



18

**Nigel Gray, M&S Area
Manager Northern Ireland
and Isle of Man**



5

Dr and Mrs Burke



14

**Roger Courtney with
Ray Davey**

Corrymeela



18
FUNdraising the
Corrymeela
way

*Sell-out Fashion Show in
aid of Corrymeela*



THE
CORRYMEELA
COMMUNITY

Three funerals, two anniversaries and no weddings



mere waiting
and looking on is
**not Christian
behaviour**



THERE WERE THREE DEATHS last summer of people who contributed a lot to Northern Ireland out of their Christian faith. The first was Bill Arlow. Bill was instrumental in setting up in 1974 the Feakle meeting between Protestant clergy and members of Sinn Féin and the Provisional IRA, which led to a short-lived ceasefire. He was from an evangelical Church of Ireland background and had once shared a platform with Ian Paisley. A Catholic bishop gave the blessing at his funeral.

The second death was that of Denis Faul. Denis was a ferocious critic of security force abuse in the 1970s and 1980s. He also helped to end the hunger strike in the Maze and was regarded with suspicion by the republican movement ever afterwards. Denis Faul was a fearless critic of the Provisional IRA and believed in the importance of a new start in policing. On his death-bed he was concerned about finding the bodies of the Disappeared. Denis was a conservative Catholic and a strong opponent of integrated education.

The third death was that of Billy Mitchell – a one-time provisional member of Corrymeela. Billy was from a working class evangelical Protestant family, became caught up in Paisleyism and ended up in the UVF. He went to prison where he read Dietrich Bonhoeffer's *Letters and Papers from Prison* (it is something else to actually read Bonhoeffer in prison). He experienced a conversion which led him to join the Progressive Unionist Party and he devoted the rest of his life to transforming loyalist organisations and communities. At his funeral there were Sinn Féin members, official republicans, UVF men, Protestant clergy, priests and people from North and South.

And two anniversaries. It was the 30th anniversary of the Peace People and of the marches that for a short time gave hope for an end to violence in Northern Ireland. For a period they were given a home in Corrymeela House. Mairead Corrigan and Betty Williams became the public face of that protest against violence. The second anniversary was the centenary of the birth of the German theologian Dietrich Bonhoeffer who was born into the German

high bourgeoisie and died a martyr's death in Flossenburg Concentration Camp for his opposition to Hitler and his involvement in the bomb plot.

What these people do not share is being successful or necessarily always right or 'good'. Work for justice and peace has its ambiguities. Opposing evil can involve us in morally ambiguous means (for instance, Bonhoeffer's involvement in the Bomb Plot). What they do share, I think, is that they were prepared to take risks and act courageously in the face of violence and wrong-doing, and accept the messiness and confusion of the world. Billy Mitchell was prepared to work in the murky world of loyalist paramilitaries. Bill Arlow got alongside all sorts of people, including loyalist and republican paramilitaries. The Peace People failed and made all sorts of mistakes. Denis Faul didn't always get it right. Armchair moralists are the ultimate in irresponsible living. 'Mere waiting and looking on is not Christian behaviour' wrote Bonhoeffer in a letter, and in the introduction to *Ethics* he said 'only in action is freedom. Make up your mind, and come out into the tempest of living.' Bill Arlow, Denis Faul and Billy Mitchell all came out into the 'tempest of living' with its costly action.

Freedom and responsibility are conjoined (as are faith and obedience). Bonhoeffer speaks of four elements of responsible living, that is, obedience to Christ in the world:

- Facing the reality of the situation;
- Accepting what we have to do for others;
- Accepting the guilt involved in acting and hoping for forgiveness;
- Facing the venture of a concrete decision with its elements of risk.

We cannot guarantee that good will come of our actions or that things will turn out well. What we can do is to act responsibly – to do the best we can to do the right thing (which may be ambiguous or uncertain) – and then throw ourselves on the mercy of God. It is this that Christian life is about; not about being 'pious' or 'good'.

David Stevens



David Stevens is the Leader of the Corrymeela Community.



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Pleased to meet you

IT IS WITH GREAT PLEASURE that I introduce myself as the new editor of the *Corrymeela* magazine and Fundraising Director for Corrymeela. During his nine years' service Peter Anderson did a terrific job editing, publishing and seeing the magazine grow and develop into a vibrant, informative and interesting read. My sincere hope for the future of the magazine is to build on all this good work to provide a regular insight into the myriad of good work that is Corrymeela, locally, nationally and internationally and also to give a glimpse into life in Northern Ireland during these changing times. It is my heartfelt wish that this magazine should reflect the interests of the friends and members of Corrymeela, so do write to me with your news to share, fundraising success stories, events to promote, suggestions for and feedback on our articles.

Likewise our new website is now up and running; however it is still under development as we strive to get all the many sections onto it. So in advance I thank you for your patience as we work hard to bring it all to life. Our goal is to make it a shared space to connect all the people with their many varied interests but with everyone sharing a common appreciation of Corrymeela. For those of you who enjoy email, please do register your email address on the site: www.corrymeela.org

I look forward to hearing from you. **Jo Watson, Editor**

N.B.

FRONT COVER MAIN PHOTO
Two models from the Corrymeela Fashion Show
Photography © Paul McErlane

FRONT COVER TOP LEFT PHOTO
Nigel Gray, M&S
Photography © Gus Moore

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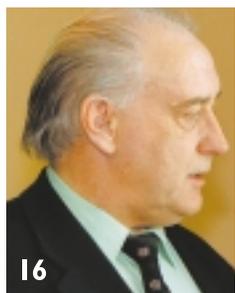
Why did leading members of Sinn Féin attend the funeral of a former UVF man? And how did a man who served time for loyalist crime come to earn the respect and friendship of prominent republicans? Roy Garland explains the extraordinary legacy of Billy Mitchell.

18 Fashion show in aid of Corrymeela

This event, generously hosted by Francis Brady of the La Mon Hotel and Country Club, saw Marks & Spencer taking the imaginative step of allowing their clothes to be modelled by Corrymeela community members and staff, of all shapes, sizes and ages, showcasing outfits from M&S's autumn collection.

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The Board of the International Fund for Ireland will provide financial assistance of £1 million towards the redevelopment of the Corrymeela Residential Centre in Ballycastle, largely towards the rebuilding of the volunteer accommodation in the Coventry building.



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United States Consul General Dean Pittman officially opens the Tara Complex at the Corrymeela Centre, Ballycastle

ELEVEN YEARS AGO last summer the television programme *Challenge Anika* team constructed three buildings at Corrymeela, Ballycastle in record time. Today these buildings, named Tara, have undergone major refurbishment to bring this much used resource up to date and, most importantly, accessible by everyone. US Consul General Dean Pittman officially opened these rooms to mark

the start of the capital renewal of the Corrymeela Centre.

The Tara complex houses an arts and crafts room for structured creative learning including *Giggles and Squiggles*, *Spirals*, *Sticky Fingers*, *Mask Making* and more; a games room for older children and a social recreation place; a regular venue for discos and karaoke evenings. Outdoor activities are an essential part of the Centre

programmes with a rich variety of adventure learning activities, team-building games and co-operative exercises which are played in the open space in front of the Tara buildings.

Consul General Dean Pittman said, 'The Tara complex is another great contribution Corrymeela has made to Northern Ireland and marks an important step in Corrymeela's

major capital build and refurbishment appeal. The United States has always been impressed by the efforts Corrymeela has undertaken to build a more inclusive and peaceful society here and we were particularly honoured to have Centre Director Ronnie Millar as a special guest of the White House during this year's St Patrick's Day celebrations.'

Thanks to the funding received from the Youth Service at the Department of Education, Corrymeela will now be able to meet the needs of more young people using the Tara resources, irrespective of disability, exclusion or experience of marginalisation. Ms Louise Ward-Hunter, Head of Policy, Research and Youth Programmes with the Department of Education, said, 'The Department of Education is delighted to help Corrymeela become more accessible to all young people and engage in peace-building youth work here. Inclusion is a key theme within the Youth Work Strategy and these improvements will enable Corrymeela to bring together a greater diversity of young people to explore making our shared future a reality.'

Corrymeela also extends sincere thanks to donor Bernardé Powell whose generous donation allowed Ronnie Millar, Centre Director, to purchase lots of materials and games for use in the refurbished buildings.



Kate Pettis, Chair Corrymeela Council and Ronnie Millar, Centre Director welcome Consul General Dean Pittman and funder Phyllis Richardson from the Department of Education, Northern Ireland. Photograph © Paul McErlane Photography.



New faces

A WARM WELCOME goes to

Robert Deignan Volunteering Development Co-ordinator

Robert is originally from north Belfast but has strong family connections in Ballycastle. In his previous work he has been involved in the management and development of training and employment programmes – principally in north and west Belfast, east Antrim and Glasgow.

Shane O'Neill House Manager

Corrymeela's new House Manager is Shane O'Neill. Shane comes to Corrymeela with years of experience in hospitality, catering and administration. He is responsible for supporting and managing the administration, housekeeping and kitchen to ensure that visiting groups continue to experience the high standard of Corrymeela hospitality. Shane is in the process of further developing the dining experience along with Moyra, Marian and Shea. More information on this in the next issue of Corrymeela.

Jo-Anne Watson Fundraising Director

Jo has worked in the voluntary sector for over twelve years; she came to Corrymeela directly from the Integrated Education Fund (IEF) where she was employed as their GB Fundraising Manager. Prior to joining the IEF she was Head of Finance for the umbrella body representing Northern Ireland charities. Jo lives in Bangor with her son Rory and husband Alan.

Shea O'Hara Catering Team

Shea is our latest addition to the Centre's catering team. Shea was formerly a long-term volunteer at the Centre and has since remained very involved in our work. Shea brings years of creative culinary experience and flair in the kitchen which will benefit the many visitors.

Baby Simeon Thierbach Resource Family

Congratulations to Helen and Kai Thierbach on the birth of their baby, Simeon, who was born at home in Cedarhaven house, Corrymeela, Ballycastle.



Golden couple donate anniversary gifts

OUR THANKS goes to the family circle of long-term supporters Dr and Mrs Burke, who have made donations in recognition of the couple's golden wedding anniversary at their request.

To be recognised as someone's favourite charity is indeed an honour and it will be our pleasure to use this donation to purchase a wall-mounted television for the lounge.

Corrymeela is often buzzing with young people and children and the television is a most welcome addition to the lounge and an encouragement for the children to sit quietly for just a little while before they are off to run around again!

Do let me know of any other heart-warming stories of others choosing Corrymeela to be their beneficiary in lieu of presents.

The Swindon Lecture

14 February 2007 – Duncan Morrow

Faith in Conflict?

Reflections on religion
and conflict in Northern Ireland

Duncan Morrow is Chief Executive Officer of the Northern Ireland Community Relations Council (CRC), the body with primary responsibility for funding and development of inter-community relations practice and policy in Northern Ireland. In recent years, the CRC has taken a leading role in promoting dialogue to underpin A Shared Future? – the government's long-running strategy to promote improved relations in Northern Ireland.

Previously, Duncan was active in many areas of community relations work as a member of Understanding Conflict and as Co-Director of Future Ways, a unique active learning agency within the University of Ulster. His interests included political education, organisational development work with public agencies and voluntary groups, community development, mediation and the facilitation of difficult conversations between people and groups in conflict. At the University of Ulster he was also a lecturer in politics with a particular interest in ethnic conflict, religion and violence.

Free public Lecture at the University of Bath in Swindon, Oakfield campus, Marlowe Avenue, at 5.30 pm on Wednesday 14 February 2007.

More info at www.swindonchurches.uk.com or contact rosemary.power@surefish.co.uk

The Swindon Lectures are public lectures on issues of faith, ethics and spirituality, given by specialists in their fields, and organised by Swindon Churches Together in conjunction with the University of Bath in Swindon.

Honorary degree for Revd Dr John Morrow

OUR CONGRATULATIONS go to The Revd Dr John W. Morrow who received the degree of Doctor of Letters (DLitt) in recognition of his distinction in the promotion of inter-faith understanding. The Revd Dr Morrow was a founder member of the Corrymeela Community in 1965 and was Leader of the Community from 1979–93. After this he lectured in the Irish School of Ecumenics until 2002.

Calling all Sixth Formers...

...to a two-day residential conference to explore citizenship, sectarianism, prejudice, racism and looking towards a shared future in Northern Ireland. Attend this conference if you are interested in pursuing a career in teaching, youth work or community development as we will explore facilitation and conflict-resolution skills and provide the opportunity for pupils to develop communication and leadership skills.

Transport from Belfast is included. There are 32 places available and the cost is £10 per person. The date of the residential is 21 February 2007 to 23 February 2007 at Corrymeela, Ballycastle. If you are interested, please email Ciara at: ciaramcfarlane@corrymeela.org

Our sincere thanks to

... everyone front and back stage who worked so hard on the very successful Corrymeela Fashion Show raising over £7,500. Further info on page 18.

... the International Fund of Ireland grant of £1 million towards Phase 1 of the rebuilding and refurbishing of our buildings at Ballycastle. Further info on page 21.

Corrymeela Open Day Events

You are warmly invited to any of the following open events at the Corrymeela Centre in Ballycastle. Please call 028 2076 2626 to register or learn more about the events.

Jamming on a Saturday Morning in the Croí

10 February 2007

10.00 am – 1.00 pm

This will be a fun event and opportunity to play with other musicians from around the world. Following on from our first session in December, during which we played and sang some international Advent music, this time we are going to explore and play Yiddish and traditional Irish music. Lunch afterwards is available at a cost of £4.00. For details please contact Kai on 028 2076 2626.

The Two Sides of St Patrick

16–18 March 2007

A weekend retreat led by Fr Laurence Freeman and Brendan McAllister. Fr Laurence is a monk of the Monastery of Christ the King, Cockfosters, London, in the Olivetan Benedictine Congregation. From the International Centre of the World Community for Christian Meditation in London he now serves a worldwide network of meditation groups in North and South America, Europe, Australia and Asia. He is also active in the contemplative meeting of the different faiths. Laurence is the editor of John Main's works and of *Monastic Studies*. He is also the author of *Christian*

Meditation: Your Daily Practice, Light Within, The Selfless Self, Short Span of Days, Common Ground, Jesus the Teacher Within and many sets of tapes and articles on meditation. Brendan is the Director of Meditation Northern and a long-standing Corrymeela Community member.

Radical Love

18–20 May 2007

An open event for members of the Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender communities to explore issues of faith and spirituality in context with personal sexuality. This is a regular residential that has taken place roughly every two years at the Centre.

Peregrinus Rian

25–27 May 2007

A journey of light: a pilgrimage in quest of a path walked by the Celtic monks of ancient Ireland where light is both goal and matrix.

An old Chinese story tells that the rainbow is the path between heaven and earth. Did our ancient fathers find this Rian? Could they walk on rain? Can their ancient light impregnate our present, rebirth to guide our future? This is not just another lecture on the history and writings of these men. It is time for an existential journeying into the root-woven ways of these spiritual masters. That our Christian communities might inherit their aristocracy of soul. Come and spend time with us as we seek imprints left on holy ground. Led by Terry Hogg.

Four Seasons

8–10 June 2007

Four spiritual retreat weekends through spring, summer, autumn and winter 2007–8, each with the theme of 'Where do we find God in our Lives?'. This is a new initiative that has evolved as a result of the recognition for spiritual and holistic re-engagement for adults in today's challenging world. This programme will offer an opportunity to come together and explore issues around personal faith, self care, interaction with the environment, interaction with others, self expression and creative processes. The programme will use the change of seasons and the elements associated as a theme for each. There will be four (seasoned) facilitators: Davey Small, Lynda Gould, Pádraig Twomey and Jayne McConkey.

Corrymeela's Big Hearted Dinner Dance

Book your place now for Corrymeela's Big Hearted Dinner Dance on Friday 9 February 2007 at the La Mon Hotel and Country Club.

Come join us to celebrate big hearted Corrymeela with a drinks reception at 7.30 pm for 8 pm then a sumptuous five course dinner to follow and then dance the night away to our fabulous dance band. Ticket are £50 per person inclusive of wine on the table. Please contact Bernie on Belfast 028 9050 8080 or email belfast@corrymeela.org for your tickets.

Congratulations to Helen Baird

Helen's photograph, taken during the summer, of Jimmy Gordon's bike propped up outside the front door to the Centre, has been short-listed in the Volunteer Development Agency's annual Volunteering Photo Competition in partnership with Northern Bank as part of Celebrate Belfast 2006. Helen's picture was displayed at the Waterfront Hall in Belfast. Jimmy Gordon is Corrymeela's Volunteer Co-ordinator.

New book on Corrymeela

A new book on Corrymeela to mark the Community's 40 year history is currently being completed by the author and *Belfast Telegraph* Religion Correspondent Alf McCreary. He has spoken to a wide range of people and has traced the major developments in the Corrymeela story over the past four decades and more. This new book which complements his first book on Corrymeela, published in 1975, will be launched next spring. A foreword has been provided by the Founder of Corrymeela Ray Davey, who writes 'Alf McCreary is ideally placed to take an independent view of Corrymeela over the past 40 years. What a great story he has to tell! It is particularly fitting that he has undertaken this latest task, because he worked with me closely on his original book about Corrymeela.'

Corrymeela London Support Group

Over the last 18 months Corrymeela's London Group has supported Corrymeela's events in London and has joined in meetings at St Ethelburga's. Katy Peters, who led the group, has now moved out of London, and has persuaded me to lead the group in her place. Many thanks to Katy for all her much-appreciated efforts. I look forward to this task, to continuing co-operation with the members I know, and to welcoming members who are new to the group. Please contact me for further information. Mick Oliver, 19 Woodcroft Avenue, Stanmore, Middx., HA7 3PT. Tel. 020 8954 4976. Email: micksheila67@hotmail.com



Olive trees grow in Northern Ireland

The Olive Tree Educational Trust was established in October 2003 to promote harmony between the communities living in Israel, the West Bank and Gaza. It aims to do so through academic and cultural activities which encourage mutual respect, the promotion of human rights and the development of economic enterprise.

Shahaf Ifhar, a young Israeli student on an Olive Tree course in London, wrote about his early experiences on the course with the other Palestinian and Israeli students.

AS THEIR SECOND ACADEMIC YEAR draws to a close, Israeli and Palestinian students learn to reconnect and work together at the Corrymeela Community Centre.

We sit in a circle on the floor. Inside the stone-built Croí it is cool and dark. People are scribbling away on little pieces of paper, trying to satisfy the query at hand without being too rational or politically correct about it. 'I want you,' says our session's leader, Damien Gorman, a local playwright and storyteller, 'to write in just a few lines about what it means to you personally to be either Israeli or Palestinian. But try to answer the question from here and not from there,' as he motions first to his heart, then to his head. After a few more minutes, we begin to talk. Very big words soon enter the space: Peace. Justice. Responsibility. Love. Home.

This photograph was taken in Belfast and shows the Israeli flag flown alongside the UFF Flag

It's my turn to speak, and I look at my page and see the word 'access'. This feels slightly inadequate at first, but I can't help it: that has always been the way I thought about home – a place where people speak my language, where I get to vote for leaders and come and go as I please, where I understand how people think and treat one another. It is also a place I more or less ran away from, as early in my life as I could, to arrive in London, a city for people without a home if ever there was one. The social

and political responsibility I feel I have, regarding Israel, is directly derived from that access and power I am given as



Reconciliation is the **hardest part** of any conflict



an Israeli citizen. But what does my heart say? Is it at all imprinted with my own sense of nationality? Does it care about language and passports, about borders and politics, about the place where I happened to be born? I told the group I did not feel I could answer this question until I spent some time living independently as an adult in Israel, something which, at twenty-three, I had never done. My lips and those of others could be seen to purse momentarily and a few heads nodded in silent sympathy, accepting the irresolution of my input. This was something that would require more life experience, more deliberation.

A very comfortable rapport was instantly established between our group of Palestinian and Israeli students and the peace-builders at Corrymeela. We were as anxious to learn what we could about conflict resolution and the nature of cross-community work as they were to learn more about our own conflict and the relationships that have sprung from our experience over the last two years. Life in London,

where we are all studying, has been exciting, sociable and free, but on returning, or even just visiting back home, we are all invariably slapped right in the face. The reality of social segregation is unforgiving. Students in Olive Tree may become best friends in London, but they may never be able to meet each other in the region, despite sometimes living only 30 kilometres apart. Add to that a real reluctance on both sides to engage or even hear about working with 'the enemy', and you have enough excuses not to venture on anything risky or innovative.

Corrymeela did not have all the answers, but they had some very useful tools to give us.

Whilst our programme for the week was packed, it still felt like a relaxing retreat after a month of university exams. For the first time in two years we were discussing someone else's problems outside the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Cryptic smiles and glances were exchanged in the room as some implications rose to the surface. After all, the two conflicts stem from the same essential reality: for economic and/or nationalistic pretexts, people arrive in a new land where the indigenous population subsequently becomes subjugated to the newcomers, which initiates a violent conflict. Sadly, many people and institutions actually benefit from prolonging this type of conflict, which is usually why people forget what it was all about in the first place. Religion, land, culture and money all become players in a charade that disguises the true reality of power and greed. Hate, handed down from one generation to the next, transforms the conflict to mean more than power; people are tricked into believing that their identity is under threat, and react by viewing the conflict existentially: it's us or them. We lose, they win; we win, they lose. Like a typical playground

Photograph taken in Belfast and shows support for the Palestine cause alongside support for Republicans





fight, or mortal combat in a coliseum, a circle of people forms around the conflict, to make sure it happens and also to prevent it from going too far. This is the quintessential spirit of conflict maintenance – that stage when the fighters have not yet exhausted their powers, and the people around them are still cheering them on, anxious to announce a winner. Some of them may become addicted to the conflict, because in many cases it is the primary thing that informs their sense of identity. That is probably why people in Northern Ireland who never go to church still define themselves in religious terms, or why the most secular Israelis see the Bible as their main reason for living there as a community.

Reconciliation is the hardest part of any conflict – it's when you finally let go of that violent and dependent embrace, when both sides return to themselves and to a healthy, working relationship.

As the week progressed, conflict comparisons quickly challenged our perceptions of ourselves as peace-builders. The Corrymeela model sounded great, but how are we to apply this back home when we cannot even physically meet? How are we to communicate when, literally, we don't even speak the same language? If we are serious about our individual commitments to change and to peace, then there is nothing left to do but to start doing, and expect no gratitude along the way. We still have a long way to go in Israel and Palestine before we can even claim to live in the 'tense peace' that now exists in Northern Ireland.

After such an intense week our hearts somehow connected. The joy at this revelation was equalled by the sadness of having to part again for the summer months, for having to go home and run the risk of having our little house of cards blown away. We will need much courage, enthusiasm and strength. Maybe a dose of madness as well, to keep us going even though our eyes remain wide open.

Shahaf Ifhar

Shahaf Ifhar is an Israeli student in London.

Since Shahaf's visit to the Centre, the relationship between Corrymeela and Olive Tree students continues to grow. We will be revisiting their story in future issues.

contact@ifhar.com

Olive Tree Trust

www.olivetreetrust.org.uk

The Olive Tree Trust is a registered charity. The Trust was formed by a group of academic, business and community leaders with a shared commitment to the above goals and a shared interest in the welfare of all the peoples of the region. Its members are drawn from various religious and ethnic communities found in the UK, including Muslim, Jewish and Christian trustees.

Hearts speak to hearts

DURING THE FESTIVE SEASON the Community at the Corrymeela Centre enjoyed Christmas and some much deserved down-time. It has been quite a full year. A year of warm welcomes, moments of hospitality, meaningful encounters and sad farewells. The doors of the Corrymeela Centre have opened and closed hundreds of thousands of times, and yet the hinges have never moved.

One of the Christian mystics has likened door hinges to the stillness in spirit, a safe place in the presence of God amidst the flurry of wholesome activity. While we have been busier than ever, the heart of the Corrymeela Centre is still hospitality: providing a safe space for people to learn about themselves and each other in the stillness and peace of the presence of God. Gerhard Tergsteegan calls this a place where 'hearts speak to hearts'.

Perhaps one of the busiest times of the year is the summer. We enjoyed a wonderful programme last summer, largely due to Jimmy Gordon and supporting community members. Jimmy built community each week, and visiting groups were warmly welcomed and hosted into the community.

In late August we ran a summer school that helped prepare women and men for public ministry in the church. Our friend Terry Hogg taught students about the life of St Patrick, St Colmcille and St Paul, and we looked at how Celtic spirituality is something more than what can be found on a glossy brochure.

It was sad to say goodbye to my first team of long-term volunteers. What an energetic group of people they were! However, endings are beginnings, and I have no doubt that each of them will be effective peace-makers and reconcilers in their respective corners of the world. Mark Myer led this team brilliantly and we wish him, Catherine, Meghan, Jonah and Evie every blessing in their new beginnings.

I am excited that this year's team of long-term volunteers includes five young people from Northern Ireland. Robert Deignan, our new volunteering development co-ordinator, is helping strengthen our programme by introducing more structured training opportunities for volunteers.

In September, we began hosting a series of 32 three-day residentials run by Young Enterprise of Northern Ireland, working with 12 cross-border schools.

One of the projects that I have really enjoyed has been working with people from the Middle East who are interested in learning about peace-building. Many who look in from the outside are encouraged to see how stable Northern Ireland presently is, but are surprised at how divided we continue to be as a society.

One of my key learnings has been that the work of reconciliation is primarily heart-work, and less an academic, financial or political exercise. Emotions, hopes and fears need to be shared and heard. The Psalmist says 'in your light we see light'; God's light is not passive but living, creative and redemptive. Hopefully during 2007, we will be able to see each other in this light of God.

Ronnie Millar

Ronnie is Centre Director at Ballycastle

David Stevens explores the theme for Corrymeela Sunday 2007 of being Christ's ambassadors through hardnosed reconciliation work

CORRYMEELA SUNDAY 2007

Christ's ambassadors in the work of reconciliation

THE LETTER TO THE EPHESIANS speaks eloquently to those caught up in the enmity generated in conflict situations and the circle of violence and counter-violence. Situations such as Northern Ireland. Situations such as the Middle East. The New Testament shows a God who wishes to overcome breakdowns in relationships (for instance, the story of the Prodigal Son, Luke 15:11–32). There is a deep solidarity of God with suffering humanity. The enmity between God and human beings is overcome through Christ's loving embrace of us on the Cross – 'He is our Peace who has made us both one and has broken down the dividing wall of hostility' (Eph. 2:14). There is a mending of brokenness and we are brought to a new place ('there is a new creation', 2 Cor. 5:17) where we are able to make space for the 'other' because Christ has made space for us. While we are made one in Christ particular identities are not abolished but are relativised and subordinated. This new identity in Christ leaves no room for individual or collective claims of superiority or self-righteousness. Reconciliation in Christ is about being freed from anxiety about identity. We do not have to shore up our own selfhood or self-esteem. We are to trust in the goodness and grace of a faithful God.

All of this has social implications. Christians are the fruits of God's reconciliation in Christ. They are called to make this reconciliation visible – in terms of a quality of relationships, in terms of openness and hospitality. This visibility should serve the same purpose as Christ's visibility, namely to reveal God and His reconciling love. In revealing God and His reconciling love we are Christ's ambassadors (2 Cor. 5:20). Similarly, the church is a community of reconciliation and is called to make this visible to the world.

The innocent victim Jesus protests against a world in which violence is met by violence and the message of the Resurrection is that the destructive powers of the world will not prevail. Such a vision of reconciliation speaks of something given us, of remade humanity, of the cost of love, of suffering vulnerability. It makes us increasingly sensitive to victims. It is a world which politics cannot bring into being. However, faith in a renewed world gives us courage to be persons of persistence and creativity in the midst of politics, for we recognise that the

world of politics is a place of encounter between humanity and God. If we realise that God loved us while we were His enemies we can work without superiority and self-righteousness with those who oppose our way and not become cynical or embittered as we seek to create a more inclusive community.

Violence demands its victims – its sacrifices. Peace and reconciliation may also demand 'sacrifice' though of a different sort: that involved in a commitment to a loving and non-violent God and by a commitment to stop the scapegoating and blaming that exists in a devious and violent world. It is a way of 'living sacrifice' (Rom. 12:1), led by the memory of Jesus, who was made victim.

Ray Davey – the founder of Corrymeela – is one of Christ's ambassadors and taught the practice of reconciliation. It is not enough to 'know' (ideologically, theologically, intellectually) about reconciliation; we need places where people can experience trust and reconciliation and we need people who can 'model' reconciliation (in this they imitate Christ). Thus encounter and relationships are central. It is only in encounter and relationships that words like trust, reconciliation and forgiveness become real.

Corrymeela has learnt the importance of 'safe spaces' – spaces that allow people to feel secure and accepted, that allow the emergence of people's stories and questions. This is about things as simple as a smile for, and recognition of, the stranger arriving at the Ballycastle Centre. It recognises the importance of hospitality. Hospitality and reconciliation are linked. In the words of Henri Nouwen, 'Hospitality is about offering people space where change can take place.'

Many people think that reconciliation work is something soft. In fact reconciliation work is hardnosed stuff. It faces honestly the tension points in situations – as Jesus did in the many situations he found himself in. Being an ambassador can look like a high status role (images of Rolls Royces etc come to mind). By contrast, being an ambassador for Christ in the work of reconciliation can mean costly action.

David Stevens

David Stevens is Leader of the Corrymeela Community

Copies of the Corrymeela Sunday Pack for 2007 are available online www.corrymeela.org or from Corrymeela House Belfast on Tel 028 9050 8080.



Remember, this is about giving all parties to the conflict **an opportunity to share in a new beginning, whether you think they deserve it or not**



Farewell to arms... a year on

The former Methodist president and former Centre Director of Corrymeela, Reverend Harold Good, OBE, who acted as an independent clerical witness to IRA decommissioning, reflects on the political landscape one year on.

IT IS MORE THAN 12 MONTHS since – as independent clerical witnesses – Fr Alec Reid and I were called upon to verify the statement on IRA decommissioning. That statement had been given by General John de Chastelain in the name and with the authority of the Independent Monitoring Commission on decommissioning.

In front of the world’s press I stated that ‘The

experience of seeing this with our own eyes, on a minute-by-minute basis, provided us with evidence so clear and of its nature so incontrovertible that, at the end of the process, it demonstrated to us, and would have demonstrated to anyone who might have been with us, that beyond any shadow of doubt, the arms of the IRA have now been decommissioned.’ I went on to say, ‘the decommissioning of the arms

*Reverend Harold Good, OBE
and Father Alec Reid.*

*Photograph © Paul McErlane
Photography.*



of the IRA is now an accomplished fact.’

At that time I was very much aware of those who had genuine doubts as well as those who, for their own predictable and political reasons, sought to undermine the validity of our statement.

Since that time not one IRA bullet has been fired, and there is growing confidence in what we declared to be a fact, even by those who expressed misgivings at the time. Peter Robinson stated recently: ‘By any reckoning, substantial decommissioning has occurred, as well as the most positive ever IRA statement. The IMC has confirmed that very significant advances have been made on the issues of paramilitary and criminal activity by the IRA.’

In any process of conflict resolution there needs to be acknowledgement of positive steps taken by either party by the other. This is why a recent *Belfast Telegraph* interview with the leadership of the UVF is also important. They said that, as far as they are concerned, ‘the Provo war is finished’ and, in their threat assessment of the IRA, there is neither the will nor the inclination to return to violence. From these comments it would appear they will put no obstacle in the way of a deal between the DUP and Sinn Féin.

In that act of decommissioning there was the removal of a giant-sized roadblock. It is now the responsibility of all parties to pursue the removal of whatever obstacles may yet stand in the way of political progress and the restoration of a democratically elected Assembly at Stormont. The most obvious remaining obstacle is the issue of policing. We have every right to ask that this issue will be resolved, and that no more undeclared obstacles will be rolled on to the path.

As we all know, no human relationship can survive without ‘compromise’. This word shares the same root meaning as the word ‘accommodate’, which means ‘making space’, which is exactly what we must do if we are to share this piece of soil with each other. Speaking of difficulties with which we are also familiar, a key player in a peace process in another place of conflict said: ‘Remember, this is about giving all parties to the conflict an opportunity to share in a new beginning, whether you think they deserve it or not.’

I can think of no better definition of the great Biblical word ‘grace’. An amazing word of which we hear and speak a great deal, but now must put into practice.

Rev'd Harold Good, OBE

NINETEEN LEADERS from Christian laity centres around the world convened in Corrymeela in early May to learn about conflict. They returned to their countries and communities inspired – energised by the idea that conflict is natural and that conflicting parties can overcome division through a mutually empowering process.

The leaders, all of whom are engaged in social change efforts, learned the process of mediative dialogue through the Vesper Society-sponsored Dialogue for Peaceful Change (DPC), an international project that emphasises practical skills that help people in conflict agree on how they can live and work together without violence.

‘People were deeply impacted by the process and the content,’ says Rich Watson, DPC’s project director. Watson was one of eight leaders certified as trainers the first week in May. They, in turn, taught the mediative method to 19 new facilitators the following week. ‘To a person,’ Watson says, ‘the participants were asking, “How can I adapt this to my own situation?”’

Vesper Society is developing DPC in conjunction with Oikos Foundation of the Netherlands, the Ecumenical Association of Academies and Laity Centres in Europe, OIKOSNET and TIDES Training in Northern Ireland. The project aims to train 200 leaders by the end of 2007.

Appreciating conflict

DPC begins with the assumption that conflict is natural and occurs in any setting where people are working for social change. Furthermore, conflict contains the seeds of transformation, Watson says.

‘If there wasn’t conflict, we’d be in a static situation. But we know our world is never static, it’s always dynamic,’ he adds. ‘So we need to appreciate conflict and understand that it is part of the change we seek.’

The programme teaches that differences which divide also make communities strong. An appreciation of difference flows from an understanding of interdependence, or ‘mutuality’, as Watson puts it. So building trust between conflicting groups is key.

Mediative dialogue is not the same as negotiation. With the latter, a negotiator hears the differences and then proposes a solution. But a mediator, who must be invited in by the conflicting parties, does not offer any solution. The solution comes from the groups. In fact, Watson notes, the solution ‘resides in the groups’.

Dialoging for peaceful change

International Training Programme Equips Peacemakers

The DPC methodology was developed in 2005 from the work of the Oikos Foundation of the Netherlands and the Corrymeela Community. The training model was further expanded by Colin Craig of TIDES Training, which grew out of 30 years of the troubles in Northern Ireland. TIDES (Transformation, Interdependence, Diversity, Equity and Sustainability) offers a model to measure the effectiveness of mediative dialogue.

‘With DPC we are saying that interdependence, diversity and equity must be acknowledged and present in order to move toward transformation and to sustain our efforts to bring about peace and reconciliation,’ Watson explains.

Applying the training

Before they even left Corrymeela, trainees eagerly discussed how they would use the methodology at home. A Lutheran pastor envisions using DPC in marriage counselling. Another participant plans to use the model in resolving office conflicts.

These 19 leaders join 16 others trained as facilitators in 2005. Already, the facilitators have applied the methodology in powerful ways.

In Canada, a centre convened aboriginal and non-aboriginal peoples to discuss peaceful means of working through divisive issues. In Bethlehem, a facilitator is working with Palestinian youth while another is addressing violence towards women in Romania. And in the Philippines, a facilitator prepared the ground for dialogue between parties with a history of conflict. But the resolution of the specific conflict was not in itself the most significant result.

the result of the dialogue between the groups is a healing of relationships, a mending of relationships,’ says the facilitator. ‘Dialogue is all about building relationships amidst differences and diversity.’

“ **Dialogue is all about building relationships amidst differences and diversity** ”

Vesper Society, a private operating foundation, promotes social justice locally and globally by addressing critical social issues including the provision of health services for the underserved.





Let us source the Pollen of Peace

ROGER COURTNEY'S SONG 'The Pollen of Peace' has for many years been associated with the Corrymeela Community as a kind of unofficial theme song. It seems to capture the essence of the Community's ideals and its commitment to peace-making.

ROGER COURTNEY'S SONG 'The Pollen of Peace' has for many years been associated with the Corrymeela Community as a kind of unofficial theme song. It seems to capture the essence of the Community's ideals and its commitment to peace-making.

A chance encounter in 2005 brought the song's author-composer into direct contact with the origins of the piece, some 30 years previously.

'Pollen' was written in 1974 when Roger, then a Social Science student at Queen's University, spotted a set of children's peace posters on exhibition in Corrymeela House, Belfast, during one of the

regular bread-and-cheese lunches. One of them read simply: 'Spread the Pollen of Peace', and included a picture of a single flower and a butterfly. The song quickly became a favourite at the Ballycastle

Centre, and a choral arrangement was very soon taken up by the newly-formed Corrymeela Singers (the guitarist of which was Roger Courtney). Over the next few years the song was performed – often with audience participation – wherever the Singers went in Ireland, Britain and, in the 1980s, even further afield. It has been translated into several languages, including German, Polish, French and Irish, and was performed for Pope John Paul II and several thousand Austrian young people in Vienna Stadium in 1983. In 1980 it provided the title track for the Corrymeela Singers' first recording, and it has been recorded and broadcast many times since, again by the Corrymeela Singers as well as by church choirs, school choirs and others. Ray Davey, the founder of Corrymeela, used 'The Pollen of Peace' as the title of one of his books in 1991. The words and music have appeared in published form in various hymnbooks, songbooks and school assembly collections, as well as by the Corrymeela Press in

sheet music form. In one version the Christian-based words were adapted (by permission) for use in inter-faith contexts. When the Corrymeela Singers gave their farewell concert in the Autumn of 2004, 'Pollen' most appropriately was the final song they performed.

Perhaps there were times when some Corrymeela members felt that it was over-used, even over-simplistic, but nonetheless the song has never failed to appeal and, more than 30 years on, 'The Pollen of Peace' remains popular and widely known well beyond Corrymeela.

A new chapter to the story occurred during Corrymeela's 40th Anniversary celebrations in October 2005. Preparations were underway for a BBC Radio Ulster broadcast service from Newtownbreda Presbyterian Church to mark the anniversary. The Newtownbreda church choir was joined by *Ceol-le-Céile* (Irish for 'Together in Music'), which includes several former members of the Corrymeela Singers, not least Roger Courtney. Two new members of *Ceol-le-Céile*, 17-year-old twins Rachel and Helen Bergin, went home after the first rehearsal and mentioned in passing to their mother, Eilish, the pieces they had been practising, including 'Pollen'. They were bemused when Eilish said that she had been responsible for the song – as the young teenage pupil at St Brigid's High School (now Drumcree High) who had made the original poster!

After the Anniversary Service on 16 October, at which Eilish was present, Roger and she met for the first time and talked about the origins of 'Pollen of Peace'. 'My father kept bees,' Eilish explained, 'so it really started out as "the pollen of bees"!' Living in County Armagh, with its many apple orchards, bee-keeping was seen as a very beneficial occupation, as the bees helped to spread the pollen. Talk about bees and pollen – and sometimes chasing around to re-gather the swarms – was an everyday experience, so when Eilish's Art teacher was looking for entries



My father kept bees, so it really started out as "the pollen of bees"





THE POLLEN OF PEACE

O let us spread the pollen of peace
throughout our land;
Let us spread the pollen of peace
throughout our land;
Let us spread the pollen of peace,
And make all conflict cease.
Let us spread the pollen of peace
throughout our land.

O Christ has sown the seeds of love,
Christ has launched the winged dove.
Let us make the flower grow
And let the people know,
That Christ has sown the seeds of love.

O let us spread the pollen of peace . . .

All it needs is our love to make it grow;
All it needs is our hopefulness to show.
And tell those who are choked with fear
That the Prince of Peace is here.
All it needs is our love to make it grow.

O let us spread the pollen of peace . . .

Words & Music: © Roger Courtney, 1974

for the peace poster competition, the ‘pollen’ imagery was readily employed.

The one regrettably absent item from this celebration of origins was Eilish’s original poster (which, by the way, had not won the competition). Roger had written to Eilish in the 1970s and had acquired the poster and had it framed. In 1980, when the Corrymeela Singers had issued their ‘Pollen of Peace’ recording, Roger and the poster featured in a UTV interview by Gloria Hunniford, but unfortunately the poster never re-emerged from the studio and was long ago presumed lost. Perhaps the original drawing could be recreated, but maybe this would be superfluous, for the creative botanical and visual ideas of a young person in the 1970s inspired a literary and musical image that lives on now in a simple but striking song which continues to move and encourage many people in their commitment to peace and hope.

Surely the next time the story behind ‘The Pollen of Peace’ is told, there will be a few additional words clarifying the fuller significance of ‘spreading the pollen’.

Norman Richardson

Copies of the sheet music of ‘The Pollen of Peace’ can be obtained from Corrymeela House Belfast, price £1.

Ulster says maybe

IAN PAISLEY FAILED THE BIBLICAL TEST of letting your yea be yea or your nay be nay (Matt. 5:37) on 24 November. So much for biblical standards. His conditional circumlocutions were, however, deemed to be a yea by the two governments (this is what the wisdom of serpents required). A subsequent ‘clarification’ by Ian Paisley was hailed as evidence. The peace process and Blair’s legacy project remained on track.

November 24 had been hyped as decision day for months; Northern Ireland’s date with destiny – a yea or nay time. We slid effortlessly past it, to face yet more dates with destiny, more decision times, more maybes, more possibly endless deferrals that our politicians are so good at. We don’t do dates with history, we prefer the ante-chamber to real happenings. Perpetual adolescence is easier.

The events in the Assembly were upstaged by scenes from a crude thriller when Michael Stone hurtled into the proceedings carrying gun, smoking bombs, knife and garrotte (plus spray can) all now used at his bail hearing claiming it was a piece of performance art. The desire for celebrity and attention overwhelms our age – ‘I am a celebrity murderer, get me in here!’ Karl Marx said that history recurs – once in tragedy and once in farce. There is a fine line between tragedy and farce and it was seen on 24 November. But for the bravery of security staff farce would have been tragedy.

David Stevens

Photography © Paul McErlane





Why did leading members of Sinn Féin attend the funeral of a former UVF man? And how did a man who served time for loyalist crime come to earn the respect and friendship of prominent republicans? Roy Garland explains the extraordinary legacy of Billy Mitchell

Why it wasn't too late to talk to Billy

Billy Mitchell photo courtesy of the Irish News

THE CONGREGATION AT THE FUNERAL of loyalist Billy Mitchell was certainly a mixed one. Dawn Purvis, chair of the PUP; Liam Maskey, brother of Alex Maskey, MLA and pastors of the Church of the Nazarene all took time to speak movingly about his life. And at the end of the service crowds poured onto the street, joining hundreds waiting outside to pay their last respects. A piper led the cortège and, as we slowly followed the hearse, I became aware of Sinn Féin members, official republicans, UVF men, churchmen, priests and people from north and south silently walking alongside. And I couldn't help but think what a fitting tribute this was to a man who devoted his life to creating a better future for all.

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*the Ulster question was **not religious in the conventional sense, but rather a 'question of humanity'***

”

In the early 1970s Billy Mitchell was one of a number of UVF men struggling to find a better way forward. He would talk fearlessly about nationalists and republicans having every right to be such, and to express their aspirations openly. He also rejected the fears being whipped up by demigods, making what seemed an astonishing statement: 'We have nothing to fear from a united Ireland.' Of course, many actions of the UVF seemed to belie such ideas, but they lived and moved in a sea of sectarianism.

Billy came from a working class evangelical home but had been caught up in a religious fundamentalism that saw Protestant Ulster as a sacred cause demanding sacrifice and obedience. Billy struggled with this and ultimately realised that genuine faith is to be expressed in love of one's neighbour – and even of one's enemy. Billy Mitchell's schooling ended when he was 14, but his teacher commended his use of English. His first job was with the *Belfast Telegraph* as a 'copy boy'. Billy's mates suggested they go to hear 'Big Paisley' and

they began attending the church and Ulster Hall rallies. Billy joined a loyalist band and an Orange lodge and helped organise Paisley's Ulster Protestant Volunteers with Noel Docherty. But after Noel was imprisoned Billy moved on to become a senior UVF officer. UVF leaders also engaged in discussion with Northern Ireland Labour Party politicians – reportedly the only ones prepared to help the UVF move in a new direction. During the winter of 1973–4 Billy Mitchell issued an appeal on behalf of the UVF calling on 'all Ulstermen to pause, to stretch out the hand of forbearance and conciliation, to forgive and forget, and to join in making for the province they love a new era of peace, contentment and goodwill'.

A Council of Ulster under a neutral chair was also envisaged with representations to be made by all sides of the community. Right-wing unionists issued vicious condemnations suggesting the UVF had gone Communist. Even elements within the intelligence services depicted the 'new thinking' in as negative a light as possible. The result was a coup d'état by hardliners. A vicious feud followed and involved terrible killings. Billy was arrested and a 'supergrass' trial followed. It ended with heavy sentences meted out to him and most of the UVF in south-east Antrim. Billy found this painful and would not talk about it. It seems he did not pull the trigger but shared the guilt. While in jail, however, he read extensively and became particularly fond of Dietrich Bonhoeffer, the German theologian hanged by the Nazis for plotting against Hitler.

In 1990 when Billy was released, loyalists again urged politicians to make peace but the appeals fell on deaf ears. Billy joined the PUP and with the support of his church, devoted his life to transforming loyalist organisations and communities. Being highly respected he could address the UVF directly and became central to the East Antrim Conflict Transformation initiative – a PUP/UVF leadership attempt to deal with the legacy of the conflict and

channel youthful energies into constructive areas. The legacy was defined by Billy to include the existence of armed groups, the culture of violence, interface difficulties, criminals masquerading as loyalists and whole communities marginalised, demonised, stereotyped and blighted by sectarianism.

Billy said armed loyalists were simultaneously engaging in an internal consultation process and needed time and space to succeed. A focus group complemented this by seeking to transform communities by enriching the quality of people's lives. 'Critical friends' from across the community monitored and constructively criticised the work and also tried to address concerns about loyalism in the wider society. A forum meets quarterly receiving reports from local groups, for whom it provides a safe space. Billy chaired the last meeting when over 120 participants represented seven different areas. Observers included PSNI, local government officers, political observers, Church people and others.

Trevor Ringland, of the One Small Step Campaign, accompanied me to the last meeting on 6 June 2006 and we were deeply impressed and moved as young and older people, many who had never spoken publicly, delivered reports. Issues being addressed included a Young Citizens Forum, flags, sectarianism, murals and bonfires. Others ranged from hockey, soccer coaching and fitness training to community safety, senior citizens, anti-social behaviour, heritage, cultural and historical interests, outdoor pursuits with police, projects to tidy and enhance areas, youth painting projects, drugs awareness, employment skills, child protection, women's groups, first aid, food hygiene, home safety, cancer awareness, beauty treatment, neighbourhood mediation, cross-border relationships, mediation and leadership training, team building, information sessions with the police ombudsman, human rights, a community garden, citizens' advice, healthy living, fuel poverty, codes of conduct for bands and much more besides. I was astounded. I had never before witnessed anything so constructive and visionary undertaken by any political party on such a scale, and there in the centre sat Billy Mitchell. He had defied the inertia, pessimism, sectarianism and class division that for so long have bedevilled this community. Sadly within a few weeks of the meeting Billy Mitchell died suddenly. His funeral took place on 25 July. He now seems irreplaceable, but his work continues. As early as the late 1970s he came to realise that the Ulster question was not religious in the conventional sense, but rather a 'question of humanity'. This insight remains central to Billy Mitchell's own, and hopefully lasting, legacy.

Roy Garland

Roy Garland is a newspaper columnist for the nationalist Irish News and a member of the Ulster Unionist Party.



Open Programmes – 2007

9–11 February

Understanding and Communicating in Relationships – expressing feelings and needs in a way that helps us get along better with the most important people in our lives. Led by Jeannette Sloan.

23–25 March

Writers' Weekend with Damian Gorman, writer, TV, stage, poet.

20–22 April

Gardening Weekend – a working weekend in Knocklayd's beautiful garden in exchange for food and accommodation. Led by Carol Press and Kate Graham.

27–29 April

Parents, Children and Sexual Identity – a weekend led by parents for parents struggling with issues around the sexual identity of a son or a daughter. Facilitated by Una Lount and Brian Treacy.

4–6 May

Painting for Pleasure – for those who enjoy painting and wish to share their skills and experience and capture the beauty of Knocklayd and Glenshesk. Bring your own paints etc. Led by Raymond Bakewell, a member of the Corrymeela Community.

11–13 April

In Camera '3' – an opportunity to see ourselves and the world through the insight the lens affords in the company of a skilled, experienced photographer. Led by Revd Gordon Gray FRPS.

9 June

Knocklayd Open Day – we invite you to join us for all or part of the day, from 10.30 am to 5.00 pm.

29 June–1 July

Writing for Pleasure – 'Just Write' – for those who would like to begin or continue to write and reminisce. Led by Una Lount and Gill Michael, members of the Corrymeela Community.

9–13 July

Walking Together – an opportunity to explore the North Antrim coast and the Glens of Antrim in the company of experienced walkers. Led by David Boyd and Brian Treacy.



It is great craic to see families from grandparents, parents and grandchildren enjoying their modelling debut together. I think that sums up what Corrymeela is all about: everyone having fun together, sharing good company, whatever your age, background or religion

Fashionable Corrymeela

“
*Marks & Spencer is a store for all the family and **we are delighted to have been able to support Corrymeela in this way***

Stuart Rose, Chief Executive, M&S

”
 Bridal House. The event was hosted by Nuala McKeever, the gifted and talented Northern Irish comedienne who hilariously entertained the guests and models alike.

Nigel Gray, Area Manager for Northern Ireland and the Isle of Man, commented, ‘I am delighted to have been able to support this fantastic event with Corrymeela and Marks & Spencer both celebrating

40 years in Northern Ireland. On behalf of Marks & Spencer, I would like to commend the efforts of everyone who took part. It has been Marks & Spencer’s pleasure to provide the clothing for such a well organised and professional show.’

The sell-out show was organised by local volunteers and by a number of corporate supporters, and raised over £7,500 for Corrymeela’s vital work with children, young people and their families at the Ballycastle Centre. This money goes towards meeting the costs of groups who couldn’t otherwise afford to visit. Part of the commitment of Corrymeela Community members is to volunteer, and most local members spend time working residentially at the Ballycastle Centre three or four times a year. However, to be a model in a fashion show is probably one of the more unusual demands.

Nuala McKeever, compère for the show, said, ‘It is a pleasure to come along to lend my support to such a worthwhile charity. It is great craic to see families from grandparents, parents and

Photographs reproduced by kind permission of Gus Moore.





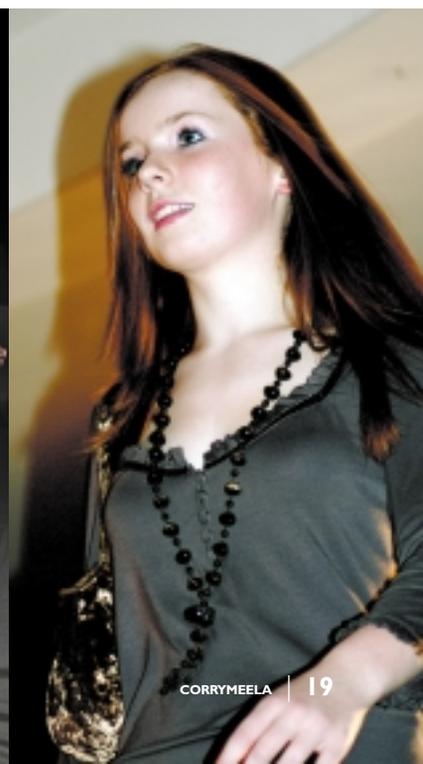
grandchildren enjoying their modelling debut together. I think that sums up what Corrymeela is all about: everyone having fun together, sharing good company, whatever your age, background or religion.'

Ronnie Millar, Corrymeela Centre Director at Ballycastle, said, 'I thoroughly enjoyed taking part in the show, but I have to say the real fun started back in June when the rehearsals started. It has been enjoyable but a lot of hard work for everyone including the many people back stage. Corrymeela relies on the kindness of people and businesses to fund our various activities at the Centre and I am delighted to say thank you to the many businesses such as La Mon Hotel and their staff who worked for free, Marks & Spencer, Wedded Bliss Bridal House, Dromona, The Flower Garden, Carecall Solutions Ltd and many more.'

Jo Watson
Fundraising Director



Photographs reproduced by kind permission of Paul McErlane and Gus Moore.





Bringing a sense of family to Corrymeela

Since arriving at Corrymeela at the start of last summer as our resource family, volunteers Kai, Helen, son Gabriel and baby Simeon have been making a special contribution to life at the Centre.

HELPING TO PAVE A WAY towards reconciliation, living in an international and ecumenical Christian community, the beauty of the North Antrim coast, a unique experience for our children – these are probably the main aspects of life in Corrymeela that drew us here to become the new resource family in May 2006.

We came from a rural parish in Saxony, in former East Germany, not far from the site of Ray Davey's internment in the concentration camp near Dresden.



*it felt like a **God-sent opportunity** when we found out Corrymeela was looking for a volunteer family*



Looking for something more in keeping with the community life we had experienced in L'Arche Lambeth in London, where we met in 1997, it felt like a God-sent opportunity when we found out Corrymeela was looking for a volunteer family.

It was an eventful first six months – as we knew it would be. We had just become familiar with the normal rhythm of life and the faces of our fellow volunteers, when along came the summer programme with its all-site water fights, Indian head massages and endless stream of summer volunteers. Just as the dust was settling and the new long-term volunteers were arriving, our second child, Simeon, was born (at home in Cedar Haven), throwing in another helping of chaos. Indeed, with variables such as the constantly changing groups who come here and never knowing what to expect at worship in the Croí, a certain degree of chaos seems part and parcel of Corrymeela life. Yet through all this we have made home, getting to know the wonderful people we have the privilege to live and work with

and discovering what Corrymeela is about and how we can contribute to its work. A recent visit to Ray and Kathleen Davey has helped to complete our sense of Corrymeela's continuity and why it was called into existence.

As a family we are in a unique position. Our roles are flexible according to our gifts and Corrymeela's needs. As a German Lutheran minister Kai has become very involved in the prayer life here, co-ordinating the worship rota, encouraging and helping others to lead worship, and taking care of the Croí. He also plays a part in welcoming visitors to the Centre, and has been helping with the running of some of the programmes. Helen has been keeping an eye on the stock of non-human resources needed for working with groups and trying to make the Centre feel uncomfortable about its lack of environmental friendliness! It has gradually become plain, however, that it is more who we are as a family than what we do here that is of significance. The children in particular make a valuable contribution to a more holistic and stable sense of community. Baby Simeon is adored by all and sundry. Gabriel, at almost three years old, provides a sometimes much-needed distraction for the other volunteers from the stress of their everyday work: 'Alan, do you want to come to the playroom with me? Daniel, do you want to read a book with me?' Each boy also has his own way of disrupting meetings!

Together with the boys we are looking forward to our next year and a half here, and hope we will learn and grow as we continue our journey as a family with the Corrymeela Community.

Kai and Helen Thierbach

The Board of the International Fund for Ireland will provide financial assistance of £1 million towards the redevelopment of the Corrymeela Residential Centre in Ballycastle, largely towards the rebuilding of the volunteer accommodation in the Coventry building.

Foundations for peace



THERE HAS BEEN a growing awareness of the limitations and difficulties which the accommodation at the Corrymeela Residential Centre, Ballycastle, poses for groups; the quality of programme work; and the financial realities faced. The concerns were mainly around disability access, health and safety, lack of programme meeting rooms, poor sleeping accommodation and inadequate volunteer accommodation.

Over the past 40 years the Community has learnt the value of the residential experience. This experience can create new openness to deal with issues that people find hard to cope with at home. Therefore much effort has been put into securing funding to regenerate the Centre, to make it ready to face the next 40 years and be able to offer its unique brand of hospitality to those in need.

This generous grant by the International Fund for Ireland (IFI) will help towards the costs involved to allow the Community to redesign and rebuild the Coventry building which currently houses so many of the long-term volunteers. Independent surveys and Community Technical Aid have reported that renovation was not an option due to the high costs involved.

The wonderful thing – and the challenging thing – is the variety of different people who come to the Centre, and the interactions between them. Corrymeela must have residential accommodation that meets the needs of a variety of people and can attract a vibrant mix of long-term volunteers, who contribute so much to the experience at the Centre. The new building, Coventry II, once constructed will attract volunteers of different ages, backgrounds and physical abilities who, together with staff and members, can sustain the work that goes on. Pricewaterhousecoopers recently valued the volunteer contribution to Corrymeela at a remarkable £500,000 per annum. Volunteers, both short term and long term, are involved in all aspects of the

work of the Community; many of them have carried their learning at Corrymeela into Northern Irish society and beyond.

Our vision is that volunteering will be even more central to the work of Corrymeela in the future, engaging a more diverse and a more age-inclusive group of volunteers. In return they deserve accommodation that meets fire regulations and the requirements of the Disability Act 1995 and can cater for their needs on a day-to-day basis over a year or more whilst they live and work at the Ballycastle Centre.

Both Tara (arts and crafts building) and Cedar Haven (family volunteer accommodation) have been refurbished already at a cost of £225,000, with sincere thanks going to our members and friends who donated so generously and to the funders, Fitzpatrick Memorial Fund (USA) and the Department of Education.

The appeal for the remaining funding required for Coventry II is well underway with results due early in the New Year. Funders secured to date include European Peace II (CRU), Fitzpatrick Memorial Fund (USA) and the International Fund for Ireland (IFI).

Once funding is complete for Coventry II then the next challenging phase will be to raise over £2 million for the updating and renewal of the Village, the House and the Croí. The two-phased approach allows the Centre to operate at an optimum level with minimal negative impact on the programme activities, numbers of people visiting and our revenue income while work is ongoing.

For further information or to make a donation to the Capital Appeal please contact Jo Watson, Email: jowatson@corrymeela.org Tel. 028 9050 8080.

Jo Watson
Fundraising Director

“
our vision is that
volunteering
will be even
more central
to the work of
Corrymeela
”

The International Fund for Ireland was established by the Irish and British Governments in 1986 with two main aims: 'To promote social and economic advance and to encourage contact, dialogue and reconciliation between nationalists and unionists on the island of Ireland'. The work of the International Fund is directed by an independent board, consisting of seven members appointed jointly by both Governments.



Back row L-R
 Ronnie Millar, Christian Guevara, Hanna Dahlin, Helen Bermingham, Daniel McShane, Robert Deignan, Marian Homan, Jason Fehr, Niki Fehr

Front row L-R
 Gabriel and Helen Thierbach, Janete Bulnes, Ochanya Ameh, Jimmy Gordon, Alan Black, Robbie Henderson, Katharina Schilling, David Price

Introducing the Volunteer Team

MY NAME IS ROBERT DEIGNAN and I'm delighted to be able to introduce myself as the new Volunteering Development Co-ordinator at Corrymeela. I was appointed on 1 September 2006. I am originally from north Belfast but have strong family connections in Ballycastle going back as far as my great grandfather, so I am overjoyed to be given the opportunity to live and work in this area and make a contribution to the work of Corrymeela. In my previous work I have been involved in the management and development of training and employment programmes – principally in north and west Belfast, east Antrim and Glasgow.

I am living on-site in Coventry House as part of the Corrymeela Community. In seeking to meet the objectives of Corrymeela's volunteering project I am supported in my work by Jimmy Gordon (Volunteer Support Worker from Edinburgh – not Glasgow!) who

was recruited as a full-time member of staff in April 2006, having been a long-term volunteer here in 2003–4. During his first six months in the post Jimmy successfully recruited and trained a team of short-term volunteers to support Corrymeela's summer programme.

This year's cohort of long-term volunteers will have the distinction of being the last group of volunteers to reside at Coventry House. The present house, built in 1976 with financial assistance from Coventry Cathedral, is being replaced by a purpose-built facility with the aid of IFI funding. Building

work will commence in the autumn of 2007. The 2006–7 team are a group of diverse and exceptionally gifted young people. During my first three months in the job I can honestly say they have been a real pleasure to work with. So let me introduce them all to you:

Marian Homan (23 – Ohio, USA) Marian arrived at Corrymeela during the summer programme having just completed a course of study in Psychology and English. As well as being blessed with a sharp wit and wicked sense of humour Marian is proving to be an extremely capable volunteer. She hopes to return to further study in the USA next September.

Helen Bermingham (26 – North Belfast) Helen recently graduated in Psychology from UJ as a mature student having spent the early part of her career as a secretary in the health service. Her career aspirations now lie in youth and community development work and she hopes that her year at Corrymeela will serve to provide her with some valuable work experience and connections with potential future employers. She is affectionately known as Helen 'B' or 'Milly' by the other volunteers. (She will kill me for telling you this!)

Hanna Dahlin (19 – Helsingborg, Sweden) Hanna heard about Corrymeela through her father, a school teacher who has been involved in exchange programmes between Sweden and Ireland. She has just finished school and hopes to go to university after her experience here. Hanna loves walking and has been enjoying the beautiful walks around the Ballycastle area since she arrived.

Christian Guevara (26 – El Salvador) The



*I am living **on-site** in **Coventry House** as part of the **Corrymeela Community***



Corrymeela 'experience' was highly recommended to Christian by previous El Salvadorian volunteers Rhina and Carolina (we must be doing something right!). Christian has an employment background in journalism, most notably in *La Prensa Grafica*, San Salvador's best known daily newspaper.

Niki Fehr (23 – Calgary, Canada) Niki, a graduate of Mennonite Theology, is making history at Corrymeela in that she and her husband Jason are the first young long-term volunteer married couple. They met at a summer youth camp in Canada six years ago. Niki has a particular interest in mediation and conflict transformation and she hopes to pursue a career in this work when she completes her year.

Jason Fehr (23 – Saskatchewan, Canada) Jason first heard about Corrymeela through a professor at the Canadian Mennonite University where he was studying Theology. He hopes to go on to further study at masters level in Theology and Ecology. Jason is a keen photographer and has contributed some superb photographs to the new Corrymeela website.

Alan Black (19 – east Belfast) Being from the east of the city of Belfast, Alan is an avid supporter of Glentoran FC (but we won't hold that against him!). Alan came to Corrymeela via Tara McHugh's Youth in Community Programme. With the experience he gains at Corrymeela Alan hopes to embark upon a training course in youth work next autumn.

Katharina Schilling (20 – south Germany) Katharina is here at Corrymeela as part of the Eirene organisation's voluntary service programme. She has shown remarkable talent already and is particularly gifted in the area of arts and crafts. Katharina hopes to commence university in Germany in the autumn of 2007.

Ochanya Ameh (27 – Nigeria) Ochanya came to Corrymeela through the Methodist Church's Scholarship and Leadership Training (SALT) Programme. She is a graduate of Business Administration and she hopes to secure employment in Nigeria in the United Nations when she returns. Next year will also be a hugely significant year for Ochanya as she will be getting married, having recently announced her engagement to the volunteers at Corrymeela (another good excuse for a week-long volunteer party in the sun!).

Daniel McShane (23 – Ballintoy, Co. Antrim) Daniel is a Computer Science graduate of Manchester University, but would prefer to return to the voluntary sector in some capacity post-Corrymeela, having had previous experience in youth work and summer camps. Daniel is also a qualified teacher of English as a foreign language (is there anything the Ballintoy 'boy-wonder' cannot do?)

Robbie Henderson (22 – Co. Durham, England) Robbie spent his early years in Ballycastle but moved to England when he was six. He recently returned to

Northern Ireland and his volunteering year at Corrymeela (which finishes at the end of 2006) has helped to persuade him to stay on here. He will be living in Belfast from January 2007 onwards and has applied to study Social Work at the University of Ulster next autumn.

Janete Bulnes (25 – El Salvador) Janete will be completing her year at Corrymeela later this month and returning to her native city of San Salvador where she hopes to resume her career in the voluntary sector. She is trained in Human Rights and has previously worked for UNICEF in her home country. Janete and Robbie have helped immensely by showing the new team of volunteers 'good practice' in volunteering at Corrymeela. They will both be sorely missed by everyone here.

In January we welcomed two new recruits into the team:

Barry Farrell (21 – Rathfriland, Co. Down) Barry was introduced to Corrymeela through the Give and Take Programme. He has already done some short-term volunteering at the Ballycastle Centre where he is already a well known 'character'. Barry has recently spent some time in Africa and we are looking forward to welcoming him into the long-term volunteer team.

Bryne Harbinson (21 – North Belfast) Bryne has also some previous volunteering experience at Corrymeela and will likewise be a valuable addition to the team. He has previous experience in cross-community work through his involvement in the Ballysillan Community Forum.

Helen Thierbach (Devon, England) and Kai Thierbach (Leipzig, Germany), along with their two sons Gabriel (3) and Simeon (3 months), make up the volunteer resource family. You can read about their story on page 20.

Don and Jeannette Sloan continue to manage our residential retreat at Knocklayd. They recently hosted a visit from the team of long-term volunteers when the food and hospitality were simply 'out of this world'! We spent a couple of nights there in early January – couldn't think of a better place to kick off the new year!

So that's the long-term volunteer team for 2006–7; as I said earlier they are a fantastic bunch of young people and are helping to keep me young too (having just turned 40 I need all the help I can get!). When you next visit the Ballycastle Centre they would be delighted to meet you so please introduce yourself to as many of them as you possibly can.

Robert Deignan



Corrymeela Desk Calendars 2

What better way to greet each new month than with a picture taken from life at Corrymeela



YOUTH 1

Activities of young people at Corrymeela



YOUTH 2

Activities of young people at Corrymeela



CORRYMEELA HAPPENINGS

Corrymeela Events



CORRYMEELA VIEWS

Various Images



WORSHIP

Worship at Corrymeela



CORRYMEELA CENTRE

The Buildings



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Taken from Corrymeela

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