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Examining
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Corrymeela magazine
Corrymeela House
8 Upper Crescent, Belfast
Northern Ireland BT7 1NT

Tel: +44 (0) 28 9050 8080
Fax: +44 (0) 28 9050 8070
Email: belfast@corrymeela.org
Web site: www.corrymeela.org

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Corrymeela (Belfast)
8 Upper Crescent, Belfast
Northern Ireland BT7 1NT
Tel: +44 (0) 28 9050 8080
Fax: +44 (0) 28 9050 8070
Email: belfast@corrymeela.org
Web site: www.corrymeela.org

Corrymeela (Ballycastle)
5 Drumaroan Road, Ballycastle
Northern Ireland BT54 6QU
Tel: +44 (0) 28 2076 2626
Fax: +44 (0) 28 2076 2770
Email: ballycastle@corrymeela.org

Corrymeela (Knocklayd)
28 Stroan Road, Arroy, Ballymoney
Northern Ireland BT53 8RY
Tel: +44 (0) 28 2075 1521
Email: knocklayd@corrymeela.org

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Breaking down the enmity and creating friendship

“

*if peace means **being trapped together in the one-way system** as we move towards the tills in IKEA, yes, we are there*

”

ONE YEAR since Sinn Féin and the DUP agreed to share power; ten years on since the Good Friday Agreement; what has changed, what have we learnt? Maurice Hayes, in a piece produced for the Belfast Telegraph supplement to mark the US Northern Ireland Investment Conference, argues as follows:

‘The chief lesson from Northern Ireland is essentially a hopeful one: that even deep-seated, long-lasting, seemingly intractable conflict can be resolved, or at least managed in a process in which lives are saved, violence reduced, and the parties persuaded to embrace democratic politics.’

And this is going too far – all we have really learnt to do is to manage our conflict in a (relatively) non-violent way. This is one big achievement and we need to recognise it for what it is, and rejoice in it.

Of course, the physical appearance of Belfast has been transformed beyond all recognition. If peace means secure shopping (the benchmark of a mature Western society) then we are there. If peace means sharing the aisles in the new Victoria Square Centre or being trapped together in the one-way system as we move towards the tills in IKEA, yes, we are there. And the truth is we cannot shop together into a shared future.

And there are now 46 officially recognised peace walls throughout Northern Ireland. There have been nine new walls built since 1994 (the date of the loyalist and IRA ceasefires) in Belfast and 11 others strengthened. Just as Sinn Féin and the DUP took up office in May 2007 another add-on to the peace line was built through the grounds of an integrated school in North Belfast. And walls continue to be built. The significance of peace walls is that they make visible where our exclusive traditions in Northern Ireland and our antagonised divisions take us, in all their ugliness. We may prettify the walls but the reality is that they wall the ‘other’ out.

The end to peace walls (‘the dividing wall of hostility’, Eph. 2:14) will represent the transformation of relationships in this society. And, of course, peace walls are perfectly compatible with the peace of truce and continuing exclusive traditions we currently have – the challenge is the peace of transformation which will lead to a new

‘us’ (cf Eph. 2:16).

Thomas Aquinas, the great theologian, writes eloquently about friendship (philia). Herbert McCabe writing about Aquinas’ theology says that friendship is ‘that relationship by which people are fellow-citizens; and it is more than justice’. Friendship is the ‘special name for human living with each other’. What we see in Ephesians 2 is God’s act of self-giving love which restores divine friendship and human friendship. The ‘dividing wall of hostility’ is broken down. Agape is the friendship that God shares with us, and enables us to share with each other.

We are called to ‘friendship’ in this society. And we know that we are serial offenders against each other – our expectations about each other are low. To wish and work for real peace in Northern Ireland is to go into the unknown – it is an ‘unrealistic’ project given our pasts. We are asked to create a shared space and a shared future with the ‘other’, the person who was your enemy and who you may still have dark suspicions of. This is beyond the romantic ‘poetics’ of peace. This is the unsentimental prose of living together. The meaning of Corrymeela in Irish was thought to be the ‘hill of harmony’ until the revisionists got to work. It is now ‘the lumpy crossing place’. This much more nearly expresses both the reality of Corrymeela and the reality of peace-making in Northern Ireland. We journey on towards lumpy crossing places where we have the possibility of meetings, which may be difficult, ‘lumpy’, but may bring transformation. Walls are ‘dead’ ends where there is no meeting.

David Stevens



David Stevens is the Leader of the Corrymeela Community



Eithne and Paddy Fitzpatrick Memorial Fund Golf Tournament

NOW IN ITS 15TH YEAR, it was my great pleasure to join John Fitzpatrick and his sister Eithne in New York this May for the Eithne and Paddy Fitzpatrick Memorial Fund Golf Tournament. The fund was established in honour of their parents, Eithne and Paddy Fitzpatrick. Over \$1,000,000 has been donated to charitable and humanitarian causes over the past twelve years by the Eithne and Paddy Fitzpatrick Memorial Fund. This year was their most successful to date and is a terrific reflection of the generosity and kindness of our friends in America and Ireland.

The American Ireland

Fund was one of the key sponsors of the event. We are indebted to John for his support over many years, for the generous participation of his friends and business associates and especially for their support of our capital campaign for the 'New Village'.

John said 'My personal knowledge of our beneficiaries confirms the tremendous difference we can make in the lives of less fortunate families – especially children. I know no better way of turning our great day of golf into a truly good deed.'

Jo Watson
Fundraising Director

Millennium Volunteer Awards

THANKS TO the diligence and initiative of Sonja Tammen, our dedicated Volunteer Support Worker, Corrymeela volunteers will now be rewarded for all their hard work.

Through the Volunteer Department Agency's Millennium Volunteers scheme our volunteers, aged 16–24, are able to record their voluntary service as part of their National Record of Achievement and will receive bronze, silver or gold certificates for their work with Corrymeela.

Millennium Volunteers is a national programme funded by the Department of Education in Northern Ireland. Since 1999 over 3,660 young people have participated in the programme in Northern Ireland with over 1,435 receiving their Award of Excellence for 200 hours of voluntary work.

Millennium Volunteers encourages organisations to provide innovative, flexible voluntary opportunities for young people that match their interests and expectations and provide tangible benefits to the young person and their community.

To find out more contact Sonja Tammen on 028 2076 2626 or sonjatammen@corrymeela.org

Linen Memorial returns for 2008 Day of Private Reflection

THE ART INSTALLATION

Linen Memorial to Lives Lost was welcomed back to the Ballycastle Centre on Saturday 21 June for the 2008 Day of Private Reflection. Belfast-born artist Lycia Trouton's *Linen Memorial* consists of white linen handkerchiefs on which the names of every man, woman and child killed in the conflict are embroidered. The names listed represent the almost 4,000 persons killed traumatically from 1966 to 2001. New names are in the process of being embroidered.

Accompanying the exhibit was a reading of the names of all those killed, in chronological order, from the book *Lost Lives* by David McKittrick, Brian Feeny, Seamus Kelters, Chris Thornton and David McVea.

The Day of Private Reflection was instated as a time for people all over the world to pause and reflect upon the Northern Ireland conflict and the possibilities for the future. Speaking perfectly to this ambition, the *Linen Memorial to Lives Lost* remains a humble and hopeful contribution to the possible 'fragile parity of esteem-for-difference' in communities in Northern Ireland. For every observer, it quietly personalises the terrible consequences of conflict.

Lycia reflects, 'While I have been an artist for many years my most major achievement, to date, has been this commemorative creation.' A



powerful creation that after a long journey might finally have some closure. She said, 'The memorial has been a heartfelt personal project – now brought home to rest. When I met Kate Turner at the Healing Through Remembering offices in Belfast, she alerted me to the fact that their offices were in a renovated historic Belfast linen handkerchief factory! Then, she told me about their research and projects – I was extremely moved.' As were the many people who witnessed, on 21 June, the memorial and its tremendous significance for Northern Ireland's history.

Note: The memorial would not be possible without the contributions of skilled needleworkers and utilitarian sewers. If you are interested in embroidering 10 names on one linen handkerchief (which takes approximately 10 hours to complete), please contact the artist at lyciatrouton@gmail.com



Seeing double

WE ARE EXCITED TO WELCOME baby Tristan and baby Rowan to our wider Corrymeela family. Proud mum and dad, resource couple Helen Hughes and Kai Thierbach, are coping superbly with their new additions, who are becoming more identical by the day, while Gabriel and Simeon are adjusting to their joint role as big brothers! Centre director Ronnie Millar said, 'The boys are doing great. Having four boys, under four years of age, at our weekly staff and volunteer meetings helps us keep things in perspective. We now have eight boys under seven years of age at our weekly community dinner – they are in training for the Irish Premier League.' Congratulations again, Helen and Kai.

Introducing Astrid Conville Fundraising Officer

JOIN US in welcoming Astrid Conville, our new Fundraising Officer, to the Corrymeela Community. Astrid lives in Bangor with her husband, Tim. She has nine years fundraising experience from working for one of the Edinburgh festivals,

a charity based in Cyprus, and a faith-based organisation here in Belfast. Astrid's area of expertise is within trusts and grant applications and we are happy to welcome her onboard. To contact, email: astridconville@corrymeela.org



Corry Fest-astic

WE HOPE YOU WERE ABLE TO MAKE IT to Ballycastle for our fabulous Corrymeela Summer Festival; packed with challenging discussions and interactive workshops, beach walks, bbq and a show-stopping evening concert, you'll be sorry if you missed it. For Summer Festival updates and pics check out our website, alternatively we will bring you the best of the bunch in the next edition of Corrymeela.



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Community Cashback Award

A BIG THANK YOU to community member Joy Mark who's invaluable voluntary work with us raised £250 through the Community Cashback Awards scheme.

Community Cashback awards are available to all staff in the Royal Bank of Scotland Group. As employers they actively donate to the community groups, schools and charities that their loyal staff choose to commit their free time to. We are delighted that Joy chose her work with Corrymeela as the beneficiary of this cash award.

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Corrymeela's YiCR wins top honours



Pictured accepting the award from Sara McCartan, NI Youth Forum (back extreme right) are (back from left) Stephanie Hill and Rosa Thompson and (front from left) David Minish, Mark Cragg and Noelle McHugh. Also pictured is Pete Snodden (back left), Cool FM, who compered the ceremony.

CORRYMEELA'S Youth in Community Reconciliation Project (YiCR) scooped top prize in the Outstanding Achievement category of the Northern Ireland Youth Awards 2008. Now in their third year, the awards recognise the commitment, success, talents and energy of young people and those who work with them. Sponsored by the Department of Education, Youth Council for Northern Ireland and the Health Promotion Agency, the awards were open to both individuals and groups in the seven categories of Volunteering, Peace Building, Innovation, International work, Inclusion, Health Promotion

work and Outstanding Achievement.

Karen Witherspoon, from the Youth Council for Northern Ireland, the awards organiser, said, 'Young people within the age range of the youth service make up nearly one-third of the population of Northern Ireland and around 35 per cent of those will be actively involved in some form of youth service. There is also an extensive network of around 20,000 adult volunteers and paid youth workers and we knew that some really innovative and ground-breaking work was being undertaken.

'Research has consistently shown that involvement in

youth work has a positive impact on the social and personal development of young people and this is very important if they are to realise their full potential.'

Corrymeela's YiCR is an innovative youth-led project delivering a personal and social development programme aimed at marginalised young adults aged 18–25. The programme focuses on community relations and is based on the principles of Equity, Diversity and Interdependence (EDI).

The group organised a conference based on contemporary issues relevant to their peers, and delivered workshops around areas such

as self-harm, suicide, bullying, sexual health, ASBOs, Global warming, binge drinking, disability awareness, and the media. This provoked thought as well as discussion, avoiding skimming over the difficulties faced by today's young adults.

Forty-one young people participated, representing every county except Fermanagh. On behalf of the participants, Noelle McHugh said, 'The project enabled young adults, through the conference, the opportunity to socialise with their peers and discuss what was relevant to them in their lives today. The participants had the opportunity to explore their thoughts and feelings around being an adult and through reflection and an awareness of self, reconciled with the adult they have become. We are proud to receive this award which recognises the hard work put in by the five individuals concerned.'

This marks the second year in a row that YiCR has been honoured, receiving Runners-Up in the Peace Building category in 2007 and now the highest accolade, Outstanding Achievement.

More than 400 people attended the glittering Youth Awards ceremony on 1 May. Congratulations yet again YiCR and Youth in Community Project Co-ordinator Tara McHugh! It was a fitting end to a powerful three year project.

Corrymeela's Youth in Community Reconciliation Project came to an end in June 2008.



Shane O'Neill celebrating with Corrymeela volunteers at the marathon finish line in May 2008.

Corrymeela goes the distance in Belfast Marathon

CORRYMEELA STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS put on their running shoes and made a dash for the starting line of Belfast's 27th Marathon,



Shane with his proud wife Carla

5 May 2008. Two cleverly titled teams, 'The Scapegoats' and 'Corrymeela Craic-ers', participated in the relay portion of the race, including legs ranging two to seven miles each. Many had been training and building their endurance amidst an ever busy Centre schedule, and are to be commended for their dedication and camaraderie. Corrymeela Craic-ers' line-up were Michael Fryer, Lilian Owens, Zandy Craig, Mike O'Rourke, and Sarah McCullough, pulling a 3:45:42 finish time. The Scapegoats; Kelly Matthews, Amy Morrow, Matt Scrimgeour; Kai Thierbach and Robert Deignan finished in 4:00:20.

It goes without saying, however; that Corrymeela's champion of the hour and only medal winner was Ballycastle House



Shane's still standing at the finish!

Manager; Shane O'Neill, who finished his first ever full 26.2-mile marathon. With great determination and perseverance, he surpassed his expectations, crossing the finish line just under 4 hr. 30 min. Shane was cheered on by his family, fellow Corrymeela participants and onlookers for what was an emotional finish to accomplishing such a huge goal. Shane reflects on his experience saying, 'Suffice to say it was an occasion I'll savour for years to come, the long training programme was well worth the personal reward and a big thank you to everyone who supported me through their sponsorship, advice, well-wishing and encouragement. Special mention to Zandy Craig for taking me through the last half mile.'

Shane displayed tremendous spirit and commitment to the marathon experience, turning his race into an effort to raise money for both Corrymeela and Cancer Research NI. Shane reports, 'Cash is pretty much in, and I have received around £810 to be shared between the Corrymeela Community and Cancer Research NI.'

To Shane and Corrymeela marathon participants, congratulations, you are an inspiration to us all. We are proud of you! Thank you also to community member Becky Dudley and the South Belfast Corrymeela Cell Group for hosting a generous reception of food and drink after the race.

Return to Corrymeela



IN MAY, Dave Cunningham, of Bangor, County Down, returned to Corrymeela for the first time in 25 years. As a child Dave visited the Centre with his family for Corrymeela's Summer Programme. At an impressionable six years old, it was none other than Corrymeela Founder Ray Davey that took to him over the week. Ray personally welcomed Dave out with his grandsons, constantly telling stories and delighting their



imaginations with the many places throughout the world he had travelled. At week's end, Ray told Dave's parents he believed Dave would grow up to be a true man of God.

Dave says after that experience he always vowed he would come back. So to make true on his promise, Dave went looking in the Yellow Pages. He was connected with Matt Scrimgeour, Corrymeela's Programme Co-ordinator, who put him in contact with Sonja Tammen, Corrymeela's Volunteer Support Worker, who promptly convinced Dave to join a short-term volunteer training weekend. Dave reflects, 'I think I appreciate Corrymeela even more as an adult. Everyone is so friendly and I am now old enough to form more relationships and contribute.' It was clearly a joyous reunion and precious story to share as Dave pulled out of his coat pocket an old picture of him and Ray, the spark that brought him back. A smile spread across Dave's face and he concluded, 'This place is perfect for me.'



Coventry raises the roof

COVENTRY is looking good. The building will be ready in October. It is wonderful to see the roof on, the windows installed and the exterior walls plastered. We will have a range of single rooms, twin rooms, bed-sits, and a good-sized dining room, seminar room, and private spaces for volunteers to relax.

Our Clerk of Works, Desie McLernon, is working hard ensuring a quality job is done, and Community member Helen Baird is helping plan and purchase the furnishings. It is going to be a great addition to the site, and will enable us to accommodate a diverse range of volunteers.



Take a bow Jill Stringer

IT IS WITH SADNESS that we will say goodbye to Jill Stringer at the end of August. Jill joined us last year as Primary School Worker and has been a great asset to Corrymeela. All of the schools she has worked with have spoken very highly of her and the programmes she designed and led for them.

She will be missed by the staff and volunteers in both Belfast and Ballycastle. Jill will be teaching Primary three at Phoenix Integrated School in Cookstown and we are sure she will be a wonderful teacher. Good luck and best wishes for the future, Jill.

Ballycastle Nativity

THE NATIVITY STORY

is something which glows in the dark. It has the lure of light and warmth about it, we gather round it as we do around a hearth in a home – we relax before it; unwind; take off a layer of our armour for a time. It speaks to us deeply about hope, about new beginnings. It makes everything seem new and possible, for a time. But this "season of the heart" is brief. Its light dims in us. We retreat from the beauty of the vision into our "selves".

Award-winning playwright Damien Gorman has teamed up with both professional and amateur actors from the Ballycastle community to produce a contemporary play based on the traditional Christian nativity.

Departing from the conventional perspective, this version of the nativity promises to be a challenging and thought-provoking performance for actors and audience alike. The Corrymeela team in Ballycastle are actively involved in the project's planning, providing expertise and help whenever needed and assisting in the creative process.

This exciting project will happen early in the new year on 29 January 2009; look out for further details in the next edition of Corrymeela.

Lord Mayor of Belfast praises Corrymeela FC



Lord Mayor Jim Rodgers gets his hands on a Corrymeela FC training top. Brendan Morris, Gary Morris, Stephen Morris, Ciaran Fox, Lord Mayor Jim Rodgers, Michael Graham, Robert Semple, Michael Morris, Gerald Morris, Ciaran Fairmichael, Danny Meegan, Mathilde Stevens.

AS PART OF Corrymeela FC's 20th Anniversary celebrations the former Lord Mayor of Belfast, Councillor Jim Rodgers, held a reception for the Club at the Lord Mayor's Parlour in Clarendon

Buildings mid-May. In attendance were members of the Football Club and Mathilde Stevens from the Corrymeela Community. The former Lord Mayor,

a keen football enthusiast himself, told the players he was aware of the good cross-community work being undertaken by the Club and hoped that the tournament they were hosting on 24 and 25 May at Blanchflower to celebrate the Club's 20th Anniversary was a great success. Eight teams from Northern Ireland as well as Germany, Edinburgh and a World United Team took part.

He then presented Club Chairman Stephen Morris with a plaque of the Lord Mayor's Coat of Arms to mark the 20th Anniversary.

Corrymeela FC would like to thank Lord Mayor Jim Rodgers for his hospitality and Mathilde Stevens for initiating the event.



Lord Mayor Jim Rodgers presents Corrymeela FC Chairman Stephen Morris with the Mayor's Coat of Arms to mark the 20th Anniversary of Corrymeela Football Club.

Go in Peace concert raises over £4000



Hostess Lynda Bryans

LYNDA BRYANS proved a fantastic hostess at our fundraising concert 'Go in Peace' earlier this year. Glamorous and gracious, the

UTV beauty primarily came to offer support to her close friend Roger Courtney, singer and songwriter behind the Go in Peace album, a musical tribute to Corrymeela.

Lynda welcomed music lovers and Corrymeela supporters from across Northern Ireland to the Elmwood Hall in Belfast where Roger sang alongside Ceol-le-Ceile, Joseph finalist Nick Parks and local songstress Katie Richardson.

The UTV presenter commented, 'I've known Roger for some years now but really had my eyes opened on Saturday night at the concert – I had no idea of the extent of the number of songs Roger has penned. The audience was enormously warm and friendly and you could feel the goodwill they



Singer Nick Parks

held for him – it was no surprise that "The Pollen of Peace" got the biggest cheer of the evening – and a standing ovation!"

Doing her bit for peace and reconciliation she posed for pictures with BBC TV rival Noel Thompson who

purchased several CDs for family and friends.

The concert raised more than £4,000 for Corrymeela's capital appeal. To get your copy of the Go in Peace CD and songbook contact Bernie Magill on 028 9050 8080 or belfast@corrymeela.org



L-R: Roger Courtney, Lynda Bryans, Christine Courtney and Noel Thompson

Auf wiedersehen beloved resource family



IT IS HARD TO BELIEVE that Kai and Helen's tenure at Corrymeela will soon end. It seems like no time since Helen and Gabriel stepped off the airplane to visit with us in December 2005, Gabriel grasping his teddy bear. They have since walked alongside three teams of long-term volunteers, and countless short-term volunteers. Their experience from L'Arche really helped us through some difficult times. Helen and Kai have helped welcome groups, co-ordinate worship, plan and maintain programme resources, and Kai has done such a good job on Cover. Helen and other volunteers helped co-ordinate the refurbishment of the TARA playrooms in 2007, and Kai has led and facilitated a number of church groups. They have championed energy conservation and recycling at the Centre.

- They talk the talk and walk the walk when it comes to stewardship of resources.
- One of Kai's rituals is to walk the site after a group leaves, turning off radiators, boilers and lights.

- We will miss all of the Thierbach-Hughes family, including Gabriel's curious questioning, Simeon's wonderful smile, Helen's care for other people, and Kai's positive attitude.

- The Thierbach-Hughes family will soon be moving to Germany where Kai will be the Minister of a Lutheran parish in south-west Baden. Helen will be a full-time mother courageously looking after four small boys.

- To contact Helen and Kai, write to helenandkai@hotmail.com or Neumattstr. 29, 79585 Steinen, Germany

USA Women's Retreat gives generous offering

A JOINT WOMEN'S RETREAT, held annually at a beautiful centre run by the Racine Dominican order on Lake Michigan, gathered this year under the theme 'The Things that Make for Peace'. About 70 women from two Chicago area churches, uniting through many shared justice commitments, were inclined to make a generous \$1800 donation to Corrymeela as part of their retreat offering. This decision was prompted after a few participants had visited the Ballycastle Centre and had been moved by Corrymeela's programming and peacemaking efforts in N. Ireland. Their other offering recipient was 'Seeds of Peace', a camp in Maine, USA, dedicated to empowering young leaders from regions of conflict with the leadership skills required to advance reconciliation and co-existence. Over 3,500 young people from several conflict regions, including Israel, Palestine, Egypt, South Asia, Cyprus and the Balkans, have graduated from the Seeds of Peace programme. Both groups they chose to support were initiated by personal connections group members had to each organisation.

Both churches, First United Church of Oak Park



- and Lincoln Park Presbyterian Church of Chicago, though very different in size and location, have come together over shared values and concerns including full inclusion of gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender individuals in their leadership, congregations, and within the denominations, as well as strong mission commitments of peacemaking, international issues, and hands-on activist work. Lincoln Park notably works within the homeless community, housing a shelter in their church 24 hours a day. First United is also part of a shelter programme, has a food pantry, and tutors young people weekly. All aspects of the joint retreat are organised by a committee of women from both churches. Next year will mark the 25th anniversary of this special women's retreat and we commend them for their enduring example to the possibility of peacemaking in the world. Thank you for thinking of Corrymeela!



For further information about First United Church of Oak Park, Lincoln Park Presbyterian, or Seeds of Peace please visit their websites; www.firstunitedoakpark.com, www.lppchurch.org, and www.seedsofpeace.org

From Japan with love

Dream Bags from Rissho Kosei-Kai



THE DREAM BAGS yet again delighted over 2,000 children in 8 schools in Belfast and Portadown (& District). The schools were chosen, as always, for their efforts for peace building. Three of them have been working with NICIE's Integrating Education project to produce resources entitled, Our Traditions.

These look at similarity and difference in Northern Irish communities and in particular our badges of identity, faith and religion, sport, language and literature, music, art and food. Most of the other schools are also involved in Schools Community Relations Programme (SCRIP) partnerships.

The Dream Bags were full of surprises with English writing; Disney & Macdonald's toys and even a Cladagh ring, but there were also packets of origami paper, dolls in kimonos, and Japanese postcards with expressions of blessing and prayers for peace. With the children we talked about the affirmation and encouragement that comes from knowing that someone in another country of the world is thinking of you.

I felt humbled by the generosity of the children and parents of Rissho Kosei-Kai, and remembered the trip a few of us made to Tokyo in 2003 as their guests at a conference to meet and network with other recipients of the Niwano Peace Prize

The Niwano Peace Prize is a roughly \$220,000 award, which is annually granted by a seven member committee consisting of Buddhists, Christians and Muslims. The Tokyo based Niwano Peace Foundation was initiated by the Japanese citizen Nikkyo Niwano, founder of the buddhist lay organisation Rissho Kosei Kai; he was one of the few non-Christian observers of the Second Vatican Council. His son Nichiko Niwano is his successor as chairman of the movement, which is dedicated to interreligious dialogue.

(Corrymeela was awarded the prize in 1997). Then, we lit a candle and prayed for our common pilgrimage as peacemakers

This is the last year that the Dream Bags will come to Northern Ireland as other countries take their turn to receive their blessings and I would like to take this opportunity to thank RKK for their prayers and gifts to our children, to Corrymeela and to all of us who have had the privilege to work with them.

Yvonne Naylor

Yvonne Naylor is a Community Relations Consultant and a Corrymeela member. www.puppetwoman.org





Duncan Morrow, Community member and Chief Executive of the Community Relations Council



PHOTOGRAPHS: BRENDAN GALLAGHER

FASHION SHOW



GLAMOROUS FASHIONS and show-stopping personalities ensured this year's La Mon fashion show was a roaring success. Once again staff, volunteers, friends and members came out in force to support the second annual fundraising fashion show in association with M&S.

Corrymeela's funniest personalities braved the catwalk and entertained the crowd raising more than £8,000 for our summer programme, now already in full swing.

Celebrity comedian Nuala McKeever, who looked stunning in a figure-hugging black dress, compèred the fashion show for the second year running. She said, 'It's great to see real-life models back on the catwalk and Marks and Spencer's have fantastic fashion for all the family.'

Our beautiful long-term volunteers and very handsome staff showcased Logan of Ballymena's bridal collection for all the lucky ladies planning to walk down the aisle.

The event was generously hosted by La Mon Hotel with delicious cheese provided by Dale Farm. Special thanks to Bev Gray who choreographed the show. Enjoy our fashion show in pictures.



Maundy Money

THE CEREMONY traces its origin to the Last Supper when, as St John recorded, Jesus washed the feet of his disciples. Afterwards, Jesus gave the disciples a command or 'mandatum' – the Latin word from which 'maundy' is derived – to love one another:



Dating from about AD 600, the ceremony originally involved the king, queen or their representative washing the feet of the poor. By the early 14th century, it had become customary for the sovereign to provide a meal, together with gifts of food and clothing. The number of men and women receiving Maundy money each equals the age of the sovereign during the year, as does the amount in pence received.

In March this year the Queen made a historic visit to Northern Ireland

to present Maundy money for the first time ever to 82 men and 82 women at the Church of Ireland's St Patrick's Cathedral in Armagh city. The recipients were selected from the four main denominations in Northern Ireland in recognition of their work for their church and community.

Two of the chosen recipients were Corrymeela Community members Carrie Barkley and Maura Kiely while Fred Graham, married to a member, also received the coins. Present-day Maundy coins consist of silver one-, two-, three- and four-penny pieces and is still considered legal tender in the United Kingdom. The Maundy coins



have been minted each year since 1971 as decimal coins and are now the only silver coinage issued. Each recipient will receive 82p in Maundy coins, newly minted Sterling silver coins worth much more than their face value.

GB FRIENDS WEEKEND

Barnes Close near Bromsgrove

Friday 14 to Sunday 16 November 2008

The next GB Friends Weekend will be held in November at Barnes Close and will follow up some of the issues which we looked at during last autumn's meeting with its theme of 'The Gift of the Stranger'. This year's theme is likely to focus on living with strangers – conflict and collaboration.



YOU ARE INVITED TO JOIN US FOR THIS WEEKEND WHICH OFFERS

- STIMULATING SPEAKERS
- OPPORTUNITIES FOR REFLECTION AND PARTICIPATION
- AN EXPERIENCE OF LIVING IN COMMUNITY

Last year the conference was fully booked. If you would like to receive further information or to register, please contact Anne McDonagh on 028 9050 8080



Jill Stringer, Corrymeela Primary School worker in the classroom

The Rainbow Fish

IT GOES WITHOUT SAYING that conflict is something that exists in every society. In the Northern Ireland context, teaching young children about the conflicts of the region's past is one of those situations where it could be particularly difficult. However, when sensitivity is used to carefully explain what conflict is and how we can cope with it, it can make the process of learning about these complex ideas much simpler. This is exactly what Jill Stringer, Corrymeela's Primary Schools Worker, has been doing in her time with Corrymeela.

I had the opportunity to shadow Jill as she spent a day at Belfast's Botanic Primary School on 28 February to teach P4, P5 and P6 children about conflict. It was her second time visiting each class in her five-session programme on conflict management.

Jill began the session simply by having the students think back to the lessons they had learned the previous week, giving them a chance to revisit the things they had discussed before moving on with any new material. Jill then went on to explain to the students that, while conflict can often seem particularly negative, sometimes it's needed in order for people to find ways to improve things. The students also had a chance to listen to a reading of Marcus Pfister's 'The Rainbow Fish', in which one little fish realises that even though his flashy glittering scales make him feel like the most beautiful fish in the sea, he is much happier when he is able to share them with his friends – something he couldn't recognise until he had become sad and lonely after being contemptuous to those around him. After the story, students evaluated the emotions they thought the rainbow fish was going through during different stages of the book and some shared their own examples of what makes them

feel happy, sad, angry or scared.

While learning, the students also seemed to have fun. Ice-breaker games and songs helped create a friendly environment and no one seemed uncomfortable during the talks about conflict. One game that generated lots of smiles and laughs ended up having a very real lesson attached to it; students were asked to run around the room until a number was called out, at which point the children had to form 'clumps' of that number. After the exercise, Jill asked the children to think about whether they had only looked around for their friends to form groups or if they had joined up with those nearest to them. At one particular point Jill highlighted the feeling of exclusion when some pupils did not incorporate some individuals into their particular group. It was an opportunity for the students to realise how greatly their own actions can influence the lives and emotions of others.

In each session, the vast majority of students seemed genuinely engaged with the activities, each other and the lessons they were taking away. Each walked away knowing more about the ups and downs of conflict and the individual power they each had to help others feel good or bad, whether they realised it or not. At the end of the day, even I went home thinking about the lessons that had been looked at during those sessions. After all, even those of us who have left primary school far behind can benefit from reminders of how fragile – and vital – emotions are, and how sometimes getting through a time of intense conflict is necessary in order to see the many things it can teach us.

Linda Sjostrom

Linda was a short term volunteer based at Corrymeela, Belfast. Read more on page 23

“
their own
actions
can
influence
the lives
and
emotions
of others
”

Knocklayd Open Events

Walking Together

11–15 July
Knocklayd Centre

A long weekend rambling along the coast and through the glens of Antrim. Non-resident participants are warmly welcome.



Painting For Pleasure Weekend

19–21 Sept
Knocklayd Centre

These weekends are for those who enjoy painting/art and wish to experience the changing seasonal beauty of Knocklayd and Glenshesk. Led by Raymond Bakewell, Corrymeela Community.

Gardening Weekend

3–5 Oct
Knocklayd Centre

Enjoy a weekend in the spring and autumn working in Knocklayd's beautiful garden in exchange for food and accommodation. Led by Kate Graham, Corrymeela Community member and Carol Press.

Time Out – A Time to Reflect on Reconciliation

24–26 Oct
Knocklayd Centre

An expressive, creative retreat weekend led by Charlie and Beryl Leeke and Kate Graham, Corrymeela Community.

Thomas Merton Weekend

17–19 Oct
Knocklayd Centre

On the 40th anniversary of his death, we will use the life and work of Thomas Merton as a starting point for silence, prayer, contemplation and personal reflection. Led by Brendan McAllister and Una Lount, Corrymeela Community members.

Ballycastle Open Events

Dialogue for Peaceful Change Training

31 Aug 5.00 pm – 5 Sept 2.00 pm
Ballycastle Centre

Learn new skills about conflict management, meditation and facilitation of groups. You will gain new understandings about why conflict happens, and how to move through conflict situations. Please visit www.corrymeela.org to download the registration form. If you have any questions about registering please contact Becca Moody at 028 2076 2626.



Reimagining Our Story

10–12 Oct
Ballycastle Centre

A weekend of community, silence, scripture and one-to-one sharing. Led by Rob Wiggs, Corrymeela Community member, Sister Stephanie Cardis and colleagues. Please call Rob 01245 359138 for more information about the content.



Another kind of worship

JAYYAB WANTED TO THANK ARIANA. She had worked all week volunteering her time and energy hosting the Olive Tree students – six Palestinians and six Israelis who had just completed their second year together at London City University. To show his appreciation, Jayyab organised a small group of his fellow students to perform the Dabke, a traditional Palestinian dance, and we invited the kids from Omagh Integrated Primary School to come and watch.



‘C’mon, guys, let’s do it. It will be fun,’ Jayyab coaxed, as he and his friends rehearsed in the small Croí.

Their music filled the large Croí from a small iPod. The kids waited politely in anticipation, sunburnt at the end of another glorious, sunny



May day (isn’t Ballycastle weather always like this?).

Khalil was the first on the dance floor, arm in arm with Jayyab, Mazen, and Montaser. Ariana smiled.



Then came one of those magical Corrymeela moments. Without being invited, young Kevin from the Omagh school group jumped to his feet and joined the Palestinian students on the dance floor. They smiled and completely relaxed. Everyone relaxed.

And then, without hesitation, Liz got to her feet and joined in, too. Soon, the entire school group linked arms and circled the Croí. It was magical. Forty-five minutes later, the children and Olive Tree students were still dancing, singing, clapping and performing for each other. I realised that the time for evening worship had slipped by, and quietly whispered to Camille, ‘Do you mind if we don’t do worship this evening?’

In an age when we are all so concerned about legislation, funding, vision, and the way ahead, how wonderful it is to share moments like this . . . moments that can’t be engineered or manufactured. Spontaneous, joyous moments that bring smiles to our faces, moments when we look into the faces of people who are completely different from us, and feel a deep connection.



“
Then came
**one of
those
magical
Corrymeela
moments**

Ronnie Millar
Centre Director

Unafraid of conflict

A Christian
community for
non-Christians?

‘WORSHIP TWICE A DAY?’ someone asked me. ‘How Christian are they, exactly?’

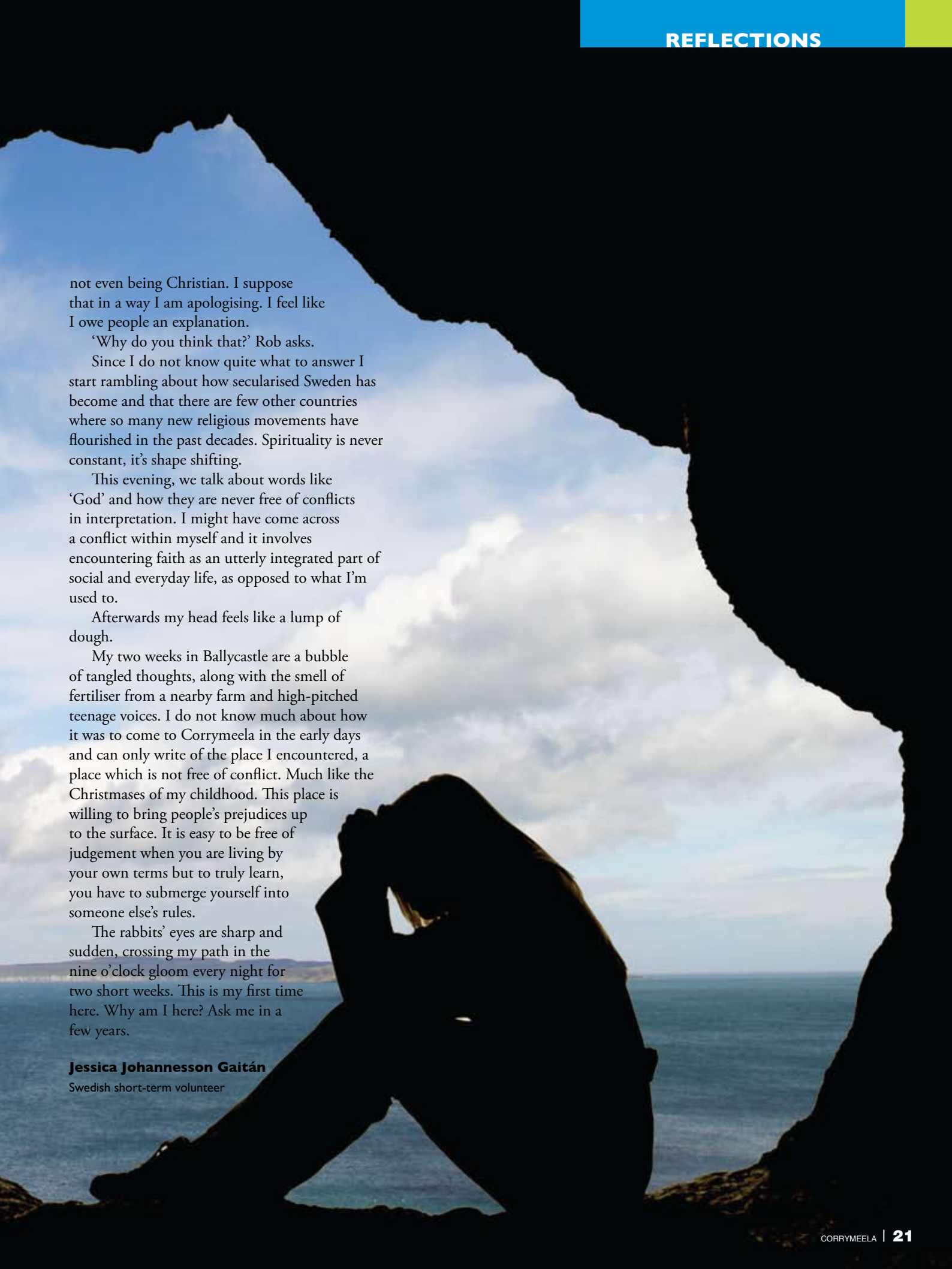
While answering their questions about my upcoming visit to Corrymeela I couldn’t help but notice how I automatically emphasised certain things and avoided others. I do not think I did it on purpose, but looking back I am no longer sure about which questions really came from them and which ones were my own.

Why did I come here?

The overwhelming number of rabbits running around, living next to the human inhabitants of the Centre in Ballycastle, certainly haven’t got the answer to that question. They seem to be constantly spying on us.

Growing up within two different cultures, one on each side of the Atlantic, I am a patchwork of compromises. Any Christmas celebrated with my mother’s family in Colombia was an example of this and quarrels between my uncle and my father were to be expected as surely as the plastic Christmas tree. Those discussions had nothing to do with a Catholic versus a Protestant celebration and everything to do with different ways of thinking; what’s logical to you and what you can put up with from someone else’s realms of logic. I was never baptised. Whatever religion I chose, if any, was to become a conscious path of my own.

On my second night at Corrymeela I become aware of this to say the least. The volunteers are gathered in a discussion led by Rob Wiggs, Church of England minister and former long-term volunteer, talking about what these words mean today; ‘a Christian community’. I am told that even though some of the others have been here for months, this topic has not been discussed in such a focused way. Our different approaches seem to materialise almost like vapour from our mouths. I find myself trying to explain why I am here,



not even being Christian. I suppose that in a way I am apologising. I feel like I owe people an explanation.

‘Why do you think that?’ Rob asks.

Since I do not know quite what to answer I start rambling about how secularised Sweden has become and that there are few other countries where so many new religious movements have flourished in the past decades. Spirituality is never constant, it’s shape shifting.

This evening, we talk about words like ‘God’ and how they are never free of conflicts in interpretation. I might have come across a conflict within myself and it involves encountering faith as an utterly integrated part of social and everyday life, as opposed to what I’m used to.

Afterwards my head feels like a lump of dough.

My two weeks in Ballycastle are a bubble of tangled thoughts, along with the smell of fertiliser from a nearby farm and high-pitched teenage voices. I do not know much about how it was to come to Corrymeela in the early days and can only write of the place I encountered, a place which is not free of conflict. Much like the Christmases of my childhood. This place is willing to bring people’s prejudices up to the surface. It is easy to be free of judgement when you are living by your own terms but to truly learn, you have to submerge yourself into someone else’s rules.

The rabbits’ eyes are sharp and sudden, crossing my path in the nine o’clock gloom every night for two short weeks. This is my first time here. Why am I here? Ask me in a few years.

Jessica Johannesson Gaitán

Swedish short-term volunteer



Musings from the Mountain

CHRIS AND I HAVE HOSTED many groups since we arrived last August, from college students from the United States to local writers and poets. One of the most rewarding experiences for me was hosting the NICRAS (Northern Ireland Community of Refugees and Asylum Seekers) group facilitated by Linda Agnew, a Corrymeela member and Moira McCombe, a NICRAS staff member.

It made me so aware of the vast cultural variety in the States that has been almost absent here in Northern Ireland until recently. I wondered whether Northern Ireland would 'welcome the stranger' in a more Christian way than the United States has done over the past decades. Will the tensions of employment issues (they are taking our jobs); religion (their beliefs/practices are too threatening to our own); their language (they must learn English or go home); education (they are using our resources); or their eating habits (using bread as a utensil instead of a fork – for heaven's sake!) prohibit the Northern Irish from embracing the diversity that these folks can offer this society?

I wonder what is it in the human spirit that is threatened by difference? When we look at a garden, we enjoy the variety of flowers; their colour, shape, height, and aromas. When we eat a fruit salad we enjoy the differences of taste, flavours, colours and textures of different fruits. And yet, our initial response to humans different from us is frequently one of suspicion, if not fear or distrust. Northern Ireland is in a unique position I believe, to challenge itself; to celebrate the differences of those moving into its society and to acknowledge the gifts that immigrants bring. The analogy of the fruit or salad bowl is so much more appealing than the 'melting pot' analogy. In my mind, the uniqueness of each is kept and enjoyed in the salad; but all are melted into a 'mush' in the melting pot.

The NICRAS folks who graced us with their presence that weekend were truly a blessing to me; Chris and I may have fed their bodies, but they fed our souls. Many of the folks live in hostels in Belfast where the noises of the city bombard them. They live in neighbourhoods that may not be so welcoming to their presence. They live with uncertainty for their future as courts and officials decide their destiny. I felt that they were able to appreciate the tranquillity of Knocklayd that we often take for granted. They fully enjoyed the peace and beauty of our Knocklayd mountain. We were all nourished that weekend.

Peace,
Mary Anne



Short-term Volunteer Training

I DIDN'T GO TO Corrymeela's Centre in Ballycastle expecting to fall in love – but I did, and it was with an entire community.

I came to Corrymeela for an international work placement at the Belfast office, and headed off to Ballycastle to attend a weekend session on short-term volunteer training. The result was three days of learning, teaching, bonding, volunteering and having fun.

The group itself was diverse. Within the ten trainees and two co-ordinators of the group, there were six different countries and a wide range of ages and experiences represented. A few people had been involved with Corrymeela in some way for years. For others, it was their first trip to the site.

Many stayed up late that first night to socialise before our full day of sessions, activities and duties the following day. This started out with walks on the beach for some, and others got their first experience of helping out in the Corrymeela kitchen by preparing breakfast.

The work itself was hands-on and informative – each time we assisted with arranging a tea tray or setting up for dinner, we were not only helping out for the moment but also learning tasks we would be doing in the future as short-term volunteers. Additionally, ice-breaker games we participated in gave us ideas for things we could do with groups in the future.

Aside from lighter activities, we also learned procedures for working with children, young people and vulnerable adults, and discussed the desires of and pressures on young people in Northern Ireland. It was an important part of our training to remember you can't really connect with a group until you acknowledge their hopes, needs and fears. Centre Director Ronnie Millar and Youth Work Co-ordinator Ivan Cross both came to lead sessions with the group; something that Sonja said highlights the value placed on volunteer work

within Corrymeela.

'Volunteers are the link into society,' Sonja said, adding that, 'the work Corrymeela is doing should always be a mirror of what's happening in society.' This can be seen in the many groups that come to Corrymeela to discuss social issues such as sectarianism and racism.

Aside from group work, Corrymeela has other volunteering opportunities, including kitchen work, housekeeping, reception, gardening and maintenance projects.

'We try to find tasks for people who don't fit into these things,' Volunteer Support Worker Sonja Tammen said, stressing the point of volunteering being looked at on an individual basis. 'Volunteering should be a win-win situation for both volunteers and Corrymeela as an organisation.' Some of the benefits she cited for volunteers include being a part of a community and getting experience within a field you may be interested in developing a career in.

One short-term volunteer, Odegua Opiah, said that she personally has enjoyed her time with Corrymeela.

'I really wanted to know more about what they do and gain experience working with people from different backgrounds,' she said. She began work at the centre in 2007 and has since gained experience working with two different youth groups. She has also volunteered in other areas of the Centre, saying she 'really enjoyed' doing kitchen work because of the friendly atmosphere created by the staff.

As the weekend wound to a close, many new short-termers signed up to come back before we even left the building. During a lift home from a fellow volunteer, those of us in his car had many warm reflections of both our weekend and of Corrymeela. No matter why you're there, we agreed that there is a sense of kindness and teamwork within the Corrymeela Community that you can't quite find anywhere else – even if your time there is limited.

I personally can't wait to come back and become more involved with it.

Linda Sjostrom

Linda is a university student from the United States. She spent one semester living in Northern Ireland to study the history of the Troubles and current peace and reconciliation efforts, as well as do a work placement with Corrymeela's Belfast office. She hopes to visit Northern Ireland again after she graduates.

For more information on how to get involved with Corrymeela as a short-term volunteer, please contact Volunteer Support Worker Sonja Tammen on 028 2076 1724 or sonjatammen@corrymeela.org





Talking to Eboo Patel

IF YOU WERE TO ASK Corrymeela a question about its direction or role in society over the next 10 years, what would you pose?

How do you plan to stay rooted in the reconciling message of Jesus Christ in a society that continues to be profoundly socially divided, at a time when it is becoming more diverse?

For a young person interested in exploring their faith in service work, what steps could they take to become more involved?

I'd encourage any young person of faith to join their local interfaith youth group – or to start one. And I'd encourage them to seek out a service component in that group. Interfaith work is grounded in acting upon common values. The importance of interfaith work lies in the reality that we don't exist in bubbles. Being young and religious involves understanding faiths outside our own. Doing so helps us to

understand our own faiths in deeper, richer ways.

Who are some of the inspiring influences of your life?

I have many heroes from different faith backgrounds, but because Corrymeela is a Christian ecumenical community, I want to highlight my heroes from both the Catholic and Protestant faiths. Dietrich Bonhoeffer is a hero of mine. As a Lutheran pastor during the Nazi era, his commitment to the Jews should inspire all of us to be committed to people beyond our own community. And Dorothy Day of the Catholic Worker Movement is also a hero. Her skin-on-the-line commitment to poor people outside of her Catholic tradition should inspire all of us to be committed to people outside our traditions. What Bonhoeffer and Day share is the idea that their faith requires them to be in solidarity with people beyond their immediate community.



Questions posed by
Ada Ketchie

In your opinion what are the most important and pressing issues of our world today?

At the close of the first World's Parliament of Religions in Chicago in 1893, the Chicago Protestant leader Charles Bonney said, 'From now on, the great religions of the world will no longer declare war on each other, but on the giant ills that afflict humankind.' Our world did not achieve that hopeful promise in the 20th century, but we may be able to accomplish it in the 21st century. But in order to do that, we have to realise that the line that currently divides us is not a line between Catholics and Protestants, Christians and Jews, or Hindus and Muslims. The 'faith line' separates extremists – who seek to dominate and suffocate everyone who differs from them – from pluralists, who believe we can live together in common cause. And given the facts of a global youth bulge and religious revival, young people will determine the direction in which our world will go. All too often, however, it is extremists who gather them up in

Eboo Patel, Director of Interfaith Youth Core, visits Corrymeela

Eboo Patel, Founder and Executive Director of the Interfaith Youth Core (IFYC), a Chicago-based charity that promotes interfaith co-operation, visited Northern Ireland in April on a twenty-four-hour speaking engagement hosted by the US consulate. Having visited what he calls 'the remarkable Corrymeela Community' eight years ago for a conference entitled 'Minorities in Europe', Eboo included in his busy plans a visit to Corrymeela's Belfast office to speak with staff and volunteers about creating pluralist societies around the world, including within Northern Ireland, whose landscape of peoples, languages and religions is quickly changing.



Interfaith Youth Core seeks to build relationships of mutual respect between young people of different religious and moral traditions, by arranging days of voluntary service and encouraging young people to engage in dialogue around shared values.



their cause. But some of our most prominent faith heroes have been beacons of hope for the side of pluralism. Inspired by lessons he learned by Ghandi, Martin Luther King Jr. led the Montgomery Bus Boycott at a very young age, and one of King's most profound partners in the Civil Rights Movement was Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel. King, a young person, did what we all must do – implement the shared value of human dignity in concrete projects in service to the rest of the world.

Besides the interfaith movement, what is another one of your great passions?

I love to write. I love stitching together a narrative that both explains our world and that inspires action to improve it. I hope my book, *Acts of Faith*, accomplishes even a little of that.

What have been the greatest challenges in your work, and the greatest rewards for you personally?

Like Corrymeela, the Interfaith Youth Core is attempting to be a community, an institution, and a movement that brings people together around shared values in rapidly changing times. There are both a thousand challenges inherent in that and a thousand joys.



Photos are courtesy of Interfaith Youth Core

What is your favourite poem?

I have a million favourite poems, but for right now I'll mention 'A Ritual to Read to Each Other' by William Stafford. I find the first and final stanzas most inspiring:

If you don't know the kind of person I am
and I don't know the kind of person you are
a pattern that others made may prevail in the world
and following the wrong god home we may miss
our star.

For it is important that awake people be awake,
or a breaking line may discourage them back to
sleep;

the signals we give—yes or no, or maybe –
should be clear: the darkness around us is deep.

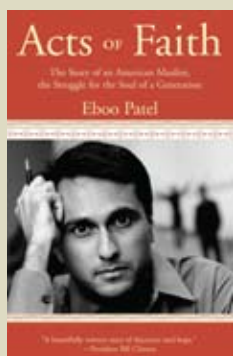
What recent book or film would you recommend?

I'd recommend James Baldwin's *The Fire Next Time* – a remarkable meditation on identity, community and nation.

Hopes for the future?

I hope we widen the circle of pluralism in a way that affirms peoples' particularity and achieves a world of equal dignity and mutual loyalty for all.

BOOK EXPOSÉ



Acts of Faith – Eboo Patel

Beacon Press, 2007

Eboo Patel in his book *Acts of Faith – The Story of an American Muslim, the Struggle for the Soul of a Generation* regards its theme as 'a story of retuning to faith, of finding coherence, of committing to pluralism, and of the influences I owe my life to'. Check out the following excerpts to get a taste of why adding this book to your reading list is anything but an act of faith.

'I am an American Muslim from India. My adolescence was a series of rejections, one after another, of the various dimensions of my heritage, in the belief that America, India, and Islam could not coexist within the same being. If I wanted to be one, I could not be the others. My struggle to understand the traditions I belong to as mutually enriching rather than mutually exclusive is the story of a generation of young people standing at the crossroads of inheritance and discovery, trying to look both ways at once. There is a strong connection between finding a sense of inner coherence and developing a commitment to pluralism. And that has everything to do with who meets you at the crossroads.

'When I was in college, I had the sudden realization that all of my heroes were people of deep faith: Dorothy Day, the Dali Lama, Martin Luther King Jr., Mahatma Gandhi, Malcolm X, the Aga Khan. Moreover, they were all of different faiths. A little more research revealed two additional insights. First, religious cooperation had been central to the work of most of these faith heroes. The Reverend Martin Luther King Jr. partnered with Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel in the struggle for civil rights. Mahatma Gandhi stated that Hindu-

Muslim unity was just as important to him as a free India. Second, each of my faith heroes assumed an important leadership role at a young age. King was only twenty-six years old when he led the Montgomery bus boycott. Gandhi was even younger when he started his movement against unjust laws in early-twentieth-century South Africa.' (pgs. XVII–XVIII)

'Pluralism is not a default position, an autopilot mode. Pluralism is an intentional commitment that is imprinted through action. It requires deliberate engagement with difference, outspoken loyalty to others, and proactive protection in the breach. You have to choose to step off the faith line onto the side of pluralism, and then you have to make your voice heard. To follow Robert Frost, it is easy to see the death of pluralism in the fire of a suicide bombing. But the ice of silence will kill it just as well.' (pg. XIX)

'In one of the moments when my father was feeling especially righteous about his "Muslim-ness," I overheard him expressing concern to my mother that the YMCA, which was after all the Young Men's Christian Association, was teaching us Christian songs. "Do you think they are trying to teach Christianity to our kids?" he asked, the tone of his voice a kind of auditory chest thumping.

"I hope so," my mother responded. "I hope they teach the kids Jewish and Hindu songs, too. That's the kind of Muslims we want our kids to be."

In that offhand reply, overheard when I was a teenager, my mother guessed the arc of my life.' (pg. 17)

To find out more about Eboo Patel, his book *Acts of Faith* or his blog *The Faith Divide*, as well as the present work of IFYC, please visit the website www.ifyc.org

2008 Interfaith Service Weekend

'WELCOME TO CORRYMEELA,' we say to each person that comes through the doors, but this evening those words carried a deeper resonance. I had been anticipating this weekend for months. The planning of the 2008 Corrymeela Interfaith Service Weekend started right after Christmas when Amy Morrow and I were given the reins to this project and told, 'Right, away you go then.' Suffice it to say that Amy and I acquired new appreciation for what goes on upstairs in the Corrymeela programme office.

We were trying to recruit as diverse a group of young people aged 14–17 as possible, but in the labelling of people as this or that religious group we could not help but feel as if we were stigmatising them in a world where religion is used to denote difference and has been a cause for violence in too many places in the world for too long.

I wanted to move past the awkwardness of labels and away from the black and white thinking that is encouraged in our media. The most important thing I learned through religious studies was the importance of complexifying an issue before you simplify it, or to 'think outside the

box'. I wanted the young people to be able to enter into the humanising power of sharing through experiencing together.

On the first night I had all of us gather around my 'Religion' box. It was a black and white box with a simple definition of religion written across it. I asked each person to take coloured pieces of paper and write down any idea, question, thought, or image that came to mind around 'religion'. So we complexified the word.

We generated all sorts of questions which I incorporated in their personal interviews the next day. I gave out a sheet of questions on personal and family practices, what aspects of your faith tradition do you particularly struggle with, and are there any myths or misconceptions that you think exist about your faith tradition that you would like to address. What followed was an open and very involved discussion.

On Sunday we had an evaluation, and I learned that informal discussions had carried on long into the night where the participants – who were by then fast friends – felt comfortable to hang out together and continue talking.





Sarah McCullough



Equally gratifying were the murals that developed over the weekend and will now be a permanent fixture in Corrymeela. None of our participants had been to Corrymeela before. Just as

I hoped that Corrymeela would make a permanent mark on them, I wanted them to make a permanent mark on Corrymeela. We painted three murals, each centred around the theme of moving identities and definitions outside of the box to better enter a more inter-relational world.

This weekend shines in my memory as one of my best at Corrymeela. Perhaps in a couple years Corrymeela will have new volunteers returning to the Centre to see the work they did still hanging on the walls.

Sarah McCullough

Sarah McCullough, 23, is presently a Corrymeela long-term volunteer based in Ballycastle. She is from Philadelphia, USA, with degrees in Dance and Religious Studies from New York University.

Radical love

ONE OF THE FIRST CONVERSATIONS we had together at the start of our weekend residential was to share our hopes: what we hoped to take from the time spent together, and what we hoped to give to it. We recorded our thoughts on a page that had no lines of division to organise the two categories, and no headings or labels; words expressing gifts, both to be given and to be received, tumbled into one another in fluid connection. Acceptance, Toleration, Courage – these were a few of the words emboldening the page and the participants. They were words indistinguishable from one another in the expectation of the hopes they expressed.

Radical Love was a residential experience created to explore the intersection of sexuality and spirituality as experienced in the gay and lesbian community. It was not a forum for biblical debate but an opportunity for conversation about personal experience. It drew together six participants, a leader and myself for a weekend of self and group exploration, storytelling and relaxation. I journeyed fully with this group of seven gay men, quite anxious myself about the affect of my presence among them and the legitimacy of my own experiences. I soon realised that my anxiety was completely unfounded; we ranged in age from 20 to

60, came from four different countries, and the most striking commonality within the group had nothing to do with sexuality, but a shared embrace of our own personhood.

I have never witnessed a gathering space that so masterfully accommodated the personal comfort of individuals, each at different levels of security in the subject and his skin. Gentle sessions at the beginning of the weekend culminated in a Saturday night and Sunday morning that blossomed with emotive personal narrative and a deep sense of fellowship. The evolution of the group dynamic was drastic as a result of the personal odyssey of each.

When the weekend came to a close and we reviewed our initial hopes, I truly realised that not only were our gifts given and received one in the same, but that they were also gifts that we were giving to ourselves. In the stories we told each other, strong voices asked for acceptance from the group and also from ourselves. Our supplications were initially aimed at the group, the more easily fulfilled appeal than asking the same from ourselves. As evidenced by our ending reflections, warm and self-affirming, we achieved both.

Sheila Vennell



Sheila Vennell, 23, is a long-term volunteer for Corrymeela, Ballycastle. She is from Maine, USA, with degrees in International Relations and Religion.



LETTERS AND EMAILS

We want to hear what you have to say! Starting next edition we will have a letters and emails page to get the Corrymeela conversation rolling. Your feedback is crucial to fulfilling our goal of creating a community of active peace-makers. We respectfully request all opinions, suggestions, comments, and queries. Please take part in the future of the Corrymeela magazine, make your voice heard.

To submit a letter please post to:

Editor
8 Upper Crescent
Belfast
BT7 1NT

Or email: editor@corrymeela.org

Hope to hear from you soon, Jo, Ada, & Ally

CORRYMEELA MAGAZINE TEAM

The Place Called Reconciliation – Texts to Explore

by David Stevens

'If we Christians cannot speak the message of reconciliation we have nothing to say.'

(Ray Davey, Founder of the Corrymeela Community)

THESE BIBLICAL REFLECTIONS on reconciliation and related themes have been written out of the author's 40 years of involvement in the Corrymeela Community. The particular setting of Northern Ireland has meant that 'reconciliation' has emerged as the Community's overarching narrative for understanding the many facets of the conflict.

The book expands on the biblical reflections in the author's previous book *The Land of Unlikeness: Explorations into Reconciliation*, often using the work of the French literary critic René Girard. Girard's work on religion and violence has alerted us to the presence of rivalry, conflict, scapegoating, exclusion and sacred violence in biblical texts and opened up the Bible to show its strangeness and newness. He has also spoken profoundly into a

Northern Irish context.

David Stevens is the present Leader of the Corrymeela Community. He was formerly General Secretary of the Irish Council of Churches (1992–2003). He is the author of *The Land of Unlikeness: Explorations into Reconciliation* (Columba Press, 2004).

To purchase your own copy of *The Place Called Reconciliation – Texts to Explore* by David Stevens (£6.99 plus postage and packaging) please contact Bernie Magill on tel. +44 (0)28 9050 8080 or email belfast@corrymeela.org





'Think Globally. Act Locally.' Maybe you have heard this popular phrase before? Reportedly coined in 1969 by David Brower, founder of Friends of the Earth, over the past 40 years it has morphed into a worldwide anthem, a motto of necessity. Our interdependence as a global community has become increasingly apparent and relevant since 1969 (vis-à-vis various mediums like the growth of information technology, travel, globalisation of business etc.), reinforcing the importance and practicality of, 'Think Globally. Act Locally.' This notion speaks to a concern and awareness for our brothers and sisters around the world like they are a part of our own village, a global village. And then transform that concern into action locally with those we can affect and influence right where we are. Thus springs the notion of our new section, Our Global Village. We intend to use this part of the Corrymeela magazine to inspire us locally by work that is happening globally, in spirit and solidarity with Corrymeela's mission. It might be an article written by a Corrymeela Friend or Community member abroad about the good work they are involved with, or reflections they have about the circumstances they face in their area. It might showcase an organisation that we have heard of or have members affiliated with which deserve to have their work shared, thus inspiring and involving our readership wherever they are. Using the powerful force of communication through media Corrymeela magazine strives to create a network of like-minded people and organizations. Welcome to our global village.

In the spirit of this issue's theme, 'Ten Years On', former Corrymeela summer volunteer Dimi Reider writes to us from Israel. His commentary strikes a poignant comparison, noting key differences between the respective directions both Northern Ireland and Israel and Palestine have made since the 1990s.

Northern Ireland and Israel and Palestine

In the 1990s – the end of the Cold War and of conservative rule in both America and the UK – the decade when 'things were getting better', when bitter arguments about women's rights, gay rights, black rights, all quietened down to a kind of a glittering, Central-Park consensus – the decade when my generation was growing up – much comparison was being made between the Palestinian–Israeli process and the Northern Irish one. It seemed for a few years, to some of us, that by grace of some bizarre and improbable aura of sensibility and boldness, the peoples in both

conflict areas got up and brushed their bruises, and decided to move forward.

The Northern Irish process is still trudging quietly, steadily on; to an Israeli visiting the state it appears – for all its shortcomings – a tangible utopia. The Israeli–Palestinian process, hailed by politicians, praised by media, with the yearly and increasingly bitter travelling circuses of summits and super-summits, is a nightmarish, cruel joke, wearing increasingly thin.

Looking through the thin lens of this writer's Israeli and Northern Irish experience, one could



note three substantial differences that stand out as being particularly noteworthy.

First, it seems that quite apart from the conflicting foreign and domestic interests vested in both the conflict and the peace process, what is missing most in our part of the world is the persistent, stubborn sub-structure of community organisations, SCOs, non-profits, youth movements, churches; the same tightly-knit community tissue that staked the conflict, that supported the paramilitaries often in defiance of the wishes of any kind of central command, is now busily and warily watching that the politicians stick to their word. In Israel the conflict is centralised: the army and the government get the mandate to conduct both war and peace, and while trust in the integrity of different individuals is usually low,

trust in the validity of the mandate accorded to the system remains out of any proportion with its actual performance. Only the radical right and radical left challenge the state in any substantial manner. Most of the public is quite content to leave the reins to them.

A second difference is what one might well term the Crusaders' complex. While the feeling one gets in Northern Ireland nowadays is a pretty firm belief in the physical future of both country and community, in Israel a dizzying sense of temporality prevails. Hence when you go to Jerusalem, one of the architectural features that strikes you most is the fortress-like overbearing of its newer buildings. The High Court is lying in wait, the entrance disguised by overlapping, unscalable walls of white Jerusalem limestone;



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 ”

Central Bus Station is a fortified wall, with embrasures for windows and X-ray machines at every door; and the Citadel Hotel (originally built for Hilton) is complete with a cast-iron awning . . . in the shape of a suspended drawbridge.

Aside from anachronism and the violence, this betrays a haunting idea of ‘not supposed to have come here’, of being ready to pack up and flee at a moment’s notice. As such, neither left nor right in Israel plan for the very long term. Regional diplomacy had been neglected since the 1950s; few left-wing movements have a concise, digested ten- or even five-year plan. And while it is obvious that quite a few of the developments, like land confiscation and the segregated road system, have been conceived and laid out decades in advance, it is also clear that the diplomatic and social implications of ignoring the region you are wedged in have been consistently dismissed.

A third (but by no means final) fundamental difference is that the discourse in Israel had been overwhelmingly segregationist. Since the two-state theory had won the ballot in the early 1990s, and over a decade or so of consolidation, left, centre and right in Israel all speak in terms of separatism. To steal the quip of an Israeli filmmaker, Israelis and Palestinians are travelling the world together, dining together, lecturing together and sometimes even sleeping together; all the time talking about why they cannot possibly stay together and should immediately pull apart. Even the courageous and relentless anarchists against walls normally supersede their sincere abhorrence of all forms of statehood with a support for the Palestinian right of self-determination in the form of a nation-state.

This stands in the sharpest possible contrast to the evolution of the Northern Irish process, where it appears that all parties accepted, however grudgingly at times, that the ‘other’ was there to stay and not going anywhere, at least in the foreseeable future. This puts both left and right in stark opposition to the reality developing on the



ground, where the extensive land appropriation and development, pitted with the demographic growth of Israeli–Palestinians and settler Jews, is pushing the two-state solution far into the realm of the impossible. Moreover, both left and right are expecting a miraculous solution, or at least an easy one; and the prospect of another bloody, considerably more ‘grassroots’, ethnic clash – for instance, an attempt of a ‘population swap’ – is getting ever thicker, as fearfulness and suspicions grow.

So what for the future? Can lessons still be learned? Can we get ourselves to Northern Ireland, or at the very least to South Africa? Or is it Northern Africa we are heading for, where refusal to engage and to acknowledge stemmed threads of refugees, the *piéd noir* crowding at the harbours? Thankfully, it’s too soon to tell: under the maddening pressure of fear and mistrust, civic society, mixed civil society at that, is tentatively growing; binational zionism, two national homes in one country, are spoken of again among the Jews, albeit by few and in whispers. The Palestinian–Israeli sector is rapidly politicising, and while many Israelis are scared witless by the very prospect of their re-acquiring their national identities, a reading of the documents put out by Palestinian–Israeli thinktanks brings out a desire to be recognised, to acknowledge and engage. The rallies and marches of protest are gone from the streets and the confusion is such that even the all-Israeli bumper stickers are disappearing from the cars. But the same activists are still there, and while some have burned out, others are hard at work, thinking, calculating, building, daring to think wider and calmer than ever before.

In September, a group of Jewish and Palestinian community and grassroots political activists will be visiting Northern Ireland to see how slow persistence can pay off. Our visit is in part inspired by one of the first sentences I heard when I first arrived at Corrymeela. ‘We started working here over 40 years ago,’ a former Centre Director told us casually, ‘and we think we might be starting to see some results now.’ We would very happily sign up to that.

Dimi Reider

Dimi Reider is an Israeli freelance journalist (mainly with the Jerusalem Post) and an activist engaged in several political and cross-community movements in Israel-Palestine. He volunteered at Corrymeela in the summer of 2007, and is Co-director of the newly established Causeways project – developing a network of experience-sharing between Northern Ireland and Palestine-Israel.

Ten years on

TAKETIMewith US to explore Northern Ireland and our ever-evolving communities, ten years on from the Good Friday Agreement. It is a tremendous opportunity for Corrymeela at this juncture to reflect on where we are now and where we have come from. In this section we ask some of the important questions surrounding peace-making and community relations in Northern Ireland and further a field.

How can we address the needs of a changing Northern Ireland while still supporting the process of reconciliation which is definitely a long-term task? What is our role as individuals within this post-conflict society and what responsibilities do we carry as citizens to be instrumental in peace-building and community restoration? These are big questions. We invite you to reflect with us, as together we carve out the path of peace for the next ten years.

The Big Fish, Laganside, Belfast, symbolizes a new law of the land, one where the tide has unquestionably turned; where peace and prosperity can be shared between us as we continue to build an interdependent future together. We cannot go back from where we came. Little by little the murals are changing, and opinions are too. It is a tireless journey that all fish take, charging up-river to be reborn, spawning a new generation to inhabit these seas.



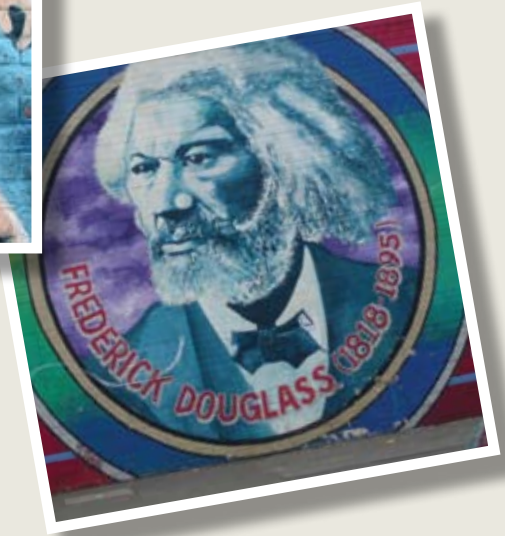
The changing



Danny Devenney, ex-Republican Prisoner and prolific muralist:

'I think murals give a voice to communities on both sides of the cultural divide. Speaking from a nationalist point of view, our murals have evolved with the community, reflecting the prevailing feeling and mood during the various stages of a difficult political process. The nationalist community has always been in favour of the Good Friday Agreement and the murals very much reflect this positivity. Before, murals depicted issues that weren't being addressed by society. Now, however, with elected representatives in place, murals are dedicated to creating solidarity globally, for example highlighting the Palestinian conflict and dealing with issues affecting the daily lives of community members. Murals can help in a small way to shed light on important social causes, expressing our heritage and community achievements.'

face of murals



Mark Irvine, son of David Irvine and celebrated muralist:

'Before, murals were largely used to demark territory in the different sections of society; now they have become more educational and an act of celebration, and are used to spread ideas, be they social, historical or cultural. I think they are aesthetic works of art in their own right and I personally can appreciate the visual imagery detached from any political message. What murals are coming to reflect now is definitely more palatable for society as a whole. The Guernica piece on the Lower Falls painted by Danny and myself is a perfect example of how murals are being used to educate and empathise. Murals are a way of motivating the people on the street. The political situation here is a first for everyone and, like a flower, peace needs to grow from the ground up, and we need to engage people at ground level independent of what's going on at Stormont. Murals are a small way of doing just that.'

Mediation

from margins to mainstream

Interview with Brendan McAlister courtesy of Innate – Irish Network for Non-Violent Action Training & Education

YOU GOT INVOLVED IN POLITICAL ACTIVITIES in the 'seventies and the peace scene in a major way in the 1980s. Why, and can you say something about those early days?

I think my interest in peace always felt vocational; as a practising Catholic it felt spiritual, a spiritual imperative living in a society being wrecked by violence. So I felt a moral obligation and a spiritual pull to the field. When I got uncomfortable in party politics because of the partisan nature of its approach to peace, I was invited to get involved with Pax Christi, the Catholic peace movement, around about 1982, and I felt more at home with people working for peace in Northern Ireland but in a way that was cross-community.

You've also been involved in Corrymeela.

Yes, I first got involved with Corrymeela as a probation officer around about 1980–81. Elizabeth, my wife, and I had a chance to go there with prisoners' families and I was very touched by that experience. In the early phases of my career as a probation officer, I was used to visiting the wives and families of prisoners and offenders but to actually go away with them was a totally different experience, a very satisfying and insightful one. Indeed my involvement in Corrymeela came professionally, through social work, not through the peace scene. But obviously when there with the Corrymeelians I got to start talking peace with them.

Is that a recognised noun – 'Corrymeelians'?

It is one Roel Kaptein used to use; he was Dutch and he got away with it. I got involved with Corrymeela in 1988 when my father died. I was very close to him and his death led me into a period of introspection about what I was doing with my life. My involvement with Pax Christi took me off to Dublin, leaving Elizabeth with small children – I might as well have still been

in politics. Getting involved in Corrymeela was something Elizabeth could identify with and we could do as a family.

You started work with what is now Mediation Northern Ireland (MNI) in 1992. Mediation has moved from the margins to the mainstream in this time, both locally and further afield. What comments would you have on that journey?

Part of the expectation would have been to mainstream mediative activity. My task, and our agency's ongoing mission, is to help develop the appetite for mediation, and the belief in it in our culture, and help develop a field of practitioners to satisfy that need. That has been the long-term task, and obviously still is. Implicit in that is the idea of mainstreaming an approach to conflict that sees the involvement of third party assistance as what people normally do.

How successful do you think that journeying has been by MNI and other agencies and individuals in the field?

I think we're only at the start of it. Our work became very defined by the Troubles yet there were many people behind the development of Mediation Northern Ireland who were not particularly energised by the Troubles. From diverse backgrounds they came together united by a common goal, to develop ideas of mediation for their respective causes. I think now we are coming out of the Troubles we come back to the new challenge of developing mediation in normality as opposed to in abnormality.

MNI chose not to get involved in work with children and young people, in general. Was this just a pragmatic decision based on resources?

Yes, entirely. There were people involved in founding the organisation whose interest was in the potential to work with families. We decided in the end we just couldn't do all these things. I

believe that family work, and work with children, is fundamental to peacebuilding and I regret not being able to do it; I don't regret that we decided not to, we simply couldn't do everything.

Why did MNI get involved in work in England?

Initially I didn't want to. I was asked to speak at a seminar in Whitehall and they brought a fairly influential group of local government chief executives together in London to hear ideas about how to promote community cohesion. I was asked to talk about the potential of mediation and I initially said 'this isn't our field' and referred them to Mediation UK. But the Whitehall person said – no, mediators in England tend to work on micro disputes, there is nobody working on macro, large societal issues. And we were used to that here because that is where we chose to start, which was controversial here of course.

And then we got invited to be involved in the north-west of England, in Oldham. I quickly saw it as an opportunity for us to learn important things about race, about ethnic conflict, that we couldn't here, with a view to the future. So why we got involved in England – one, we were asked to; two, it was clearly going to be a great learning experience for us, and has been; and three, it was a good income stream.

And the outcomes of the work in England?

It has met all of our hopes and aspirations. The work is growing and falls into two broad areas, one is what I call social cohesion. Here we need to talk about our work, conceptualise it in non-peacebuilding terms because this wasn't a society that saw itself at war. I think the major difference between England and Northern Ireland is that we are seen as a divided society, and can't really argue with that, whereas England is a society with division. One area of social cohesion work focuses on trying to promote social partnership between different sectors of society; the other area centres on justice and policing dealing with gang culture, guns and knives – an area we can later implement here in Northern Ireland.

What is the secret of the universe?

John Lederach once gave me a little cartoon and it showed two people. One was a wee man with a dark suit and a preacher's hat on him and he was sitting with a book which was clearly the good book, the Bible. The other says to him, 'Preacher, tell me something profound.' And in the next frame the wee man is saying, 'Life is short and so am I.' And in the next frame 'First you're born,

and then you die.'! John Lederach gave that to me and I stuck it on the wall, and I wish I hadn't lost it, because the secret of the universe is not to take life too seriously, to realise we are only around for a short time, and we can only make a small contribution, and we don't have to achieve everything, and not to lose our capacity for joy. Having said that, while I might think I now know that secret, doesn't mean that it makes any difference to how I live my life.

You were recently appointed as one of four victims commissioners in Northern Ireland. Will there be a direct link or connection between the work done by this office and the outcome of the Dealing with the Past Consultative Group?

We're due to meet the Consultative Group on the Past, there is a clear link between the needs of victims and survivors and the need to deal with the past. Of course dealing with the past is wider than victims and survivors but my own view is that our approach to the past should be victim-survivor focused; this allows us to reflect on the past and build a shared future as well.

What do you see as the most urgent task or tasks for the victims commissioners and what can the person in the street, and civil society groups, contribute in this area?

I don't have a ready-made answer except to say, my hope is that each citizen will feel some sense of responsibility for making sure we learn the important lessons from the past, and infuse them into what will be a wiser society, moving on. We are in many ways civically impoverished by our experience of the Troubles but potentially humanly enriched. It would be better, of course, if we hadn't come through it but given that we have, I think there is a duty on us now to make sure that future generations in this particular society benefit from the misery. We will do that by being awake and having a critical awareness of where we have come from, and not escaping into evenings spent watching *The Champions' League* or *Coronation Street*, which is fine to do as well. That is one of our achievements through the Troubles; that so many people stayed normal, but up ahead for every citizen, it's to feel that sense of moral obligation I think is what I would like to promote.

Mediation Northern Ireland (MNI) is based at 83 University Street, Belfast. t 028 - 9043 8614

<http://www.mediationnorthernireland.org/>

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our
approach
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victim-
survivor
focused



Brendan McAlister is a member of the Corrymeela Community and outgoing director of Mediation Northern Ireland (MNI). He was recently appointed as one of four victims commissioners for Northern Ireland.

As individuals committed to the diverse and often challenging process of local and international peace building, Zandy Craig and Susan McEwan offer their views and reflections on the Good Friday Agreement and the reality of life here ten years on.

Individual reflections



Zandy Craig is a graduate of the University of Ulster and an active Corrymeela volunteer in his early twenties.



Susan McEwan is a Corrymeela programme facilitator, Masters Student and mother of three.

Where were you when the Good Friday Agreement was signed? Were you optimistic?

Zandy: I was about 13 and the freedom summer holidays of second year were looming large on the horizon. Like many of my experiences of the deeper-lying divisions in Northern Ireland during my school years, the peace talks fell into a similar category as the Union Jack billowing in our playground. Everyone knew the subconscious significance amongst the lunch-time laughter but its explosive nature meant the topic rarely found its way beyond visual displays or subtle comments. That changed in the days after the Agreement. I remember watching the 6 o'clock news at home with my parents in Ballycastle on the day the deal was signed and feeling very excited that we were finally moving somewhere – anywhere – peaceful. I was hugely optimistic; I think at that age I thought the Agreement was the full stop on the book of conflict rather than just the end of another chapter in a long saga.

Susan: I remember it was a cold day and I was at home with my son Charlie who was only a toddler then. Watching the news on television I felt a sense of anticipation and hope; but for me the day of the Referendum was more significant; I was in Portrush when I heard the news and told the kids to remember this day; for me that is when things really began to move forward.

What is your lasting impression of the Good Friday Agreement?

Zandy: I think if we seek to shift how people grapple with power in society, from violent to democratic, it means you must have a political deal. For all its faults I think when I look at the history of the Troubles in Northern Ireland the Good Friday Agreement marked that turn of the tide. I think much like waves coming up and drawing back down the beach there is always a sense that Northern Ireland politics seems caught in an agonising back and forth, but I think the Agreement signalled a major political shift of the tide towards a more peaceful society. As we all know it takes much

more than changes in political institutions to move to a pluralist society but in tandem with grassroots movement it is where we start.

Susan: I recall it was snowing but I guess Ian Paisley being turned away and the iconic image of Hume and the others outside Stormont was the lasting impression of the Good Friday Agreement.

What have been some of the events that have stood out for you in the last 10 years, both positive and negative?

Zandy: For the most outstanding positive of an agonisingly slow peace process I think it's hard to see past the Agreement last May that brought Stormont back online, with Sinn Féin and the DUP sitting and even talking in the same room, and that provided a previously inconceivable leadership duo – the chuckle brothers (Revd Ian Paisley and Martin McGuinness). On the flip side I think the recent Ian Paisley Jnr scandal exposed the ugly side of politics that seemingly exists across the world, and that creates such a mistrust and disenchantment from the public towards their representatives. Stepping away from the obvious to a movement more than an event, I think the growth and emergence from the shadows of the Northern Irish art scene has been a massive positive that is just one of a number of movements providing the space to foster just the kind of creative social cohesion and cultural identity this society is crying out for. There are many more, but finally, as far as earth-shattering, life-changing personal events go, Northern Ireland beating Sweden in the European qualifiers was huge!

Susan: The major events for me have been the Referendum, the interface violence, the Bono concert with Trimble and Hume, Clinton's visit and of course the bank robbery; a reminder of the various hurdles the government has had to overcome over the years. As well as these the McCartney murder and Sinn Féin's subsequent exclusion from the White House on St Patrick's Day was very telling, but the focus of everything shifted after 9/11. I believe this had a huge impact on our own peace process, with the US no longer able to support anything related to violence of any kind everyone had to move forward.

Have you noticed any significant changes during the last 10 years; if so what?

Zandy: A more subtle change appears to have been the shift of the long-held divisions that fuelled the Troubles to generally a more covert rather than overt expression that remains beneath the surface of the society, and when inspected a little closer reveals clear examples, such as 'peace' walls that have actually grown in size and number, of a society still with deep social divisions. As a direct result of Northern Ireland feeling locally and being regarded globally as a much safer place I think the economic boom that has followed has been very visible, with huge rises in capital investment and tourism. As a result I think one of the most dramatic changes has actually been the shift in Northern Ireland demographics; we have had an explosion of peoples and cultures arriving on our shores in the past 10 years seeking to benefit from the growing economy. I think this has been somewhat of a double-edged sword. On some levels the growing cultural diversity has helped broaden previously relatively narrow horizons to seeing and experiencing that Northern Ireland is actually a very small piece of land in a very big and diverse world. On an other, expressed through the slogans of 'Poles out' or swastikas that now litter many walls that hold sectarian graffiti, the rate of change in demographic has exposed the size of the ugly head of racism prevalent in Northern Ireland.

Susan: I think the most significant trend to emerge over the past decade is the increased participation by nationalist communities in peace and reconciliation and the increased disillusion of the unionist communities.

Do you think Northern Ireland is a better place now because of the GFA?

Zandy: Yes.

Susan: I think Northern Ireland is a better place to live compared to ten years ago, however I don't feel this is due to the Good Friday Agreement itself but to a much bigger process taking place and because people have simply been getting on with their lives.

Who have been some of the main characters for you?

Zandy: There are the obvious political names – Gerry Adams, Ian Paisley, Tony Blair, Bertie Ahern, David Trimble and I think John Hume's role often goes unmentioned these days. However I think the main characters are the hundreds of unknown names that worked and continue to work tirelessly every

day towards building positive relationships between communities.

Susan: I'd have to say Gerry Kelly, Martin McGuinness, David Irvine, Monica McWilliams and David Trimble.

What challenges face us 10 years on?

Zandy: Globally and as a 'western' society based on a capitalist free market economy we face huge environmental challenges that cut to the very root of our relationship to the world upon which we depend. I think one localised symptom already evident is the seemingly exponential rate of immigration Northern Ireland is experiencing that, along with its many benefits, will and is causing growing economic and cultural challenges.

Susan: I think it is essential we do not take peace for granted. Increased poverty and social issues are proven precursors to conflict, and at the moment these are two areas that are not being handled well. Racism is on the increase and the gap between the wealthy and those living on the breadline is ever widening.

Where would you like Northern Ireland to be 10 years from now?

Zandy: I would love to see Northern Ireland with a functioning Stormont Parliament elected on policy that represents and looks after the needs of all its people. With the huge investment currently planned for our infrastructure over the next ten years I would love to see Northern Ireland thinking globally and acting locally, taking a lead on environmental sustainability in the UK. I truly hope that learning can be drawn from our past and that the new faces that arrive are welcomed into a society seeking pluralism, not one of segregated non-violent co-existence.

Susan: Ten years from now I hope to see real politics embedded into Northern Ireland. It is important tribal politics is replaced with social politics dealing with the daily issues facing Northern Irish citizens. We need to learn from our past conflict and equip our communities to deal with difference peacefully.

Liza Kelly, former Corrymeela family worker, now Training Project Manager with Tides, was also interviewed and her reflections can be read online at www.corrymeela.org

Interested in reading more? *Ten Years On* continues on our website.



Questions posed by Alyson McElroy-Jones

Catch up with Corrymeela



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Corrymeela makes a real difference to the lives of children and families; this depends on your donations. Support our work by becoming a friend of Corrymeela and keep up to date with news, events and community life. Friends also receive a complimentary copy of this magazine.

www.corrymeela.org

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Expiry date Issue No (Switch only) _____

Start date
if applicable

Security Code

Please give the last three digits that are printed on the signature strip on the reverse of the card

Cardholder's name _____

Signature _____ Date _____

Tick here if you would like to gift aid your donation increasing the value at no cost to you

Thank you

