser in County



Limerick where a dozen Republicans staged a protest against a British Legion band concert, The Limerick Leaders reports.

As a result of the activists' disapproval of the event disappointed organisers – the Knocklong History Group – were forced to call off Tuesday night's charity concert at the local community centre.

The British Legion Leiston Band, hailing from the small town of Leiston in East Suffolk, was invited to perform a brass concert, which was to take a moment to remember the Knocklong men killed in the First World War, with proceeds going towards a playground for the local Heritage Park.

However, a planned “peaceful protest” scuppered any hopes of an enjoyable night going ahead, with 12 “Irish Socialist Republicans” arriving at the scene at around 6pm.

More than 10 gardaí arrived at the scene, according to a spokesperson for the campaign, which was entitled ‘British Imperialists not welcome in Knocklong’.

The spokesperson told the Limerick Leader that “despite the ring of steel around Knocklong Community Centre”, the Republicans

“successfully prevented the pro-imperialist event” from taking place.

He claimed that there was a “heavy garda presence”, including three squad cars, an armed response team, and members of the special branch. One protester took to social media to state that a garda had impounded his vehicle for no NCT. Gardaí confirmed that a vehicle was impounded in the area on Tuesday, and that the regional support unit were at the scene.

A spokesperson for the Knocklong History Group told this newspaper that it was “very disappointed that it was not possible for the concert to proceed. We would like to thank the band from Leiston for all their work preparing for the concert and traveling to Knocklong to perform. We wish them every good wish and hope that one day they will be able to play in Knocklong.”

The community band is understood to have members as young as 14 and as old as 77.

Protester and Knocklong native, George McAnaspie said that the protest was a “massive victory for Socialist Republicans in the Munster area”. Mr McAnaspie’s grandfather was involved in the famous rescue mission of IRA

leader Sean Hogan in 1919, which took place in Knocklong.

“Left unchecked, events like the concert in Knocklong could become subtle recruiting grounds for the Brit Army in Ireland and therefore must be opposed.”

He added: “Let the message go out loud and clear from Knocklong, Brit Imperialists are not welcome in Ireland and will be challenged.”

Sinn Féin TD Maurice Quinlivan said: “I think it is a bit strange somebody invited them and didn’t expect any sort of reaction to it. I am not saying that I condemn or support it, but it would be controversial to invite the British Legion band to come to a rural village, where there was a huge armed resistance during the British occupation at the time. It seems a bit strange that you would invite just the band from the occupying forces and not to have a Republican-type band – a bit of balance.”

He said he was unaware of the Irish Socialist Republicans. On July 30, a group called Anti-Imperialist Action Ireland posted on Facebook about the concert. “Normalisation must be opposed. Imperialism in Ireland must be confronted. Brit Military recruitment in Ireland must be Challenged.

“Therefore the concert in Knocklong must be opposed by Socialist Republicans and all those opposed to the illegal British presence in Ireland and in nations all over the world. Join us at 6pm this Tuesday at Knocklong Community Centre and let's take a stand for our youth, for our class and for our country against Imperialism!”

Gardaí said no arrests were made on the night. The Leader made a number of attempts to contact the British Legion Leiston band.

## **Nun officiates at wedding in Canada with local bishop and Vatican's permission**

When no priests were available, the bishop of the Quebec Diocese of Rouyn-Noranda sought and received Vatican permission for a local nun to officiate at a recent wedding.

While the story has been portrayed around the world as a sign that Pope Francis is changing the role of women in the church, Bishop Dorylas Moreau said the wedding was carried out according to a long-established provision of canon law.



It allows an exception for a layperson to be permitted to officiate at a wedding when a bishop, priest or deacon is unavailable. That layperson can be a man or a woman.

"It is an exceptional situation, not something habitual," Bishop Moreau said in French.

The bishop said he has only 16 priests for 35 parishes in a diocese that covers nearly 9,300 square miles of rugged territory. The diocese has more than 75 nuns, but no deacons, although three are currently in formation.

This priest shortage, especially acute in the summer, led the bishop to make a request through the Vatican's Congregation for Divine

Worship and the Sacraments for permission to have Sister Pierrette Thiffault of the Sisters of Providence conduct the wedding. Approval was received in May.

On July 22, Sister Thiffault conducted the wedding of a couple identified only as David and Cindy at a Catholic parish in Lorrainville, Quebec, about 300 miles northwest of Ottawa. The church was not far from the parish in Moffett, where Sister Thiffault is a pastoral worker.

## **Bishop claims poor are abandoned by middle-class clergy**

The Church is "abandoning" the poor as middle-class clergy don't want to move away from "trendy coffee shops", a bishop has claimed.

Rt Rev Philip North said in a speech at the Christian conference New Wine United that he was "astonished at the number of people Jesus is calling to plant new churches as long as they are in Zones 1 and 2 of the London transport system".

He added: "If you feel called to plant, we need you on the outer estates, we need you in our



northern towns, we need you in areas where a majority of people come from other world faiths, we need you in those areas where the trendy coffee shops and artisanal bakers are hard to find.

"Come there if you really want to make a difference in Jesus' name."

He said the C of E has become so disconnected from deprived communities that its mission approach is "entirely focused on the needs and aspirations of the wealthy".

He claimed that the least talented clergy usually ended up in deprived areas which had less competition for each role than in-demand posts in wealthier parts of the country.

"We spend £8 per head of population on ministry. In some rural areas that figure rises to £24 per head. On the estates we spend just £5 per head," he said.

In March 2017 the Bishop of Burnley announced the withdrawal of his nomination to become Bishop of Sheffield, referring to "the highly individualised nature of the attacks upon him". He had received a backlash because of his opposition to women's ordination in the Church. Last year he wrote in The Telegraph that the Church was too obsessed with issues such as sexuality, to even notice the concerns of the poor it should be serving.

However, on Premier's News Hour, Natalie Williams, co-author of the books, 'A Church For The Poor' and 'The Myth Of The Undeserving Poor - A Christian Response to Poverty in Britain Today' said that some efforts of the church were going unrecognised stating:

"The Church is doing more than they've done, perhaps in the previous few decades and I absolutely agree that there's a lot more we can be doing.

"But I think we are stepping up – I think churches of all denominations are running food



banks and night shelters and soup kitchens and debt advice and marriage courses and parent & toddler groups and a whole range of activities that are reaching out to some of the neediest people in our communities.”

She added that based on her work with Jubilee+, who work alongside UK churches to engage with the poor, she had seen more churches approaching them to get involved with the poor.

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