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PRESS RELEASE

PATRON SAINT OF ROPEMAKERS COMES TO HAILSHAM:

A Historic Visit with Local Links

Hailsham will host a unique and historic event this summer when sacred relics of St Andrew the Apostle, St Columba of Iona, and St Margaret of Scotland visit St Wilfrid's Church on **Wednesday 27th August 2025** and will be available for public viewing from 10am to 7pm for quiet reflection throughout the day at St Wilfrid's Church, South Road, Hailsham. A timetable of specific services and activities taking place is also available on the church website www.saintsgeorgeandwilfrid.co.uk.

The day is open to everyone, and in addition to services, talks, and a Hailsham rope-making display, there will be a special **4pm session for families and children** led by youth leaders, featuring storytelling and creative activities about the saints being venerated, including a short time in church.

While relic tours are rare, what makes this visit so meaningful is the connection between **St Andrew—Patron Saint of Ropemakers—and Hailsham's proud rope-making heritage**. Once a major centre of the rope industry, Hailsham is the only town in East Sussex selected for this national tour, which is organised by the Knights of St Columba.

For centuries, Hailsham has been one of England's key centres for ropemaking, with generations of families working in the trade. At its height, ropemaking employed hundreds of townspeople, producing everything from agricultural ropes to ship rigging. That legacy continues today with Marlow Ropes, a world-class rope manufacturer based in the town supplying specialist ropes for worldwide sailing teams, military uses, and industrial applications.

St Andrew was a fisherman from Galilee and the brother of Simon—later known as St Peter—one of the most prominent figures in early Christianity. He is said to have been among the very first followers of Jesus and is widely honoured as the Patron Saint of Scotland. Less well known is that he is also the Patron Saint of Ropemakers, reflecting his trade and connection to fishing nets and maritime work. The presence of his relics in Hailsham—a town shaped for centuries by the rope industry—adds a rare and locally significant dimension to this national tour.

Hailsham's ropemaking legacy is still visible around the town. The original long ropewalks—narrow strips of land where rope was twisted by hand—can still be traced in parts of the town.

The Hailsham Heritage Centre preserves artefacts, tools, and photographs from the town's ropeworks, and is now working with Marlow Ropes and Knockhatch to create a new display of rope-making history. This includes items from the former Michelham Priory exhibition, some of which will be on show in St Wilfrid's Church Hall during the relic tour.

Jane Ings Marketing Manager at Marlow Ropes said: "Having the relics of the Patron Saint of Rope Makers coming to Hailsham via the local Catholic community is incredibly fitting since the town has such a history of Rope Making.

"Marlow is proud to have a longstanding presence in Hailsham, a town with deep roots in the rope-making industry. As a local employer, Marlow Ropes continues to honour this heritage by combining traditional craftsmanship with modern innovation, reflecting the legacy of generations who shaped Hailsham's identity through rope-making.

"Today Marlow Ropes exports to 80+ countries, providing high-performance ropes for sailing, arboriculture, defence, and other industrial applications. Being part of this town's community and its history is a privilege we carry forward with pride."

The relics will be available in the church for all who wish to venerate and attend services including mass and talks on the saints throughout the day. Refreshments will be available all day also in the church hall where people will be able to view the heritage societies ropemaking display of Hailsham Ropemaking history. Location St Wilfrid's Church, South

Road, Hailsham BN27 3JG. Everyone is welcome to drop in at any time between 9.30am and 7pm.

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Press enquiries or interview requests, please contact: Sandra King 07791 627368 / sandraforte40@gmail.com

NOTES TO EDITORS:

- The relics come from **Carfin Grotto** in Scotland, a national Catholic shrine, and are touring the UK as part of the 2025 Jubilee Year **“Pilgrims of Hope.”**
- The relics include:
 - **St Andrew the Apostle** – Patron Saint of Scotland, Ropemakers, and Fishermen
 - **St Columba of Iona** – 6th-century Irish monk missionary who helped spread Christianity in Scotland and founded the famous monastery on Iona
 - **St Margaret of Scotland** – 11th-century English Princess and Queen of Scotland known for her charity, faith, and reform efforts
- The **Knights of St Columba** are a Catholic fraternal organisation founded in 1919. They support charitable works, promote the Catholic faith, and encourage community fellowship across the UK.
- The Jubilee Year 2025 is an international Catholic celebration called by Pope Francis, focusing on hope, pilgrimage, and renewal following years of global challenges.
- The tradition of venerating relics dates back to early Christianity. While sometimes misunderstood, relics are not worshipped but honoured as physical reminders of individuals who lived lives of deep faith. The Church teaches that any miracles associated with relics are God’s work, not magic.
- The Council of Trent (1563) reaffirmed the value of relics:
“The sacred bodies of the holy martyrs and of the other saints... should be venerated by the faithful. Through them, many benefits are granted to men by God.”
- Biblical examples linked to relics include:
 - **2 Kings 13:20–21** – A man is brought back to life after touching the bones of the

prophet Elisha

▪ **Acts 19:11–12** – Handkerchiefs that touched St Paul cured the sick

- This event is organised locally by St Wilfrid's Church, supported by the Knights of St Columba and a volunteer steering committee.
- A display on the history of Rope-Making in Hailsham by the Hailsham Historic Society is available for viewing in the church hall all day.

EVENT SCHEDULE – WEDNESDAY 27 AUGUST 2025

St Wilfrid's Catholic Church, South Road, Hailsham BN27 3JG

9.15am – Arrival of the relics

9.30am – Rosary

10.00am – Holy Mass Celebrant: Fr Rory Kelly includes a brief talk on the saints during Mass.

10.40am – Veneration of the relics begins and continues throughout the day accompanied by quiet background music.

10.40am – Refreshments are available in the Church Hall until 5.30pm.

11.00am – Illustrated ten-minute Talk: Saint Columba in the Church.

12.00pm – Angelus

1.00pm – Illustrated ten-minute Talk: Saint Margaret in the Church

3.00pm – Chaplet of Divine Mercy

4.00pm – Illustrated ten-minute Talk: Saint Andrew in the Church

4.00pm – Saint focused Storytelling and Family Activities in the church garden until 5.30pm

4.30pm – Holy Hour Silent prayer before the Blessed Sacrament, with Taizé chants

5.45pm – Closure of the Hall

6.00pm – Angelus

6.05pm – Illustrated Talks About the three saints in the Church

7.00pm – Closing Holy Mass Celebrant: Canon Paul Jennings.

7.45pm – Relics received by Brighton Knights of St Columba

Everyone is welcome to drop in at any time. No booking required.

Shorter version for local newspapers (about 270 words)

PATRON SAINT OF ROPEMAKERS COMES TO HAILSHAM

PRESS RELEASE - PATRON SAINT OF ROPEMAKERS COMES TO HAILSHAM

Sacred relics of three saints — St Andrew the Apostle, St Columba of Iona, and St Margaret of Scotland — will be visiting St Wilfrid's Church, Hailsham, on **Wednesday 27th August 2025**.

The relics will be available for public viewing from 10am to 7pm for quiet reflection. A timetable of services and talks is on the church website www.saintsgeorgeandwilfrid.co.uk. The event is open to all, and at 4pm there will be a special session for families and children led by youth leaders, with storytelling and creative activities about the saints being venerated, including a short time in church.

St Andrew is best known as the Patron Saint of Scotland, but he is also the Patron Saint of Ropemakers — a fitting connection for Hailsham, once a major centre for rope-making. The town was one of England's leading rope producers for centuries, supplying everything from farm lines to ship rigging.

On the day, the Hailsham Heritage Centre will present a rope-making display in the church hall. This forms part of a larger project they are developing with Marlow Ropes, incorporating material from the recently closed exhibition at Michelham Priory, with plans for a new permanent display at Knockhatch Adventure Park.

Jane Ings, Marketing Manager at Marlow Ropes, said:

"Having the relics of the Patron Saint of Rope Makers coming to Hailsham via the local Catholic community is incredibly fitting since the town has such a history of Rope Making."

Refreshments will be available all day.

Location: St Wilfrid's Church, South Road, Hailsham BN27 3JG. Everyone is welcome to drop in anytime between 9.30am and 7pm.

30-second local radio script

This summer Hailsham welcomes a very special visitor — the sacred relics of St Andrew the Apostle, Patron Saint of Ropemakers, along with St Columba of Iona and St Margaret of Scotland.

On Wednesday 27th August, St Wilfrid's Church will open from 9.30am to 7pm for everyone to see them, enjoy quiet reflection, and take part in services and talks.

It's especially fitting that St Andrew's relics are coming to Hailsham, a town with a long rope-making tradition. St Wilfrid's is the only church in East Sussex to host the relics on this year's national tour. You can also explore a fascinating rope-making display from the Hailsham Heritage Centre, featuring items from the town's rope-making past.

At 4pm, there's a special treat for families and children — storytelling and creative activities about the saints, led by local youth leaders.

That's Wednesday 27th August at St Wilfrid's Church, South Road, Hailsham — everyone is welcome!

Social media teaser

"Saints, stories, and rope-making history come together in Hailsham on Wednesday 27th August, when sacred relics — including St Andrew, Patron Saint of Ropemakers — visit St Wilfrid's Church for a free, all-day community event open to everyone."

Images below available in high resolution on request or images of the saints seen on the poster can be supplied.



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