

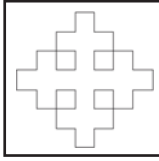
CONNOR

SUMMER 2007

The Magazine of the Diocese of Connor

connections





Vital role of the Diocesan Reader

Holidays, illness and vacancies mean Diocesan Readers with cassock, surplice and blue preaching scarf are a familiar sight in many parish prayer desks and pulpits.

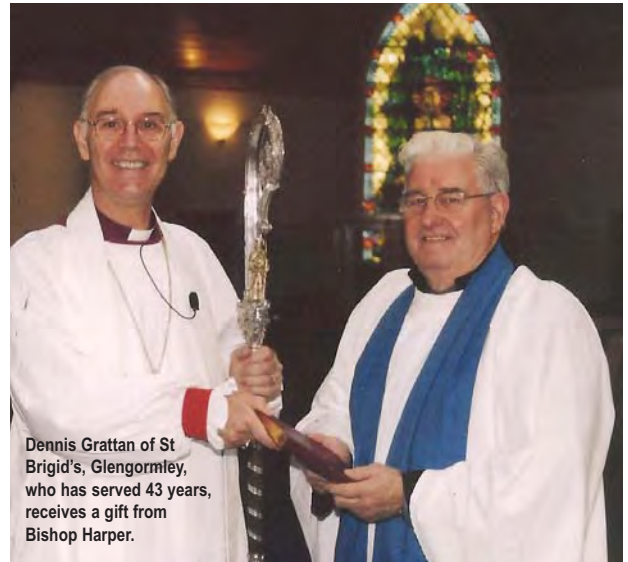
A survey of the workload of Diocesan Readers in Connor produced returns from 27 Readers indicating they had either read the service of Morning or Evening Prayer and/or preached at 1176 services in a one year period.

Eleven had been involved in 50 services while four had been involved in more than 70 services, leading and preaching at three services on certain Sundays which sometimes involved considerable travel. This is a significant contribution to the worship of the church and also in individual parishes.

Many Readers have also served for a considerable time. Dennis Grattan of St Brigid's, Glengormley, has served for 43 years; Dr Wilfred Mulryne will complete 35 years' service this year. Bob Fryer will complete 31 years' service while other long servers include Jim Neill, 29 years, Jack Hassard and Dennis Fullerton, 26 years, and Mr Robert Harper, 25 years.

Despite these outstanding examples the supply of candidates is not keeping pace with the number leaving through retirement or death. Anyone interested in the Diocesan Reader ministry must obtain the approval of their Rector at a selection panel. Their studies include attendance at tutorials, the writing of essays and regular meetings.

Not surprisingly, Diocesan Readers have become a fertile recruitment field for the Non Stipendary Ministry.



Dennis Grattan of St Brigid's, Glengormley, who has served 43 years, receives a gift from Bishop Harper.

Over the past few years Mrs Bobby Moore, Robert Simpson, Harold Sharp and Andrew Ker have been ordained while Readers presently in training include Helen MacArthur, Michael High, John McClure, Graham Nevin and William Patton.

A recent innovation in the Reader ministry in Connor diocese has been the introduction of Parish Readers. Candidates are selected in the usual way, but undergo a much shorter training course. Parish Readers are not licensed to preach and their licence lapses when there is a vacancy in the parish but it is renewable on the recommendation of the new Incumbent.

Reader ministry plays a vital role in the worship of the diocese, and although this is likely to change with the formation of team ministries in grouped parishes, Readers will continue to rise to the challenge of conducting services and preaching where appropriate to the benefit of the whole church.

Contributed by Mr George Leckey

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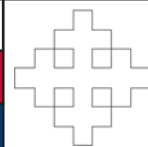
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Website: www.connor.anglican.org

COVER PHOTOGRAPH: BISHOP-ELECT ALAN ABERNETHY LOOKS ACROSS BELFAST LOUGH FROM BALLYHOLME INTO CONNOR.

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Saving children's lives in Siberia

One Connor parish is reaching out to starving street children living not in the dust of India or Africa, but in a freezing Siberian city with at times only a sewer for shelter.

Since the break-up of the former Soviet Union, the number of children forced to live on the streets of Russia and the Republics has spiralled.

Through Child Aid's Helping Hands Appeal, the parishes of St Peter and St James in Belfast has been supporting these children through prayer and by sending funding for food, boots and winter coats which will literally enable some to survive the minus 40 degree Siberian winters.

Parishioner David Cromie said that following the collapse of socialism in the former Soviet Union, the currency crashed, prices rose and the social protections of the former system disappeared.



Rev Charles McCollum, Rector of St Peter's; Mr David Cromie; Mrs Sandra Hutchman; Mr Peter Gray and Mr Wes Holmes who make up the Charities Action Group at St Peter and St James.

Prize for Connor Connections

Connor Connections, the magazine for the Diocese of Connor, was voted runner-up in the diocesan magazine category in the Church of Ireland Magazine and Website competition.

The winner was N:Vision, from Derry and Raphoe.

Magheragall Parish in Connor won the best parish magazine, and the Diocese of Down and Dromore won the best diocesan website.

The awards were presented by the Archbishop of Armagh, the Most Rev Alan Harper, who acknowledged the hard work of all those who contribute to communicating the message of the Church.

Archdeacon Stephen McBride, chair of the Connor Communications Committee, received the award for Connor Connections from the Archbishop.



Two boys in Chita shelter in a sewer as the snow lies on the ground above. Photo: Child Aid.

"At the bottom of all this is where the children come in, particularly in Russia where there is a big tradition of drinking of illegal vodka," he said. "It is cheap, can be very bad and is like a drug. When people are drinking they cannot work. In some of the cities there is now a failed generation because the economic base has been taken away. Some parents are literally drinking themselves to death."

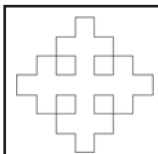
He went on: "A lot of the kids are kicked out. They end up living wherever they can find shelter. Many of the girls will turn to prostitution and the boys become involved in burglary and theft and other anti-social activities. As for education, you can forget about it."

"We found examples of children in Siberia trying to survive in minus 40 degree temperatures living in sewers or sleeping on pipes carrying irradiated water from nuclear power plants. It is a massive problem."

The parish formed a small Charities Action Group, which as a first target selected Child Aid because of its high impact low cost approach to the problems. The select vestry backed the idea by providing start up funds. The rector, Rev Charles McCollum, encouraged the group to take the issue to the whole congregation.

"We didn't even ask the parishioners for money, but they responded generously," said David. "We have supported the soup kitchens they run for the children, and sent funds to buy winter coats and boots. Child Aid is setting up a new shelter in Chita and we have helped with that by providing funds to secure the services of a psychologist to work with traumatised children and families."

"We started off feeding the hungry and clothing the naked. We want to follow these specific instructions and it seems to have struck a very positive chord with the parish," David added.



Family **helping** to equip Zambians for Zambia



Keith and Lyn Scott with their children Adam and Hannah on a visit home from Zambia.

The glens of Antrim are a far cry from the dusty plains of Zambia, but this is where Keith Scott and his young family set up home four years ago.

Deadly crocodiles and spitting cobras have become a way of life for Keith, his wife Lyn, and their children Adam, 16, and Hannah, 12.

The family live in Kitwe, Copperbelt province, close to the Congo border. Keith is a lecturer at the Anglican Seminary of St John the Evangelist in Kitwe, while Lyn also works in the seminary teaching study skills and advanced English.

Zambia is a Christian nation, and in the Kitwe area around 60 per cent of inhabitants are nominally Christian.

Keith is parish priest of Chambishi, one of a group of churches between Kitwe and Chingola. He visits,

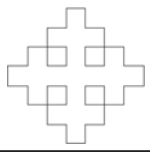
preaches and takes services. His English is translated into the local Bemba language by an interpreter.

The family live in a new bungalow with a few problems, such as undrinkable water, a leaky tin roof and plaster which falls when a door bangs.

Lyn said the couple don't see themselves as 'old fashioned missionaries,' but enablers, training people up to serve in the church in Zambia.

"Most mission activity is about skills training, trying to get people to take up projects for themselves," said Keith. "It is very difficult to keep people with training in Africa but ideally in the longer term people with skills will take over positions in Zambia. We train Zambians for Zambia."

Keith was a parish priest before leaving Northern Ireland for Africa. He spent three years in St Matthew's, Shankill Road and 14 in the Glens of Antrim in the

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parish of Ardclinis, Tickmacrean, Layde and Cushendun.

“We felt we would like to do a spell overseas. We applied to go to Sierra Leone, but that didn’t work out because of the conflict there. Then the opportunity arose to go to Zambia,” Keith said.

Before the trip Keith visited Zambia to get an idea of what the family’s future home would be like, what schools were available for the children and how difficult life might be.

“We had to think about things like that, but we felt it was right. God was calling us to do this,” he said.

Life is not easy. “We have to worry about drinking water and power cuts,” said Lyn. “Shopping isn’t like it is at home. There’s a market and a scruffy old supermarket which we are lucky to have, but some of the produce is extremely dubious – we found a cheese that was three years out of date.”

Other problems include ants, cockroaches, mosquitoes and even killer snakes which, if given a chance, will spit in your eye. Rivers have to be avoided because of the number of crocodiles, and crocodile attacks are reported regularly.

Seeing the grim reality, people who have nothing, no hopes or prospects impacts on your life.

The population is poor, most families are dressed in rags. “People will try and get work in the mines or in the shops or other support services but there is massive unemployment and everyone has to try and grow something. A lot of the spare space between houses and under power lines will be used to grow maize or groundnuts,” said Keith.

November to April is the rainy season with temperatures around 40 degrees centigrade. The other six months are dry and cool.

Although Zambia is peaceful, there is ongoing unrest in Congo. “The trouble in Congo does impinge,” said Lyn. “There are a lot of refugees and traffic across the border as well as criminal activity like car theft and smuggling of guns and copper. The Congalese people are lovely, but there is a real rogue element.”

Zambia’s peaceful status is partly down to the fact that tribalism is discouraged. “To be accused of tribalism is a very serious accusation in local politics. There is a deep

sense in the Zambian population that they need to co-exist to be a nation,” said Keith.

But Zambia cannot escape another of Africa’s major scourges, Aids. “Every week we know someone who dies of Aids or suffers an Aids related death. Many of Zambia’s young professionals will die of Aids,” said Keith.

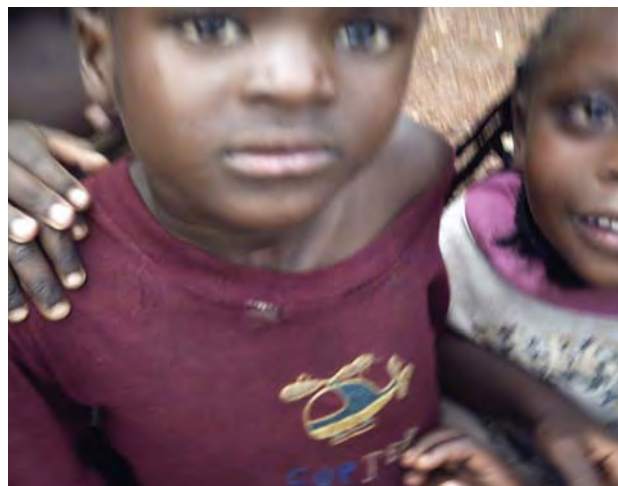


A colourful Zambian dance with makeshift costumes.

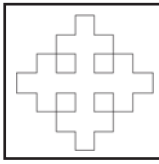
The family expect to return home in two years, but are gaining much from their African experience. For Hannah it is her beloved horses, for Adam it is meeting people from all corners of the globe at their international school.

Lyn says life in Zambia puts life at home in perspective. “Seeing the grim reality of life, people who have nothing, no hopes or prospects impacts on your life. Here we have so much and take it all for granted,” she said.

Keith believes they are making a difference in Zambia. “It’s not like you can say I have done this and it’s made a difference to somebody’s life, but with the Zambians we are trying to build the economy and bring hope to people,” he said.



Zambian children.



Norman and Eileen search the marriage records with Archdeacon Forde looking on. Picture: Ivan Morrow Photography

From Down Under to renew their vows

Sixty years after they were married in Larne, Eileen and Norman Greenway travelled from Australia to walk down the same aisle and renew their vows.

Larne-born Eileen, 77, was 14 when she met Norman, a submariner. They married in St Cedma's Parish Church on March 20 1947, and in 1952 emigrated with their two children to Australia.

Unfortunately the job Norman had been promised was cancelled, and the family had to live in a Nissan hut in a migrant camp for 'pommies' on the outskirts of Perth. Eventually they fled to Rocky Gully in the outback, 250 miles from Perth, where they lived in tents with no water, no electricity and open drains.

After two years of hardship they then moved 70 miles to the seaside town of Albany, where they live today.

Guests at their renewal of vows included Margaret their bridesmaid and George their bestman. "It was a wonderful service, far beyond anything I ever dreamed of," said Eileen. "I think it was better than doing it the first time around because behind it was all the bad and good we have had in life and we have survived it."

A proud day for St Columba's, Dunclug

St Columba's Parish Church, Dunclug, was awarded first prize in the post -1900 category of a competition run by the Ulster Historic Churches Trust.

The Ulster Historic Churches Trust has Church of Ireland, Roman Catholic, Presbyterian and Methodist trustees. The prizes were awarded for well-maintained places of worship and the awards were presented by Paul Clarke from UTV.

St Columba's is a multi purpose building, built in 1975 in response to new housing developments in the area.

Canon Stuart Lloyd said: "St Columba's is beside the Dunclug Housing Estate where there has been trouble at times. The church has been burnt in the past but there is a group of people who faithfully keep the grounds outside and do most of the work inside as well."



A team from St Patrick's Parish Church, Ballymena, carried almost 100 blocks up Slemish Mountain to build a small house in a bid to raise awareness of the work of Habitat for Humanity and to support a building project in Ghana. The endeavour raised just over £3,000.

Liverpool coaching team back in Belfast

Liverpool Football Club's community coaching team was back in north and west Belfast at Easter.

The coaches were at Paisley Park in the Shankill to train children and young people and help them master football skills, drills and tactics. The two-day event was spearheaded by Sister Valerie Thom of the Church Army.

She said: "This is the fourth year that Liverpool Football Club community coaches have visited the area. It is a positive experience and gives those attending a sense of worth when a club like Liverpool returns to the area every year."

Bishop Hilary of Yei in 10 day visit

The Rt Rev Hilary Luete Adebe, Bishop of the Diocese of Yei in southern Sudan, Africa, spent 10 days his link diocese of Connor during March.

One of the highlights of his visit was the Enthronement Service for the new Archbishop of Armagh, the Most Rev Alan Harper, in St Patrick's Cathedral, Armagh.

Bishop Hilary's schedule included meetings with staff at the Church Missionary Society Ireland and Connor Diocesan Council for Mission, and visits to Belfast Bible College and the Irish School of Ecumenics.

He visited the Restorative Justice Programme and the Cornerstone Reconciliation Community and also travelled to a number of Connor parishes and participated in services in Cairncastle, in Larne, and at Queen's University, Belfast.

Archdeacon Stephen Forde, who hosted Bishop Hilary



Bishop Hilary with the Rev Roger Thompson, rector of St Patrick's, Cairncastle.

during his visit, said: "Although you can read about the situation in a place like Sudan, it is not until you actually meet someone who lives their daily life there that you begin to understand the harsh realities they have survived and the deep faith that carries them through every day."

Rectors instituted

The Rev Stephen Fielding was instituted as rector of Agherton Parish, Portstewart, on April 17.

The 39-year-old has a degree in Economics and Geography from the University of Ulster at Jordanstown, and previously served as curate in the parish of Bangor Abbey, Diocese of Down before his appointment as incumbent to the parishes of Templepatrick and Donegore in 1997.

Rev Fielding is married to Julia and the couple has

two young children.

The institution of the Rev Paul Jack as rector of the united parish of St Simon and St Philip took place in St Simon's Church, Donegall Road, Belfast, on May 25.

Rev Jack's first curacy was in St Patrick's, Jordanstown, Connor Diocese, where he remained for two years before moving to Seagoe parish where he was curate for six years.

Rev Jack is married to Claire and the couple has three children.

our former Bishop and his wife Helen.

The editor would like to assure you the photograph had the blessing of Archbishop Harper, and in fact was his choice for the February cover following his appointment as Primate.

February

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photograph

Some readers expressed surprise at the front cover photograph in the last Connor Connections of

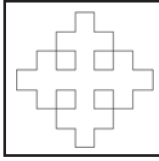
Flower Festival in Lisburn

Three hundred years after Lisburn was destroyed by fire, Lisburn Cathedral will remember the tragedy with a flower festival themed: 'Out of the Fire.' The arrangements are by the world-renowned Rev William McMillan, helped by Ballymacash Flower Club.

The festival runs from October 25 -28, and includes a series of church services. Entry is free but donations are welcomed, and will go towards church refurbishment and to help the people of Yei diocese in the south of Sudan.

Connor MU vice president Kathleen Rodgers, along with Cynthia Cherry, Grace McCabe and Ruth McKeegan, pictured below with their medals, each completed a nine mile Belfast Marathon Walk to raise funds for the MU Literacy and Development Programme and soup kitchens in CapeTown. Treasurer Rosemary Burnside (right) swam an amazing 1,500 lengths of the Grove Baths to raise £1,000!





Bishop-elect of Connor, the Rev Canon Alan Abernethy.

CV of a Bishop

A native of Belfast, Canon Alan Abernethy, Bishop-elect of Connor, was ordained in 1981 and was appointed rector of Ballyholme Parish in 1990.

A former pupil of Harding Memorial Primary School and Grosvenor High School, Belfast, he obtained a BA in History and Political Science from Queen's University, Belfast, in 1978; a Dip.Theol. (1st class) from Trinity College Dublin in 1981 and a BD from Queen's in 1989.

He was Curate-Assistant at St Elizabeth's, Dundonald, from 1981 to 1984, and Curate-Assistant, Lecale Group of Parishes and minor canon of Down Cathedral from 1984 until 1987. During this period he was also Officiating Chaplain at RAF Bishops court.

From 1986 until 1990 the Bishop-elect was rector of St John's, Helen's Bay and Chaplain at Crawfordsburn Geriatric Hospital, before moving to his present post as rector of St Columbanus, Ballyholme.

In 2004 he was appointed Church of Ireland Central Director of Ordinands and since 2005 has been a member of Church of Ireland Theological Inspection Team

He has also been Church of Ireland Religious advisor to Downtown Radio, and is author of "Fulfilment and Frustration," published by Columba Press in 2002.

Please pray for me and my people

When Bishop-elect Canon Alan Abernethy is consecrated as Bishop of Connor on June 29, he will be wearing something special on his finger.

His Episcopal Ring belonged to a former Bishop of Connor, the Rt Rev James Moore, and was given to the Bishop-elect by the Moore family.

The Bishop-elect said: "The ring has a special connection for me. Jimmy Moore was my Archdeacon here, and was later a parishioner. I ministered to him through to his death. He also pastored to me, we had a special bond."

Weeks after he received the phonecall from the Archbishop inviting him to be Bishop of Connor, the Bishop-elect remains in a state of disbelief.

"It really was a profound shock," he said. "When I got the call I just could not speak. My response after 20 seconds was 'How can I say no to that!' If other people have prayed about this and believe that I can do it then I cannot say no.

I have a pastoral heart. I know how in parish ministry it can be difficult and it can be lonely. In Connor I want to spend time with clergy, that is my number one priority.

"But afterwards I wondered if it was a wind up – with that one phone call your life is turned upside down."

He went on: "I have been overwhelmed by the sense of support of people who believe this is good for the church, and as my mother would have said, 'Just be yourself son.' I can hear her whispering it."

Bishop-elect Abernethy said he was aware challenges lay ahead. "I want to listen and hear what the challenges are. I think it is important that we do that together. It is not *my* diocese, it is ours. I want to visit clergy, talk to people and go forward together. Part of that is to really

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Pray for my family

genuinely listen. I have no preconceived ideas although I know what matters to me in my own ministry.”

He admitted that his joy and excitement at his new position was mingled with a certain amount of grief. “I am finding it really painful to disengage myself from the lives of the people here in Ballyholme. We have lived here 17 years, our children grew up here. We have been gloriously happy.”

The Bishop-elect, who is 50, is married to Liz, a medical doctor at Musgrave Park Hospital. They have two children, Peter, 20, a medical student at Glasgow University, and Ruth, 17, a student at Methody.

His appointment was made by the House of Bishops of the Church of Ireland on April 17. Announcing the appointment, Archbishop Alan Harper said: “I warmly welcome the appointment of Canon Alan Abernethy to become chief pastor in the Diocese of Connor. That diocese is very much in my heart, since I spent a

considerable part of my ministry there.”

He went on: “Canon Abernethy brings considerable gifts, which will greatly benefit the diocese when he begins his episcopal ministry. He has served as Central Director of Ordinands and has been very closely identified with the work the Church of Ireland is doing to reshape training for ministry. I wish Canon Abernethy and his wife, Liz, every blessing in this new development in his ministry.”

Bishop-elect Abernethy describes himself as a pastor. “I have a pastoral heart. I know how in parish ministry it can be difficult and it can be lonely. In Connor I want to spend time with clergy, that is my number one priority.”

He went on: “I also have a great concern for training, and I would like to be part of what is going on in Connor. It is wonderful that Connor has a training council and a training officer. The release of all ministry is very important to me.”

As the date of his consecration approaches, the Bishop-Elect admits: “The initial sense of shock is beginning to lessen and I feel a growing sense of excitement and awareness that this is what I am supposed to do. I love working with people and there are so many people in Connor who know what they are doing.”

“My message to Connor at the moment is please pray for me and my family. I will have L plates up and I need your love and patience. I pray for wisdom and peace and they are the two greatest gifts you can receive.”



The Bishop-elect chats with Pat Orr (left) and Emily Weir, who come to Ballyholme parish centre for their regular Friday lunch.



Darren Whiteside was one of those featured in the exhibition.

Our kind of people

In the Protestant enclave of Monkstown, unemployment and deprivation are high and expectations are low.

An exhibition staged by the Church of Ireland's Hard Gospel project in March aimed to tackle the problem of poor self esteem and lack of ambition and broaden horizons for the area's young people.

The 'Our Kind of People' exhibition ran for a week in the brand new community centre before moving to Monkstown's two local schools.

The brainchild of Stephen Dallas, Hard Gospel project worker for Northern Ireland, the exhibition aimed to inspire youngsters to work hard and aim high.

Through words and photographs, it documented the lives of 70 people who once attended local schools or lived in the area, whose achievements have propelled them into a variety of careers. Among them are an airline pilot working in Indonesia, an actress, a nurse, a school principal, missionaries and a number of youth workers.

The project took six months to research. Interviews were conducted by a team of Church of Ireland volunteers. Photos were taken by Belfast Exposed and Stephen.

Stephen said: "The Hard Gospel theme is around a shared future and people in Northern Ireland moving forward. But people in Monkstown, Rathcoole and other loyalist communities in Belfast are in the lowest three per cent of educational attainment.

"If we are going to move forward in Northern Ireland there's an issue of people looking forward and having positive self esteem. That got me thinking about all the good that is not recorded. I thought about holding an exhibition about local people who have achieved things which would reverse the negative image. The result is a collection of great stories.

"They are aimed at increasing the self esteem of a community that does not appreciate itself."

Stephen said the project had given people the opportunity to reminisce about how life in Monkstown used to be.

"Everyone is really pleased to see such a positive message coming out of the area. Parents are bringing their children along because they want them to see this."

The wall mounted stories, accompanied by glossy photographs, are definitely inspirational.

Eileen and Stephen Trew are now working as missionaries in Paraguay, Ulster athlete Clare Dallas is off to do youth work in Massachusetts. Jacqueline Wilson was involved in the opening of the Waterfront Hall and has met celebrities including Bill Clinton and Robbie Williams.

Rachel Ball sings in a band and is a freelance make-up artist; Nadine Nicholl was the first female coach with the IFA; Brian Duff is a school principal; Karly Greene didn't like school but is now an actress and university student; and Clive Grey, at one time chief pilot for two large companies, now flies for a Christian mission agency over the jungles of Indonesia.

The story boards also include pupils of Hollyfield Primary School and Monkstown Community College talking about school and their aspirations for the future.

Darren Whiteside is one of those featured in the exhibition. "I found it quite humbling," he said. "I work in an agency helping young people with drug problems and am also involved in informal education – mainstream education does not work for all people – but I would not say what I do is anything exceptional.

"The young people said they enjoyed interviewing me because I struggled a wee bit with conflict with teachers who would not have expected me to go on to university and to be involved in organising a big project.

"But a youth worker came into my life and helped me believe in myself. It that's the difference a youth worker can make, then it seemed to be a good thing to do with my life. I'm never going to be a millionaire, but I get a lot of job satisfaction."

The 'Our Kind of People' exhibition is one of Hard Gospel's first major projects. Hard Gospel was founded by the Church of Ireland to address the hard issues of sectarianism and to stimulate fresh and creative thinking about finding ways of a shared future in the Ireland of the 21st century.



At home in the kitchen! The Rev Neal Phair and Archdeacon Stephen McBride.

Connor clergy test their culinary skills!

Two fearless clergymen donned their pinnies and turned up the heat to impress members of Connor Mothers' Union in March.

Archdeacon Stephen McBride, vicar of Antrim, and the Rev Neal Phair, rector of Dunseverick and Ballintoy, turned up the heat when they competed in a Can't Cook, Won't Cook evening in St Patrick's Church Hall, Ballymena.

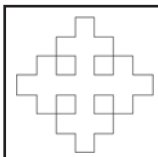
The event was attended by around 250 members of the Mothers' Union from branches across the diocese.

The colourful chefs were guided in their culinary quest by Fanny Craddock's daughter (Ann Armstrong, MU Area Chairman for Lisburn) and her two assistants, Gladys (Marie Quigley, Young Members Rep for Mid-Connor) and Vera (Roslyn Graham, Young Members Rep for North Connor).

The two clerics showed differing kitchen skills and produced some reasonably presentable dishes to a varying degree of success. On the vote of red and green peppers, miraculously, it was a tie.

The evening raised a marvellous £555 for the MU Relief Fund, and was an opportunity for the ladies to see two of Connor's clergy in a different role and have a good laugh at their expense.

The event was organised by the Young Members representative of Connor Diocese and was co-ordinated by Patricia McWhirter.



A view from the Hill

Three pm on Devolution Day and there's an unmistakable buzz about the corridors of Stormont Castle.

For the majority of people Tuesday May 8 represented an end to 38 years of violence – but for Assembly Members like South Antrim's David Burnside it also represents a beginning – the start of a new government and the start of new challenges.

David, 55, a parishioner of St Patrick's, Ballymoney, is a well known far beyond his parish boundaries as he juggles a life in County Antrim with business commitments in London.

Baptised in the Presbyterian Church, he was confirmed in St Patrick's in his teens. A prominent member of the Ulster Unionist Party, he is also a Public Relations expert.

David has always had a love of politics and first stood for election during his final year at Queen's University. He lost his deposit and his first job was as a supply teacher.

His interest in politics encouraged him into a job as press officer of the Vanguard Unionist Party coping with rallies of 25,000 or more. "Those were very heady days," he said. "It was a very exciting job. There was no electronic media and no fax machines. I would write the press releases, copy them and hand deliver them to the media."

When the Vanguard Unionist Party folded David left for England in search of a PR job, and was recruited by the Institute of Directors. "Working there I got to know the whole Thatcherite side of the Tory party and was involved with a lot of important political figures," he said.

In 1984 David was offered the job as Head of PR for the Conservative party, but turned it down in favour of a post



with British Airways. "I chose BA rather than the Tory party because it was a chance to do a privatisation and you only got to do that once," he said. David remained a key figure at BA until his resignation in 1993, following a libel battle with Sir Richard Branson's Virgin Atlantic.

He set up his own PR company, and pursued his love of politics. He has always been involved in the Unionist party and is a co-founder of Friends of the Union.

"I had always said I would not stand for election again, but then I became disillusioned by the Good Friday Agreement. I felt the treatment of the RUC, taking away the Royal title and the insignia was a disgrace and the betrayal of a very fine force," David said.

He was selected to defend the South Antrim constituency in a by-election in 2000, losing narrowly to the DUP. A year later he was elected to Westminster, and along with MPs Jeffrey Donaldson and the Rev Martin Smyth, resigned the UUP Whip in 2003. That year he was elected to the Northern Ireland Assembly.

He lost his Westminster seat to the DUP in 2005, but remains an Assembly Member for South Antrim and chairman of his PR company, dividing his life between Northern Ireland and London.

David has a 17-year-old daughter Anna from his first marriage. He and his second wife Fiona have a three-year-old daughter named Agnes.

"You do manage to juggle things. I am probably the exception rather than the rule. But if someone said you either had to be an Assembly Member, or a Westminster MP or had to get rid of your own business my choice would be to give up elected politics," David said.

The more business experience you have out there in the real world the better you are in using that expertise as an elected politician.

"The more business experience you have out there in the real world the better you are in using that expertise as an elected politician."

David admits he never thought he would see Devolution Day, but remains sceptical, adding that if the Ulster Unionists had done the deal Dr Paisley did that day, the DUP would have labelled them traitors.

He recognises that Northern Ireland is now a better place to live. "You don't have to have your bags checked, there are no road blocks. That whole security atmosphere has gone. Things are more peaceful but more sectarian in an ironic way, especially in working class estates."

David was leaving Stormont to pursue one of his other great loves – motorcycling - and was riding both his 1955 Royal Enfield and his Honda VF1000 bikes in the North West 200. When he has free time he also enjoys boating and shooting at his family farm in his home parish of Ballymoney.

Changes ahead for Ministry training

The new Programme for Ministry in the Church of Ireland was launched in April with information meetings in Templepatrick and Dublin.

The new ministry programme has been developed over the last two years following a major review of the Theological College. The project team is made up of Bishop Michael Jackson (chair), Bishop Ken Clarke, Bishop Richard Clarke, Bishop-elect Alan Abernethy and Andrew McNeile (Project Co-ordinator).

The changes mean initial training for ministry would be undertaken in the trainee's own locality by distance learning and there would be a choice of a full-time or part-time route resulting in equivalence of qualification and training.

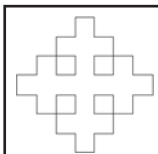
The trainee's final year would be spent as an intern in a training parish with academic reflection on their work, and once qualified there is the freedom to choose to serve in a stipendiary or non-stipendiary capacity.

The Bachelor of Theology would be replaced by Masters in Ministry with curriculum focus on Scripture, Theology and Ministry and training would focus on equipping ministers for all aspects of the role of a full time minister. A new site and centre for training would be developed, with provision for families.

The new post of Director of the Theological Institute has been advertised, and the programme will commence in 2008.

Bishop Michael Jackson, Chair of the Project Ministry Team, said: 'The future shape of ministry for lay people and clergy alike is exciting for the Church of Ireland. Those of us who have been involved in the Ministry Project so far are encouraged by the widespread interest throughout the church.'

Peter Hamill, Connor Diocesan Training Co-ordinator, said: "This is one the most exciting things happening in the Church at the moment. It heralds a new dimension to training in the church and will complement and enhance the aims of the Training Council in Connor Diocese."



CHEERS! Recovering addict Dennis McCarroll enjoys a bit of banter with Rosie Armstrong-Woodroffe, counsellor with the Well Springs project at St Hilda's Church, Kilmakee.

KILMAKEE PROJECT HELPS TO CHANGE LIVES

Beating addiction

At his lowest ebb, Dennis McCarroll would stagger drunkenly to the grave of his 10-year-old daughter and sleep there.

The grave was as comfortable as many of his sleeping places – parks, doorways, the pavement. For in the three years after his little Nichola died, the street was Dennis's home.

Seven years later, Dennis had to bury his other daughter Caroline, killed in an accident at the age of 19. The loss of his children was the greatest of many tragedies in the 54-year-old's life, tragedies which turned him to drink and robbed him of his dignity and even his will to live.

Yet today Dennis is a changed man. He no longer drinks, he has clothes on his back and food in his stomach.

And that change has been brought about largely by a project run by Kilmakee parish on the outskirts of

Lisburn. Well Springs is a Christian Support Service for people with alcohol and drug addictions and has, quite literally, saved Dennis's life.

Based in St Hilda's Parish Church, Well Springs has been running for 18 months. The parish covers the Seymour Hill estate, an area of high social deprivation.

"There are a lot of alcoholics and people with addictions," said the rector the Rev David Boyland. "What sparked the project was one guy turned up at church and said he had been to Alcoholics Anonymous who talked about a higher power. He asked his GP who the higher power was and the GP sent him to me. He was open to receiving Christ and it got us thinking there were so many like him in the area."

The parish recruited Mrs Rosie Armstrong-Woodroffe to run counselling, drop in, fellowship and addiction recovery sessions at St Hilda's. Although many who come to Well

Springs are not from the parish, Rev Boyland said the project was good for the church too. "Often a church can be very inward looking. This provides an opportunity for people to focus on those outside."

Dennis believes he owes his life to Well Springs. "Without Rosie taking me to Well Springs I don't think I would have made it," he said.

"When I went along at first I was very insecure. I thought life had treated me and my family really bad, and I had no real faith because of the things that had happened.

"I knew that sooner or later I had to do something because the drinking had really got to me. Thanks to Rosie and the people at the church who I love and respect so much I have not looked back. I have been off the drink two years now and I am a Christian. Where life will take me from here I don't really know."

Dennis is understandably nervous about the future. At present he lives with Rosie and her husband Peter who took him into their own home after he completed the Well Springs programme.

"Usually people who have addictions have lost everything and the expectation for them to 'pull up their boots' is too high. Dennis was someone we knew had nothing and no-one and we offered him a bed," said Rosie

More than 30 people from all walks of life have followed the Well Springs programme in the past 18 months.

For Dennis, it is difficult to look to the future with so much pain from the past to live with. One of 15 children, he has lost his parents and five of his six brothers.

Nichola was the youngest of his five children. Following her death in an accident in 1991, his marriage broke up and Dennis hit the drink. "Before my wee girl's death I was not much of a drinker. But I ended up on the street, I gave up my job and begged for money and slept in parks and empty houses. I even slept on Nicky's grave. I could not get her out of my mind."

Dennis picked himself after three years when he heard his daughter Caroline had a baby, and began to visit her regularly, but tragedy struck again when Caroline was killed in an accident. Dennis returned to the streets.

The pain of his loss is still apparent. "After Caroline's death I had nowhere to go and no one to turn to. I went to Nicky and Caroline's grave – they are buried together. There's not a day goes by that I don't think of them," he said with tears in his eyes. Photos of the two girls are among other family pictures above Dennis's bed.

Dennis eventually ended up in a bedsit, but one night he was stabbed and badly beaten. "At the time I did not care if I lived or died. There was nothing left for me. I had lost

my wife, my parents were dead, my brothers were dead, my daughters were dead," he said.

Dennis did recover physically and remarried. But that marriage split up, and Dennis was back in a hostel when he met Rosie who encouraged him to go to Well Springs.

"I had given up on people and felt no one cared about me and my life was a real mess. I have tried to make sense of it all, why things happened. When I am in church people talk to me and give me great comfort. Without Rosie and Rev Boyland and everyone else I don't think I would have made it," he repeated.



Dennis with photographs of his daughters Nichola, who died when she was 10, and Caroline, who died aged 19.

"There are lots of people out there who need help. That's what Well Springs is for, to help these people who have addictions and problems with alcohol. But they have to want that help. You cannot work miracles overnight."

Dennis's own recovery has not happened overnight, and he admits there is still a long road ahead. But he is now back in touch with his first wife and his sons, and is looking forward to the birth of a second grandchild.

Anyone interested in finding out more about the Well Springs project at Kilmakee can contact Rosie on 028 9030 1777.

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