

The  
Connection

May 2024

Spring has sprung

## Mass Times

### **St Nicholas' Church, Carrickfergus**

Sunday 11.30 am

Tuesday 10.00 am

Wednesday 7.30 pm

### **Our Lady of Lourdes, Whitehead**

Sunday 9.30 am

Wednesday 10.00 am

## Eucharistic Adoration

### **St Nicholas' Church, Carrickfergus**

Saturday 11.00 am to 12.00 noon

## Weddings

By arrangement. Three months notice is required.

## Sacrament of the Sick

Father Owens attends the sick and house-bound as announced in the parish Bulletin

## Confessions

**Carrickfergus:** First Wednesday of the month, 6.00 pm to 6.45 pm.

**Whitehead:** Before Sunday AM Mass.

## Baptisms

**Whitehead:** on the first Sunday of the month

**Carrickfergus:** on the second Sunday of the month. Please contact the parish office giving a minimum of one month's notice.

# An Introduction from Father Peter Owens & Stephen Lavery

We are delighted to bring you the spring 2024 edition of, 'The Connection', the magazine of the Parish of Carrickfergus & Whitehead. We pass on a word of sincere thanks to the parish Communications team and to all the contributors of the articles within this edition.

Much has happened within, and beyond, our parish since the Christmas 2023 edition. In particular, we are delighted to bear witness to a new energy and enthusiasm within our parish over the past few months. This edition of the magazine will outline some of the highlights of the many stories and events that have taken place within the parish (and beyond) since the last edition of the magazine. We've said 'good-bye' to old and 'hello' to new friends and have witnessed a new dynamism within the life of the parish which resounds in joyful tone—'**Spring has sprung!**'

Spring brings new life and brightness to our lives following the drab and dreary long winter months. Nature may hibernate during such days but our parish hasn't been sedentary. We've been diligently preparing the grounds of our parish life, sowing seeds and cultivating new shoots of life that are becoming evident. The church and community has witnessed much activity stemming from new initiatives launched throughout the parish over the winter months—new services, new programs, new social & entertainment events. Just like spring—the parish is bursting with a newness and freshness to our worship, praise and community spirit in Christ.

We sincerely hope that the content of this edition will resonate with your view of our parish today as we recount what's going to-day within the parish, what we plan for the future and where, we as a community, stem.

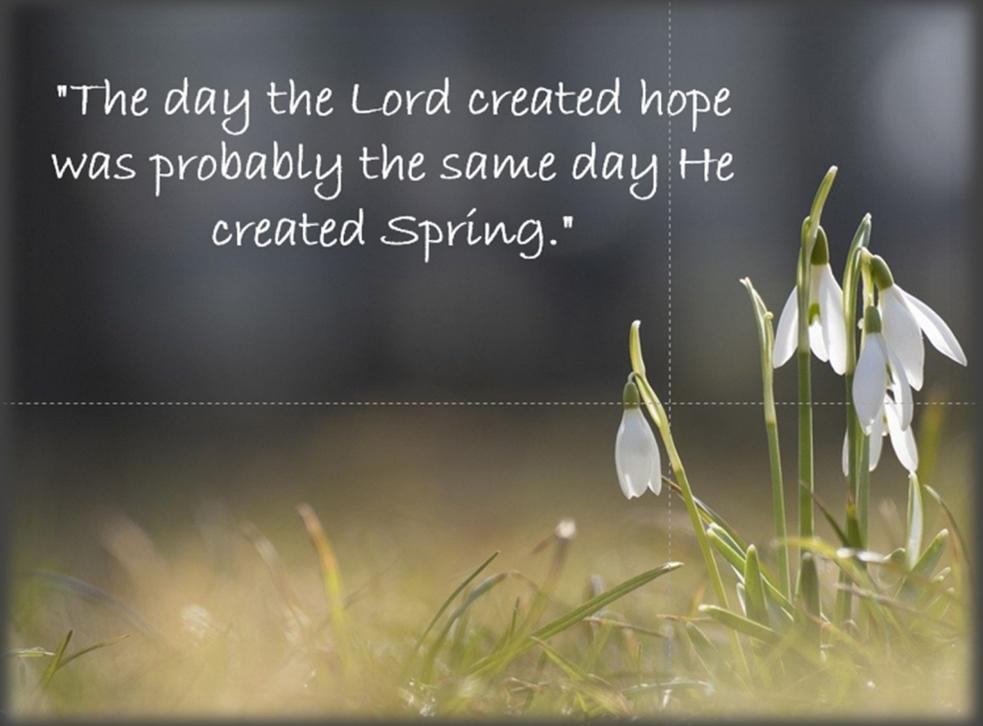
May the spring and summer of 2024 bring you, your loved ones and our parish family many blessings as we continue our walk with God.

**Fr Peter Owens P.P.**

**Stephen Lavery (Chairperson PPC)**

# Your Parish Pastoral Council

"The day the Lord created hope  
was probably the same day He  
created Spring."



## **Parish Pastoral Council Members: -**

Father Peter Owens (President)

Tom Moore

Stephen Lavery (Chairperson)

Patrick Quinn

Bob Sweeney (Vice-Chairperson)

Petar Segó

Julie Elliot (Secretary)

Paul Smith

Marion Frampton

Paddy Stewart

Siobhán Gilmore

Mary McCormack

# A Good & Faithful Servant

*Fr Martin Cushnan C.Ss.R*

(20-04-1934 to 03-04-2024)

On the 29th April 1934, Martin was born to Vincent & Jane Cushnan in Carrickfergus, Co. Antrim. He was the 2nd youngest of four girls and two boys. Having completed his secondary education in St Malachy's College, Belfast, he disappointed several of the priests of Down & Connor Diocese when he decided to join the Redemptorists!

On Ash Wednesday 1955, four priests and six students left Ireland to join the Redemptorist Mission in India. Brother Martin Cushnan was one of the students. He was within three years of ordination when he arrived at the Redemptorist seminary in India. In 1958, he was ordained in Bangalore a long way from home and family. The joy of ordination and the absence of family was a mixed experience that he integrated with his usual good humour, faith and fortitude. That began his many years of mission service in many parts of India.



One of his early appointments was to Tenali in Andhra Pradesh where he was to spend so many years of his missionary life. As well, with his varied ability and availability for the different tasks he was asked to do, he was assistant Province Bursar for the Province, he was assistant Vocations Director, he taught English in our College for prospective Redemptorists, he was parish priest and superior of the community. He served his confreres and the mission generously.

All will remember him with love and gratitude, especially for his presence and ministry during the last 20 years of his life in Tenali. He was more at home preaching in the villages than at the parish centre. However, it was at the centre that he did the work he loved—helping poor people with practical assistance in their day-to-day needs. With the help he received from family, friends and others, he could engage qualified doctors or nurses to offer medical aid to his beloved poor when major surgery was beyond their means. And he was no mean medical man himself. From his modest clinic he dispensed what was necessary for minor ailments to men, women and children.

Although Martin spent a lifetime in India he never lost his love for Carrickfergus, for St Malachy's and for Down & Connor. And he was always very devoted to his family into the third generation with whom he kept very close contact and they with him. He can rest assured of the gratitude and prayer of the countless people he helped.

Surely the Lord is saying to him—"Martin, well done good and faithful servant!"

(Article reprinted by kind permission of the Redemptorist community, Clonard, Belfast.)

# Rome Visits Leixlip

On 24<sup>th</sup> April 2023 eleven parishioners headed south to join Cell members from around Ireland at a special service in the Church of Our Lady's Nativity in Leixlip, Co. Kildare. Our group was made up of cell members and choir members who had generously offered their support in providing the music for the service. The keynote speaker was Archbishop Fisichella, the Pro-Prefect of the Vatican's Dicastery for Evangelisation and the theme was, "the important role of faith communities in the urgent work of evangelisation." Father Michael Hurley, the priest who brought Parish Cells to Ireland and



Archbishop Fisichella



Fr Michael Hurley

who continues to be actively involved in its work and leadership, also addressed the congregation. Cell members, including Stephen and Diane Lavery, shared their personal faith stories and how their experiences as cell members has developed, enriched their faith and nurtured a love of the Holy Scriptures. They also feel a strong sense of belonging to a community of cell families who genuinely care, support and encourage each other. The testimonies of several cell members as well as Archbishop

Fisichella's encouraging key note speech are available on the <https://www.parishcellsireland.ie> website (Archbishop R Fisichella Event) and are well worth listening to.



Ready for a feed:  
members of the Carrickfergus Cells & Choir.

My abiding memory of this extraordinary event was the sense of fellowship and unity between the eleven Carrick & Whitehead parishioners when we dined together, the palpable joy in the church when we reunited with cell friends after the long COVID-19 lockdowns and coming home feeling refreshed, invigorated, encouraged and blessed.

**Ann McFerran**

# Bishop Alan takes his seat ....

Sunday April 14th, 2024 was a historic day for the diocese of Down and Connor as our new Bishop, Alan McGuckian was formally installed at a Mass in St Peter's Cathedral, Belfast. I was delighted to be there with Gerardine Stewart, Stephen Lavery and Father Peter, representing Carrickfergus and Whitehead parish. Among the many joyful moments of the celebration a few things stood out for me.



The first of these was sitting in the beautiful surroundings of St Peter's Cathedral which was packed to capacity with clergy and lay people, from every parish, secondary school,

chaplancy, and ministry in the diocese. The presence of so many lay people and in particular the number of young people who participated in the service; the opportunity to connect with old friends, meet new ones, and the sense of excitement that something special was taking place. I felt honored to be there and, in that moment, I had a glimmer of hope, that despite the many challenges of recent years, the Church and our diocese was very much alive and well!



Not unrelated to this, in the few moments before Bishop Alan arrived, the priests and deacons had moved in procession to take their place in the Cathedral, many looking for some space in the seats. I was struck that more comfortable seats had not been reserved for them and I quietly pondered the significance of the priests sitting among the people. The relevance perhaps given the gospel story that day for the Third Sunday of Easter – *‘Jesus himself stood*



*among them and said to them, Peace be with you!’* There was in the Cathedral a real sense of a Church and its people, at peace.

I could write about many things that afternoon, but I will leave you with the closing words of Bishop Alan’s homily. *‘We have among us the God of all possibilities who transforms darkness into light, who brings hope where despair reigns and salvation where sin abounds.’*

As we all went our various ways, renewed in our faith, and strengthened by the grace of friendship, I did wonder what the God of all possibilities has in mind for us....

Amanda Stewart



# Never Too Old ...

Since childhood, I always had a desire to play a musical instrument but was held back because of shyness, insecurity and self-doubt. After three failed attempts to learn piano, I now admit that I never truly applied myself to the task. But, now, I am of the opinion that you're never too old to learn to play a musical instrument.

Having moved to Carrickfergus in 2015, I was invited to attend Carrickfergus Traditional Music Society (CTMS) which met in the Flame Gasworks Museum in the town. Knowing basic guitar chords, I occasionally attended but would sit as far away as possible from the 'real' musicians as they performed. I loved the tunes played as they were exciting and stimulating!

Later, having the desire to play the tin whistle, I found a teacher but, unfortunately, COVID-19 put an abrupt end to my instructor-led lessons. But, I was determined to keep at it and to learn. So, during lock-down, I challenged myself to learn the instrument with the help of YouTube. The CTMS, however, continued to meet on-line via Zoom but, to my frustration, I struggled to play the tunes on the whistle at the required speed.



Me with my friends & musical mentors

—Martin Murray (Banjo), Denis Hession (Keyboard)

After a discussion with the CTMS Chairman, I decided to set up a trial Introductory session for beginners to traditional music. The session would allow beginners to play together at a slower, more-manageable pace. Once COVID-19 restrictions were eased the sports hall in Eden Community Centre was hired to allow for social distancing. Banjo player, Martin Murray, and keyboard player, Denis Hession, agreed to assist me and they were happy to play the tunes at a slower pace.

That was two years ago— eight people attended the first session and the group has now evolved from shy, quiet beginners to a lively, confident, public-performing team consisting of over 30 people from diverse cultures, instruments and musical styles.



Eden Traditional Music Players continues to meet each Thursday afternoon in the Eden Community Centre and Martin continues to support on-learn learning by posting the current tunes on his YouTube channel to allow people to learn them at a slow pace in preparation for playing together.

Music is a wonderful hobby —suited to all ages and walks of life. It's a universe crying out for exploration, the limits of which will never be exhausted. If you or someone you know may be interested in learning I can be contacted for more information via email Heather at

[edentraditionalmusicplayers@gmail.com](mailto:edentraditionalmusicplayers@gmail.com) or visit the groups [YouTube](https://www.youtube.com/@carrickfergustradctms3383) channel at <https://www.youtube.com/@carrickfergustradctms3383>

**Heather Parkes**

# A Hidden Gem

Lying close to the entrance of Belfast Lough are three small islands, collectively known as the Copeland Islands. These islands are an Area of Special Scientific Interest (ASSI) and fall within a Special Protection Area (SPA). One of the islands, Lighthouse Island, is home to the Copeland Bird Observatory (CBO).

CBO was established by a group of passionate, amateur ornithologists in 1954. It was the first, and still is the only bird observatory in Northern Ireland. It forms part of a network of bird observatories around the British Isles and is a member of the Bird Observatories Council. Seventy years after its formation, the Observatory is still run and managed by dedicated members for the benefit of birds.

Every breeding season, the CBO plays host to several thousand birds. Medium-sized seabirds called Manx Shearwaters leave their wintering waters off the coast of South America and head north to breed. Travelling thousands of miles

across open seas, they glide on stiff wings just above the surface of the waves, hence their name, '*Shearwater*'.



**Manx shearwater**

Manx shearwaters are long-lived birds and can live for over fifty years. They nest in underground burrows and thrive on rat-free islands such as the Copeland's Lighthouse Island. They are capable of digging their own burrow, but are not shy in using rabbit



burrows as well. During the breeding season, shearwaters gather offshore in large groups known as rafts and ascend on the island under the cover of darkness. This nocturnal invasion is necessary because shearwaters are ungainly on land, leaving them vulnerable to attacks by predators such as large gulls.

In 1952, the first nineteen shearwaters were ringed on the Copelands, with another twenty-five in 1953, one year before the observatory was officially established. Since then, over 41,000 shearwaters have been ringed, making the Copeland Islands an internationally important site. So, the next time you look out towards the islands, spare a thought for this hidden gem lying off our shore. Over 41,000 Manxies can't be wrong!

**Niall Waterman**

CBO Website: <https://www.the.cbo.org.uk/>

# MacNeice's Carrickfergus

“So, what brings you here?”

Five minutes earlier, the grand Victorian entrance to Belfast's Linenhall Library had seemed imposing. The question, however, was not. Our teacher was simply curious to find out what had brought each of us along to the Irish language class.

“They're free!” joked one student. Others just enjoyed learning languages. My motivation was more introspective. New to university, living away from home for the first time, I had a whole world to discover. To begin with my own identity, my 'Irish-ness' seemed like a good first step.

Who I was and who I wanted to be seemed very connected with where I came from. So, too, was it with poet Louis MacNeice. My English Literature studies first introduced me to his poetry.

Those of you who are familiar with his writing will know he was always searching for something to believe in, for a place to call home, for an identity. He never really arrived there, holding fast to, “the unanswerable question rather than the unquestionable answer”.

MacNeice stands alongside other famous poets from the first half of last century, including W. H. Auden and, as such, is thought of by many as Anglo-Irish. We parishioners of Carrickfergus, though, have every right to claim him as our own.



Frederick Louis MacNeice was born in 1907 in Belfast. His father, a rector for the Church of Ireland, was appointed to St Nicholas' in Carrickfergus in 1908, bringing his wife Lily and their three children, including baby Louis. The following decade was to be spent in our town and the time had a profound effect on Louis, both the boy and the poet he was to become.

Their first residence was 5 Governor's Walk, next to Kelly's Coal Merchants and overlooking the "little boats beneath the Norman castle", as the poem "Carrickfergus" states. The poem is an evocative trip down memory lane. Nostalgia juxtaposes the harsh realities of life during World War I.



North Road, where a blue plaque commemorates his life, was his next home, the rectory proper. Louis' mother tragically died when he was just seven. Although he conveys a mostly fearful and distant relationship with his father, a happier memory is recounted in his autobiography, 'The Strings Are False'. He credits his father for his growing love of language: *"My father would seat me on his knee and imitate the train from our town to Belfast, chugging and whistling and stopping at all stations – Trooperslane, Greenisland, Jordanstown, Whiteabbey, Whitehouse, Greencastle, Belfast..."*

Of the town's name itself, he savoured the blend of myth and history, acknowledging that Carrickfergus meant "the rock in the sea" but also attributing it to Fergus the ancient King of Ulster. In true MacNeice style, he likes to show both sides of the coin. He goes on to say, *"I disliked the abbreviation Carrick which in the local voice sounded like a slap in the face."* A point clearly made!

Further dichotomies were apparent in the other inhabitants of Louis' North Road home. Archie was the elderly gardener, an Orangeman who played his flute in the processions. He couldn't read or write but told marvellous stories. Annie, the cook, was a girl still in her teens, from Co. Tyrone. She was the first Catholic Louis had ever encountered and served as *"my only proof that Catholics were human."* She did Irish crochet work and entertained Louis with talk of banshees and fairies. Annie and Archie, Catholic and Protestant, left a lasting impression on Louis. At first glance, opposites, but actually quite similar characters beneath the surface. MacNeice's poem, "Carrick Revisited", written in 1945, is more sentimental than the previous "Carrickfergus". For a start, he is kinder to the abbreviation, using it in the title. He acknowledges the town's influence on him. He implies his beliefs, thoughts and ideas are all fleeting and transient, but his decade in Carrickfergus gave him a solid foundation:

*"Whatever then my inherited or acquired Affinities, such remains my childhood's frame Like a belated rock in the red Antrim clay That cannot at this era change its pitch or name..."*

A real acceptance for who he was because of where he came from. All the more reason to claim Louis MacNeice as our own, then.

## Louise Mayne

The opening two stanzas from MacNeice's, 'Carrickfergus'.

I was born in Belfast between the mountain and the gantries  
To the hooting of lost sirens and the clang of trams:  
Thence to Smoky Carrick in County Antrim  
Where the bottle-neck harbour collects the mud which jams

The little boats beneath the Norman castle,  
The pier shining with lumps of crystal salt;  
The Scotch Quarter was a line of residential houses  
But the Irish Quarter was a slum for the blind and halt.

# SACRAMENT OF CONFIRMATION

On 21 April, children from the Parish celebrated the Sacrament of Confirmation, administered by Father Peter Owens.

In the weeks beforehand parents attended a workshop with Aishling Steen from The Living Church to discuss how we demonstrate our faith in normal family life and support our children in their faith journey. Then, at the Service of Light, parents passed a lit candle to their child, a symbol of transferring responsibility for their own faith with continued support from their families and faith community.

The children had spent time preparing for their Confirmation, from researching saints and choosing their name, to learning



about the fruits and gifts of the Holy Spirit. At the service they proudly renewed their baptismal promises before being anointed with chrism as they received the gifts and strength of the Holy Spirit.

Significantly, Confirmation takes place at a time when the children are growing more independent and preparing to leave primary school, a great time to affirm their faith, as they move on to make their way in the world.

The services were beautiful, the children were a credit to their families and teachers, and the school choir sang splendidly.

Thank you to everyone involved for making it a special day.

**Caroline O’Kane**



# The Franciscans in Carrickfergus

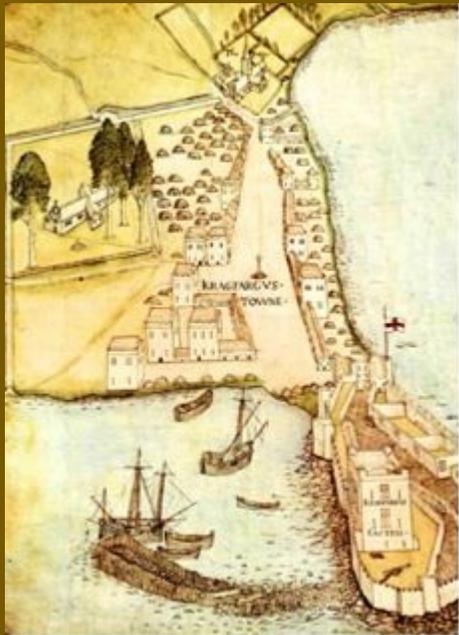
Carrickfergus Castle was built by the Norman, John de Courcy in 1177. It consisted of a 3 storey keep within a small enclosure. He also commenced the building of St. Nicholas' Church around 1182. In 1204, another Norman, Hugh de Lacy ousted him and became the Earl of Ulster.

In 1232, a monastery of Franciscans, or Grey Friars was founded in Carrickfergus, probably by Hugh de Lacy, Earl of Ulster, though some believe it was founded by the O'Neills.

Hugh de Lacy was buried in the monastery in 1243.

The Franciscan Abbey would have played a prominent role in the life of the town.

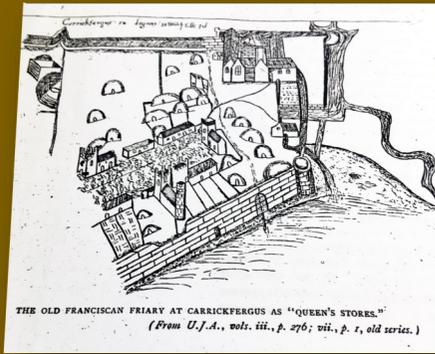
In 1497, the Friary was reformed to a branch of the Franciscans called the The Order of Strict Observance.



In 1510, a General Chapter of the Order of Franciscans was held in the Priory. This would have been a large and prestigious gathering of Franciscans and indicates the importance of the Priory.

Monks in the Middle Ages performed many practical services such as housing travellers and helping the sick and the poor. Their main foodstuffs included vegetables such as turnips or salads, dark breads, porridge, fish, cheese and beer. They also spent much of their time in prayer and contemplation.

A map from 1560 shows Carrickfergus with the Priory shown. Today this is the yard behind the Town Hall.



During the reign of Elizabeth 1, however, the Friary felt the full fury of the persecution of the Catholic Church which raged throughout Ireland. In 1560, the English governor seized all the sacred properties of the friary and cast 5 of the friars into prison. After this suppression the friary became a store-house for Elizabeth's troops. It was totally destroyed by Sir Arthur Chichester, Viceroy of Ireland, about 1610, who built Joymount House on the site of the ruined abbey. It was finished in

1618. It was a palatial residence for himself and his family. He ceased to live there in 1724 and the magnificent building fell into disrepair.

A county jail and courthouse were built in its place and it was subsequently turned into a military barracks. Further changes took place until what we now have is the Town Hall.

A new Franciscan residence was erected about 1626 in the district and F. Edmond Cana was appointed Superior. Father Paul O'Neill was



appointed as a Guardian of Carrickfergus on 15th August 1629. He is described as Venerandus Pater – Venerable Father. It is almost certain that this Father Paul is the same person whose name appears on the "O'Neill Chalice" dated 1632. This beautiful chalice is still in the possession of the parish. Guardians of Carrickfergus, described as Venerandus Admodum Pater – Very Venerable Father – continued to be appointed until 1869, but none was appointed after this. In 1670 it was recorded by Primate Oliver Plunket that there were ten Franciscans in the convent of whom 5 were priests. It is not known where the new Franciscan Priory was built. It could have been in Kilroot, Woodburn or Islandmagee. It is certain, however, that the Franciscans disappeared from Carrickfergus and surrounding districts.



**Davy Muir**

(Reference material supplied by **Sean Neeson**)

# Parish Quiz Night

On Saturday 3rd February the Parish Events Team (affectionately known as “PET”), organised a quiz in Carrick Golf Club.

Quiz enthusiasts came from all areas of the Parish, some as remote as Aldos, The Commons and the Muttonburn Stream, to test their wits. Twenty Three teams in all enjoyed the night with eventual winners Frances, Angela, Eleanor and Paul, proving to be the best team on the night.

“PET” organised a great evening, ably assisted by volunteers, Barbara Smallwood and Joanne Mulholland, who arranged a ballot which raised £350! Many thanks.

All of the participants enjoyed the evening, many of them digging deep into the recesses of their minds to answer questions on a wide range of topics including: John Wayne Movies,

Manchester United, Horse Racing, Carrickfergus Streets, USA State Capitals, USA Presidents, the Bible, to mention but a few ....

Spot prizes were also presented during the quiz to teams who proffered, “Good but not right” answers, reminiscent of Roy Walker’s Catchphrase!

At the end of the night, comments on the success or otherwise of the event were sought from the participants. Everyone agreed that the night was a roaring success, with the mischievous, mirthful, Matt Monaghan stating that it was the best quiz he had attended since the previous one!

A **BIG** thanks are due to all of the organisers, helpers and, of course, Carrick Golf Club for the use of the premises. We’re all looking forward to the next one!

**Michael McGivern**





*"PET" would like to thank Michael for his contribution to a great night; for his efforts in putting together the quiz questions, doing the scoring, his excellent quiz-master delivery and, of course, his trade-mark craic.*

# St Patrick's Night Celebrations

After watching a nail-biting end to the Six Nations, it seemed that most of the Parish

descended on Whitehead Golf Club. We enjoyed a light supper before the music started. The children enjoyed the freedom to dance around the floor especially when Ursula Kelly, in traditional costume, showed them how it was done!

The traditional ballot was then drawn and lots of prizes were won. We raised £341 thanks to your generosity!

The Trad. Group started up again and entertained us until 11.00 pm. Under the expert guidance of Ursula we even managed to get lots of people up to dance. It was almost a ceilidh!! Next time we'll expect much more of you.

Many thanks to:-

- Whitehead Golf Club for hosting this event. In particular, thanks are due to Alan Dodds for providing the supper, Paddy Stewart, Paddy O'Donnell and Jeremy Jones for facilitating our Parish event celebrating St. Patrick. The Traditional Group (with no name) for providing the music.
- The Irish Dancers - Lily, Holly, Macy, Sarah and Maria from Tir na nOg
- Dolores Cuss for the decorations (at least a million balloons!)
- All those who supplied prizes for the ballot.
- The whole Parish Events Team for their sterling efforts.



Davy Muir



# Celebrating Creativity: A Parish Exhibition

The parish community recently came together, to celebrate a beautiful tapestry of talent at our Spring 2024 Parish Art Exhibition. Showcasing a diverse array of artwork and photography, the event served as a testament to the artistic spirit thriving within our Parish community.

Among the artists were Barry Vance, Joanne Campbell, Steve Diamond, Maureen Graham, Marie Mone, Joe McKernon, Shelly Mullan, and Jenelie Coelho. Each artist with their unique perspectives and styles. As a young artist Jenelie shows talent beyond her age.



In addition to the remarkable artworks, the exhibition also featured stunning photography by Stephen Lavery, Paul Smith, and the late Harry Bates. Through their lenses, the photographers captured moments of beauty, inviting viewers to see the world through their eyes.

Our own ex-Mayor of Carrickfergus and lifelong Marine Historian and Marine Heritage enthusiast, Sean Neeson, provided an intriguing display of historical paintings and articles such as the painting of the Schooner, Result, built in Carrickfergus and the last Q ship (A heavily armed decoy transport ship) from World War II.

The exhibition was not merely a display of talent; it was a celebration of community and connection. It provided a platform for parishioners to share their passions, stories, and visions with one another, fostering an appreciation for the diverse talents within the Parish.

As visitors meandered through the exhibition, they were not only treated to visual delights but also to fantastic hospitality provided by the Events Team.

Together, let us continue to support and celebrate the artists and photographers among us, for they enrich our lives and illuminate the world with their extraordinary talents.

The Artworks continue to be shown online in a virtual gallery hosted by: [artsteps | Carrick Parish Spring 2024 Exhibition](https://www.artsteps.com/view/6617a5430ad1baaca82370b8?currentUser). URL = <https://www.artsteps.com/view/6617a5430ad1baaca82370b8?currentUser>

## Paul Smith





# The Gift of Music

What have George Formby, Elvis Presley, Paul McCartney, and Taylor Swift got in common with Stephen Lavery, Michael Colville, Martin Murray, and Gary White? .... They all have played ukulele and the lads from the Parish learned to play Ukulele under the guidance of Marty Martin the founder of the Flame 'N' Ukes, which started in the Gasworks in 2019.

Our Parish is blessed with so many talented musicians and singers and you hear and see them every Sunday adding something special to the Liturgy.

When I joined the choir, I thought I would just turn up, strum a few chords and sing along. Most people do not appreciate how much effort it takes to get the lyrics on the screen and everyone singing from the same hymn sheet and



in tune. (Pun intended.)

So, would you like to learn a musical instrument? Learn to sing a few good tunes? And join in the "craic"? Well, why not join us at Ownies Bar & Bistro every Wednesday evening from 7-10 pm.

The benefits of making music and enjoying the company of other like-minded people is uplifting. Just ask Matt Monaghan, Mary & Davy Muir, Margo Bristow, Anne McFerran or Roisin White who are regulars at Ownies and are big fans.

Ukuleles are great fun. Cheap to buy and for £40, Marty Martin of the Flame 'N' Ukes group offers, easy, step-by-step fun tutorials on [YouTube](#) on how to play popular tunes with this marvellous wee instrument. Learn to play anything from Abba's 'Waterloo' to Irish folk favourites such as, 'Whiskey in the Jar'!

Also, if you are feeling musically inclined and want to become a Ukulele player or get involved with the any of the parish choirs have a chat with me or any other member of the St Nicholas' Choir

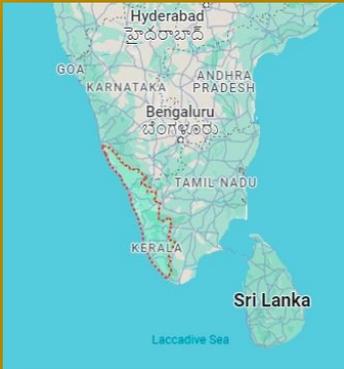
**Michael Colville.**





# From India to Carrickfergus

## ~ Neethu & Don



My name is Neethu Paul Panjikaran and nine months ago I left Kerala in Southern India to travel with my friend Jiljy George Chakkalakkal to Northern Ireland. We were sponsored on a three year contract to Burleigh Hill House nursing home. I had to leave my husband Don Davis Chemban and my two young children, Donald David and Damian David behind. Three months later Don and the boys joined me. I have an uncle in Belfast who had encouraged me to come but, despite being a qualified nurse, my qualifications do not meet NHS standards so I am currently employed as a care worker.

The main problem I faced was finding accommodation for our small family and I searched for two months to find a suitable apartment. We have experienced many changes including the weather, time differences and school selection. We had never seen snow which we loved. However we have been met with kindness and are happy in our new home and parish.

### Neethu and Don.



# From India to Carrickfergus

## ~ Jijo & Jiljy

On July 27th 2023 I arrived in Carrickfergus, far from Kerala, India, without my husband, Jijo Parekkattu , and my son, Aljo Parekkattu. My name is Jiljy George Chakkalakkal. In India, I am a qualified nurse. However, my nursing qualifications do not align with the NHS nursing qualification requirements and, therefore, I am working on a three year contract in Burleigh Nursing Home as a care assistant.

Initially, upon arrival to Carrickfergus, I shared a house with my friend Neethu, as we work together. However, on October 13th 2023 my husband, Jijo and our only child, Aljo arrived in Carrickfergus. People may wonder why we came to Northern Ireland but we had always dreamed of one day coming to Ireland. Jijo had worked in the Middle East and had spent fifteen years in Saudi Arabia but Aljo and I had always remained in Kerala.

The main problem we face in Carrickfergus is finding suitable rental accommodation that is both suitable in size for three and not over-priced. Jijo and I are both working but, so far, it has been impossible to find accommodation without a local guarantor to support our rental applications. Also, Jijo, is a trained and qualified domestic appliance engineer, but currently is working in another line of work. He would dearly love to return to his original profession. Our son, Aljo is very happy at school and has no wish to return to India where higher education is very expensive.

The people we have met in Carrickfergus are very kind and have graciously helped us in many ways.

**Jijo and Jiljy.**



# From India to Carrickfergus

## ~ Jacinto & Monica

I am Jacinto Coelho. After several years travelling for work from Goa in Northern India to Belfast, London and then Carrickfergus, I eventually settled in Carrickfergus in October 2022. On November 9th 2022.

Monica Fernandes, my wife, and our two children Jenelie and Jenslan joined me and we

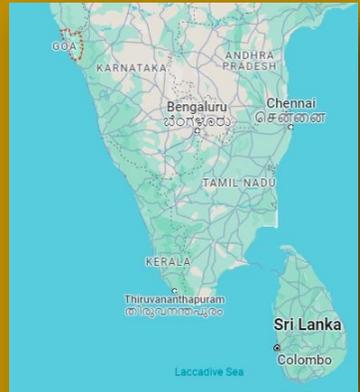
Were, once again, a proper family after being separated for so long. From 2016, Monica and the children had remained in Goa.

As a family, we think Carrickfergus is a cool place to live. The children are happily settled in school and Monica and I are working locally. I am employed in the 'Little India' restaurant while Monica works in Tesco. Our main reason for coming to Northern Ireland was for education for our children as education in India is very expensive. We initially worried who would look after us so far from home and family but the parish has been so good to us helping with accommodation and guiding us through any administrative and problems.

Father Owens has been particularly good to us and we have made great friendships in the parish.

Just recently, I have been invited to join the Parish Pastoral Council and Jenelie is a regular altar server. This gives us great pleasure and we feel at home with everyone.

**Jacinto and Monica.**



# Can you help ...?



The above photograph (supplied by Sean Neeson) is of the Carrickfergus Gaelic football team of 1958. The photograph was taken at the playing field at Rosebrook Avenue. At the time, the team coach was Vincent Kelly from County Tyrone who was married to Annie Chambers from Carrickfergus.. All the team members lived in Sunnylands.

Among the team (and in the photograph) were the following: -

- The 2 Nesson brothers, Sean & Patsy
- The 3 Mullan brothers, Seamus, Dessie & Sean, aka 'Bubbles'
- Danny McGahan
- Tony Cassidy
- The 2 Degan brothers, Terence & Raymond.

.... That accounts for 9 faces in the photo. Can you identify any others, not yet mentioned? If you do recognise someone, it would be great if you could let Sean Neeson or Paul Smith know the name(s).

**Prize for recognising 3 or more faces:** - a one-off special invitation to attend the next Carrickfergus GAA annual AGM. You get to choose a local telephone box as the venue of choice for the meeting.

Let us acknowledge the LORD; let us  
press on to acknowledge him. As surely  
as the sun rises, he will appear; he will  
come to us like the winter rains, like the  
spring rains that water the earth. ~

Hosea 6:3



## The Parish of Carrickfergus & Whitehead

Parish Priest: **Father Peter Owens**

Parochial House, 8 Minorca Place, Carrickfergus, Co. Antrim, BT38 8AU

Tel: (028) 9336 3269

Email: [carrickfergus@downandconnor.org](mailto:carrickfergus@downandconnor.org)

Web: <https://www.carrickparish.org>

Parish Office Hours: 10.30am – 1.30pm Mon-Thurs.

the  
**Connection**