



## **Belfast Cathedral hosts service celebrating 100th anniversary of RAF**



**At the RAF 100 service in Belfast Cathedral are, from left: the Chief of the Air Staff, Air Chief Marshal Sir Stephen Hillier; The Dean of Belfast, the Very Rev Stephen Forde; the General Officer Commanding Irish Air Corps Brigadier General Sean**

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## **Clancy; and Shailesh Vara MP, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Northern Ireland.**

Belfast Cathedral was packed for a Service of Choral Evensong celebrating the centenary of the Royal Air Force (RAF) on Sunday April 29.

To mark this milestone, the Chief of the Air Staff, Air Chief Marshal Sir Stephen Hillier, was joined at the service by his counterpart from the Irish Air Corps, Brigadier General Sean Clancy.



### **Memorial crafted for the RAF 100 service.**

The service recognised the historic links between the formation of the RAF and the formation of Ireland's National Army Air Service, now the Irish Air Corps. Ireland made a significant contribution to the development of the Royal Air Force from the days before the First World War when the Royal Flying Corps made the first ever crossing over a stretch of water, the Irish Sea, in 1913.



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In his words of welcome, the Dean of Belfast, the Very Rev Stephen Forde, said that the presence of both Air Chief Marshall Sir Stephen Hillier and Brigadier General Sean Clancy, was of particular significance ‘because those pioneer aviators of the RAF in the final months of the First World War included those drawn from across the whole island of Ireland, as we shall be reminded later with the reading of WB Yeats’ poem, ‘An Irish Airman foresees his death.’”



**A crane stretches from the ground to lofty heights of St Anne’s Church, Shandon for the repair work to the weather vane - see report below**

Dean Forde told guests: “While today is a day to look back with pride over 100 years of courage, daring and innovation across the history of the RAF, this is also a day to look forward with those of you who are today’s Air Cadets, and whose vision is for the RAF’s future.”

Other special guests at the service included the Lord Lieutenant of Belfast, Mrs Fionnuala Jay-O’Boyle,

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Deputy Lord Mayor of Belfast City Council, Councillor Sonia Copeland, Lord Lieutenants from across Northern Ireland, Shailesh Vara MP, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, representing Her Majesty's Government, and four Northern Ireland MPs.

Before the service, Air Chief Marshal Hillier hosted a reception for 11 WW2 RAF veterans and descendants of former serving Airmen from across the island of Ireland at the nearby War Memorial building.

Across Donegall Street in Writers Square, a life sized replica WW2 Spitfire aircraft owned by Ulster Aviation Society was on display. The aircraft is a replica of Spitfire Mark 2a and is owned by the Ulster Aviation Society. It has been painted in the design of Spitfire P7823 of 504 Squadron which served with the RAF.

Writing in the Order of Service, Air Vice-Marshal David Niven, Air Officer Northern Ireland, stated: "The contribution by the people of Ireland to the foundation of the Service has been significant. The RAF has a long association with the City of Belfast and this Cathedral, where the standard of the first Royal Air Force Reserve Squadron – 502 (Ulster) Squadron Royal Auxiliary Air Force – was laid up in 1957."

Following the arrival of the dignitaries, and the singing of the National Anthem and Processional Hymn, the standards were received, and these were followed by the World War Two veterans of the RAF.

Lessons were read by Air Chief Marshal Hillier and Brigadier General Clancy. The sermon was preached by the Rev Dr (Wg Cdr) David Richardson and the Cathedral Choir, under Master of the Choristers David Stevens, sang the Psalm 'I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills,' the 'Magnificat,' the 'Nunc Dimittis,' and the anthem 'They that go down to the sea in ships.' Assistant Organist Dr Ed Jones was at the organ.

There was also music, including a powerful Lament, from the RAF Band, and an RAF bugler played the Last Post and Reveille during a moving Act of Remembrance.

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An Altar crafted from a propeller from a Handley Page V/1500 bomber; the 502 (Ulster) Squadron Royal Auxiliary Air Force Standard and a Commemorative Stone, stood at the front of the Cathedral.

Wreaths were laid here by Air Chief Marshal Hillier, Deputy Lord Mayor Copeland, Mrs Jay-O'Boyle and Minister Shailesh Vara.

The WB Yeats poem 'An Irish Airman foresees his death' was read by Robin Murray Brown, great-grandson of Major William Robert Gregory, MC.

Prayers were read by a Cadet, an Airman and World War Two veteran, Major DV Clarke.

The standards were returned during the singing of the final hymn, and following the service guests were invited to refreshments served in the Nave.

An RAF 100 exhibition is currently on display inside St Anne's where it will remain until May 6.

## **Presbyterian Church urges 'No' vote in abortion referendum**

The Presbyterian Church in [Ireland](#) has called for retention of the Eighth Amendment to the Constitution, which recognises the equal right to life of mother and unborn, in next month's referendum.

In a letter circulated this weekend to all minsters and congregations in the Republic, it said that: "The [General Council](#) of our Church, acting with the authority of the [General Assembly](#), has concluded that meaningful protection for the unborn can only be secured if the Eighth Amendment is retained in the forthcoming referendum.

"We therefore encourage church members to consider these matters prayerfully and with great care over the coming weeks and to vote in accordance with their conscience."



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The letter is signed by the Church's moderator Rt Rev [Dr Noble McNeely](#), clerk of the general assembly Rev [Trevor Gribben](#), and convener of the Republic of Ireland panel, council for public affairs, Very Rev Dr [Trevor Morrow](#), also a former moderator of the church.

They recalled how “in January, representatives of our church wrote to members of the [Oireachtas](#), affirming the value of every human life, emphasising the importance of care for women, children and families in times of crisis, and urging all to work for a truly progressive Ireland where the weak and vulnerable, including children in the womb, are cherished and protected”.

## **Cork's 'Goldie Fish' Comes Face to Face with a Lofty Crane**

Cork's 'goldie fish' - the distinctive salmon weather vane atop Saint Anne's Church, Shandon in Cork - had company on Thursday 26<sup>th</sup> April. A crane rose to lofty heights to repair the lead flashing on the dome of Shandon, Cork's iconic landmark overlooking the River Lee.



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There were many concerned enquiries as to the fish's health and much relief when assurances were given that all was well. The damage to the lead work was caused by the cumulative effects of hurricane Ophelia, and storms Brian and Emma, and took only a short time to repair once contractors had reached the appropriate height. Local residents were very accommodating of the huge crane and welcomed the care being taken of the city's much loved building. Doors re-opened to patient visitors and tourists shortly afterwards.

## **Bishop joins 300 Anglicans backing US Church's plans for gender-neutral wedding service**

A prominent bishop and 300 other Anglicans have backed the US Episcopal Church's stance on same-sex marriage, saying it shows the Church is 'not as homophobic as it can sometimes appear'.

They have signed an 'alternative' letter to one sent by the Church of England's general secretary, William Nye, that [warned American Anglicans could face 'stringent consequences'](#) if it went ahead with plans for a gender neutral wedding service. He added such a move would increase pressure for the CofE to 'disassociate' itself from its US counterpart.

The Episcopal Church (TEC) in America permits same-sex marriage, unlike the Church of England and most other provinces in the 80 million-strong Anglican Communion around the world.

Nye's original letter has sparked a fierce backlash from pro-LGBT Anglicans in the UK and more than 300 have signed a different note thanking TEC for 'leading the way on this important issue'.

The bishop of Buckingham, Alan Wilson, joined 30 of the ruling general synod's 483 members, as well as other clergy and churchgoers, to dissociate themselves from Nye's letter.



**Diocese of Oxford Alan Wilson, 62, is bishop of Buckingham and has been an outspoken critic of the Church of England's approach to sexuality.**

They added they 'are expecting "stringent consequences" as a result of his actions'.

'We still have a few problems to sort out over here with those who keep threatening to leave, but we know that your actions have given great hope to thousands and shown that the Church is not as homophobic as it can sometimes appear,' they wrote.

Jayne Ozanne, a prominent LGBT activist on the CofE's synod, originally wrote the 'alternative' letter saying she was 'unsure' who had signed off on Nye's original.

'It would be strange if it were sent with the knowledge and support of the Archbishops given their firm commitment to "radical Christian inclusion" and their understanding of the need to be pastorally sensitive to the LGBT community, neither of which area mentioned in the letter,' she said.

It comes after a [separate lobby group responded](#) to Nye's letter saying it was met with 'anger, frustration and disappointment'.

One Body One Faith, which calls for a more accepting attitude to LGBT relationships in the Church of England, described the American Church's decision as 'brave and costly'. It added the



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Church was being judged and found 'sorely wanting' for its attitude to same-sex couples.

## **New Zealand Primate Don Tamihere installed during Maori service in Gisborne**



**The installation service contained a number of Maori traditions, including this Ngati Porou haka.**

The youngest primate in the Anglican Communion was installed as Archbishop of the Anglican Church in Aotearoa, New Zealand and Polynesia (ANZP) on Saturday. About 750 people attended the service, which was held in a huge marquee at Manutuke marae, west of Gisborne. Archbishop Don is the sixth Pihopa o Aotearoa – or leader of the Maori Anglican Church – and one of three equal-status primates in the Province.

The youth of the new Archbishop – he is 45-years-old – was reflected in the service; during which he was installed in his cathedra not by other bishops, but by three students from Maori schools. Then, to underline the “new wine, new wineskins”

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message, he chose the Revd Wiremu Anania, newest and most recently ordained priest in the Maori Tikanga, or cultural strand, of the ANZP, to preside at the Eucharist. The 24-year old priest is vicar and missionary of Tauranga Moana, and was ordained just three months ago.

The new Archbishop succeeds the late Archbishop Brown Turei in two ways: as Bishop of Te Tairāwhiti, the tribal district which covers the eastern seaboard of the North Island, and as the leader of the Maori part of the church. Before his installation, he sat between his wife Kisa and Archbishop Brown's widow Mihi Turei.

The Maori King, Kingi Tuheitia Paki, and his wife Makau Ariki Atawhai were amongst the guests at the service. It was the first time that a Maori monarch was present at the installation of any Bishop of ANZP.

