

## Rugby star's 90km cycle for Tearfund



**International rugby star Ruan Pienaar has taken on the tough challenge of cycling 90 km in the name of tackling child trafficking with Christian charity, Tearfund.**

The 33 year old and newest Tearfund ambassador embarked on the journey on Wednesday morning as he bid farewell to his



Ulster team. He will be moving to France to play for Montpellier next season.

Tearfund has dubbed the ride 'Cycle for Freedom' which will cover the length of Northern Ireland's North Coast.

Pienaar said as a father of two it's important to do his part to help protect vulnerable children.

He said: "Trafficking is a global crime that affects the world's most vulnerable. I am so moved by the many who have signed up for the Cycle for Freedom and believe that, together, we can make a real difference."

A group of 30 cyclists from across Northern Ireland, including the player's teammates Rob Herring and Craig Gilroy, helped him raise £20,000 for the cause. Tearfund said the money

raised could help protect up to 2,500 children at risk across the world.

The organisation said: "The epic bike ride will help protect children like Mazna, a young girl Tearfund rescued after she was trafficked from her small village in rural India.

"Mazna's father sent her to a large city to pursue a job as a home help, in the hope she would find better opportunities than he could offer and a release from economic poverty. But Mazna was immediately sold to a brothel."

## **Solar panels funded by Dublin & Glendalough dioceses renew Gaza hospital**

Solar panels funded by a Dublin & Glendalough diocesan appeal have been installed at Al Ahli Hospital in Gaza.

The funds were raised through collections and events held in parishes, schools and organisations throughout the United Dioceses as part of the 'Prepare a Place' campaign in Advent 2014.



## Work in progress

The solar panels are now up and running and already are having a positive effect for staff and patients of the hospital which is run by our partner diocese in Jerusalem.

The solar panels were installed on the roof of Al Ahli Hospital during November 2016. The batteries were installed in April 2017 and installation works were completed by 18 April 2017. There were delays in receiving the solar cell panels and the batteries due to the new Israeli regulations on goods imported to Gaza.

Gaza continues to suffer from severe power disruptions which have a serious impact on the delivery of the basic hospital services, undermining already vulnerable livelihoods and living conditions.

Al Ahli Hospital relies heavily on backup generators. However, the operation of generators is constantly at risk due to funding shortages, lack of imported fuel, overuse of the generators and difficulties in obtaining spare parts due to import restrictions.

Now the energy needs of Al Ahli Hospital's operating theatre Number 2 and the delivery room have been secured during daytime. The system is providing the department with power at night when there is power failure ensuring energy security in all circumstances. This also saves money on electricity bills, fuel consumption and is a non-pollutant energy generator.

Al Ahli Hospital staff and more than 3,500 patients served by Al Ahli Hospital are the beneficiaries of this programme. In addition, the installation of the system provided an important opportunity for work for 50 local labourers.

“Ahli management, staff and the patients we serve are very grateful for the generous support to Ahli solar cell energy system that will assure continuity of Ahli work during the long outages of electricity daily without any interruption,” the hospital’s director, Suhaila Tarazi, said in a report to Dublin & Glendalough’s Council for Mission who helped coordinate the Prepare a Place appeal.

## **Newtownards Wedding Dress Festival will spark Marriage Memories**

As part of a series of special events marking the bicentenary of St Mark’s Parish Church, Newtownards, members of its Mothers’ Union are staging a Wedding Dress Festival.

Entitled ‘Marriage Memories’, the festival – to be held in the church – features a range of over 50 wedding dresses from many eras, some of them from celebrities, others from parishioners and some from as far afield as India.

This fascinating display runs from Thursday, June 15 until Sunday, June 18.

On Thursday, Friday and Saturday, exhibits will be on display from 10am until 8pm.

On Sunday the times are 2pm to 5pm, followed by a special service at which Lady Eames will speak (5.30pm).

The four-day festival is open to all-comers, with the hosts stressing that everyone is welcome.

Cream teas (£5) are available in the Parish Centre halls, though group bookings for these must be made in advance. To do that, contact Pat on 0751 3999 217.

## **Leading light in Belfast mission Margaret Ferguson dies aged 61**

Tributes have been paid to a senior member of the East Belfast Mission.

Reverend Margaret Ferguson (61), who was its superintendent, passed away on Monday at the Marie Curie centre, the Belfast Telegraph reported today.

The East Belfast Mission, which is part of the Methodist Church in Ireland, said it was hugely saddened by her death.



Andrew Irvine, its chief operations officer, said: "It was with great sadness that the congregation, directors, staff and volunteers of East Belfast Mission learned of Margaret's passing.

"The loss of our superintendent is a huge loss for us and our thoughts and prayers are with Margaret's family at this time

Rev Ferguson answered the call to the religious life in 1998 after working as a school teacher and a businesswoman. She was a former president of the Hollywood Chamber of Commerce.

Her work with children and young people transcended into her life as a minister and many of the projects she held close to her heart involved young people.



Prior to her role with the East Belfast Mission, Mrs Ferguson served for eight years on the Shankill Road, where she focused on making disciples and encouraged the church to engage with the community.

Trained in pastoral supervision, Rev Ferguson had also served on the Methodist Team of Mission, the Presbyterian Church young adult volunteer programme and a placement supervisor for ministerial students from Edgehill College. She was also committed to ecumenism.

Among those who expressed sadness at her passing was Fr Martin Magill, administrator of Ballyclare and Ballygowan Parish, who worked with Rev Ferguson on inter-faith projects.

Fr Magill said: "I was sad to hear of Margaret's passing, she was a woman of deep, deep faith who cared passionately about people and particularly about young families.

"She and I worked together on the Back to Church Sunday project when she was with the Woodvale and Shankill Methodist Church.

"Margaret had a real interest in people and a real love for people, she was very keen to see them flourish."

Sinn Fein MLA for South Belfast Mairtin O Muilleoir also expressed his sadness.

He said he was "devastated" to hear of her death, adding that she was "a peerless ambassador for Belfast and for a compassionate and loving faith".

The funeral will take place in Mountpottinger Methodist Church tomorrow at 11am.

Her husband David and the couple's three daughters, Heather, Ruth and Clare, will lead mourners.

From there the cortege will make its way to the East Belfast Mission.

Her remains will be in repose in the sanctuary of the mission from 1pm to 3pm, where the family will be available to meet anyone who was unable to attend the earlier church service.

## **Liz McElhinney left a legacy of faith**

The funeral service for the Revd Liz McElhinney will be held on Saturday, June 17 at 10.30am in Shankill Parish Church.

Paying tribute to her, Bishop Harold Miller of Down & Dromore said: "It is so hard to believe

that the vibrant and loving Liz McElhinney has gone.



“She died of Motor Neurone Disease, and gave a wonderful testimony of faith.

“I had the privilege of sharing in Holy Communion with her last week to give thanks for the 20th anniversary of her ordination. It was a holy moment.”

Liz was a curate in Magheralin from 1997 until 2001 before continuing her ministry in Calry in the diocese of Kilmore Elphin and Ardagh.

She returned to the diocese of Down & Dromore in retirement in 2007, taking on the role of pastoral support for the clergy of Down & Dromore and their spouses until 2012.

She then served in parochial ministry in Roscommon, diocese of Kilmore Elphin and Ardagh from 2013 to 2015.

## **Stuart Townend among dozens honoured by Archbishop Justin Welby**

Songwriter Stuart Townend and musician Vicky Beeching were among more than 35 people to have been honoured by Most Rev Justin Welby.

They received prizes in the Archbishop of Canterbury's Awards for their service to the church, during a ceremony at Lambeth Palace in central London.



Archbishop Justin said: "I realise that the people receiving these awards today have worked devotedly and diligently, and in the spirit of that prayer.

"But I hope that they will allow me to say that we hold them up as examples to others. Those who read their citations will, I hope, be inspired themselves to see what can be achieved when good people work for the coming of the Kingdom."

Nine categories recognised contributions in different fields, including prayer and religious life, reconciliation, and evangelism and witness.

Other recipients included religious, political and community leaders and musicians from Europe, Africa, Asia and the Middle East.

They also included the Labour MP Frank Field who won the Langton Award for Community Service and Dr Sally Thompson who was presented with the Cross of St Augustine for Services to the Anglican Communion.

Archbishop Justin also said: "I know only too well that there are good people doing excellent work in support of the Church all over the world.

"Very often the fruits of their efforts are not apparent to many but they are no less valuable for that. I want to encourage those who dedicate their lives to such work by assuring them that their efforts do not go unseen."

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