

UNITED KINGDOM AND IRELAND LOCAL PAGES

AREA LEADERSHIP MESSAGE

Supporting New Members

By **Elder Francisco J. Ruiz de Mendoza, Spain**

Area Seventy

As the work of salvation moves forward, we feel delighted to see an ever-increasing number of God's children become members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, "the only true and living church upon the face of the whole earth."¹

I usually think of a new convert as a rough diamond whose true beauty as a jewel will gradually be realised through a carefully crafted cutting and polishing process. This requires a masterful technique, combined with loving patience and consistent dedication.

When a diamond is extracted from the mine, it does not look beautiful. An expert with many years of training and experience has to work on it before that happens. The Lord wants every one of His children to come unto Christ and "be perfected in him."² Like shining diamonds, perfected Latter-day Saints are beautiful, noble, and magnificent. Their faith and works shine as a beacon of light to the world, and there is no question that they are different and unique.

Pressing forward along the way to perfection is more often than not a daunting task. It requires considerable effort and sacrifice. It also requires perseverance. And it definitely involves knowing what to do and how to do it. In His mercy, the Lord has determined that His children need to work together, helping one another, to be successful in living the law of the gospel. When Alma the Elder gathered by the waters of Mormon, fleeing from the servants of the wicked King Noah, a "goodly number" of followers gathered together, desirous to covenant with God. Alma felt they were ready for baptism, for they were "willing to bear one another's burdens, that they may be light; . . . and . . . to mourn with those that mourn; . . . comfort those that stand in need of comfort, and to stand as witnesses of God at all times and in all things, and in all places . . . , even until death."³

New members have tasted for the first time the Spirit of God. This has happened as a consequence of members and missionaries bearing testimony to them. They have felt the truthfulness of the gospel in their minds and their hearts,

by the Holy Ghost, which has come upon them and dwelt in their hearts.⁴ Now in further fulfillment of the baptismal covenant they need to be loved and nurtured so that, through this example, they can experience even greater joy and develop the urge to do unto others as has been done unto them.

As the late President Gordon B. Hinckley (1910–2008) reminded all of us, a new convert has had to leave past habits and even old friends and associations. This drastic departure from the old to the new ways is not an easy one, and the new convert often runs the risk of discouragement. Remember the children of Israel, when they were released from bondage in Egypt. As they experienced the hardships of life in the desert while they were led to the "promised land", they were often distraught and wished they could return to Egypt.⁵ Speaking of the new members, this was President Hinckley's prophetic challenge:

"Every one of them needs three things: a friend, a responsibility, and nurturing with 'the good word of God' (Moro. 6:4). It is our duty and opportunity to provide these things."⁶

It is my earnest prayer that each of us will receive new converts into the Church with wide-open arms, with patience and kindness, with genuine, selfless love. In so doing, we will be a significant part of the pure and undefiled religion,⁷ we will help them shine like diamonds and we will shine ourselves even more. Ultimately, we will help them build the attributes of Christ as we build these attributes ourselves. ■



Elder Francisco J. Ruiz de Mendoza

NOTES

1. Doctrine and Covenants 1:30.
2. Moroni 10:32.
3. Mosiah 18:7–9.
4. See Doctrine and Covenants 8:2.
5. See Exodus 16:2–3; Numbers 14:2–4.
6. Gordon B. Hinckley, "Converts and Young Men," *Ensign*, May 1997, 47.
7. See James 1:27.

York International Festival—a Celebration of Faith and Culture

By Mark Taylor

Saturday 26th April saw international performers and guests converge on York city centre to attend the 'York International Festival—a Celebration of Faith and Culture'. Amongst those performing for York's Lord Mayor, Councillor Julie Gunnell, who is also Chairman of City of York Council and the first citizen of the city, was Elder Orihuela, age 20, a full-time missionary from The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints from Barcelona, Spain. A classical guitarist, Elder Orihuela was serving in the York area. Following his performance, Elder Orihuela then joined the York Interfaith Group stand to represent the Church and share

with people how his faith has helped him in his life.

The 'York International Festival—a Celebration of Faith and Culture' returned for a second year, providing an opportunity to celebrate the international community and different faiths in the city. Along with Elder Orihuela were many other international performers, including groups from Rwanda and Indonesia.

Commenting on the event, Mark Cosens, of the York Interfaith Group and one of the organisers of the event, said, "This has been an incredible experience for the people of York to come to their city centre and see great performers from



COURTESY OF ELDER ORIHUELA

all around the world. To then speak with the performers, such as Elder Orihuela, and discuss their faith and beliefs just adds a significant dimension to this great experience." ■

Elder Orihuela performing at the York International Festival

Arthur Hardy Retires

By Debbie Singh-Bhatti

Forty years, eleven stakes, 135 seminary graduations, half a million miles. These are just part of the legacy Arthur Hardy leaves as he retires from his position as seminaries and institutes of religion coordinator.

First called as a newly returned missionary to the position of seminary supervisor for the Preston District in 1973, Arthur little suspected that this new calling would lead to a full-time occupation and a lifetime of service within the Church Educational System. His work led him first to Dublin, Ireland, in 1978 for four and a half years and then on to Loughborough, England, for the next 31 years.

Arthur's position as seminaries and institutes of religion coordinator has taken him to a total of eleven stakes to train teachers, teach students, visit classes and conduct seminary graduation ceremonies. Often this has meant early starts, but his love of what he does means he has never regarded it as a sacrifice.

"It has been a wonderful privilege to have such a career—it is more than a job, it is a vocation.



COURTESY OF ELDER ORIHUELA

Elder Orihuela with the Mayor of the City of York, Councillor Julie Gunnell

I have always loved this work; it has never been hard to get up in the mornings!”

One summer, Arthur spent hours preparing a set of ‘gold plates’, fashioned after the description in Church history. He painted them gold and engraved the top plate with characters from several relevant ancient languages. “They weighed some 32 pounds,” he recalls. “Though the real plates probably weighed significantly more, I wanted the students to have as close an experience as possible to that of Joseph and the eight witnesses who ‘hefted’ them.”

There are students from all over the country with special stories to tell of his time in seminary and institute.

Jacob Turner remembers volunteering to be tarred and feathered during a lesson about Joseph Smith. “Brother Hardy poured thick, cold, sticky black treacle down my bare chest,” he recalls. “He then called up students from the crowd to throw feathers at me. . . . This experience always makes me sit and think about Joseph Smith, who had to endure the real thing, and he did it so that this great Church could be here today, and so that we could have the Book of Mormon.”

Rachel Haws describes Arthur as “this amazing scriptionist who knew the scriptures inside out and made all of us want to know them that way too. He was inspiring to us youth, and I felt incredibly blessed we had such an amazing seminary leader.” “The way he taught never left me,” agrees Serose Randhawa. “He helped me love the scriptures.”

Brother Hardy’s patience as he taught early-morning classes, his willingness to listen to moans and troubles and his practice of always putting his students first impressed Hilary Top. “He is ultimately one of the few people that kept me on the straight and narrow as I didn’t want to let him down,” she confesses.

Described by one student as “a seminary legend” and by another as “a great teacher, a man who

loved his students with a great sense of humour”, it is clear that Arthur has influenced many for good during his years of service. But what has he gained from his experience?

“I find it rewarding that three of our new professional seminary and institute employees are men I have taught,” he comments. “Two I taught in institute and one in seminary.”

To have his students continue ‘the legend’ and bring the scriptures to life for a new generation of youth is reward enough for this giant of a man. ■



COURTESY OF ARTHUR HARDY

Arthur Hardy, retiring after 40 years of service as a seminary and institute coordinator

NEWS FROM IRELAND

First All-Ireland Seminary Graduation

By Linda Coulter

On Saturday 28th June, over 100 seminary students made their way to the Finglas Stake Centre, Dublin, for the first all-Ireland seminary graduation ceremony. Elder Clifford T. Herbertson, Area Seventy, presided, with President James McCrudden, representing the Belfast Stake, President Ben O’Farrell, representing the Dublin Stake, and President Tom Murphy, representing the Limerick District, also in attendance.

At the start of the meeting the students from Dublin were

asked to stand, then the students from Limerick and finally the students from Belfast. They were invited to look around by President McCrudden, seminary and institute coordinator for Ireland, and see that they were not alone. One graduating student, Lucy Black from Bangor 2nd Ward, said that she was amazed at how many others there were. Lucy stated, “It strengthened my testimony to know that so many would commit themselves to something so hard, because it is hard, doing it for four years—but it is worth it. It made me realise how strong the Church is here in Ireland”.



Some of the seminary graduates at the all-Ireland seminary graduation (from left to right): Nathan Reid, Terence Lamb, Gary Graydon, Stephen Murphy, Claudia Bowen, David Jackson, Peter Boyd, Bailey Faloon, Ciarrai O'Tool, Steven O'Farrell, Lucy Black, Brooklyn Cathers

Twenty-four students graduated from seminary, having completed four years of study, which is a real achievement. In total, 120 certificates, including completion certificates for this year's course, were awarded, and many parents travelled to Dublin to share this special occasion with their children.

Elder Herbertson addressed the students and showed them his own seminary graduation certificate. He shared that he ran three miles to seminary each day, something which has stood him in good stead as he has since participated in marathons. He also said that seminary is like a

mini-MTC which would help them to prepare for missionary service and commended the students for their efforts.

The graduating students were invited to bear their testimonies, and Sister Amanda Peacock was asked to share a few words on behalf of her son Daniel, who was not there to collect his graduation certificate as he is currently serving in the China Hong Kong Mission.

The ceremony was followed by a dance during which the youth were able to strengthen existing friendships and make new ones. ■

Ireland—Land of Saints, Scholars and Missionaries

By James McCrudden

Twenty-six potential missionaries gathered in the Rosetta Building in Belfast Stake to participate in a missionary preparation weekend. Young adults from Dublin, Belfast and Limerick came together for an intensive spiritual missionary weekend under the direction of seminary and institute teachers.

Several of the participants have already received mission calls, including Elder Daniel Peacock to the China Hong Kong Mission, and Elder Warren Lynch to the Alpine German-Speaking Mission. Sister Rebecca McKenna has also received her call to the Greece Athens Mission.

All of the participants enjoyed a full agenda of classes, companionship study and spiritual experiences throughout the three-day missionary preparation course. Following the Sunday testimony meeting, several students felt it was now time to see their bishops and branch presidents in order to submit their mission papers.

All three stake and district presidents attended the classes and expressed their love for the students from their district and stakes. One student, a convert of three months, travelled for five hours by bus



and train to get to the course and later expressed his gratitude to be able to attend the classes as he felt his testimony for missionary work grow.

Elder George Donaldson and Elder Clifford T. Herbertson, Area Seventies, also attended the weekend event, speaking with the young adults and sharing testimonies and feelings of the call to serve. Elder Donaldson, UK & Ireland region director, and Luke Kerr, a seminary and institute coordinator, led the students in all the elements of the missionary preparation course.

As the students participated in all the classes, they found the *Preach My Gospel* manual a wonderful spiritual tool that will help them teach as the Saviour would want them to teach. All felt inspired by the Spirit of the Lord as they discussed and sought direction on how they could invite Heavenly Father's children to repent, be baptised and return to Him once more, and many felt, though tired, they would encourage others to take the opportunity to come to the course. ■

Front row: Leaders at the Ireland conference were (from left to right) President Jim McCrudden, Belfast stake; Elder Herbertson, Area Seventy; Elder Donaldson, Area Seventy; President Tom Murphy, district president, Limerick; President Ben O'Farrell, Dublin stake president.

PAUL CURRAN



General Church Leaders Visit Northern Ireland

By James Parker



JULIE BRIDGEWATER

From L to R: Sister Joan Watterson (Portadown Ward), Sister Linda S. Reeves and Brother Melvyn Reeves, Brother Jackson Wixom and Sister Rosemary M. Wixom, Sister Mena Hayter (Portadown Ward), Elder Patrick Kearon, stake president James McCrudden

On Wednesday 28 May 2014 members of the Church in Northern Ireland were treated to a special meeting with Elder Patrick Kearon of the First Quorum of the Seventy, Rosemary M. Wixom, general president of the Primary organisation, and Linda S. Reeves, one of the counsellors in the general presidency of the Relief Society—the oldest women's organisation in the world.

Following earlier instruction to local leaders, the over 300 attendees at the meeting experienced a memorable evening where many commented on the spiritual direction received and greater motivation to live stronger lives of faith.

Linda S. Reeves, second counsellor in the Relief Society general presidency, engaged with a number of members during her remarks and provided the opportunity for these individuals to express how the gospel of Jesus Christ had

blessed their lives and the lives of their families. She further expressed the promises associated with participating in family history work.

Rosemary M. Wixom, Primary general president, having asked some of the children and congregation to sing a favourite Primary song, spoke of how membership in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints provides understanding of who we are, what God's plan is for us and our need to follow in faith.

English-born Elder Patrick Kearon of the First Quorum of the Seventy then gave concluding remarks, quoting, "If we always do what we've always done, we'll always get what we've always got," and urged attendees to act on the powerful messages given and promptings received.

Following the meeting, the guests spent some much-appreciated time getting to know local members and building faith. ■

Young Golfer of Great Promise Gives Up Clubs for a 'Higher' Purpose

By James Parker

Daniel Peacock (18), a member in Bangor, Northern Ireland, recently received a call to serve a two-year full-time mission for the Church in Hong Kong, but Daniel had also been recognised locally for his outstanding achievements in golf. Just prior to his mission call, Daniel was asked to join the Ulster squad to represent his country for the 2014 season—a call-up he declined for a different 'call'.

At the age of 14, Daniel discovered his passion for golf, and it soon became obvious he had the talent to match when he was noticed for his natural ability by Michael Bannon, who, as Rory McIlroy's coach, knows a good golfer. During his first season Daniel improved his handicap to 13 and was recommended to the Ulster Coaching Panel. The following season his handicap improved to just 5 and he went on to convincingly win the Ulster School Boy's event, with province-wide recognition for his achievements.

In addition to leading his local youth team to victory, Daniel represented the men's senior team at his local club, aged 15. In the season prior to his mission call Daniel was the only member of his team to remain undefeated, with his handicap reduced to just 2.

To Daniel's delight, his long-term goal to play for his country was then realised when he received a letter at



Elder Daniel Peacock on his mission in Hong Kong after turning down a call to play golf for the Ulster squad

Elder Daniel Peacock playing golf prior to his mission call

the end of last year informing him of his selection to represent Ulster in the upcoming 2014 season squad.

However, Daniel was clearly focused on his lifelong desire to serve a mission and made what to many would be an unthinkable decision by declining his place in the squad. Daniel stated, "As important as golf is to me, serving the Lord is far more important. I feel excited, overwhelmed and honoured to have been called to serve in Hong Kong, China". Although anxious at the prospect of learning to speak Cantonese, Daniel's strong faith provides him with the assurance he will receive help from above.

Daniel's parents expressed how 'proud' they are of Daniel and further shared the joy they feel in the decision he has personally made to serve the Saviour of the world. ■



National Mission Preparation Seminar

By Grant Neale

Forty-two prospective missionaries from around the UK, aged 17 to 23 years, attended a national mission preparation seminar held at East Grinstead. Of those in attendance, fourteen either had or were awaiting to receive full-time mission calls to serve for between 18 months to two years.

"The seminar was set up to help young people understand more fully the requirements and commitment needed for a mission,"

said Miah Neale of the East Grinstead Ward. "It was very well organised and enabled me to make new friends with people with the same interests and life goals as myself."

President Stilgoe, of the Crawley stake presidency, also attended the seminar and commented, "I saw teenagers mature in the gospel able to articulate doctrine and express how they felt about principles of the

gospel. They shared personal experiences of how they came to know the truth of the gospel, what it was like to feel the Holy Ghost. They knew their scriptures."

The seminar concluded with Sunday services held at the London Temple Visitors' Centre in Lingfield, Surrey. Elder and Sister George Donaldson, UK & Ireland region director, led the national mission preparation seminar with Elder Clifford T. Herbertson, Area Seventy, who spoke at the service, offering guidance to the young people.



DAVID BRIDGSTOCK

Bishop Chris Cooke from the Clapham Ward commented, "I am amazed when I see the spiritual depth of these young people and their ability to

sacrifice. They commit to place their lives and personal plans on hold while they go where they are sent to help other people. It blows me away." ■

Prospective missionaries from around the UK at a national mission preparation seminar held at East Grinstead

Earthbound Cycling to Help the Airbound!

By Eileen Webb

Five members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints cycled from London to Huddersfield, a distance of 250 miles, to raise money for the Yorkshire Air Ambulance. John Perrin (Scarborough), Michael Gore (York), Robert Siswick, Roy Blair and Michael Siswick (Huddersfield 1st ward), wearing their Huddersfield Town supporters shirts, completed the gruelling task. In conjunction with 300 fellow supporters, the five friends undertook the journey to help raise funds, through sponsorship, for a cause that is very much needed but has to be completely self-supporting in order to operate. The helicopter ambulance charity needs £10,000 a day to remain airborne.

The journey was completed in four stages. The starting point was the Emirates stadium, Arsenal's home ground in London. From there they cycled to Cambridge, a distance of 55 miles. The next stage of the journey was from Cambridge to Leicester, which was

72 miles, and from there on to Doncaster, a stretch of 85 miles. The last stage was covering the final 45 miles into Huddersfield, where all the cyclists met at the town's football ground.

They did a lap of honour as the crowd roundly applauded them. The hardest leg of the journey was from Leicester to Doncaster when they were caught in heavy rainstorms



COURTESY OF MIKE GORE

From L to R: John Perrin (Scarborough), Michael Gore (York), Robert Siswick, Roy Blair and Michael Siswick (Huddersfield 1st ward) after completing the 250-mile cycle ride for Yorkshire Air Ambulance

and had to battle fierce winds. Intrepid, resourceful and persistent, they kept to their pre-determined course. Many and varied are the lessons that any member of the Church could

draw from their experience.

The journey took 3 days, from 26th to the 29th April, although the memories they made and the good they achieved will last much longer. ■

Trying to Be Like Jesus

“This is my testimony and is very difficult to express my feelings, but I know this gospel is true and correct. I know Jesus lives. He loves us. He always wants us to be happy.”

Jonathan: age 10, Preston Ward (Jonathan has been living in England only a few months and is learning to speak English) ■



JANICE PEERS

**Jonathan: age 10,
Preston Ward**

Editor's Note

The editors, Jason Watling and Debbie Twigger, invite all news stories, articles and photographs to be sent to ukiensign@ldschurch.org. Stories should be in Microsoft Word, 350–500 words, with photographs in jpg format, around 3–4mb in size. Please submit stories for the News section as close to the event as possible.

The signed written permission of all participants in the photograph, as well as the photographer, is required for the Church to use the article.

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All articles and photographs for the websites and Local Pages should be sent to ukiensign@ldschurch.org. ■

My Conversion

By Edward Wilkins

Since joining the Church three years ago, I have received so many blessings, including being sealed to my wife in the Preston temple. This recent event has filled me with such joy and humility that I want to proclaim to all people my assurance that Jesus Christ inspires us to acts of love and kindness, especially with regard to the true Church within which I've found shelter.

Eighteen months after my wife died, two missionaries rang my front doorbell to change my life, giving it fresh purpose and hope. Their fervent and sincere words opened up a desire to attend their Church that very Sabbath, and a month later I was baptised at the age of eighty-seven, confirming my newly awakened belief in the holy scriptures and an introduction to the Book of Mormon.

Returning to the USA, Sisters Angela Kerr and Lauralee Maugham soon married their sweethearts, Lauralee giving birth to a daughter last December, naming the baby Irene in remembrance of my beloved wife and requesting that I send details of the life I spoke of during their visits to my home. She intends a wee book to be given to the infant when old enough to understand the tremendous honour and love behind such an action. I am filled with awe and wonderment, as it proves beyond doubt that pure love as practised by the Latter-day Saints can span oceans when it is lodged in the heart by Jesus Christ. I am absolutely certain that He sent the missionaries to me and He put me in the place where they found me. ■

Edward Wilkins with Angela, one of the sister missionaries who taught him the gospel



COURTESY OF EDWARD WILKINS

EUROPE AREA (ENGLISH)