



UP Standing

Stories of courage from Northern Ireland

Project funded by:



INTERNATIONAL FUND FOR IRELAND

 the
Corrymeela
community

About the Corrymeela Community

Corrymeela is an inclusive Christian Community founded in 1965 by Reverend Ray Davey, assisted by a group of students from Queen's University Belfast. Corrymeela's mission is: embracing difference, healing division and enabling reconciliation. Our vision is of a peaceful and sustainable society based on social justice, positive relationships and respect for diversity.

www.corrymeela.org

About Facing History and Ourselves

Facing History and Ourselves, founded in 1976, is an international educational and professional development organisation whose mission is to engage students of diverse backgrounds in an examination of racism, prejudice, and antisemitism in order to promote the development of more humane and informed citizens.

www.facinghistory.org



UP Standing - Stories of courage from Northern Ireland is part of the 'UP Standing' series which features this written collection of stories, a 45 minute film containing 10 of the stories from this publication and an educators guide to support classroom use.

The UP Standing series has been produced as part of 'Facing our History, Shaping the Future', a project of the Corrymeela Community in partnership with Facing History and Ourselves.

For more information on the Upstanding series visit www.corrymeela.org

FACING OUR HISTORY
SHAPING THE FUTURE



INTERNATIONAL FUND FOR IRELAND

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FOREWORD

Sean Pettis

Facing our History, Shaping the Future Coordinator
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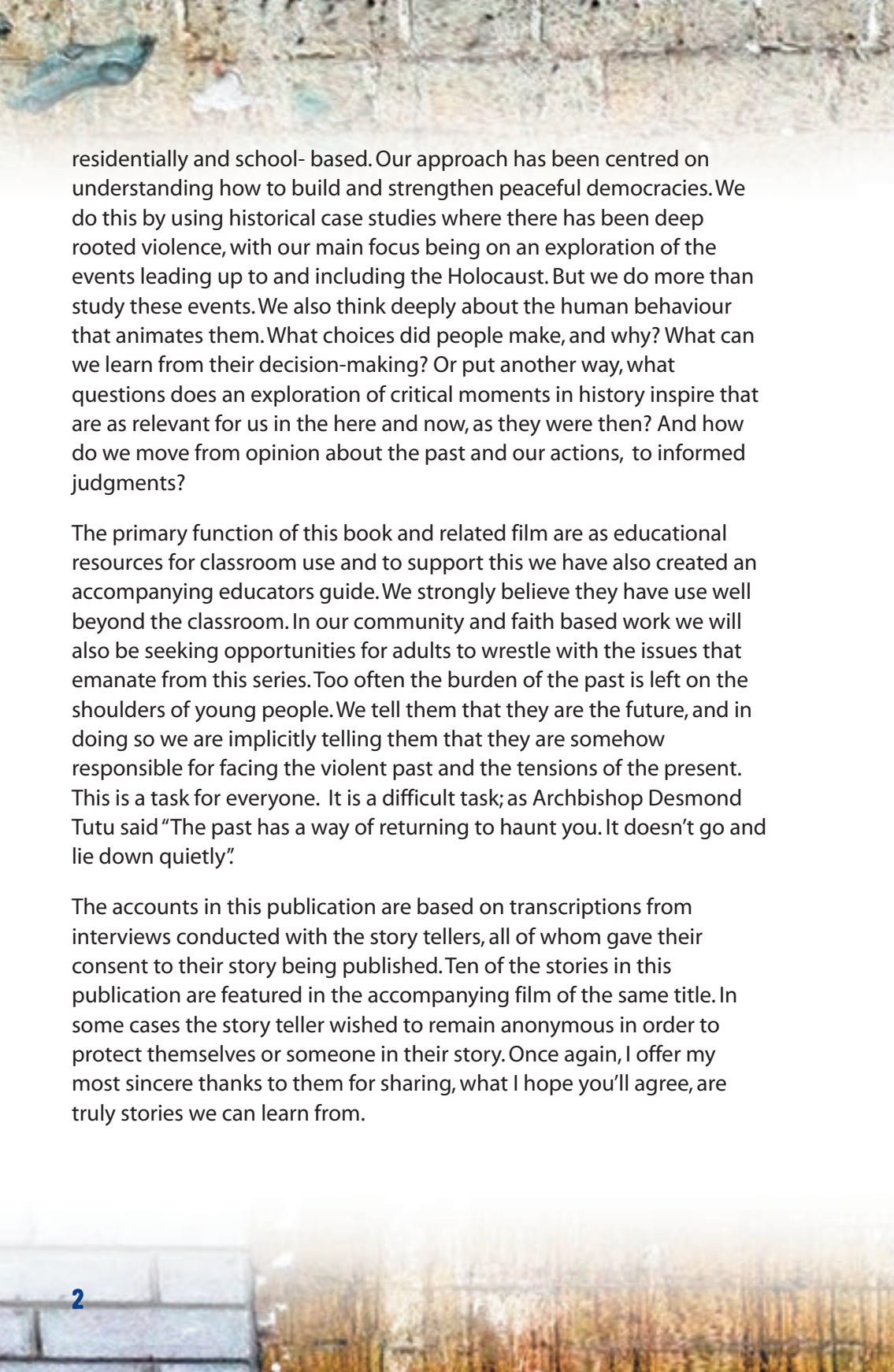


In the concluding chapter of his book, *‘Two Lands on One Soil,’* the late Frank Wright suggested that breaking the force of sectarian choices could rarely be done on a grand scale, but was rather more a case of “reinserting sanity in the middle of chaos.” Wright goes on to cite the example of George McMullan, a man from Sandy Row who during a period of sectarian expulsions in 1857, refused to evict a female lodger from his house who was of the “wrong” religion. In his closing comments Wright contends:

“He had no resource to turn the tide except his own conviction as he stood on the doorway facing a mob. There were probably many like him who were never remembered; so in remembering him, I am thinking of all like him.”

The production of this book on Upstanders and related film go some way to acknowledging and remembering some of those people ‘like him’ who have made different choices in Northern Ireland’s more recent past. UP Standing- Stories of courage from Northern Ireland is, we are sure, only a snapshot of such behaviour. We do hope, however, that it can begin a process of inspiring new stories to be told, so we can more fully understand the complexity of choices that were presented to individuals and groups. It is also our hope that such stories can inspire a greater sense of civic efficacy and resilience in our young people.

UP Standing has grown out of *‘Facing our History, Shaping the Future’* a project of the Corrymeela Community, in partnership with Facing History and Ourselves. Our work supports educators and young people to link lessons from the past to the moral choices we make today. We do this through teacher training and extensive follow up support as well as cross community learning opportunities for young people both



residentially and school- based. Our approach has been centred on understanding how to build and strengthen peaceful democracies. We do this by using historical case studies where there has been deep rooted violence, with our main focus being on an exploration of the events leading up to and including the Holocaust. But we do more than study these events. We also think deeply about the human behaviour that animates them. What choices did people make, and why? What can we learn from their decision-making? Or put another way, what questions does an exploration of critical moments in history inspire that are as relevant for us in the here and now, as they were then? And how do we move from opinion about the past and our actions, to informed judgments?

The primary function of this book and related film are as educational resources for classroom use and to support this we have also created an accompanying educators guide. We strongly believe they have use well beyond the classroom. In our community and faith based work we will also be seeking opportunities for adults to wrestle with the issues that emanate from this series. Too often the burden of the past is left on the shoulders of young people. We tell them that they are the future, and in doing so we are implicitly telling them that they are somehow responsible for facing the violent past and the tensions of the present. This is a task for everyone. It is a difficult task; as Archbishop Desmond Tutu said "The past has a way of returning to haunt you. It doesn't go and lie down quietly".

The accounts in this publication are based on transcriptions from interviews conducted with the story tellers, all of whom gave their consent to their story being published. Ten of the stories in this publication are featured in the accompanying film of the same title. In some cases the story teller wished to remain anonymous in order to protect themselves or someone in their story. Once again, I offer my most sincere thanks to them for sharing, what I hope you'll agree, are truly stories we can learn from.

AN INTRODUCTION TO UP STANDING - STORIES OF COURAGE FROM NORTHERN IRELAND

Dr Duncan Morrow



This publication should really be called “a short book about courage.” Because this is about courage in the raw, where people without any access to violence themselves found themselves faced with a choice- to bend to the use of violence by others, or to stand up and put themselves at direct and personal risk.

I have been honoured to know many of the people featured in this book. None of them saw or see themselves as heroes. But for me they were. Because their story involves endurance in the face of fear. This book does not highlight the absence of fear but the facing of it. Mary Healy was afraid. So was Paul’s mummy. There were consequences for the mental health and physical safety of others. At the time, very few of these people thought about courage or even thought it “courageous.” Taking down a paramilitary poster was a decision not a bid for glory.

But they stood up because they could do nothing else. Being human demanded nothing else. As one of the people in the story says, “What else was I to do?” But not to have done so would also have been all-too-human. And because they stood up, they affirmed a kind of humanity- rooted in solidarity with those at the receiving end of threat, intimidation and oppression- without which we have no future.

By their nature, these were small acts by ordinary people. In the world of political power, they are quickly written off as “ineffective,” “marginal” and “irrelevant.” But I think in our heart of hearts we all know differently. Part of the power of these stories, is their ability to make us humble about ourselves and the limits of our effectiveness. But for each of us, it is in these decisions that the rubber hits the road. Thankfully most of us are not required to make them. But it is important to know that should it be asked, all is not lost.

Because in the absence of courage, there is only fear. That is why the ability to confront fear, danger, uncertainty and intimidation was one of the four cardinal virtues in ancient Greece and one of the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit in the medieval church. As Samuel Johnston commented, "Courage is the greatest of the virtues, because if you have not courage, you may not have the opportunity to use any of the others."

This book is about moral as well as physical courage: people who acted rightly in the face of popular opposition, shame, scandal and discouragement. It is the disturbing evidence of something we do not always understand; that humanity sometimes depends on the upstanding of one person against the moral indifference or depravity of the crowd. It tells stories of people holding out against the normal collusion with the abuse of power, sometimes alone. Because the deepest opposite of courage is not cowardice, it is conformity. At its most extreme these people seem like the only humans in an inhuman world. Just because "Johnny" is out of step does not mean that he is always wrong. So, this is a book about small people and big themes. It is about small impact and huge importance. It is about grace under pressure.

This is important on at least three levels. Firstly this is not a book for preachers but one for doers. It is the power of showing not telling, of acting not theorising. It has nothing to do with "do-gooding" and everything to do with doing good. Secondly, it reaffirms the real meaning of hope. Hope is too often reduced to a kind of vague optimism about the future. In this book, hope for the future of humanity is actually made plausible by the continuing acts of bravery and humanity even where they might be thought impossible. The evidence of things seen is the ground of our faith in things as yet unseen. Thirdly, it gives flesh to the idea of ethics and morality. Through this book about specific actions by ordinary and no doubt flawed people we are invited again to consider what matters, what we can and could be and also that humanity depends less on the guarantee of success than on people willing to put themselves forward at times when it seems hopeless. This is no utilitarian calculus, but a series of acts of madness through which we might all be saved.

Yet it is also enormously important on a political level. It reminds us that participation in the violence of the past is not limited to soldiers and victims, but extends to a wide circle of those in its orbit. The stories rescue the contribution of the ordinary and the humane from the obscurity which is the result of our obsession with violence and the violent. By rescuing some of the real heroes it also re-establishes the proper moral order. More than the calculators, the killers and even the political actors who took the plaudits, these are the people who saved the future by keeping alive a flicker of human spirit. And we are reminded that this contribution was not confined to people from one side or another of a conflict or community at war, but was a response that goes far deeper than superficial "sides" to the heart of what we shared together. Through these kinds of stories we are rescued from the romanticism that "we" were human, and "they" were not.

On a more sobering level, we are also reminded that the scale of trauma in violent conflict. None of the abuses of power and threat recorded in this book were made amenable to the law. The death threats, the stress of a poster, the cost of standing up in a bus or standing with a fire extinguisher in the face of a mob do not "count." What this film tells us is that the measurable and the measured are but the surface of the damage of violence, and that the scars and their impact are immeasurable.

UP Standing is both a wonderful book and film. Its champions, participants, makers and sponsors are to be congratulated. Its easy access nature allows us to hope that it can be used in the classroom, in communities and in youth clubs. Above all, it allows us to hope with Maya Angelou that, "History, despite all its wrenching pain cannot be un-lived, but if faced with courage it need not be lived again."

Duncan Morrow is a lecturer in Politics at the University of Ulster.

A DIFFERENT SONG

Jim Rainey

When the Troubles began, a Northern Ireland football match was seen as an opportunity for fans to show their Britishness, and that they wouldn't be defeated by this new regime and the new Troubles that were coming along. As a result it was mainly British emblems that were in the kop (spectator stand). The colour of the kop was red, white and blue even though the team on the pitch was playing in green and white. So in the 70s and 80s the football song we sang at Northern Ireland matches was "Hello, Hello, we are the Billy Boys," and there was a line in it which read "we're up to our neck in Fenian blood." You didn't really think about it at the time; you were just singing it; that's what you sang at football matches even though the guy beside you was a Catholic.

I began to think about it - what about the guys on the pitch, the players there, half of them are representing Northern Ireland and half of them are Catholics and how do they feel when we're singing songs like that? I said to myself- that can't be right let's try and change it.

We had been building up the "Football for All" project and it was going really well. We were trying to encourage other groups to come in, people who wouldn't traditionally support Northern Ireland, just to show them that the atmosphere was changing. Everything was going quite well until the night that Neil Lennon, who had previously signed for

Celtic, was booed each time he caught the ball. There is nothing much that you can do when a crowd of 50 start chanting - it's not a case of where you can challenge people and say don't be doing that, or knock that on the head.



I felt let down by the Northern Ireland fans. I had been trying to encourage others to come along and support football; putting out this message that things were changing ; that the craic's great; that you'll have a good time going to watch N.Ireland; the atmosphere will be great.

By this time the Northern Ireland supporter clubs had started to amalgamate and we had enough people by then to decide -right we'll do something about this. We reckoned that football fans tend to just sing what others start so we made an agreement with the IFA, to get 800 people into the kop stand and I would bring the megaphone and we would start chants. I went down into Belfast and bought a megaphone and during games started to chant "Green and White Army," along with the two drums, the base drums... BOOM BOOM, GREEN AND WHITE ARMY, BOOM BOOM... and it gradually spread throughout the ground. Had it not worked or had people told me that this was ridiculous, we'd have stopped it.

So these type of songs and chants have now become the norm and as a result there are no sectarian chants at matches. I don't even have to try and drown out sectarian songs because they don't happen as everybody has bought into these new chants and new songs.

Some people would suggest that I was a bit of a hero but I'm saying that it's not me- it's the Northern Ireland fans who have done this. One person couldn't do that; you need all the Northern Ireland fans backing it. If there was only one person it wouldn't happen.



A KNOCK AT THE DOOR

Paul and Valerie Hutchinson

You open your door and you let a wee girl in who's hurting, and why would you not do that again?

I remember it being mostly a Protestant street, a Protestant area... there used to be three Catholics, then there were two, then there was one and then there was none. As my Mummy used to say, "the troubles were creeping up the road," but you don't feel it until it gets into your street. There were bombings on the news every night, there were guns on the streets, lots of things were happening. I was ten, my brother was four and my Mummy... this is her story.

There's a commotion on the street and there is banging on the doors and eventually banging on our door, our wee terrace and my Mummy opens the door to this wee girl who's in floods of tears. She recognises her from four doors up though doesn't really know the family that well - they were quite quiet. The wee girl just blurts out, "They're gonna kill my Daddy, somebody's trying to kill my Daddy." Bearing in mind my Mummy is shy, quiet... she's not the sort of person who is out on the streets, going around shouting at people -but she feels she has got to do the right thing, and for her that is to bring the wee girl in, try and quieten her down and see what is the matter. She decides to phone the police who arrive 15 minutes later. Nobody is arrested as by that stage the people involved were gone. We later realised that they belonged to a paramilitary organisation.

Next morning our front windows are put in. Mummy simply says, "there is a brick on the table, and glass on the floor." We hadn't even heard it; it must have happened in the early morning or late at night. The next



night bottles are thrown from the entry outside into our yard and this kept going on every night for a week. We didn't know when it was going to happen but the bottles kept flying over the wall. Mummy later told me—"I was frightened for you, I was frightened for me, I was frightened for your brother, frightened for your Daddy; wondering why are people doing this?"



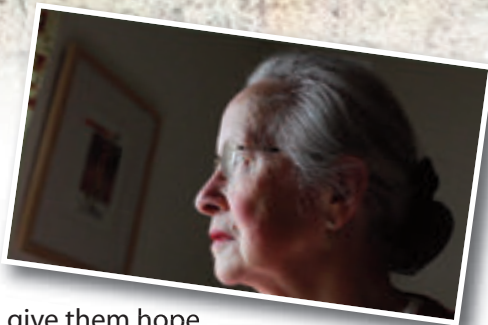
We then found out that we were targeted because my Mummy had opened the door to the wee girl and had phoned the police. We were put on the emergency housing list and within two months we had moved.

That one act of kindness led to us having to leave our house, leave our home, our schools and for me, my mates. We moved to a place that was very alien to me, and so the consequence for me was having to start a new life with new friends. When I asked my Mummy why she did it? She said -"Paul what else would you do, some wee girl's upset, comes to your door and says "somebody's gonna shoot my daddy." What would you do, what would anybody do?"

A LONELY MARCH

Mary Healy

We were the Armagh Peace People and we had set up the group to bring people together, to give them hope through nonviolence. We had a great response to that.



I didn't think at that time of the whole political thing you know. I was aware that Catholics and Protestants worked together within the groups I was involved in and I was also aware that some people may not have liked my involvement.

As a result of my name being in the press I got a lot of phone calls and they were phone calls I couldn't cope with. The language was horrible—saying what they'd do with me if I went ahead with these meetings. It came to a stage when my husband couldn't cope with those phone calls and I said I would be the only one to answer the phone. So I would just lift the phone, listen to it and set it down again. I never thought very much about who they were other than that they opposed the sense of us trying to do something in a non-violent way. I presumed that they were from my own denomination. Then one day I got a letter and it was a life threatening letter. It was from a paramilitary group— they didn't specify who nor did they give names or anything but their last sentence was something like, "you or a member of your family will be shot if you go ahead with the proposed march." (The Armagh Peace Group was planning a march to raise awareness).



I remember after getting the life-threatening letter, going up the stairs and feeling that I'm alone in this now and praying about it and saying- "my god, I give you my family, my home, my house, myself," and I suppose there was a release; a relief in that. So after that I didn't lose any sleep- there was a peace in that and that's where I got my strength from.

There was one clergyman whom I had contact with and he said- "you know you don't talk about this letter; you don't spread fear; you have to hold on to this and go forward, without anybody around you knowing what may or may not happen."

The proposed march started in the centre of Armagh on Market St and moved down round the town with people joining us at different parts. There were huge numbers in the end. No opposition showed up on that day that I can remember. We made speeches and sang songs which I suppose gave people a short time of happiness if nothing else. They weren't afraid to be on their streets and that was important at that time. I always think of the woman who said to me that we were all going to be killed and I felt no we're not and that we must give people hope.



A SAFE JOURNEY HOME

‘James’

I was teaching in a State high school that was considered a Protestant school for Protestant boys. The school was set in a part of Belfast which was split into two main areas, controlled by different loyalist paramilitary groups (the UDA and the UVF). During the early 1980s, shortly after the hunger strikes when tensions were high, difficulties had arisen between the two paramilitary groups. This often meant that young people from one area were not welcome in the other. I had just finished my teaching duties for the day, and was clearing up some homework books, when a fifteen year old boy came to the door. I knew the boy well and he came over to the desk.

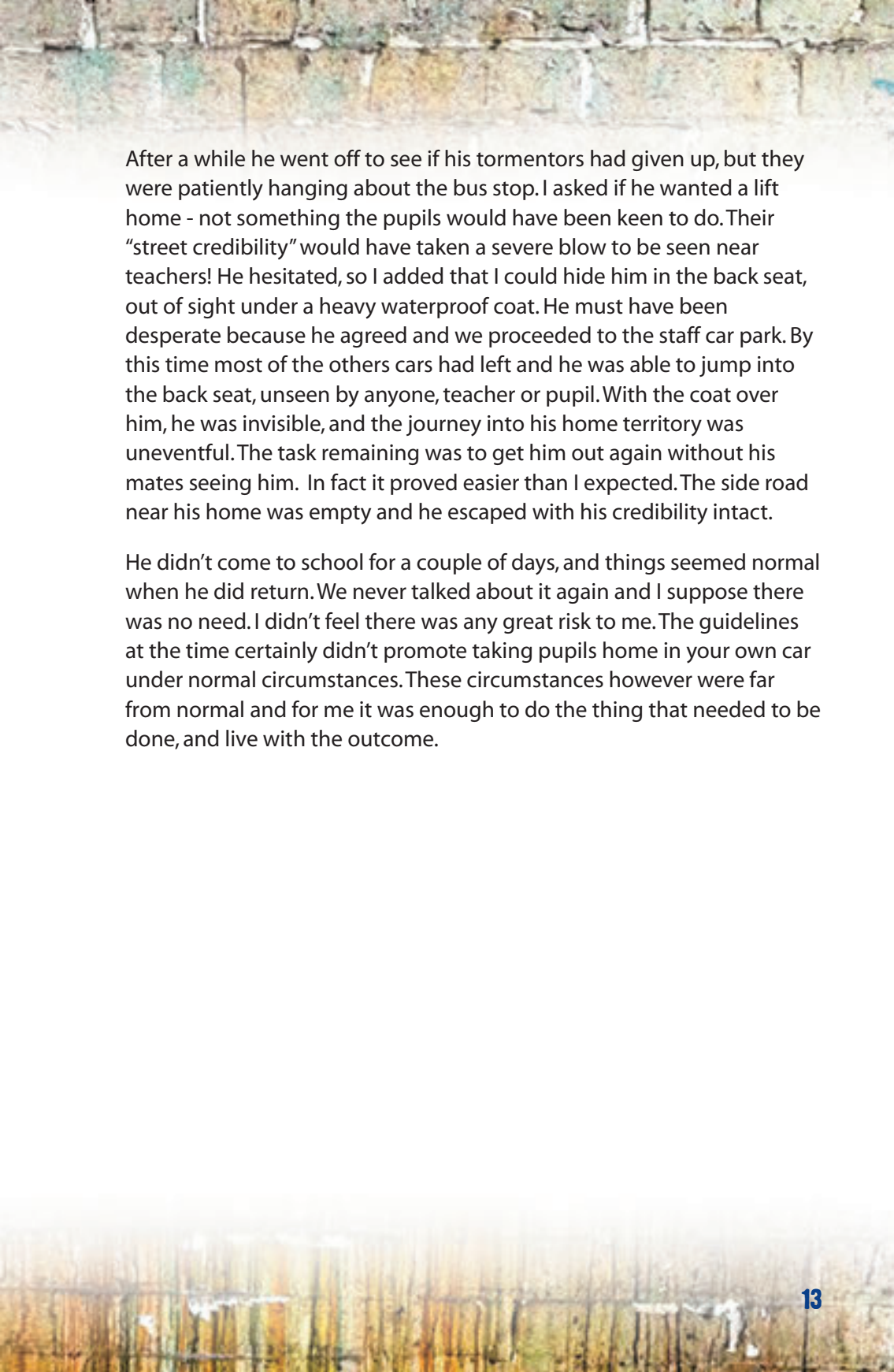
“They’ve come to get me, Sir,” were his first words.

“Who has come?” I asked.

“The UVF, they’re waiting at the gates.”

I didn’t ask why as he’d only have had to think up some story, so I told him to sit and maybe they would tire and go home. The boy lived in the UDA controlled area and to get home he would normally have taken the bus from in front of the school.





After a while he went off to see if his tormentors had given up, but they were patiently hanging about the bus stop. I asked if he wanted a lift home - not something the pupils would have been keen to do. Their "street credibility" would have taken a severe blow to be seen near teachers! He hesitated, so I added that I could hide him in the back seat, out of sight under a heavy waterproof coat. He must have been desperate because he agreed and we proceeded to the staff car park. By this time most of the others cars had left and he was able to jump into the back seat, unseen by anyone, teacher or pupil. With the coat over him, he was invisible, and the journey into his home territory was uneventful. The task remaining was to get him out again without his mates seeing him. In fact it proved easier than I expected. The side road near his home was empty and he escaped with his credibility intact.

He didn't come to school for a couple of days, and things seemed normal when he did return. We never talked about it again and I suppose there was no need. I didn't feel there was any great risk to me. The guidelines at the time certainly didn't promote taking pupils home in your own car under normal circumstances. These circumstances however were far from normal and for me it was enough to do the thing that needed to be done, and live with the outcome.

CROSSING BOUNDARIES

Rab Toland

I was in secondary school from 1968, just before the troubles actually started, and went to Kelvin School in Roden Street. Where I lived we could've gone up the Grosvenor Road or the Donegall Road, but that was the only year that happened because after that we had to go up the Donegall Road because the Grosvenor road was a Catholic area and going through with a Protestant school uniform on wouldn't have been a clever idea. I was involved with the school's sports teams and enjoyed loads of different sports. At the time growing up in Sandy Row I was a member of the Junior Orange Order but that was coming to an end for me because of my age and just my interests.

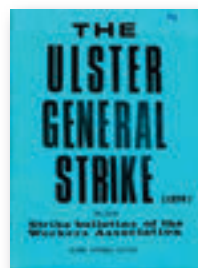
I got involved with Corrymeela through school and seemed to enjoy it. There were other things going on that I got involved with like the 'blue lamp discos' which were run by the community relations officers of the Police. They felt they were too old maybe to run them for teenagers and got a couple of us guys to give them a hand at doing DJ. We ran them in different places like Corrymeela in Ballycastle, sometimes around the Queen's University area and places like that - neutral venues I suppose you could call them. I enjoyed doing that and going up to Corrymeela making canoes, doing various things and various activities.



The groups were mixed (Catholic and Protestant) and I was quite content with that, but I wasn't sure how everybody else would've felt about that. There certainly was no problem from my parents or family members, but I just was concerned with what other people in the area might of thought,

so I didn't make it too widely known... and while I travelled around Belfast getting involved with the youth groups, we tended to get out of the area or up into the university area to be picked up.

As I grew older during that early period in the 1970s and coming up into the mid late teens I was starting to become one of the guys that was involved in looking after some of the younger kids and getting involved in some of the projects that were going on. During the Ulster Workers' strike, I was asked to go to Corrymeela, but I was wondering how I was getting out of the area? People might ask where would I be going, why was I leaving the area?



So I just decided it would be better if my sister who lived close by came down with her baby in the pram, with my clothes underneath and a bag concealed somewhere. I got myself out of the area and then got a lift to Ballycastle. I felt that the less people knew the better. I knew I wasn't doing anything wrong, there were just some things I wasn't comfortable people knowing I was doing. I enjoyed the whole opportunity to mix with different people and not only people of another religion, but people from other countries who I would never have met otherwise.

Corrymeela also gave me the opportunity to meet with people of a similar or slightly older age who were studying at Queen's University or the Northern Ireland Polytechnic. I was studying Mechanical Engineering part-time at the then Belfast College of Technology and working in a local engineering firm. Meeting these people made me realize there was nothing stopping me from going onto higher education; it was just something I had never considered before going to Corrymeela.

GET ON THE BUS

‘Gillian’

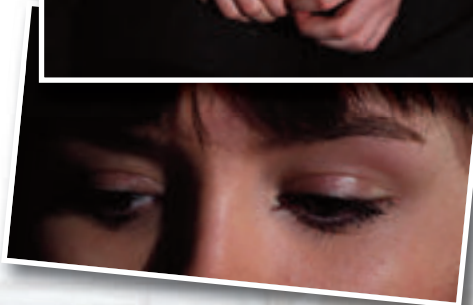
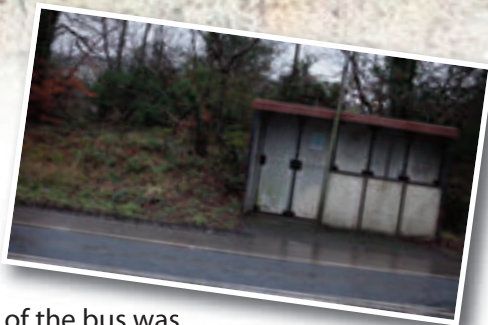
We were the minority on the bus; there would have been maybe 20 Protestants and the rest of the bus was Catholic. My first awareness of there being a difference between us, was the morning bus journey to secondary school - the fact that the Protestant kids knew their place and sat in the first four to five rows and the Catholic kids all sat at the back of the bus. As a 12 year old you just accept that that is how it is. You don't question it; you just take your seat and that was it.

I never saw it coming; it was never talked about it so I wasn't expecting what happened. The older boys in the bus came down to the front, grabbed one of the younger 1st or 2nd year Protestant boys, took him to the back of the bus and then they ripped the young boy's boxers off and threw them down the aisle of the bus. They lay there where they had landed, so you knew what had happened without actually having to have seen it. Once they'd done that the young boy came back down to his seat but he wasn't allowed to lift his boxers.

For me sitting on the bus, not looking back and not doing anything for many years, it was something that just bubbled up inside of me. And I

was so angry with the older Protestant kids on the school bus because I felt they were in the perfect position to do something, to say something, to stand up to the older boys... but nobody ever did.

As I grew older, I became more confident in myself. Instead of just keeping my head down, looking forward and pretending that



nothing was going on, I started to sort of actually look at them, trying to make eye contact as if to say- "what are you doing?" By making eye contact with the person that's doing it, you are sort of showing them that you are aware of what they are doing and that you're not going to sit with your head down and look forward, pretending that it's ok. I also tried to make eye contact with the other Catholic kids on the bus and I was trying to gauge what did they think of what was actually going on?

I knew that I was going to be leaving school soon; I knew that if I didn't do something that this sort of thing was just going to keep on happening; I knew that I didn't want to leave that bus with this continuing. My friend and I agreed that the next time that we thought this (bullying) was going to happen, that we would stand up and block them, so that's what we did. Whenever they came down the aisle, we got up, stood in front of them and told them that we weren't letting them past. They just sort of said, "right," turned around, went back and sat down at the back of the bus again. From that time, the dynamics on the school bus completely changed. There was no more bullying, no more fear, no threat anymore from them. We started to mix.

I don't see it as being heroic. I just didn't want there to be the element of fear; I didn't want somebody telling me how it had to be. I wanted to change that.



HONOURING THE DEAD

Ian Milne



In Portadown and Lurgan there were very few funerals done by Protestants for Catholics or Catholics for Protestants. About 5 years ago someone walked into my office and said to me, "is Ian Milne about?" I shook hands with him and I said "I'm Ian Milne". He said, "do you bury Catholics?" and I said, "only if they are dead." He said, "you'll do me."

Some people might still be of the opinion that "he buries Catholics, we'll not go to him," but I feel it's very appropriate to bury anyone who comes and honours me with their loved one.

One of the first deaths I attended was as a trainee funeral director. A part time UDR (Ulster Defence Regiment) man who had been out on his daily work had been shot. He had been selected from the people he was working with and executed. As we delicately lifted his remains in a white sheet onto a stretcher, two school buses went past and the children on board started clapping and singing the Soldier's Song. Now I was then in my early twenties but my mind went straight back to home and this behaviour wouldn't have been acceptable in my home because the sanctity of life had been taken and it didn't matter who it was.

When I was working for another funeral firm in Lisburn there were two funerals on two consecutive days - ladies in their twenties and one was a Roman Catholic and one was a Protestant. The pain of the children however, was exactly the same.

Life is transitory; it is just a fleeting glimpse of this world and people forget that - we all think we're immortal. Yet you know, I bury people who are a few days old, 31yrs, 43 yrs, 101yrs and it's so important that we all live everyday as if it were our last.



LIVING NON VIOLENTLY

Rob Fairmichael

I'm a Protestant from the south of Ireland, married to a Catholic also from the south of Ireland, but we've lived in Belfast since 1975. I went to boarding school in the Border region of Northern Ireland and that was an interesting experience because it was a good introduction to the Protestant community in the North.



In school there was a British army cadet force which I was a member of for a couple of years. We were watching a British army training film on hand to hand combat. One side were the British and one side were the Russians, one side were doing all the winning and one side were doing all the dying, but there was no blood and guts. I think it was something about that lack of balance and surreal nature that made me think this is ridiculous. I think part of my reaction could have been because of Christian teaching, in terms of "loving your enemy," and I suppose coming from the south I was a bit removed from it – I didn't identify with British institutions like the Army and so I looked at it maybe in a different way.

So I handed back my uniform and said "that's it, no". The school very much saw the cadet force as part of the institution and when I started speaking out against that kind of approach at one stage the Principal told me to "shut up or get out" – that was a testing experience for a 16 year old to have. It was 1969 and that was the start of my involvement in nonviolence and peace activities.



The Troubles in Northern Ireland were a challenge for anyone believing in nonviolence. At times it seemed that all sides (republicans, loyalists, state, and those in alliance with these three) each supported whatever violence they could get away with. After involvement with 'Dawn' peace magazine from 1974 and Bishopscourt Peace

Camp from 1983-6, an Irish Network for Nonviolent Action Training and Education (INNATE) was born in 1987 which I became coordinator of in a voluntary capacity. The hope was to provide a support mechanism for those involved and committed to nonviolence and nonviolence training. One fairly early and important piece of work which we did was in pioneering monitoring/observing work in Northern Ireland which, along with other developments, has played an important role in preventing escalation in contentious situations and continues to be used, more on a local and interface level.

I would like to think that in the four decades since I have tried to practise nonviolence my beliefs have deepened, expanded, and matured; they have certainly developed but I am aware that I do not have all the answers, and I haven't even come across all the questions. But I have certainly become aware of the range and depth of nonviolence and aware of many or at least some of the possibilities. My work in nonviolence training is about helping others to explore these possibilities. My work with INNATE in general is about helping the peace and reconciliation sector, and allied sectors, to develop, and become a force for transformation in Ireland and more widely.

We all have possibilities to act nonviolently, even in the most difficult circumstances; the task is to persuade people they have choices, explore the nonviolent choices that exist, and prepare people for them. That, and the awareness of it, did not exist when the Troubles developed.



OUT ON THE STREETS

Mary Kelly



Well basically what happened was that I saw kids throwing stones and bottles and I thought -look at all the size of them ; do they realise what's going on ; do they realise the consequences if bigger people got involved ; somebody could end up shot; some child going for a bottle of milk could lose their life because of this. So that's when I went out into the street and thank God I had a couple of people who also came out with me. At the beginning I was more or less just out, as people would say, "slabbering."



This was the start of the "interfaces" when a wee crowd would come up from the Protestant end and a wee crowd from the Catholic end and it was 6 of 1 and half a dozen of the other. I could stand back and see that there were kids caught up in it. I wondered how I could get across there to the "other side" to get to know some of the woman down there so I would be able to say to them to keep their kids away and we on our side would do the same. And then as it flourished and people got to know you, they knew you were doing it for a purpose.

I believed that every man in his house had a responsibility to know where his kids were and what they were doing. We approached lots of parents and asked them if they knew where their kids were and what they were doing? We didn't care what religion they were and warned them that it was time they did know where they were and that they needed to go and get them. My name got around – "she's out there she is," and the kids used to shout – "here come Mary Kelly." You would have thought I was carrying a machine gun.



Nobody really threatened me. You would have got the odd one shouting out their neck – "who do you think you are?" I would say – "I don't think I'm anybody but I'm telling you we're not having it; we're not letting this area go down the tube; I've seen too many areas going down the tube and this one certainly isn't. I've worked too hard buying my house and I'm still paying for it and I'm not putting up with you or anybody taking this away from me and that's the way it's gonna be."

On reflection I would say I still wouldn't let anybody do anything if I thought somebody was in danger. It's my nature; I can't help myself; I would have to get involved no matter who it would be if I thought that somebody was deliberately abusing someone. If I was about I would have to say – "here what's going on?" I can't help my nature. It's not being nosey. The way I look at it is if everybody took that stand – 'well I wouldn't like that done to my child' – then maybe we would have a better place.

SUPPORTING MIXED MARRIAGES

Anne Odling-Smee

We came to Northern Ireland in 1970 as my husband obtained a post here as a surgeon. We are in a Mixed Marriage and have raised our children within our two traditions, baptising them alternately as Roman Catholic and Anglican (Church of Ireland). In 1974 I was introduced to people who were starting a support group for couples planning or in a mixed marriage. We had experienced a certain amount of critical and indeed unchristian comment because we had married outside of our tradition and so had the people with whom we decided to become involved.



In the early days of the Northern Ireland Mixed Marriage Association (NIMMA), as we called the support group, we spent a lot of time helping and supporting each other and the couples who

made enquiries by letter or telephone. It was not safe to use our own numbers as many people felt it wise to be ex-directory but Corrymeela House sheltered us as a postal address and telephone enquiry point.

We were helping couples to understand the guidelines which the churches were supposed to follow about the conduct of a mixed marriage ceremony or baptism, but also to provide support when they faced other obstacles. For example, we had a couple where the bride was a Catholic and her family were very hostile to her marrying a Protestant and so would have no part in the wedding. The ceremony was arranged but where to celebrate it? NIMMA decided to provide the food and the reception took place in the nearby home of hospitable members.

Another issue we worked on was housing. It was at a very troubled time in Northern Ireland and a couple came to us who were living in a Catholic housing estate, but the husband as a Protestant felt unsafe and they needed to move. So we contacted our friends in the Association of Inter Church Families in England. They found a clergyman who with the help of his congregation found a house into which our couple could move.

Housing has been a big issue, particularly if as a couple you did not have enough money to choose where you lived. When people were intimidated we could put them in touch with Housing Aid and other organisations and we began to campaign for Housing without Labels, but a big change needed to happen.

After the Good Friday Agreement the Housing Executive announced that they were working out a strategy for Shared Social Housing as so many of their estates were segregated and not safe for people in mixed marriages, nor often for ethnic minority people. NIMMA was given a place on the Advisory Board and so we were able to explain what our couples needed and urgently. The housing application forms had three categories 'Catholic,' 'Protestant' and 'Other' - but we are not other. We are inter church, cross community and mixed. We bring two traditions to the table. After a good discussion it was agreed that a category 'Mixed' would be added so that couples could apply for a house in a Shared Neighbourhood, or in a Shared Development – housing without labels.

In NIMMA we know that as a group you can make structures change so that those people who want to be together, not separate, can be so. We think this is what being a Christian means. A great many people in Churches and wider society have done their best to help. It just needs to become infectious - NO LABELS.



THE BREAK-THROUGH

Mary Montague



I had been given a great opportunity of training as a mediator while I was working for Corrymeela. We were involved in a very big project that was around interfaces particularly at interfaces that were very violent. We had arranged for communication systems to be set up and it meant really that I was working very very long hours because you were on call in case there was an incident. This meant that you acted as a go-between across communities or between communities and the police.

Unfortunately there was one particular leader who did not agree with what I had done and he put me under threat. He did it very openly- he made a phone call to me at the office. Being the risky personality that I am, I arrived on his door step to tell him he wasn't putting me off and I wasn't stopping. I also felt that although I was under threat I wasn't going to tell Corrymeela and I wasn't going to tell my family. So for 4 years I lived under the threat without voicing it to anyone.

Towards the end of those 4 years that same person unfortunately found himself in a different position. He made a phone call to me asking for my help. It changed the relationship to the point where he just said –“you know I've lifted that threat by the way”. Three months after the threat was lifted I took what people would call a breakdown, a nervous breakdown. I called it a break-through.

I call it a break-through and I call it that deliberately because it meant that I was forced into facing parts of the trauma for the first time. Also and more importantly I learnt that I was not this great big strong person who helped everybody but didn't need help. I had to learn that I needed help.

In relation to the breakdown, I just woke up one day and found I couldn't cope. I couldn't even think of what clothes to put on. I had to be treated



with drugs for mental illness. It was a time when I started revisiting all the memories from my life - casualties I'd seen; the work on the ambulance; the work at the interfaces; loss of people I had loved through the Troubles . It just opened up a whole flood gate and unleashed everything but it meant that I was ill for about 3 to 4 months and in a very dark place.

My family were fantastic. My family brought me through it. I mean within 4 or 5 months I was off the medication and back to work. To this day, please God, I haven't had a reoccurrence of it.

I think one of the things that really helped me was going back to my own roots- where did I come from? Why did I come into this work? What was it all about? Remembering wisdom from my parents. I would say to my dad –“awh it's beating my head off a brick wall, daddy, and this is no good.” He used to say-“Mary love, a dripping tap will still fill a basin.” Remembering those words and keeping that to the forefront helps me to keep going.

I'm only out there sowing a little seed. It's just a little drip in the middle of a big lake of water. The drip is important. I'm not important but the action is and the message is and that's what is going to make the difference.

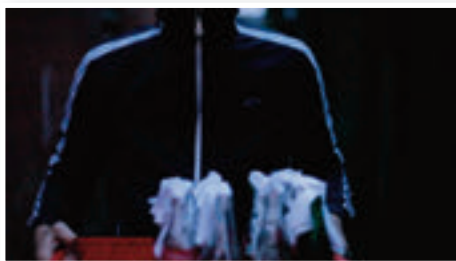
THE GOOD NEIGHBOUR

‘Donna’



It was a typical estate where there was nothing going on apart from drug dealing, paramilitary beatings, and paramilitary shootings -they used to be regular occurrences. In the late 90s it was the early days of the peace process and the Good Friday Agreement so tensions in the estate were still very high. The police and the army land rovers would patrol the estate and young thugs had nothing better to do other than to stone them. That was just on an ordinary day before the big rioting started. Come the evening the balaclavas came on, the milk bottles were filled, walls were knocked down to provide ammunition to throw at the police. It was just “open season” and crazy. I just wanted to get home before dark, get everything set, the house locked up and stay in.

I can’t for the life of me remember how exactly I found out about it. It involved our neighbours- the husband was Protestant and his wife was Catholic. Obviously Drumcree had happened and road blocks were being put up. He had got a telephone call to his place of work to say – “we know you are married to a Catholic; we don’t want Catholics in this estate ; you’ve got until tonight to get out or we’re going to come and burn you out.” He took that security risk very seriously and he literally pulled up (at his house). He had two kids and he got the kids out and his wife. He took the basic stuff and he came and knocked on my door and told me what was happening. That was it -he’d packed his stuff and was gone. I got to thinking- well if they are coming to petrol bomb their



house that’s maybe their incident, but what happens if the house next door catches fire? The girl next door is partially deaf and has two young kids. You know their life is at risk and then my house is the next one and I

just thought -I'm not having my life, my neighbours' lives or their house being put at risk.

It was as simple as that. I went round to my mum and dad's house and I explained the situation. My dad gave me a fire extinguisher and I went back home. I was not going to move and I thought if anybody came anywhere near me or my neighbour's house I will be putting the fire out and that's all there is to it. I stood in the lane behind the house and yes there were people running up and down that alley way with petrol bombs and they petrol bombed the police and army as they drove past. I stood there determined that not one person would be touching that house.

Every wee noise I was kind of like right this-this is it; this is me ready to go. I stayed there for hours just going out the front, checking out the front making sure everything was fine and then going round to the back again. Then I'd check my son who was in bed to make sure he was alright. I stayed to about 4 o'clock in the morning- it was starting to get light so it was and the estate had quietened down and I kind of knew that tensions had calmed a bit.

It didn't cross my mind that I was in any danger. I was just looking out for my neighbours despite their religion, despite anything else. They were friends; they had two young kids; my child was living in my house and well if I wasn't going to do it, nobody else was willing to do it. Somebody had to do something and I was that person.



THE HARDEST WORD OF ALL

‘Jane’

It was a largely Protestant village- in fact 100% Protestant. The town also had a reputation for attacking people - I remember so well that there was a homophobic attack, a racist attack and a sectarian attack all in the one week.



So it was a town that was interested in driving people out and it seemed to me that the community all around us were doing nothing. Their way of dealing with it was to go inside, close the door, pull the curtains, and have nothing to do with it - perhaps tut a little bit about it and say, “isn’t that awful?”

So three of us decided that we would go to the community association and see what was happening there. It became very clear to us that these people had a grip on the community and everything was going to be run in their way so any change was going to be difficult. There were three of us ladies, three little grey haired ladies and we would go there on a Tuesday night. We didn’t speak at all and each night we came out from the meeting and we vowed never to go back again. Nevertheless, we kept going back in spite of the fact that we hated it and felt uneasy. We felt that we were simply just a presence if nothing else- a presence that they had to deal with. It was not easy to say anything in those meetings. For example, I remember one incident when I spoke up about the situation with regard to flags in the village. Although there were in fact not many flags in the village, there was one Union Flag flying very obviously outside the Chapel. I mentioned this and asked, if there was any chance that it could be brought down? That was not received well at all and some people said it should be put further up the pole and

others said that it was the flag of the country and they could fly it where ever they wanted.

Often I suppose, I felt unsure of what people were thinking - there's a wee line in a hymn somewhere that talks about "can you stand the hostile stare?" I felt there were hostile stares. Nevertheless, I had to get involved in some way. I felt unsure that what I was doing was the right way but I had to do something. It all comes from my belief in God and in Christ. As far as I'm concerned God is an all-embracing person, and his whole life was all about love, peace and reconciliation, particularly reconciliation which is the hardest word of all and the hardest thing of all to do.



THE POSTER

Billy Robinson



There were a lot of attacks taking place on people in work, going to work and coming home from work. A lot of intimidation took place... it was really at its height from the late 70s to the early 80s. There was a heightening of tension in the workplace. There was shooting of Catholic and Protestant taxi drivers. It was taking place on a nightly basis. It was in the home, it was in the workplace, in the streets. There really was a lot of fear and lots of tensions.



I hated the divisions in this country to the extent that I had wanted to leave it from my early teenage days. I hated that other people would tell me who I could socialise with or who I could be friends with. That really got to me big style and I never liked this place for that reason and I never ever wanted to be seen as a Catholic... you know this traditional Catholic. I wanted to be taken as I am and to have whatever friends I wanted.

At this time I was involved in the (Trade) Union and then I became a rep' in it and then I was asked if I would stand for office. Even though I was getting fed up with the job itself, I stood for office and was elected.



One of the crisis points happened one morning. I received a phone call from one of our members in an establishment in East Belfast - he informed us that there was a poster up in the premises; a recruitment poster for one of the paramilitary groups. It was there on the wall and management was aware of it, but for obvious reasons there was a fear of actually removing it. His concern was that it would cause conflict within the site. We thanked him for calling and my colleague and I had a discussion about it. We were very frightened because we knew we had to remove it or somebody had to remove it. So we arrived at the site and went into the room where all the staff would congregate to get their jobs in the morning - probably about 200 people. We spotted the poster. The noise level was pretty high - people were on their phones or having conversation with mates or whatever, so the only way to draw attention was to knock a locker over... a steel locker. There was silence. We stood on a chair and we made a statement - "this was a place of work, no place for politics." We removed the poster. When we got down we were half expecting some reaction, but there was no reaction ... just the noise level went back up again, people went back to their work. So we were leaving and truthfully we were trying to get out as quick as we could but individuals came to us, particularly of a Protestant background because it was a majority Protestant site and they thanked us and said that they were glad we took it down because their fear was that it would cause fear, conflict and really destroy relationships in the site.

I had felt very frightened and nervous. I felt you know I am a fool for putting myself out? But on the other hand it felt good in the end - it was good to do it. Fear- it's a four letter word but it sits across everything in this society and stops us having conversations.

WATCHING AT WALLS

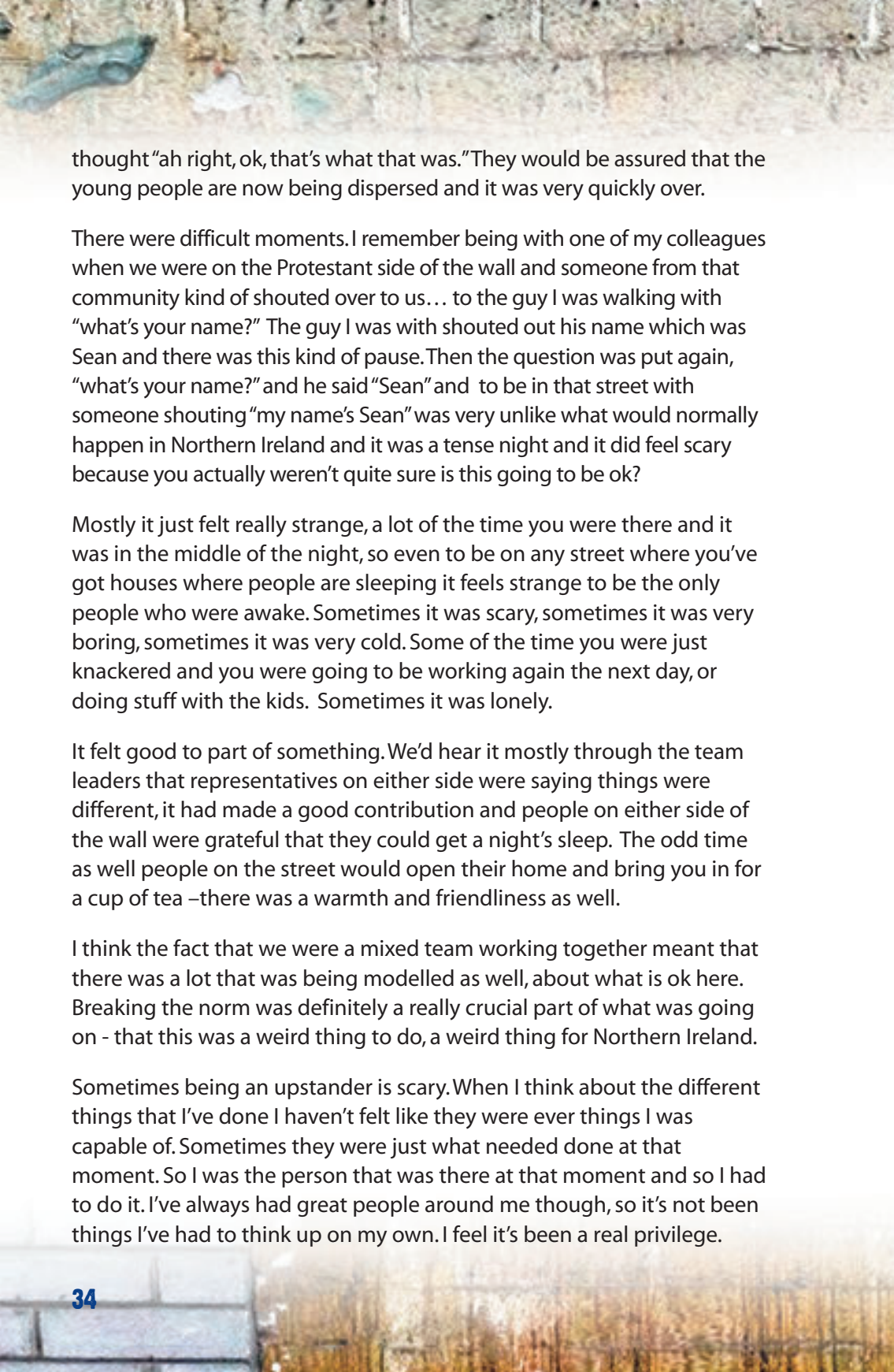
Laurie Randall



When I was choosing my degree and I was flicking through to get to 'Politics' I came to a 'Peace Studies' advert and I thought actually that's what I want to do. My school was disgusted - they wanted me to study something sensible like History. It seemed to me that my life would be in Northern Ireland and doing something to make it better. A lot of my friends went to university over in England and that was it, that was their escape, but I knew I was coming back.

When I came back from university I began to work in peace building and mediation. An opportunity came up to volunteer on a new project. There had been a lot of trouble across different interface areas in East Belfast. So we were teamed up, often Catholic and Protestant together, and our task was to support local community workers by recording what we saw in terms of any violence across the interface. So if I saw a marble coming over, then I would note in my book "marble came over the wall into... (whatever street I was in)" and the time. Sometimes I couldn't tell which direction it had come from and sometimes people on the street would say "did you see that?" or they'd come up to me with things in their hands that had landed, and I couldn't note those because I hadn't seen it and that was the role - if you didn't see it, then you couldn't say that it had happened ...you could only say it was reported to you. Some residents found that frustrating.

This was a response to the fact that actually on both sides there was an interest from people within the communities for it to stop and that they wanted help with that. We weren't there for one side we were there for everybody. So having outside people there to monitor and record what was happening helped ease tensions and acted as a deterrent to violence starting. It was an experiment- it was something very different. If there was an initial incident, which actually might just be a bunch of youngsters, instead of that very quickly escalating to where the police were called in, or the other side retaliated and you get caught in a spiral -with this improved communication instead it was very quickly caught and people



thought “ah right, ok, that’s what that was.” They would be assured that the young people are now being dispersed and it was very quickly over.

There were difficult moments. I remember being with one of my colleagues when we were on the Protestant side of the wall and someone from that community kind of shouted over to us... to the guy I was walking with “what’s your name?” The guy I was with shouted out his name which was Sean and there was this kind of pause. Then the question was put again, “what’s your name?” and he said “Sean” and to be in that street with someone shouting “my name’s Sean” was very unlike what would normally happen in Northern Ireland and it was a tense night and it did feel scary because you actually weren’t quite sure if this was going to be ok?

Mostly it just felt really strange, a lot of the time you were there and it was in the middle of the night, so even to be on any street where you’ve got houses where people are sleeping it feels strange to be the only people who were awake. Sometimes it was scary, sometimes it was very boring, sometimes it was very cold. Some of the time you were just knackered and you were going to be working again the next day, or doing stuff with the kids. Sometimes it was lonely.

It felt good to part of something. We’d hear it mostly through the team leaders that representatives on either side were saying things were different, it had made a good contribution and people on either side of the wall were grateful that they could get a night’s sleep. The odd time as well people on the street would open their home and bring you in for a cup of tea –there was a warmth and friendliness as well.

I think the fact that we were a mixed team working together meant that there was a lot that was being modelled as well, about what is ok here. Breaking the norm was definitely a really crucial part of what was going on - that this was a weird thing to do, a weird thing for Northern Ireland.

Sometimes being an upstander is scary. When I think about the different things that I’ve done I haven’t felt like they were ever things I was capable of. Sometimes they were just what needed done at that moment. So I was the person that was there at that moment and so I had to do it. I’ve always had great people around me though, so it’s not been things I’ve had to think up on my own. I feel it’s been a real privilege.

WORKING WITH THREAT

Jeff Maxwell

In the late 1980s I was a youth worker in North Belfast. I was working with young people who were being knee-capped or were under the threat of being punished and I suppose that's where the interest came around how to support young people when this was happening to them. People were aware that punishment beatings were happening, but not at that scale and it was something that the majority of people didn't really want to know about. There's always been that misconception that punishment beatings were about young people who were joyriders - that was comfortable for communities because if they were joy riders and young people doing drugs there was a reason for punishments - almost a reaction of "well it's terrible, but here, they didn't get it for nothing". If they had accepted that it was an injustice, then there would have been an onus on them to do something about it.

In 1990 I started working with a number of peace groups dealing with victims of paramilitary violence and in 1994 I commenced working for Base 2 which is a crisis intervention service for individuals and families who are at risk of paramilitary or community threat. It started as a response to the very high levels of predominantly young males who were being punished or put out of the country. I've since dealt with about 5,000 cases where people have been under threat or at risk. The job involves meeting with community/paramilitary contacts to verify if the threat is genuine and what level of threat exists. We see if we can get the threat lifted or if there is a possibility of a mediation to address the issue. If it isn't possible to get the threat lifted we'll assist that person to relocate, usually within Northern Ireland, but during the height of the conflict, often out of the country.

The very first time I was involved in moving people out of the country was two young lads who had been put under threat. We'd arranged for them to



go to England on the boat. We picked the two lads up, but they had to get their belongings from their house - they couldn't go back into the area because they were under threat, so we went to one of the lad's house to meet his mother. She got a sports bag with a pair of jeans, a few jumpers and a poster from the bedroom wall. She opened her purse and gave me a tenner for him - it was the last note that she had in her purse. So you get the young people out and then the reality sinks in of how on earth are they going to survive on the other side? If you were to look at a group within our society who are least capable of being lifted and taken elsewhere, it's that group. Here was a 17 year old fella going to a city to start a new life with a sports bag, a poster and ten pounds. Six to Eight months down the line he made approaches to come home and one of the other paramilitary organisations claimed that young lad: "if you come home and you join us - you'll be all right they won't be able to touch you". So he came home, joined that organisation and ended up with a serious conviction as a result of his involvement. So it cost him in the end. That was the price of being able to return home because he couldn't survive. That was his only way back - to go and join another organisation and ultimately that cost him 10 years of his life, but that's how organisations manipulated and used people.

It's not a 9-5 job and it does impact on you outside of work. On occasions when out in town, I have been approached by individuals asking for support to return to their areas or for mediation. Obviously people are sitting at nearby tables and I'm thinking people will assume I'm part of the paramilitary organisation that's keeping him out!

Things have progressed now - there isn't the same level of physical assaults and better mechanisms for mediation. Communities are more open to restorative processes. Back in the 1990s there would have been higher levels of violence and risk of personal attack. And you did live with that for a while and that certainly did put massive strains on relationships and everything else. But most of society lived with risk at that time.



Some comments on UP Standing

As a young person, this film really opened my eyes and helped me realise how bad the Troubles actually were. Often we aren't told the whole story and are protected from our past, even though the past is how we learn for the future...

It was a very unique and interesting film and I enjoyed it very much. The stories were very inspirational and made me think about facing the future together.

UP Standing illustrates the power of storytelling. As a testing resource it gives insight into a society in conflict and the impact on everyday life. Perhaps, it also provides insight into why this society did not descend into total mayhem when, on occasions, it came close.

'UP Standing - Stories of courage from Northern Ireland' features diverse accounts from people who stood up to violence, discrimination or prejudice in Northern Ireland. It provides a window into often untold stories of courage that individuals have shown in the context of a divided and often violent society. This publication is accompanied by a film featuring ten of the stories from this publication and an educator guide to support classroom use.

The film has been produced as part of 'Facing our History, Shaping the Future Project', a Corrymeela Community initiative in partnership with Facing History and Ourselves.

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FACING
HISTORY
AND
OURSELVES