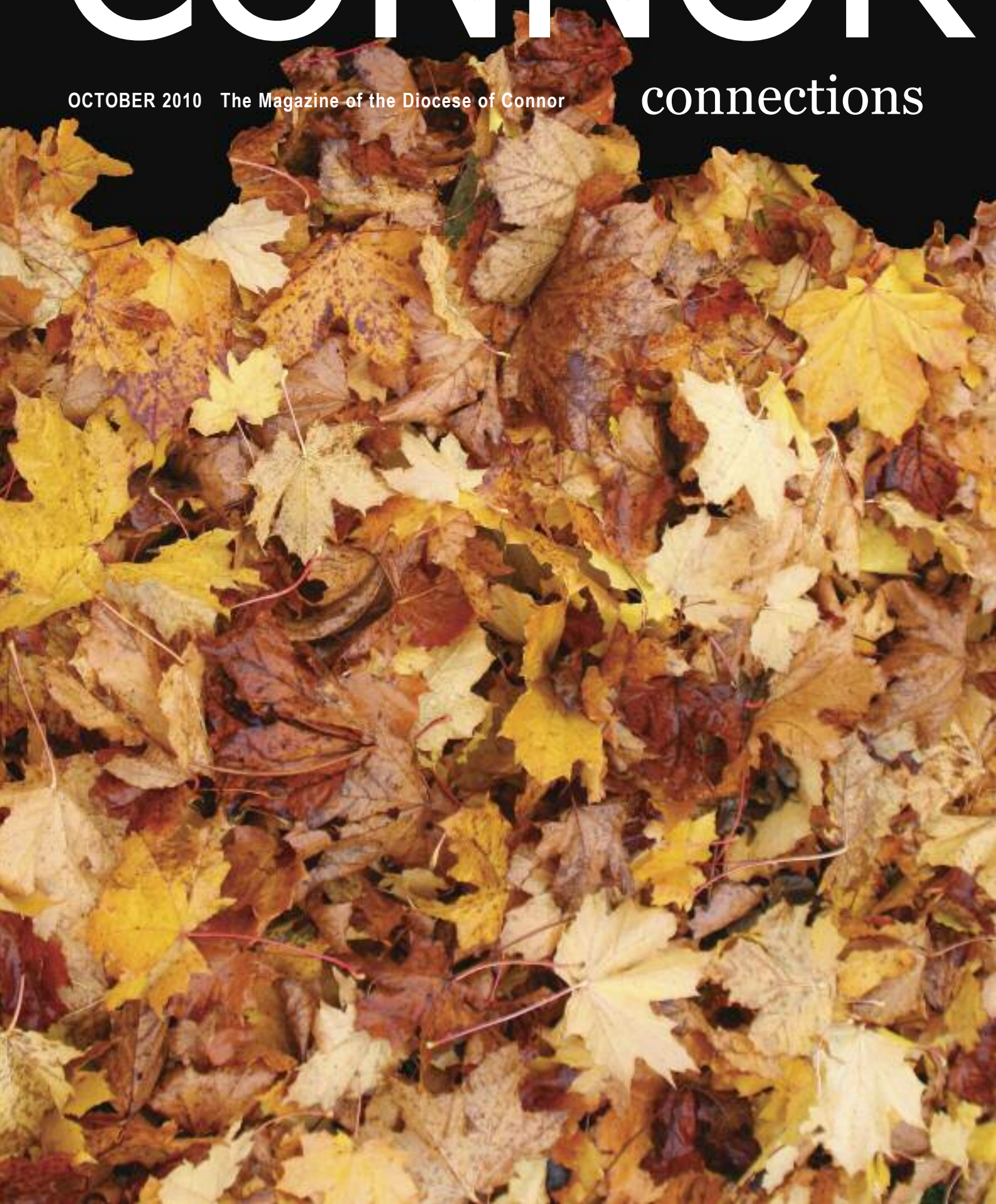
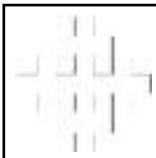


CONNOR

OCTOBER 2010 The Magazine of the Diocese of Connor

connections





Lunchtime food for thought



The Rev Paddy McGlinchey delivers his lunchtime lecture.

Former Queen's University chaplain, the Rev Paddy McGlinchey, delivered the latest in a series of lunchtime lectures in St Bartholomew's Parish Church, Stranmillis, on September 7.

Paddy, lecturer in Missiology at the Church of Ireland Theological Institute, entitled his talk 'Profile of a Pontiff,' and over a 35 minute period explored the Augustinian roots of the theology of Pope Benedict XVI.

His talk, just days before the Pope's visit to the UK, prompted questions from the 30-strong audience, and afterwards the rector, the Rev Dr Ron Elsdon, thanked Paddy for 'a lecture of remarkable clarity.'

Profile of a Pontiff was the third of this year's four lunchtime lectures. The final one takes place on November 2, when the rector himself will deliver a talk

entitled 'Is there Anyone Out There? – Theological musings on the search for extra-terrestrial intelligence.

Previous lecturers this year were John Woods, former NI Director of Friends of the Earth, whose talk entitled 'Between a Rock and a Hard Place' looked at the future for UK energy as 'the oil runs out and the climate runs amok.' Professor Richard English from the Department of Political Science at Queen's University tackled 'The Big Issue – the global challenges facing an incoming government.'

The first lunchtime lecture was held in February 2005 when 220 people came to listen to the then Bishop of Durham, the Most Rev Tom Wright, discuss the challenges faced by the Christian faith in the wake of the Asian tsunami.

The following year the series began in earnest, and St Bartholomew's has hosted four lectures a year since then. They have been delivered by clergy, lecturers from the nearby university, and on occasions Ron – a noted columnist in the Church of Ireland Gazette – has taken the podium himself.

Topics have been varied and include: Behind Dawkins and The God Delusion; The importance of being ignorant; Keeping religion out of politics and 'Please Help Me Die.'

The lectures were the initiative of Ron and his wife Janice, curate at St Bartholomew's. "We are in the middle of the university area and this is a beautiful church," Ron said.

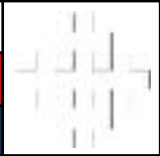
"This is the kind of ministry we can provide for people who really want to think about things in the context of the Christian faith,

and we try to come up with a varied range of topical subjects."

Most people who attend come from outside the parish. "We are delighted about this as it gives us the opportunity to tap into another audience. I have even welcomed a self-confessed atheist to one of the talks," Ron said.

"I love welcoming people into the church and hearing debates on things you might otherwise not think about. Organising the lectures is not a chore – we really enjoy this!"

Next year's lecture programme is being finalised, but we understand Dr Who fans may be in for a treat when the Rev Mercia Malcolm, rector of Carnmoney, takes the podium in May. Full details will be posted on the Connor Diocesan website www.connor.anglican.org.



Mrs Evelyn Lewis is congratulated on her retirement from the Good Book Shop by the Bishop of Down and Dromore, the Rt Rev Harold Millar, and her husband Canon Walter Lewis.

Evelyn closes the book after 24 years

Best wishes are extended to Mrs Evelyn Lewis, who retired from her position as manager of the Good Book Shop.

To mark the occasion the Board of Directors hosted a lunch at Church of Ireland House on September 27 for Evelyn and her husband Canon Walter Lewis.

Thanking Evelyn for 24 years of dedicated service, both to the Good Book Shop and previously to APCK, Mr Dermot O'Callaghan, vice chair of

the Board of Directors, said he had often been a satisfied customer. He added that the diligence and helpful service he and others received from the bookshop was often down to Evelyn and he thanked her for all her hard work.

The Bishop of Down and Dromore, the Rt Rev Harold Millar, told the gathering: "I want to thank Evelyn for ploughing a straight furrow all these years and for serving the bookshop very faithfully not only as her job but as her ministry."

Focusing on connections

At our diocesan synod in September I was outlining some reflections on how we as a diocese and as parishes can look to the future with vision and hope. The word that I have found myself focusing on is 'connections.'



All around us in our local communities, society and indeed on the world stage there is disconnection. As we seek to incarnate the presence of Jesus by being him to others, I want to help us all find ways as individuals, parishes and diocese to reconnect with the people who are disconnected from God and in particular with his people, the church.

to reflect on these issues. Full details will be available in the next couple of months.

May I ask for your prayers that the Holy Spirit will inspire and encourage us, that we have a renewed sense of the Father's love and the presence of Jesus with us always.

Grace and peace to you,

+ Alan Connor

There is a programme of events early next year that will enable us

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Website: www.connor.anglican.org



COVER PHOTOGRAPH: AUTUMN LEAVES BY KAREN BUSHBY.

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Bishop Alan and Judge Derek Rodgers with clergy and lay members of Synod from the Ballymena area outside St Patrick's Parish Church before business of Synod got underway.



The hard working ladies of St Patrick's Mothers' Union who provided a delicious dinner for more than 200 Synod members.



Mr Richard Ryan, acting manager of the Good Book Shop, addresses Synod.



Enjoying their Synod meal, are, from left, Agnes Young, the Rev Edith Quirey, (both St Stephen and St Luke's) and Kate Magill and the Rev Moreen Hutchinson, Ardclinis, Tickmacrevan, Layde and Cushendun.



Senior Registrar Canon Edgar Turner listens with interest to the debates during Connor Diocesan Synod.

A future

Churches must no longer think about survival, but must find ways of looking to the future with vision and hope, the Bishop of Connor told Connor Diocesan Synod in St Patrick's, Ballymena, on September 9.


The Rt Rev Alan Abernethy said: "Churches used to be the centre of social life and even providers of education, but increasingly we are marginalised and indeed ridiculed. We have become more disconnected from local communities and thereby at times become inward looking and intent on arguing over the meaning of religious words."

He reflected on the many 'disconnections' in society – family breakdown, lack of education and job opportunities, a disinclination to vote – and a disconnection from church and from God.

Bishop Alan said he was increasingly struck by the critical importance of the Incarnation. "The Lord pitched his tent among us – God became human and experienced the joy and pain of our humanity. By doing so he affirms us but gives us a picture of how we are to be church," he said.

"I want to encourage us all to find ways of being the real presence of Jesus in our communities. Not to see people as potential pew fillers but as broken, hurting people like ourselves that Jesus wants us to find ways of connecting with to bring them his healing presence."

Bishop Alan outlined ways he hoped would help the diocese increase connections with the local communities. He plans to visit the nine Rural Deaneries

CONNOR CONNECTIONS		
	CONNOR SYNOD	
CONNOR CONNECTIONS		



Bishop Alan delivers his Presidential Address during Connor Synod in Ballymena. He is flanked by, from left: The Very Rev John Bond, Dean of Connor; the Ven Barry Dodds, Archdeacon of Belfast; Ken Gibson, Lay Secretary; Judge Derek Rodgers; Robert Kay, Lay Secretary; June Butler, Diocesan Secretary and David Cromie, Diocesan Accountant.

of vision and hope

to discuss the issues locally, as well as holding three evenings following the pattern of his annual Lent seminars.

“This is a challenge for all of us but we must not think about survival, we must find ways of looking to the future with vision and hope. We need to move from maintenance to mission,” he stated.

In his address he spoke of his recent surgery and recuperation, thanking those who had cared for him, and those who had ensured everything in the diocese had kept ‘rolling.’

He also expressed gratitude to those who had visited Connor’s link diocese of Yei in Southern Sudan during the year, and congratulated all those clergy celebrating significant anniversaries, as well as the Rev Bill Boyce, rector of St Brigid’s, Mallusk, and his fellow cyclists whose Tour de Connor ride raised almost £48,000 for the Friends of the Cancer Centre.

During Synod two notices of motion were unanimously agreed. The first related to the revision of Diocesan Regulations, while in the second Archdeacon Stephen Forde proposed that the Commissioned Lay Ministry scheme be adopted in the diocese and reviewed within five years from the passing of the motion.

Archdeacon Forde said: “I believe Commissioned Lay Ministry provides a scheme for this diocese, where lay members of parishes can offer their gifts and talents to the service of their church in a way which is both acknowledged and supported by the diocese as a whole.”

Standing Orders were suspended during Synod for four presentations. Diocesan Secretary June Butler outlined a

new scheme for managing human resources. Mr Richard Ryan, acting manager of the Good Book Shop, appealed to all present at Synod to support the business and outlined several ways parishes could do this.

A third presentation was made by Mr Peter Hamill, Connor diocesan training co-ordinator, who launched Connor’s Review of Children’s Ministry (see page 15). President of Connor MU, Mrs Moira Thom, and Mrs Kathleen Rodgers also addressed Synod, speaking about some of the MU projects that specifically benefit children in Connor Diocese, in particular the successful parenting programme and the new Away From It All Holiday project.

Archdeacon Forde, chair of Connor Council for Mission, spoke about two trips to Southern Sudan where in July Mongo Primary School, funded by parishes and individuals from the Diocese of Connor, was officially opened by former CMSI Director Canon Cecil Wilson (See pages 10-14).

In light of the forthcoming referendum, the Archdeacon urged Synod members to be as informed as they could on the situation in Sudan, and to raise the issue with anyone they knew of influence. At the request of Bishop Alan, Synod agreed to send its prayers to Bishop Hilary and the Diocese of Yei.

The Diocesan Council Report and all other reports were carried. At close of business, the Very Rev John Bond, Dean of Connor, thanked Bishop Alan for ‘getting us through the business and deliberations with care and efficiency,’ and expressed the delight of everyone in the diocese that the Bishop was recovered from his illness and surgery and ‘back in the harness.’

Ordination of Deacons

St Nicholas Parish Church, Carrickfergus, hosted a Service of Ordination of Deacons in the Diocese of Connor on St Barnabas Day, Friday June 11.

The four new deacons ordained by Bishop Gordon McMullan were: Peter Ferguson for the curacy of Carrickfergus; Brian Lacey for the curacy of Ballymena and Ballyclug;

Brian Howe in the Non-Stipendiary Ministry for the curacy of Ballymoney, Finvoy and Rasharkin and Trevor Kelly in the Non-Stipendiary Ministry for the curacy of Craigs, Dunaghy and Killagan.

The preacher was the Very Rev Raymond Ferguson, Dean of Kilmore and father of Peter, one of those being ordained.



At the Ordination of Deacons are, from left: The Ven Stephen Forde, Archdeacon of Dalriada; the Ven Barry Dodds, Archdeacon of Belfast; Brian Lacey; Brian Howe; the Rev Clifford Skillen, Bishop's Chaplain; Bishop Gordon McMullan; Peter Ferguson; Trevor Kelly and Registrar William Taggart.



MBE for June

June Butler, secretary to the dioceses of Connor and Down & Dromore, was awarded an MBE in the Queen's Birthday Honours List, announced in June.

June, who joined diocesan administration as secretary this year, was previously Assistant Chief Electoral Officer for Northern Ireland, and received her honour for 'services to electoral services' in the province.

June worked for the Electoral Office of Northern Ireland for more than 22 years, nine of those as Assistant Chief Electoral Officer. She said: "I feel very privileged to be awarded an MBE."

She added: "None of my work could have been successfully achieved without the support, encouragement and determination of the team of staff at the Electoral Office and this award is a reflection on their dedication to electoral services."

Awards launch

The Dean of Belfast, the Very Rev Dr Houston McKelvey, launched the Spire of Hope Awards on October 6. The Awards will recognise the contribution of individuals, groups and charities working in the voluntary sector. Closing date is December 15.

Scout leaders sought

Lisburn and District Scouts are seeking adults to take on the role of leaders.

Noel Irwin, District Commissioner, said: "Our district has grown from strength to strength over the last number of years and this is down to the quality of leaders involved, their time, commitment, energy and enthusiasm. However, the expansion in our youth membership has not been matched by an expansion in our adult membership.

If interested, please contact Mr Irwin at 028 3888 1617 or 07773713810 or email clanconnel1@btinternet.com

22 clergy enjoy diocesan retreat

Twenty two clergy from Connor Diocese travelled to Minsteracres in County Durham from June 7-10 for the Diocesan Clergy Retreat.

They were joined by Bishop Andy John, Bangor Diocese, Church in Wales, who gave three excellent inputs on grace, worship and service. He had great insight in opening the scriptures and relating them to day to day ministry.

Minsteracres is a Passionist retreat house set in 90 acres of grounds including a lake and an arboretum. The sense of peace and opportunity for spiritual refreshment was wonderful. The retreat gave clergy time to reflect spiritually and unwind physically away from parish life. Clergy commented on how good it was to have time away from the parish to recharge the batteries.

Highlights of the time together included a service in St Mary's Church on Holy Island, a visit to Durham Cathedral and winning the local pub quiz (prize money donated to the Tour de Connor charity cycle).

St Patrick's MU celebrates 60th anniversary in Broughshane

St Patrick's Broughshane Mothers' Union branch is celebrating 60 years.

The occasion was marked with a special service of Holy Communion, led by the Very Rev John Bond, Dean of Connor and branch Chaplain, on May 23. The guest speaker was Mrs Margaret Crawford, former All-Ireland President of MU.

During the service Mrs Cathy Doig was enrolled and branch members participated by reading lessons, leading intercessions and lifting the offering. An MU choir was formed for the occasion and sang two



At the 60th anniversary services are, from left, Dean John Bond, rector; Margaret Crawford, former All Ireland President; Sally Cotter, branch leader; Mrs K Reade, senior past leader, Mrs K Miller, former branch leader, and the Rev Dr B Cotter, curate.

pieces, one of which had been specially composed for the service. Branch Leader, Mrs Sally Cotter, who had trained the choir, also gave the children's address.

The celebrations continued on Wednesday May 26, when branch members were joined by guests, including Diocesan President Mrs Moira Thom, and former Branch Leader Mrs Denise

Rooney, for a dinner at the Adair Arms Hotel, Ballymena. Mrs Brownie Esler made the special celebration cake and the beautiful floral display was created by Mrs Sheila King.

During the summer months Broughshane residents have enjoyed a flowerbed specially planted to show the MU logo. This has really put MU on the map not just in the village but province-wide as Broughshane is famous for its flowers!

The anniversary events are not over yet, as it is planned to round off the year with a wine and cheese party.

350 take part in pampering evenings



Models at one of the MU pampering evenings organised by the Younger Members' Committee in Connor.

The MU Younger Members' Committee in Connor Diocese arranged 'pampering' events for women of all ages which took place at two venues in the diocese in June .

Both nights proved very popular with more than 350 ladies


attending. The format included a fashion show (using some lovely MU models!) with fashions supplied by Cameron's of Ballymena and Couples of Coleraine. Three workshop demonstrations followed - Templespa Skincare, Avon cosmetics and local beauticians and hairdressers.

After supper Diocesan President Moira Thom gave a short presentation about the work of Mothers' Union with families both overseas and at home, encouraging the audience to become involved and explaining how the proceeds from the events would make a real difference to women in Africa. Over the two nights, £1,000 was raised for the Worldwide Fund.

Helping rebuild Haiti

Church of Ireland House, Belfast, hosted a coffee morning on August 12, raising more than £500 to help build new homes in Haiti. The money will support the work of the NGO Haven. During

October, Neil Patterson, son of Archdeacon Philip Patterson, will be joining 600 volunteers leaving Dublin for a 'build it' week in the region which was devastated by an earthquake this year.

	CONNOR CONNECTIONS	
		SPECIAL FEATURE

Rector of Mossley has a lotta bottle!

Neil Cutcliffe sure has a lotta lotta bottle – several thousand of them in fact! The rector of Mossley has been collecting bottles in all shapes, sizes and colours since he was just a wee nipper doing a milk round in Downpatrick.

He has bottles from all over the world, but the bulk of his literally awesome collection comes from Ireland. And most have been dug out of the ground by Neil himself.

“We are all born with talent and this is my one talent,” Neil says proudly as he surveys the walls of his thankfully spacious attic, lined with milk bottles, stout bottles, rum bottles, chemist bottles, water bottles, ginger beer bottles and much, much more.

Some are plain glass, some are coloured, many are pottery, and Neil knows each and every item, its history and its quality.

The pride of his collection is his ginger beer bottles – 314 in total - which come from all over Ireland. Neil has dug many of these up, others he has swapped and some have been bought from other collectors. The pottery bottles, each carrying the name a different ginger beer maker, were in production between the 1890s and 1930s. “The ginger beer was put in pottery bottles because in a clear glass bottle ginger beer looks very cloudy and dirty. But then the pottery bottles were made illegal for the very reason that people could not see what was in them,” explained Neil.

Interestingly, Belfast transported ginger beer all over the world, and Neil is considering publishing a book on Irish ginger beer and stone stout bottles.



Memorabilia from bygone days in Neil's attic.

He already has 601 photos catalogued!

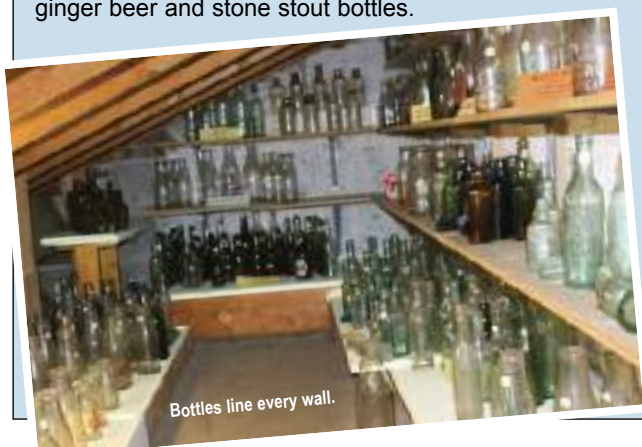
A tour of his bottle collection is like taking a trip back in time. The little brown bottles are not so unfamiliar, they may have held Bovril and can still be bought today. The blue ones contained poison and come in weird shapes – this was to alert someone who may inadvertently go to drink from the wrong bottle in the darkness of night.

“I started back in 1961 when I was a wee fellah in Downpatrick delivering the milk. We would collect other boys’ empties and if you found any that did not belong to your dairy then you held onto them. They were all different in those days,” Neil said.

He then progressed to actively seeking out bottles, and the best place turned out to be in a farmyard. “The farmers used to dump old bottles under the manure so the cows would not walk on it. I dug out a farmer’s manure heap and that’s where I found my first wide necked bottle.

“It’s a bit of a treasure hunt. Like life. You can dig all day and not find anything and on other days you dig up a load of stuff. My favourite bottles would be my Downpatrick milk bottles. They are not worth much money, but they mean a lot to me.”

Interestingly, Neil’s most treasured bottle is not one made of glass or pottery, but a small plastic mineral water bottle. “If the house was burning down and there was one bottle I could save it would be this,” he says, holding up the unpretentious plastic bottle, half full of clear liquid. “It is water from the River Jordan and a parishioner gave it to me around 15 years ago.”



Bottles line every wall.



Neil checks out a bottle in his massive collection.

Obviously in years of digging Neil has unearthed many other interesting items from days gone by, and some of these are also on show in his attic 'museum.' They include tobacco tins, a tin of corn pads, cream jars, toothpaste box, and yet more little bottles – ink, gin, hair extract, veterinary medication. The list goes on.

There was a time when bottle collecting was a popular hobby, but now fewer people are doing it, largely because so many areas which might have been potential digs are concreted up. As a result, the value of the bottles both in terms of monetary worth and prestige has gone down.

"I am still digging. You just drive around and if you see building work going on you ask permission to dig on site. But it is harder now to find anywhere to dig. A few years ago there would have been 50,000 people out digging bottles in England on a Saturday morning!" Neil revealed.

His collection has earned him a certain renown, and he has given talks to many groups and organisations – bringing along some samples of his collection. "I normally can get five or six spiritual lessons into each talk, but I keep it all very humorous," he said.

"The collection still gives me pleasure. I love bringing people up here and seeing their faces."

I love bringing people up here and seeing their faces.

Unfortunately his hobby is not quite so enthusiastically shared by his family. When his children Gareth, 27, Matthew, 25, and Zoe, 16, were little it wasn't the ideal activity to involve them in. "I couldn't take them digging with me because there was always broken glass around, and I couldn't bring them up here to look at the bottles when they were toddlers as they might have knocked everything over," Neil said. As for his wife Audrey, he admits, "It tries her boundaries of patience!"

A browse through the collection reveals some really interesting bottled compounds, such as Pratts Killer for bed bugs; Bishop's laxative (!!); Dr Radam's microbe killer which carries an embossed picture of someone bashing a skeleton on the head; and the once famous – or perhaps that should be infamous – Warners Safe Cure

which carries a picture of a safe and while it claimed to cure all ills, allegedly contained nearly pure alcohol – guaranteed to ensure the imbiber required another cure the next day!!

Neil has been rector of Mossley for 25 years and his thoughts are now turning to what he will do with the collection when the time comes for him to leave the rectory. Let's hope that it will remain intact for the interest and education of others for years to come.



The welcoming and inquisitive faces of the children of Mongo on the day of the official opening of their primary school.



Ben Mallon helps out at a lesson in Immanuel School in Yei.



David Henderson gets to know some of the Mongo schoolchildren.

Team's Y

A 10-strong team visited Connor's link diocese of Yei in South Sudan during July where they officially opened Mongo Primary School and ran a conference for local clergy.

They also helped prepare a new children's ward for its first patients, ran lessons in local schools, and preached at Sunday services, all this despite heavy rain which turned roads into rivers of mud!

The Mission Experience Team Abroad (META) was led by former Director Canon Cecil Wilson and the Ven Stephen Forde, Archdeacon of Dalriada and chair of Connor Council for Mission. The other team members were: Fiona Forde (Larne); Ben Mallon (Stoneyford); the Paddy McGlinchey (former Church of Ireland Chaplain at Queen's); Missiology lecturer at the Church of Ireland Institute, Dublin); Barbara Wilson (Ballynahinch); David Henderson (Larne); Judith Hegan (A); Canon Sam Wright (Lisburn Cathedral) and Norma Nixon (Larne). The project was facilitated by CMS Ireland.

For Archdeacon Forde, the return to Mongo School, where he and the Connor team had received a fantastic welcome in January, was a highlight. The school was built with donations of more than £110,000 from the people of Connor after being identified by Agherton Parish as a partnership project.

"As we approached Mongo the road was blocked by children making a way to the opening. The locals had built a tukul in the school courtyard especially for the occasion, and the teenagers put on a drama showing how much the road needed to be improved," said Archdeacon Forde.

Dozens of schoolchildren, mothers, toddlers, babies, and village elders were packed in the area around Mongo School to witness Canon Wilson, his wife Barbara, and Fiona Forde officially open the building.

But while delighted at the success of the school building programme in the diocese, the Archdeacon expressed concern about recent state po



Fiona Forde chats with staff inside the bright new children's ward

CONNOR CONNECTIONS		
	PARTNERSHIP	



Participants in the conference for local pastors run by the clergy members of the Connor team listen to a lecture under the shade of a mango tree.

Yei mission

which led to the sacking of all unqualified teachers. During the trip, the three teachers in the group helped out in Immanuel School, the most successful in Yei, where they found 110 children in a single class. Endeavouring to change that through resourcing Yei Teaching Training College will be a focus for Connor in the future.

Archdeacon Forde said 40 had attended the conference for local pastors. Canon Sam Wright lectured on preaching, the Rev Paddy McGlinchey on evangelism, and the Archdeacon spoke on discipleship. "The conference was an extremely positive experience for everyone," he said. "It took place in the cathedral but many of the sessions were held outside under the mango trees."

The opening of the children's ward at the Martha Clinic was another highlight for Archdeacon Forde, who had seen it as a derelict shell in January. The ward boasts the only cots in Southern Sudan.

Archdeacon Forde paid tribute to David Henderson who got a Sudanese driving licence and despite the muddy conditions drove team members around in CMSI Mission associates John and Poppy Spens' old 4X4 'Hallelujah.' "David's practical skills were brilliant, as well as doing all the driving, he did work in the children's ward and helped out at the Vocational Training Centre," the Archdeacon said.

Reflecting on his latest trip, and the uncertainty of Sudan's future, Archdeacon Forde said the training of teachers and clergy was now a priority. "The next phase of the Connor Yei partnership is not about buildings, but about training people," he said.

He and his wife Fiona left for Africa two days before the others to allow Fiona to spend more time with Poppy who runs the Martha Clinic. "I hit the ground running," Fiona said. "After arriving we had lunch, it was pouring out of the heavens, and we headed straight into Yei town."




Muddy conditions on the road to Mongo.



Stunning scenery in rural Longamere village.

Continued on page 12

	CONNOR CONNECTIONS	
		PARTNERSHIP



The Connor Yei META team, taken on the day members visited the Commissioner of Yei. Front Row from left: Mr David Henderson, Mr Ben Mallon, Canon Cecil Wilson, Col David Lokonga Moses (Commissioner for Yei County), Rt Rev Hilary Luate Adeba (Bishop of Yei), Archdeacon Stephen Forde, Mrs Fiona Forde. Back Row Mrs Barbara Wilson, Mrs Norma Nixon, Rev Patrick McGlinchey, Canon Sam Wright, Mrs Judith Hegan.

Continued from page 11

"We had to paddle to Poppy and John's house along the river that had been the road, and went to the market to buy things for the ward like baby baths and washing up bowls. They already had general equipment like cots, beds, lockers and chairs and a fair amount of medical equipment."

Fiona had agreed to do some training for the staff. "I gave three teaching sessions for nurses appointed for the children's ward, as well as staff from the clinic and healthcare workers. I kept it simple talking about how to identify a sick child and how to build up trust with its mother.

"We had quite a lot of fun as well. I was learning from them as well as them learning from me." Interestingly, all but two of the nurses were male.

The grand opening of the ward took place on the Friday of the META's visit. "All the team was there and I had the privilege of opening the door," Fiona said. "Bishop Hilary was visibly moved. He had not seen the ward since it was just a shell and I could almost imagine a tear in his eye."

Fiona also visited Yei Hospital where there are now three qualified doctors [there were none in January]. "There was a strange atmosphere in the orthopaedic ward where there was a mixture of children and adults," she said. "The nurses were sitting around, apparently with nothing much to do. There was an eerie silence and yet there were needles lying around and bins overflowing. Outside everything was ankle deep in mud."

On the Monday Fiona went to a rural church with the mobile clinic. "As soon as we got there people just started coming out of the bush. We saw 50 patients in two hours, diagnosing and treating their illnesses," she said. She described her experiences in Sudan as 'amazing.'

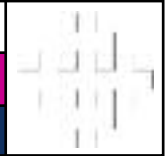
It has been several years since Canon Cecil Wilson's last visit to Yei. "I saw some things had improved and some had not. Having telephones and electricity was a big bonus and it was good to see the schools finished. People were looking healthier and their clothes were better. Yei had also expanded a lot," he said.

"But the Vocational Training College has not really improved and the roads are as bad as ever."

Canon Wilson returned to Yei Cathedral to preach on the Sunday. He has preached here in the past so conducting the Bari language service in front of more than 1,000 worshippers was not a new experience.

He described the opening of Mongo school as 'an amazing occasion.' "The people of Mongo turned out in force to greet us. It was a full day of music, choirs and processions, with lots and lots of children taking part," he said.

Bombs in Uganda disabled the computer system at Entebbe Airport on the team's return causing flight delays. The team missed their ongoing connections and their journey took 36 hours, but Canon Wilson said the team managed to stay in 'good form!'



A baby gets weighed by staff of the mobile clinic.



The Rev Paddy McGlinchey and Mrs Judith Hegan visit the tukul home and the family of one of the local pastors they met during their trip to Yei Diocese, Sudan.



A colourful scene. Local women sell produce at a rural market in Yei.

Fear of what lies ahead for South Sudan

When the Connor team's return was delayed due to bombings in a stadium in Kampala, Uganda, in which 70 people died, the international repercussions of a local incident were graphically brought home to them.

The fear of similar chaos is also very real for the people in Southern Sudan as they approach the referendum on whether North and South should unite as one country.

In the elections to national and state parliament in April, the SPLM (the political wing of the Sudan People's Liberation Army) took the majority of the seats, giving them a mandate to press for the completion of the 2005 Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA).

But Archdeacon Stephen Forde said the North had been dragging its heels in implementing the CPA, finances have not come through for oil and the border dispute continues. "All these issues feed into the belief that the Southern Sudanese would be better masters of their own identity and be independent within the East African States with Northern Sudan a friendly neighbour," he said.

"There is a huge groundswell in favour of independence but will the Northern Government either facilitate that or prevent it?"

"In Yei we had talks with the Rev Clement Janda who represents the Church of Sudan in the negotiations between the government of Southern Sudan and the national government in Khartoum. He had quite a pessimistic view of the potential outcome. He fears the North may use military means to impose its will on Southern Sudan.

"There is a risk that Sudan will revert to type - long periods of war and short periods of reconstruction."

Archdeacon Forde went on: "We have seen what has been achieved over the past five years. There is still a massive way to go but if war breaks out again all gains will be lost. People will be pushed back into the bush, refugee camps and neighbouring countries.

"If hope in the CPA is lost it puts Sudan in a very bleak place with the potential of becoming a non-functioning state. It is vital the international community gets involved."

Opening of new rectory

Rural Dean Canon George Graham officially opened the new rectory in Dervock for the Grouped Parishes of Billy and Derrykeighan on August 28.

After an act of worship and blessing, parishioners were invited to view the house.

Historically the centre of the parish is at the Derrykeighan crossroads where the old church, graveyard and glebe house still stand, but in 1836 the parish church was rebuilt in Dervock.

A century later a new rectory and church hall were built on land opposite the church. The rectory was a spacious house designed to accommodate the large family of the then rector, the Rev Samuel Barnhill. Tragically Mr Barnhill died before the new house was ready in 1937, and the next two incumbents over the following 70 years were bachelors.

The house had fallen into disrepair and during the last vacancy, the Select Vestry made the courageous decision to sell the rectory and a portion of glebeland around it. An acre was kept beside the Allen and Adair Memorial Hall as a site for a new house. The last five years have seen all the planning and preparations slowly fall into place

and building began in August 2009.

The present rector, the Rev John Anderson, his wife Eleanor, and children Simon and baby Hannah are looking forward to life in their new home. "Many parishioners tell me that after five years, it will be worth it in the end, and I can only hope that we can now be settled in a family home, a house fit for purpose for the demands of parish life," said John.



Canon George Graham, who officially opened the new rectory, with John and Eleanor Anderson and children Simon (first child born to a rector of Derrykeighan for 89 years) and baby Hannah.

Dan steps down after 65 years!

After 65 years of valuable and faithful service on the Select Vestry of Ballintoy Parish, Dan Craig has retired.

To mark the occasion, Dan, an enthusiastic historian, was presented with a book 'A History of the Church of Ireland.'

Now in his 93rd year, he has served with 13 different rectors and has been rector's and people's churchwarden numerous times.

His rector, the Rev Patrick Barton, said at his retirement: "Dan, we offer you our sincere appreciation and admiration. May you enjoy a long and fruitful retirement, and don't be surprised if we need to draw upon your vast wealth of knowledge of Ballintoy Parish from time to time."

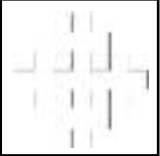


People's churchwarden Raymond Rodgers and Rector's churchwarden Ida McIntyre present Dan Craig with 'A History of the Church of Ireland.'

Institution

The Rev Ian Magowan was instituted rector of Connor and St Patrick's, Antrim, in St Saviour's Parish Church, Connor, on Monday September 6.

The 59-year-old, who was ordained in June 2007, was previously curate assistant in Killowen Parish Church, Coleraine. Ian is married to Hilary and has three daughters. A former teacher, Ian was a choir member of Drumglass Parish Church, Dungannon, for 42 years, and is a keen photographer.



How we see Church- by Connor's children

A major survey on children's ministry in Connor Diocese has revealed some fascinating facts about how children view their time in church and the dedication of their leaders.

The research, conducted by Connor Diocesan Training Co-ordinator Peter Hamill, researcher Mrs Margaret Fullerton and Prof Leslie Francis of Warwick University, was unveiled at Connor Diocesan Synod on September 9.

One of the key findings is that girls enjoy Sunday School more than boys. Children show a definite interest in developing faith, but their interest in Sunday School peaks aged nine or 10, and then declines.

The report found leaders are very dedicated to their work, but need more support in developing their own faith, more time to listen to children and help them develop their faith, and more opportunities to access training.

The report authors determined there is a need for a diocesan vision to show ways of integrating children's ministry into the full life of the church and a need to value children for who they are and not what they might become.

In relation to Sunday School, 41 per cent of children said it was 'sometimes boring' while 43 per cent said it was 'sometimes interesting.' Children aged seven to nine are happier in Sunday School than those aged 10-12.

As for worship, more than 50 per cent of children admitted they sometimes found services boring, but a large number said church was friendly. When asked about worship at home, 34 per cent said they prayed at home, 13 per cent said they read the bible at home, and 19 per cent talk about God at home every week.

Other findings reveal the children like meeting their friends in Sunday School, they were positive about the adults who work and worship with them, and in terms of their physical environment, comfy seats seemed a priority for good comments!

When asked what they least liked about their church, the children's comments ranged from having no separate Sunday School room, to 'long and boring' worship.

The report includes a view from clergy on the current state of children's ministry in our parishes, issues that arise, and potential ways forward.


Leaders were questioned on their work with children and their attendance at training events. Of the 196 who completed the survey, 80 per cent were female.

Among other things, the findings revealed that 57 per cent miss part of church due to children's ministry, 22 per cent have never met with leaders outside the children's group, and 72 per cent had not attended training events in the previous year.

Ninety eight per cent said they were involved in children's ministry in order to build positive relationships with children. The same percentage wanted to bring children to a faith in Jesus. Ninety seven per cent enjoy being a leader, but 37 per cent admitted they took on the task because there was no one else to do it. More than 71 per cent felt their church appreciated them and what they do.

Nick Harding, Children's Advisor to Nottingham Diocese, has been asked to support the practical implementation of the strategy, and will attend a series of meetings organised by the Bishop of Connor due to take place across the diocese. As a follow-up to the survey, a focus group will also visit parishes to talk to children.

The survey results were first published in booklet form. Results were taken from two dissertation papers which can be downloaded in full at www.connor.anglican.org.

	CONNOR CONNECTIONS	
		MISSION



The Ballinderry team at Belfast Airport before departing for Ethiopia. Background picture shows the mountain which the team hiked up to visit the Rock Church on the summit.

Ballinderry team

A 16-strong team from Ballinderry Parish travelled to Ethiopia during the summer to run Bible Clubs for boys and girls.

The team also helped out in a School for the Blind and in an orphanage which is home to some of Ethiopia's many AIDS orphans.

This is the parish's third visit to Mekelle, home to Crosslinks Mission Partner Karen Salmon. Previous teams went out in 2006 and 2008.

The Rector of Ballinderry, Canon Ernest Harris, and his wife Ray have been part of all three teams. Bible Clubs have been the focus of each trip. "Crosslinks were very specific about what we should be doing," Ernest said. "Because we were not going out to build or decorate, we could not just arrive unprepared. There was a lot of work planning our lessons beforehand."

The team met one Sunday a month from December until July, and also attended six evenings at Crosslinks with the Rev Trevor Johnston, Ireland Team Leader, in the weeks before their July 30 departure.

In the Bible Clubs the team members taught lessons and entertained the children with craftwork and games. "This year was particularly demanding," said Ray. "On our previous visits we went to a rescue centre which was well organised with the children already divided into groups. This time we were at a youth centre and it was completely different. We had

to hold the classes in the yard, and were very fortunate that it didn't rain."

The Bible Classes took place outside because the Youth Centre is run by the government and it does not permit Bible teaching inside its premises.

"The present government is quite secular and would not support Christian activity, although the Ethiopian Orthodox Church is quite strong," said Ray.

Many churches in Ethiopia are carved into rocks. "These rock churches are amazing. They go back to the sixth century and are beautifully decorated inside with paintings and icons in the Orthodox tradition," said Ernest. "This part of Ethiopia is very mountainous and yet quite barren. It is very dramatic.

"We trekked up a mountain to see one of the rock churches. It was very hot, the track was steep and narrow and the rocks underfoot were very smooth. We had to be careful because at times we were walking on the edge of a precipice."

Inside the churches, liturgies are said in an old ecclesiastical language. Many of the preachers have no scriptures, and Ballinderry Parish is helping fund the translation of the New Testament into the local language, and to print and distribute these to the 5,000 churches in the Province of Tigray.

During the fortnight Ernest returned to preach in the Mekane Yesus Lutheran Church. As with all their



Team members hike up a precarious mountain trail to the Rock Church.



The Boys Bible Club attracted around 270 youngsters a day.

back in Ethiopia

lessons and talks, Ernest's words had to be translated into the local language. English is not widely spoken.

The team had anticipated 60-80 girls attending the girls' Bible Club. In the end they had 120 girls, while the boys' club attracted an unprecedented 270 youngsters! The team organised sports, singing, talks on the theme 'Who Will Be King?' and crafts – they took 32 suitcases full of craft materials with them to Mekelle!

In the afternoons team members visited Operation Rescue Ethiopia where they organised similar activities for the children. They also ran activities at the Orthodox Church orphanage, and spent time with young people in the Boarding School for the Blind.

Members visited a hospital for women, while Ernest twice led prison inmates in Bible Studies. "There were about a dozen men and they all paid great attention," Ernest said. "They said they needed to raise the equivalent of £40 to buy a strip of land from the council to grow vegetables. Two ladies had given me £40 just before I left and I still had it in my wallet. I was able to give that to them."

Ray added: "It was lovely for these two ladies to hear that their money was used in this way."

The team had raised funds before going to Ethiopia and they were able to distribute money to a variety of projects including the clinic at the rescue centre and to provide juice and bananas for children in the blind

school for the next six months.

Ray paid tribute to all the team members. "The young people were absolutely brilliant," she said. "They were full of fun, they worked hard and did everything they were asked."

Ernest and Ray expressed thanks to Connor Mission Support Fund and the other business, organisations and individuals who had contributed towards the 2010 trip.

"When we report back it enthuses the whole parish and the young people who help with youth groups. It is blessings all round," said Ernest. "It gives a wee country parish a world-wide vision which is very important and it is also good for the life of the parish."



Sandra Livingstone and Melinda Steele with children from the Blind School.



Avril Waller with a photograph of her daughter Lindsey.

Helping others to cope

A Carrickfergus mother whose daughter died in an accident is helping other bereaved parents by manning a telephone helpline.

Avril Waller, a parishioner at Holy Trinity, Woodburn, is a volunteer with the charity Compassionate Friends. Avril featured in *Connor Connections* in October 2008 when she spoke about the death of her daughter Lindsey whose donated organs helped three other people to live.

Avril said: "Everybody in Compassionate Friends who answers the helpline has lost a child. It means that we can tell anybody who rings 'I know how you feel.'"

Joining the Compassionate Friends helpline was a natural step for fitness instructor Avril. "There are people around Carrick and ladies in my classes who have lost a child and I would always make a point of calling them. People in church who know I lost Lindsey would ask me if I would speak to someone they know who has been through the same experience."

It is now seven years since Lindsey died and Avril said the pain never eases. "I love to talk about her as do most parents who have lost a child. But as the years go by people talk about that child less and less and that's hard."

Manning the helpline is also therapeutic for Avril. "I feel needed. I want to help people as I understand how they feel. I know what it is like to think you are going mad."

The helpline number is 028 8778 8016. The Compassionate Friends website can be found at www.tcf.org.uk.



Posed by models.

CONNOR CONNECTIONS		
	MOTHERS' UNION	

For many children, separation or divorce can mean they see little or nothing of one or other parent.

Through its Contact Centre in Belfast, Connor Mothers' Union offers these children, and the non-resident parent, a chance to meet in a safe and caring neutral environment.

The centre, based in St Stephen's Church, Millfield, was established 10 years ago, and is affiliated to the National Association of Child Contact Centres. It is staffed by Melanie Phillips, a qualified social worker, along with trained MU volunteers.

The United Nations Convention on the rights of the child advocates that children have a right to a relationship with both parents unless there is a compelling reason why this should not happen.

contact, not supervised, so the children who attend it are not deemed to be at risk.

"The centre allows relationships to develop, sometimes from the word go because in quite a few cases the children may never have lived with this parent," said Melanie. "The centre also allows a relationship to develop following a break-up. We have never seen a child who does not want to spend time with the absent parent."

The Centre is now funded by the Department of Health, but until two years ago was financed solely by donations. Melanie said it offered a vital service and the help of the 30 MU volunteers, from all over Connor Diocese, was invaluable.

"I am indebted to the dedicated and enthusiastic volunteers without whom we could not operate in such an

Vital contact

The Centre is child focused. The volunteers, some of whom are men, are impartial and do not take the side of either parent. They support the relationship between the child and the non-resident parent often through the medium of play.

Melanie has been co-ordinator of the Belfast Contact Centre since April 2007. There are currently 49 families on the register, made up of 36 fathers and 12 mothers having contact with 61 children. The centre also facilitates contact between children and their birth parents where the children are in long term foster care and between children and grandparents and siblings.

The Belfast Centre, which is run by a management committee, is one of the busiest of the 10 in Northern Ireland, and is used by all sections of the community. "The location is ideal for public transport and Castle Court is handy for resident parents to pass the time when children are having contact with their other parent," Melanie said.

"We broke all records on the first week in September with 32 families in attendance. Although we hosted 38 children the atmosphere remained happy and relaxed as all enjoyed very positive contact – one cannot help but feel rewarded and privileged to be part of such a worthwhile activity at times like this."

The families who use the centre are referred by the courts or social services. The centre offers supported

active way. They all remain committed to the successful running of the centre and add so much to the pleasant welcoming atmosphere each week," she said.

"The parents get a lot out of the volunteers. We have young fathers who have never changed a nappy, and the supportive environment is very good for them. It also helps parents who really don't know how to play with their child. The volunteers are unobtrusive but make it very comfortable for the parent and child.

"Parents have often said that if it was not for this centre they would not get to see their child."

The children using the centre are aged 11 and under. Their time spent in the centre means that a relationship can be established and nurtured and in time the centre is used as a pick up and drop off point before eventually both parent and child are able to get together elsewhere.

Anne Adams, branch leader of St Patrick's MU, Ballymena, and a member of the Contact Centre management committee, said family was a central focus of the MU and the organisation also helped people in trouble. The Contact Centre meets both these objectives.

She said the volunteers get a lot out of their time at the centre. "They build up relationships with the children and parents, and when they leave on a Saturday they know they have helped these families."

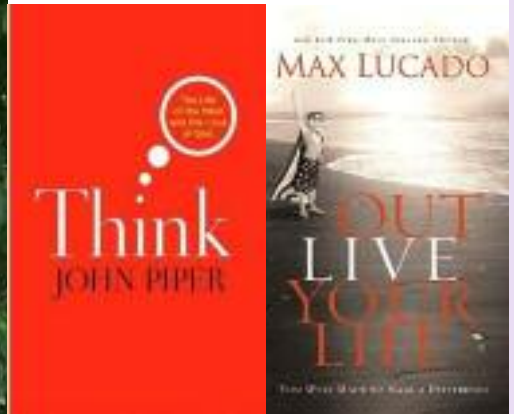


'When the volunteers leave on a Saturday they know they have helped these families.'
Anne Adams, MU



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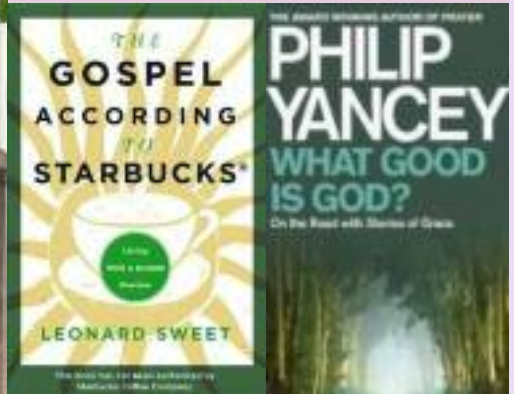


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