



## **Alexandra College's 150 years pioneering the education of women**

A year of celebration marking the 150th anniversary of Alexandra College, Dublin, began on Thursday evening (January 21) with a special service in Christ Church Cathedral. The cathedral was filled with past and present students, staff, parents and friends of the Milltown school. The Archbishop of Dublin, the Most Revd Dr Michael Jackson presided while the Bishop of Copenhagen, the Right Revd Peter Skov-Jackobsen preached.

Alexandra College was founded in 1866 by educationalist Anne Jellicoe and was the first college in Ireland to provide a university type education for women. It was named after Princess Alexandra of Denmark.

Introducing the service the principal of Alexandra College, Barbara Ennis, said they were celebrating the 150th anniversary of an institution that paved the way for the education of women in Ireland. She paid tribute to the bravery of Anne Jellicoe in setting up an educational facility for women at a time when it was considered that bonnets and brains were not compatible.

“She was an enabler of women. She afforded them the opportunity to move forward and the opportunity of education. What began on 11 October 1866 was the beginning of a movement that we cannot forget today,” Ms Ennis stated.

The present day school has an incredible atmosphere, the principal stated. She said it has a great energy, a sense of fun and of enjoying learning. Innovation is at the core of the school’s teaching and the students do well academically. But the focus is also on the person and she praised the relationships between students and their teachers.

“We encourage the students to be free, to have a voice, to lead. We provide opportunities for them to be the best that they can be and make their contribution to society in whatever way that may turn out to be. We want them to know that their lives matter and what they do counts,” Ms Ennis said.

Hailing from the birthplace of Princess Alexandra, Bishop Skov-Jackobsen, observed that they were celebrating the education of women. He said that in founding Alexandra College, Anne Jellicoe was ensuring that women could be part of future society but also sought to focus on the whole human being.

He related Alexandra College’s pioneering education of women to the story of Mary Magdalene who arriving at Jesus’ tomb found his body missing. The angel told her to go and tell the disciples and she was confused and uncertain. “It is this love, uncertainty, doubt, confusion in which Christianity has its roots. We have had 2,000 years in which to get used to this. We frame the events with words but the words don’t always express the mystery,” he said. “In 1866 I am sure that that the founding mothers of Alexandra College had an idea of what happened 2,000 years ago. They will have known the story of Mary Magdalene. They were

aware of the scandal of the Gospel of John in which a woman brought the news of Jesus' resurrection to the disciples.”

The Bishop encouraged the congregation to do as Mary Magdalene did – to be baffled and to weep and laugh in exaltation. He said this was important as we live in worrying times, scared of terror and war, hatred and politics, extremists with no compassion.

Past pupil and chairperson of the London branch of the alumnae, Eva Bangle, spoke of her days in Alexandra College in the 1960s and the educational and personal opportunities that she grasped with both hands. Current head girl, Julie Ryan, spoke of today's school community which allows each student to flourish. She said that the ethos of the school remained the same as when it was founded by Anne Jellicoe.

Archbishop Jackson brought the service to a close saying that in a world of flux, the sense of stability at the heart of the story of Alexandra College was a gift. He thanked the principal for drawing the community together to mark the start of the 150th anniversary year and the pupils who contributed to the evening. He also thanked the cathedral for accommodating the service, the Precentor, Canon Neil McEndoo, and Bishop

Skov–Jackobsen for preaching and giving a tangible connection with Copenhagen and the Royal family in Denmark.

## **Launch of The Art of Listening Belfast 4 Corners Festival**

A sampling of the musicians, poets and artists who will be participating in the fourth annual 4 Corners Festival took part in its launch yesterday in the newly-opened Girdwood Community Hub in North Belfast. Building on this year's theme of 'The Art of Listening,' the organisers encouraged people to begin reflecting on this idea and to approach the festival with ears and hearts open.

This year's programme includes 15 events, ranging from music, discussions, art, poetry, film, and a churches' walk. All events are free, with the organisers – who are all volunteers – asking only for donations to help cover costs.

The festival's motto is 'Bringing Belfast Together', which it aims to do by strategically placing events in the north, south, east and west of the city. In this way the festival is designed to encourage people to leave their familiar corners of the city and to cross mental, geographical and spiritual boundaries. Given this year's 'art of



***Steve Stockman, Hannah McPhillimy and Martin Magill***

listening' theme, the aim is to create spaces where people will hear some things they may never have heard before.

The festival was conceived by Rev Steve Stockman of Fitzroy Presbyterian and Fr Martin Magill of Sacred Heart parish. It has been organised by a small group of Christians from all four corners of the city.

Speaking about a screening of the BBC True North documentary at Stormont on 5 February at 7.30 pm, Rev Stockman shared how he had been channel-surfing one evening and stumbled across the programme. When he heard a loyalist

bandsman say his 'favourite day is the 12th of July,' he said he almost changed the channel right away, as this comment seemed to confirm his own stereotypes. But he kept the programme on and was moved when he heard a young bandsman say how people 'looked at the uniform' and thought he must be 'bad.'

Stockman said that he could see the pain in the young man's 'soul' when he said that, and that this was a wake-up call for him personally to try and listen better to those he might normally dismiss.

This year's festival also features an opportunity for 'listening to our young leaders', an invitation-only event on 5 February at Ulster University. Fr Magill explained how this event had grown out of a peace walk for young people in North Belfast prior to Christmas, where he had been impressed by the leadership and maturity of those who took part.

A 4 Corners Schools art competition also encouraged the city's young talent. The winner of the competition, Adam McParland from Corpus Christi College, will be recognised at the festival closing event, 'Dreamers and Visionaries', on 7 February at St Nicholas' Church at 7 pm. McParland's art features key

landmarks from the corners of the city. As McParland explained in text that accompanies the work, a small lamppost in the right-hand corner symbolises 'hope.'

Poet Jim Deeds, who will be speaking at the 'Dreamers and Visionaries' event, read two of his poems. The first, 'A Belfast River,' was inspired by the river in the Falls Park. He wrote it yesterday in preparation for the launch. The second, 'A Prayer for the City,' he wrote earlier in the year as he pondered the effect that previous 4 Corners Festivals had on him.

Deeds' 'A Prayer for the City' reflects on the 'corners,' 'quarters,' 'have's,' and 'have nots' of the city, capturing the spirit of the festival as it strives to listen to citizens from a variety of backgrounds. In that vein, Rev David Campton spoke about an event, 'Voices of the New Belfast,' on 2 February in Youth Initiatives Belfast at 7.30 pm, which will screen a documentary featuring the real stories of various people who have come to live in Belfast over the past number of years. The first event of the festival, 'From Syria ... with Grace', on 28 January in City Hall at 7.15 pm, also makes space for voices from away. It is an information and discussion evening, co-organised with Embrace, about how



Belfast churches can respond to the refugee crisis.

Singer songwriters Chris Wilson and Hannah McPhillimy, who will both be performing in the 'Songs of the City' event on 6 February at the Duncairn Centre at 7.30, also lent their talents to the launch. As 'Songs of City' will feature both original songs and covers of songs about the city, Wilson played his own 'Fragile', while McPhillimy performed Snow Patrol's 'Take Back the City.'

## **Methodist President calls for a nimble Church**

The Methodist President, the Rev Brian Anderson, in his monthly letter to be published in the February issue of the *Methodist Newsletter*, recalls a conversation he had recently with the Rev Barry Sloan, in which Barry asked if there was a positive attitude to church planting in Ireland to which Brian replied, 'No; we seem to be focused on redefining existing places of witness.' Brian goes on to ask if groups in our churches are getting smaller; if there is a struggle to find leaders? If so, maybe it is time to ask if there are new ways in which we can



witness to those around us. Can we contribute, and who can we partner with to extend the Kingdom of God?

Brian also recalled the Rev Howard Mellor talking at last year's British Methodist Conference about the Methodist Church in Hong Kong. This Church is a nimble church – it seizes opportunities. Howard likened the Hong Kong Church to the type of scaffolding that is used in that country. Scaffolding there is made of bamboo and strapping, rather than steel and

clamps. It gives strength and flexibility. Traditional scaffolding would be blown over in the many typhoons that hit the country. While bamboo appears fragile, it is strong and flexible. Howard said the Hong Kong Church has this flexibility – if a congregation is not flourishing they move to the next housing estate to test if it will bear more fruit there.

Brian urged the Methodist Church in Ireland also to be a nimble Church, capable of adapting and withstanding the winds of change that are currently buffeting it.

## **1916 : themed lectures and events planned for Cork over the next week**

At St Finbarre's Cathedral University College Dublin professor of modern Irish history Diarmaid Ferriter spoke about 1916: New Perspectives, Old Rows. He was followed by responses from University College Cork historians John Borgonovo and professor emeritus John A Murphy. This was the first in a series of events organised by the Church of

Ireland Diocese of Cork, Cloyne and Ross for the centenary year of 1916.

Other UCC historians are among the speakers at a free two-day conference next Friday and Saturday: *The Rising of Poets & Playwrights? The Arts & The 1916 Easter Rising*. Music, poetry and other artistic work that inspired, or were prompted by, the Easter Rising and those connected with it are among topics being addressed.

The keynote address on Friday night by Micheál Ó Suilleabháin, professor of music at University of Limerick, will look at music of the Rising, with particular reference to Seán Ó Riada's *Mise Éire* film score. Papers will also deal with Constance Markiewicz, Jack B Yeats, and Patrick Pearse, and with theatre, film, and poetry.

UCC's chaplaincy begins a series of weekly lectures on the Catholic Church in the revolutionary decade, 1912-1923 next Monday at 6pm in Boole 1 lecture theatre. Gabriel Doherty of UCC school of history will explore the Catholic Church's engagement with the 1912-1914 Home Rule crisis; its attitude to female suffrage; to the First World War; and its take on the 1916 Rising. He will also address its position on various issues during the 1919 to

1921 War of Independence and the Civil War that followed.

More information on the Arts & The 1916 Easter Rising conference is available at the UCC School of History web pages: [www.ucc.ie/en/history/conferences/](http://www.ucc.ie/en/history/conferences/)

## **New York celebration of Corrymeela anniversary**

Director Norman Houston and New York Irish Consul General Barbara Jones co-hosted a reception to celebrate 50 years of The Corrymeela Community, Ireland's oldest peace and reconciliation center.

The evening honored the Eithne and Paddy Fitzpatrick Memorial Fund, set up by John Fitzpatrick (Chairman of The Worldwide Ireland Funds) in memory of his parents and their dedication to peace and a shared community all across Ireland.

## **Sligo suicide prevention seminar**

Vox magazine is hosting a series of one-day conferences around Ireland to inform and equip churches and Christians (of all denominations

and backgrounds) as they seek to respond to suicide and engage in suicide prevention. This includes a conference at Calry Church, Sligo, on Saturday, 20th February, between 10am and 4pm.

Clergy and parishioners are welcome to explore these vital issues with top speakers from the area of mental health and suicide prevention.

**Cost is** €20 per person (including lunch), €10 for students and concessions. Book now [online](#).

These events are designed for church leaders and individual Christians who are concerned about suicide or have been affected by suicide and want to know how Christians can respond.

A range of workshops will be offered depending on the venue and demand. Subjects may include:

- Supporting those bereaved by suicide
- Understanding self-harm
- Equipped to care (listening skills)
- Working together with your community
- Supporting a family member with chronic mental illness

## Broadcast service from Ardee on RTE Radio

A celebration of Holy Communion at St Marys Church of Ireland, Ardee, will be recorded for broadcast on RTE Radio 1. The service, which takes place at 7.30pm on Tuesday January 26th, will be broadcast on the national station on the following Sunday, January 31st at 11am. In order to allow parishioners to listen to the mass on the radio, that morning's regular 11.30am service has been moved forward to 9.45am. Mass in the Church of the Nativity of Our Lady in Ardee has previously been broadcast on RTE Radio.

You can listen to RTE Radio 1 on FM on 88-90 Mhz, online [on the website](#) or via the RTE Radio Player app.

For more information about St Mary's Church of Ireland in Ardee, it's church warden Leonard Hatrick talks through it's history in this video by local videographer Joe Finnegan, at - <http://www.thisisardee.ie/2016/01/21/rte-radio-1-to-record-ardee-church-service/>

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## **Vicars should grow beards to reach out to Muslims, bishop suggests**

It brings together the most unlikely of bedfellows from Prince Harry to Gerry Adams and even – in many depictions – God himself, John Bingham writes in the Daily Telegraph.

Now the fashion for beards has been given the blessing of the Church of England, after one of the country's most senior clerics praised vicars who grow them to appeal to Muslim communities around them.

The Bishop of London, the Rt Rev Richard Chartres, singled out two East End priests who had cultivated bushy facial hair “of an opulence that would not have disgraced a Victorian sage”, for special praise.

More than simply a fashion choice, the move reflected a desire to “reach out” to the community in their Tower Hamlets parishes, a large proportion of whom are of Bangladeshi origin, he said.

It is, he added, an acknowledgement of the fact that in many Middle Eastern and Asian cultures



the hirsute appearance is more associated with “holy men” than hipsters.

The bishop, who sports what he describes as a “modest” beard dating from the late 1970s, made the observation in **an article for the Church Times** tracing the history of facial hair over the last 2,000 years of Christianity.

In Islam beards are viewed as an “adornment” and Muslim men are encouraged to wear them to honour the Prophet Mohammed.

Many orthodox Jewish men also wear beards, partly because of the traditional interpretation of a verse in Leviticus as a ban on shaving.

One of the priests praised by the Bishop of London, the Rev Adam Atkinson, Vicar of St Peter’s church in Bethnal Green, said he had found that having a beard had helped provide a connection with many people in his parish, around 85 per cent of whom are Muslim.

## **News links to reports on faith, politics and education**

### **Catholic Church’s hold on schools at issue in changing Ireland**

New York Times

The Roman Catholic **Church** has lost the battles over divorce, contraception and gay marriage in **Ireland**. But it still wields what some ...

[http://www.nytimes.com/2016/01/22/world/europe/ireland-catholic-baptism-school.html?\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2016/01/22/world/europe/ireland-catholic-baptism-school.html?_r=0)

## **Irish Education Minister threatens Catholic education in schools**

Church Militant

reland's minister of education is facing ... The minister, a member of the **Church of Ireland**, initially announced plans to ...

<http://www.churchmilitant.com/news/article/irish-education-minister-threatens-catholic-education-in-schools>

## **'Protestant' St Patrick row sparks religious debate**

the Irish News

But the **Church of Ireland's** Henry Hull, Dean of Down, said it's "erroneous to describe Patrick as either a Protestant or a Roman Catholic".

<http://www.irishnews.com/news/2016/01/22/news/-protestant-st-patrick-row-sparks-religious-debate-390776/>

## **'Creativity needed to tackle obesity' says primary school principals**

Irish Examiner

<http://www.irishexaminer.com/breakingnews/ireland/creativity-needed-to-tackle-obesity-says-primary-school-principals-716936.html>

## **School facing loss of teacher linked to rising rents**

Irish Independentnet

<http://www.independent.ie/irish-news/education/school-facing-loss-of-teacher-linked-to-rising-rents-34386669.html>

## **Children missing more days at schools in Northern Ireland**

Belfast Telegraph

<http://www.belfasttelegraph.co.uk/news/education/children-missing-more-days-at-schools-in-northern-ireland-34386337.html>

## **Patient safety charity criticises use of confidentiality clauses in Northern Ireland**

The Detail

[https://www.thedetail.tv/articles/patient-safety-charity-slam-use-of-confidentiality-clauses-in-northern-ireland?utm\\_source=mailinglist&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=47-patient-safety-charity-criticises-use-of](https://www.thedetail.tv/articles/patient-safety-charity-slam-use-of-confidentiality-clauses-in-northern-ireland?utm_source=mailinglist&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=47-patient-safety-charity-criticises-use-of)

## **Mail**

Columnist Ephraim Hardcastle says Justin Welby may be the last British Archbishop of Canterbury if the next postholder is elected by other Anglican bishops from around the world.

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/debate/article-3411224/EPHRAIM-HARDCASTLE-Justin-Welby-British-Archbishop.html>

## **Guard**

Article on how four Syrian refugees, including three teenagers and a man with mental health problems, won a landmark case to be granted refugee status overturning the original refusal. It quotes the Bishop of Barking, Peter Hill, saying it was a fantastic outcome for vulnerable child refugees from Calais. The group was met at St Pancreas by supporters and campaigners from Citizens UK.

<http://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2016/jan/21/syrian-teenagers-brother-looking-forward-to-reunion-after-legal-victory>

### **BBC**

Report that Bishop Bell Church of England School in Eastbourne intends to choose a new name; the process was started in 2014 but the school says was accelerated after the Diocese of Chichester paid compensation in a civil claim and apologised last year after sex abuse allegations against Bishop Bell. The school said it was looking at two new names - St Edward's College and St Catherine's College.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-sussex-35359859>

### **Ind**

The creation of a homeless charter and extra accommodation for the homeless in Manchester, backed by the Bishop of Manchester, David Walker, is mentioned in a report on the death of a homeless man in a tented camp for rough sleepers in the city. It states police are investigating the death.

<http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/manchester-residents-shocked-after-homeless-mans-body-found-in-a-burning-tent-a6826231.html>

## **Tel**

Report that the return of a fragment of bone believed to come from the body of Thomas Becket is a symbol of reconciliation between Anglicans and Roman Catholics. The Revd Canon Jeremy Worthen, the Church of England's Secretary for Ecumenical Relations is quoted saying Becket is a martyr and an inspiration shared by both churches. It states the relic, held in a Hungarian Basilica, will form the centrepiece of a "pilgrimage" to London and Canterbury with the Hungarian President and clerics from the two churches.

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/religion/12113298/Bones-of-Thomas-Becket-to-return-to-Canterbury-via-Hungary.html>

## **Third Sector**

Article on a talk by Professor of Charities at Sheffield Hallam University, Gareth Morgan about the charity commission and regulation, saying churches have little understanding of compliance and charity law. Ian Theodoreson, chief finance officer of the Church of England governance group, is quoted and disagrees strongly, saying guidance for parishes is all in place.

<http://www.thirdsector.co.uk/why-two-extra-types-charity/governance/article/1379723>

## **Times**

Report on results of a MORI Poll says establishment scandals have eroded public trust and that people name hairdressers as most trusted people rather than the clergy. It states those who trust priests to be truthful fell from 85 per cent 30 years ago to 67 per cent. It says the

results coincide with a change in the country's relationship with the church and decline in religion.

<http://www.thetimes.co.uk/tto/news/uk/article4671629.ece>

### **Times**

Richard Morrison writes on the growth of elaborate national First World War commemorations and argues that local commemorations are best. He uses the example of an event at his local church.

<http://www.thetimes.co.uk/tto/arts/article4671008.ece>

### **Mail/Ind**

Report that Pope Francis has written to the department regulating worship saying all people including women should be included in a foot washing ceremony before Easter, overturning the tradition to only wash the feet of men.

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-3410618/Pope-overturns-centuries-tradition-allowing-women-footwashing-service-Lent.html#ixzz3xxAivLaf>

<http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/pope-changes-vatican-rules-to-include-women-in-holy-thursday-foot-washing-ritual-a6826186.html>

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