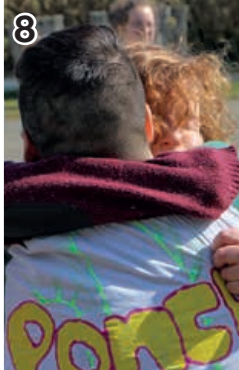


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Why islanders don't kiss hello

And it's not just the bad-timing nose-grazing
jaw against pursed expectation, nor
is it because of Judas
(though he slips out of the side door of this discussion)
but more that it seems too familiar
as we have not been to pre-school with your mother.
Perhaps we are not fully of the Europe
where the lean-to nature of a kiss can denote
who will be shafted in a vote.
Or is it just a fear of being wrong, two in
Paris, three in Zagreb and so on?
Right-left instead of left-right could affect the funding
for those new roads in Cavan.
It's not to do with hygiene;
we shake hands happily instead
but we've learned because we must,
being from the island of largesse,
to give that peck of venture in a shared future
where the view over one shoulder is as good
from this side as the other.

Siobhán Campbell

*'Why Islanders don't kiss hello',
Siobhán Campbell (from Heat
Signature, Seren. 2017).
Reprinted with kind permission
from the author and publisher.*

Siobhán Campbell is a poet from Dublin whose work is published by the Welsh press Seren. In this poem, from her latest collection, *Heat Signature*, minute differences between greetings across Europe are explored. The awkwardness of kissing, the worry of whether one should kiss twice or three times, and the sense that to kiss is over-familiar. In Ireland, we've long been parochial, and if you're in a village twenty years you're still a blow-in. However the poem has a beautiful turn, recognising that people don't often kiss here, we, nonetheless, have taken a peck towards a shared future in peace agreements, and worries about whether one is getting it right or not are lost in the practice of greeting, together, a more peaceful Ireland. Siobhán publishes regularly in literary magazines in Ireland, the UK and the US. Her six collections of poetry have been highly acclaimed and she's the winner of many awards for her work in poetry. She teaches with the Open University.



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Dear Friends

It's been a year of change at Corrymeela, with the mingled pain and hope that any transition brings. And yet in the midst of it, thanks to the sterling work of Matt Scrimgeour over the last few years, the residential centre is busier than ever. At the heart of our work of welcome we create the space for a warm human encounter with someone unexpected.

The theme of transforming division through human encounter is at the core of our vision for Corrymeela programme work. Inside you can read about the discernment process that led to this and the new thematic approach to our work. We also pause for a moment to reflect on the 20th anniversary of the Good Friday Agreement. Monica McWilliams, Avila Kilmurray and Duncan Morrow reflect on how the early reconciliation promise faded, Brendan McAllister gives us the international perspective and Kerry Logan talks to young people with no memory of 'the troubles' about their hope for the future. We also celebrate the joys of Carafest, our Easter festival of faith and friendship and highlight the work of community members on a recent peacebuilding trip to the DMZ in South Korea.

We always say that 'Corrymeela begins when you leave,' and while it has been a privilege to edit this magazine over the last four years, this will be my last before returning full time to the world of journalism. The writer Frederick Buechner describes vocation as "the place where our deep gladness meets the world's deep need." For me journalism is that place and I return to it with gladness, renewed energy and belief in the need for it today. While thinking on vocation I was struck by the role of Corrymeela as a symbol of hope, and how the symbol is as important sometimes as what we do. The theme of Corrymeela as a light in the darkness runs strongly through my time here. Our 50th Anniversary Aperture festival was named for the part of a camera lens that opens to let in the light. Prince Charles quoted the poet Helen Waddell in describing Corrymeela as, "a lit window on the hills at night." Even in this current issue Duncan Morrow writes about lighting candles rather than cursing the darkness, while Yvonne Naylor's trip to the DMZ in Korea puts her mind of the parable of the ten and the girls who brought extra oil to make their lamps burn brightly. As long as we have something to say about reconciliation I believe the light will burn here and by doing so will meet a deep need in the world. Even in the current political stalemate in Northern Ireland and with an uncertain Brexit ahead I refuse to be depressed. As the Indian mystic poet, Rabindranath Tagore said:

"Faith is a bird that feels the light and sings When the dawn is still dark."

Mark McCleary

Acknowledgements: I want to thank the many staff and volunteers who have contributed to communications over the last four years especially interns Zach Dunn, Rosie DeFilippo and Kerry Logan. Trevor Williams, Matt Scrimgeour and Pádraig Ó Tuama were always a fertile source of inspiration, ideas and support. David Acheson used his considerable design skills to make the magazine look beautiful and the whole thing would simply not happen without the dedication and hard work of Angela Saunders. Angela and Bernie Magill made the Belfast office a wonderful welcoming place to work and visit, and I thank them for their professionalism and good humour through two office moves and considerable organisational change.

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who, individually and together, are
committed to the healing of social,
religious and political divisions in
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the world.

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Thoughts from

Stories about Stories

In the last two years questions about British-Irish relations have re-emerged powerfully in the public space. Brexit has raised questions about how the governments of Dublin, Belfast, Westminster, Cardiff and Edinburgh relate to each other.

In contemporary times, there has been a strengthening of relations, a strengthening that has led to cultural, religious and political events that deepened bonds to a level previously unimaginable. I think of the Queen's visit to the Republic; I think of that famous handshake; Michael D Higgins' state visit to Britain; I think of dignified marking of the centenary of the 1916 uprising; and I note increasing public recognition of people from across these islands in civic life.

Different people voted differently for Brexit, for many reasons.

One of the outcomes – whether people were for Brexit or against it – is the

straining of relations across these jurisdictions. Scotland and Northern Ireland voted to remain in the EU. England and Wales voted to leave. The Republic of Ireland wasn't part of the vote, obviously, but both sides of the border are impacted.

In the midst of the negotiations between these jurisdictions, as well as the UK negotiations with the 27 remaining countries in the European Union, I am struck by the work that needs to be done in order for these islands of Britain and Ireland to deepen civic life with each other. Whatever the outcomes of the negotiations of the next years, nobody is going anywhere, so we need to find ways to live with each other – in all of the compromises, collaborations, and celebrations of our shared lives.

Corrymeela has launched a resource exploring British Irish relations through the lens of the biblical book of Ruth. This book, in four short chapters, details an extraordinary story. The setting is a cross-border one. Israelites and Moabites have long held history against each other. When there is

the Leader

famine in Israel, a family migrate to Moab (an extraordinary thing in itself). However, disaster strikes that family in Moab too, and years later, Naomi returns to her homeland with her Moabite daughter in law Ruth in tow. These are two displaced widowed women seeking safety. In the course of the book Ruth and Naomi use law and change and love and welfare to change their status.

In many ways, the history of two neighbouring identities are embodied in the stories of Ruth and Naomi. The authors of this text found a way – through a compelling story – to embody the ways in which the relations between Israelites and Moabites could, and needed to, change.

Through imagination, through art, the storytellers of Ruth found a way of embodying the need for civic change in the lives of two displaced women; and the way in which their original marginal status (even from each other) changed as they found a way of sharing space with each other and being woven in to each other's – and a nation's – story.

In Christchurch Cathedral in Dublin a few weeks ago, we gathered with people from across all these islands and reflected on British-Irish relations through the lens of the book of Ruth. As we discussed, someone said “What are the positive stories that we can tell about each other, even in trying times where our political negotiations may be divisive or tense?”

And people told stories: stories of moving from one jurisdiction to another; stories of stereotypes; stories of pain; stories of hope; stories of attitudes changed and lives entwined.

Such storywork can support us through difficult transitions. In these years, we have the impact of Brexit and the marking of the centenary of the border. Politics needs the generosity of human encounter in order to have civic currency. Generous stories can deepen our capacity to engage in difficult differences with each other.

For more information see www.corrymeela.org/ruth and www.corrymeela.org/storywork

Pádraig Ó Tuama
Corrymeela Community Leader

Say hello! Wave Goodbye!

It's not just the name of a great song by the new wave group Soft Cell, but the reality of an organisation like Corrymeela, which has seen a lot of change since our last magazine.



Firstly we are pleased to welcome **John Stewart** as our new Executive Director. John comes to Corrymeela from a career in the public sector, higher education and the charity/ voluntary sector. He has also worked on consultancy projects in Georgia, Ukraine, Botswana and Sierra Leone. John lives in Ballymena with his wife, Karen and grown up children, Katie and Jack. He worships at Causeway Coast Vineyard Church in Coleraine. Commenting on his appointment, John said:

"I'm looking forward to starting work at Corrymeela in June. I've admired Corrymeela's work on peace and reconciliation for some time and see it as a great privilege to join the Team."

We look forward to John taking up his post on 1st June 2018.

We are also delighted that **Glenn Jordan** has joined us as the Public Theology Programme Manager. Glenn is from Bray in County Wicklow but has been living in Northern Ireland since 1987. He has worked in the Church and community Sector for more than 25 years including being the driving force behind the building of the Skainos Centre in East Belfast and was also the Director of the Law Centre NI. Glenn is currently completing his PhD in Old Testament Studies and will bring great wisdom and creative thinking to our public theology programme.



We are also in the recruitment process for a Programme Manager for Marginalisation and hope to have news on that soon.



We are also sad to say goodbye to a number of staff who have left an indelible mark on Corrymeela. None more so than the indefatigable **Matt Scrimgeour** who brought such wonderful energy and dedication to his work as Head of Hospitality and Facilities. Matt worked with Corrymeela for over a decade showing a remarkable commitment to the experience and life of the work of the centre. His embodiment of welcome and tireless dedication is enormously appreciated and we are very grateful to him for the huge contribution he made that touched so many lives.

In February **Mark McCleary** left his role as Head of Communications to take up a job as a Senior Broadcast Journalist with the BBC, working as part of the team leading the relaunch of the NI News website. Pádraig Ó Tuama said *"I want, to express profound thanks to Mark for his work over the past three and a half years. He has supported us and led us in enormous change in our communications (magazine; public relations; media coverage; public reputation; relationships with key people in funding, political and media outlets; input into communications aspects of policy development; contribution to major public festivals and events; mediative roles; communication roles with community life committee and broader community structures; social media cohesion and more.) I am sad to see Mark go, but also know that this is a wonderful opportunity for him."*



We also want to acknowledge the work of two members of our programme team whose contracts have come to an end. **Chris Foxall** and **Lisa Mooney** have worked on Corrymeela's programme team for the past number of years. They have brought an expertise of youth work – focusing on both primary and post-primary ages – as well as skills of engaging with youth who are on the edges. They have given countless young people experiences of warmth, community, engagement, fun and challenge. We are delighted

to say that both Chris and Lisa have secured new employment and we wish them well for the future.



As well as staff Corrymeela relies on thousands of hours of volunteer time to do our work. We welcome Adelaide Sargent, Alessa Koch, Allison Cutili, Amber Neufeld, Dearbhaile Bradley, Emma Thomas, Jesse Bulicek, Khadi Anton, Keller Hawkins, Kiera Russell and Stéphanie Heckman.





Transforming Division through Human Encounter

Corrymeela's programme focus for 2018-2022

Reconciliation work is not static and to ensure that Corrymeela remains faithful to our mission for the next fifty years, we carried out an intensive review of our work.

Under the careful guidance of Whelma Villar-Kennedy, Teri Murphy and Shona Bell, the intern team reviewed every programme we've run for the past seven years. 1800 bookings were analysed, focusing on participants, programme themes and the nature of our partnership with visiting groups. The results were collated and carefully considered. We then undertook a comparison with key organisations in the field in Northern Ireland (NI), across Ireland and the UK and those further afield.

We discerned what our focus has been in the past, the present, and what the future trends may be in terms of our work. It was an exhaustive process, and enormously

worthwhile. Over a three-month period staff met, to discuss, to listen, to learn, to build hypotheses and to make decisions. We included current and former staff and volunteers, our interns, members of the Corrymeela Community and leaders from reconciliation groups across Northern Ireland.

What we've discerned is that Corrymeela's mission is to **'Transform Division through Human Encounter'**.

Our programmes will address four interrelated themes:

1 Sectarianism

2 Marginalisation

3 The Legacies of Conflict

4 Public Theology

1

Sectarianism

We understand sectarianism as ‘belonging gone bad’. Our programmes build trust between diverse groups to deepen collaboration and belonging. We address fear and differences, give space for difficult conversations and encourage change at the community level and beyond.

Strategic Dialogues

A series of strategic events convening key practitioners, community and elders to explore shared learning and new opportunities to develop interventions on sectarianism. This is ongoing.

(Partners The Community Relations Council (CRC) and the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA))

POD Project

Over two years 28 Schools will come to Corrymeela to make and broadcast podcasts about Good Relations. *(Partners BEAM Creative Network and BNL Productions and the EU Peace IV programme.)*

Crossing Borders/ Conversations that Matter

Engaging young adults in conversations that matter. In particular we are addressing the issues of Borders during this time of current political discussions and upcoming anniversaries.

(Partners DFA & CRC)



2

Marginalisation

As we understand it, this is not simply an experience of feeling on the margins, but a power structure that excludes. Our programmes support people who find themselves being pushed to the edges, and also works with groups to help them deepen their practice of inclusion, and challenge power structures that lead to exclusion.

PRISM Project

A peacebuilding project in seven areas of NI, working to build relationships between local communities and their new neighbours who are asylum seekers, refugees or vulnerable migrants.

(Partners British Red Cross, Irish Red Cross, International Committee of the Red Cross, ArtsEkta and EU Peace IV.)

Community Integration Project

A peacebuilding project in the Causeway Coast and Glens Council area, looking at the experience of the BME community and working on ways to build community integration.

(Partners Building Community Resource Centre, Institute of Conflict Research, and EU Peace IV)

Living Well Together

In partnership with the Education Authority, we are now a recognised outdoor learning centre with a specialism in Good Relations, diversity and citizenship. In the next few years we will be working with hundreds of young people from across NI on the topic of ‘living well together’.

Storywork

Our founder Ray Davey said “Corrymeela is Story”. For over 50 years, we have used narrative approaches to address difference and implement change in society. Hearing stories and learning from stories is at the heart of our work in addressing contemporary conflicts, sectarianism and marginalisation. Every year we run a Summer School designed to showcase our contemporary learning as well as gather a community of international practitioners.

3

The Legacies of Conflict

The Good Friday Agreement is now 20 years old. On Pages 12-19 we assess the strengths and flaws and show how the reconciliation at its core was lost along the way. There is much work needed to address the legacies of the past, repair relationships in the present and challenge the structures that continue to feed violence and division. Our Legacies of Conflict programmes focus on individuals as well as key institutions, giving us the confidence to address the impact of conflict and prevent future outbreaks.

Facing Our History, Shaping the Future

We are supporting teachers and pupils in schools across NI to address the legacies of conflict, locally and globally. By reflecting on key periods of history such as the Holocaust and US Civil Rights, we are enabling young people to build critical thinking and reflection skills. These can then be used to face contemporary issues in Northern Ireland.

(Partners Facing History & Ourselves, CRC, DFA and Stichting Het Solidariteitsfonds)



Heritage Project

A way of exploring contested history and heritage with communities across NI and helping them to critically understand events in the past and challenge how they are portrayed in the present. Our Winter School in January 2018 also revealed an international desire to consider the role of heritage in reconciliation processes. We look forward to building a global element to our programme that challenges parochial thinking.

(Partners Belfast City Council, Causeway Coast & Glens Council, QUB, Ulster University and Quarto Collective)

Inspire

A project with young people reflecting on the 100th anniversary of the end of the First World War. Through school outreach and a keynote event in Belfast on the 9th November 2018, we will create spaces to ethically reflect on the end of the War, its impact on Ireland and what we can learn to build peace in the present.

(Partners Oasis Trust, CFNI, DFA, CRC and Heritage Lottery)



4

Public Theology

Matters of private religion have a public impact. We know this well, for good and for ill. The last twenty years have seen a rise in public consciousness about the impact of fundamentalism, and with it much truth and untruth about the nature of belief. With this in mind, we use the texts, traditions and practice of faiths to help us find ways towards each other, using faith to build bridges of understanding and mutual collaboration rather than walls of distrust.

Brexit and Ruth

A peace building project with churches and faith communities across NI and beyond. We are conscious of how the Brexit process brings up the question of British-Irish relations. The “Brexit and the Book of Ruth” project has been designed specifically to bring people together in a narrative of generosity as we enter into a difficult and divisive time. This can help us address stereotypes and deepen relationships between people across the Irish border and between the UK and Ireland.

(Partners CRC, DFA)

Faith and Inclusion

Through retreats, public meetings, the development of resources and dialogue with major churches, Corrymeela addresses the impact of exclusion of LGBT people in Northern Ireland society. We work with individuals who are feeling isolated and targeted because of their sexuality, as well as provide training for individuals working for inclusion in the faith sector. We also provide opportunities for safe and focused dialogues between people who disagree about the inclusion of LGBT people in the life of the society. This project has been funded through many donors, and we are currently exploring new models of funding for this necessary project focus.

Summer School in Theology for Young People

We are delighted – with the support of the Student Christian Movement Ireland – to run a summer school in Public Theology for 20 young people from across Europe, aged 18-25. We will take energising questions of today: What does it mean to trust leadership? How can we collaborate for environmental action and What is a contemporary theology



of protest? Participants will discuss theological approaches to these questions and others in a way that inspires action, not just essays.

Spirituality of Conflict

Funded by a generous donation from the JVM Trench Trust Corrymeela has been thrilled to lead on the development of a resource that provides weekly reflections on conflict resolution through the lens of the Sunday Gospel Readings. This resource delves into the conflicts inherent in the gospel readings and provides insights for action, reflection and understanding of the dynamics of belonging, division and belief.

(Working together with The Mission and Discipleship Unit of the Church of Scotland, Iona Community, Place for Hope, the Church of England, the British Methodists, the Irish School of Ecumenics and the Reconciliation Ministry at St. Michael's House at Coventry Cathedral.) www.spiritualityofconflict.com

We are delighted and honoured to work together with skilled staff, committed volunteers, focused and professional partners and extraordinarily generous donors. If you wish to hear more, please contact whelmavillarkennedy@corrymeela.org

The Corrymeela Programme Team

Good Friday Agreement Introduction

I can still remember it with a clarity that is almost unnerving. Getting up early in the morning and walking through the Jaffa Gate into the old city of Jerusalem, where crowds were already gathering. We were swept along the cobbled streets, through the souk and finally into the coolness of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre to join in one of the few Good Friday services on offer. It was a (Roman) Catholic service as the Greek Catholics and Orthodox Christians were on a different calendar and would not celebrate Easter for another week. In the liturgy, there was no celebration, rather a remembrance of sacrifice and blood that was shed. Those thoughts came back to me later that night as we waited for news from home. I was travelling with a group from YMCA Ireland and making some radio reports for the BBC on their trip to Israel/Palestine. Our schedule on Good Friday 1998 took us into the West Bank for most of the day but our thoughts were turning to home. Arriving back in the late afternoon we ended up in an Irish pub in West Jerusalem that was entirely staffed by Russians. Its main attractions were Guinness and satellite TV which we persuaded them to tune to the CNN news channel, whose correspondent outside Castle Buildings in Stormont was trying valiantly to explain our politics to the world.

And so I watched the defining moment of my generation, on satellite TV while drinking surprisingly good Guinness in Jerusalem. I was born in 1972, the worst year of the troubles when almost 500 people died. My generation had not known a different way of life was possible until the ceasefires of 1994. And now there seemed to be a possibility that it really would happen and that a political deal would happen. A few hours later I sat beside an Ulster Unionist Councillor from Derry/Londonderry and we watched George Mitchell announce that an agreement had been reached. There was celebration that Good Friday but our talk reminded me of the morning liturgy, translated for me by a man whose father was killed in a bombing in Jerusalem during the British mandate. We remembered the sacrifice of many but felt a sense of hope and the possibility of a better future.

Twenty years on as we were putting the magazine together it seemed important to reflect on the Good Friday agreement. Many Corrymeela members were involved in grassroots work that made the agreement possible and thus we are devoting the core of our magazine to reflecting on different aspects of something that is at the core of Corrymeela

As Senator Mitchell said when he introduced the Corrymeela 50th anniversary celebration in New York; “Many organisations, many institutions, many individuals contributed to the process that led to the Agreement in 1998 and the progress that has been made since then. None [in my judgement] have been more steadfast, more consistent, more devoted than the Corrymeela Community”.

In this section, we look at the Good Friday Agreement from a number of angles. Monica McWilliams and Avila Kilmurray give us the eyewitness perspective from the Women’s Coalition, Duncan Morrow turns his analytic eye to where things went wrong and what we need to do next. Brendan McAllister outlines how the agreement influenced other peace processes around the world and then we ask young people with no memory of the troubles for their views on the Good Friday agreement. The reconciliation promise of the Good Friday Agreement may not have been met but as Duncan reminds us, our role now may be to light candles rather than curse the darkness.

Mark McCleary





What part of 'Agreement'

is hard to understand



The snow was coming down in flurries that Easter of April 1998. Huddled journalists from all over the world were reduced to interviewing each other to justify the wait for smoke of any hue to emerge from Castle Buildings where the peace talks were on a roller coaster towards their end point. Even the trees looked uncertain as to the season or the outcome of the talks. It was Holy Thursday. The catering staff had closed up as they had been told to go home for the Easter holidays whilst the political parties grumbled they were being starved into submission. Talks chairperson, George Mitchell, was muttering threateningly about a promised family holiday that he had vowed to uphold. The Prime Minister was looking longingly at the flight tickets for his own family break. A number of figures, including Jeffrey Donaldson, left the building. Mo Mowlam looked exhausted, with an intravenous drip in her arm to stymie on-going pain - not caused by the long hours of the talks but from a pre-existing condition. The final draft of the Agreement was circulated with

everyone being summoned into the plenary session. The tedium was over and the deal had been done. Some of those present enthusiastically welcomed it whilst others were more circumspect. Joe Cahill was on hand to legitimise Sinn Féin's position, while the regulars from the Shankill Road's Rex Bar also seemed to be in attendance.

Grown men began to cry as the drama of Good Friday twenty years ago was concluded. Everyone observed the sign off, did the round of press interviews and went home to prepare for the referendum. The Women's Coalition and the loyalist parties, despite being the smallest in numbers, worked hard to ensure that it would be ratified. It needed to be a resounding Yes in both parts of Ireland and once again, everyone held their breath until that vote came in.

The preamble to the Agreement proclaimed that a new society could be built on respect for human rights, equality, inclusion and mutual





esteem. The well crafted sentences exuded hope of a new beginning, while leaving space for a menu of national aspiration and identity that circumvented narrow notions of state-specific citizenship. This was to be an agreement guaranteed by both the Irish and the British Governments, under the benevolent gaze of the EU and the USA. It was to be an international beacon of what can be achieved when there is imagination, pragmatism and patience to the point of exhaustion.

So What Went Awry?

Once the spirit of goodwill lifted there were crucial issues that needed to be addressed, starting with the lack of attention to implementation and the absence of a validation committee. Subsequent crisis summits toured the gracious houses of England along with overnight sessions in Hillsborough Castle. Ulster Unionist leaders pushed Tony Blair for concessions endlessly repeating the mantra that they had 'lost' out by what was agreed. When they said it often enough, people from the Lower Shankill to Sion Mills began to believe them. Sinn Féin, for its part, spun out the ambiguities of decommissioning and negated the possibilities of police transformation until political will became frayed. Friction and failure was once again on the horizon. The UK Government delegated much of its responsibilities

on to the still bitterly divided Northern Ireland Executive whilst the Irish Government lost its mojo and started promoting its ablest negotiators to ambassadorial positions in far away countries. Since the Good Friday Agreement had concluded without any discussion on what constituted the seeds of the conflict, it was unsurprising that the legacy of the past turned up as a troubling spectre over its future.

2007 marked movement when Rev. Ian Paisley led the self-excluded DUP back into the fold by recognising the legitimacy of Sinn Féin's political mandate and agreeing to sit down with Gerry Adams at the infamous rectangular table. The photos would be able to show that he was seated alongside, rather than beside, his former opponent and the process was on the move once more. The smiles resulting from the most unlikely of friendships between Martin McGuinness and Ian Paisley, as First and Deputy First Ministers, was captured in pictures of the 'chuckle brothers'. By then there were too few spoilers on both sides to undermine this engagement and players from other conflict situations flocked to Northern Ireland to learn from this turnaround of events. Things worked and while they worked, there were people walking the streets who might otherwise have been in the graveyard.

But there was still the quagmire of

frustrated expectations that flew in the face of this heady optimism. A 'benign apartheid' was allowed to set in and became more acceptable than the politics of a shared society. Friction repeatedly arose over a 'sharing out' of favourite 'political' projects rather than working for a common good. The British Government adopted a self-exonerating narrative of being a neutral referee for the warring sides. Victims/survivors of the violence were used to score a political point with their entitlements ignored or prevaricated. The re-integration of political ex-prisoners was left to the administrative rigidities of European PEACE funding, mostly staccato and ad hoc by its nature. The shared housing, integrated education, support for community development, promotion of the representation of women and a Bill of Rights for Northern Ireland were referenced rather than acted upon. Public critique was muted for fear of destabilising an already tentative power sharing arrangement. The public held its breath whilst questioning if the exit of Peter Robinson and Martin McGuinness from the political scene would lead to yet another vacuum?

The current vacuum cannot be filled by local councillors alone - or by the London and Dublin administrations. If narrow short-term party interest is put before the long-term challenge of conflict transformation in Northern Ireland then it is clear that the hand of history, as far as the Conservative government is concerned, will be both heavy and unforgiving.

Monica McWilliams and Avila Kilmurray

Monica McWilliams is an academic in the Transitional Justice Institute at Ulster University. She was the former head of the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission and co-founder of the Northern Ireland Woman's Coalition.

Avila Kilmurray is a former Trade Union official, community development worker and for many years was the Director of the Community Foundation for Northern Ireland.



The Long Good Friday



It was a very 'Long Good Friday' in Belfast in 1998, after a very long holy week. The text when it came was an almost miraculous amalgam of human aspiration, constitutional and institutional innovation and practical political deal. The ethical core of the Good Friday Agreement was laid out in the preamble: this was a new beginning, dedicated to 'reconciliation, tolerance and mutual trust and the vindication of the human rights of all' as an alternative to the tragedies of the past and the end of violence. The institutional innovation was in a radically inclusive approach to citizenship and three strands of partnership government designed to reflect the 'totality of relationships' and 'consent'. The pragmatic politics ensured the release of prisoners, support for victims and the reform of policing.

On referendum day, 80% of the voters in Northern Ireland turned out - enough for a decisive 'Yes'. But too many returned to abstention at the Assembly election a few weeks later, leaving division and uncertainty altered - but not abolished. Amidst recrimination and polarisation, Sinn Féin and DUP decisively eclipsed the power-sharing coalition which dominated in 1998.

Desperate to entice the new winners into an unlikely partnership, the governments set about 'recalibrating'

Good Friday to their requirements. Previous focus on 'reconciliation' gave way to a new emphasis on 'restoring the institutions.' Without fanfare or consultation, history was set aside for politics, relationship-building for stability and transformation for truce. The Agreement was cherry-picked to its real political essentials - power-sharing, decommissioning and policing. If those were agreed, everything else - like civic participation, bills of rights, dealing with the past or a shared future - could be 'unagreed' - or at least left without life-support. In the jargon, a more stable negative peace was prioritised over an aspirational positive peace.

From now on, devolution was the ceiling not the floor, the end not the means. Politically and rhetorically, the restoration of devolved government was an obvious success. But in rewriting the letter of the GFA at St Andrews, the long-term damage was to its spirit. Now that devolution was the measure of, rather than the vehicle to, reconciliation, efforts to promote reconciliation beyond party interests were treated as disruptive rather than supportive. Lacking Executive support, Shared Future was dropped, progress on equality stalled, bills of rights were abandoned, the civic forum was ignored, integrated education became shared education and no progress



proved possible on the past, peace-walls, symbols or any contentious cultural issue. The one exception was the successful devolution of policing and justice. Free at last from direct responsibility for the intractable sore that was Northern Ireland, London and Dublin would not be diverted from cheerleading for progress and success citing the presence of devolution and the absence of violence as evidence.

But with 'sharing' off the Northern Ireland agenda, the remaining options were 'sharing out', 'standing off' or 'squaring up'. Behind the façade of Executive unity, the spirit of 1998 was being eaten from within. Rather than reach to an improbable future, the Executive became a venue for culture war over the past. Republicans remained committed to the narrative of heroic violence and imperial state

oppression while the DUP depicted themselves as trapped in government with terrorists who were unrelenting in their pursuit of lesser state offenders. The political system became a mechanism to contain bitterness, rather than a platform for transformation.

Inevitably, the damage started to show. A series of mini-crises over the Maze prison, flags, talks chaired by Richard Haass, parades, paramilitaries and welfare reform strained relations to breaking point. When Brexit, corruption and the Irish language converged and coalesced after 2016, neither the Executive nor the governments were in a place to prevent breakdown.

Twenty years after 1998, there is plenty of rhetoric supporting the Good Friday Agreement. But the body language and the political facts tell a different

story: Politics in Northern Ireland has effectively come to an unprecedented halt. As early as 1969, Terence O'Neill located 'Ulster at the crossroads'. Fifty years later, it seems squarely rooted to the same spot. To paraphrase Robert Frost: Reconciliation remains the road not taken, and that makes all the difference.

Yet what happens now still depends crucially on those choices. In contrast to constitutions and institutions, reconciliation cannot be enforced, but can only flourish through the voluntary reciprocal choices of people and their leaders. The choices of the UK government over the post-Brexit border will decide the extent of the damage to the British-Irish framework underpinning the negative peace. The choices of Northern Ireland politicians will determine the extent to which power-sharing is transformative of historic relationships. The choices of voters will determine the room for creativity in politics.

In the waiting, hope in Northern Ireland has once more become a question of signs more than solutions: signs of new possibility, signs of a different way of being together, signs of the possibility of transformation and growth in the everyday and in the lives of communities. Hope between Good Friday and Easter was always in the waiting, and the working and the preparing and the praying and the believing. For Corrymeela, and for Christian communities, none of this is new.

The Agreement's importance as sign, survives its failure as solution. In the absence of political clarity, hope still lies in lighting candles, not just in cursing the darkness. There is, as ever, a lot of work to do.

Duncan Morrow

Corrymeela Community Member





The Good Friday Agreement: Lessons for the World

The Good Friday Agreement was the last big peace settlement of the twentieth century world. It remains significant as a case study for the international diplomatic community, though its star shines less brightly now because of our political breakdown and the fact that more recent peace processes are more comprehensive by design and execution.

Four broad areas merit attention: the design of the peace process; the negotiations that led to the Good Friday Agreement; the agreement itself and its implementation since 1998.

There are two kinds of lessons that have been learned from our case: positive lessons about what was good or worked well, and negative lessons about what was bad or inadequate. And it is not so much that our story is unique but, rather, that the Northern Ireland peace process and Agreement confirmed internationally held

beliefs about how peace is made and sustained.

At first sight in our case, we tick a lot of the boxes that the international community would want to see in the story: collaboration between responsible governments; ceasefires; elections; inclusive dialogue; a comprehensive (three-stranded) formula for peaceful co-existence and progress; power-sharing; an international treaty; geopolitical backing (especially from the United States); regional support (in our case from the EU); 'security sector reform' (known as SSR in the international trade); 'disarmament, demobilization and reintegration' of combatants (known as DDR); a commitment to human rights and equality; economic aid and mechanisms to promote or assist social development.

Indeed, we have many useful stories to tell, in particular, how an inclusive

talks process came about; how lifelong political enemies entered government together; the long struggle to take the gun out of our politics; the reform of policing; the significance of European Union and other international funding to help bed down the peace and assist the social and economic development of a divided society.

Then there is a litany of negative lessons. I'll mention just three:

British Government handling of the peace process in the years after the Good Friday Agreement made a strategic error when they took what had been a fairly transparent, multi-party process and reduced it to a two-horse race marked by the kind of pragmatism and side deals that delivered short-term gains at a long-term cost.

The Good Friday Agreement's scant attention to dealing with the legacy



of the past, in particular the needs of victims, totally underestimated the long shadow of division, violence and trauma that still hovers over our post-Troubles lives. Today, the international community refers to this area of peacemaking as ‘Transitional Justice’ and its main features are justice, truth-seeking, reparations and ‘non-recurrence’. However, Transitional Justice is itself a troubled concept, possibly because it has not quite faced up to another negative lesson from places like Northern Ireland: the need for reconciliation.

Peace is a sense of balance, of equilibrium, within yourself and with other people or communities. When your peace is taken away by some of those other people, reconciliation with them is often necessary to restore balance, to establish a new equilibrium in your life and your community. Reconciliation is about coming to terms with your new reality and with the reality of people who have hurt you. These are insights that many of us know in our bones, because of the times we have lived through. The instinct for reconciliation, while not possessed by everybody, is well established in our social DNA. But, such emotional intelligence did not make it into the Good Friday Agreement. Twenty years later, we have peace but we do not have reconciliation. There has been insufficient healing of relationships across the lines of division and enmity. And so, we can say to the world that a good peace

agreement is one that provides for decades of reconciliation.

Another aspect of our peace process and agreement that merits attention is its treatment of women. There is much international admiration for the Women’s Coalition. The world has much to learn from the story of how a group of women, from all sides and none, decided to organize themselves and lean into a male dominated political circle, challenging its culture, widening its perspective and influencing the outcomes. However, the Women’s Coalition could only fight their way as far as the margins of the negotiations. But, informed by their experience and the experience of other heroic women around the world, the United Nations has developed much tougher standards regarding the participation of women - as negotiators and as mediators - and regarding the need for negotiations to address the impact of conflict on women (half of the world’s population).

A 2015 UN review of peace-building provides us with some ironic observations:

“In the aftermath of violence neither a cohesive nation state nor an inclusive system of governance can be taken as a given. The national responsibility to drive efforts to sustain peace must therefore be broadly shared across all key social strata and divides. A wide spectrum of political opinions and domestic actors must be heard -

particularly women and youth.”

The Review also states:

“Sustaining peace after conflict is a particularly lengthy and costly challenge. Evidence strongly suggests that undue haste and a narrow focus on the cessation of hostilities rather than addressing root causes are significant factors in relapse.”

I would suggest that, in our case, where, twenty years on, we have a social peace but a political breakdown, the UN’s observations should remind us that our peace process was, essentially, about managing our conflict but now it needs to be transformed. Transformation would seek to help us come to terms with each other much more. I would also suggest that it is time for civil society to flex itself again because, as the UN has said, the effort “to sustain peace must be broadly shared”.

Brendan McAllister

Corrymeela Community Member



Brendan McAllister was the founding Director of Mediation Northern Ireland and a former Victims Commissioner who now advises the UN and EU on peace mediation.

The Good Friday Agreement: A Youth Perspective

There is an entire generation who have no memory of 'the troubles', or of the agreement that brought the violence to an end. Many of these young people come through the doors of Corrymeela and their perspectives on the Good Friday Agreement are undoubtedly wide ranging. From those who are unaware of its existence or meaning, to those who are frustrated at its inefficacy and those who find hope in the commitments it made. We asked some young people who grew up in Northern Ireland after its signing what the Good Friday Agreement means to them today...

"Honestly it doesn't mean much, I've heard about it and know that it had a positive impact during the troubles but that's about it. I have no idea of what it actually means for Northern Ireland or how it helps us."

Amy, 25

"Growing up in Northern Ireland as a child I knew that something was wrong with our society, that people were hurting. It was only recently that

I could see that the troubles were still having negative consequences long after the Good Friday Agreement was signed. It makes me sad and slightly confused why all those lives had to be lost but it wasn't my fight and hopefully never will be!"

Eoin, 20

"The Good Friday Agreement means nothing to me, because look at the situation we find ourselves in. We are regressing and our rights and health and wellbeing are suffering as a result."

Éadaoin, 24

"The Good Friday Agreement seems to simply have stopped the violence, which although is a massive achievement in itself, did little in the way of actually reconciling communities and creating a shared future for the two."

Aimée, 19

"The Good Friday Agreement contains no internal incentives for political parties to moderate their stances and

arguably gives parties the security to adopt more strident, ethnically based positions."

Gareth, 23

"I see the Good Friday Agreement as a sort of protection blanket, reassurance that there are protections in place to prevent us as a society going back to the Troubles."

Ruth, 25

In partnership with the Education Authority, Corrymeela is now a recognised outdoor learning centre with a specialism in Good Relations, diversity and citizenship. Arlene Kee is the Assistant Director of EANI, with responsibility for the delivery of youth services in Northern Ireland. She shared her thoughts on the perspectives of the young people she works with...

What does the Good Friday Agreement mean to the young people you work with?

"It depends on the age group. Those young people who are 14+ care about a safe environment, about shared spaces





and about living in an equal society. I am not sure if they would know the detail of the Good Friday Agreement but they are very frustrated with politics and politicians. One of the biggest issues and frustrations for them was our decision around BREXIT.

I do not think young people under 13 have an understanding of what the Good Friday Agreement is. While a lot of our young people are very accepting in terms of LGBTQ people, Catholics, Protestants and Ethnic Minorities, in terms of citizenship, engaging with the political structure and voting I think they are pretty turned off."

What can be done to foster more civic and political engagement among young people?

"The Education Authority has developed a number of programmes to develop young people's awareness of citizenship. We have a programme called the Global Service Learning Programme where we build young peoples' identity as a citizen beyond that of Northern Ireland, whether that is through working with the homeless in

Washington DC or teaching children in India. We take them out of their comfort zones and give them the space, time and ability to reflect on who they are, how to compare their experiences to their home situation and how they can contribute to their society. The young people then have to do a minimum of 6 hours community service when they come home. The other thing we do in terms of fostering citizenship is to get young people to work in each other's communities through shared education projects. By getting the young people to engage in social action in one another's areas together they bond, get to know their society and invest in it."

How can we best equip young people to build a shared future in Northern Ireland?

"The government has a clear strategy through the Shared Education Bill through which we are trying to ensure that young people from different communities meet and spend an increasing amount of time together being taught in the same classroom and working together. The youth service supports that, making the community

connections in the evening, engaging the parents and the whole community.

One thing that we need to do is to get young people involved in civic leadership. I don't know whether that would be young people getting involved in existing parties or whether there needs to be an alternative party. Young people want a simple belonging that enables them to succeed educationally and enables them to contribute. Young people are not takers in my view, they are very keen to be generous, to reach out and work with others and sometimes we just don't have the place for them to do that."

At Corrymeela we will seek to honour our history and keep providing a space for young people to learn, to grow and to have the courage to change our society for the good of all.



Kerry Logan

Ex-Intern and Long-Term Volunteer, Corrymeela Community

Heritage as Reconciliation

A Winter School at Corrymeela

Since 2015 Corrymeela has been working in partnership with Belfast City Council, Causeway Coast and Glens Borough Council, Queen's University Belfast, Ulster University, the College of William and Mary and Quarto on an innovative community heritage programme exploring the contested legacy of the Ulster Plantations. In January 2018, the partnership held a week-long Winter School focused on the theme of 'Heritage as Reconciliation'. One of our partners, Gemma Reid from Quarto shares her reflections on the School.

The winter school brought together the same partnership team that had created our pilot heritage project, 'Contact Culture and Conflict across the Causeway', almost 2 years ago. It was an opportunity to reflect on what we learnt and to compare our approach with others involved in

similar work, both locally and internationally. Corrymeela provided an ideal environment for open dialogue between heritage professionals, academics, public bodies and local communities.

During the week, we were reminded that heritage is



Colin Breen (Ulster University), Audrey Horning (QUB/ College of William and Mary), Robert Heslip (Belfast City Council), Helen Perry (Causeway Coast & Glens Borough Council), Councillor Joan Baird (Mayor of Causeway Coast and Glens), Sean Pettis (Corrymeela), Gemma Reid (Quarto).

essentially a political act, an act that shapes the identity and politics of society. It is therefore a powerful act, creating both unity and division. Ignoring or dismissing its power and influence will only hinder

efforts to establish peace, as has been evident here in Northern Ireland. The experience of the guest speakers pointed to the value of developing long-term partnerships with local communities



Colin Breen leads an interactive visit to Dunluce Castle.

and of supporting local aspirations to secure cultural and economic sustainability, rather than assuming a leadership role that serves only your own professional interests. It was also clear that the basis for any successful community partnership was respect, transparency and a willingness to learn. We questioned how the role of heritage practitioners is defined as we were presented with some radical re-imaginings of the potential uses of cultural heritage in conflict resolution and societal change. Existing funding structures may still struggle to facilitate participative, open-ended ways of working, but individuals with a passion and personal commitment are making small and yet significant gains.

All that I heard and saw during the week coalesced into a personal challenge; to reflect on my own commitment, professional capabilities and ethical responsibilities in relation

to working in contested heritage. This work matters to me; it is about the type of place I want to live in and I want to better understand how I can help to create that place. I began my career in local museums shortly after the Good Friday Agreement, when museums strove to present themselves as 'neutral spaces', set apart from, or even above, the cultural conflict outside their walls.

Growing up in the 1980s and 1990s, I was taught to deflect personal questions that could pinpoint which side I was from. But how can I ask other people to engage in dialogue about identity, place and heritage if I am not open to that dialogue myself? And how can I participate in real dialogue without honestly confronting how my background and experiences influence my interpretation of the past?

And a purely academic perspective on these issues can be frustrating. While taking a critical distance

can give us fresh insights, it can also allow us to remain at a distance from community conflict, rather than acknowledging our own role as an actor in that environment. In the final session of the week, we gave a similar challenge to the rest of the group, asking each person to share their story about how and why they came to be at the winter school. It was obvious that initially people felt uncomfortable, but I was grateful that in the end most embraced the challenge and seemed to get a lot from sharing their responses with each other.

I left Corrymeela with a renewed personal commitment to working in contested heritage. I care about this place in which I live and I want to be part of creating a peaceful, sustainable society. Heritage may be only one element of building that better future,

but it is at the centre of so many factors that divide us, and conversely has the potential to break down that division. I believe heritage practitioners have an ethical responsibility to bring to the fore voices that have been ignored or overlooked, to illuminate the shades of grey between the narratives of 'us' and 'them'. To do that we need to be honest and acknowledge that we are taking a political standpoint, that we are deliberately making different selections from the past to create new stories, because we believe that is what this society needs in the present in order to carve a different future. Taking such a stance involves risk, but if we treat everyone we encounter in this work with humanity and respect, and are prepared to be challenged and to learn along the way, I believe we can achieve real change.

It seems that the spirit of Corrymeela may well have infected me along the way.

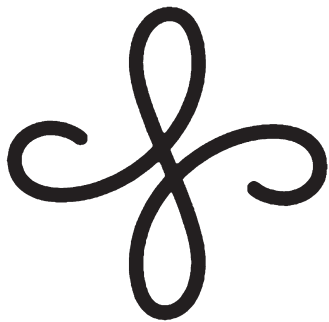
Gemma Reid



Colin Breen leads an interactive visit to Dunluce Castle.



Carafest 2018 *Food for the mind, the soul and the stomach*



On the morning of Good Friday, Corrymeela's Drumaroan Road site was a hive of quiet activity with final preparations for the second annual Carafest festival over Easter.

There was food for the mind, the soul and the stomach and even just looking at the first day's timetable there were sessions looking behind the headlines of Korea, the Book of Ruth, the work of the Equality Commission, the Scots language, how faith informs Tearfund's work with people on the margins, along with a rolling buffet dinner. All testament to Pádraig Ó Tuama's imagination, Stéphanie Heckman's spreadsheets and organisation, and the talents of the huge team behind the running of the festival.

Children enjoyed a well-constructed programme of activities and story-telling as well as fine weather to be able to play outside. They were reported to be "exhausted and happy"



by the end of each day. Stephen Fischbacker brought his fusion of music and movement to learning development workshops for children and families. An Easter Bunny could be spotted running along a path on Sunday morning while young children scoured the site on a family Easter egg hunt.

Late night film screenings for younger audiences ran alongside live music in the Main House with a new generation of Sands family cousins



giving a sparkling performance with Na Leanaí's beautifully blended voices and Irish trad. Later in the weekend, songwriter

Rory Butler's mellow guitar and vocal set incorporated his lyrical admission of an addiction to Facebook, and No Oil Paintings had feet stamping and people whooping with their set.

One young person had returned to Carafest for her second time and to Corrymeela for her fifth visit: she said that without a doubt she'd be back next year. A father spoke of his joy at watching his teenage

children "get it" as they threw themselves into festival sessions that were "wholesome and holistic".

The pop-up café in Tara offered a quiet space for conversation and coffee. Watch out for its doors reopening at future weekends and events.

"Corrymeela is really welcoming and at ease with itself" commented one first-time visitor to Corrymeela who had travelled over from Bristol and praised the variety of stories and topics at Carafest. His partner welcomed the community's approach to public theology that "counters the polarisation of other narratives."



Glenn Jordan has been hosting conversations about Brexit for Corrymeela around Ireland. Over two sessions at Carafest he asked what sort of society we envisage on the far side of the UK's exit. Looking through the lens of the Book of Ruth he led Carafest delegates through a brief reflection and group discussion on the first chapter of the story about the child of a foreign woman who enters the lineage of King David. The materials



are now available on the Corrymeela website.

Many people staying on site spoke about the 6am Easter Sunday dawn service as the highlight of the festival. Beginning in the intimate tomb-like Croí space, the moving and reflective service finished out on the lawn at the clifftop wooden cross overlooking the sea. Three hours later, BBC Radio Ulster's Morning Service was broadcast from the Croí. After some quick rehearsals and a search in the producer's bag for a clock,

the uplifting 45 minutes of worship examined Mary Magdalene's part of the Easter story and included a Corrymeela prayer for reconciliation. The service closed with Maeve McLaughlin's haunting solo *Ag Críost an Síol* (Christ's is the seed) which echoed around the curved stone walls.

On Saturday evening after dinner, the Main House emptied leaving just a few children playing outside and the Croí filled to capacity with people wanting to hear Brian Keenan. He spoke powerfully and prosaically about identity and the intensity of his experience of captivity in Beirut. He found the process of writing to be one where the words "tracked him down [and] found their way out" rather than being created.



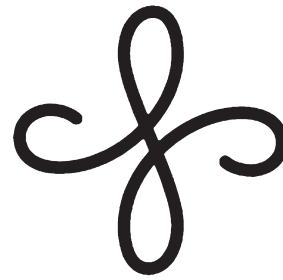


While hawks, owls and a falcon were being lifted out of their carrying boxes and being introduced to children in the Falbane lounge in the Davey Village, just down the corridor political commentator Alex Kane was in conversation with community member and academic Duncan Morrow under the chair of Sara Cook.

Alex spoke of his expectation that a post-conflict society would see the emergence of new political voices, new political parties, and the expansion

of the middle ground. But to his disappointment, none of these three have happened with any significance. Reflecting pessimistically on the current state of local politics, he said: "We're in end-game territory given the two largest parties in Northern Ireland. It's become the most brutal form of politics, headcount territory... All the hope of the [Good Friday] Agreement has exploded into dust ... and I don't see it being rebooted."

Duncan acknowledged that his childhood was unusual



in that he grew up among the Corrymeela Community. "It was very clear from an early age that my friendship group wasn't defined by politics [nationality] or religion."

"Our sides never learned out how to concede to each other, it was always to the governments. It's a paradox that as it becomes more obvious that we need to work together [as a society made up of groups of minorities] it is less likely that we will."

Duncan described the Agreement as "having been compromised for a long time", adding: "The I don't want the Good Friday Agreement to go because



it says this is a 'both and' country and not an 'either or' country and it required 'either or' parties to work together."





Writer, academic and community editor of *Sluggish* O'Toole Claire Mitchell found sources for hope as she unravelled unexpected religious, political, cultural and community cross-overs two generations' back in her own family's history and pointed to research data showing that identity is less binary that it's often portrayed.

Other sessions looked at the issue of distrust within the peace process Northern Ireland, a lack of benevolence and power-sharing system's disincentive to move politics forward.

Youth worker and community member Mark Cragg explored the justice of inclusion and navigating a walking world in a wheelchair. Frances Black

spoke about the work of the RISE Foundation and plans to develop a centre for recovery from addictions at the East Lighthouse site on Rathlin Island and creaturely poems from Gail McConnell had the audience spellbound.

Scottish theatre maker Ishbel McFarlane brought her successful Edinburgh Fringe show 'O is for Hoolet' to the Kenbane lounge with little houses made out of books dotted about the stage. While the audience sat on their 'bahookies', they

became co-conspirators in her exploration of the Scots language, linguistics, discrimination and delight in a theatrical tutorial.

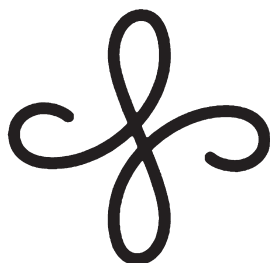
Sunday afternoon's programme was packed with authors. Jan Carson read some new work and filmmaker Phil Harrison spoke about his first novel whose themes emerge from his upbringing within a conservative faith community. The storytelling continued into the evening with Tenx9 and seven stories from festival-goers about being 'scundered'.

One long-time community member couldn't remember another weekend at Corrymeela which had such a richly curated collection of worship, discussion and challenge, with so many

international voices throwing their wisdom and experience into discussions about reconciliation and justice.

The weather turned on the final morning and the closing circle decamped to the shelter of the Croí. Even as festival-goers were taking their luggage out to the car park after lunch on Monday, an impromptu musical session from Annie, Kiran and Michael had some guests setting down their bags and dancing in the foyer. As the sign at the door says, Corrymeela begins when you leave.

Alan Meban
Corrymeela Community Member



In our last magazine, we heard from Dr Dong Jin Kim (Jin) about his thoughts on the conflict and peace process between North Korea and South Korea. In November Jin invited two long term Corrymeela members Yvonne Naylor and Colin Craig to join him on a trip to Seoul. They spent four days hosted by Okedongmu Children in Korea and the Centre for Unification Education at the Seoul National University of Education to address the question, **'Can Peace Education make a Difference?'** The visit was sponsored by the Ministry of Unification, Republic of Korea.

Okedongmu is a Korean word meaning a symbolic gesture of friendship, putting arms around each other's shoulders - an expression of full understanding and affection so 'Okedongmu Children' contains a wish to see North and South Korean children doing Okedongmu together. Yvonne reflected on a very special time sharing Corrymeela's message with others striving for peace.



Corrymeela Begins When You Leave A Trip to Korea



In the light of all that I heard about the history of relationships between North and South Korea and the complex nature of those relationships with the external players in the conflict, the more I admired the courage and hope constantly displayed by our friends and partners in peace, Okedongmu Children (OC) in Korea. On a visit to Peace Life Valley in the north-eastern mountain ranges of the Demilitarised Zone (D.M.Z.) land strip, dividing North from South Korea, Sung Han and then Colin and I had an opportunity to deliver some presentations about our Centres, their programmes and vision and share stories of hope. Sung Han took us on a tour to point out their green energy initiatives and, amongst the trees, some decommissioned South Korean tanks painted white or 'rainbow' with flowers cascading from their guns.

A film crew, making a documentary, accompanied us to the restricted area and an observation post in Ga-Chil peak where the distance between

North and South Korean guard posts is as short as 780 metres. This visit was humbling as the DMZ remains both a memory of the nation's tragedy and agony and the actual space of live confrontation and division. To reach this post we passed miles of barbed wire fencing, guard posts and an inspection to count us in and out. We also travelled around Hae-an, Punch Bowl village, where thousands of people died during the Korean War. The film crew interviewed us outside the observation post information centre. Asking why I came, I reflected how during the conflict in N. Ireland I was uplifted by the visits of friends from England at a time when many people were afraid to come. My hope



was to share resources OC might incorporate into their peace education programmes like the set of eight puppets I had brought for them. The film-maker noticed I had been drawing on our way to the restricted area and I told him they were symbols of hope we keep at Corrymeela - a Celtic cross, a prayer book and a candle - and brought with me for the Peace Centre. I admired the natural beauty of the mountains in DMZ, wrinkly like an elephant's skin, an area which is acknowledged for its rich ecological and bio-diverse wildlife giving a home to 38% of the country's endangered plant and animal life - surely a symbol of hope itself.

Back at the Centre, Sung Han and then Colin and I had an opportunity to share more stories of hope. Always I was uplifted by the warmth and interest our hosts and partners/friends showed in our work and humbled by the generosity of their gratitude for our visit. They reminded me of the five wise girls in the parable of the ten who took extra oil for their lamps



during their long wait for the arrival of the bridegroom. The task of waiting and keeping hope alive is an active waiting and preparation for peace. I was moved and inspired by their work and overwhelmed by their generous appreciation and hospitality - as we were leaving, some words from the 23rd psalm came to me and still when I remember their generosity today, 'my cup overflows'.

Yvonne Naylor
Corrymeela Community Member



Ballycastle Site Report

At Corrymeela Ballycastle, after the hustle and bustle of Carafest, we are preparing to go into our busy spring - summer period. Hopefully the volunteers are getting some well-deserved rest in their new mattresses acquired by our new fundraiser Kevin McCaughan.

Tulips, daffodils and primroses are blooming, each meticulously placed and tended to by the Gardening group. We have a new potting shed onsite for the gardening group, the funds needed were very kindly raised by Garvagh Clydesdale & Vintage Vehicle

Club. The gardens and grounds are coming alive with an abundance of colour and life, surrounded by young laughter from school and family groups.

Our polytunnel is providing a plentiful supply of leafy greens for the kitchen salad bar and the rewilding committee is excited about the new growing season ahead.

At the start of June, we have the Citibank group on their yearly work day visit so if anyone has an interest, would like to see how green fingered they are or would enjoy the experience of



getting their hands dirty at the site it is an excellent day to volunteer to help out.

The Waste Water Project is trickling on and hopefully we will have a solution soon. As with many of these projects we have received huge support and guidance from the Facilities Committee.



Eleanor Duff, Patricia and Gordon Smyth, Yvonne Naylor

None of this work would be possible without the wonderful teams of volunteers, working groups, committees and staff that continually work so hard developing and ensuring that the centre always looks as welcoming and inviting for all those that visit. We cannot thank you enough.

Michael McCartney

Hospitality Manager, Corrymeela

If you want to help out, please contact Michael on 028 2076 2626 or by email michaelmccartney@corrymeela.org

DONATE
www.corrymeela.org/donate



Meet our new Volunteers



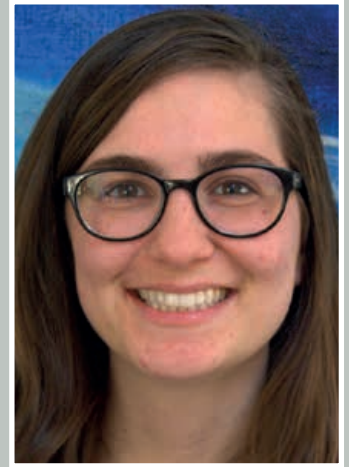
Khadi Anton
Mid-Term Volunteer
Senegal/France



Dearbhaile Bradley
Mid-Term Volunteer
Northern Ireland



Jesse Bulicek
Intern
USA



Allison Cutuli
Mid-Term Volunteer
USA



Keller Hawkins
Long-Term Volunteer
USA



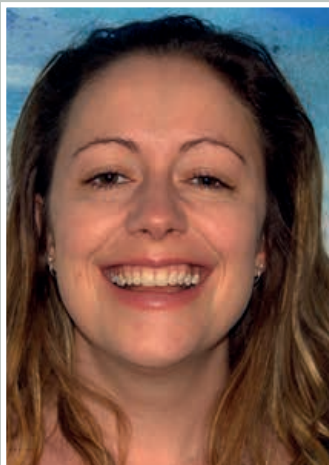
Stephanie Heckman
Long-Term Volunteer/Intern
The Netherlands



Alessa Koch
Mid-Term Volunteer
Germany



Amber Neufeld
Long-Term Volunteer
Canada



Kiera Russell
Long-Term Volunteer
Australia



Adelaide Sargent
Intern
USA/Guatemala



Emma Thomas
Intern
USA



Become a Friend

As you are here, we have a small favour to ask. Funding for reconciliation work has fallen dramatically over the last decade and like many organisations we are feeling the pinch. This is the worst funding climate we have ever faced, at a time when the work of Corrymeela is needed more than ever. In an era of fear, separation and division we still believe in the power of inclusion, dialogue and story to reconcile our divided society. We believe that division can be transformed by human encounter and we welcome 10,000 people a year into that space.

Hundreds of small donors help to fund our work, giving us the ability to welcome groups who otherwise couldn't afford to stay. We would love to add 1,500 new friends over the next year, 1,500 people giving a minimum of £5 a month towards encounter and welcome and modelling a different way of being. For less than the cost of a cup of coffee every week you will be making a difference to thousands of people around the world.

Please visit www.corrymeela.org/friend for details on how to sign up or call our Belfast Office if you would like to make a donation 028 9050 8080



Lenten Walks

Our ever-popular Lenten walks attracted dozens of walkers in Ballycastle, Belfast, Draperstown and Dundrum. The hardy Ballycastle cell group and assorted friends got the ball rolling with a February walk in Murlough Bay. They were treated to a lecture on the complex history of Sir Roger Casement who had requested to be buried in Murlough Bay before heading out into the elements. The walk included stops at the

Casement Memorial Cross and the Abbey Ruins and some time for contemplation and prayer, before heading back to Corrymeela for lunch. The second Lenten walk saw 45 participants trek from Dundrum to Newcastle stopping to pick up litter from the beach along the way. Then participants were invited to pick up two stones - the first symbolic of what they wished to let go of and another symbolic of something that would help them to move

forward. The first stone was thrown in the water, and without looking back the second stone picked up as a sign of a new direction or commitment. The final stage of the journey was walked in silence, before participants laid down their stones in the sand in the shape of the Cross. The final two walks were in Draperstown around Lough Fea with a stop at the Ballybriest chambered Cairn, and in Belfast with a stroll through the industrial heartland of East Belfast ending up at CS Lewis square. Thanks to Eleanor Duff, Joyce Williams, Dougie Tyler and Brian McLoughlin for leading the walks.

Summer at Corrymeela

Our busiest season at Corrymeela is upon us. Between now and September hundreds of visitors will be welcomed into the Corrymeela family, thousands of meals prepared and countless cups of tea served. Over the next few months we welcome six family groups to the centre, four development organisations, two summer youth camps, 15 university groups, ten school groups, four church groups, an international mediation training, 2 summer schools and lots more retreats, residencies and day groups. Time spent at Corrymeela establishes a place of belonging, a temporary community and a unique shared experience. At the core of our work is welcome and creating the space for a warm human encounter with someone unexpected. Such meetings have transformed many lives here over the years. We are Corrymeela and you are always welcome.

SAD NEWS

Legacy Gifts

Vera Jane Annett
Ivan and Dorothy Wheeler
Charitable Trust
George McCulloch
A.K. Mawhinney

Gifts in Memoriam

Edward (Ted) Kelly

Brexit and the Book of Ruth

Sunday 20 May, 2018



For 2018, Corrymeela has produced resources to explore conversations about Brexit, borders and belonging using the book of Ruth from the Hebrew Bible.

The Book of Ruth details the story of Ruth, her mother-in-law Naomi and Ruth's eventual husband Boaz. It's a story of borders, tensions between neighbouring territories, stereotyping narratives between people long divided, law, how laws change when people meet people, hunger, resentment, shame and love.

Using the lens of this extraordinary book, we have produced nine resources for use in congregations across both sides of the Irish border as well as congregations in England, Scotland and Wales, they are available for download from our website under Resources.

If you are on the island of Ireland, we can probably arrange to come visit your congregational group to have a discussion.

Date of next public discussion: Sunday, 20th May, 7pm
Ballycrochan Presbyterian Church, Bangor.

We also have events planned for Derry and Monaghan, details will be available on our website when they are finalised. See corrymeela.org/ruth

CORRYMEELA LEARNING SEMINARS

Tuesday 29 May, 2018

Corrymeela's "Learning Seminars" are held usually on the last Tuesday of each month from 4pm to 5.30pm at our Belfast Office, 83 University Street, Belfast BT7 1HP. The Learning Seminars cover a varied programme of topics and issues and are part of Corrymeela's Public Theology initiative.

The next seminar on Tuesday 29 May will feature Peter Doran of Queen's University Belfast. Peter will help us consider the significance of attention and consumerism, using the idea of the 'mindful commons'. The power of capital is the power to target our attention, mould market-ready identities, and reduce the public realm to an endless series of choices. This has far-reaching implications for our psychological, physical and spiritual well-being, and ultimately for our global ecology



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.

Tuesday 26 June, 2018

Liz Griffith has been involved in social justice advocacy in N Ireland for many years. She works at Law Centre (NI) and has volunteered with Belfast Friendship Club, Horn of Africa People's Aid NI and the Larne Immigration Detainees Visitors Group.





Quiz Night

Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council are hosting a quiz night on Thursday 31 May,

All proceeds will be shared between Corrymeela and Habitat for Humanity NI. Thank you LCCC!
Venue: Lagan Valley Island, Lisburn
Start time 7.30 pm. Entry fee £5 per person

Ideally, we would like teams to book in advance as space is limited. To book a team please call the Mayor's Office on 028 9250 9331 or email mayors.secretary@lisburncastlereagh.gov.uk

Corrymeela in the City

Sunday 17 June, 2018

Corrymeela is delighted to welcome you to an evening of quiet prayer, reflection and gospel reading. The next date is Sunday 17 June beginning at 5.15pm in Fitzroy Church, University Street, Belfast (please enter through the side door towards the café area). Corrymeela in the City will be followed by a cup of tea and a chat for anyone who wishes to join us. Future dates are on corrymeela.org/city No booking required - all are welcome.

Word & World

(Public Theology Summer School)
at Corrymeela Ballycastle
5 - 8 July, 2018
See back cover

Storywork (A Summer School in Narrative Practice)

at Corrymeela Ballycastle
15 - 18 August, 2018
See back cover

Mercy, Justice, Truth and Peace

17-18 November, 2018
in Exeter

17th November

An Interfaith conference, open to those of all faiths and beliefs and none. 10.00am to 4.30pm in the Alumni Auditorium, the Forum, Exeter University.

17th November

An evening poetry reading in the chapel on the St Lukes site (Heavitree Road, Exeter). Doors open at 7.00pm, the reading will start at approximately 7.30pm. The poets reading with Pádraig Ó Tuama are Alwyn Marriage, Lawrence Sail, Richard Skinner and Dana Littlepage Smith

18th November

A Christian based service of worship in Exeter. The keynote speaker and preacher is Pádraig Ó Tuama.

More information on all these events including how to book will be available on our website www.corrymeela.org/exeter

Silent Retreat at Corrymeela Ballycastle

19-21 October, 2018

Please note our Silent Retreats are very popular and book out quickly, please book early to avoid disappointment.

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

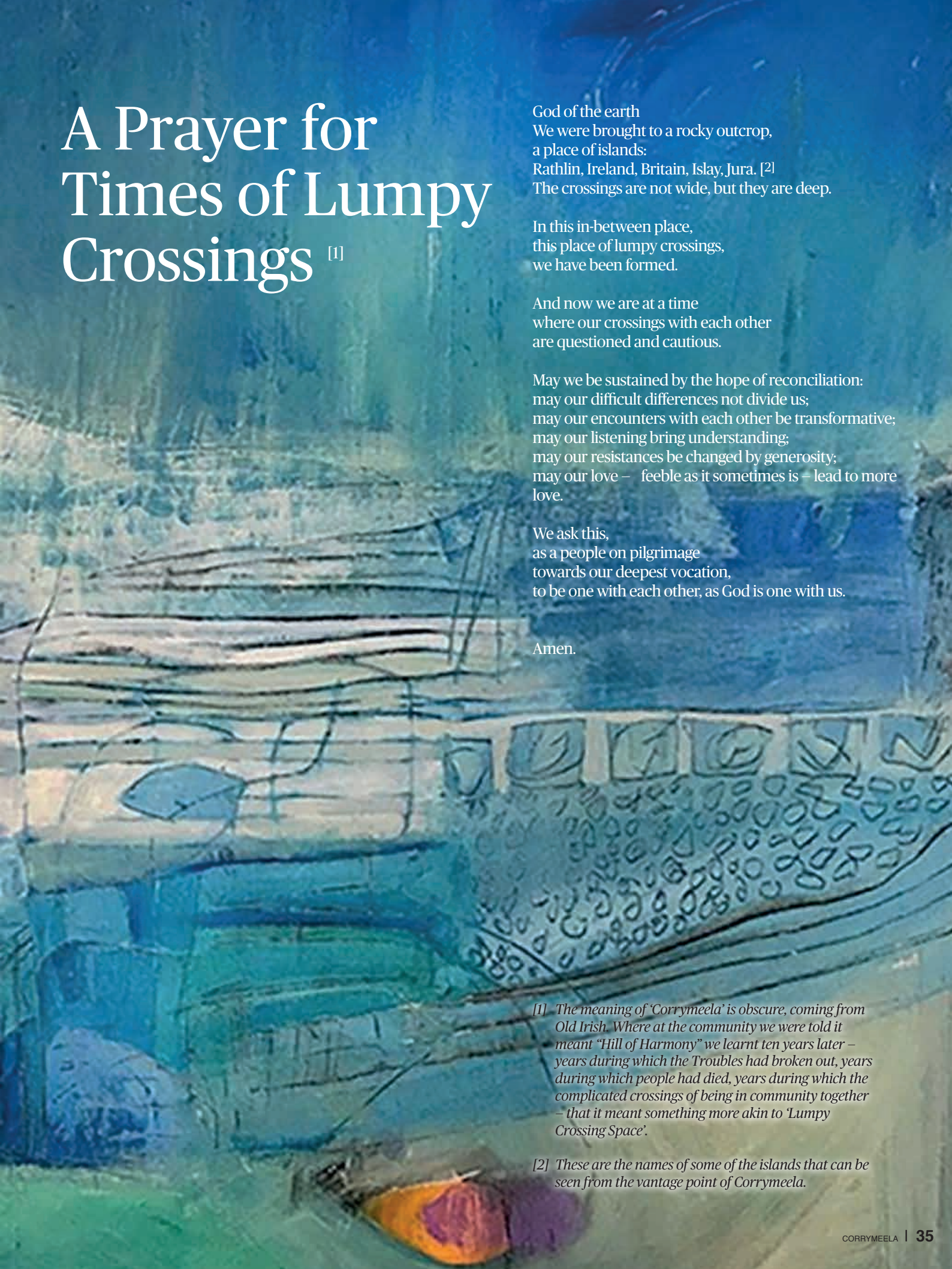
a time to get a lot 'done'... rather, expect to have a few more times of reflection than you usually would, some time to write, walk, time for an extra nap. We always say at the beginning of the retreat that one of the richest words of faith is 'welcome'. The retreat will give you time to listen to the

conversations and thoughts that go on in you, so that you can speak to and with those, and speak to and with God.

The cost of this retreat:
Sharing room: £99 per person
Single room £139 per person

All meals and refreshments are included for the duration of the event.

To book go to our website www.corrymeela.org/silent or if you prefer, call our Belfast Office 028 9050 8080.



A Prayer for Times of Lumpy Crossings ^[1]

God of the earth
We were brought to a rocky outcrop,
a place of islands:
Rathlin, Ireland, Britain, Islay, Jura. [2]
The crossings are not wide, but they are deep.

In this in-between place,
this place of lumpy crossings,
we have been formed.

And now we are at a time
where our crossings with each other
are questioned and cautious.

May we be sustained by the hope of reconciliation:
may our difficult differences not divide us;
may our encounters with each other be transformative;
may our listening bring understanding;
may our resistances be changed by generosity;
may our love – feeble as it sometimes is – lead to more
love.

We ask this,
as a people on pilgrimage
towards our deepest vocation,
to be one with each other, as God is one with us.

Amen.

[1] The meaning of 'Corrymeela' is obscure, coming from Old Irish. Where at the community we were told it meant "Hill of Harmony" we learnt ten years later – years during which the Troubles had broken out, years during which people had died, years during which the complicated crossings of being in community together – that it meant something more akin to 'Lumpy Crossing Space'.

[2] These are the names of some of the islands that can be seen from the vantage point of Corrymeela.

Word & World

5 – 8 July, 2018

Corrymeela is delighted to host a summer school in theology for young people aged 18-25. This exciting four-day school will explore borders and belonging in contemporary Europe.

This summer school will consider questions of public theology:

How do we read the biblical texts and hold conversations between them and the modern world?

How do we approach divisive topics about religion and conflict today?

How do we use theological methodologies?

What is it that young people know about theology that needs to be learned by the wider community?

We are delighted to welcome a teaching team of people from across a vast array of theological disciplines (liberation, political and public theologies; biblical studies; political science; and the arts).

Cost: The full cost of this residential is £220.00 but thanks to very generous sponsorship by the Student Christian Movement Ireland, we are able to offer a subsidised rate of £75.00. Details of how to book are available on our website www.corrymeela.org/word

Storywork

A Summer School in Narrative Practice
15 - 18 August 2018

A summer school on Storytelling for Change and Reconciliation at the renowned reconciliation centre, Corrymeela, on the north coast of Ireland. Led by Corrymeela Community leader Pádraig Ó Tuama with input from Sara Cook.

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

“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.”

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 now offer training courses on using narrative practice in your personal, community and professional life.

This course will explore methodologies of narrative practice that are relevant for: Congregational, 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.

Cost: £450 (shared room) £550 (single room)

Details of how to book and FAQs can be found on our website www.corrymeela.org/storywork

Corrymeela acknowledges the support of the following

Community Relations Council



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



The J V M Trench Will Trust

