

# Church News Ireland



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October 23, 2024

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## Image of the day



### Whoopers return

**The whooper swan is a winter visitor from Iceland which makes the long sea-crossing in family parties from October onwards. They have arrived recently in the Lough Foyle area where the photographs here were captured.**

It features in Irish myth and legend, most notably in the story of the Children of Lir. Large flocks can often be seen feeding in fields and their trumpeting calls heard from some distance, provide an evocative sound of winter.



Lough Foyle is one of their major grounds in Northern Ireland. They feed on grassland and stubble crops if available. It breeds on arctic and sub-arctic bogs and wetlands and occasionally in Northern Ireland.

The whooper swan is a very large waterbird. The Adult has entirely white plumage (though head, neck and breast may become stained brown or orange), a long neck and black and yellow bill. The legs and feet are also black. Juveniles are pale grey with the base of the bill pinkish, which becomes white and then yellowish as the winter progresses; legs and feet are grey.

Whooper swans usually nest in low-lying marshes, bogs or lake shores. Four or five eggs are laid in April or May and incubated by the female whilst the male remains on guard.



After five to six weeks the eggs hatch and the young fledge after a further eleven weeks. Adults remain paired for many years and return to the same nest site. Southerly migration begins in mid-October with family parties making the flight non-stop from Iceland to Ireland. Many swans winter at the same sites each year, feeding predominantly on improved or wet grassland, and arable stubbles. Return migration in spring takes place in March and April. A few pairs remain in Northern Ireland to breed, most likely because of birds being injured and unable to make the return journey to Iceland.

### How to see this species

Whooper swans are easily encountered in winter months around the polders of Lough Foyle, the grasslands of Loughs Neagh/Beg and Upper Lough Erne. Most often, they will be feeding in fields and can be observed from roadside



viewpoints. Some sites such as Portmore Lough RSPB Reserve, County Antrim are used as nighttime roosts and large numbers of swans can be watched flying in to roost at dusk.

There is evidence of a slight increase in wintering numbers. Lough Foyle is part of an extensive complex of sites, which includes Lough Swilly in Donegal. Collectively they form the most important Irish site holding up to 3,000 birds. Lough Neagh/Beg support up to 1,500 swans, and Upper Lough Erne is the next most important wintering area with up to 1,100. All of these sites are internationally important for this species. Several other areas host smaller flocks. Occasional pairs have bred successfully in Antrim and Fermanagh in recent years. The whooper swan is specially protected at all times under the Wildlife (NI) Order 1985 and is listed in Annex I of the EU Birds Directive as a species which must be the subject of special conservation measures.



## News

### Monaghan Methodist harvest

**The Two Kens - allegedly retired but serving in the Aughnacloy circuit among other roles with Circuit Steward Margaret Finn at the Monaghan harvest.**



One of our smaller congregations and who recently renovated much of their building and reaching out to the wider community in a variety of ways inc a Sat Night Harvest Praise with Portadown Male Voice Choir and Violinist Hayley Howe.

## Evening prayer and anointing of the sick in Dundalk

The people of Dundalk and surrounds weren't put off by the stormy weather on Monday evening as they processed from St. Nicholas's Church to St. Patrick's followed by solemn evening prayer and anointing of the sick.

“Our Lady of Lourdes pray for us, St. Bernadette pray for us”



## Service of Wholeness and Healing

**A Service of Wholeness and Healing can be a catalyst to kickstart the search for wholeness in our lives.**



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So said the Rt Revd Patrick Rooke who preached at The Church's Ministry of Healing: Ireland's annual gift day and service in Christ Church Bray on Sunday October 20).

He said this search was not a search for perfection but rather for what is possible.

The service was led by the Rector of Bray, the Revd Leonard Madden in the presence of the Chairperson of CMH:I the Revd Lesley Robinson. CMH:I is a registered charity which supports all who are in pain of mind, body or spirit and also helps those who minister to them.

During the service members of the congregation had the opportunity to come forward to receive prayer with the laying on of hands and anointing with oil. Healing Prayer Ministers also had an opportunity to reaffirm their commitment to their ministry.

Read more on the diocesan website here: <https://dublin.anglican.org/news/2024/10/21/search-for-the-wholeness-in>

## **Organ Marathon in Eglinton**

**The Rector of Faughanvale, Rev Canon Paul Hoey, has been looking forward to next weekend's Organ Marathon in St Canice's Church in Eglinton to raise funds for the new Canice Centre.**



Supporters and well-wishers are invited to drop in anytime between 9am and 9pm on Saturday 26th October, when they can request a favourite hymn to be played or commission their own composition, and enjoy refreshments in the company of others.

A highlight of the 12-hour marathon will be the 'Favourite Hymns Singalong' from 8-9pm. All are welcome.

# Cathedral Calls

## Armagh canons installed



Congratulations to their two new Canons in Armagh, the Revd Canon Andrew Totten and the Revd Canon Gary McMurray, pictured here with the Archbishop John McDowell.

Next page - The Archbishop, the Dean and members of the Cathedral Chapter. Images -Ian Maginess



## Newcastle's illuminated sheep

**“Join us for the final stop of the Illuminated Sheep’s Urban Adventure, where the baa-rilliant artwork is lighting up the dark on Tuesday 22, Wednesday 23, and Thursday 24 October!”**

The enchanting flock of 30 sheep, created by artist Deepa Mann-Kler and accompanied by a specially commissioned soundtrack, recently dazzled visitors at Segedunum Roman Fort.

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Now, for the first time, they'll shine indoors at the Cathedral.



Evening viewings are in timed entry slots, with tickets available on a 'Give as Ewe Feel' basis. Don't be sheepish – book in advance at [ticketsource.co.uk/newcastle-cathedral](https://ticketsource.co.uk/newcastle-cathedral).

Find us at Newcastle Cathedral, St Nicholas Square, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE1 1PF.

## **Birmingham Cathedral free lunchtime recital**

“Join us for a free lunchtime recital performed by our Assistant Head of Music Ashley Wagner at 1310 on Friday 25 October. It will be an organ recital of works by JS Bach, Duruflé, Fournier and local composer Christopher Churcher. Entry is free. Just turn up”.

## **Webinars, music, resources, broadcasts, and books**

### **Renaissance Chamber Choir in Derry**

Join them at their next concert on Saturday 16 November, 7.30pm.

In the historic surrounds of St Columb's Cathedral, Derry.

## **BBNI Podcast - Pastoral Care: A Compassionate Presence**

### **Season 3: Episode 2 Podcast with Paul Gallucci: Pastoral Care: A Compassionate Presence**

The BBNI Podcast is back for season 3 and on episode 2 this week Paul Gallucci, House Chaplain at The Big House, joins David on the BBNI Podcast to discuss his extensive experience in pastoral care, particularly with young people.

Paul Gallucci, House Chaplain at The Big House, joins David on the BBNI Podcast to discuss his extensive experience in pastoral care, particularly with young people. With over 22 years of pastoral care experience, 12 of those specifically focused on youth, Paul offers valuable insights. The Big House Ireland's vision is for every young person to understand that they are created, known, loved, valued, and deserving of respect. For more information about The Big House, including their training events, retreats, programmes, and ways to support their work, visit [www.thebighouse.org.uk](http://www.thebighouse.org.uk).

We've some incredible guests in season 3, all with amazing stories to share.

Available on Spotify, Apple and Youtube, Why not subscribe so that you don't miss an episode?

## **Calm and Bright Advent Calendar**



**Help children and families prepare calmly and joyfully in the run up to Christmas with daily pictures and challenges, as well as QR codes for digital activities prepared by C of E.**

Order now for your family, or to hand out at upcoming church services, at [cofe.io/C&BCalendar](https://cofe.io/C&BCalendar).

## Perspective

## **Moderator's praise for SEN schools as he hears of 'difficult times' on school visit**

**The Moderator of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland (PCI), Right Reverend Dr Richard Murray, has praised the work of the Special Education Needs (SEN) sector, and expressed the Churches 'great appreciation for the dedicated and compassionate way that staff provide such a vital service for some of the most vulnerable in our society...' adding, 'especially in such difficult and constraining times.'**

Dr Murray was speaking during a visit to Roddensvale School in Larne, as part of a week-long series of engagements during his tour of PCI's Carrickfergus Presbytery, which takes in the town. "I really want to thank the school's principal, Mr Madden, for taking the time to show me and my colleagues around the school, introducing us to some amazing children, and staff, who work so hard to help each one to fulfil their full potential."

Originally opened as Larne Special Care School in 1964 with a group of six pupils, today there are 255 children and young people with a range of special educational and physical needs, from the ages of 3-19. While the current school opened on the site in 2005, with further development promised, the Moderator found that resourcing and space was still a major issue.

"It was great to take part in a P7 assembly quiz, and talk to some of the children and staff, and hear how as a controlled school the non-denominational Christian ethos was



important, as was being part of the broader local community,” Dr Murray said.

“Talking to Mr Madden, I was really struck by the complex challenges and the increasing need that there is, and how the school is trying to meet those needs. While great work is being done, it is being undertaken in very difficult and pressing circumstances. For example, a store room has become an additional classroom, as have other rooms. The teachers have also given up their staff room, which is a classroom now. ‘Needs must’, Mr Madden said, when telling us about it.”

The Moderator continued, “A good working relationship with Larne High School, which is close by, has meant that seven refurbished classrooms are now used by older Roddensvale students, which eases some of the pressure. While there has been investment, more needs to be done.”

Before going onto visit a local food bank and specialist farm, Dr Murray said, “I really want to express our church’s great appreciation for the dedicated and compassionate way that staff provide such a vital service for some of the most vulnerable in our society, across the sector, and here at Roddensvale in particular, especially in such difficult and constraining times.”

Mr Madden, who received the MBE for services to education and children with special educational needs in this year’s King’s Birthday Honours, welcomed the opportunity to show the Moderator around. “We are very much a part of the local community and some of the local ministers in the town, and surrounding area, would come and support us in different

ways, so it was great to have Dr Murray and his colleagues visit us,” Mr Madden said, who has been at Roddensvale for 22 years, and a teacher for over 30 years.

One of those ministers, Rev Peter Bovill of Islandmagee Presbyterian Church, would take assemblies at the school from time to time. He accompanied the Moderator and took the opportunity to see his son who is in P4.

Mr Madden continued, “Our main purpose at Roddensvale is to provide the most appropriate education for our pupils within a safe and secure environment, and we have worked hard to create a shared ethos and we are committed to developing a school which meets the personalised learning and emotional needs of every child in our care.

“At the same time, we also recognise each pupil’s strengths and weaknesses, and endeavour to fulfil the full potential of the ‘whole’ child. That means having the appropriate resources available. While there has been investment, I sincerely hope that the two programmes that will lead to an additional 14 classrooms will be fulfilled.

“As I explained to the Moderator, it is isn’t just about bricks and mortar, across the SEN sector support services and specialisms like occupational therapy, physiotherapy and clinical psychiatry, need to dovetail seamlessly with the service that each school provides to produce the best possible outcomes for children and young people. At the moment, especially with clinical psychiatry, there is a resource issue, which has implications for the small percentage of pupils who are in most need of this service.” Mr Madden said.

## In the media

### Suicide deaths top 200 a year in NI - Sunday Life

**Around 200 people per year are taking their own lives in Northern Ireland. The revelation comes amid a warning in the Assembly that more people have died by suicide in Northern Ireland since the Good Friday Agreement than were killed during the Troubles, Noel Mc Adam writes.**

The overall suicide death toll here for the 26 years since 1998 is now more than the official figure of 3,532 people killed between 1969 and 1998.

However, one factor in the grim statistics could be the ongoing, inter-generational impact of the Troubles.

Health Minister Mike Nesbitt said: “If you take a map of Northern Ireland and put on that map the hotspots of the Troubles measured by shoot ings, bombings and murders and then superimpose a contemporaneous map of mental health issues — completed and attempted suicides, drug and alcohol abuse etc — you will have a match. I mean somewhere like north Belfast, to pick one area.”

Now, an Executive working group on mental wellbeing, resilience and suicide prevention is to be reformed.

The SDLP Opposition at Stormont brought a debate to the Assembly but lost out to a DUP motion “lamenting that the number of people who have passed away as a result of suicide since 1998 is higher than those who lost their lives in the Troubles”.

SDLP MLA Mark H Durkan said: “It is deeply concerning that, in a time of relative peace here in the North, the number of lives that are lost to suicide now exceeds the number that were lost during the Troubles.

“While the suicide statistics are shocking, they are the tip of the iceberg when it comes to the lives that are lost and destroyed due to poor mental health.”

The Foyle MLA argued early intervention is key but the Healthy Happy Minds counselling programme for primary school children had been cut “with seemingly no hope of return”.

The DUP's Diane Dodds said the 2020 youth wellbeing survey had found anxiety and depression levels in Northern Ireland to be around 25% higher than in the child and youth populations in other regions.

The campaign group, New Script for Mental Health, had highlighted that one in five adults in Northern Ireland was prescribed an anti-depressant last year which Mrs Dodds called “a shocking statistic”.

Sinn Fein's Orlaithi Flynn went on: “There are over 200 deaths by suicide a year, with provisional figures for 2023

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showing a slight increase, thus perhaps bringing the figure up to 221.

“And 585 lives have been lost as a result of drug deaths over the past three years. The biggest killer (is) alcohol, which accounts for around 350 deaths every single year — all those deaths (are) preventable somewhere along the line.”

The final motion called on Health Minister Nesbitt “to work with Executive colleagues to commit to making the prevention of poor mental health and suicide a priority across all departments”.

\* Anyone affected by this article can contact the Samaritans on 116 123.

06/19/2024. Sunday Life

## Poem for today

### When You Are Old

By William Butler Yeats

When you are old and grey and full of sleep,  
And nodding by the fire, take down this book,  
And slowly read, and dream of the soft look  
Your eyes had once, and of their shadows deep;

How many loved your moments of glad grace,  
And loved your beauty with love false or true,  
But one man loved the pilgrim soul in you,

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And loved the sorrows of your changing face;

And bending down beside the glowing bars,  
Murmur, a little sadly, how Love fled  
And paced upon the mountains overhead  
And hid his face amid a crowd of stars.

## Speaking to the soul

Short reading and a prayer - daily on this site

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## Church News Ireland

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# Church News Ireland

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