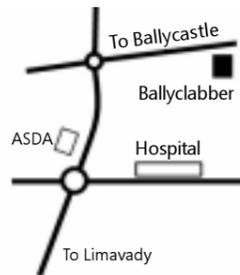


When?

We meet every Lord's Day at 11.30am and 7pm for about an hour and a quarter.

Where?

Ballyclabber is located just off the ring road on the Ballyrashane Road, half a mile from the Ballycastle Road roundabout.



Need a lift? Just let us know and it can be arranged.

Contact details

If you would like to contact us, please get in touch with:

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Want to learn more about the 1859 revival?
Here are some recommended books, available at
Ballyclabber RPC bookstall:



Revival on the Causeway Coast, by Nicholas Railton

The most recent work to be produced on the 1859 Revival, focusing particularly on its effects in Coleraine and the surrounding area, written by a resident of Coleraine.



The Ulster Awakening, by John Weir

Written in 1860, Weir weaves correspondence from the leading figures of the Revival into his fascinating eye-witness account of the events of 1859. "The finest account of the last great awakening in the British Isles." (Iain H. Murray)



God's River in Spate, by John T. Carson

A classic account of the Revival in Ulster, covering the main events and places affected by this remarkable work of God's Spirit.

Or come along to one of the places where the story unfolded... the Coleraine Town Hall, first used 150 years ago as a spiritual hospital for people seeking peace with God

Coleraine Town Hall
Thursday 3 September, 2009
8 p.m.

"1859 - Year of Grace"

Prof Robert McCollum will speak about the events of 1859 in Ulster

Prof McCollum is a son of Coleraine, minister of Lisburn Reformed Presbyterian Church, and Professor of Pastoral Theology and Homiletics at the Reformed Theological College, Belfast

Want to find out more about Christianity? Why not come along to *Christianity Explored* Starting Autumn 2009

Contact Warren (details on left) if you're interested.

Summer 2009

The Word on the Street

God's Never Changing Word to his Ever Changing World

By Warren Peel

150 years ago, on Tuesday 7 June 1859, Coleraine was visited by a supernatural phenomenon. It didn't involve UFOs or little green men from outer space. It was something far more impressive that affected thousands of the people who lived in our town at that time. It was something called 'revival'—an unusual outpouring of the power of God to change the hearts of human beings.

There were many changes in Coleraine because of this mighty work of God. Drunkenness almost disappeared overnight. The Saturday after the revival came was a market day in Coleraine—usually a day blighted by much drunkenness. But this week there wasn't a single incident. The *Chronicle* mentioned one pub which, until 3 p.m. that day, hadn't sold a single glass of whiskey—unheard of on a market day in Coleraine!

Crime dropped dramatically in the area. 'The Superior of Police, who had work experience in most of the counties of Ireland, claimed he had never seen such a quiet town. There had been, in his view, a "complete reformation" in the habits of many people. The Head Constable, with 18 years experience in Coleraine, said the Petty Sessions held on 17 June 1859 was the first he had ever attended where nobody was prosecuted for both riot and drunkenness.'

The Week Coleraine Stood Still

The revival in Coleraine meant that the new Town Hall, instead of being opened with a grand ball, was kept open all night for people who wanted to learn how to become Christians. It caused the Irish Society school to go on until 11 p.m. one day, because so many of the pupils were looking for peace with God.



Produced by Ballyclabber Reformed Presbyterian Church

Diary of a Remarkable Week

Tuesday 7 June, 1859

It started on what used to be called the 'Fair Hill'—around where Kwik Fit is now. 6,000 people met for an open-air meeting to hear reports of how different people had been dramatically converted by God in meetings taking place throughout Ulster in recent days.

One speaker reported his experience just the night before in Portrush. As he listened to a preacher, he said he felt 'an indescribable spirit of awe' and was overwhelmed by a sense of the holiness of God and his own unfitness to meet him. Later that night he tried to ignore the feeling and go to sleep, but in the end he had to go out to his barn and cry to God for mercy. Other speakers testified to similar experiences. As they spoke, many people in the large crowd started to cry out in distress.

The *Chronicle* reported what happened next: *'The ministers were... kept out of bed all night that they might answer the calls for assistance to dear ones in trouble... There is not a street or lane in the whole town but can number three or four of those who have been enlightened.'*



Wednesday 8 June, 1859

On Wednesday evening (8 June) another huge crowd gathered in the market place to hear preaching. Many people were physically collapsing under the strain of their guilty consciences and longing for forgiveness. A Methodist minister, coming down the town about midnight, worn out from telling so many people how to become Christians, found one of his Presbyterian colleagues busy at the same task with a group of people in the middle of the street.

Business came to a virtual standstill. The *Chronicle* reported, *'Trade, except in Bibles and Testaments, if not suspended, has been partially paralysed—those who conducted it having for the present given it up or become incapable of transacting it... Our readers will excuse us when they know the cause of delay, should they not receive the Chronicle at the usual time... when they read of the glorious things the Lord had been doing for our town and neighbourhood.'*

Thursday 9 June, 1859

On Thursday evening, after another large open-air meeting, the ministers of the town decided that they needed somewhere quieter and more private where people could receive spiritual help after the open-air meetings. The place they settled on was the brand-new Town Hall in the Diamond. Building work had only just been completed, and a grand Ball was planned for its opening. Instead it was first used as a kind of spiritual A&E ward. Some hundred people were brought to the Town Hall for spiritual help until the early hours of the morning. The *Chronicle* wrote, *'Instead of the joyous dance and stirring music of the ballroom, the walls of the hall gave back the almost despairing groans of the stricken sinner, the heart-felt prayer of a believing penitent, or resounded with the adoring thanks of a redeemed saint... The hall was thus opened by one of the most glorious celebrations that could possibly be imagined.'*

Friday 10 June, 1859

On Friday (10 June) took place what the *Chronicle* called 'the most remarkable instance of the Divine power that has yet marked this revival.' It happened at the Irish Society school. One of the schoolboys was so deeply affected by the Holy Spirit at work in his conscience that his teacher sent him home to pray, along with an older boy who had become a Christian the day before. On their way home they passed an empty house, which they decided to use for prayer. They stayed there until the younger boy had found peace with God. But then



he wanted to go back to school to tell his teacher what had happened. When he got back to class he said, "Oh sir, I am so happy I have the Lord Jesus in my heart." The rest of the class was deeply moved. One boy after another left the classroom to go out to the playground to kneel in prayer and ask God for forgiveness and mercy. A contemporary describes what happened, 'Their silent grief soon broke into a bitter cry. As this reached the ears of the boys in the room, it seemed to pierce their hearts as... they cast themselves upon their knees and began to cry for mercy. The girls' school was above, and the cry no sooner penetrated to their room, than... they, too, fell upon their knees and wept. Strange disorder for schoolmaster and mistress to have to control! The united cry reached the adjoining streets, and soon every spot on the premises was filled with sinners seeking God.' Ministers came and spent the day in the school. The last person didn't leave until 11 p.m. that evening.

1859-2009

For weeks afterwards open-air meetings took place every night, attended by thousands. The Town Hall was kept open all night, until 5 a.m., and even then people were reluctant to leave. A daily prayer meeting was begun in the Town Hall, which met every morning during the workers' breakfast time. Normally about 1000 people came along each day—one fifth of the population of the town at that time! The 1859 revival was surely the most amazing and significant thing that has ever happened in our town. Certainly that was the *Chronicle's* opinion, *'Nothing at all approaching it in absorbing interest has ever before visited our country.'*

The ugly, evil things that have happened in our town in the last few months are a stark reminder to us that our town still needs today, more than anything else, this powerful, life-transforming work of God. At the end of the day the heart of our problem is the problem of our heart—we have all tried to live as though God is not God, and for that we deserve his judgment. But the good news is that there is mercy and forgiveness available for anyone who asks God for it. God's power to save was shown in a dramatic way in 1859, but he still saves people today. We may or may not live to see a repeat of 1859 in our town, but you can experience that same release from guilt and judgment for yourself. For the God who turned our town around 150 years ago is the same today as he was then.