

corrymeela



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The Blackbird sings

IN HIS RECENT “BELFAST SUITE” COLLABORATION with Traditional Irish folk group Ulaid, Duke Special sings a beautiful song in old Irish called ‘Londubh Loch Lao.’ It’s inspired by a 24 syllable, 9th Century poem which contains the earliest known mention of the word Belfast. Many translations of the poem have been made into English over the years and below you can find examples from Seamus Heaney and Ciaran Carson. Carson even went so far as to make the Blackbird the symbol of the Seamus Heaney Centre for Poetry at QUB. What interests me about the poem is that it was doodled in the margins of the text probably by a bored monk. Despite this it is a complex piece of rhyme, and the little note in the margins of something

deemed more important, has survived through the ages and become an iconic presence in the poetry of Northern Ireland. When I think of margins I can’t help but think of the work of Corrymeela over many years, quietly working with people and groups not considered important at the time. As we face an uncertain future with funding cuts and Brexit looming, we stand with those at the margins of our society and extend our welcome and support to all those of goodwill seeking to build a shared future together.

Mark McCleary
Head of Communications, Corrymeela



Londubh Loch Lao

Int én bec
ro léc feit
do rinn guip
glanbuidi

fo-ceird faíd
ós Loch Laíg
lon do chraíb
charnbuidi

9th century Irish

The Blackbird of Belfast Lough

The small bird
chirp-chirruped:
yellow neb,
a note-spurt.

Blackbird over
Lagan water,
clumps of yellow
whin-burst!

Seamus Heaney

The Blackbird of Belfast Lough

the little bird
that whistled shrill
from the nib of
its yellow bill

a note let go
o’er Belfast Lough—
a blackbird from
a yellow whin

Ciaran Carson

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Dear Friends

THE RESIDENTIAL CENTRE IN BALLYCASTLE is buzzing with life and possibility as we enter the busiest time of the year. As well as the normal rhythm of the centre we are preparing for the annual influx of international university groups and the summer programme. During Carafest I overheard a visitor to Corrymeela asking a community member about the “Corrymeela begins when you leave” sign, and that eavesdropped conversation has been in my mind ever since. Many visitors come to Corrymeela hoping to learn from our 50 years of peacebuilding and take that learning and possibility with them when they leave. It’s hard to quantify the impact of our work but this current magazine gives a great snapshot of the ripples that start in Ballycastle and end up in places as diverse as Hilltown, Rostrevor, Burnley, South Sudan via Tanzania, Jerusalem, Syria, Iraq, Turkey, Ukraine, Macedonia and Pakistan. That’s just in the last few months and it’s not an exhaustive list.

As the world seems to be moving towards fear, protectionism and closed borders the role of Corrymeela in hosting hope and being a place of welcome becomes more important. In this issue, we look at the impact of Brexit on the Peace Process, we engage with conflict zone Journalists, civic and military leaders from the Royal College of Defence Studies and Colin Craig teaches Mediation to a group of South Sudanese leaders meeting in Dar es Salaam. We also report on conversations with young leaders across Ireland and bring you the latest news from the Ballycastle site. There are also a number of fantastic public theology events to sign up for and opportunities for training in storytelling and mediation.

Through of all these things runs the core belief of Corrymeela, a belief that grew from the ashes of the second world war and that we still cling to do. There is a better way to live and that way is reconciliation. Here we stand, we can do no other.

Mark McCleary Head of Communications, Corrymeela

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The front cover image is of long-term volunteer Gareth Gould entertaining some young guests at Carafest, the picture was taken by Kerry Logan.

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committed to the healing of social,
religious and political divisions in
Northern Ireland and throughout
the world.

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Thoughts *from* the Leader

I HAVE BEEN THINKING ABOUT PLURALS A LOT LATELY. The word in English comes from a Latin root meaning 'more'. As a child, learning English, we learnt that Sheep is the plural for Sheep, that Fish is the plural for Fish and that Peace, because it's both a mass and abstract noun, cannot be pluralised.

However, one of the things that has made Northern Ireland peaceful has been the strong support for Plural. As such, peace depends on plurals.

The Good Friday Agreement recognised, under constitutional considerations:

"the birthright of all the people of Northern Ireland to identify themselves and be accepted as Irish or British, or both, as they may so choose, and accordingly confirm that their right to hold both British and Irish citizenship is accepted by both Governments and would not be affected by any future change in the status of Northern Ireland."

The guarantee, in perpetuity, of pluralities is one of the considerations of complex divisions. So much is lost when we argue for an either/or approach to divisions that have lasted for decades and centuries. The question about the northern corner of Ireland is a distillation of events that go back, in people's minds, to the question of languages, land, the famine, World War I, the Battle of the Somme, the Uprising, Partition, the Flight of the Earls and more. Two neighbouring islands have had interaction – some required, some requested, some

resented – over centuries and Northern Ireland is the jurisdiction that bears witness to the ongoing legacy that history simply will not go away, that we reap what we sow and we must pay attention to the pains and legacies of the past in order to find any kind of a peaceful present.

We have an invisible border, that makes an all-Ireland reality seem all-but true. We also have a UK system that gives Northern Ireland a distinctive British identity.

And so, we have plurals. We have an invisible border, that makes an all-Ireland reality seem all-but true. We also have a UK system that gives Northern Ireland a distinctive British identity. To add to the double-reality of both Irish and British, we had the emergence, too, of a Northern Irish identity. For many years the BBC, rather than saying "Northern Irish politicians are meeting today to discuss..." the headline would run as "Northern Ireland politicians..." It was a bid to conjugate headlines in a way that tried to upset the least amount of people. It's an understandable bid. In a place where we can't agree whether we are Irish, British, where people have died because of a disputed border, it is understandable that sophisticated solutions need to be sought. In the past decade, however, there are increasing numbers of young people who, when speaking about Irishness

and Britishness are also speaking about Northern Irishness. Some love that, some don't, but it's a measurable truth: Northern Irishness is a thing.

And, of course, a fourth reality in this set of plural identities has been the EU. For most people, they could find two places along the continuum of Irish, Northern Irish, British, EU where their identity could land. They may even find three places, and find some that rank higher and some that rank lower.

At this time, following an inconclusive election at Stormont, facing a complicated Westminster series of elections, we are seeing that the plural realities that supported us to climb out of sectarianism are under pressure. The removal of the EU banner – while supported by people for many different reasons – nonetheless puts a pressure on the peace agreement here. The attention towards the border area – whether by customs checks, electronic monitoring, changed signs, or any delays – will always be a cause of anxiety for us here.

Peace always needs to be plural in order to bring separated peoples to work together to safeties, futures, presents and hopes.

Sustainable peace will always require plural realities to be marked, honoured and maintained. We are a people at peace, we are a people still marked by sectarian

divides. We are a governed people, we are a people with deep disagreements about governance. We are a people united, we are a people who are marked by difference. We are Irish, we are British, we are many things besides. The sophisticated truths embodied by these statements are not obfuscation, they are not wordplay, they are not distractions, they are the reality. Peace always needs to be plural in order to bring separated peoples to work together to safeties, futures, presents and hopes.

Our work calls us to work alongside people who have felt like they themselves have been divided – by grief, by sectarianism, by trauma – and support them with plural realities that just might save us from further divisions. In this we know that we are well practiced in approaches that are becoming ever more appropriate in a world that seeks single-sentence solutions to problems that are long-lasting and complicated. There are multiple ways to tell a story of war, we know. There are, too, multiple ways to hold a peace together, and each of these multiples are important as we face our futures together.

As always, we remain grateful to you for your interest, support and commitment to Corrymeela. We are proud of our work and our extraordinary people – volunteers, staff, community members, partners – and we will continue to do this work as we walk bravely into todays and tomorrows.

Pádraig Ó Tuama
Corrymeela Community Leader





Brexit and the Peace Process

THE LIGHTS WENT OUT ALL OVER EUROPE when war was declared just over 100 years ago.

They went out again a generation later.

Starting in Europe these conflicts took millions of lives, caused misery and grief of overwhelming magnitude, and left a world devastated and divided.

Yet in the three generations since, there has been no repeat grand conflict, hundreds of millions of people are better off, and Europe is more united, peaceful and prosperous than it has ever been. The rights, quality of life and aspiration of all in Europe have taken not small steps but giant leaps forward; an unrecognisable Europe compared to that of 1914 or 1939.

In Northern Ireland, the dark days of the 1970s and 1980s have also been replaced by light and hope for a better future - the peace process has been a shining beacon for what might be possible.

The European Union has been central to much of that change, in Europe as a whole and in its nooks and crannies.

But in this part of Europe we are less than half way through our peace process. The 1998 agreement provided a foundation to build peace over the next 50 years and longer.

Peace building is long-term. It must not be taken for granted or neglected.

A forward flow to peace in Ireland is not inevitable.

With the 2020s already shaping up to be a rocky decade Brexit only adds to the uncertainties.

There will be a massive psychological effect on the peace process for everyone if there is a return to some physical infrastructure on the border.

Leaving the Customs Union with a hard Brexit will have consequences for the border.

Meaningless phrases, such as not returning to the borders of the past and seamless borders, need challenged and plain language used.

If a pole is constructed with a camera on top, it becomes a target. If a caravan is provided in which spot-check officials have coffee, they become targets. And you have to repair and defend your targets.

There is already widespread uncertainty about the constitutional impact of Brexit on Scotland, Gibraltar and even Jersey. The unique circumstances of Northern Ireland will be even more prominent in discussions given it is a region in the middle of a peace process with economic interests that speak to a unique relationship, not just with Scotland and Britain but with the rest of the island and Europe.

Many industries, the caring and emergency services are dependent on the in-flow of labour. Migration to this small part of Europe has enriched us so much economically, socially and culturally. For a region uncomfortable with the concept of "other" raising its eyes to the bright and positive influence of others has been refreshing and change-making.

Freedom of movement is so important for this society beyond the economic impact of it and the other Freedoms.

And Northern Ireland, for good historical reasons, jealously protects its access to protections, rights and justice all of which have advanced immeasurably because of the EU.

For a devolved administration with mutual ethnic vetoes on legislation the impact of a Great Repeal Bill that dilutes protections and rights recently won could be devastating for an already unstable devolved power-sharing arrangement.

In the last 20 years politics has come to define all that there is in the peace process while civil society has been weakened, less able to play its critical role in helping peace flow up to Stormont.

Meaningless phrases, such as not returning to the borders of the past and seamless borders, need challenged and plain language used.

Yet in those years while civil society has shown maturity, politics has remained fractious and unstable.

And the fractiousness of the Brexit debate so far doesn't suggest it will get better.

In the Bible, Titus suggests avoiding a divisive person after one or two warnings - it seems in Northern Ireland we are still addicted to divisiveness.

When people grow up in a household with addiction issues they can be attracted to people with addiction problems. Maybe because we have grown up with conflict, we are addicted to issues that cause more conflict.

Brexit may be like a co-dependency fix to an addict.

It's just that some of us want to build the peace, not find more reasons to fight.

Peter Osborne

Peter has been involved in good relations, cohesion, community enablement and reconciliation work for over 20 years. He is chair of the Community Relations Council, has chaired the Parades Commission and was a Northern Ireland Board member of the BIG Lottery Fund. Peter served as an elected member of Castlereagh Borough Council for 12 years from 1993-2005. You can follow Peter on Twitter @OsborneTweets.





Carafest Easter 2017

Back to Sunday School

Glenn Jordan transported many of us in the room back to a time when Church meant going to Sunday School halfway through the service to colour in pictures, drink over diluted orange juice, eat sweets and learn popular Bible Stories by heart. All those elements were in place but he took us back to some of those stories to ask how we read them now as adults. Is there a different lens to read familiar stories by that can open up new meaning in the text? We looked at the story of the tower of Babel and examined the idea that instead of being simply about hubris and pride, could this actually be God supporting diversity. Much discussion followed and much sugar was consumed!

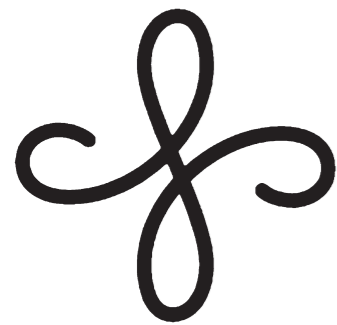


food, queues of people, we had strangers making new friends and friends re-meeting strangers, we had that enjoyable level of chaos that we love at Corrymeela, we had the Corrymeela programme team presenting

workshops and trainings on their practices, we had Jo Berry and Pat Magee who shared extraordinary stories of their unexpected connection, we had Jayme Reaves hosting theology conversations about

Abraham, Hospitality and Myths, we had poets and authors – Jan Carson, Moyra Donaldson and Shirley McMillan – we had Andrew McCracken speaking about charities, we had a magnificent session from

Harriet Long exploring how theology can take the body seriously. We had Colin Craig speaking about elephants in the environmental room, we had Lynn Finnegan in the Polytunnel, we had art and paints and messy spaces, we



Carafest was a festival of faith and reconciliation, of friendship and fun, of theology and poetry, of politics and prayer, of story and sharing.

We were thrilled to welcome Azadeh Sobout, an Iranian PhD scholar at Ulster University who shared thoughts on reconciliation in the poetry of Rumi; Katy Radford who offered a Jewish viewpoints on Northern Ireland's hospitality and hostilities; Glenn Jordan who led a Sunday School bible session for adults (complete with colouring in and weak cordial); Duke Special, Katie Richardson, Alana Henderson, George Sloan and Blue Rose Code turned our dining room into a late night music venue with candles, twinkling lights and melodies to break your heart. We had late night Taizé sessions and early morning Easter services, we had a film programme that took participants from Iran to Ireland, we had



A fantastic performance by Duke Special

The Seanchaí spins some tales...

Liz Weir had us all in the palms of her hands. The first two rows of the lounge were packed with kids and the rest with adults. Like all the best stories the meanings worked on a number of different levels. From tales of tight-fisted Ballymena natives to faeries and trolls and Rathlin Island she wove a wonderful picture of old Ireland rubbing up against the new and we were all the better for it. Fabulous.



Tenx9



Azadeh Sobout sharing about the Heart of Reconciliation in Rumi's Poetry

Ruminating on Rumi

Azadeh Sobout led us on an enchanting journey through the work of the 14th Century Persian Poet Rumi. Time slowed down to the calm measured beat of her voice and his work, recited in both Persian and English. As we thought about Reconciliation Rumi said "Out beyond ideas of right and wrong there is a field. I will meet you there."

After an enchanting hour her final exhortation was to do everything with great passion "Why be a dead fish in the sea of God's love?"

As one community member said on the way out – "Breathtaking!"

had Derick Wilson hosting sessions on Hope. We had youth workers speaking about how Youthwork can Work, and we had Alison Urie speaking about how singing and storytelling can transform a reform system. We had Linda, Ronald and Lilian speaking about Asylum and Duncan speaking about borders. We

had Liz Weir telling stories of fairies and Rathlin and Tenx9 hosting stories of frenemies.

What did I forget? We had volunteers who got up early and stayed up late, we had candles lit, we had poetry sessions, we had a kitchen staff who produced food for hundreds, we

had Heather Dornan Wilson speaking about resilience and David McConkey

speaking about debt. We had LGBT information sessions with Tim Kane, we



Ronald and Lillian Vellum speaking about the support provided for asylum seekers in Northern Ireland

Forgiveness and Reconciliation

In 1984 the IRA tried to kill Margaret Thatcher at the Conservative Party Conference in Brighton. The Prime Minister survived but five others were killed including MP Sir Anthony Berry. Patrick Magee planted the bomb. Jo Berry is the daughter of one of the victims. In one of the most powerful sessions at Carafest they chronicled their unlikely journey into friendship and talked of the complexity of forgiveness and reconciliation. Compelling, moving and challenging.

had admin meetings to cope with changes, we had kite making, table tennis, children's programmes, gallons of tea, views of Rathlin and

We had light and life and a joyous celebration. The wonderful people at Trust Greenbelt supported our festival and we are so grateful to them, the Ireland Funds, JVM Trench Trust, the DFA in Dublin and the Community Relations Council. We are grateful to the volunteers, members and staff who made it happen. And we are grateful

to everyone who came and made our festival of faith and reconciliation a festival of friendship.

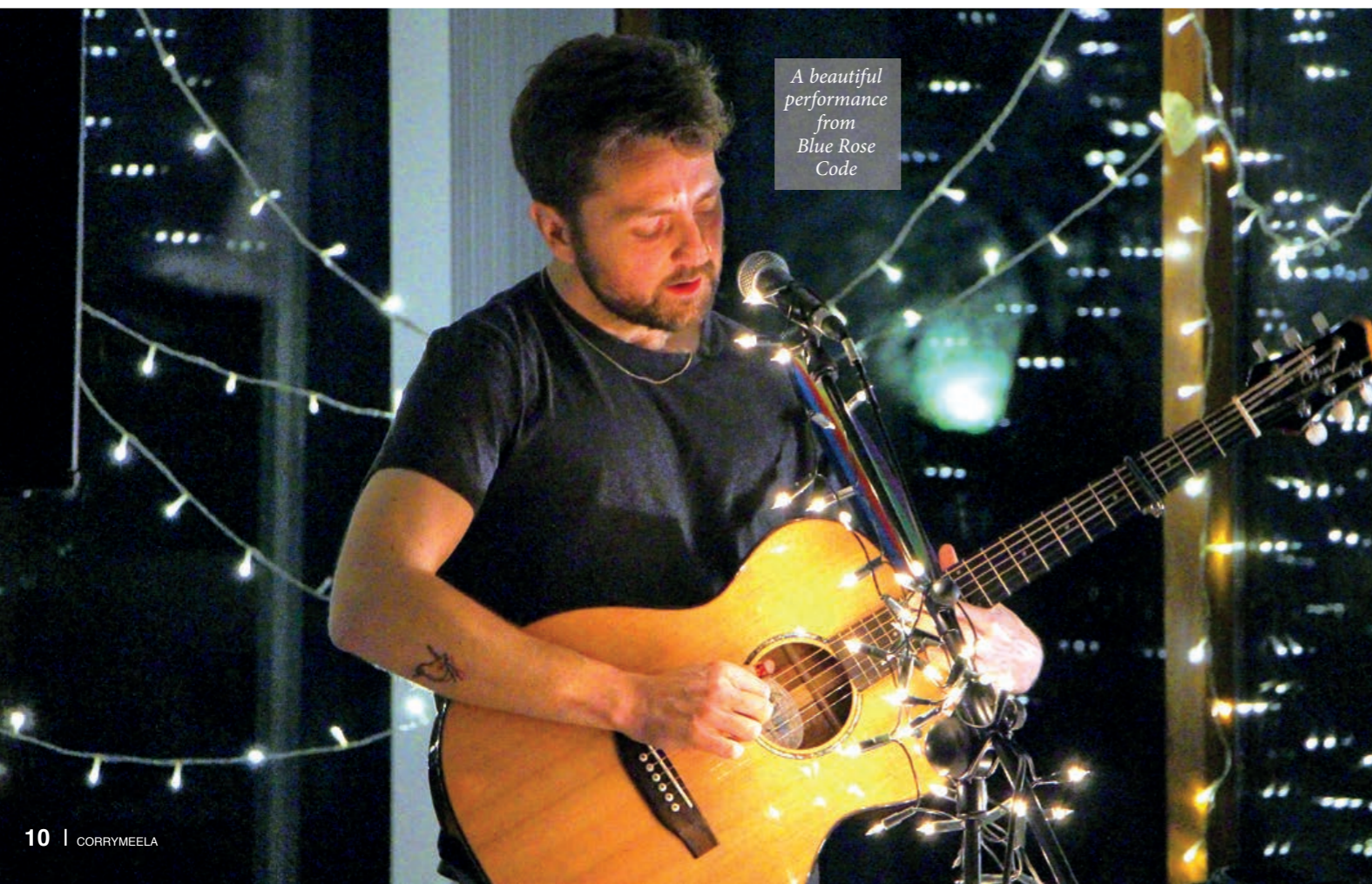
Join us for Carafest 2018. A festival of faith and reconciliation. 30th March - 2nd April. Tickets and line-up details from October 2018.

Mark McCleary
Head of Communications, Corrymeela



Worship

The regular pattern of Corrymeela worship continued throughout the festival in the Croí. From Quaker silence in the mornings to a moving Tenebrae Service on Easter Saturday led by Trevor Williams. The lights that were extinguished on Easter Saturday were lit again with joy on Easter Sunday as Community leader Pádraig Ó Tuama and around 50 hearty souls gathered for the Dawn Service followed by an Agape Breakfast.



A beautiful performance from Blue Rose Code



Katie and Norman Richardson creating a Scratch Choir

In May journalists who work in global conflict zones came to a retreat in Corrymeela designed to look at the trauma that comes with living and working in such an environment.

Seán Harvey and Kerry Logan journeyed alongside them.



Shaptai Gold sharing a poem written by the journalists about their retreat



Sharing stories on the way to Ballycastle

A retreat for Conflict Journalists

As Dimi Reider, journalist and friend of Corrymeela, shared his vision behind the week-long retreat for conflict journalists that took place in May, he spoke of the importance of Corrymeela being seen as a harbour. A harbour that would allow each of the eleven participants working in places such as Syria, Afghanistan, Iraq, Turkey, Jerusalem, and the Ukraine to unload their memories, their questions, their doubts and their struggles.

The retreat was designed and facilitated by team of experts who brought together diverse skills in journalism, psychology, art, yoga and massage to create a space for the participants to breathe, to process and to learn how to practise self-care when they returned to work in conflict zones. One member of this talented team was Cait McMahon, founder and managing director of the Dart Centre Asia Pacific www.dartcentre.org. The Dart Centre, a non-profit charity, and a project of Columbia University in N.Y, is dedicated to improving media coverage of trauma, conflict and tragedy and is the only organisation in the world that specifically addresses the relationship between news-gathering and psychological trauma as its sole focus. Cait explained how the retreat at Corrymeela was a pilot of sorts, "This is the first time we have done what we call body-mind. We are deliberately trying to straddle both body and mind by learning massage and shiatsu and doing yoga everyday while also looking at the cognitive side of things".

The honesty with which the participants spoke about their experiences of reporting in conflict zones was both courageous and humbling. The value of giving journalists the opportunity to do so should not be underestimated. As Cait explained, "It is so important for journalists working in conflict zones



Team building games

to step back, to take time off to reflect and to process the trauma. Journalists are unique because they are supposed to be very objective and unbiased and therefore they have to cut off any emotions they feel about the situation they are reporting on. Yet they need to be emotionally connected to the person so as to get an accurate story. This is a skilful yet difficult practice. Giving them time and space to process is a real gift that we can give them to be better journalists".

Despite the trauma that conflict journalists witness so regularly, there is a distinct lack of psychological and emotional support provided by news organisations. The huge need for such support was highlighted by the experiences the journalists spoke of during the retreat. Cait shared some fascinating insights into why she believes such support is so important, "I really believe in the importance of good media in a democracy. We are seeing that more and more, especially in America where Trump has undermined the media with his fake news cry. If you do not have a solid media to shine a light in dark corners of corruption, if you do not have investigative journalists questioning governments and big businesses, you may as well be in a dictatorship. Good investigative journalism also gives a voice to people who are silenced by trauma. We saw that, for example, with the Khmer Rouge in Cambodia where whole generations did not know what happened to their parents as they did not speak about it to their children.



Capturing sessions through Graphic Recording

So, it is important to help journalists be healthy in themselves as good investigative journalism can be the voice of the voiceless and also, in a way, be the cornerstone of democracy".

As is the beauty of Corrymeela residentials, conversations continued outside the structured sessions and the participants continued to learn from one another and share their experiences organically as they dried dishes together, strolled down to the pub or sat around the campfire. As well as embracing the challenge of reflecting upon and processing the trauma they have reported on, the participants also took

time to truly rest and unwind. Journalists were spotted napping among piles of pillows, blankets and yoga mats in the lounge, on the slide in the playground and at the cross overlooking the cliff, it was a joy to see how quickly they felt at home at Corrymeela.

The carefully crafted programme was boosted even further by a simply glorious week of weather, allowing nature to work its own healing magic as the group soaked our north coast views at their finest. As Cait beautifully articulated, the landscape itself was "a balm for the soul".

It was a privilege for Corrymeela to host and help facilitate a retreat whose ethos was so tightly intertwined with our own; creating a safe harbour for those affected by conflict, supporting those who give a voice to the voiceless, and providing an open space for people to share and process experiences of violence and trauma. As Cait encapsulated, "Having created space for the spiritual, psychological and physical healing of people in conflict situations for many years, Corrymeela is a perfect place for us to bring conflict reporters to come to restore and rest and replenish".

Kerry Logan and Seán Harvey



Reflecting on the week in the 'Graphic Recording Gallery'



Community Reach Burnley

WE ARE ALWAYS DELIGHTED when a group repeatedly chooses to come back to Corrymeela. One such example is the UK-based 'Community Reach' project which has been running for five years. The project aims to build the skills and confidence of those in a leadership or activist role in order to identify and safeguard people who may be at risk of radicalisation and protect them from being targeted by extremists and terrorist recruiters. The programme deals with all forms of extremism, including those at risk from far-right and Neo-Nazi extremism, as well as those vulnerable to Daesh or Islamist inspired extremism. Prior to coming to Corrymeela participants take part in four workshops exploring the

road to radicalisation. As group leader Mohammed Ali Amla (Ali) explains, the group then visits Corrymeela, "to gain a deeper understanding of the conflict in Northern Ireland as well as to draw on good practice when it comes to peacebuilding and conflict resolution".

Day one of the group's Corrymeela residential involved a trip to the Giant's Causeway followed by an evening session taking a deeper look at the Northern Irish conflict. The second day was spent in Derry/Londonderry where the participants heard the story of Bloody Sunday and discussed the social justice issues and gerrymandering that contributed to radicalisation at the time.

They met community peace activist and former IRA member, Jon McCourt, who gave them a tour of the walled city, sharing his insights into the historical background of the conflict and his own journey from extremist violence to peace. As Ali articulated, "It is fascinating to hear how someone who had a militant background became a man of peace".

Following Jon's tour the group visited the Siege Museum to speak to members of the Apprentice Boys and hear about the conflict from a different perspective. The day ended with a panel discussion with former members of the IRA and the UVF, a former British Army soldier who had been posted to Northern Ireland during

the troubles and a woman whose brother had been killed by the British Army. It was fantastic for the group to hear these powerful stories of reconciliation and to continue to explore the complexities of the troubles.

Having gained a deeper understanding of some of the causes of extremism in Derry/Londonderry, the group spent their final day in Belfast, touring the peace walls and connecting with a Youth Centre which works with young people at risk of being drawn into militant groups, they were able to draw parallels with their own communities and share their learning.

During his stay, we were delighted to hear about Ali's dream of establishing a retreat centre for peace and reconciliation based on Sufi Muslim values, one open to people of all faiths and none. Ali explained, "unfortunately we live in a world of geo politics where Islam is considered a global threat and is associated more with violence and terrorism than it is with peace and playing a proactive role in society. As a Muslim, it breaks my heart every time I hear that narrative. But I think if you lose hope, you have lost the battle. We need places like Corrymeela that shine a light of hope and inspire people, we need more places that allow people to have hope rather than fear".

Lisa Albrecht

International Programme Support Worker, Corrymeela

SLOWING DOWN

The Slowing Down to Meet Yourself planning team is slowing down and is ready to pass its baton to the next team which will, we trust, bring fresh ideas and energy to the programme.

The idea was to create a stress-free, peaceful day where a small number of participants could take stock and find mental space in the beautiful setting of the Corrymeela Ballycastle Centre. Our aim was to provide a day that enabled a brief escape from the hectic pace of life in which so many of us find ourselves immersed. Embedded in our thinking was the hope that we would attract participants from a wide range of backgrounds and not just those already familiar with Corrymeela.

Matt Scrimgeour helped to arrange the first of these events by saying "yes" to community member Desney Cromey over a cup of coffee whilst scribbling possibilities onto a napkin. He says "Slowing Down to Meet Yourself has become a really practical example of how Community Members and Staff can collaborate together to create something functional and necessary. We'll miss the input and support of the planning team and hope that we can carry on the practice of creating space for people to slow down, perhaps with help from someone like you!"

Over the five years of events we did welcome new faces, as well as a loyal band of 'regular' participants, some with longstanding interest in the work and focus of Corrymeela. Those who came appreciated the slow pace, the relaxing delivery of content and the opportunity of contributing themselves without any pressure to do so. Frequently, participants commented on the thought-provoking nature of the day and appreciated the luxury of time and space to be still and reflect.

Some facts:

Slowing Down began in 2012 and held twice yearly, one-day events covering a variety of topics including:

Mental Health	Retirement	The Rhythm of Prayer
Celtic Spirituality	Story telling	One Day Reflective Retreats
Caring for Creation	Rest	

The team was made up of two community members, one associate member and one friend plus others who came on board for a short time. Our team enjoyed a rewarding, mutually supportive relationship with Corrymeela staff and volunteers who increasingly shouldered the administration, encouraged and enabled us to develop together a retreat programme which had a wide appeal for community members and many others who experienced Corrymeela for the first time.

What next?

You are invited to consider forming a team to develop the format of Slowing Down. Interested? If so, please contact Matt Scrimgeour at Corrymeela, Ballycastle.

And thanks to Alison Curry, Mary Hawthorne, Roger and Desney Cromey for the last five years!





Well the best laid plans were scuppered by the UK visa system unfortunately. Instead of having 14 South Sudanese Community Leaders for the programme we only had four. So, what to do? The programme even in this limited format was really valued by both USIP and the four who made it over. Well, as you have guessed by now, the answer was to go there or as close to there as possible to run the programme again.

We originally hoped that we could run the programme in Juba, the capital of South Sudan but the re-emergence of the civil conflict across the country made that impossible. So, it was off to Dar es Salaam in Tanzania instead.

In preparing for the workshop I was painfully aware, that the current situation in South Sudan had been moving from bad to worse to potentially catastrophic. The collapse of the power-sharing Government and the return to civil war is exacerbated by long-standing ethnic and tribal tensions. Crops haven't been sown in many places, and where they have been it has not been possible to harvest them. Corruption and starvation is endemic across many parts of the country.



through their organisations to work on.

During our first morning together we realised immediately that the current situation was so chaotic and insecure that we needed to focus on what could be done in very local contexts. The deep question for the whole group was how to keep hope alive not just for those they serve but also for themselves. It was humbling to be allowed to explore with each of them how they could do something constructive to

With children being critical to the future and with so many children dying through conflict and starvation, tribal groups are now raiding villages to steal and sell babies to other villages.

In all, I had just two days in total to work alongside these amazing and courageous peacebuilders and leaders. Were the tools we helped bring to them useful? Yes, I think they were in their own minor way. No doubt I carried much more away from them. Their resilience and commitment to meet the crisis of their land, to do what they can where they can and know it could never be enough was amazing to witness. Their desire to learn more has moved us to explore the possibility of bringing two of their young adult leaders to Corrymeela as Interns. This would be for 3 - 4 months in the late summer or early autumn period. South Sudan faces a long a desperately hard road. There is no safe harbour in sight.

Colin Craig
Executive Director, Corrymeela



Dialogue for Peaceful Change

Our work in Corrymeela leads us down many unexpected roads. Last month I found myself making an early drive to Dublin Airport on the way to Dar es Salaam in Tanzania. I was travelling to lead a Conflict Analysis workshop for 14 South Sudanese aid workers and community leaders.

In management speak these days there is a great interest in the term "emergence". Well the fact of my heading off to Tanzania for just a few days most certainly falls into the world of emergence. In October 2015 as part of our 50th Anniversary celebrations we hosted an event at Belfast City Hall called, The Poet, The Peacemaker and The President. My wife Rachel and I had the joy of a reunion with Dr Kathleen Kuehnast who was the Peacemaker on our panel. Kathleen, Rachel and I had become friends in the summer of 1981 when she was volunteering in Corrymeela. Our paths continued to cross for a while and then life just took us off in different directions.

Not having seen each other for over 30 years and sitting over a cup of tea in the Ballycastle Centre, we began to share something of our learning. Kathleen is now the Director of Gender Policy & Strategy within the United States Institute for Peace [USIP]. USIP have South Sudan as one of their two priority countries within Africa, the other being Nigeria. Kathleen was interested in our Dialogue for Peaceful Change [DPC] methodology and in particular its capacity to support leadership development. This then led, over a number of months, to us agreeing to host a Leadership Development programme at Corrymeela for USIP in 2016.

The group that I would be working with came from a range of NGOs based in South Sudan and had all been directly involved in trying to mitigate the crisis in different ways. Six of the group were from Faith Based organisations and Churches, four were working for International Development Agencies and two were working for local NGOs that focus on Gender and Violence. As part of this group, it was great to see Galdino and Rebecca who had been part of the Corrymeela workshop. My task was to introduce the group to some of the Conflict Assessment tools used within the DPC framework, and to support them in using these tools to work directly on local issues that they each carried a mandate

help local communities and families not to be drawn further and further into the violence. As part of this analysis work they each undertook a "mapping" exercise of the situation they had chosen to focus on. All of their maps were challenging but one stood out to me in particular.

In the rural areas where the conflict ebbs and flows a new phenomenon has been emerging. With children being critical to the future and with so many children dying through conflict and starvation, tribal groups are now raiding villages to steal and sell babies to other villages. The absolute despair this is generating is appalling.

A visit from the Royal College of Defence Studies

On 22nd March, we had the privilege of hosting sixteen Members of the Royal College of Defence Studies for a meal and panel discussion with representatives from Corrymeela, Ballycastle Church Action and the Causeway Peace Group.

The Royal College of Defence Studies (RCDS) was founded 90 years ago by Winston Churchill to provide strategic education at the highest level for future military and civilian leaders. Today, the College enrolls students known as 'Members' from the UK and around the world; this year over 70% of the Members are from overseas, with 56 nationalities represented. All are experienced professionals in their various fields, and are only accepted by RCDS if they are deemed capable of reaching high command.

Members undertake a year-long course in strategic studies at Seaford House in Belgravia, London. This includes an in-depth study of the UK's national strategy and governance, particularly in relation to the regions. A group of

16 Members from the College, led by Deputy Commandant Admiral John Kingwell, visited Northern Ireland from 19-24th March to study the political developments here, and the role of civil society and churches. The group included Members from Australia, Spain, Hungary, Macedonia, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Nigeria, Bangladesh, Egypt, Hong Kong, Myanmar and the UK.

After two days in Belfast, where they visited Stormont and met Lord Eames and the Rev. Harold Good, they travelled to Ballycastle. They visited Ballycastle High School to look at the 'Ballycastle Model' of Shared Education, meeting the Heads of both the High School and Cross and Passion College, as well as an extremely impressive group of Sixth Formers from both schools. The



Shona Bell discussing Corrymeela's work with the RCDS Members

group then came to Corrymeela for a facilitated dialogue exploring the role of civil society in peacebuilding efforts in Northern Ireland, as exemplified by the Corrymeela Community, Ballycastle Church Action and the Causeway Peace Group.

After a traditional supper of Irish stew the group heard presentations from our Head of Programme and Innovation, Shona Bell, local Church of Ireland Rector, Rev. David Ferguson and Causeway Peace Group member, Eleanor Duff. Each spoke about the work of their respective organisations in bringing communities together. It was a particularly timely discussion given the significant political developments in Northern Ireland during the previous weeks including the death of Martin McGuinness, two pipe bomb explosions in Bushmills and a worrying lack of progress towards Stormont's power sharing agreement, the deadline for which was fast-approaching. This fuelled a lively discussion during which RCDS Members asked the panel about their

respective organisations work in the community, focusing on youth identities, how to encourage cross-community dialogue, the contrast between divisions in urban and rural communities, and how to extend education past the school gates and into the home.

It was fantastic to have the opportunity to share stories, explore lessons learnt and discuss the continued struggles in

Northern Ireland with this international group of military and civilian leaders, each of whom brought a wealth of knowledge and experience from their work in their communities and countries. We were grateful for the visit and the chance to engage with this international group.

Neale Jagoe and Kerry Logan





Exploring teambuilding and conflict styles through the Lego Game.

When you bring together eighteen young adults from across the island of Ireland who are interested in engaging in critical changes in our society, to discuss the conversations that matter to them, it is difficult to know what the weekend will hold.

group had become with one another by Sunday. They reaped the benefits of this in a fantastic session on identity where group members felt safe to explore the various aspects of their identities together, highlighting the diverse nature of young adult identities across the island.

As the weekend drew to a close the group discussed how best to use our remaining weekends together to delve deeper into some of the challenging topics they had identified. From participant facilitated discussions to transforming our conversations into practical actions, the group once again stepped up to the plate with their suggestions, demonstrating their commitment to embracing difficult



The Lego game

conversations and to taking ownership of their time together. We cannot wait to see what the remainder of the programme holds!

We would like to extend a huge thank-you to the Department of Foreign Affairs, Community Relations Council and Trinity College Dublin, for their support in making the programme possible.

Kerry Logan
Assistant to the Executive Director and Communications Departments, Corrymeela

An Roinn Gnóthaí Eachtracha agus Trádála
Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade



Trinity College Dublin
Coláiste na Tríonóide, Baile Átha Cliath
The University of Dublin

Conversations that matter

THERE IS SOMETHING ENERGISING when a great deal of potential is coupled with a great deal of unknown. We felt it amongst the team as we prepared for our Conversations that Matter programme and again amongst the young adult participants the moment they arrived at Corrymeela in February for the first of three residential weekends.

When you bring together eighteen young adults from across the island of Ireland who are interested in engaging in critical

changes in our society, to discuss the conversations that matter to them, it is difficult to know what the weekend will hold. We were delighted how this bright, enthusiastic bunch of 18-25-year-olds embraced the challenge of shaping their programme.

We kicked off the weekend with some games and icebreakers that soon got the group interacting, ready to delve into our Saturday morning session exploring the concept of conflict and their conflict

styles. On Saturday afternoon, we had a World Café session in which the group started to draw out the themes and topics they wished to take a deeper look at over the course of the programme. They were asked to reflect upon the last year and discuss what they had witnessed, both locally and globally, that had invoked feelings of anger, frustration, hope and inspiration. From media sensationalism to mental health to inter-religious dialogue to youth empowerment to the US election to technological advancements, the themes and topics identified were rich and varied, paving the way for an engaging and thought-provoking programme.

On Saturday evening the group shared stories of leadership around the fire, opening up empowering conversations that were continued down in the pub. It was great to see how comfortable the



Participants discussing local and global events that gave them hope.

It was a joy to have Lynn Finnegan and Andrew McMurray with us at Corrymeela, volunteering on sustainability projects, from September until March. The creativity, passion and positivity of this fantastic pair propelled Corrymeela's sustainability work forward, while their forward-thinking and fun-loving attitudes attracted staff and volunteers to get involved in, and carry on, this important work. I chatted to Lynn and Andrew about their Corrymeela experience before they left...



Lynn in her element composting!

Polytunnels, plants, power and peace

What were you both up to before you came to Corrymeela?

Andrew: I have spent the last few years working as a renewable energy engineer. Most recently, I have been working with the Drumlin Wind Energy Co-operative, Northern Ireland's first community-owned renewable energy co-operative. It owns six large wind turbines dotted around Northern Ireland.

Lynn: I have spent the past five years studying and working in International Environmental Law. I also edit a local independent magazine called Freckle.

How would you define 'sustainability'? What got you interested in sustainability work?

Lynn: At its most technical sustainability is the earth's capacity to absorb our waste and replenish our natural resources. Our lifestyles are exceeding both of those capacities. However, I think it is about a lot more than that - it is about giving life to things and remembering that we are a part of nature rather than apart from nature. Sustainability should be awakening rather than something boring that is just for the privileged. I have loved nature for as long as I can remember and I have always been fascinated by people's relationships to their landscapes and how that is different all around the world.

Andrew: For me, sustainability is working with nature and keeping in

mind our relationships to the earth. When I was growing up my parents took me to forest parks around Northern Ireland for day walks, and I remember running through them when I was really small and my interest grew from there. When I was a teenager I became interested in renewable energy and I have been on that path ever since.

Can you tell me about the projects you have been working on during your time here?

Andrew: I have been working on an environmental audit of the site; looking at the energy being used in electricity; the oil being consumed for heating and ways to improve energy efficiency and incorporate other types of renewable

energy into the system more effectively.

Lynn: I have been looking after the polytunnel and working to link the polytunnel and the kitchen. I have also been helping facilitate conversations around how reconciliation, conflict and environmental sustainability are linked and how those fields of practice can learn from each other on a more theoretical, conceptual level.

What has been the most surprising thing about your time at Corrymeela?

Andrew: I was surprised at Corrymeela's flexibility, being able to accommodate us to volunteer part-time along with the other professional work that we had and still be really open to our contribution.

Lynn: I think I would echo that. I would also say that, while it is not surprising, it is very impressive how Corrymeela welcomes people and does their best to find a place for everybody who comes and wants to help, no matter what they can offer.

What has been the highlight of your time at Corrymeela?

Andrew: For me it is two-fold. Firstly, the relationships and the people I have met and experienced over the past few months. Secondly the landscape and the place, right from the feeling and the environment of the Croí to looking out to the ocean and running on the beach.

Lynn: Spending time with the plants! And spending time on the site, which I think is amazing. It has so many areas outside for re-wilding work and so much potential for awareness-raising. The volunteer sustainability training was also really fun, especially hearing people's visions about how they think this place could be in terms of sustainability.

What have you found most challenging about working towards sustainability at Corrymeela?

Lynn: The work ethic has been a challenge; people work so hard and therefore do not give time to being outside during their work day. But

that is a wider issue which is present throughout the work culture all over Northern Ireland. I think it is a challenge we will have to increasingly address in lots of organisations.

Andrew: I agree, society's sedentary work lifestyle disconnects us from the earth and from nature.

What are the strongest links you see between Corrymeela's work and sustainability?

Andrew: I think there is a relationship of care and stewardship underlying the Christian faith and many other religions. I feel that feeding through into Corrymeela's sustainability vision.

Lynn: Sustainability is part of Corrymeela's vision of a world grounded in justice, courage and reconciliation. Firstly, sustainability can be a tool for conflict transformation: it can help us examine how we relate to, and interact with, the world. Secondly, our society and economy need to urgently, radically and fundamentally transform if we are to preserve earth's life support systems. For instance, scientists and politicians now almost universally realise we have to decrease our carbon emissions by 80% by 2050 if we are to prevent dangerous and unpredictable climate change. Corrymeela can be a practice ground for such change.

If there was one thing you wish people knew about your sustainability work what would it be?

Lynn: How much happier and awake I am if I get outside every day!

Andrew: For me it would be the satisfaction of knowing that every little bit we contribute contributes to the greater good.

If you had to pick one piece of advice to leave the Corrymeela staff, volunteers and community with as we move forward with sustainability work what would it be?

Lynn: That neither smugness nor despair is useful when thinking about sustainability. If we can do it from a place of joy and support rather than judgement then it is a much happier journey to take.

Andrew: Education and learning about the issues is a continual process. You think you know the issue and then when you hear about it from a slightly different angle you think differently. So keep learning!

Kerry Logan

Assistant to the Executive Director and Communications Departments, Corrymeela



Andrew and Lynn harvesting

New ways to support us



WE HAVE BEEN WORKING HARD to make it easier for you to donate, and now, thanks to oversight and management from the Charities Aid Foundation, we have Direct Debits set up. It takes less than a minute for you to set up a monthly donation to Corrymeela – UK donations can be gift aided if you are a UK tax payer. For

2017/2018, we aim to generate 2,000 new monthly donations of £5. We would love to hear from you. www.corrymeela.org/donate. Many thanks



Trees

Shelagh Livingstone gave 6 apple trees and a copper beech to Corrymeela on her 80th birthday, she also helped plant them leaving a living legacy on the Ballycastle site.



Lenten Walks

EVERY YEAR AS PART OF LENT, Corrymeela members and friends organise a series of spiritual pilgrimages across Northern Ireland. This year the intrepid walkers were to be found along the North Coast, The Sperrins, Hilltown, Rostrevor, The Glens of Antrim and Divis Mountain.

Highlights included the first walk which began at Corrymeela and remembered Peter and Valerie Tennant, Quakers and Gardeners who left a living legacy on the site. Yvonne Naylor led the pilgrimage around the site and on to the Breen Wood in the shadow of Knocklayde Mountain.

The walk in the Sperrins crossed parts of the old coach road from Mid-Ulster to Derry reaching the high point known as The Emigrant's Cairn. It was here that thousands of those who left would have stopped and glanced back at their homeland prior to heading to the West Coast and a new life in America. It ended in Swatragh with prayer, St Patrick's breastplate and Irish Stew.

The Glens of Antrim walkers were blessed with a beautiful spring day as they walked along the river path catching the iconic view of the three-arch bridge by Lanyon, over the Dun river to Cushendun and out to the Cave house. Other highlights were the Mass Rock and the Gloonan (kneeling) stone and joining in prayer with the local priest at St Patrick's Church.

At every walk, there was a chance to slow down and take some time to contemplate the beauty of creation around us and to pray for our world. Thanks to all those who made the walks possible.

Ballycastle News

AT CORRYMEELA BALLYCASTLE we're looking forward to the longer days of this season and the possibilities that this change invites. Our Biomass system that runs heating and hot water in Coventry (where volunteers are accommodated) is now up and running as the primary system which adds to our green credentials. The polytunnel is in full flow and producing greens regularly for the salad bar. The recently installed pond is now home to a range of beasts and the occasional visiting mallard.

Our grounds continue to be maintained and stewarded by a committed cohort of volunteers without whose dedication the site would not be in the condition it is. Our gratitude for their indefatigable service is deep, high and wide. You might be interested in the possibility of joining us for the annual work weekend which takes place during the first weekend in September each year. If you would like to join the work weekend or if you would appreciate exploring other ways in which you might support and/or volunteer please get in touch - call our Ballycastle Centre on 028 2076 2626 or email mattscrimgeour@corrymeela.org.

We celebrated our first Carafest over the Easter weekend, which we hope will become an annual event, where those who are friends of Corrymeela both old and new can reconnect with ourselves, the site and one another at this colourful event.

Sadly, we have not made significant progress in relation to replacing the beloved Green Slide, although plans for playground upgrades currently feature in our operational planning. Our major investment at the beginning of 2017 was to replace the beds and bedding in the Davey Village. Overwhelmingly this improvement has been well received by those who have slept in the beds and we hope that guests will continue to enjoy a good sleep there for many years to come. We also took advantage of a recent opportunity to invest in new pillows and duvets for the Main House too!

Lastly, let me just acknowledge that Corrymeela is what it is because of the wonderful array of people whether volunteers, members, staff or visitors who together daily retell the story of what it means to learn to live well together. The place and the facilities we are privileged to steward may well invite this kind of being well together, but it is precisely in our humanity that this metaphysical invitation becomes visible. Remember us as we steward what has been entrusted to us and as we make daily attempts to be our very best selves while also inviting the same of each other.

Matt Scrimgeour
Head of Hospitality & Facilities, Corrymeela

Meet our new Volunteers



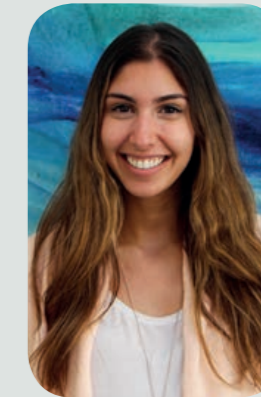
Annie O'Brien
Long Term Volunteer
Northern Ireland



Barbora Kosnarova
Mid Term Volunteer
Slovakia



Eli Legere
Mid Term Volunteer
USA



Emilie Roussis
Mid Term Volunteer
Canada



Ingrid Lici
Mid Term Volunteer
Albania



Jiyeon Min
Long Term Volunteer
South Korea



Kaeleigh Fletcher
Long Term Volunteer
Canada



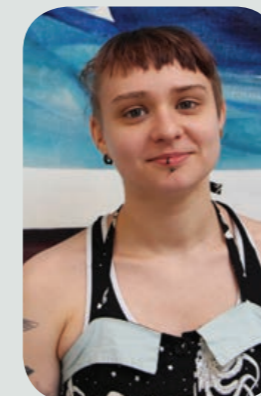
Lisa Albrecht
Programme & Innovation
Support Worker
Germany



Katerina Polanska
Programme & Innovation
Support Worker
Czech Republic



Maeve McLaughlin
Centre/Volunteer
Support Team
Northern Ireland



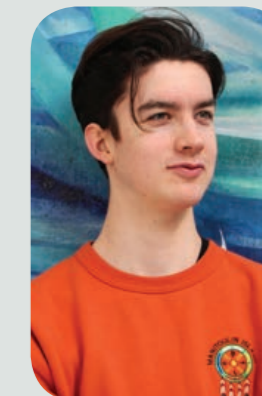
Nathalie Soukup
Long Term Volunteer
Sweden



Olivia Klein
Logistics Assistant
Hawaii



Olwyn Dowling
Mid Term Volunteer
Northern Ireland



Peter Jacobs
Mid Term Volunteer
England

Voices Together



“LAST NOVEMBER, A FRIEND ASKED ME TO GO TO A CONCERT OF CHOIRS. I love listening to people sing - so she booked and I turned up. It was a great night, but the highlight for us was “Voices Together”. We were blown away by what and how they sang. The songs ranged from exuberant and joyful, to peaceful and contemplative. It was clear that the choir were enjoying themselves and we really wanted to join in. A few enquiries later we had signed up! Now after two rehearsals we are loving it, and it is a joy.”

These warm words are from a new member describing our large community

choir, one of whose ancestors were the Corrymeela Singers. At the Dedication service, you may have seen that we are all ages, shapes and sizes! The only requirement is a love of singing. From many walks of life and traditions we gather to rehearse in Belfast before performing in three or four concerts per year, mainly for charity.

Our musical director and conductor is Corrymeela member David Stewart supported by Ruth and their family of percussionists. As well as learning, we enjoy fellowship and fun, and our singing together implicitly expresses our belief in a life where all can share.

Come join us!

Kate Graham

To find out more, visit our website www.voicestogethercommunitychoir.com

VT is a non-auditioning Community Choir. We welcome new singers for all sections, particularly tenors (male or female!). Experience of singing a part would be an advantage - but not essential. Why not come and sing with us? Contact Janet at janetuprichard@googlemail.com.



Storywork
A Summer School in Narrative Practice
20 - 24 August
at Corrymeela Ballycastle
For more information see back page

Corrymeela in the City

Corrymeela is delighted to welcome you to an evening of quiet prayer, reflection and gospel reading.

Beginning at 5.15pm in Fitzroy Church, University Street, Belfast (please enter through the side door towards the café area).

All dates are Sundays:
21st May
18th June
24th September
22nd October
26th November
10th December

Corrymeela in the City will be followed by a cup of tea and a chat for any who wish to join us. No booking required - all are welcome.

Spirituality and Power Seminars

The “Spirituality and Power Seminars” are a series of seminars run by Corrymeela, usually on the last Tuesday of each month at our offices in Belfast, 83 University Street, Belfast BT7 1HP.

They run from 4pm - 5.30pm and feature a speaker who will present some reflections on the topic of Power and Spirituality.

Dates are as follows, with more details available on our website www.corrymeela.org/events and our Facebook page www.facebook.com/Corrymeela

27 June
24 October
12 December

26 September
28 November

If you are coming along, please let us know, either email belfast@corrymeela.org or call 028 9050 8080, tea and coffee will be provided.

The seminars are free, but you are welcome to make a donation if you wish.



3 - 5 November at Corrymeela Ballycastle

Can we build experiences of communion with one another or must we continue with the ways of violence and exclusion?

We are delighted that Derick Wilson and Duncan Morrow, Corrymeela Community Members, will be hosting a weekend to examine the thinking of René Girard, the renowned Stanford scholar whose work focused on scapegoating, violence, religion and belonging. Since 1977, through the Dutch Northern Irish Committee members, Roel Kaptein, Andre Lascaris and Aat van Rhijn, the Corrymeela Community has been uniquely influenced by the theories of Girard and the challenge it poses for reading and understanding the biblical texts, especially those of the New Testament.

Duncan, Derick, Frank Wright and others have practically applied Girard's ideas to the work of: teachers, youth workers, family workers and restorative practitioners; politics and economics; and in institutional change programmes as well as with communities of faith.

The weekend will present some overviews of Girard's thinking and offer some specific sessions with resources relevant to the community practices outlined above. The weekend is open to those who are familiar with and those who are new to the thinking of Girard. Some papers will be distributed in advance for preparatory reading for those who register for the event. It is intended that this will develop into a series of annual events.

To find out more go to www.corrymeela.org/girard



DIALOGUE FOR PEACEFUL CHANGE 5 - 10 November at Corrymeela Ballycastle

From Antioch to Zimbabwe more than a thousand people around the world have been trained in the Dialogue for Peaceful Change (DPC) programme.

It was developed by practitioners working in national and international conflict settings. DPC is a hands-on course offering learning about the nature of conflict and practical tools for managing conflict. Participants in the course will learn through lectures, reflections, coaching and real life mediation scenarios.

This training will give valuable tools of mediation and conflict analysis to people in the public sector, healthcare management, education, third sector leadership, community development and business.

Dialogue for Peaceful Change was developed in a partnership between Ireland's oldest peace and reconciliation centre Corrymeela and the European Ecumenical Network Oikos.

The training starts with a look at the causes of conflict and the different methods we use for coping. We then move on to a highly practical approach to finding new ways out of conflict with learning gathered from around the world. The training has been used by mediation professionals, community workers, churches and aid organisations in more than a dozen countries.

To find out more go to www.corrymeela.org/DPC

SPACE TO BREATHE

8 - 9 November
at Corrymeela Ballycastle

TIME AWAY FOR CLERGY

Gentle retreats at the beautiful site of Corrymeela Ballycastle for clergy - to rest, reflect on scripture and recharge.

These retreats are for clergy in ministry who wish to be among a group of other clergy to support each other in prayer, reflect on what brings life, engage with discussion in a beautiful calm setting and find refreshment. These retreats are hosted by members of the Corrymeela Community.

Beginning at 10am Wednesday 8th November to 2pm on Thursday 9th - these retreats cost £72 (full board, single occupancy room), a subsidy may be available.

To book go to www.corrymeela.org/clergy

If you have any queries about this retreat, please call 028 9050 8080 or email belfast@corrymeela.org

SILENT RETREAT

10 - 12 November
at Corrymeela Ballycastle

The retreat is a time for you to be at ease. It is not a time when you need to create high expectations of yourself. Don't think of it as a time to get a lot 'done'... rather, expect to have a few more times of reflection than you usually would, some time to write, walk, time for an extra nap. We always say at the beginning of the retreat that one of the richest words of faith is 'welcome'. The retreat will give you time to listen to the conversations and thoughts that go on in you, so that you can speak to and with those, and speak to and with God.

Find out more, go to www.corrymeela.org/silent

PUBLIC THEOLOGY is a new word for an old concept: that theological discussions should reflect on matters of real consequence to the daily lives of ordinary people.

In this way, it's obvious that there has been Public Theology for millennia. The Hebrew scriptures are filled with narratives about whether a second-born should inherit more than a first-born, surely a debate of life and death during the time. Similarly, questions about how Jewish and Greek believers in the early decades of Christianity should coexist received enormous attention; questions about how power and gender played out in early Churches also divided the faithful. And that phrase "be in the world but not of it" – what does that mean in an age of empire, in an age of capitalism, in an age of privilege and economic oppression?

For Autumn 2017, we are delighted to announce that we will host a series of Public Theology events, in partnership with Trinity College Dublin and Queens University Belfast. These events will take biblical texts and stories – Hebrew bible stories of siblings; stories of the gospel and reconciliation with God and each other; stories of reformation; letters of Paul and questions about division and unity; practices of prayer in a violent age – and ask the most important question of Public Theology: "So what?"

This is what is so vital at the heart of any public theological enquiry. So, what? What difference do these texts, these experiences, these narratives make to the day to day living of the ordinary person. Over a series of six events, we will explore some of these vital issues, in the hands of scholars, in friendship with each other.

You are most welcome to them all. Final details are still being worked out, so keep an eye on the events page of the Corrymeela website for the exact details and costs.

September 4th or 5th

(waiting on confirmation of details)

"Sibling Rivalry in the Hebrew Bible" with renowned scholar Avivah Gottlieb Zornberg. An evening lecture and discussion at Queen's in Belfast.

November 3 - 5

"Violence and the Sacred"

a weekend exploring the work and application of René Girard, led by Duncan Morrow and Derick Wilson at Corrymeela.

Mid-November

Five Hundred Years

A shared event between Corrymeela and Foccolare reflecting on Martin Luther and the Reformation. An evening lecture, with hospitality and discussion in Belfast.

December 1 - 3

"A theology of Reconciliation"

a weekend of events in Dublin and Belfast with renowned theologian Stanley Hauerwas.

March 2 - 4, 2018

St Paul and Reconciliation

A weekend retreat at Corrymeela with the extraordinary bible scholar Paula Gooder.

April (awaiting details)

"Exploring our Violence in Prayer"

Theologian, musical scholar and historian Sheelah Treflé Hilden will offer insights and lead discussion on how spirituality can reckon with the human tendency toward separation and violence.

To add to these events, our Spirituality of Conflict project continues to offer reflections on conflict through the lens of the Sunday Gospel texts. The resource is free, and you can get the weekly reflection in your inbox. spiritualityofconflict.com

THE ROOT SYSTEM OF A TREE, including the thread-like symbiotic fungi that provide nutrients and moisture, totals hundreds of miles and can extend up to seven times the size of the crown of the tree. The root systems of two trees can graft together - International Society of Arboriculture.



GROWING A TREE

Look at us, say our politicians

look at the fine tree of peace
we are growing for you, look
at the efforts and compromises
we have made to bring you
to this point where the sapling
of hope is becoming a great oak;
your children will play safely
in its leafy shade, tie ropes
to its strong branches,
swing high in tomorrow's blue skies.

Quietly beneath, are the roots
and micro roots - we the people,
nourishing the tree's green growth
with potent gestures of love, kind
words, a touch of a hand, a smile;
acts of courage and friendship,
at ease with difference, embracing
new connections, respecting all life.
Creative and open hearted, we feed
the future, we sustain the tree of peace.

© **Moyra Donaldson**

'Growing a Tree' by Moyra Donaldson, with kind thanks to the author for permission. Moyra Donaldson contributed this poem to the 20/20 Visions Project, directed by Karin Eyben. The 20/20 Visions Project co-ordinated public conversations across Northern Ireland, focusing on what gave people hope within their families and neighbourhoods, using appreciative enquiry as a methodology.

Spiritual Reflection

These are some of the things that prayer is. Prayer is rhythm. Prayer is comfort. Prayer is disappointment. Prayer is words and shape and art around desperation and delight and disappointment and desire. Prayer can be the art that helps you name your desire. And even if the desire is only named, well, naming is a good thing, surely. Naming is what God did, the Jews tell us, and the world unfolded. Or perhaps Naming is what the Jews did, and God unfolded. Either way, I'm thankful. Naming things is part of the creative impulse. Naming the deep desires of our heart is a good thing, even if those desires are never satisfied.

No prayer is perfect. There is no system of prayer that is the best. There is only the person praying, the person kneeling, the person walking with beads between their fingers, the person cursing God, or gloom, or fate, or whatever it is that seems to be not listening. To name the night is to be like God, speaking light to formless voids, putting

rhythm and rhyme to the pell-mell that compels us. To pray is to trace the edge of chaos and find a way to contain it, not control it.

If we are going to take Jesus of Nazareth seriously, we must take him in truth. In Irish, if you want to say seriously, you say *í ndáiríre*, which might mean something like "in truthfulness". So we take the truthfulness of a man born in a time of occupation seriously; we take the truthfulness that all human lives needed warmth, changing, touch, love and loneliness to flourish; we take the truthfulness of ignorance seriously. And to take Jesus of Nazareth seriously, we must take ourselves seriously. It's no use trying to pretend to be him. We are not him. He is not us. But the Christian hope says that he was among us, and he looked out for the people who caught his attention. So I think we must pay attention: to ourselves; to our hate; to our deepest yearning; to our abandonments; to our creativity; to our edges; to our endings; to our violence's and voices.

Pádraig Ó Tuama

Corrymeela Community Leader

Daily Prayer



We are delighted to announce that Canterbury Press will publish a new book from Pádraig – **'Daily Prayer from the Corrymeela Community'** – this summer. This collection gathers an essay about prayer, 31 collects for the 31-day cycle of the Corrymeela prayer book and other short liturgies (for the morning and evening, for the Stations of the Cross, for times of change) in a volume that will be available in bookshops and on Kindle. Available from late August 2017.



Storywork

A Summer School in Narrative Practice
20 - 24 August
at Corrymeela Ballycastle

Some reflections by
last year's participants:



A rich well-balanced programme; good content and a helpful mix of different ways to engage; It felt hard work but very satisfying.

Interesting and informative, excellent communication by facilitators; appreciated the workshop format.

Thoroughly enjoyed it! It's so amazing to hear from people working in the field I want to go into. Thought it was an excellent mix of theoretical/practical application and interpersonal engagement.

I have thoroughly enjoyed the programme - the content, the people, and the location. It has raised questions and enabled me to find answers.

This is a wonderful programme - a weekend isn't enough. Although, this did affect me in a way I didn't expect so I really appreciate the breaks - it was good to have time to process.



From healthcare to business, from congregational work to community work, it is being increasingly recognised that story is a key factor in personal and group wellbeing. When a person can know their story, can know that their story will be heard, can find words to share their story, and can find ways in which their story both resembles and differs from others', wellbeing is deepened.

For 50 years, Corrymeela has been a place of story. We have been a gathering place where people from many sides of conflict and division have shared their story. While for many years we held much of this work quietly, we are now beginning to offer training courses on using narrative practice in your personal, community and professional life.

This weekend course will explore methodologies of narrative practice that are relevant for: Teamwork, Community Development and Conflict situations.

We will cover some of the theoretical bases for understanding narrative dynamics within groups a variety of practices for using narrative work in professional and community settings. We will coincide our gathering with a hugely popular storytelling event in Belfast and we will also engage the participants in a process of storytelling in the group.

COSTS:

Cost : £599 (this rate comes with the offer for a single-occupancy room for £100 extra)

If you wish to apply for a subsidised rate of £350, you may apply, and if we are successful in raising other funds, we will let you know.

To book your place and find out additional information check out our website
www.corrymeela.org/storywork

**Corrymeela
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An Roinn Gnóthaí Eachtracha
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