

# the Corrymeela community

embracing difference • healing divisions • enabling reconciliation



Corrymeela will donate to Northern Ireland's Carbon Footprint Tree Planting Scheme, to offset the environmental impact of this magazine.



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January 2013  
[corrymeela.org](http://corrymeela.org)

# Shaking Hands

27ú lá Meitheamh, 2012

Because what's the alternative?  
 Because of courage.  
 Because of loved ones lost.  
 Because no more.  
 Because it's a small thing; shaking hands; it happens every day.  
 Because I heard of one man whose hands haven't stopped shaking since a market day in Omagh.  
 Because it takes a second to say hate, but it takes longer, much longer, to be a great leader.  
 Much, much longer.  
 Because shared space without human touching doesn't amount to much.  
 Because it's easier to speak to your own than to hold the hand of someone whose side  
 has been previously described, proscribed, denied.  
 Because it is tough.  
 Because it is tough.  
 Because it is meant to be tough, and this is the stuff of memory, the stuff of hope, the stuff  
 of gesture, and meaning and leading.  
 Because it has taken so, so long.  
 Because it has taken land and money and languages and barrels and barrels of blood and grieving.  
 Because lives have been lost.  
 Because lives have been taken.  
 Because to be bereaved is to be troubled by grief.  
 Because more than two troubled peoples live here.  
 Because I know a woman whose hand hasn't been shaken since she was a man.  
 Because shaking a hand is only a part of the start.  
 Because I know a woman whose touch calmed a man whose heart was breaking.  
 Because privilege is not to be taken lightly.  
 Because this just might be good.  
 Because who said that this would be easy?  
 Because some people love what you stand for, and for some, if you can, they can.  
 Because solidarity means a common hand.  
 Because a hand is only a hand; so hang onto it.  
 So join your much discussed hands.  
 We need this; for one small second.  
 So touch.  
 So lead.

© Pádraig Ó Tuama 2012. [www.intheshelter.com](http://www.intheshelter.com)  
 Will be included in 'Sorry for your troubles',  
 a book of poetry and essays to be  
 published by Canterbury Press, July 2013.

Pádraig Ó Tuama, a Corkman, lives in Belfast where he is involved  
 in writing poetry, public theology, LGBT chaplaincy and storytelling.  
 Pádraig is a member of the Corrymeela community.

*Martin McGuinness referenced this poem at the Davey Village  
 opening and since then Padraig has been to Stormont to meet  
 with McGuinness and gave him his book in person.*



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Thank you to Corrymeela member, Helen Baird, who provided the photography for many articles in the magazine.

### SPRING EVENT

# FAITH AND IDENTITY EMBRACING DIFFERENCE

CORRYMEELA WEEKEND  
OXFORD  
2 MARCH – 3 MARCH 2013  
SATURDAY 10.00AM – 4.00PM

*Speakers:*  
IMAM MONAWAR HUSSAIN  
REV NIGEL HARDCASTLE  
RABBI NORMAN SOLOMON

Sunday 10.30am  
MORNING SERVICE: PREACHER – REV DR INDERJIT BHOGAL

CONFERENCE COST (INCLUDING SATURDAY LUNCH) – £20  
Concessions (£10 Students and unwaged)

*For further details and booking form:*  
corryoxon@gmail.com or log on to: [www.corrymeela.org](http://www.corrymeela.org)

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# We've only just begun

by Inderjit Bhogal,  
Leader of the Corrymeela Community



Inderjit Bhogal

THERE IS A PERCEPTION that Ireland is fixed. There is a peace process, the conflict is over. The work of Corrymeela... done? The reality is very different. Corrymeela's beginnings in 1965 predate the conflict but there is no denying Northern Ireland's social and political landscape over the past 30 years deeply influenced our work as we reached out to individuals and families alike and became a radical voice in the growing ecumenical movement.

On Good Friday 1966, Corrymeela hosted a very prominent visitor and speaker at a Conference on community. The speaker, Prime Minister of Northern Ireland, the Rt Hon Terence O'Neill, used his speech to call for a new community and understanding, and appealed for joint efforts to build a better society.

Mr O'Neill recognised there were differences of opinion and principle, and that though, "the avoidance of controversial issues may be comfortable, ...it makes no real contribution to better understanding". He touched on controversial themes, especially the segregation of education along religious lines.

The speech concluded with what Ray Davey called a very moving appeal:

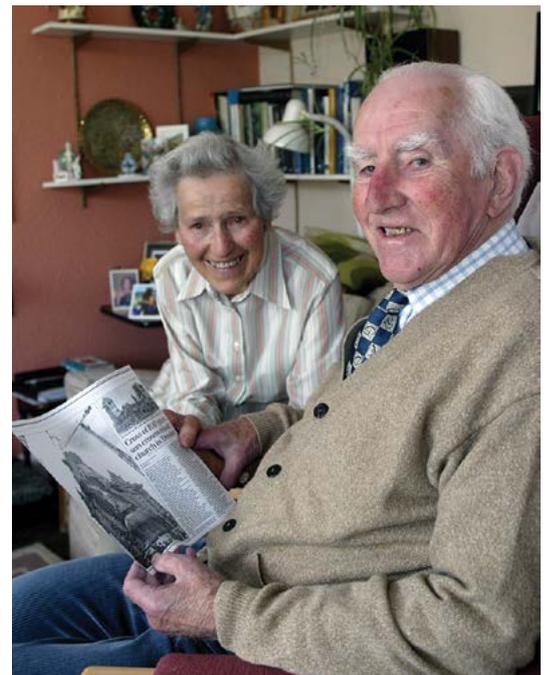
"As we advance to meet the promise of the future, let us shed the burdens of traditional grievance and ancient instruments. There is much we can do together. It must and God willing, it will be done".

The next Prime Ministerial visit to Corrymeela came on 16 October 2012 when the First Minister, Mr Peter Robinson and the Deputy First Minister, Mr Martin McGuinness attended the opening of the Davey Village.

In his remarks to a gathering of almost 200 members, volunteers and supporters, Mr Robinson called Davey Village, "a fantastic facility where people can meet and talk". He said that the partnership that he and Martin McGuinness have, reflects how things have been transformed in Northern Ireland.

Mr Robinson went on to state his two priorities which are: the economy and the reconciliation of this community. He stressed that:

"There is still bitterness and hatred in some sections of our community which requires an



Kathleen and Ray Davey

enormous amount of work to ensure that respect, tolerance and understanding become the norm in Northern Ireland and that is exactly the kind of work undertaken by Corrymeela."

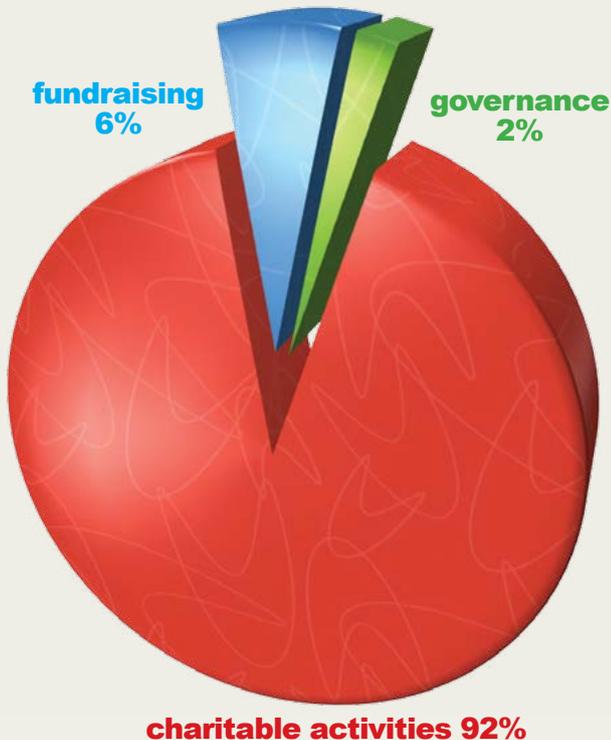
He applauded the work Corrymeela and concluded, "If there is anything either Martin or I can do in Government to assist you in the work you perform here...we would only be too glad to assist you."

Martin McGuinness said that, "The work of Corrymeela is absolutely invaluable. Bringing people together is hugely important. Hope springs from the fact that we can increasingly move forward for all of our people, but to do so we have to learn the art of compromise... to lead and learn in very difficult circumstances, and give real leadership."

The work of community development is not easily done in war like conditions. In some ways we've only just begun this work. The challenge now is to give a lead in our more diverse population. Our goal is reconciliation and ultimately an open, inclusive village where all are welcome, belong equally, have sanctuary and are safe. The context is different now, but sadly, the agenda has not

**"As we advance to meet the promise of the future, let us shed the burdens of traditional grievance and ancient instruments. There is much we can do together. It must, and God willing, it will, be done"**

# Fundraising intensifies



MARIE-LOUISE McCLAREY, the new Fundraising Manager, said she was greatly encouraged by the commitment shown by members, volunteers and staff to raise much needed funds.

The team is currently working on a fundraising pack that will provide the Corrymeela Community and service users with all the support and information they need to fundraise successfully for the organisation. It will be packed full of fun, user friendly ideas for school groups, youth groups and church groups. Every single £1 raised is invaluable to the continuation of our work in 2013 and beyond. If you are interested in receiving a pack we would love to hear from you. You can email Bernie Magill at: [belfast@corrymeela.org](mailto:belfast@corrymeela.org) to register your name.

## How is your money spent?

We work hard to ensure that all monies raised are channelled into our programmes, training and residentials. We are proud that 92p in every £1 goes to our charitable activities with 8p spent on management and administration.

Throughout Autumn members and friends worked hard to support our work. Over the next few pages are just some of the great fundraising events that have taken place recently. Our website is a great source of inspiration for those of you who want to get stuck into fundraising. To check out our latest fundraising news go to: [corrymeela.org](http://corrymeela.org)

## Coleraine Coffee party raises £1030

CORRYMEELA'S COLERAINE BASED CELL GROUP raised a whopping £1030 at their coffee party last month. Hosted by Anne Jack guests enjoyed fresh coffee, delicious tray-bakes and were free to browse donated books and enjoy the garden.

The Coleraine cell group wish to extend their gratitude to Jimmy and Anne Jack for their hospitality, to Rebecca who came all the way from Glasgow to get the house ready, to Isobel for her card factory and to all the friends, family and neighbours who made the day a great success.





## Le cheap c'est chic!

THE RECENTLY FORMED BALLYHACKAMORE CELL GROUP, organised a Clothes Swap where fashion lovers could spice up their winter wardrobes without

breaking the bank and get their hands on gorgeous nearly new and vintage clothes and accessories. They raised £352.

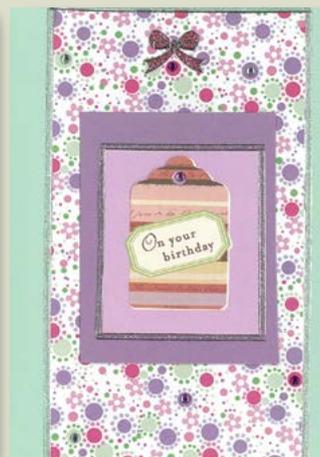
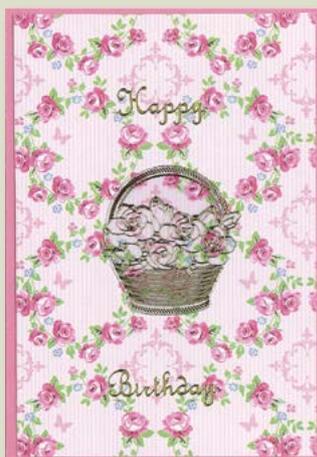
## Isobel does it craft(il)y

VETERAN CORRYMEELA MEMBER Isobel McDonagh has single handedly raised more than £300 for the organisation over the last few months.

Putting her creativity to good use, Isobel has been selling her beautiful handmade greetings cards to raise money. The cards have unique messages and are individually stamped. We extend our thanks to Isobel for her sterling work and individual contribution to raising money to help resource the organisation.



Anyone wishing to purchase Isobel's birthday and greetings cards can contact 028 90508080 or email: [belfast@corrymeela.org](mailto:belfast@corrymeela.org). Cards are also on sale in our Belfast office and Ballycastle Centre.



# Did you hear the sleigh bells?



THE BALLYCASTLE CENTRE'S annual Christmas open day was once again a great success, engaging the local community and raising over £1000. Staff, volunteers and members were delighted that so many local families came to enjoy the fun-filled day. This year Santa had travelled all the way from US to visit, much to the delight of our young guests.

Corrymeela's talented kitchen staff served up delicious bites for guests, while Council members were kept busy serving teas and coffees. Tiffany and the volunteer team performed a Cinderella Pantomime, enjoyed by children and parents alike. There were stalls selling homebaked cakes and plum puddings as well as, cards, calendars and gifts created by members and volunteers. This event grows each year and it provides great opportunities for local families to link in with Corrymeela.

Corrymeela wishes to thank the local businesses in Ballycastle who generously donated gifts for the raffle: NI Co-op; PC Electrics; Flowers @ Anne's; JF McLister Cost Cutters; The Central Wine bar; O'Connor's Pub & Restaurant; Ronan Boyles Spar; Aidan Boyles café; Dan McLister's Toy shop; Indigo Jewellers; McLaughlin's jewellers; Thyme & Co; Beautique Beauty Salon; James McCaughan's Chemist and local donors Louise McFadden and Mrs Smyth.



## Busy elves raise £548 at the Co-op

VOLUNTEERS AND MEMBERS alike, were transformed into busy elves for a day of bagpacking at the Co-op in Ballycastle. Raising £548, the volunteers spread some Christmas cheer in the local community. Corrymeela wishes to thank the NI Co-op and all the people of Ballycastle who donated and supported its Christmas Appeal 2012 for bereaved families and peace work.





# Pedal for justice with us

LAST SUMMER 25 PEOPLE CYCLED 82 miles around Strangford Lough raising almost £5,000 towards funding the NICRAS summer week at Corrymeela.

'Spoke Up For Justice' took place on a sunny day in July. The cyclists gathered early in the morning at Scrabo Park and set off down the Ards Peninsula. A small group, two on a tandem, took an early lead making it round the Lough in only six hours, but most of us rode at a gentler pace. Some fool hardy individuals stayed in

When asked about why they embarked on 'Spoke Up for Justice', organisers Heather and Gemma said: Fundraising is an integral part of Corrymeela's work, it is essential to raise money and awareness of what we do and what we stand for within our communities. The fundraising challenge is one to embrace. We can often feel reluctant to ask people for money, but getting people involved in fundraising gives them an opportunity to be part of the thing we call 'community'. Ultimately, it's about taking time out from the comforts and challenges of our own lives to give to others and hopefully enjoy ourselves in the process.

We live in a time when fundraising needs to be done professionally and with support we can all achieve that. The success of 'Spoke Up For Justice' was achieved through branding the concept, having a 'clear ask', careful organisation... and sometimes not taking no for an answer. Lots of communication with participants and little extra touches that allowed us to build the sense of anticipation and achievement during the event were also really important. Successful fundraising requires that we capture people's attention and secure their commitment. With persistence, a little imagination and attention to detail, the great people of Northern Ireland WILL get involved.



Duncan Morrow's slip stream until they discovered how competitive he was!

We stopped for flapjacks in Portavogie, enjoyed ice-cream on the ferry and indulged in a cheeky pint in Daft Eddie's. Never have so many cycled so far and put on so much weight in one day, thanks to Catherine Vincent's scrumptious food. Legs were sore but spirits were high at the end of the day, as someone said, we were all "really chaffed".

**Heather Hanna and Gemma Steen**, Spoke Up For Justice Organisers



## Sad News

### Legacies

We remember Seán Barton, David Burke, Ray Davey, Sarah G Graham, Joan M Gray and the Ivan and Dorothy Wheeler Charitable Trust. They are held in our hearts and their legacy gifts will be put to good use.

### Gifts in Memoriam

We also remember Reggie Akew, Ray Davey, Mairead law, John McAdam, Addie Morrow, Fr Eddie Murphy, Louise Romoli and their families.

log on to

corrymeela.org

to hear all our latest news and find out about open events and fundraisers near you.

## Corrymeela Summer School

OUR 2013 Summer School, Hate Pray Love - Part 2, will take place from 15 - 18 August 2013. Keep an eye on our website for further details. You can read all about last summer's programme in Hate Pray Love on page 18.

### New post

**MATT SCRIMGEOUR** currently Programme Coordinator has been appointed as Corrymeela's new Volunteer Support Worker.

He will take up his new post in April 2013. We offer our congratulations and wish him all the best in this new role.



## Baby boom Maybe it's in the water?

2012 SAW THE BIRTH of no less than six Corry babies and what's more there was only one baby girl. We congratulate the new mums, Tiff Wyse-Fisher, Anne McKay, Ciara Doherty, Sara Cook, Nicola McKeown and Colleen Brown and wish them a joy-filled 2013 with their newest family members (congratulations to the dads as well).

## Ray Davey Lecture Series

THE INAUGURAL Ray Davey lecture took place in The Mac, Belfast, on 20 September 2012. Rebecca Dudley, a Corrymeela member spoke on Human Rights and Peace Building in the 21 Century. This marks the beginning of a series of lectures that will continue throughout 2013, dates and topics will be announced soon via the website.

## watch this space

### Davey Youth Fund

THE DAVEY YOUTH FUND, in memory of Corrymeela's founder and visionary, the Rev Dr Ray Davey will be launched later this year. This resource will invest in young people, equipping them to run projects that create real change in their own communities; creating leaders of the future.

### 1000 x 1000

1000 x 1000 is a major new fundraising campaign that will run alongside our new strategic plan being launched in 2013. Driven by Leader and CEO Inderjit Bhogal the campaign will engage 1000 individuals, churches or groups, who will each raise £1000 for the continued work of our organisation.

Keep an eye on our website for more information on these projects: [corrymeela.org](http://corrymeela.org)

## I HAVE A DREAM

IT IS 50 YEARS this year since Martin Luther King delivered his famous dream speech. He imagined a new world. What's your dream for our society as we move forward together? Corrymeela Leader and CEO shares his hopes for our shared future in a thought provoking reflection. Read it today online at: [corrymeela.org](http://corrymeela.org)



## Congratulations

CONGRATULATIONS to Corrymeela member Francis Brady who recently received an MBE for services to tourism and hospitality in Northern Ireland. Francis, who grew up in Belfast, has been managing director of the La Mon Hotel and Country Club, near Castlereagh, for the past 20 years; during that time has completely revamped the hotel, taking it to four-star status.

# At the Kitchen

**Activism at the Kitchen Table, AKT, is a Corrymeela Community initiative that is based in the urban environment of Belfast.**

A need was identified in Belfast for people, of all faiths and none, to have spaces where cross pollination could occur, the meeting of minds and hearts where people could galvanise themselves and organise to support one another in on-going social action and social change.

The group involved are a loose network of Corrymeela Community members and those interested in engaging in contemporary social and ethical issues.

Studies show that the most successful social change movements have an emphasis on relationship building, sharing of ideas and sustained support of individuals in the pursuit of change.

Hence AKT evolved. The format is simple we gather round a table to learn, discuss, challenge inspire, be inspired and get creative. At the end of our time together we commit to act and that can be a small personal change, for example, changing brands or banks can make a huge difference, a decision to be part of an action or a signing of a petition, the possibilities are endless!

## Slaving away



AKT recently hosted **Slaving Away**. Below is an account of the evening to wet your appetite and encourage you to take AKTion and change things for the better right where you are.

Welcomed in from the cold winter night with the delicious aroma of homemade soup, Jon Hatch opened the event by reminding us of our often silent collaboration with

slavery through the language we use, the products we buy and... our silence.

The challenge to think differently about our actions or behaviours continued around small tables looking at the many varied forms of slavery; from human trafficking; to slaves in the Bible; to pole dancing as slavery. Each area discussed created the opportunity to look at a particular concept

# Table

of slavery or in other cases to ask if something even was a form of slavery. The 'chill out' table asked no questions at all, simply allowing participants to escape the shackles of time for a few moments.

Having hosted a table during the first half, I was delighted to join Kellie Turtle who was facilitating a discussion entitled '50 Shades of 'Sexual Liberation?' Here we discussed the much talked about 50 Shades of Grey and whether it is an example of sexual liberation. We spent some time looking at the images used by advertisers and taken out of the context of a glossy magazine they were painful reminders of how normal sexualised violence against women has become. It was an eye opening discussion that I thoroughly enjoyed; the mix of gender, age and backgrounds provided a depth to the conversation I don't usually experience amongst my friends, who, due to school and university, are mostly of a similar age and

background to myself. The evening was enriched by the voice of Andrew Farmer, lead singer of local up-and-coming band, Sons of Calibre who serenaded us throughout the event.

I would encourage anyone who has the opportunity to attend, not to miss an AKT event. If this has sparked your interest please get in touch via email or facebook. The Corrymeela website: [corrymeela.org](http://corrymeela.org) and our Facebook page will announce future dates. If you would like to get involved with the AKT team please email: [akt@corrymeela.org](mailto:akt@corrymeela.org).

Thanks to Susan and Jonny McEwen, Mathilde Stevens, Jayne McConkey and Patricia Lubeck for helping to set up and run the evening. Also, thanks must go to Kellie Turtle, Steve Stockman, Jo Robinson, Sarah Williamson, Sean Pettis, Emma Wilson, Trocaire and Si Johnston for giving their time and hosting tables.

## **Beth Randell**

Corrymeela member and one of the organisers of AKT



## Inderjit meets Hillary

OUR LEADER AND CEO, Rev Dr Inderjit Bhogal, met with US Secretary of State, Hillary Clinton, during her recent visit to Belfast.

Mrs Clinton arrived just as protests in Belfast over the flying of the British flag at Belfast's City Hall had gained momentum. At the reception she spoke wisely calling for steady, responsible leadership to promote peace without taking sides. She urged our government to, "Continue to make sure that the promise of peace is delivered in the context of testing and economic downturn, (to) get out of the ballrooms and Stormont and into communities where people live."

Mrs Clinton added:

"If we do not focus on the community at interface level we will not achieve the peace we are looking for. Peace has to make a difference to families and children, to the participation of women and the growth of businesses. How can we make an impact on those who remain unconvinced, and those who are hard to reach?"

"We have to be more thoughtful and creative. I want to assure you of my continuing support to get to grips with the problems that remain. In this season of good tidings, let us reach out to those who feel left out and offer the gift of peace and love to all."

Mrs Clinton was deeply impressed with the work and history of Corrymeela and sent her good wishes to all staff, volunteers, members and supporters. She said, "This work is important and must be sustained." Dame Mary Peters was also present and she hopes to visit Corrymeela in the near future.

# The Flags Protests uncovered

Since 3 December 2012 there have been multiple, sustained protests against the decision to stop flying the Union flag at Belfast City Hall 365 days a year. The majority of these protests have been nonviolent but a minority have turned violent and grabbed the headlines. This article unpacks two questions relating to these flag protests: Who is behind them? and Why?

## Who is behind the protests?

There are four identifiable elements at work in the protests. The progressive elements within Loyalism are by far the biggest group operating on the ground. They have made it clear they are angry at the outcome of the flag vote but, they are committed to using any influence they have to keep the protests free of violence. They have called for restraint and unarmed resistance and deserve great credit for this. This group includes the Ulster Political Research Group and the Progressive Unionist Party and is by in large fully supportive of the peace process.

The second element involved in the protests are anti-Good Friday Agreement, GFA, and anti-peace process Unionists and Loyalists. These are old-school Unionist and Loyalists who are now only represented politically by the Traditional Unionist Voice. If they had their way, the Northern Ireland Assembly would be abolished and there would be a return to direct rule from Britain. This group has recently established the Ulster People's Forum.

The third group are autonomous elements within Loyalism who neither respect the mainstream leadership nor care for keeping things nonviolent. Their identity is still heavily informed by a conflict mentality. Although the messages from the Northern Irish Police Service are unclear regarding paramilitary involvement in the protests, it appears this third group is acting without the support of paramilitary leadership.

The fourth and smallest group are right-wing extremists, BNP types who want to hijack the protests to build support for their own agenda. Mainstream leaders have been quick to publicly disassociate themselves from this group as they know they will discredit the campaign.

## Why?

The flag issue at Belfast City Hall may have provided the motivation for the protests, but it is not the sole reason for their intensity or longevity. There are various underlying issues contributing to feelings of dissatisfaction and anger within Loyalist communities.

Some Unionist politicians from the Democratic Unionist Party and the Ulster Unionists, called for action over the flag issue; their supporters listened. Let's be clear if they call for action then they are obligated to take their share of the responsibility when things go wrong. History has shown that it is difficult

to call people out onto the streets of Northern Ireland and maintain control over the crowds. These politicians would, of course, have known this, but they quickly disassociated themselves from the protests when some turned violent.

I wonder why the same political leaders did not offer training in nonviolence or unarmed resistance to the protesters? I suspect there are two reasons. In reality, I don't think politicians have the leadership skill or even the good sense to think of doing this. Secondly, when there is no peace money available... no one cares. One of the downfalls of the peace 'industry' is that peace consultants and directors of peace organisations are often not rooted within the communities at a grassroots level

2012 was a very important year for both Loyalism and Unionism. There were a number of centenaries celebrated, including the Balmoral Review and the Ulster Covenant. The Union flag at Belfast City Hall is hugely symbolic to both Loyalists and Unionists, perhaps even more so than at Stormont because it is there that the Ulster Covenant was signed 100 years ago.

Given the significance of this centenary year and after a summer of high tensions, the decision to reduce the amount of days the flag was flown at Belfast City Hall from 365 days to less than 20 a year by Belfast City Council was a case of bad timing. Many Loyalists and Unionists, feeling they had already compromised a lot during their big year, saw this as a step too far. This poor timing helps to explain why there was not a similar reaction when the same decision was taken over the flag at Lisburn Council or at Stormont.

It is also crucial to understand the protests within the context of what is going on in wider society. Northern Ireland remains a society coming out of conflict. We're not there yet. A peace process is, by definition, a process. It's a bumpy ride. It's not an end point.

There have been and will be steps backwards along the way. Sections of the media, sensationalist print and broadcast journalists, often paint all Loyalists as the bad guys; they are ill-informed and I would suggest making a huge error in judgement.

There is no doubt there are some Loyalists who have not moved on since the GFA, hence the violence. But there are also Republicans who have not moved on since then either. There is a tendency to lump all Loyalists together yet we go to great lengths to differentiate mainstream Republicanism from dissident Republicanism. The progress made by mainstream Loyalism and its contribution to the peace process has largely gone unacknowledged.

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, Loyalist and working class Unionist communities have suffered a profound sense of abandonment

**“Northern Ireland remains a society coming out of conflict. We're not there yet. A peace process is, by definition, a process. It's a bumpy ride. It's not an end point.”**

- politically, economically and socially. The profound influence and impact of this cannot be underestimated.

This is what is meant when people say Loyalist communities have been 'left behind'. Loyalism has almost no political voice. The ongoing effects of deindustrialisation, the loss of traditional working class jobs, and lack of educational opportunities, statistics reveal children from Loyalist areas have little chance of making to to Grammar School, let alone University, demonstrating that the situation has in fact got worse, not better in Loyalist areas since the GFA. Often those who had the capacity to 'get out' have done so, leaving behind those who are unemployed, underemployed or with little social mobility.

There is the perception in these communities that

the peace process so far has been largely a political one that has primarily benefitted the middle classes and has yet to filter down to the grassroots communities. It is little wonder then, in this context, that the flag issue has gained unnecessary significance. Simply put, Loyalist and working class Unionist communities have yet to experience the peace dividend. Until the peace process filters down so they feel some benefits, little can or will change.

#### Dave Magee

Dave has worked on grassroots community projects for a decade including men's groups and ex-prisoner groups. Following an MPhil on Martin Luther King Jr's philosophy of nonviolence, he is currently working on his PhD on Loyalist Masculinities. He recently taught Peacemaking at the School of Open Learning at Queen's University Belfast. You can follow his blog at: <http://dgmagee.wordpress.com/>

**“I wonder why the same political leaders did not offer training in nonviolence or unarmed resistance to the protesters?”**

# Flags and Facebook

*Young people breathing hope into hopelessness and being the change in their communities*

ON NEW YEAR'S EVE 2012, more than 20 young adults came together to discuss the current flags issue in Northern Ireland and create a set of guidelines on how they can engage with oneanother constructively, about divisive issues, using social media.

The cross community group, who have all taken part in the international exchange programme, Face to Face/Faith to Faith with The Corrymeela Community & Auburn Seminary in New York, expressed divergent opinions, representative of the wider debate in Northern Ireland but they did agree on how to engage constructively around contentious issues online.

Here are the young people's Lucky 13 Do's and Don'ts for Social Media.

#### Do

- Address/engage with arguments and viewpoints. Social media is a tool for communication - let's use it.
- Be respectful. Post items that show respect and thoughtfulness.
- Use 'I' statements where possible. You are expressing your opinions.
- Be constructive. Don't just gripe about problems, offer solutions.
- Think carefully about your audience and how your words may be received by different people. Words can be tricky duplicitous little monsters and can cause all kinds of damage that was never intended.
- Remember that you can still meet with people face to face. Social media isn't the only means of communication, call some one up or grab a coffee.
- Take responsibility for how your posts reflect not just on you, but your family, communities and groups you are associated with. It's that old adage, 'With great freedom comes great responsibility.'

#### Do Not

- Attack individuals or their character. We are past the school playground.
- Stereotype. All Protestants, all Catholics, all Women, all Men, all Muslims, all the people in your Community, your Church, your Street or even your Family aren't the same and don't believe the same things.
- Use words as a weapon. Sticks and stones may break my bones, and words will hurt me.
- Use text language if you want to be taken seriously. Lmfao dat is nsane!
- Post online when angry. Allow yourself time to cool off and take the heat out of a situation.
- Say it online if you wouldn't say it to someone's face. Bullies aren't cool, cyber bullies are less so.

#### Glenn Harvey

Glenn is the Face to Face/Faith to Faith coordinator for Corrymeela. For more information on the programme email: [glenn.harvey@corrymeela.org](mailto:glenn.harvey@corrymeela.org)



# Meet our volunteers

CORRYMEELA WOULDN'T BE POSSIBLE without volunteers and our volunteers come from all over the world. They have different backgrounds, interests, and abilities. They may stay for a few days, a few months, or an entire year. They do all sorts of work, from housekeeping to administration to programme facilitation.

If you would like to get involved with our short, mid and long term volunteering email: [volunteering@corrymeela.org](mailto:volunteering@corrymeela.org) for more information or log onto: [corrymeela.org](http://corrymeela.org)

## 11 long term volunteers



**Mark Stevenson**, 22, is from Northern Ireland. Before becoming a LTV, Mark was a Summer Volunteer last August.



**Jamie Shields**, 22, is from Coalisland in Northern Ireland and he first came to Corrymeela with the Visions 4 2morrow youth groups.



**Helen McLaughlin**, 22, is from Northern Ireland and practices a martial art called Capoeira.



**Mohammad Al Easawi**, 26 is from Palestine. He is a graphic designer and excited about meeting people from all over the world.



**Kara O'Brien**, 22, is from Philadelphia, Pennsylvania in the US. With family in Northern Ireland Kara wants to learn more about the current social and political landscape.



**Josué Rodriguez**, 24, is from El Salvador. He wants to learn as much as possible at Corrymeela to enable him to work with children and young people back home.



**Josep Garcia Coll**, 29, is from a village near Valencia in Spain. He loves travelling and getting to know different cultures and languages - right now he wants to learn Arabic.



**Pradeep Raj Giri**, 25, is from Nepal. It was a tough decision for him to apply to volunteer for one year as this sort of volunteering is not taken seriously in his country.



**Maria Nopper**, 20, is from a village in the Blackforest in the South West of Germany. She is enjoying living with the other volunteers from all over world and getting to know many new people!



Married couple **Stephanie and Mathew Neville** are volunteering together. From England they have travelled and volunteered all over the world. Corrymeela is the next step in their journey.



## 4 other volunteers

We would also like to welcome Elizabeth, Kelsey, Marcia and Martha to the team. Also longer-term volunteers they are not part of our LTV programme and instead meet specific needs within the organisation.



**Elizabeth Payne** is the new Volunteer Assistant, from Harrogate in North Yorkshire. She is passionate about building dialogue to aid understanding and improve community relations.



**Marcia Mundt** is the Training and Facilitation Assistant and is from Los Alamos, New Mexico, USA. She describes herself as a young idealist dedicated to the promotion of peace.



**Kelsey Thompson-Brigg**, 24, is the Volunteer Programme Assistant and is from Sacramento, California, USA. Kelsey is interested in pursuing a career in peace and reconciliation.



**Martha Sheldon** has lived and worked in Indiana and Ohio, USA for most of her life. She has been involved with Corrymeela in various ways over the past 30 years.



# past wells water future possibilities

Treacle sludge and sinking sand  
Convey my sense it's not in hand  
I fear no-one is in control  
Or has what it takes to stop the roll  
Relentless pace building again  
Terminal speed destination pain

Who will come intervene  
Bring another view serene  
Tis peace we practice and we seek  
Where are the paths walked by the meek  
I heard a voice say: find ancient wells  
Dig deeper there you'll be compelled  
To walk, talk, think anew  
See this puzzle from another view

Be still said she peace to your soul  
Contend for this perspective parasol  
Fractals from our now and immediate past  
Suggest ways of being that will not last  
The wells contain all that we need  
Come explore their depths by cross and creed

Be still and wait, wait, wait for me  
Open your eyes until you see  
Walk by faith and not by sight  
Let your heart eyes dwell on light  
In this safe place of sanctuary  
I'll disclose to you new strategy

Contemplate the mystery of we three  
Abide in us be still to hear in the Croi

**Matt Scrimgeour**

# St Patrick

**“So St Patrick with a gun was, on a deep level, what I wanted God to be for me, or at least to provide for me: a protector.”**

**“So I know in my heart that violence is not the answer. But the t-shirt brought me face to face with my violent nature, my desire to hit back, to be feared.”**

ABOUT A YEAR AGO, I was surfing the internet when I came across a t-shirt with a picture of St Patrick, looking as he always does, wearing the stole and mitre of a bishop, right hand raised in blessing, casting out the serpents.

But that's where the traditional portrayal ended; this Patrick was wearing dark sunglasses and carrying an AK-47, a wisp of smoke curling out of the barrel making clear it had just been raised up in anger.

I experienced several emotions when I saw it. The first, was that I thought it was the coolest thing I'd ever seen in my life. The second emotion was shame for having thought that. Violence has played a huge role in making Ireland the place it is today and I've spent 12 years, a quarter of my life, working to help people here overcome violence.

Worse, this shirt incorporated imagery that was both religious and violent; it was, therefore, almost a perfect example of sectarianism. I have spent years passing murals emblazoned with slogans like, 'For God and Ulster' or biblical imagery of sacrifice, flanked by hooded figures carrying assault weapons. I've studied ethno-political conflict at postgraduate level and I'm currently writing a PhD on the topic of theology in deeply divided societies, so I'm well aware that mixing religion and violence, even in imagery, has consequences.

So the disturbing question I had to ask myself was... Why the initial positive reaction? To answer that, I have to describe the low-level intimidation my family suffered for years, first living in the lower Shankill and then in north Belfast where we had bought a house - being made to feel unwelcome and unsafe, mostly at the hands of children and teenage young men.

Part of our difficulties came from being different. Certain elements in the areas we lived did not react well to difference.

But most of our difficulties came as a result of having to be especially conscious of the needs of my son, who is on the autistic spectrum. Iain is intelligent and very funny but his ability to play and interact with other children has always been

challenging, particularly when other children are loud, aggressive, impatient and physical. Iain becomes overwhelmed quickly in such situations and has what we call a meltdown. It became apparent quickly that certain local children found it quite amusing to cause a meltdown, something that can affect Iain deeply for many hours.

It was often at this point that my wife Amy, would have to bring Iain inside and tell other children that they had to go home. They didn't always go home. It also became apparent that certain local children tormented Amy as part of their game.

It made me feel so weak, so powerless and disrespected.

The perpetrators ignored me. The police, when they came, couldn't make it stop. Over time, stones were thrown at our windows; if it snowed, a crowd of young men would stand and throw snowballs at our house for hours; our tyres were slashed; fireworks were put through the letter slot; graffiti was written on our fence and on our home. Our house didn't feel like my home. We couldn't sit in our back garden and share a drink and a relaxed chat on a spring evening. We always wondered when the next 'incident' would be.

It was exhausting and debilitating. We eventually sold the house. Amy and the kids moved back to the US. I will join them when I finish my doctorate. Thanks to Skype and email, it's bearable, but the sense of loneliness and loss are always there.

So St Patrick with a gun was, on a deep level, what I wanted God to be for me, or at least to provide for me: a protector. Here was an image of a saint, not as peacemaker, but as avenger; a figure who would absolutely command respect, couldn't be argued with or ignored; someone who would absolutely make the abuse end.

St Patrick with a gun was who I wanted God to be - who I wanted to be.

This is the allure of violence. I didn't bother to think about that if I did resort to violence against these young men, nothing would be solved. At the very least, I'd go to jail. The PSNI might not know

(with a gun)

how to stop 12 year-olds from tormenting adults, but I'm sure their response to a 44 year-old beating up a 12 year-old would be fairly and justifiably, robust. A lot of people would be hurt and angry, on and on in a cycle of violence, anger, fear and hurt.

So I know in my heart that violence is not the answer. But the t-shirt brought me face to face with my violent nature, my desire to hit back, to be feared.

Did I hit back? No... but I came face to face with the part of me that wanted someone to. I felt like the Psalmist, crying out for God to fight for me, to come to my aid, to strike down my enemies, those who make my wife cry and make my son hide under a bed.

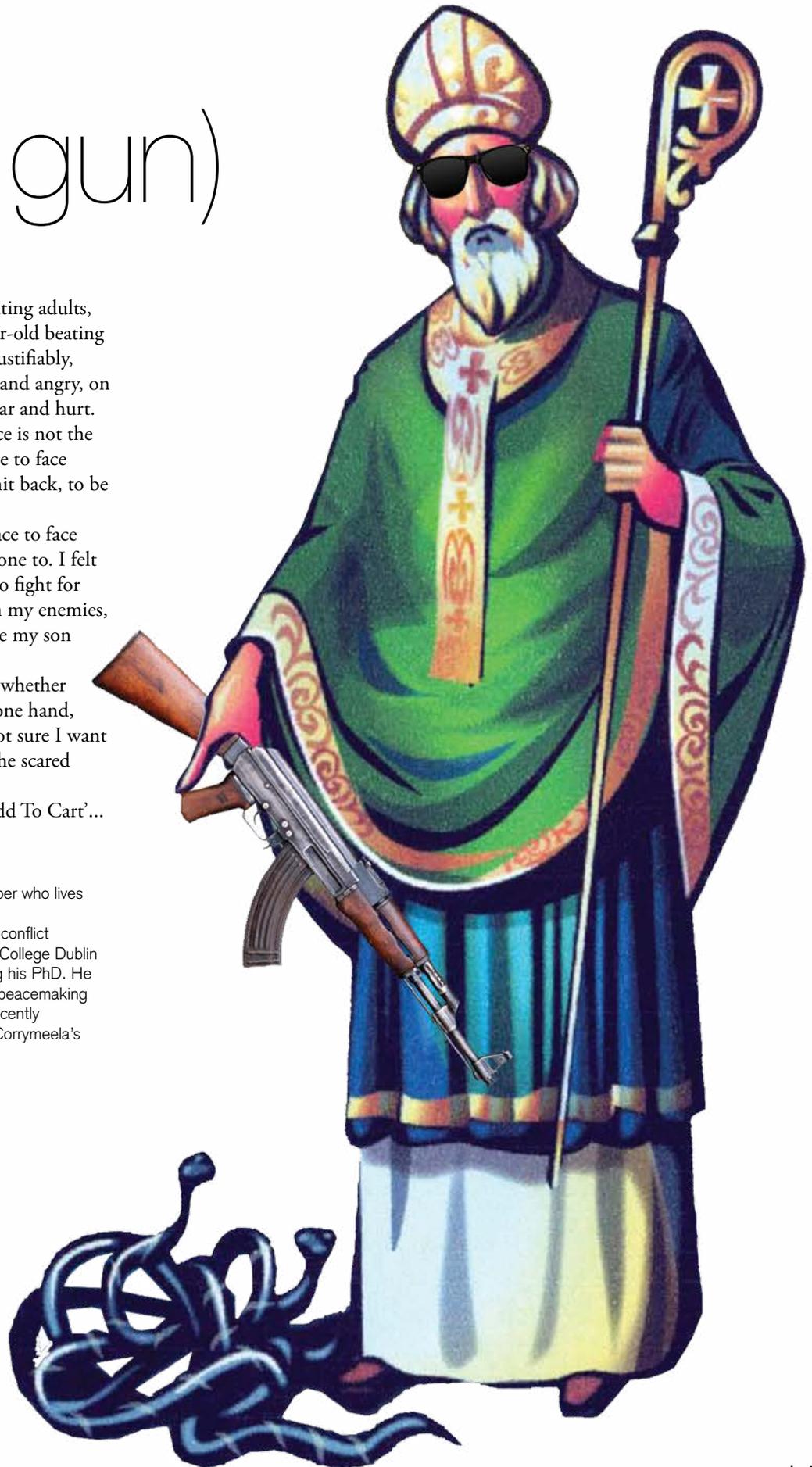
I haven't yet made a decision as to whether or not to purchase that shirt. On the one hand, I've recognised myself in it. But I'm not sure I want to celebrate that part: the weak part; the scared part.

My index finger floats over the 'Add To Cart'...

### Jon Hatch



Jon is a Corrymeela member who lives and works in Belfast. He has a Masters in Post-conflict Reconciliation from Trinity College Dublin and is currently completing his PhD. He has worked in the field of peacemaking and reconciliation, most recently developing resources for Corrymeela's education projects.



# HATE



THE SUMMER PROGRAMME has always been a key element of Corrymeela's calendar. Historically it was a time when members brought groups they worked with throughout the year to Ballycastle to savour and enjoy that unique 'Corrymeela experience'.

Although the format has evolved, the essence of our summer remains intact; we journey with people, offering individuals, groups and families, time and a safe space to create dialogue, to reflect, to play, to grow and learn and to share stories together.

Potentially one of the busiest times of year at the Centre, summer volunteers are recruited to share the hectic schedule with staff, volunteering members and the long-term volunteers, who are growing tired after 10 months of non-stop activity.

To find out more or get involved log onto: [corrymeela.org](http://corrymeela.org)

# PRR



**“Who is my enemy? How do I dialogue well with those whose views stir my insides in anger? How do I love those who hate those I love? Should I love those who persecute? What does love look like? Where is self care in this? Can love bring transformation?”**

*“You have heard that it was said,*

*‘Love your neighbour and hate your enemy.’ But I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be children of your Father in heaven. He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous. If you love those who love you, what reward will you get? Are not even the tax collectors doing that? And if you greet only your own people, what are you doing more than others? Do not even pagans do that? Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.*

Matthew Ch5 v 38-47



AY

When Paul Hutchinson, Centre Director, first suggested to the steering group that this be the text we explore during our second annual Summer School - the text to shape our discussions, liturgies and thinking, most of us balked and then the questions started:

*‘Can we use the passage in Romans instead?’*

*‘Do we need to use the word enemy? Can we not talk about the other?’*

*‘I love it!’*

*‘What translation do we use?’*

*‘Who are we hoping will come?’*



**“If you love your enemy he is no longer your enemy. He becomes a friend. Relationships are complex and flexible. Constantly shifting. Friends can be a source of pain.”**

LOVE

# HATE



As a group we wrestled with the words, the sense, the demands of the verses but what it boiled down to, was the challenge these verses posed in the context of who Corrymeela is. The Corrymeela Community is committed to embracing difference, healing division and enabling reconciliation and to be authentic in this we realised we wanted to create a space where people from different backgrounds and faith perspectives could come together and look at how we respond to those people in our lives who have hurt us... This passage acknowledges the idea that we have enemies and then says that we should love them.

In shaping the Summer School we wanted to create opportunities for learning, dialogue, creativity, play, worship, prayer, films, poetry, music, laughter, vulnerability, fun and reflection. We wanted to build on Corrymeela's long experience of bringing people together from very different backgrounds and creating a safe space where things happen between and within individuals. The Hate Pray Love Summer School did just that. We had people from Jewish, Buddhist, Christian and no faith backgrounds come to explore these verses and do so, not in a theoretical unemotional way, but in a real way; a way that brought tears and understanding. Rather than me telling the stories of others this piece highlights some of the questions and issues raised by the participants at different points throughout the conference:

# PRR



**“I had heard of bombs, I had heard of peacemakers, I had heard of a troubled land, I had heard of harmony, restored and recreated... I had not seen the panoramic view, I had not noticed the natural sight of wonder, I had not recognised enemies within, I had not heard... Ask and it shall be given, and when I heard it... The process of healing began, within me.”**

**“The internal, destructive enemy – we will reside together in peace. Your voice will be heard. But you will no longer rule. There’s a new democracy here and you have been deposed. Other voices – healing, merciful, gracious voices need to be heard and given attention. I love you. You are still me. And that’s OK.”**



AY

We are currently planning next year’s Summer School, Hate Pray Love - Part 2. It will take place 15 - 18 August 2013. We are sticking with these verses. We have looked around at what is happening in the world, in Northern Ireland, in our families, in our hearts and learning how to be with our enemy, those who persecute us, seems as relevant now as it did last summer. You are warmly invited to grapple with these verses with us.

Keep an eye on the website for details:  
[corrymeela.org](http://corrymeela.org)

**Susan McEwen**  
 Development Director for Corrymeela

**“I saw the text and thought of the enemy as an outsider or someone other than me but... now I see the enemy can be within me.”**

LOVE



*Pictured at the opening of Davey Village are: (L-R): Rev Dr Inderjit Bhogal, Leader of Corrymeela Community; First Minister Peter Robinson MLA; Alison Curry, daughter of Ray and Kathleen Davey; Deputy First Minister Martin McGuinness MP MLA and Dr Adrian Johnston, Chairman of the International Fund for Ireland.*

The Davey Village  
A beautiful space that welcomes  
Risk  
Oddness  
New ways of learning  
Creative tensions,  
That seeks to address the epidemic of violence,  
That nurtures healthy relationships,  
As a muscular, merciful, non-violent faith community.  
What a journey we have taken.  
What a journey we have before us.....

**Paul Hutchinson**

Centre Director

Our state-of-the-art residential facility was funded by The International Fund for Ireland, who provided £1.25 million through its Leaving a Legacy Programme, the Fitzpatrick Hotels Group who contributed almost £100,000, while the remainder of the funding was raised by our members, friends and associates worldwide.



The Davey Village provides modern residential accommodation for groups and families visiting the Corrymeela Centre and offers people of all ages, creeds and cultures a space to reflect and learn. It sleeps up to 42 people, is equipped with free wifi and audio visual equipment and all bedrooms have ensuite facilities.



INTERNATIONAL FUND FOR IRELAND

*What are we open for,  
in this place, at this time?*

**NAMED AFTER THE FOUNDERS** of the Corrymeela Community, Ray and Kathleen Davey, the Davey Village was officially opened by International Fund for Ireland Chairman, Dr Adrian Johnston, First Minister Peter Robinson MLA and Deputy First Minister Martin McGuinness, MP, MLA on 16 October 2012.

As a community we would like to thank all our supporters who made our collective vision for the Davey Village a reality. The centre has been in use since June 2011 and already over 2000 people have passed through – living, fighting, praying, hoping, wounded, healing, questioning.

At the opening ceremony Paul Hutchinson, Centre Director, spoke and his words went a long way in articulating the essence of our vision and hope for this invaluable resource, and indeed for our organisation as we look to the future and set our strategic direction for the years to come. We have shared them with you on the pages that follow.



*John Fitzpatrick from the Fitzpatrick Hotels Group with Derick Wilson, Corrymeela member*

Who uses the Davey Village?  
 Youth groups, local and international  
 Family groups, mourning a loved one in prison  
 Faith groups, dealing with doubt  
 Politicians, debating policing  
 Schools groups, considering the borders in their lives  
 Academic high-flyers, the street wise  
 The differently abled  
 Refugees and Asylum seekers  
 Students, learning about conflict transformation  
 And you are welcome too.

To find out about our residential possibilities contact the Centre at: [ballycastle@corrymeela.org](mailto:ballycastle@corrymeela.org)

# *Who are we open to, in this place, at this time?*

## What we aspire to be open to, everyday...

I want to offer seven things I think Corrymeela is open to, what we aspire to be open to, everyday...

### **Corrymeela is open to Risk**

A volunteer once said he made some of his best mistakes here... he also learnt from them. No, we don't always get it right, but risk is part of the learning and every healthy relationship has a risk factor.

Picture another scene: A police officer is blindfolded, he is being taken into a dark wood by a nervous teenager, what is this image? Where does it take you? This happened here, in the Davey Village, our 'Having a Say' programme seeks to explore and build relationships between young people and police in the Moyle area. This was a trust exercise; it was a profound and healing moment for all involved. But... it was a risk.

### **Corrymeela is open to oddness**

Take for example, volunteering, it is odd to work

as a volunteer, it is counter-cultural. Work for no money? Whats in it for me? ...and yet people flock to volunteer here.

It is oddly intergenerational. People aged between 18 - 65 years old live on site, learning from each other, in sharp contrast to recent societal norms.

It is also oddly international, there are a lot of odd, meaning different, people at Corrymeela.

Open to oddness is... open to strangeness, to otherness, which offers the opportunity of being open to the Divine Other, God, in ourselves, in our enemy, in and out of the Church.

### **Corrymeela is open to a unique blend of learning**

- physical learning: six acres, adventure learning
- emotional intelligence: games/film/exercises



(L-R): Rev Harold Good, First Minister Peter Robinson MLA; Corrymeela Treasurer Ed Lane; Deputy First Minister Martin McGuinness MP MLA, Marie-Louise McClarey, Corrymeela's Fundraising Manager and Rev Dr Inderjit Bhogal, Leader of Corrymeela Community.

- creative learning: imagining new ways of living
- academic courses/intellectual stimulation
- spiritual formation
- learning through encounter: local/global
- accelerated learning through residential experience.

**Corrymeela is open to holding difficult tensions**

- We held a conference exploring sex and God and in particular same sex relationships and spirituality. From that gathering came the theme: How do we love well, people we disagree with? ... a sometimes healthy discomfort.

**Corrymeela is open to addressing violence, what the academic James Gilligan calls 'our deadliest epidemic'.**

We begin by confessing our own violence; at our Hate Pray love summer school we had a Buddhist, a Jew and various shades of Christian, all asking; How

do we respond to hurt, to pain, to our enemy, who is our enemy? Surely all of us need to reflect on this issue?

**Corrymeela is open to nurturing healthy relationships**

- Families in need of rest and respite
- Dealing with our country's violent past
- Within and between faiths
- With nature: everything in this place came from the earth, yet so often we take it for granted.

**Corrymeela is open to being a muscular, merciful non-violent faith community**

- Passionate about truth and justice, as well as peace and love
- Open to being wrong, open to the truth in others...

**Paul Hutchinson**

Centre Director

## DAVEY VILLAGE



*(top left) Olive Bell, Alison Curry, Desney Cromey and Paul Hutchinson; (top right) Paul Hutchinson, Centre Director addressing guests at the opening ceremony; (bottom left) Former Leader Kate Pettis and Mathilde Stevens, Corrymeela member; (bottom right) John Fitzpatrick, Inderjit Bhogal and Paul Hutchinson.*

Speaking at the event the First Minister paid tribute to Ray saying:

“The development of this £1.85million village is a very welcome achievement and a tangible outcome of the Reverend Davey’s vision which has been brought to reality here in Corrymeela.”

Dr Adrian Johnston, Chairman International Fund for Ireland added:

“For nearly 50 years now the Corrymeela Community has been at the forefront of promoting tolerance, respect, peace and understanding on this island and has become the epitome of all that the Fund stands for. This community resource is good news for anyone interested in pursuing peace and stability in Northern Ireland.”

John Fitzpatrick OBE, CEO Fitzpatrick Hotel Group, North America said:

“The Eithne and Paddy Fitzpatrick memorial fund is a long term supporter of Corrymeela’s vision and work. The completion of the Davey Village marks a milestone in its legacy and grants staff, volunteers and visitors access to fantastic resources, a shared and safe space for dialogue, conversation and reconciliation. It is a fitting tribute to two exceptional people and will enable their spirit to live on through the terrific ongoing work of the Corrymeela community.”

# Moving into the future

## Corrymeela's Strategic Plan 2013–2016 takes shape

**CORRYMEELA IS CURRENTLY DEVELOPING a new Strategic Plan and this will play an essential role in how Corrymeela develops over the next three years, until 2016. A Strategic Planning Steering Group, comprised of Community members, council representatives and staff was established last year and Michael Gibbs, heads up this committee. Below he brings us up to date with progress so far:**

The aim of the Strategic Plan is to review the organisation's direction, as to the goals, vision, mission, philosophy, values, objectives and strategies, and make adjustments that enable us to realise optimal organisational productivity and performance in the near future. The plan must be energising, inspiring and relevant to community members, staff, partners and other key stakeholders. *"It will enable us to be clear in our rationale and purpose and will provide a strategic framework that can be distilled into an operational plan that is both deliverable and sustainable."*

One of the key elements of the strategic planning process is the comprehensive consultation involving individuals and groups connected to Corrymeela. Gaining input from the wider Community is an essential part of crafting a strategic plan that can bring energy and direction to Corrymeela's life as a Community and work with the wider world.

This consultation period is now over, culminating in an open day in January where members were given the opportunity to ask questions and comment on the draft strategy with Inderjit and the Strategic Planning Steering Group. All responses received, written and verbal, are being analysed and will be used to develop the strategic plan.

We have found responses to the consultation varied and diverse. Areas of emphasis include the roles and responsibilities of the Community,

priorities for work and programme development, the vision and mission of Corrymeela, the relationship between staff and Community members, volunteering, our relationship with churches, allocation of resources and the future growth and development of the Community.

Our strategic planning journey is now in its final stage; this involves an external Strategic Planning Reference Group, SPRG. Their remit is to ensure the integrity of the proposed Strategic Plan 2013 – 2016, taking into account Corrymeela's past and its vision to become self-sustaining in the future. The group will consider and provide feedback to Corrymeela Council on draft documentation in relation to the proposed Strategic Plan. The SPRG membership includes:

**Tony Gallagher:** Queens University Belfast

**Harold Good:** Ex-President of the Methodist Church NI

**Bronagh Hinds:** Independent Consultant from Women in Politics

**Avila Kilmurray:** Community Foundation for NI

### Next Steps:

Final draft written

Launch of Corrymeela Community Strategic Plan 2013-2016.

Review of process

### Michael Gibbs

Corrymeela member

Keep up-to-date with the Strategic Plan's progress via our website. You will also be able to read a personal account of someone involved in the Steering Group to better understand the role these individuals play in guiding the Community and organisation into the future.

# Challenging

**Rev Sam McBratney spoke at Corrymeela's Friends' conference on 24 November 2012 in Reading. The conference is part of a series of activities that make up the Corrymeela GB programme and is targeted primarily at Corrymeela friends and supporters who live in England. Below is his account of the experience.**

IT IS ALWAYS INTERESTING to speak at a conference where someone else has chosen the title and subject matter. There is a danger of deep disappointment if the speaker interprets the title in a way entirely different to the expectations of the organisers. I can only hope that my contribution on the subject of Faith and Identity was, at least in part, what they had planned for.

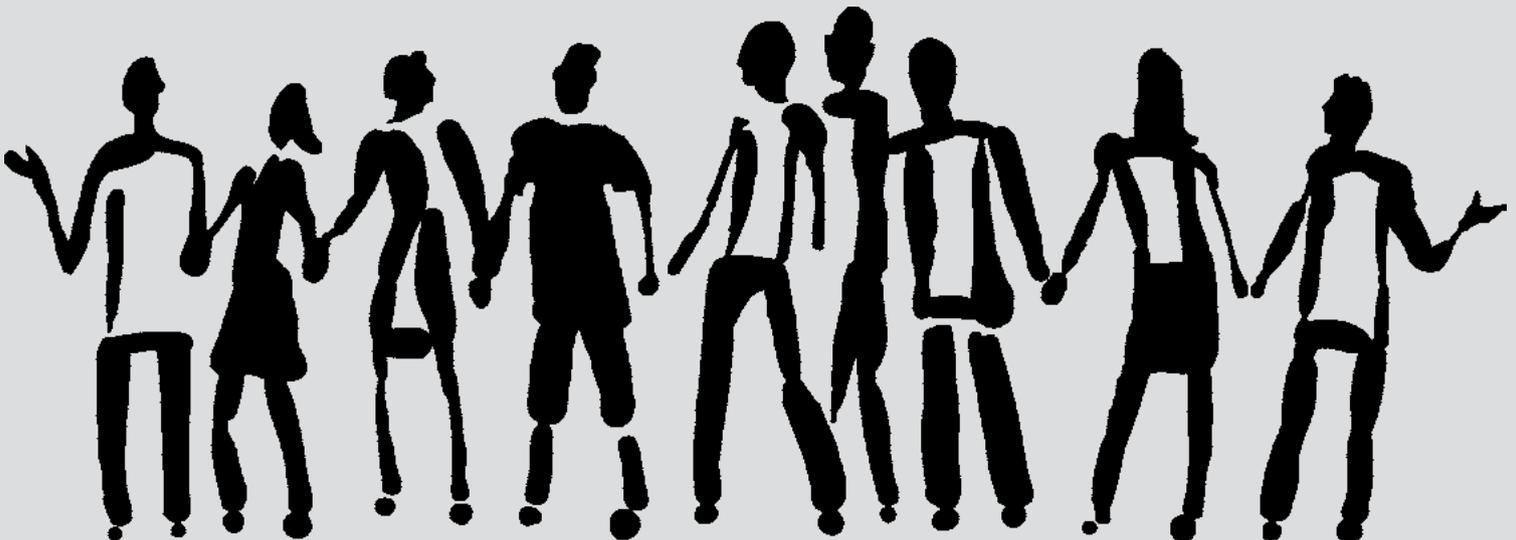
Faith and identity are both weighty subjects and can be approached in a variety of ways. The conference steering group decided to look at the how faith and identity have entered collective social consciousness in recent years, especially in the West. The presence of certain types of religious faith in the public arena, has shaped a discourse around quite specific issues and it was some of those issues that became the subject for our own conversations. I don't think we could have predicted the outcome of the vote against women bishops in the Anglican General Synod, but it certainly helped to shape our thinking for the day! Alongside gender, we also engaged with attitudes to other faiths and sexuality.

The Corrymeela experience has taught me that

**“The presence of difference, of the radical other, can be deeply destabilizing.”**



you can never predict the way a conversation will go when different types of people gather together. At the conference although gay marriage had not been mentioned in the introductory material, it became the topic that dominated our thinking and conversation. I believe there is an assumption in wider society that everyone now knows what they think about the 'gay thing' and so, no further discussion is necessary. It could be summed up as, you're either for us or agin' us! That means in the public realm, anything short of full acceptance of gay relationships is considered to be a display of



# difference: faith and identity

homophobia and in the church, you can either believe what you like or believe the Bible; nuance becomes unwelcome, if not downright dangerous.

I felt that our conversation in Reading broke through stereotypical ideas and attitudes and created an alternative space, with open and honest discussions; especially welcomed when so little of that space exists within the Churches or even at times in wider society. We were able to share our views and did so with kindness and respect. But sexuality is not simply about views or attitudes, it goes to the heart of our identity, regardless of whether we are straight or LGBT\*.

The presence of difference, of the radical other, can be deeply destabilizing. Recent history has added 'ethnic cleansing' to our lexicon - the forcible removal of diversity in areas of conflict. But there exists a temptation to create this in our domestic reality too; we can, too often, associate ourselves only with people who agree with us, act like us and look like us.

Soon we have constructed safe havens for ourselves where our identity is reconfirmed as 'normal'. Nowhere has this become truer than

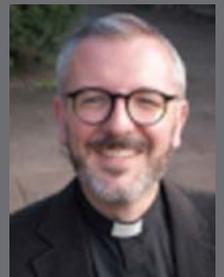
within faith communities, where those who are different can be excluded as heterodox or even heretical. But what if we resisted the rush to define the 'normal'?

It was often said of the late Methodist preacher, Donald Soper, that while others loved God's people, he loved an argument. His willingness to speak truth to power, to say the unpopular thing, to engage in discussion, earned him this reputation. Soper resisted the idea that the Church was a place where people 'agreed' or even where consensus was reached. Rather he believed it should aim to create a 'fellowship of controversy', where debate, discussion and even disagreement become the order of the day. In this context, discipleship is characterized, not by seeking out those who appear to be the same, but by learning to live with those who are different. At Corrymeela, we make a start...

## Samuel McBratney

Sam is a Tutor at the Queen's Foundation in Birmingham, responsible for the Global Christianity Programme. He is also working on a Chaplaincy Development Project for City University and St Ethelburga's Centre for Reconciliation in London. He has worked with the Olive Tree Programme at City University London for the past five years.

*\*LGBT is an initialism that collectively refers to the lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender community.*



# Leadership that's working?

This extract is taken from Gerry's blog post on [www.sluggeroole.com](http://www.sluggeroole.com). You can read the full post at: <http://sluggeroole.com/2013/01/12/leadership-thats-working/or> or on our website: [corrymeela.org](http://corrymeela.org)

48, 48, AND 48 – those are the nightmare numbers for Unionism. Not necessarily for the Union, but for Unionism the political ideology as we have understood it for the past century or so. In the 2011 Assembly election, only 48% of the population voted for Unionist candidates, interpreting that term as generously as possible. In the 2011 Census, only 48% of the population were classifiable as 'Protestant' by community background, even given the statisticians' remit of allocating the non-religious to their community of origin by any means possible. And in the same census, just 48% of the population identified itself as British in any way, even when given the opportunity to mix their Britishness with either or both of Irish and Northern Irish identities.

All three of those figures are set to decrease in the years to come. To put it as bluntly as possible, the Protestant population tends to be older and the Catholic and non-classifiable populations tend to be younger. Short of convincing the Unionist population to 'breed for victory', committing ethnic cleansing on a Rwandan scale or convincing Catholics and liberal Protestants to vote Unionist for the first time, there isn't much Unionism can do about this. Option 1 is unlikely to prove popular, Option 2 is, I hope, off the cards and as for Option 3 – how credible, if they are being honest with themselves, do Unionists think Peter Robinson's 'hug a Catholic' Party Conference speech looks in the cold light of six weeks of flag riots?

Unionism is going to have to come to terms with the fact that it now has minority status in Northern Ireland, the largest minority in a region of political and religious minorities. Yet the most senior DUP politicians are still attempting to hoodwink the party's base into thinking that a return to majority Unionism is possible. Both Nigel Dodds on BBC NI's *The View* and Peter Robinson in an interview with the *Belfast Telegraph's* Liam Clarke claimed that better voter registration and higher turnout was the only way to get the Union Flag on the City Hall every day of the year.

I would like to think that Robinson and Dodds are both smart enough to know this is delusional. In the 2011 Belfast City Council elections the Unionist

vote was only 36%. Thanks to the boundary changes to the City, which take the particular and peculiar form they do because Peter Robinson was determined to preserve his legacy in Castlereagh, a further percentage point, at least, will be shaved off that figure next time. Dunmurry Cross voted 82% Nationalist in 2011, for example, and the most strongly Unionist bits are staying in Lisburn.

Gilnahirk/Tullycarnet, Belvoir and the bits of Castlereagh within the ring road won't balance that out, especially when they contain two Alliance fortress heartlands, Wynchurch and Gilnahirk, and pockets of decent SDLP support.

Demographic changes will probably knock a further 1-2% off that figure. So Unionism starts the campaign for the slightly enlarged new Belfast City Council from a base of 33-34%. Even if we indulge for a moment the fantasy that there will be heroic voter registration efforts, epic Unionist turnout and a collapse of the Alliance vote, there is simply no way that Unionists will gain a majority of seats in Belfast at the next election.

And in any case, as any smart West Belfast Sinn Féin backroom boy could tell Unionists, those who are difficult to register are also difficult to get out come polling day. Registered non-voters are mainly utterly disaffected with the shambles that is Northern Ireland party politics – ask the SDLP and Sinn Féin activists who spent years obsessing about long term non-voters in West Belfast before the 1997 General Election. And the Alliance vote isn't going to collapse – 12.6% in 2011 was a high water mark for the yellow peril in Belfast recently, but other than the 2001 and 2005 elections where Alliance was squeezed almost to oblivion across NI, the absolute floor of Alliance support in the City is over 9%. Much of that 12.6% is anything but 'soft unionist' – of course some of it is, but some of it is while definitely pro-Union is equally anti-Unionist identity politics, and some of it is decidedly pale green, especially in North and South Belfast.

## Gerry Lynch

Gerry is a former Chief Executive of the Alliance Party, currently working as a commentator and political and polling consultant in Belfast. He is a churchwarden of St George's Church of Ireland in Belfast city centre.



## Keep in touch with us at [corrymeela.org](http://corrymeela.org)

UNFORTUNATELY we are unable to squeeze all the features and articles we know you will love into this edition. These stories are available now on our website so log on today to read more about Louis Boyle's pilgrimage, a decade of Forgiveness Education in Northern Ireland and Inderjit's upcoming prayer walks as well as catching up on all our latest news and events. If you do not have access to a computer please call Bernie Magill on 02890 508080 and we will post you a hard copy.

A flavour of what's in store:

### A Ray of light – tributes to the late Rev Dr Ray Davey

Rev Dr Ray Davey, founder of The Corrymeela Community was a visionary leader throughout his life; he passed away in April 2012. We have collected tributes to him written by colleagues and friends; these will be posted on our website over the coming months and we invite you to log on and savour their reflections. The first tribute is from Desney Cromey, Corrymeela member and personal friend of Ray's you can read it in full online now at: [corrymeela.org](http://corrymeela.org)

### Walking the Pilgrim's Way Camino de Santiago: The way of St James



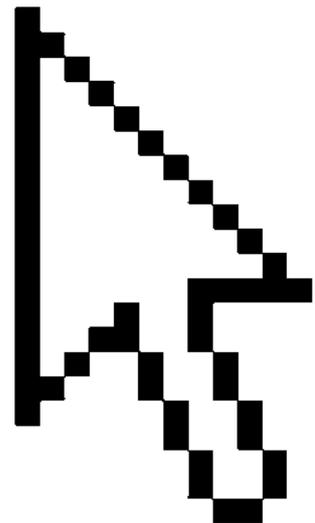
Louis Boyle is a member of the Corrymeela Community. He raised in excess of £3,000 for two charities, Rombo, a Rotary project in Kenya and Corrymeela when he walked the ancient pilgrim's trail in 2012. You can read the full account of his journey, see photos and find out more about the ancient trail on our website: [corrymeela.org](http://corrymeela.org)

## Happy Anniversary The Forgiveness Education Programme

THE FORGIVENESS EDUCATION PROGRAMME, FEP, recently celebrated its tenth anniversary. Now taught in more than 100 classrooms across Northern Ireland the FEP was created in 2001 by Educational Psychologist, Dr Robert Enright, to make the virtue of forgiveness more understandable and accessible to children. Becki Fulmer, the FEP Coordinator said, "We have spent the past ten years helping children, schools and communities develop a better understanding of what it means to value all people, to understand our own and others humanity and to practice respect, kindness, generosity and forgiveness."

To read the testimonies of teachers involved in the programme and find out how FEP is equipping children to become informed, forgiving citizens log onto our website. For more information on how to bring the FEP to your school, contact Becki Fulmer at: [bfulmer@corrymeela.org](mailto:bfulmer@corrymeela.org)

# [www.corrymeela.org](http://www.corrymeela.org)





# Get involved...

Raise money for Corrymeela and make a difference in people's lives.

You can now direct people to donate online to Corrymeela using your own webpage. Make your own fundraising page, personalise it and share with friends and family. They can donate securely on your JustGiving or Facebook page or by text message.

All donations from UK residents can be GiftAid donations earning Corrymeela an extra 0.25p per eligible £1

Make your own fundraising webpage in minutes at [www.justgiving.com/corrymeela](http://www.justgiving.com/corrymeela)

## CORRYMEELA FRIENDS WEEKEND

MAINTAINING PEACE | SUSTAINING RECONCILIATION

### 31 MAY - 2 JUNE 2013

The weekend will provide opportunities to hear from Corrymeela volunteers and staff and meet with friends of Corrymeela from across the UK and further afield. Now taking bookings

I would like to attend the Corrymeela Friends' Weekend 2010

I enclose payment of: £78 (waged)  £68 (unwaged)  £35 (non residential weekend rate)  £20 (deposit)

Name: (PLEASE PRINT) \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Postcode: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Please tick as appropriate:

- I will be present for a light meal on Friday at 7.30 pm
- I require a seat on the bus from 8 Upper Crescent on Friday at 6.00 pm
- I wish to have vegetarian meals
- I have other dietary/medical needs. Please state: \_\_\_\_\_