

Queen Elizabeth makes history in Armagh

by UPI

ARMAGH, Northern Ireland - Queen Elizabeth II took part in a historic English service to Northern Ireland Thursday in an effort to heal the religious and political divisions there. Accompanied by her husband, Prince Philip, the queen distributed "Maundy Money" to 82 elderly men and the same number of elderly women at St. Patrick's Cathedral in Armagh, the Irish Independent reported. The service, an English custom dating back to the Middle Ages, is held on the Thursday before Easter, but this was the first time it had been celebrated outside England and Wales. Cardinal Sean Brady, the head of Ireland's Catholics, Presbyterian Moderator John Finlay and the Methodist President, the Rev. Cecil Cooper, participated in the service led by the Church of Ireland Primate, Archbishop Alan Harper. Security was tight. Two suspicious devices turned out to be hoaxes. The service was the climax of the queen's three-day visit to Northern Ireland. The queen Wednesday met Mary McAleese, president of the Irish Republic in Belfast, suggesting she might be planning the first royal visit to Dublin since 1911.

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