

As this book has so many different stories I found it difficult to come up with a cover that would represent all of them at once. Instead of tackling each individual story I decided to base the cover around the stories main corresponding feature. All of the stories in this book were written by ordinary people who have a story to tell and this book enables them to do so. This is something that really inspired me and got me thinking. How each person we meet has a library inside of them, but too often we shy away from sharing it with anyone else. This was why I chose to do an assemblage of faces for the front cover. It shows the diversity of the storytellers in the book. I arranged it so each face still remains hidden. I think these are the two defining features of the book. Firstly, these stories are coming from a range of people. Secondly, the fact that the book encourages people to dig deep and write down those stories that have been hidden away for so long. The image on the back cover is of our local church, St Laurence O'Toole's.

Tara Kearns – the artist who created the designs for the front and the back cover.



OUR STORIES MOVING US FROM Shame to Dignity



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MARTIN BYRNE

Unravelling the Spirit As We Trudge Through Life at the Margins

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Our Stories Moving Us From Shame To Dignity



(Digital Media Class at the NWCTC)

Unravelling the Spirit As We Trudge Through Life at the Margins

Martin Byrne

Scribbles from the Margins Press, Dublin 2017

CONTENTS

<i>Foreword</i>		5
<i>Introduction</i>		9
<i>Acknowledgements</i>		11
<i>Dedication</i>		12
Aoife Watson	Who Am I?	13
Lennon Grimes, Patrick Knowd, Cameron McCabe, Kaylem O'Reilly, Evan Conroy and Daniel Kenna	Stories From The Larriers	17
Geraldine Griffin	Waves Dashing Against the Side of the Boat	21
Ragnall Cooke	An Baile Bocht agus Comhairle Mo Leasa	28
Alex Kennedy	Christina Caffrey: Her Final Days	31
Noel Gregory	The Voice of An Inner City "Servant Leader"	34
Amy Doyle, Niamh McKee and Jane Mellett	World Youth Day 2016	38
Abbie, Fayth, Ellie, Katie, Sadhbh Katelyn, Kayla, Teegan, Jayla, Amber, Shaneece, Madison, Lacie, Grace, Kianna, Angel, Elizabeth, Éabha, Hanneen and Cassie	Larrier Girls Deserve To Win	42
Donal Blake, Anne Keating, Jane Mellett, Denis Gleeson, Shelagh Lockery, Christy O'Carroll, Peter Dowling and Seamus Gill	Searching For Mystery	52
Roisín Kearney	Chasing A Dream	58
Sean Dunne and participants of NWICTDP	The Revolution Will Not Be Televised	61
Ronnie McCabe	Shared Reflections on our Pilgrimage to Rome	63
Sean Carroll	Climbing Four Peaks	65
Seamus Gill	Shelley - An Experience of Forgiveness	67

Kim Flood	From Sheriff Street to MTV Lebanon	69
David Lambert	The Raid	72
Ashling Golden, Taylor Molloy and Dylan Darcy	SWAN In Boston	73
Mary Mooney, Gwen Shiels, Anita Maher, Marie Maher, June Howell, Dolores Cox, Marie Lord, Siobhan Mokrani and Dolores Griffiths	Fourteen Moments of Mystery	76
Pauline Brennan	“You Out There Change It”	86
Paul Jennings and Des O’Brien	St Laurence O’Toole GAA Club and the 1916 Commemoration	88
David Rogers	From Cherry Orchard to Compostela	92
Martin Byrne	Arise Artists, Activists and Artisans of Humanity in Dublin’s North Inner City	95
Ritah Merembe and Diane Ihirwe Cooper	Creating A Support Network For Young Mums	99
Star Ballyfermot	Where Peace Dwells Fear Cannot	102
Hugh O’Donnell	A Blessing For Charlotte Rose Unexpected Beauty	105 107
Gareth Herbert	The Ballyfermot Cycling Project and the Matt Talbot Trust Charity Cycle	109
Debbie Moore	Being Mother	111
Pato Batt, Sean McDermott and Noel Kelly	Friilly	113
Austin O’Carroll	On Being A Loser	115
ACRG Creative Writers Group	Walking Down The Recovery Road	117
Eddie Byrne	The Street	126
Ann Matthews	The Parish of St Laurence O’Toole Dublin 1844 - 1850	128
Sharon Harding	Cherishing All The Children Of The Nation Equally	134



(Digital Media Class at the NWCTC)



(Digital Media Class at the NWCTC)

These amazing photos have been generously gifted to this book by Gary Somers and the Digital Media class at the North Wall Community Training Centre.

Foreword

The Dublin-born statesman Edmund Burke, speaking more than two centuries ago, said “All that is necessary for the triumph of evil is that good people do nothing”. That is as true now as it was in Edmund Burke’s time. This publication recognises the truth of what Edmund Burke said. It is a loud and powerful naming of the current reality experienced by so many people. At its core it challenges the failure of Irish politics and Irish society to build a nation where every man, woman and child has access, as of right, to what is required to live life with dignity.

It is important to note that the hundred pieces contained in this book were written during 2016 - a century after the 1916 Rising. While there is much to celebrate and to be proud of at a time like this, there is also a need to recognise some major failures. Recent statistics published by the EU show that Irish people face much higher levels of poverty and deprivation than other comparable EU states. Large-scale homelessness is obvious on our streets, especially in Dublin, for the first time in many decades. Our health and education systems are not at the EU average levels that people would expect. After years of austerity and despite being one of the richest countries in the world Ireland has failed to eliminate poverty, inequality or social exclusion.

Traditionally Ireland has coped with social deprivation by resorting to increased emigration. Since the crash of 2008 the population flow emigrating from Ireland has been proportionately higher than at any time since the middle of the 19th century potato famine. It is more than ironic that, as the world has focused on the mass migration of people into Europe, many Irish people have again been forced to emigrate so that they can have access to a decent life. This need not be the case. A better future is possible. The authors who write in this publication refuse to remain silent. They know the importance of speaking out, of telling their stories, of ensuring that reality is named and the truth is told.

This brings us to another major development in the past year – the growing realisation of the importance for leaders, especially political leaders, to listen. The UK electorate voted to leave the EU. The American electorate chose Donald Trump as the president. In both cases the polls taken in advance of the ballots were wrong. Both results were completely unexpected. Analysis of these results

show that people are reacting to the fact that many politicians and policy makers have not listened to their experience, their concerns or their proposals. More and more it seems that decisions have been made in the interests of the better off while it is the rest of society that pays the costs of these decisions.

The society we have today is the result of decisions taken over many decades. It can be changed. A better future will emerge when better informed decisions are made by the variety of policy-makers and institutions that impact on people's lives. All decisions are based on values whether decision-makers realise that or not. Do we value banks and financial institutions more than we value people and the ordinary lives that they live? Do we as a people accept a two-tier society in fact while dismissing it in principle? For the past decade, Ireland's answer to these questions has been yes!

The authors in this volume want a world based on the values of human dignity, human rights and the common good. It is long past time for decision-makers in Irish society to prioritise these values and to take the decisions required to ensure that everyone in Ireland has sufficient income to live life with dignity; meaningful work; appropriate accommodation; participation in shaping the decisions that affect their lives; appropriate education; essential healthcare; and an environment which respects the culture. Ireland has the resources to produce such a society and to do so in a sustainable manner.

A special word of congratulations to Martin Byrne for his initiative and imagination in drawing the strands of this book together and not just this book but the twenty volumes that have preceded it. This publication gives us a glimpse of the real lives of the people of North Wall and Cherry Orchard where Martin spends his life and it highlights their hopes and fears and the love and solidarity that drives them to resist the temptation to give up or to remain silent. Every day they work for a better future and they want to work in solidarity with others to make that future emerge. This volume demands that decision-makers listen and hear and act accordingly.

Seán Healy S.M.A.
Social Justice Ireland



This picture 'The Summer Garden' was drawn by Katie McDonagh aged 7'



This picture 'The Owl in the Tree' was drawn by Lauren McDonagh aged 5½

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- 1 **Katie** and **Lauren** occasionally join their mother Susan Cleary as she sings with the St Laurence O'Toole Folk Group at the Sunday noon mass in the North Wall.



'Empires' - Halloween Morning 2014



'Burnout' - St Patrick's Day 2016

These amazing photos have been generously gifted to this book by Paul Kelly whose North Wall Collection has been exhibited in the CHQ, Wood Quay and City Hall.

Introduction

Starting anew and reflecting on this twenty-first book of stories, I'm conscious that I am very, very privileged. Somehow in the company of many unsung, heroic humans, I'm standing in a unique, edgy borderland; a special terrain that is so different from most other neighbourhoods in Dublin. In kinship, I have been drawn to the North Wall and to Cherry Orchard and in partnership I have been sustained to remain standing there. There is some godly mysterious dynamic of mutual gift-exchange going on.

If the postal address around here was D 6, then 95% of the young people would go to college. If the postal address around here was D 10, then a mere 10% of young people would progress to university, but in the North Wall, 4% of young people attend college. Any sort of theology or spirituality worth its salt, emanating from the North Wall will be political, disturbing, angry and inviting the reader to align him or herself with a compassionate God of justice.

Struggle is central to the story of the North Wall community. This past year of commemorations in the North Wall provided us with the opportunity to remember our past and to tell again the stories of who we are. Recalling the events of one hundred years ago, in and around Seville Place, very many ordinary people and their heroic deeds were celebrated and acknowledged. There is much to be proud of, in the part the North Wall community played in the struggle for Irish freedom. On Saturday 16th of April 2016, the members of O Toole's GAA club gathered at Croke Park and marched behind the pipe band to join the local North Wall community for a mass of remembrance. On route to the church they stopped outside of 100 Seville Place and played the National Anthem. Certain places and people are sacred and special in our collective memory. Reflecting together and telling our stories make us human. We have commemorated together what has made us as a people, and now one hundred years on, we ponder on what defines our identity as we struggle together, be it in the North Wall or in Cherry Orchard.

The varied stories that fill the pages that follow are about identity, meaning, survival, mystery, memory, history and purpose, expressing something of the wisdom and the grit of this community, (rather than focussing on the violence and on the evils of poverty). Look beneath the empowering words and you will

see a whole community of struggling grass-root activists, detonating street signs of God's salvation.

This particular, edgy borderland of the North Wall is criss-crossed with railways, roads, canals and the river. It is a busy hub, for ever in transition. At its enduring heart is a community of people. This collection of people's stories provides an understandable intersection between, faith, history, contextual urban theology, and Christian spirituality. The many ordinary stories told in the vernacular of the people, are the yeast in the flour, as this book addresses and attends to a complexity of voices, and hints at some of the gifts needed for the discernment of mystery at Dublin's edges in 2017.

This collection of contemplative, contemporary stories draws us deeper into a strange terrain of seeing and of laughing and of weeping. Pope Francis remarked that many of us no longer have the capacity to weep. Even if our hearts do not come to it naturally, we now at times find tears in our eyes in seeing the tears of countless others suffering tragedy around the world. God is where there are tears and that's where we must go to meet him. Pope Francis said, "Sometimes tears are our glasses to see Jesus, not with our physical eyes, but with those of the heart. ... Certain realities of life are seen only with eyes that are cleansed by tears."

I am so grateful that the gritty and wise people of Cherry Orchard and the North Wall are again generously prepared to bring their perspectives into the public forum and not render their precious stories invisible. Each contribution to this book holds up the mirror to God's work of art. The invitation is thus gifted to each reader to find the mercy and the beauty of God in the faces, in the lives and in the stories of the people in these special, edgy neighbourhoods. Today hard-lined secularism, the cult of capital and the espousal of individualism combine to sideline the mystery of God into a private sphere away from the street. However, our ordinary stories, told here in accessible language, suggest that there is an intrinsic link between our profound intimate experience of God and the equally profoundly challenging practical claims of the Gospel. The Incarnation in Cherry Orchard and in the North Wall teaches us that immersion in the world of our soul, in the world of our families and of our community etc, far from taking us away from the mystery we call God, in fact draws us deeper into God's heart. Our joys and our sorrows are the pulse of mystery: the places where we meet God. Stand a bit clear of this gospel Semtex as it explodes.

Acknowledgements

This book is blessed with the generous creativity of eighty remarkable people. To each I am deeply indebted. I am delighted and really grateful also that Seán Healy SMA, director of Social Justice Ireland, has penned such a challenging and affirmative Foreword. Thank you all most sincerely.

This book is not a commercial venture. As with previous books the provocative and reflective illustrations that enliven the text and enrich each story are the beautiful compositions of Joe Connolly. Thanks also to Tara Kearns for her remarkable illustrations that adorn the front and back covers and to Katie and Lauren Mc Donagh for their wonderful drawings. The inclusion of the amazing photographs from the Digital Media Class at the NWCTC is a powerful embellishment to this volume. Likewise the evocative photographs of Paul Kelly tell a story in themselves and greatly help to situate this book in a very particular context. My sincere thank you to Gary and to Paul for their generosity and for their craft.

Gerald Loftus, Noel Gregory and Sean Beckett have generously donated their skilled and patient eyes as proof readers and for this I am very grateful. Martin O’Flaherty and Paul Hendrick have facilitated each book launch in a conversational manner which witnesses to the priority of the empowerment process.

This type of book requires competent professional support and I acknowledge with gratitude the skills and commitment of Christy Hammond and his team at CRM Design and Print for such a wonderful publication.

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Dedication

This book of stories is dedicated to my godchildren who enrich the world with their vitality and goodness: Jessie Byrne, Anna Fairhurst, Saoirse Keaveny, Ellie May Fogarty and Sorcha Greene. This book is also dedicated to Suzanne Hayes who died this past year and who in 1998 contributed a story to the first publication, Listen Up! I have accepted in good faith that each presented story carries the correct copyright ownership and if there has been any inadvertent discrediting, or if facts are found to be incorrect, then I apologise in advance and will carry the corrections in next year's book.

Urban Contextual Theologising – North Wall Stories To Date

“Listen Up!” 1998, A New North Wall Spirit, 1998, “Tell Me About It ...” 1999, Walking Along With Dockland Mystics, 1999, The Boundary Wall, 2000, A Gutted God, 2003, Unmasking God, 2004, Hope In The Shadows, 2005, Word On The Street, 2006, Small Stories Matter, 2007, Freshly Baked Bread, 2007, Writing On The Wall, 2008, Seepings From The Margins, 2009, Detecting A Break In, 2010, North Wall -Our University, 2011, Rummaging for Mystery in the North Wall, 2012. Old Yarn Theology, 2013, It Takes A Village, 2014, Spinning Straw into Gold, 2015, 100 Gritty Voices, 2016, Our Stories Moving Us From Shame To Dignity, 2017.



(Digital Media Class at the NWCTC)

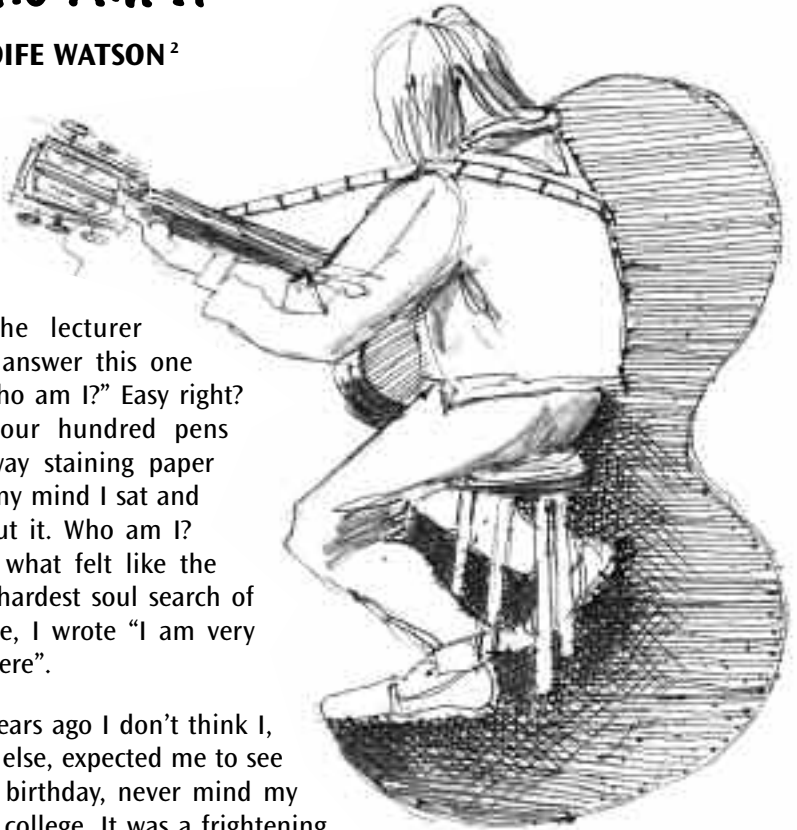
Who Am I?

AOIFE WATSON²

Sitting in my very first Sociology lecture in Maynooth University the lecturer asked us to answer this one question, “who am I?” Easy right? Wrong. As four hundred pens scratched away staining paper as blank as my mind I sat and thought about it. Who am I? Finally after what felt like the longest and hardest soul search of my entire life, I wrote “I am very lucky to be here”.

Almost ten years ago I don't think I, nor anybody else, expected me to see my eleventh birthday, never mind my first week in college. It was a frightening time when little ten-year-old me was diagnosed with a brain tumour and rushed off for immediate surgery.

“Your poor parents!” I hear this, every time I tell someone my story. Yes of course it was very hard on them but I don't think people understand that at the age of ten, I was very bright. I understood everything that was happening and I felt all of the pain. I watched my family worry, my parents cry and my friends avoid me as if my brain tumour was contagious.



2 Aoife – is a university student from Seville Place.

So here I was, spending most of my days in bed, being pushed around in wheelchairs and with very limited movement of my neck and I was lonely. I got absolutely buried in gifts from neighbours, friends, teachers and even people who didn't know me but knew of me. People were very generous. I got things I love like teddies and books and things I didn't, as a ten year old, love so much, like holy medals and prayer books. People were sorry for me and they felt useless, which was completely understandable. I felt pretty useless myself, but I would not for one moment feel sorry for myself.

Despite the whole tumour thing I was quite content, I loved reading. It was my favourite thing to do, so being bed ridden wasn't all bad, - that was of course until my parents noticed that I had a problem with my eyesight. Back to hospital again. "Visually Impaired", that's what they told me. No peripheral vision, no central vision, blind spots, near sighted, far sighted, colour blind, blurry vision and for a short time double vision. My life as I had previously known it, was over. I was coming back to myself after the tumour no problem, but there was no bouncing back to the damage done on the optic nerve.

I started back in school in the September. I was in fourth class now. At first I came in for an hour a day and I insisted on having all of the work that I had missed throughout the day sent home to me. A problem quickly appeared, I couldn't see the books (hence the visual impairment). This is where Aisling Egan comes into the mix. She was my SNA (special needs assistant). The 'A Team' we liked to call ourselves because we truly were a team.

This whole transition was difficult for me to say the least. I was a very independent child and it killed me to accept that I needed help, but as soon as I did, everything just fell into place.

I would not let anything stop me from doing everything that other girls my age were doing. I went to the playground, I got books with larger text (audio books for when I was tired), I got magnification software for my computer; nothing could stop me. Of course the barrier of my visual impairment was always present but that just made me more determined.

Before I knew it I was saying goodbye to everything I knew and left the comfort of primary school. It was terrifying, everything was going to change and I hated the idea of it. And so everything did change and I had to get used to a new

place and new people; the new people had to get used to me too. After a while it all just became second nature to me. I was on a roll, things were getting better and better ... then I got sick. This meant more time spent in hospital and of course less in school. It was after this we decided to reduce my timetable. I decided to drop art, a difficult but necessary decision. I had to keep reminding myself that it was impossible for me to “be like everyone else” because everyone else didn’t have a visual impairment and everyone else hasn’t had a dozen brain surgeries. I tell myself time and time again that the most important thing is my health.

I carried on through secondary school with really good results in my exams, a few more trips to the hospital with a result in constant headaches. I was in pain all the time. Yet I carried on with my studies, not only because they were important but because I loved learning. I didn’t get involved in many extra curricular activities. So I joined the basketball team. I played on a team of fully sighted girls against teams of other fully sighted girls. The games were fast moving and I couldn’t always see the ball ... or the other players at times. But this was the first time since before my first surgery that I had been part of a team. I do admit that it was probably not the safest thing for me to do but I do think that it was one of the most rewarding things I have ever done. Even though I have never scored any points in a match, I wasn’t the only one. At least I took part; that’s more than some people can say.

Despite my dislike of new and unfamiliar places I push myself all the time. I attended a residential camp for visually impaired teenagers called CampAbilities all about adaptive sport. I loved it so much I returned when I was eighteen to be a leader. I love showing people, especially young people how they shouldn’t let any sort of disability or barrier limit them in anyway. This is one of the many reasons why I decided to become a leader in the Girl Guides. Another reason is that I have had to make adaptations myself and I want to make clubs and activities more accessible for people with any disability.

I am not a sporty person. I enjoy music and reading and that is what I spent most of my time doing. I learned to play guitar and I loved it. I played at all my schools masses and even played on stage at the Helix in the Emmanuel Concert. I got a kindle to read my books on so I can make the text larger and not have to carry around six or seven volumes of the one book. What I have found is there will always be a way around any challenges that I face and if something

does prove too difficult, once you can say you gave it your best shot; well that's all that matters really.

I know for a fact that my sight has somewhat set me back and makes some things harder for me. But to me this setback is just encouragement to work harder. I was very lucky in school to be given assistance and the use of any resources I needed. I set goals for myself and where some seemed unrealistic I worked hard towards them. I completed the long struggle that is the leaving cert, achieved my seemingly unrealistic goal of an A1 in English and am in the college course that I wanted.

Maynooth University is a new and unfamiliar place. It was a mixture of my own hard work and support from my schools, family, friends and community that got me here. Yes, of course I wish I was fully sighted and pain free, but I'm just trying to make the best of what I've been given. I know I am lucky to be here and I am extremely grateful for that.

Stories From The Larriers

*Going To McDonalds*³

Once upon a time me and my little cousin Cam-li were in the park. I said, "Come to Nanny Anne's house." She said, "Yes Lennon." We walked through Sherriff Street and then we got to the house. We walked in. My uncle Thomas was there and me nanny. Thomas said, "Lennon?" I answered, "What?" He said, "Are you coming to Mc Donalds?" I said, "Yeah". One minute later we got in his car and went. I got six chicken nuggets, chips and a drink. Seven minutes later I was finished. I asked, "Are we going?" He said, "Yeah, come on." I walked to the car and we went home.

Lennon Grimes

Cupcakes

I was with you ma when you passed away,
I thought of you last night,
I'll think of you today.
You loved your peace and quiet and watching T.V.
Your favourite programmes you loved to see.
You'll always be with me, be on my mind.
You were always caring, loving and kind.
You loved brown bread, your oul' cup of tea.
We'll love you forever.
Corrie and me xxxxx

Lennon Grimes

3 **Lennon, Daniel, Cameron** and **Patrick** - are pupils in St Laurence O'Toole's CBS with Lennon in sixth, Daniel and Cameron in fifth, **Kaylem** and **Evan** in fourth and Patrick in third class.

Kidnappers

Me and my sister were in St. Stephen's Green Park. When I was playing I saw a woman in distress. So, I asked my sister, Chloe, could she ask her if she was ok. She wasn't, because her child was missing. We helped her look for her child. A man said "I saw a man and woman with a little boy about two years old. The woman began to run and so did we, to look for her son. We spotted him with a man and woman and they were walking out of the park. The woman got her son back and she was happy to see her boy.

Patrick Knowd

Mysterious Temple

One day I was in the Amazon forest when I stumbled across an ancient temple. So I ventured in to find some treasure. When I went in there was a big drop so I attached my rope to the top and started climbing down. I started to think how big is this hole? Then my rope snapped and I fell to the bottom! When I woke up my arm was sticky. Then I looked at my arm and it was stuck in a giant spider web. So I got my knife out and it cut the web off. Then the spider came around the corner and attacked it. It was three feet tall and six feet long. I stabbed it with my knife and it died. I continued on through the temple. I walked for a few minutes. Then I came to a maze. I kept coming to dead ends in the maze but then I realized I could climb on the walls of the maze to get out. So I got up on the maze walls and easily got out. I went into the next room and the walls collapsed behind me. Then lots of spiders came crawling in and I had to fight them off. Eventually, I found the secret passage way and managed to escape.

Daniel Kenna

Volcano!

I was playing out in Iceland with all of my friends. We were going on a hunting trip. We were looking for deer in the woods. Then we felt the volcano erupting. We were all terrified. My friends and I ran for our lives. A big rock crash landed on a deer's head. We just kept running. We got back into the town and called the police to come and help us. The police came ten minutes later but it felt

like two hours. There was nothing but car crashes and cars on fire. It was a disaster. We figured it would be much safer to keep running away from the volcano because the cars weren't moving. We saw the black smoke behind us. We were so scared. There were ambulances coming towards us. One of the ambulances nearly knocked me down. We were running for about four hours! We saw an abandoned boat and we sailed out of the country.

Cameron McCabe

The Haunted Graveyard

One night there were three boys in a graveyard. Their names were Kaylem, Dyson, Evan. They were all only ten years old. They were all bold for their parents. One night they all went to see the graves, Evan whimpered "I don't think we should be here", Dyson shouted, "Don't be a wimp and come on."

Suddenly, a hand popped out of nowhere. Dyson and Evan screamed, "Where is Kaylem gone?" Then, a clown came out of nowhere and Evan start sobbing, so did Dyson. Then Kaylem came and said, "What happened?" Evan whimpered, "We thought you had died". Kaylem said, "Don't be so ridiculous." Then Kaylem asked, "Can we go to my uncle's grave?". Dyson whimpered, "Where is it?" Kaylem said, "It is at the back of the graveyard". "Ok," they said, "Come on."

They all went and Kaylem shouted, "What is that coming out of that grave?" It was a clown. They all ran to the exit but it was locked. Kaylem said, "Drop what you have and have a bare knuckle fight." The clown did and Cian shouted, "Go wan Kaylem you mad thing!!!" Then they went home and told their parents what had happened to them and they got in big trouble over going to the graveyard.

The next day they went back to the haunted graveyard with their parents and Kaylem asked his ma, "Can we go to my uncles grave please?" Kaylem's ma said, "Yes you can." So they all went to Kaylem's uncle's grave and there was a lot of blood on the ground and Kaylem said, "What is that on the ground?" Dyson said, "It is blood." Then they went to get water for the ground.

There was a voice saying "LOOK WHO'S BACK AGAIN!!!" Kaylem shouted, "Ma quick help us, there's a clown attacking us." Then Kaylem's ma came and hit the clown on the head. They went home and had a family and friends' dinner.

That night they went back and the front gate was blocked off with Garda tape, so then Kaylem burst through the tape and ran through the graveyard to find the clown.

He found the clown and battered him and then Dyson ran after Kaylem and shouted, "Stop running you are going to get killed by a gang of clowns." Kaylem did not stop running. Then he saw a load of clowns and he ran at them. Dyson shouted "R.I.P Kaylem." Then Kaylem was getting closer and closer until they started running at him and Dyson and Evan started sobbing and Kaylem kept running and BOOM!!! the clowns were dead. Evan and Dyson were happy. Then they went back to their parents and went home.

Kaylem O'Reilly

HELP!!!!

One nice sunny day Marcus woke up to kids outside screaming. He checked out the window to see kids trick or treating. He quickly ran downstairs got dressed and scrambled outside. He got his friends and went 'trick or treating' for the day. His friends decided to go home early at 11:47pm. Marcus didn't want to go home, so he stayed out.

It was as cold as ice but Marcus didn't really care. His red shiny t-shirt felt soooo cold. He really wanted to go home now when he heard a deep low manly laugh. Simple Marcus was very curious so he wandered into the forest. It was as black as a shadow in there. He was wandering in there for half an hour.

An hour went past. Marcus heard a very high-pitched scream. It wasn't like the other one. Could there be two? All those thoughts rushed through his head. He sprinted when he heard "HELLO MARCUS" in a deep low manly voice. He was running and running when...TRIP. He tripped over a chainsaw!

It felt like he was running for hours but he was only running for seconds. He finally reached his neighbourhood. So he sprinted to his house. ALL THE DOORS WERE LOCKED!!! Then a tall shadowed man approached him with a chainsaw. HELP!!!!

Evan Conroy

Waves Dashing Against the Side of the Boat

GERALDINE GRIFFIN⁴

Coming Home

As I listen to the sounds of the waves dashing against the side of the boat I can't stop wondering why. Why am I looking at this pine box in front of me with beautiful markings on each side? But the sad thing about it is, you, my sweet wife, are sleeping on a bed of satin, never to open your eyes and see my face as I wipe the tears away and look up and see all your family waiting to take you to your resting place. So, my love, I kept my promise and brought you home. But I thought you would be standing beside me. It was not to be. I say good night my sweet. You're home now.

New Life

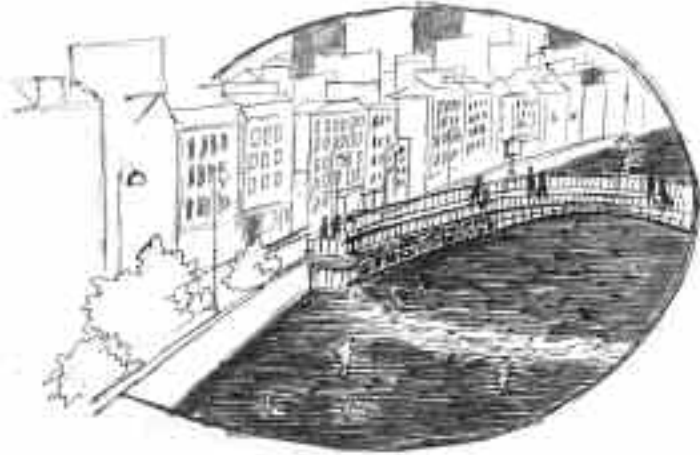
As the doctors said, "One more push" and out you popped.

And all the pain I was having, I just forgot it as I looked into your eyes and saw you for the first time. My heart was thrilled with joy.

I forgot all about running to the toilet day and night, the swollen feet, not being able to tie my own shoes, giving out about my clothes not fitting me, and the kicking all hours of night. It was all worth it.

What a joy a new life is, and how happy it makes me feel to hold such a precious gem in my hands.

⁴ **Geraldine** – is a grandmother and a student of Creative Writing at the Thursday night classes at the Life Centre in Cherry Orchard.



Bright Lights

As I walk across the Halfpenny Bridge I see the light dance across the water.
There are people walking along holding hands and laughing with each other.
Some people are sitting on the benches just chatting to each other.
I suppose talking about their day.
It's lovely to see all the lights brighten up the Liffeside boardwalk.
Everything is calm at night. We slow down and take it easy.
The pubs are full of people having a drink and a chat.
The clouds are heavy in the sky. It looks like it is going to rain.
Sure what's new in Ireland?

Thursday Meeting

“Hi ladies how are you all this fine Thursday night?”
“Don't talk to me Mary, I've got bills coming out my ears.”
“I don't have enough money for a pack of cigs.”
“I'm just the same Helen, I'm hiding from the rent man and he can sing for his money this week, John needs a pair of shoes.”
“And what about you Ann?”
“That little fecker is in trouble in school again.”
“Sure what's new!?”
“What about you Bern, how about you?”
“I'm up in court with being drunk and disorderly.”
“I think if I had not got you women to talk to, I would go mad.”
“The joys of motherhood!”

Rob and Sam

“Hi ye lads, what have you been up to?” “Nothing Rob.”

“What has you down here?”

“Oh my da is on the warpath again and my ma is on the drink.

There’s nothing to eat in the house, I’m starving and I can’t take any more.”

“I thought your da was in the nick?”

“Ye he got out yesterday and all he’s done is drink. I hate the smell of it.”

“It’s no better down here. Look at Pete, he’s on the drink since yesterday, the other two are here since last night.”

“I’m just here myself, I’m like you Rob, a mother and a father that don’t give a shite.

I don’t want this life for my kids Sam.”

“When is your bird due?”

“Christmas, I can’t wait, we’re off to England as soon as she has the baby.

My sister’s husband says we can go over to them

He has a job for me and all.”

“Ah that’s great mate, I’m going to miss you, don’t forget me.

We have been through a lot together and we always promised that we would stay in school and that when we left, we would get good jobs.

Well it has happened for you Rob, and I’m delighted for you.”

“Look Sam, I’ll ring my sister and ask can you come.”

“Ah Jesus, thanks Rob, you’re the best.

I don’t think I could stay here without you to keep me in my place.

You’re a true friend.”

The Tree

This will be the last time I come to say hello my friend as you are getting old, just like me your beautiful bark is all cracked and breaking away just like my bones. Your beautiful branches which once blossomed with lovely white flowers have fallen off. As I look down at your roots I see all the grass that once covered them has faded away, just like my thoughts, my



friend. So I say to you now, good bye and when we meet again it will be in a place where we won't get old and your branches will bloom forever. And I will stay young, my beautiful tree.

Invisible

"I'm here, can you see me?"
"I'm asking for your help.
Please don't pass me by.
My children are so hungry.
I'm not asking for much, just a few pennies to get milk and bread."

"I'm here, can you help?"
Oh the shame of it, having to stand on a corner begging for money to feed my kids.
"Oh God, keep them safe."
I had to leave them alone in a cold house with no heating or light. I'm so sorry. I said "I'll be back soon, don't be afraid, mammy loves you."

"I'm here, can you see what's in my hand?"
"Just a few pennies that's all I need."
But the people just kept walking by. Maybe I'm dreaming and I'll wake up in the morning and will have food on the table and the lights will be on and the house will be warm.

"There you go love, and I hope this will help" as the sound of money hits the bottom of my cup. "I'm here and I can see you."
This is not a dream.



Dad

"Dad can you hear me?"
"Are you here, go away son."
"Ah, so you know it's your son
Come home man, we need you in our lives, look at the state of this place and

look at the state of you.”

“Leave me in my thoughts son. I can’t go back to that house. It has too many memories.”

“If ma could see you now, feeling sorry for yourself, you want to drink yourself to death.”



“I can’t go on without her. She was my life and my world.”

“Ah da, what about your kids and your grandkids? They lost one grandparent and mother. We can’t lose you. We will help you. Please da, come home and we will laugh at the happy times we had with ma. Come on da. It is this place that is making you so sad and the drink is not helping you. You’re my da and I love you.”

“I love you son.”

“That’s it da, let’s go home, home to your family that loves you.”

Keys

As I walked along the corridor I could hear the sound of doors shutting and the jangle of keys banging off each other and a loud voice saying, “Move along there!” As the squeak of the big black gate closed behind me and the sound of the keys being scraped around in the lock, I looked around. I realised where I was. “Help!”

Boots

As I hear the sound of heavy boots coming up the stairs I turn to my sister, whispering, “Wake up, wake up. Its daddy, he is home from work.” We always knew it was daddy by the noise of his boots along the landing floor. He would open the door very slowly. I think he thought that we were asleep. He would walk to our bed to kiss us good night. “We are not asleep da.” we would say. “And why not?” “Your boots are very noisy da.” He would laugh. “They are heavier than me,” he would say. “I must take them off when I come home from work before I come up to say good night,” he said.

Au Revoir

As the ships pulled on to the French beach, there in the distance we could see a light waving back and forward. "Follow the light," the sergeant said, "Run to the light lads and keep your heads down." Bullets were flying everywhere. "Jesus", I said to myself, "We will be killed." "Run man, run!" Tom said. As we reached the light there stood a young man all dressed in black. He spoke in French and was waving his hand. As we got to the top of the hill a hand reached out and took mine. I looked into his eyes and I said to myself, "I'm going to marry you." I don't know what made me say that. Maybe it was because he just saved our lives.

We were on a secret mission and we had to meet up with the French Resistance. They were to help us. As we were to be there for a while I got closer and closer to the young man. When our mission was done it was time for us to head home. There was only a few of us that survived the mission. I found it so hard to say good bye. "We will meet again my friend when the war is over, we will," I said. With a sad heart we departed.

The war is over now and the years have gone by and I often think of that young man standing on the hilltop taking my hand. I often wonder will we ever meet again.

The Waves

As I stood on the mountain top with my friend I could see the sea. It was calm. As I walked a little forward the wind was picking up. I could hear the roar of the sea. The waves were getting louder. As I walked to the top of the mountain, a dash of water lashed at the rocks. I could not believe my eyes. I could see a small boat. The waves were so high. They were coming over the whole boat. "Oh my God," I said, "They are getting too close to the rocks." I roared, "You're getting too close to the rocks." "Steer away, steer!" My friend said, "They cannot hear you, you fool." I watched as the waves grew bigger and bigger. There was this little boat. It was so close you could see the people in it. Just then a mighty wave came and swallowed it up. "Oh my God," my friend said, "Call for help." We ran and told the Life Guard about the little boat. All the neighbours came down to the beach to see if they could help but the weather was too bad. Not even the Lifeboat could set out.

The next day there were bits of the boat washed up on the beach. My friend and I saw a piece of wood and on it was written Storm Breaker. That must have been the name of the little boat. It was so sad. No one was saved. Because the big waves were so strong and stormy, no one could be saved in that weather.

The Pope's Visit

It was 1979 when the pope came to Ireland. He came to the Phoenix Park. I remember that morning like it was yesterday. It was about five o' clock. I could hear noise downstairs. I got up to see who it was. It was my mother. She had her little trolley all packed with sambos and a flask of tea and one of those folding chairs. "Where are you off to ma?" I asked. "I'm going to see the pope in the park with the neighbours." "Jesus!" I said, "This time of the morning!" "Yes, have to get a good seat." "Are you coming?" my ma asked. "No, I'm going back to bed." "Right I'll be off then, I'll pray for you." "Ye, ye, ye" and back up the stairs I went. I looked out of the bedroom window. I could see all of the people: kids, mothers and fathers all walking down the road with smiles so big. I don't know. It's hard to explain but the next thing I'm running down the road after my mother. "Ma, wait, I'm coming with you!" She was delighted.

When we got to the park there were loads of people, millions. We were there for a while when someone shouted, "Look up, look up!" We could hear the roar of the plane. It was so loud. I swear I could see the pope waving at the people. The cheers of the people were deafening. I swear I felt so proud to be there with my mother. Later when the pope's mobile car was going along the road my ma said, "Oh God Geraldine I can't see anything." I got my ma by the hand. "Come on ma!" I pushed my way up to the barrier and just as we got there my ma said, "Oh bless you father!" I just looked. My mother had a big smile on her face. We left the park that day so happy. It's a memory I will never forget.



An Baile Bocht

RAGHNALL COOKE⁵

Baile beag gleoite, ainmniúil sa saol
I gcóngar scread asail,
Lár na cathrach mhaorga, Áth Cliath
Teoranta idir dhá dhroichid snoite,
Muintir shoilbhir shoicheallach,
Le ciall cheannaithe an tsaoil.
Theip ar leatrom nó daibhreas iad a gcloígh,
Lonnaithe ar thailte ársa bheannaithe,
Mainistir Naomh Mhuire na héigse is saíocht,
Dea-mhéineacht, is teanga oirirc na nGael.

Pobal a sheas an fód in am an ghátair,
Na Rinnigh is a gcáirde cróga dochloíte
A throid go calma sa G.P.O. 1916,

5 **Ragnall** – as Baile Bocht a chum an dá dhán seo. Tá an chéad dán in ómós dá áit conaithe agus is ábhar an dara dán ná an bheirt fhear a chuaigh go mór i bhfeidhm air, agus é ag fás aníos.

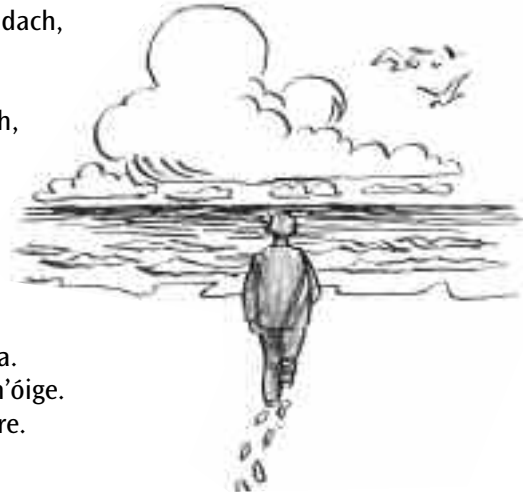
In aghaidh an tsrutha choscrach,
Gur phléasc an díon i mbladhmanna anuas.

Éacht an Gregory Deal i mbéal an phobail go deo.
Is ár Tony a líon an bhearna bhaoil.
A chosmhuintir faoi thréan ionsaí lena bheo.

Is aoibhinn spaisteoireacht a théim,
Ar bhruach na habhann, Tulchann i gCluain Life,
Áiméar chun mo smaointe athchúrsáil,
Leoithne fhionnuar aniar ar m'aghaidh,
Ceol meidhreac na gcuilithíní,
Ag damhsa thar bráid go suáilceach,
Siosarnach na nduilleoga sna crainn,
Comhcheol binn na n-éan, máguaird,
Aoibhneas i gcéin is i gcógar,
Fuinneamh, is seanléim sa seanfhondúir
I ngach céim, sa Bhaile Bocht go héag mo bhéim.

Comhairle Mo Leasa

An ceo draíochta ag scaipeadh go sceadach,
I mbéal na toinne ag faireach,
Glór na mara suáilceach,
A fuinneamh spíonta ar feadh scaithimh,
Taoide thrá is gaineamh tais,
Rian mo choiscéimeanna aireach,
Na héin mhara ag scréacháil gan
faoiseamh,
Ag iomaíocht a gcoda le cíocras
I m'aonar ag machnamh siar.
Le smaointe fánacha lácha.
Ar laethanta griamhar sona m'óige.
Ag déanamh mharana doiléire.



Ar bheirt fhear is mó a chaith,
Am, comhairle, is treoir orm.
Síor-aireach, corr crothán cáitheadh le seachaint.
Ní go haclaí, ach le críonnacht ársa.

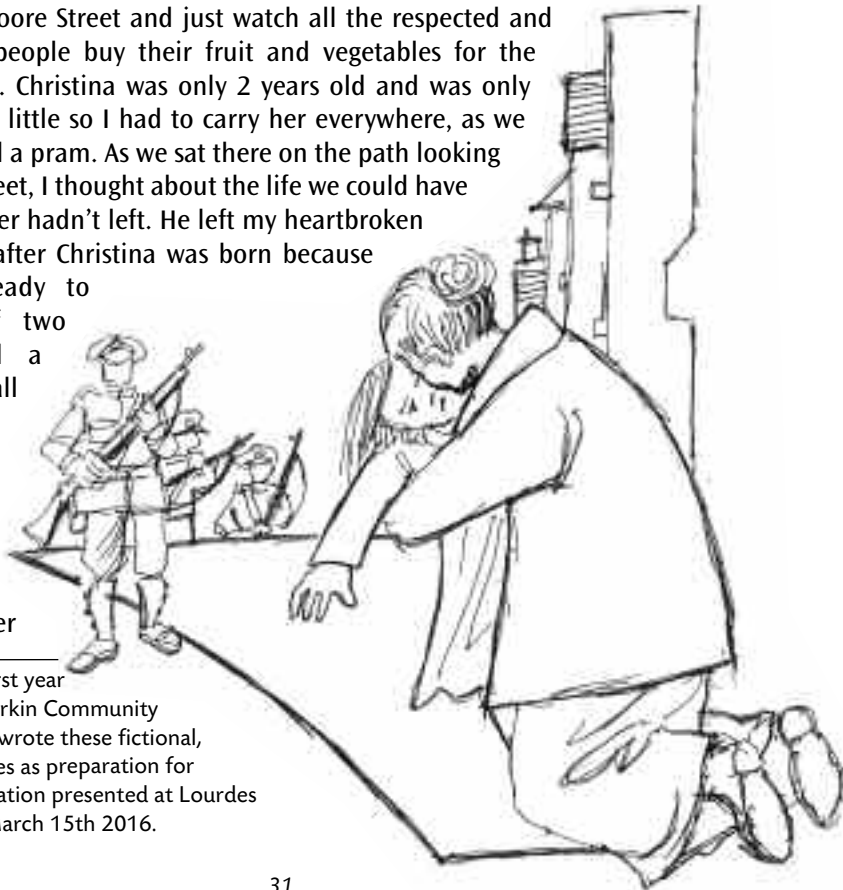
Ar aird go maorga i scáthchruth.
Scoil Mhuire Marino, iomráiteach,
Foinse ár dteanga ionúin.
Sa cheantar is dúiche máguaird,
Ghlacas chomhairle mo dhaid.
Go fonnmhar ach mé caidéiseach.
Cultúr na nGael, céad searc a chroí, is a mhianta,
Nach seoigh an todhchaí a bhí romham,
Seilbh docht daingean ar m'oidhreacht
Níor ligear m'áiméar ná mo mhaidí le sruth.

Macalla an ghaeilgeoir Chorcaíoch tréitheach,
Bráthair Ó Ceileachair i mbun dúil a anama,
San áit úd a rinne sé éacht.
Faoi gheasa, ábhar teagaisc faoi lán tseoil.
Teanga, stair, béaloideas, is seanchas fiannaíochta.
Ach is fada an dís ina thost
A shaothair beo beathach go fóill,
Iad i mion scuaine ar neamh.
Fáilte Uí Cheallaigh rompu araon.
Sluaithe Cine Na nGael á moladh.
Níor choigil an churadh mhír ceol dí na léann.
Satailít ag timpeallú na cruinne,
Rian saothar an dís go bhfeiceálach soiléir,
Is mise faoi chomaoin dóibh gach is uile.
Is orainn a bhronn siad an lóchrann,
Nach air a leag an bhéim threiseacht.

Christina Caffery: Her Final Days

ALEX KENNEDY⁶

Chapter 1 - Moore Street - Hello, my name is Annie, I am 16 now. My life has been a rollercoaster of emotions, and then unfortunately my youngest and only sibling died when I was only 12. Let me tell you about the disastrous days leading up to my sister's tragic death. It was April 23th 1916, and me, my sister and mother were sleeping on our mattress in our tenement. We woke up and as usual I went down to Moore Street with my little sister. Moore Street was like a home away from home for us, every day Christina and I would go down to Moore Street and just watch all the respected and well dressed people buy their fruit and vegetables for the week to come. Christina was only 2 years old and was only able to walk a little so I had to carry her everywhere, as we couldn't afford a pram. As we sat there on the path looking at the busy street, I thought about the life we could have had if my father hadn't left. He left my heartbroken mother soon after Christina was born because he wasn't ready to take care of two children and a wife. At 7 pm all the crowds started to leave Moore street and so did we. I walked, with my sister



⁶ Alex – is a first year student at Larkin Community College. She wrote these fictional, creative pieces as preparation for The Proclamation presented at Lourdes Church on March 15th 2016.

in my arms, all the way back to our Tenement. My mother prepared the dinner in the bowl that we used as a bathroom, shower and pot. Most days I would help my mother prepare the little food that we would have, but on this day she already had it ready. As we sat in the dirty floor we discussed how our day went and then as usual we want to sleep on the old worn out mattress.

Chapter 2 - The Rebellion - I woke up to the sounds of gunshots, I looked around me and saw that people from the other rooms had rushed into ours to see what was going on. Our room was the only one that had a window so I had to wake my mother and Christina and then battle my way through to the window. "What's happening Annie?" my mother called. I took a look out of the window and once again battled my way back to my mother who had Christina in her arms. "Soldiers," I said "The British soldiers are here fighting a group of men just down the road near O'Connell Street." I told my mother that I'd go to the news agent and look at the newspaper. I brought Christina with me so my mother could have a bit more rest. My mother worked as a maid and cook in five of the most well respected households in Ireland, yet despite working five jobs she got paid very little. I didn't get far down the street before people started shouted "It's the rebellion. Stay inside." I ran back down the street frantically with Christina in my arms. I stopped my neighbour and asked what was happening, he told me that the rebels were fighting for independence. I hurried as fast as I could back to our little room. By now everyone had left and my mother was left to worry by herself. I went in and told my mother everything that our neighbour had told me. "Darlings, no matter what happens in this war of independence, we stick together no matter what. Okay?" For the rest of the night we sat on the mattress in our cold tenement listening to the sounds of gunshots.

Chapter 3 - Her Last Day - Christina was crying. She was scared. She thought our mother had been killed because she wasn't in our room. I tried to comfort her but she was still crying. "Don't worry Christina," I told her "Mammy will be back soon." I was starting to feel worried because all we could hear was gunshots and screaming. I looked around me and saw a piece of paper at the other side of the room. Christina saw it as well and crawled over and got it. When she brought it back I instantly recognised the writing as my mother's. Annie and Christina, do not be alarmed I have just gone across the road to go to the shop. There is a bit of food in the pot. I shall be home shortly. If you start to feel scared Mary said she would be happy to have you until I come back.

Love, Mammy. I could tell that Christina had been crying even more. I began to cry myself, I hugged Christina and gave her a kiss. We were both starting to get scared, the gunshots were beginning to get louder as were the screams. We couldn't handle the thought of mother being out there, so we walked straight past Mary's door and across the street. The gunshots were further down the street, but they were getting closer. We ran across to the shop and got to the door just as our mother was leaving. Christina and I were so relieved. We gave my mother the biggest hug a person could give. "Let's go home and keep ourselves safe," mother said. We looked out of the shop doorway and saw that the soldiers and the rebels were very close to where the shop stood. "AAAAAGGGGGHHHHH" A woman screamed. I ran across the road and I thought my mother was right behind me with Christina in her arms. I was across the road and I heard a scream. It was a horrifying scream. I turned around and I saw my mother on the ground holding Christina in her arms. Her hand was bloody and so was my little sister's dress. It was an image that still haunts me. My little sister was dead. The bullet went through my mothers hand and straight through Christina's back. My mother cried desperately for help but no help came. And from that day on my family has never been the same. My sister now and forever will be a Child of the Rising.

The Easter Rising

The Easter Rising. The war of 16.
Ireland fought for her freedom. The war has came and been.

The children of 16. So fragile and weak.
Always with a smile. Though their world was so bleak.

The rebels had fought. And many have died.
They fought for the Republic. And died with their pride.

Sackville Street was destroyed. The Republic was overjoyed.
For Ireland is now free. And will forever live in glee.

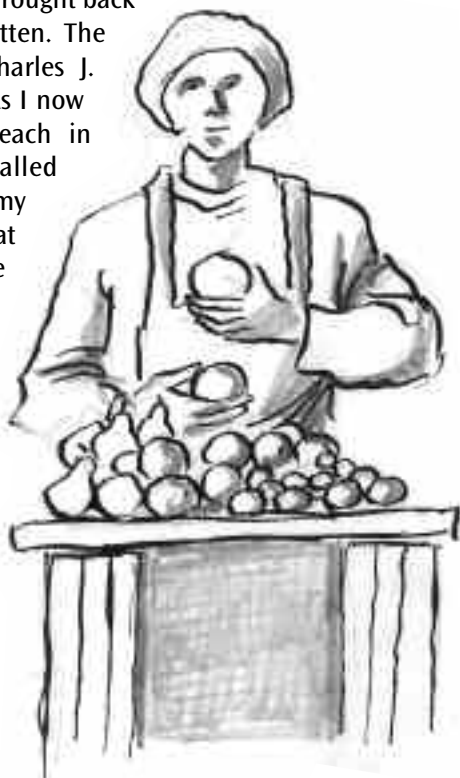
100 years on. The hatred is now gone.
The country is now at peace. And the love will never cease.

The Voice of an Inner City “Servant Leader”

NOEL GREGORY⁷

The bio-drama series “Charlie” on R.T.E., brought back to mind an incident I had almost forgotten. The “Charlie” in question was of course Charles J. Haughey – a proper good-time Charlie. As I now recall, shortly after C.J. became Taoiseach in March 1982, as a result of the so-called “Gregory Deal”, the telephone rang in my house one Saturday night. Tony was not at home so I lifted the phone and the male voice at the other end of the line said that there was a party going on out in Kinsealy and would Tony come out. He added that there would be “lots of goodies” on offer at the party. I explained that Tony was not at home and I would relay the message to him when he came in. I often wondered if it was P.J.Mara at the end of the phone. One way or the other it was one of Charlie’s flunkies.

Later when I told Tony of the invitation to Kinsealy he dismissed the idea out of hand, That was not his scene or style. This was not why he entered politics. The people of the inner city who elected him regarded him as “one of their



⁷ Noel – a retired secondary school teacher who lives in Ballybough, whose brother Tony represented the local community in the Dáil over many years.

own". He was to be a servant-leader in his community so he insisted in living more or less on a par and among those whom he served, this leads on to the question as to what motivated Tony to enter politics in the first place. What was the reason he became involved in politics? I will endeavour to answer this, by using his own words from a document I came across recently. This was a manuscript in his own writing of a talk he gave. The following is the voice from the grave of a servant-leader. Imagine Tony speaking, and listen.

“The way I will deal with this question is first to state the background which influenced me into an active political involvement and then secondly the immediate motivations and objectives I had when I first became involved. My background is that I was born and bred in the north inner city on the North Strand and later in Ballybough. My father, Anthony, had lived through the most important political and historical events in Dublin in the early twentieth century - the 1913 Lockout, the 1916 Rising, the Tan War and the Civil War and later the Blueshirts. My childhood was hugely influenced by my father’s accounts of these events and deeply interested me in Irish politics and history.

I grew up in the 1950s and 1960s in a very unequal Ireland – the north inner city had drastic housing problems, unemployment was endemic, virtually no local children went to university, except by the very severe sacrifices of parents, like my mother, Ellen. I did my Leaving Cert in 1966, the 50th anniversary of the Easter Rising. I strongly believed that the state had not lived up to the high ideals of the



lost leaders of the rising and that we were very far from treating all citizens or all children equally. That is the background that motivated me in becoming a political activist.

So having gone through secondary school in O'Connells on a Corporation scholarship and on to University in U.C.D., I became a founding member of the U.C.D. Republican Club. When I left U.C.D., I became involved in left-wing republican political activism which seemed to be organising on the issues that I believed to require serious change. I then became involved in my local community organisation in Ballybough and in the mid 1970s we joined forces with other communities in the city-centre, including East Wall and North Wall, on issues ranging from organising protests for better housing conditions and equality of opportunity in education where I knew at first hand that local children had no chance even to get through secondary school, never mind university education. Unemployment was massive and without educational qualifications children had no chance. We also got active on the needs for amenities, play grounds, summer projects and on major environmental issues like the Eastern By-Pass Motorway that threatened to cut the north city in half, and most particularly, the East Wall area.

These were issues that appeared to be ignored by politicians at the time and that is why we as community activists took them on. So in a sentence, I was motivated by the belief that radical changes were essential in the Irish State if we were to achieve a genuinely fair, just and more equal society. One example I would like to give would be the plight of the women street traders who sold fruit and flowers from old prams and breadboards. Some of them were the poorest of the poor, making an honest living in a traditional Dublin way. Yet they were hounded by big business and by police and the courts jailed them in dreadful conditions in Mountjoy Prison. This was at a time when drug dealers were openly selling heroin even in O'Connell Street and the police were doing little or nothing about them. I regarded this as a classic example of how unjust our society had become and I helped organise the women against this whole system. I ended up spending a number of weeks in Mountjoy Prison myself but we made a national issue of an inner city scandal.

Finally, can I say that any involvement I had from the mid-1970s up to the present was as one of a group of community activists who attempted to

focus national attention on social deprivation and inequality in Dublin's inner city. We supported the principles of equality of opportunity and community empowerment – attempting to give a voice to disadvantaged communities. That is in summary why I became involved in politics.”

A journalist once wrote that Tony Gregory was “The Taoiseach of Ballybough.” Tony never claimed that title for himself but he certainly gave sterling service to and provided leadership for his local community in Ballybough and in the wider north inner city. He was a real true example of a servant-leader.

As a case study I want to cite the history of Gary Gannon. Gary is a Summerhill boy, born and bred. He attended the Central Model School in Marlborough Street adjacent to the Department of Education. Then he went to Rosmini on Grace Park Road for his secondary schooling. Being from a disadvantaged background he did not apply himself very well to his studies and got an Applied Leaving Certificate, not the sort of qualification that would lead down the corridors of academe. He became an apprentice plumber. Because of his innate ability which did not blossom in Rosmini he did not find fulfilment in the plumbing game. So, what was he to do?

Tony Gregory as a politician in the Summerhill area had known Gary's family. He told Gary and his family of the Trinity Access Programme for disadvantaged young people. Tony encouraged Gary to engage with it, which he did. So, to cut a long story short, Gary entered Trinity College or Dublin University through the Access Programme, to study politics and history. He graduated and now, at the time of writing, he is an Independent Councillor on Dublin City Council, with further ambitions. Will he be the second coming of Tony Gregory? That remains to be seen. I think he will be another servant-leader in the north inner city in the mould of Tony Gregory. He is certainly greatly influenced by Tony's example.



World Youth Day 2016

AMY DOYLE, NIAMH MCKEE AND JANE MELLETT⁸

Introduction

After each World Youth Day pilgrimage I say to myself “Never Again!” and yet this was my fourth WYD event. I joined 5 amazing young people from Ballyfermot and Cherry Orchard along with almost 300 other young people from around Dublin and set off on the big adventure to Krakow, Poland. It was a very special week. We clocked up 130km of walking that week. We hardly slept. We struggled to get from A to B with the hundreds of thousands of young people around us. Yet every time WYD comes around I somehow forget about all the hardships of it and know that this is a very special week for us all. It reminds us that there can be joy and celebration in our church, that it is ok to say ‘Yes, I believe in God’, and that you can sing and dance and celebrate faith without feeling like you are crazy.

⁸ **Jane** – is the Parish Pastoral Worker for Cherry Orchard and Ballyfermot Assumption parishes.

The theme of the entire event was ‘Blessed be the Merciful’ – some joked that the organisers needed to be more merciful considering all the walking that was involved. Pope Francis reminded us that: ‘Mercy always has a youthful face! A merciful heart is motivated to move beyond its comfort zone. A merciful heart can go out and meet others; it is ready to embrace everyone. A merciful heart is able to be a place of refuge for those who are without a home or have lost their home; it is able to build a home and a family for those forced to emigrate; it knows the meaning of tenderness and compassion. A merciful heart can share its bread with the hungry and welcome refugees and migrants. To say the word “mercy” along with you is to speak of opportunity, future commitment, trust, openness, hospitality, compassion and dreams.”

Our weary pilgrims returned to Ballyfermot in one piece, but perhaps a little bit different. So as always I say, ‘never again’ (until next time of course!)

Jane Mellett

World Youth Day Krakow ~ Don't Be A Couch Potato!

The experience of World Youth Day is one that I will never forget. It was amazing! It was a week filled with emotions and fun. The atmosphere was one of my favourite things about the week. The atmosphere was brilliant. Everyone was so happy and overjoyed, making the event genuinely inviting and wholesome. The feeling of being surrounded by that many young people in one place all celebrating one thing, their faith, it's indescribable.

While taking part in this event, I realised several things but mostly that it's best to be happy and to be kind. I learned that it's not enough to believe you are a good person, but to actually love as a good person through being kind to all and by showing love and care instead of hate.

It's so hard to explain such an intense week, which is probably why I would recommend taking part in this to other young people. It is genuinely a week I will never forget along with the people that I met. I made new friends throughout the week and even got to know some friends better. These

friendships have stayed with me since the week ended and will hopefully continue to do so. All in all it was a fantastic week and an amazing experience that will stay with me wherever I go. I would definitely recommend that any young person who would like to strengthen their faith, or who would simply like to learn more about what it means to be a good Christian, attend World Youth Day. With so much hate and bitterness in this world, it's amazing to go to World Youth Day and witness such love and kindness even of complete strangers.

*Amy Doyle*⁹

Travelling In Poland

Travelling to Poland for World Youth Day was a fantastic experience that I am happy I was a part of. WYD is a truly magnificent event and the community that comes with it is very special. It is amazing to think that you are part of something so big that brings together so many young people from all around the world.

Along with all the fun times during WYD, there were also some challenges. After all it was a pilgrimage and wasn't supposed to be easy. The long walk to and from the last event in temperatures up to thirty degrees was a reminder of the pilgrimage aspects of the trip.

My favourite part of the trip was having the experience to walk around Krakow and see all that the beautiful city has to offer.

I am truly grateful that I got the opportunity to be a part World Youth Day. I couldn't have asked for a better community of people to travel to and from Poland with and have made great friends from all over the world.

There is also a very strong spiritual aspect of WYD. What makes WYD so unique is that it brings so many young Catholics from all around the world together. It is an amazing thing to be able to share your faith with nearly two million young people. Also there is the extraordinary experience of seeing Pope Francis in

⁹ **Amy** – is a Leaving Cert student at St Dominic's College and lives in Ballyfermot Assumption parish.

person and hearing him speak about God. It was a truly inspiring experience to hear Pope Francis talk at WYD.

*Niamh McKee*¹⁰

Some things the Pope said to young people

Pope Francis had a lot to say to the 1.5 million young people who gathered in front of him:

“Stop being a couch potato” - he urged young people (and not so young people) to get up off the couch and live. He urged us to dream big; to never be afraid of following our dreams. ‘We are gathered here to help one another, because we do not want to be robbed of the best of ourselves. We don’t want to be robbed of our energy, our joy and our dreams.’

He told us to, ‘stop being boring’, don’t retire from being a young person at twenty-three.

¹⁰ **Niamh** – is a Leaving Cert student in St Dominic’s College Ballyfermot and lives in Cherry Orchard parish.

Larrier Girls Deserve To Win*

How to Babysit

What I need: -

a baby - a bottle

a crib - food

clothes - diapers

toys - a pram

What I do

Hold the baby on my lap. Take off its diaper. Throw it in the bin.

Get the baby wipes and wipe the baby's bum.

When it's clean get a new nappy. Put it on the baby.

Give the baby its bottle. Put milk in and give it a treat, only a baby one. Then change the baby's clothes, and put on its coat.

Put the baby in the pram and get a blanket and pillow (small ones)

Bring the baby on a walk in the pram then go back to the house or apartment. Play with the baby. Put him/her in a bouncer and walk with the baby.

Next take the baby out and let him have a nap for four hours.

Let him play with soft toys. Put the pyjamas on and learn them to walk (depends on age or months). Potty train him. Feed him again and change the nappy again.

Finally put the baby in the crib and sing a lullaby softly and the baby will fall asleep. The baby will wake up during the night and cry, but feed him and he'll fall back asleep, then you can do what you want like watch TV or go on your phone.

Kayla Mooney 3rd class.

* All of the writers are students in St Laurence O'Toole Girls National School on Seville Place.

Candy Land

There were girls called Madison, Grace, Amber, Cassie, Kianna, Éabha, Ella, Kayla and Zara. They were all having a sleepover and they were eating candy. Then they all went to sleep and when they woke up they were in this weird place and the trees were made out of peppermint and the houses were made out of ginger bread. Zara said ‘sweets are everywhere.’ Madison said, ‘We are in candy land’. Cassie said, ‘I don’t know’. So they looked around the place and there was candy everywhere they went. Then Grace was hungry, so she started eating a ginger bread house. Éabha said, ‘Stop, don’t eat my ginger bread house’. Then Éabha started eating it and Madison said, ‘stop’. Madison kicked the ginger bread house and it fell down.

Madison Maloney 3rd class

Candy Land

Once upon a time there was this girl called Teegan. She had five friends called Shaneece, Grace, Bríann, Meisha and Kayla. One day they were all playing and Kayla said, ‘Everyone, close your eyes’. So all of them closed their eyes then they opened them and found themselves in a magical land. Teegan said, ‘We are in Candy land. The clouds were made out of candy floss. The trees were made out of chocolate.

Shaneece said, ‘Come on we will eat them. Meisha said, ‘No, they could poison us, you never know.’ Shaneece said, ‘Ok’. So all of them closed their eyes again and found themselves back home. Shaneece said, ‘I am glad that I am back. So all of Teegan’s friends went into Teegan’s house. They went up to her bedroom and started to play. They played blind man’s bluff. It was so funny because Grace fell and whacked her head off Teegan’s wardrobe. She only hurt her head a bit.

Then they stopped playing the game. They went downstairs and watched the XFactor. They all fell asleep in Teegan’s house on the chair. They woke up the next morning and went out to play in the park. It was Meisha’s birthday that day so they had a party in her house. They got cake. It was fun. After the party Teegan went back to her house and told her Ma everything that happened that night.

Teegan Kavanagh. 4th class

The Bow Team Save The Day

Once upon a time in a faraway land called Bowlandia, there lived five super heroes called Jayla Bowington, Bréann Bowington, Angel Bowington, Lace Bowington and Meisha Bowington. They were all sisters.

One day the most evil of the twins struck Dublin. The twins were called Amber and Grace Blackbow. The Bow team rushed to the scene and saved the town. They put Amber and Grace in jail. What will happen next....

To be continued.....

Jayla King. 4th Class

The Evil Chair

Once there was a girl called Kianna and her chair was evil, but she did not tell a single person. When everyone was out of school Kianna told her chair to swap with Grace's chair but like Kianna, Grace's chair was evil too, but only Kianna's chair knew. Kianna's chair told Kianna that Grace and her chair were evil. So Kianna asked Grace's chair to go over to her. Grace's chair went over to Kianna. Then Grace came in...don, don, don...

Grace was looking for her chair. That's when Grace saw Kianna's chair. 'Are you evil too?' 'Yup' said Kianna. 'Let's work together' said Grace. 'Yay' Kianna shouted. So Grace told her chair to never swap with Kianna's chair and Kianna's chair knew never to swap with Grace's chair, ever.

So Grace and her chair, and Kianna and her chair came up with an evil plan. Kianna told her chair to swap with Jayla's chair and Grace told her chair to swap with Ciara's chair. But Grace's chair shouted 'NO'.

Ciara is the most evil of the evil, so you shall never swap with Ciara's chair or she will kill you. I heard that Amber's chair swapped with Madison's chair but the moment Kianna's chair flipped Jayla on to the floor she knew that someone evil had to have done this. Jayla had to reveal her secret identity. Her name was Jayla-bow. Jayla came up with her name because she loves bows. That is how she came up with her name. So Jayla-bow stayed in school late to figure out who did it.

Amber Shelley. 3rd class

The Haunted Sleepover

Once upon a time there was a girl called Shaneece. She went to knock for her friends. They said they wanted to stay in Shaneece's house. So they asked Shaneece's Ma could they stay in Shaneece's. Her Ma said who is coming. Shaneece said that Jayla, Meisha, Angel, Amber, Teegan, Gracie, Briann and Kayla were coming.

Her Ma said 'ok, they can stay but no messing'. They said, 'OK'. They went up to Shaneece's room. They were painting their nails. They heard a knock and they went down to see who it was. There was a man dressed in all black. He said 'Who is home?' They said, 'No body'. Then the man said, 'That's good'. They closed the door and went back up to the room. They looked out the window, they saw the man again, and he knocked back.

With a few friends he came in. He went up to Shaneece's bedroom. They knocked at the door. Shaneece and her friends were scared. They all pretended to be asleep. The man came in and he got Jayla. He went out and we all ran after him to get Jayla but he ran too fast. He put Jayla at the back of the van and drove off. So we called the police. They said, 'Ok we will be back'. So an hour later they came back with Jayla.

So we all said 'Jayla, are you ok?' We asked the police, "Did you arrest him?" 'Yes, he's in prison'. We said, "Thanks so much". Shaneece said, "Come on and do make-up." So we went up to Shaneece's bedroom.

Shaneece Cleary. 4th class

True Love Poem

Roses are red
Violets are blue
Sugar is sweet
And I love you
From the time it began
To the time it ended
A spot in my heart
is always free

Angel O'Toole. 4th class

Christmas

On Christmas I got a phone. It was so wonderful. I got a chocolate fountain but it did not work. I was a bit disappointed. It was fun opening the presents. My phone was wrapped in a lovely royal blue paper. I wanted it to be the colour of my phone but it was a lovely green.

I got a new puppy but it was a toy. My nephew has it and he loves it. The puppy says, 'I love you' and dances and plays with me. He eats food and poops. I know, disgusting, right. I loved to see his reaction. He went mad and gave me a kiss. He said, 'Thank you' and I said, 'You are welcome'

One day he threw it across the room. I thought that it was broken but it wasn't. I hope you enjoyed my story.

Elizabeth Cash. 4th class

Halloween Night

Ghosts go by on Halloween night

Ohohoh scary night

Witches have darty cars

So they are on witches brooms

La la la Halloween come by so go trick or treating

Children have fun on a scary night

So go bye on Halloween night

Ha ha ha your are me but I am you

So you are a witch and I am a ghost

Éabha and Hanneen. 3rd class

How To Make Money

- Get your job, try doing one of your favourite things
- Do extra time, you get paid more
- Be nice to your boss, he/she will pay more
- Pretend you've got no money, it's an old trick
- Have a good attitude
- Keep this up and you'll be rich

What you need

- A job interview
- A few sniffs of perfume
- A nice attitude
- Not a strict boss, you'll never be hired
- A lunch

Cassie Ivers. 3rd class

The Day The 'Elf On The Shelf' Came To School

One day I was at home. I was getting ready for school. I ate my breakfast and brushed my teeth. Then I got to school. When I got to my class I looked in my school bag and my 'Elf on the Shelf' Rosie was there. My teacher put her on the desk. After a while it was small lunch then we went to the yard. We had lots of fun. Then we went back to the class.

Rosie had moved and wrote on my book. Then we were doing our reading groups and then our maths. After maths we went down to the yard and played lots of games. When we went back up Rosie had made a zip line. Ms. Lucas came and said that Santa Clause had called to say that he was sorry for all of Rosie's messing. Ms. Lucas checked the camera and she saw Rosie about to put the camera all blurry. Then it was half two and I went home.

Kianna Caffery. 3rd class

The Crazy Pencil

Once upon a time there was a pencil that was always used. The pencil was not happy about this so he went and scribbled on her work. He was doing it to everyone's work and the kids are like... 'Who did this?' They told the teacher and the teacher said, 'Whoever is doing this will be in BIG BIG trouble.'

Everyone said 'It's not me'. Then someone saw a pencil moving and said, 'Look at that'. Everyone screamed. AHHHH! 'Who is doing that?'

And that is how they found the mystery of the mysterious crazy pencil.

Grace Farrington. 3rd class

Sleepover Story

Setting: - in Sophie's house

Characters: - Sophie, Layla, Lola, Kayla, Ma, Da, Nana and Grandad

What happens:

Sophie and her friends went out. Her Ma, Da, Nana and Grandad were at home. Sophie asked her friends if they wanted to have a sleepover. They said yes.

They went to Penny's to get the same PJ's for the sleepover. They walked home and got a Supermacs. They said, 'Let's go home'. They went home.

When they walked in there was blood on the ground. Sophie and her friends were screaming. They ran around to the backyard. There was someone dead. Sophie said, 'That's my Da'. She started crying. They heard something. They were screaming, but it was Sophie's Da. He said, 'HA, HA'.

The End

Lacie McCarthy. 4th class

Larrier Girls Deserve To Win ¹¹

In our school we don't have the best supplies and equipment but what makes our school one of the best is the spirit and the dedication. We all support each other and if we won the money it would do a lot for our school and make all of our smiles even bigger. The money would go a really long way. It would be put towards reading books, yard equipment and some interactive whiteboards. We are an all rounded good school but we need help to get some more stuff, so please pick us. We would really appreciate it and it would mean the world to us. I feel that it would make our principal really happy. She is only back from having a baby boy. Please pick us. It would mean the world.

Ellie and Katie

Larriers

(Acrostic Poem of our school nickname)

Lovable Community
Amazing Friendships
Remarkable Education
Radiates Happiness
Incredible Teachers
Extraordinary Girls
Really Unique
Strong and Proud

My school really needs this money. We are falling behind on everything but the teachers and girls in it make it work, and that's why I am proud to be a Larrier girl! If we won the 10,000 euro we would spend it on iPads, computers, new library books, new furniture, art supplies and PE equipment. It would be an honour to win this for my school. I would be a true Larrier!

Thank you!

Fayth

¹¹ **Abbie, Fayth, Ellie, Katie, Sadhbh and Katelyn** are students in fifth and sixth classes at St Laurence O'Toole's Girls National School on Seville Place.

Dear Today FM,

I think my school is great because the teachers are always encouraging us to do our best in everything. Our school has a lot of spirit. Our principal Ms. Lucas is very approachable, bubbly and friendly. Mr. Ryan is our vice principal. He is very funny. He runs the choir and the Student Council which I'm on. The Student Council is made up of 5 girls from 5th and 5 girls from 6th class. The girls in our school are full of potential. They are nice and friendly. If we won the money I would start a football team and get new iPads. Thank you for reading my story. I really hope we get in.

Sincerely

Abbie

The reason I think we should win the competition is because we would like the money to use it on things that we could do with, in the school, like to buy stuff that's important to us like new things - more art supplies, some new toys for the younger classes and to help to do the school yard up with some benches that we could sit down on. We have a student council in our school and they are brilliant. They try and make things easier for the pupils and the teachers in the school because they do all sorts of fundraising to help the school. As I am on the Student Council myself I would love to try and help the school in every sort of way. The girls in 5th class go to France every year to meet with another school. This used to be funded by some local business like Dublin Docklands but now they don't have money no more. The Student Council has to work very hard to make some money to go towards their trip, so this prize money would really be a help to them. Our school would really appreciate this prize because the teachers and the SNA's really work very hard with the pupils in our school to give us the best education that we can get. We would really like to win this prize so we can give the school back something and it would make it a little bit easier for the pupils and the teachers.

Thank you!

Sadhbh

We are S.L.O.T Larrier Girls and we deserve to win,
either that or the money goes in the bin,
we need the money for more school stuff,
we need rulers to rule,
markers to mark,
and rubbers to rub off the mistakes,
and the next mistake is if we don't win.
Because in my head I think,
that my school is the best one going in Ireland so far,
Because of the nice people and because of the things that you learn.
I love my school,
it is cool,
and fun to learn and play all day.
My friends are nice and my teachers too,
And that's why, I'm telling you!
To pick my school!

Katelyn

I think my school is full of polite and clever girls that are full of potential. I would like to spend some of this money on a football team and for more teachers to come in and teach sports. At the moment we play basketball, go running and take part in boxing, so it would be nice to add more sports activities to our timetable. Our principal Ms Lucas is very funny, friendly and is very proud of our school and its achievements. Our vice principal Mr Ryan is very friendly and caring. He always has our best interests at heart. We can go to him about anything and talk to him about anything.

Our school has achieved a lot of great things over the past few years. Our 5th and 6th classes last year took part in a programme alongside PWC in which we raised 5,000 euro which was donated to Inner City Helping Homelessness. It was a great achievement for our school and helped to promote the ongoing issues with homelessness in our society today.

We have a fantastic community spirit that goes back years and years that we are very proud of, and what St Laurence O'Toole's GNS achieves annually is only a small part of it.

The money that we could win could do huge things for our school and therefore benefit all those living in our community!

Abbie B

Searching For Mystery ¹²

Heart of Stone

Remove my heart of stone
O Lord, my heartfelt plea,
Restore my heart of flesh
As centre of my being.

When I meet you in the gutter,
May I kneel and feel at peace.
The other is my brother,
And therefore is my Lord.

Donal Blake

Reality Check

I spent so long staring at that space,
wondering why it was so silent.
They told me You were there.
It never made much sense.

They told me I should bow to them
and to You, but I knew You were bigger.
Slowly I stepped out of my comfort zone
and heard you in the Wind.

Then I heard You in the birds and
felt You in the earth under my feet.
It was in the Orchard I heard you crying
in despair, in the shouts and bangs.

I also heard Your dreams
in the silence of the vast expanse.

Then I saw the real You, in stories of turmoil,
hidden away so no one could see, or they chose not to see.



12 The contributors were participants in the '*Searching for Mystery in Marginal Communities*' retreats in Cherry Orchard.

Loneliness, abandonment, heartbreak -
the cross is sometimes too clear to see
And yet, I refuse to stop dreaming about the Hopelandic.

I can still hear the February singing:
“My Sweet Lord, I really want to see You!”

Jane Mellett

Walking with a Contemplative Eye

Bent bars in the park fence flaking paintwork
Crushed cans scattered now and again
Tidy homes speaking of dignity and pride
Casual rubbish on clean streets
Featureless expanses of green
Graffiti giving voice to the voiceless
Irritating the articulate peace and calm
Masking quiet desperation
Punctuating chaos.

Denis Gleeson

The Searcher and the Finder

I'm searching, I'm searching.
I seem to hear me say.
I'm looking in, I'm looking out.
Forever and a day.

I'm finding, I'm finding.
The Creator calls, I've found.
My Beloved ones are walking.
All ground is Holy Ground.

The searcher and the finder wed
They dance the hallowed ground.
And energy, real life, erupts
And carries all around.

Anne Keating

The Garden

The most beautiful plant
Guards the entrance to Paradise.
It calls and waves its most bright stems
Pink, red, purple and green
Alas, on looking closely
A stem is severed and limp.
We must act quickly
To stop the whole plant from dying.

This looks like our world
With parts detached and suffering.
The Gardener attends the plant
With care and love it is whole again
Our love for each other
Will heal the world again.

Shelagh Lockery

Contrasts

Contrasts - beauty and hurts
Violence and love
Support and rejection
When can the twain meet?
Who can bring them together?

Acknowledging failure
Experiencing depression
Is my/our effort a waste of time?
Only touching the surface?
Never going deeper?
Having no lasting bearing?

Then a tiny voice spoke -
“It is I who touch the heart, not you;
It is I who bring about lasting change
But I could not do it without your intervention
Your presence, your listening, your small
Seemingly hopeless and helpless efforts
Don’t give up, I beg of you -
Together is feidir linn!
All are worth it - nothing is lost.”

Seamus Gill

Pieta



She holds her boy
Tears of pain, sorrow and despair
The once lively son now limp and gone
Questions throw themselves at her
- why, did we miss something, what now?
Embracing her own flesh as she rocks him
Inner screams struggling to escape
Somehow he could not keep alive his flame
Now darkness overwhelms her too

This moment will last forever
She will never let him go
Yet she knows the spark in her
Needs to kindle fire in others
An eternal picture of disaster,
Of failure
Bears a fragile seed of something more
Faithful woman, holding firm.

Peter Dowling



Not Alone

I wallow in my misery
And fail to understand
Why was I the chosen one
To be dealt a lousy hand?

I know I'm not alone
The numbers could be legion
They're found in every town
In every different region

I feel I should rebel
And cause a mighty row
If the law should catch me
Then I'll have to bow

I cry to my companions
Can someone lift me up?
Instead I'm told to suffer
I've got to drink that cup

A helping hand appears to me
A friend is by my side
He listens as I name my woes
And never once does chide.

A ray of light begins to shine
It brightens up the room
It tells me there is hope out there
Get rid of doom and gloom

Reach out to those who are in pain
Who suffer that same fate
Give them the hope that stirs you
Get moving fore 'tis late

Together we can make a stand
And let our voices speak
Instead of down to lowest depths
We can scale the highest peak

So the lesson to be learned
Is clear for all to see
Don't try to go alone
You've got community

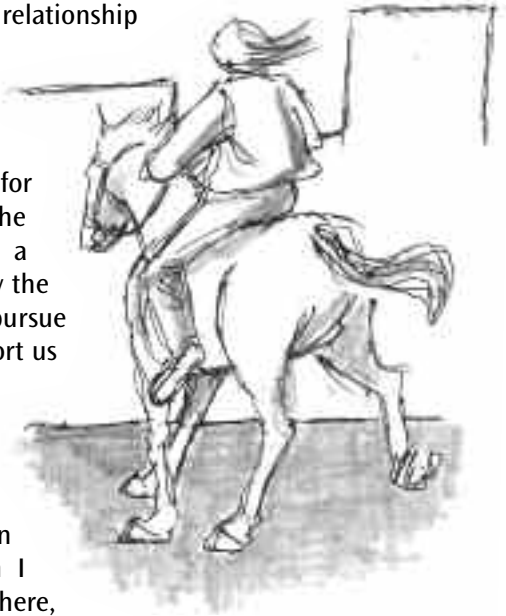
Christy O'Carroll

Chasing A Dream

ROISÍN KEARNEY ¹³

As a teenager growing up in the working class area which is Clondalkin, horses were always around. My peers and I would pool our money together to buy a horse which we would keep in one of the many idle green spaces which surrounded the estates. We would fill up our days looking after the horses. As we didn't have money for saddles, we learned to ride bare back, as necessity is the mother of invention. We always felt at ease around the horses. It was hard work but worthwhile. Sadly, we were always waiting on the day the pound would come and take the horses away, never to be seen again. It was a crushing feeling, knowing you have looked after something the best you could, putting all your time, money and energy into something, for it to be snatched from you. It was futile to believe you could get that money to get your pet back, so you go and buy another cheep pony and began to desensitise yourself from building a relationship with the animal, as you know it will hurt too much when its happens all over again. And each time it happens to you or your peer group, it builds more and more resentment for authority. More and more time for the devil's work due to idle hands. As a teenager I could never understand why the powers that be would not allow us to pursue our passion, why they would not support us to practise horsemanship and why we were made feel like criminals for doing what we loved.

We felt powerless and felt there was nothing we could do about it. Now as an adult I still feel the same, although I understood why horses can't be kept here,



¹³ Roisín – from Bawnogue and assists with classes in the Life Centre, Cherry Orchard.

there and everywhere and that the local authority have to remove horses from unauthorised lands. This is merely fire-fighting and is not having an impact on the urban equine population. When the animals get taken away, they are always replaced within hours. The difference is now, as an adult, I try to do something. I try to create a space in our town for responsible horsemanship. This is a place where people can learn through their passion and become educators and advocates for animal welfare. This is a place where people can develop personal, social, educational, vocational, and innovative skills in a structured club atmosphere. It is from this pipe dream that the Clondalkin Equine Club was born.

The Club's objectives are to make it affordable for members of our community, in particular, young people to own and rear horses. We believe that by acknowledging urban horse culture and supporting people, young and old, to engage responsibly in that culture, that everyone will benefit. CEC was established by horse owners in Clondalkin in October 2012, following an extremely busy public meeting for horse owners. The high attendance at this meeting was a clear indication that the community of Clondalkin want to be a part of the solution to the urban equine issue. From this public meeting the group formed a committee, with a subcommittee of youth members. We developed a constitution and formulated a work plan with the assistance of South Dublin County Partnership. Our aims are to promote animal welfare in our community, to promote responsible horse ownership, to provide education, to develop a stepping-stone to a vocation in horsemanship, to work with South Dublin County Council and other agencies in order to achieve our purpose. We wish to create a better community for all and to identify and secure land that can be used by horse owners in Clondalkin and that will be managed by our group for the purpose of providing a horse club. Over the past two and a half years our volunteers have worked around the clock to reach our objectives for community development from the ground up. Early in the planning stages we were informed that SDCC would not give over public lands to run our project. We did not let this stop us and since then every time we have met a stumbling block we have shown resilience, determination and dedication. This did not come without frustration, but as the strong, skilled learning-organisation we have moulded ourselves into overcoming the obstacles and we have come back with even more determination. While lobbying for land and networking, we use a multi-agency approach and we build relationships with club members and with the wider community.

Hosting a number of organised events included a worming and delousing day with the support of Irish Horse Welfare Trust. We have connected young horse owners with community based educational activities and built working relationships with both Clondalkin Youth Service and Ronanstown Youth Service. Our joint efforts have raised almost 3000 euro, thanks to the generosity of our community. We have met with relevant TDs, councillors, council officials, community workers, animal welfare groups, community gardai, prison and probation services, the local Education and Training Board, Community Drug Services and have made numerous presentations to the relevant bodies. Johnny Murtagh, the champion jockey, is our current patron and has made a vital commitment to support the club.

Education is a big part of our club's plan and when we become operational we intend to get members trained-up in as much as possible. Informal, outside-the-box education may be the best kind for members when on occasion the mainstream school system has failed them. The club is not even operational and already our committee is trained-up in First Aid, Child Protection and Committee Administrative Skills. Three of the committee members have gone back to education through their involvement with the club. Imagine how many we can reach when operational.

When the club is operational, the first places will go to our targeted group of young people, whom we have been building relationships with. The target group are the youths who keep horses all year round and have a passion for horsemanship, which has been passed down through their family. These are also the group who practise unsafe horsemanship, unregulated horsemanship, underground horsemanship, as needs must and as there is no opportunity or access to pursue the passion. Marginalization can bring innovation, but also a lot of issues. Just to add, a lot of these young people are coming to the attention of the gardaí and are at a very risky point in their lives. Participation in a positive, rewarding, focused hobby could be a life-line at this point.

Clondalkin Equine Club is proof that hard work and perseverance does pay off, as the club has recently been approved to be developed by the Department of Agriculture and South Dublin County Council. Really, the hard work is only beginning, but it will be so worth it. It is delightful to conclude this story knowing that the Club is being built and is due to open to the community before Christmas 2016.



“The Revolution will not be Televised” ¹⁴

You will not be able to stay home, brother,
You will not be able to plug in, turn on and cop out.
You will not be able to lose yourself on skag and skip out for beer during
commercials, because the revolution will not be televised.

The revolution will not be televised.
The revolution will not be brought to you by Google
in 4 parts without commercial interruptions.
The revolution will not show you pictures of Enda Kenny blowing a bugle
and leading a charge by Joan Burton
Gerry Adams and Michael Martin to eat ham and cheese sandwiches
confiscated from the homeless.

The revolution will not be televised.
The revolution will not be brought to you by the Abbey Theatre

¹⁴ The original lyrics of the popular song were composed by Gil Scott-Heron and were adapted by the members of the NWICTDP, mentored by their drama tutor, Jedd Murray and presented at the Oct 17 Commemoration at the Poverty and Human Rights Memorial Stone, 2015.

and will not star Twink, Gay Byrne or Zig and Zag and Ian Dempsey.
The revolution will not give your mouth sex appeal
The revolution will not get rid of spots
The revolution will not make you look five pounds thinner,
the revolution will not be televised, brother.

There will be no pictures of you and Jack Charlton
pushing that shopping cart down the block on the dead run,
or trying to slide that colour television into a stolen ambulance.
RTE will not be able to predict the winner at 8.32
on reports from Polling Stations in the 26 counties.
The revolution will not be televised.

X Factor, Fair City and Britain's Got Talent
will no longer be so god damned relevant,
and women will not care if Dick screwed Jane on Big Brother
because poor people will be in the street looking for a brighter day.

The revolution will not be televised.
There will be no highlights on the eleven o'clock news and no pictures of
homeless men and women activists and Mary Robinson blowing her nose.
The theme song will not be written by Bono, Hozier, nor sung by Boyzone,
One Direction, Jedward or Daniel O'Donnell

The revolution will not be televised.
The revolution will not be right back after a message
about rich food, luxury apartments or rich people
You will not have to worry about a dove in your bedroom,
a tiger in your tank, or the giant in your toilet bowl.

The revolution will not go better with Coke or 7UP.
The revolution will not fight the germs that may cause bad breath.
The revolution will put you in the driver's seat.

The revolution will not be televised, will not be televised,
will not be televised, will not be televised.
The revolution will be no re-run brothers and sisters
The revolution will be live.

Shared Reflections on our Pilgrimage to Rome

RONNIE McCABE¹⁵

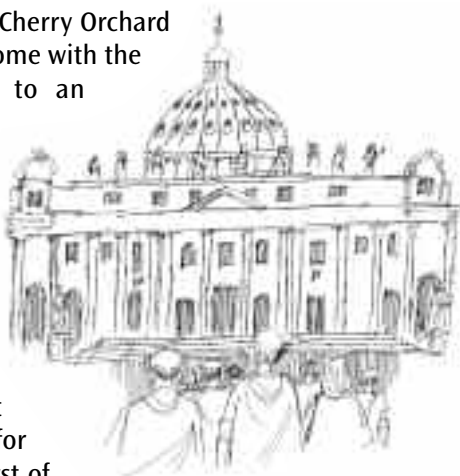
It was a great surprise when five of us from Cherry Orchard parish were invited to go on pilgrimage to Rome with the Dublin Parish of the Travelling People to an International Gathering of Travellers, Gypsies and Roma Peoples, Oct 24-27, 2015.

A 3am start from Cherry Orchard saw us meet the 50 other Dublin pilgrims for an early morning flight. We foolishly imagined there would be time for rest and recovery when we reached our destination. Instead, a quick lunch was followed by a visit to the Irish college and on to the Colosseum for a candlelit Way of the Cross. This was the first of three events for the total group of 7,000 people.

From then on the days were full – we didn't even have time for shopping.

The main whole-group event the next day was Mass in the Sanctuary of Divine Love, Rome. It was very chaotic; the Mass seemed to be happening in one corner of a very big building and did not engage the congregation to any degree. Some of our group had been elected to sing "The Servant Song" after Communion. We did so, but another group in a different part of the church was singing at the same time. Not a great experience of liturgy. After that we had a packed lunch on the grass outside and that gave us a chance to enjoy the beautiful day. Pizza that night Italian-style, followed by a concert of gypsy music in the Basilica of Santa Maria in Trastevere.

Next day came the highlight, the special audience with Pope Francis. We were



¹⁵ **Ronnie** – a Dominican Sister and a parish sister in Cherry Orchard, who accompanied the Parish of the Travelling People on their pilgrimage to Rome in 2015.

seated in the Paul VI hall two hours before the scheduled time and shared in the general buzz of excitement. The audience surpassed our expectations, the simplicity, warmth and attentiveness of Pope Francis shining through and touching everybody.

After the papal audience we remained in the hall for packed lunches; chairs which had been in rows were moved into circles. Lunches were shared. “This is like a Eucharist”, one person said. And it was.

After that, we had a short time to explore St Peter’s Basilica (and to do some sneaky shopping!) before re-grouping for our final, beautifully served, evening meal.

For all of us, these were three extraordinary days. At the beginning people were a bit shy of each other, perhaps even a bit wary. But as we listened to each other’s stories it was no longer ‘us’ and ‘them’. “It was like when women get together”, one of our group said, as we learned about each other’s lives. (Apologies to the men in the group!) We gained new insight into the Traveller culture – to aspects such as early marriage, family, the importance of religion, the dominance of men in the culture and the effects of discrimination. We met people who were bright, intelligent and with much to contribute but so often not having the opportunity to use their gifts in the wider community. This saddened us greatly. We also realised that Travellers have a very different concept of time than ‘settled’ people. When we re-grouped at scheduled meeting points we waited... and waited. That was certainly a learning.

From start to finish the pilgrimage was a grounded religious experience for each of us.¹⁶ There were some very special moments:

- * *A Traveller woman giving a spontaneous rendition of ‘Amazing Grace’ outdoors in the square.*
- * *One of the group singing ‘Dancing in the Sky’ – in memory of a loved one – as we travelled on our coach*
- * *Our group singing ‘The Servant Song’ - ‘We are pilgrims on the journey, we are travellers on the road’ took on new meaning*
- * *and, for one surprised Cherry Orchard person, the realisation that Sr May, DCC, who was with us, was the same ‘Sr Oliver’ who had taught her daughters in St Louise’s College in Ballyfermot.*

16 The Cherry Orchard Parish Group consisted of Ann Byrne, Margaret Doran, Ann McLoughlin, Patty Murtagh and Ronnie McCabe,



Climbing Four Peaks

SEAN CARROLL¹⁷

We set off from the Life Centre at 2 pm on Monday the 11th of May 2015. We went to Avon Rí, a family resort in Blessington. The group consisted of Derek Aherne, Aaron, Niamh and Martin. We dropped our bags into the house and went and met our hiking guide, Kasper. We then drove to the mountains and began walking. The walking was quite difficult as we had to scramble through bushes and bracken that was really over grown. The first mountain wasn't too steep and we reached the top okay. It was called Sorrel Hill. At the summit of the mountain there was a stone-age grave: a cairn of stones. We took a few photos and then headed back down the other side and faced into the second mountain.

¹⁷ Sean – a student in the Cherry Orchard Life Centre.

Climbing the second mountain was tough. This mountain was called Lugnagun. The ground was really muddy and sludgy. As we got higher it became more windy. The cold cut through us and it was freezing. We sat down and had something to eat but we moved on quickly. Eventually we got down again but we had to face on to the third mountain called Black Hill. This mountain was even more overgrown than the first and at this point we were very tired. So it was really hard. It got steeper the closer to the top we reached. The paths were mucky and it wasn't easy to climb. We were exhausted when we finally reached the top. We took some photos and headed back towards the bus. I was really happy to see the van. We covered over twenty km on that first day.

Back in the house I cooked a nourishing dinner for everyone with some help from Niamh and Aaron. Then we had a table quiz and we headed to bed early as we knew we had to be up early in the morning for another hike.

It is hard to believe but we were all ready for breakfast at seven the next day and were in the bus heading for the next mountain. It was difficult to find the motivation to climb again. My body was very tired and my muscles were aching from the day before. However, with the encouragement of the group I found the energy to climb again. It took Martin some time to find the correct sheep track, so we were scrambling in the heather for a while. Within a few hours it was all over and we reached the top of Seefin. At the summit of the mountain we climbed into a passage grave and had some lunch.

I felt absolutely wrecked but proud of my accomplishment. For the final time we returned to the van. I was happy to head towards home and to bed but not until we stopped for some grub at McDonalds in Tallaght.

My Gaisce medal was hard earned. For my challenges, I targeted two additional subjects in the junior cert: History and Business Studies. For my community involvement I assisted Derek Aherne, the local Sports Development officer, to organise some sporting events. For my own physical challenge I focussed on increasing my fitness for boxing. My Bronze Gaisce medal was awarded to me by Stephen Peers at the June graduation ceremony at the Life Centre.

SHELLEY

An Experience of Forgiveness

SEAMUS GILL¹⁸



It was beginning to get her down. It seemed to be a recurring pattern in her life. Was it becoming her theme song – giving offence, sometimes without meaning to, in smaller and bigger ways and mostly, through off-the-cuff remarks? Often these barbs were unintended smart remarks that seemed to come from nowhere. Other times they seemed to come from a deeper place of dark anger and aimed at self-defence in the face of perceived slights. Oh! Shelley could always justify herself afterwards when guilt began to flow in. But it was never convincing. It always left her feeling bad about herself, ashamed, betrayed.

Time did not seem to be a healer either. Promises made to herself to eradicate this from her lexicon of unwelcome habits never seemed to survive the test when the unexpected occasion popped its head to present an opportunity. Promises to break the cycle by offering an apology failed to materialise, squeezed out by cold feet or the self-deception that it was nothing anyway and might cause more harm in the naming than in the forgetting. Memories of responses to her hard won apologies like, 'I don't know what you're on about' or 'I never took any notice of it anyway', was a scenario that brought more heart-searching like, 'Did she really mean that or was it just her way of making me feel bad or stupid, a way of denying me the satisfaction of knowing I was forgiven?'

Then the penny dropped! It was all her own stuff!!

Shelley needed to take it in hand seriously – to see where it was coming from – a hidden anger, a poor self-image, and many more, none complimentary to her ego, but needing to be faced up to honestly and with determination to take whatever steps were needed to rid herself of this tormentor.

18 **Seamus** – a Christian Brother who lives in Cabra and enjoys doing creative writing exercises.

And then it happened!

A once in a lifetime heart-to-heart with her best friend, Denise.

They were together with a few friends over a cup of coffee in the Beehive after finishing work on Friday. All were relaxed and in a happy mood looking forward to a quiet weekend. Good humour turned to banter and gentle slugging when a casual comment from Denise presented Shelly with an opportunity for a smart rejoinder that she couldn't resist. It was out the gap before she could restrain herself. But too late.

She saw that Denise was taken aback and the fleeting glances exchanged by their pals couldn't be disguised. This was the most hurtful part of all – Lynn and Sophie would get great mileage out of it. She knew that she had hurt her friend deeply, especially as the unintended double meanings and implications began to rise up to confront her, this was a bridge too far, a betrayal not only of her friend but also of herself and could not be left to rest.

After teatime that evening when things had settled down, Shelley made her way around to Denise's house. Yes, it was as expected. Clearly Denise had been deeply hurt, but was prepared to listen. And so they talked it through long into the evening. It was a frank and open admission on Shelley's part - no excuses made, but a serious apology for her gratuitous comment, which, while not intended, could be seen as offensive and hurtful. She admitted that it was a habit that she was aware of and had struggled to control it. Denise acknowledged that she had noticed it towards others in the past and felt that it did not do her friend any favours.

What followed was humble acknowledgement by Shelley of her failure and of the hurt caused, a gracious acceptance on Denise's part of the apology offered and a generous admission that what happened was in the excitement of the moment and not intended to give offence. She valued their friendship and would be happy to support her friend in any way she could.

Their relationship was sealed with warm hugs of friendship and as she walked home Shelley was overjoyed that not only was their lifelong friendship salvaged but had been strengthened and enhanced by their open and honest exchange.

A glow of warmth and satisfaction rose up in her, knowing that she had grasped the nettle and that the caring response and understanding of her friend did far more than a harsh rebuke and rejection to strengthen her resolve to change her ways into the future. Only time would tell.

From Sheriff Street to MTV Lebanon

KIM FLOOD¹⁹

I'm Kim a twenty-one year old living in Sheriff Street. I like sport and fitness and am a member of the RAW gym. Going out, I always listen to music, mostly house music. My ambition has always been towards the fitness modelling industry and my goal is to be fit and in good shape.

I started dance with Tracy Dunne when I was four and attended dance competitions all around Ireland and in Blackpool. As a kid I did some ballet in Coolock and some street dance in The Hollywood Academy. At sixteen I stopped with the dance but kept my interest in fitness and health.

These past few years fitness for me is not just about my outside appearance but also involves staying healthy within. Eating healthily is a priority in looking good for photo shoots.

Presently I work in retail at Dresses for Heaven and on some weekends I model clothes for Doll's House in Leixlip. I am a student of Beauty Therapy at the North Wall FAS Community Training Workshop.

I can remember while in St Laurence O'Toole School being interested in art and was always competitive and creative. Art was my favourite subject



¹⁹ Kim – a student in the Beauty Specialist Class in the North Wall FÁS CTP.

but I was also sporty and played on both the school's football and Gaelic teams. Going on to secondary school at Marino College, I recall as a junior there admiring the way the senior girls had a sense of themselves and of what was fashionable. Art was different in secondary school as we had to study theory and art history but most times when we had to do practical art projects I loved doing collages of celebrities or fashion designs or decorating. Unlike many in secondary school I retained my interest in sport and represented the school on football, swimming, basketball and badminton teams. Also I loved home economics and there I learnt not alone cooking skills but the confidence to cook for myself and to eat healthily. Like many teenagers my interest in fashion deepened by reading magazines or by watching TV programmes like, Keeping Up With The Kardashians. I knew what was trendy and glamorous.

When I was seventeen a girl on Facebook invited me to do some photo shoot sessions for hair modelling. Through this I became friends with the girls in the House of Colour and we are in contact together to this day. Then last April, another friend from Poland got in touch and asked if I'd like to represent Ireland at an upcoming competition in Lebanon. I didn't think twice and my parents left the decision up to me. Before I left for Lebanon we were hosted to dinner in the house of the Lebanese ambassador.

It was scary being away in a country on the brink of war. It was tense there with many military check points. You could see the results of previous wars and it seemed to be a country with many poor people and some very rich people. I loved the gorgeous sunny weather. I learnt a lot about different cultures, languages and foods in Lebanon but found the Lebanese meals strange.

The competition in a five star hotel was amazing and we were given clothes. We also got to design our clothes for the competition. There were many photo shoots and I was pleased to be placed tenth in competition with forty-five other girls. The fashion show went out live that night on MTV Lebanon.

Just before last Christmas the Dolls House was invited to send two models to Lilly's Bordello to model clothes for a major suicide awareness evening. I was delighted to be selected and the experience was great. There were goodie bags, lovely food and the opportunity to meet and greet with celebrities and other models while comedians entertained all those gathered.

However the serious part of the night was listening to the stories of suicide survivors and of their families. What I learnt was that suicide touches everybody, from posh elderly ladies to younger people. All can be depressed. Now I take it more seriously if friends or family are feeling down.

In a few weeks time I'm off to visit family in Australia. Already a fitness instructor there has been in touch with me and I will make contact with her when I get there. The fitness modelling industry in Australia is huge. If I like what I see and if I can break into the fitness industry there then I may return to Australia at some future date to establish a career. That's my dream anyway.



The Raid

DAVID LAMBERT²⁰

Police raid the block on a regular basis
Constantly invading our personal spaces
Making fools of us, seeing the looks on our mamas' faces
Ain't able to face this life with disgrace to the races

Because we ain't living life like this
To putting rhymes together like this

Living life this good
Trying to make it out of the hood
Watching people getting caught up in the game
Hearing police banging on the door screaming your name

Police ain't nothing but a pain
So much hassle from them buzzing my brain
We live the words, 'no pain, no gain'.

All about making a name for yourself
Put the record upon the shelf
Why we living like this?

Putting rhymes together like this
Cause we ain't living life like this.

²⁰ David – a trainee at Youthreach, North Great Georges Street.

SWAN in Boston

ASHLING GOLDEN, TAYLOR MOLLOY AND DYLAN DARCY²¹

In September 2014 our youth workers Ashling and Paul from SWAN talked to us about doing a programme that could at the end lead to a trip to Boston U.S.A. We have gone away with SWAN loads of times before but usually camping or to Wexford or Cavan, never to America. So, we were certainly interested. Ashling and Paul explained that the programme was about supporting us to stay on the right track. We would have to plan some goals for ourselves and work on achieving them. We would have to look at crime in different parts of the world and try to learn more about our situation and we would have to do this with some of the community gardaí from Store Street Station. We hadn't ever worked with the gardaí like this before and it was strange at first but we wanted to go to Boston so we thought let's see how it goes.

For all of us the nine month programme and the eight days in sunny Boston in June brought up so many different experiences and feelings and I think it is fair to say we would all do it all again but each of us had our own highlights, so here's a few of them.

Ashling and Paul: For the youth workers this was new and big and exciting but also a lot of hard work. We brought together a group of young people who might not naturally hang out in their personal lives and got them working and committed to making changes for the positive. An important memory for us was the weekend away in Wexford before the trip to Boston. The boys had a cake baking competition which included two gardaí. The great British bake-off looked amateur compared to this. The determination to have the tastiest cake was like nothing we had seen before. During the trip we laughed, played jokes on each other and even went night time exploring. The youth workers knew after that weekend that these boys were serious and were more than ready to support each other on the trip to Boston in a few weeks' time. A few days later, tragedy hit. One of the boys was tragically killed in an accident. The grief was so obvious in everyone. There were questions as to what we should do, should

21 **Ashling, Taylor and Dylan** – are all associated with SWAN Youth Services in the North Wall.

we still go to Boston. There was a happiness that we had shared that weekend together before he died and there was support from everyone, for everyone to deal with this loss. The group managed this so well and invited a close cousin of the young person to come to Boston to honour and represent him on the trip. The youth workers were so proud of how the entire group managed this; kept his memory alive in Boston and followed through with the promises they had made to themselves. They did everybody proud.

Taylor: When we got to Boston everything was ready and organised for us, we didn't have to sort anything. Everybody made us feel so welcome and appreciated. Ashling had told us that during the trip there was a fundraiser organised for SWAN, I hadn't really thought too much about it until we got



there. We arrived at an Irish Hibernian Club in south Boston. The entire place was packed, well over one hundred people coming up to each of us and introducing themselves and welcoming us to Boston. People had baked cakes, cooked food, and there was so much Irish memorial on display. I was shocked that this was all for us, I kept asking Ashling if they were really all here just to support our trip. Irish dancers came out and performed and then they did a raffle to try raise some money. Me and the boys got called up to call out the winning numbers. We tried but no one could understand our accents. It seemed like every number had a 3 in it and people didn't know if they had won or not! Everybody laughed and it was all taken in great spirits. We were all just so blown away that these people whom we had never met before came here to support us. They wanted to hear our stories and wanted to support the building of the link between Irish people and Irish Americans living in Boston.

Dylan: There is a bucket list of things you must do if you visit Boston, and going to a Red Sox game is one of them. So this was organised for us but not in your typical fashion. We got a police escort in cars that were worth more than some houses right to Fenway Park. The stadium wasn't open yet but that didn't matter for us. The police just brought us straight through. We got to watch the pre-game practice out on the field and then took our positions for the game. I had seen this stadium on the T.V. before and now here we were drinking from our oversized cups getting the V.I.P. treatment. It was an experience that money can't buy.

We have loads of stories and great memories from the people we met; the young people in the youth projects in Boston, the youth workers trying to get gangs involved with young people into the projects, Boston Police Department trying to stop drugs devastating communities and the fun tourist attractions too. It was certainly not your typical holiday. The welcome and hospitality people gave us was unbelievable. People knew we had worked to get to come there and treated us with great appreciation for doing so. We all came home with new friendships and memories that will last a life time.

Fourteen Moments of Mystery in Cherry Orchard

MARY MOONEY, GWEN SHIELS, ANITA MAHER, DOLORES COX,
MARIE MAHER, DOLORES GRIFFITHS, JUNE HOWELL
AND SIOBHAN MOKRANI²²

Introduction

‘We were the people who were not in the papers. We lived in the blank spaces at the edges of print. It gave us more freedom. We lived in the gaps between the stories.’ The explosion of stories in this collection expresses what formal print could never capture. They fly from the pens of people familiar with hardship, struggle and loss, soothed by beauty breaking through the cracks and by small, patient victories. These stories ‘... smelting with passion the commonplaces of life,’ Patrick Kavanagh

The N4 is a faraway, low rumble, as cars rush west, by-passing Cherry Orchard’s trim houses, green patches where horses gallop, factories glimpsed behind walls. But these stories record forever and honestly the teeming, complex life of the estate, from childhood years through teenage years, to young love, and through all the challenges of family life to the happiest times of welcoming grandchildren. They trace the delight and graft of early farm work, the demand of mountain walks, the joy of sea excursions, the making and breaking of friendships, the heartbreak of loneliness, the call to love and forgive. And in among these memories, most vibrantly, there emerges, time and again, the bravery of finding a way to banish and bury old, discouraging experiences.

The writers acknowledge how writing these stories has led them to find their own unique voices, to unearth truth, to take risks, to sharpen perception, to trust their own intuition, to observe and initiate change, to find hope in hopeless situations, to chronicle their own personal growth and capacity to

22 There reflections were written by the parent’s group at the **Cherry Orchard Life Centre** and were based on the process outlined in the Partners In Faith booklet, ‘Moments of Mystery’. The introduction was kindly written by **Gemma McKenna**.

love, to register the graciousness of God gently and compassionately active. The stories have a transformative power. Read them with care and let them break open your heart.

1. Birth - Turnips Through A Keyhole

Women are fantastic. All of us that have given birth have gone through a lot. From the time you know you are pregnant the worrying starts. Will everything go alright? Will the baby be okay? It is a worrying nine months. Some women have bad morning sickness and some sail through it.

I sailed through all my pregnancies although I had one miscarriage. I had four normal births and one breech birth. The births can be very painful but you forget all about the pain when they put the little bundle of joy into your arms. It is truly a miracle

I remember telling my friend's daughter not to be afraid of having the baby when she asked me what it was like. I explained to her about the pain and that you could get gas to help with the pain. I said it's your first so do what the nurse tells you. I tried to tell her it was like a flower bud opening. After she had her little boy I went up to see her. She said, "Never again!" She said to me, "A flower opening! It was more like a turnip going through a keyhole!" We all laughed. She went on to have two more boys.

Mary Mooney

2. Love – Is Trying to Bring Up My Teenagers Well

Love for me, is never ever wanting my teenage sons to go out at night in case they get into trouble even though they are good kids, I fear they will. When my grandchildren give me a hug or a kiss, this is love. I love looking out the window and watching all the kids playing outside, it fills me with love.

Some times I cry myself to sleep over my partner that I lost six years ago or my mother whom I wish I could see now. I know she is always with me but it hurts so much.

At the moment I am trying my best to love myself because I know I am not a bad person. I need to trust myself more. Sometimes I feel like I don't deserve to love myself but I'm working on that. I really need to learn to love myself more.

Gwen Shiels

First Love

How exciting, there he is, he is a good one.
I'm feeling sick because he sees me.
"Would you like to dance?" he asks.
"Of course I would," it's the only thought going through my head.
At sixteen, I thought I knew it all.
When I looked into his big blue eyes, everything was magic
Little did I know!
At eighteen, it was all different.
He liked to go and play football. That was the love of his life.
By then, a lot was happening that was different.
By this time, I still loved his big blue eyes but my heart was broken.
He finished with me.
At eighteen, I thought my world was over.
Three months later I met the real love of my life.
Love is a funny thing that comes your way when you least expect it.

Anita Maher

3. Nature's Beauty

Beauty and nature are all around us but we don't always have the time to enjoy them due to being busy in our everyday lives. When we take the time for ourselves there is so much for us to enjoy.

Sometimes the beauty is in our own garden. When we see the beautiful colours of the flowers we have planted and when we hear, on waking up, the birds singing on a spring morning, it is wonderful. We have bees, snails, ladybirds and beautiful, graceful butterflies, with their wings of so many colours.

We have lots of lovely white, sandy beaches with their great big seas of green and blue. We have the mountains and countryside with so many trees in all their shades and sizes. The heathers that grow on the mountainside and all the wild flowers that we see in the fields help us feel so good in ourselves, when we visit such places in summertime.

Autumn brings so many amazing gifts when we see the colours of the trees change from green to the lovely warm colours of red, brown and gold. It's nice to walk past the trees at this time of year and hear the sound of the leaves falling to the ground. My son has told me about the beautiful mountains and the lovely log cabins where he lives and my one wish would be to go out there and see them for myself but mostly to see my son again and give him a big bear hug. Sometime, please God, I will make that journey.

Dolores Cox

4. Vulnerability - He Does Not Want To Be Any Trouble

My youngest son is very easily led and people take advantage of him a lot. I worry about him because he is a good fellow behind it all. He often helps old people, cutting the grass in their gardens and planting flowers. It keeps him busy. He is on his second course now and is doing very well. People take advantage of him. They get him to burn scrap and then don't pay him a penny. He really does be annoyed but won't say a thing because he doesn't want trouble. You can see this is an example of what happens when you are vulnerable. People take over your life.

Marie Maher

5. Creativity – Ten Children – That’s Creativity!

I did not know I could be so creative, but looking back now after rearing ten children, each with their own personality, I can see my creativity. Each of my children now has their own children. Yes, I used to knit a lot and bake and my two daughters today do the same. I started doing art classes and that was very creative. I found arts and crafts very rewarding. Doing creative writing gets your mind working. I think I am very creative.

Dolores Griffiths



6. Energy – Our Body Clock Tells Us To Slow Down

Energy is something that has greatly changed in my life. It is like my body is slowing down now as I am getting older and no longer with the energy to do the things I used to. Some days I think back and ask myself how was I able to manage when I was bringing up my seven children and when I went out to work every morning at five. I would have to walk from my house down to Ballyfermot Road to catch the ghost bus. It was called that as it used to bring all the busmen down to Conyngnam Road garage. There would only be a few women like myself on it going to work. We got to know each other and have a chat. That’s what women did then in order to get some extra money to try and give their children a better life.

Today I wish I had some of that energy back. Now a few hours with my grandchildren and I am tired and unable to run around after them, the way I did with my own. I give it my best and try to keep up with them. Oh, to be young and full of energy! The years just pass so quickly. Time doesn’t stand still for anyone. Our body is something like a clock telling us to slow down and save some of our energy.

Dolores Cox

7. Giving A Helping Hand - Making Tea and Sandwiches

Helping someone out is a nice feeling. It makes you forget your own problems for a while to do a kind act for someone else. When I was young my parents always said, "If you cannot do a good turn for someone, don't do a bad one." It is a wise saying.

I volunteer twice a week. On a Tuesday I help out with disabled people. We have tea and sandwiches and play bingo and have a quiz. I love doing it. The same on Saturday I work in a visitors' centre doing teas and coffees and listening to people talk about their problems. I like to think that I am helping someone. I don't judge anyone as I might need help myself and it's nice to have someone you can trust. Caring is sharing, so if I can help someone I will.

Mary Mooney

8. Forgiveness – It Is Hard To Say Sorry

Sometimes it is hard to forgive people when they really hurt you. I wouldn't be a bad person and I usually do forgive people a lot. People say, 'forgive and forget' but that only works for a while as people can play on your trust.

Years ago when our children on the street would argue, both parents would sort it out in a minute. That forgiveness does not seem to be about anymore. The children today have no respect for one another. Today the killings and the stabbings are terrible. It might be so different if they just knew how to say sorry or take a deep breath to calm down. Then before you know it, it's all over. That's forgiveness. The word 'sorry' goes a long way, because sometimes we say things in anger and later regret them. At other times you can be too forgiving and people use you.

June Howell

Extremely Unkind

I recall a situation when someone was very unkind to me. They made me out to be a very bad person. Well I know different. I don't hate the person, I feel sorry for them. I think about it a lot but I cannot let it get me down.

As that person is not in my life anymore I don't miss the drama. I can be quite civil when we meet now. It is very easy to forgive but not so easy to forget.

Dolores Griffiths

9. Failure - Shamed In Front of the Class

When I was a young girl in primary school I never liked it. I don't really know why but I had a nun teaching me and she never gave me a minute. She used to call me up in front of the class to read out loud and if I got a word wrong she would make me stand in the corner. This went on for a while even though I was only ten or eleven then. She made me feel like I was both a failure and stupid. One of the days she called me up and I could not read the book. She smacked me over the knuckles and told me I was illiterate. I didn't even know what that meant so when I went home I told my mother.

Little did I know! She marched me back to the sister's office and had some harsh words with her and that is putting it mildly. After that I started mitching out of school. I hated that nun for what she made me do in front of the class. For years after I kept that inside of me. But thank God, I've let it go now. I am as good as anyone else.

Gwen Shiels

10. Alienation - Language Barrier

When I first went to Algeria to visit my husband's family the language barrier was huge. It took a lot of energy from me and from my husband as he had to constantly translate from English into Arabic.

I felt much more comfortable being around children as a few of them had learnt English in school. Together with the children we could play and use gestures and use whatever bits of language that the children knew.

I missed adult conversation and was not able to express myself verbally when in general company. Many times I would fade out of the conversation and would prefer to slip away and read a book.

It was awkward but thankfully on subsequent visits I have become more familiar with Arabic customs, culture and language as everything is less alien to me.

Siobhan Mokrani

11. Learning Through Life - You Think You Know Everything

You can come to a time in your life when you think you know everything. After bringing up your family you think that that's it for you. But you are always in for different changes in your life. I went back to school after my children were grown up and I could not believe that there was so much to learn from arts and crafts, creative writing, etc and getting involved, doing things to help others.

A time then comes when you find it very hard to deal with life and you give up for a while, until you get a push from others. That brings you back to check-in on your emotions and make a decision on how you wish to go on. There is no point sitting around doing nothing. You realise that every day is precious and you get involved again in the group.

This makes a big difference in life and it helps that there is always something more we can learn in life. That's what keeps us going. There is always a time when we need a change and it's great if we get involved and learn something new. We discover that we don't really ever stay still in our lives.

Dolores Cox

12. Grandchildren - The World Is Big And Frightening Now

I am very proud of being a grandmother. I have seven grandchildren, four boys and three girls. Each one is so different. The eldest is eighteen years and is mad but a good mad, very easy going. The next is twelve and into sport. He can be

very stubborn at times. The next is eight years old and loves dancing and showing off. Then the six year-old is very quiet and good humoured, not an ounce of trouble. You could bring him anywhere. The five year-old loves anything to do with planes. He loves the park and being heard. Finally the four year-old is the best of all. He is not afraid of anything and he won't take crap. If anyone does anything on him he will dash out and let them have it. When all of the children are together we have some laughs. When they argue it is a free for all. The youngest comes out the best as he is not afraid and when he lets fly, they all run. Behind it all they do get on great.

Grandchildren are different to our own children. They grow up quicker, don't listen and think they know it all. When ours were growing up, they weren't angels, but I think they listened more.

The world out there now is very big and frightening. So, we do worry and hope that they don't get involved. Even going out at night you worry, hoping they return safe, as there is so much violence. As grandmothers all we can do is tell them and let them know how much we love them all.

June Howell

13. Loss - Trust Is Broken

Apart from losing a loved one I think to lose trust in someone is the worst thing that can happen. I told some friends things that were very private to me along the way. I needed to share these things with someone. I later found out that they were not friends at all because my stories came back to me from strangers on the street. I felt so betrayed. It was awful and as a result I find it very hard to tell anyone things that are going on in my life that may be getting me down. So, I keep a lot in.

I think I have one or two people in my life that I can talk to. But as I said the loss of trust really hurt me and at least it taught me a lesson. Be very careful about who you talk to about your personal things. I really do think that some people need to learn the meaning of trust.

Gwen Sheils

14. Moments of Mystery

Let's Spend More Of Our Lives In The Soulful Times

Sometimes I think back on things in my life. We had great times together. My son and I got on very well together. I often think back and laugh at the things he'd say. He always had a joke to tell. Sometimes I'd be on the Luas passing different places and I'd say to myself, "Ah I remember that." Sometimes on my own in the house I have different things going through my head. I look over at his picture and say, "I wish you were here."

I know lots of people are in the same place. There are times when it hits you hard. But going to the Life Centre with all the group helps us to pull together and not forget our loved ones. We learn to cope by talking. Chatting about stuff goes a long way. I feel good when I go to the Life Centre and listen to other people's stories. It gives me hope and the strength to carry on.

June Howell

Prosperity Pie

In life, we go on trying to give our knowledge and to gain wisdom. From an early age we had our parents to share theirs with us. Then through life we have grown our own knowledge and we store it in the back of our heads. Now and again we pass it on. For example, when we have our kids we say something when they ask us about this or that. We answer 'that we learnt that a long time ago.'

In this creativity class I've learnt a lot of new stuff and so I can better see who I truly am. I can pass this on to my kids and it helps them to discover who they are and they try to reach for their full potential in life.

Prosperity is not about having more money. It is about having wisdom and learning as you go through life.

Dolores Griffiths



“You Out There Change It”²³

PAULINE BRENNAN

Every morning I awake and take a walk around
I can see so many of me, sleeping on the ground
Every morning I awake and take a walk around
I can see so many of me, walking into town

I also see some addicts walking in a trance
Winging, wanging garbage, spitting on the ground
I also see some young ones, hopping on a bus
Off to school, a game of pool, or maybe even FAS

²³ **Pauline** – is project leader at Bradóg Youth Service, Dominick Street.

I also see what could be me, deep, deep into their eyes
They need a fix, have many tricks, to help the day go by
I also see what could be me, a future bright and fun
I need some slack, please watch my back and then I'll turn out grand

I turn around the corner, a load of kids I spot
Waiting for their hashis, in the middle of the block
I turn around the corner, a load of kids I spot
Waiting for the bike club, come on, its five o'clock.

A completely new direction, another group of teens
Nicking bikes and iphones, it makes me want to scream.
On Tuesday there's a drop-in, another place to go
Fifa, pool and drama, play poker, Netflix show

Is this the place I want to be, are these the things that one should see?
Is this the place I like to be, a place where people value me?

This desperate life that could be me, or you or anyone
CHANGE IT!
This nurtured life, a place for me, or you or anyone
CHANGE IT!

St Laurence O'Toole GAA Club and the 1916 Commemorations

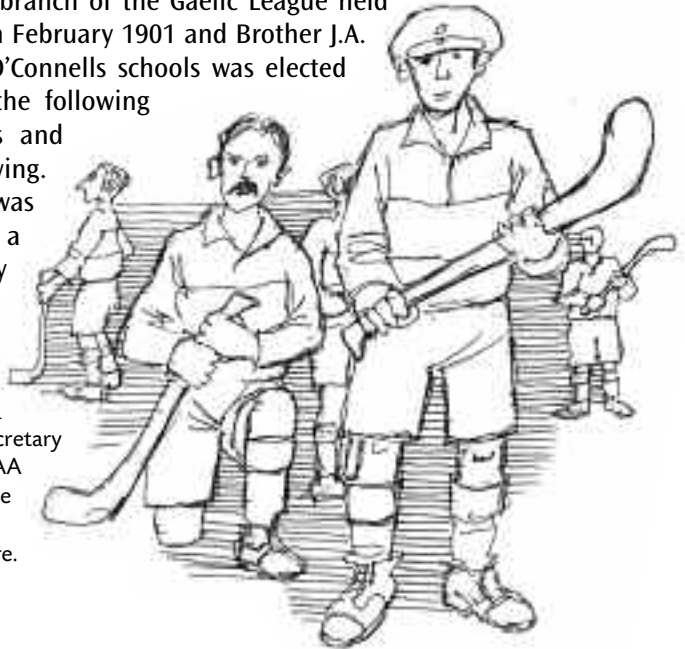
PAUL JENNINGS AND DES O'BRIEN²⁴

Introduction

O'Toole's GAA Club now based in Ayrfield was originally founded in Seville Place. Over eighty of its members participated in the 1916 Rising not least of which were two of the signatories of the 1916 Proclamation, Tom Clarke and Sean Mac Diarmada who were executed on the orders of General Maxwell.

O'Toole's Club History

In 1901 the present Saint Laurence O'Toole G.A.A. club was formed from the Gaelic League branch at Seville Place. An earlier Saint Laurence O'Toole G.A.A. club had existed in the North Wall area from 1888 to 1896 but disappeared from the scene because of a lack of properly organised juvenile competitions. The St. Laurence O'Toole branch of the Gaelic League held their inaugural meeting in February 1901 and Brother J.A. O'Mahoney, Superior of O'Connells schools was elected its first president. Over the following months branch activities and classes moved into full swing. From these activities it was decided first to form a hurling team and shortly afterwards a football team.



²⁴ Paul Jennings – is Club Secretary at St. Laurence O'Toole GAA Club and Des O'Brien is the Chairperson of the 1916 Centenary Committee there.

The hurling team was formed after Irish classes on Thursday 8th October 1901 when Edward Keegan was elected captain, Thomas Keegan, secretary, and John Taylor treasurer. The first competition won by the Saint Laurence O'Toole club was the Saturday Junior Hurling League of 1905 when the team was captained by Tim O'Neill. The winning of the 1908 Minor Hurling League was the start of several years of O'Toole's domination in that grade when the McDonnell brothers, Paddy and Johnny, were the backbone of these teams. In August 1902 the football team was formed and they won their first major competition – the minor league – in 1910. To complete the picture, O'Toole's entered their first camogie team into the 1912 Dublin Camogie league – one of the oldest camogie competitions in the country.

In 1910 a pipers band was founded in connection with the O'Toole's G.A.A. club and the 1916 leader, Tom Clarke, was elected president and the playwright, Sean O'Casey was the first secretary. When the Irish Republic was declared on Easter Monday, 1916, over seventy members of the O'Toole's club answered the call and took their stand among the city garrisons. Tom Clarke was executed after the Rising, as was Sean Mac Dermott, a non playing member of the O'Tooles club. Others who took part included Liam O'Briain, Professor of Romance Languages at U.C.G., Citizen Army Sergeant, Frank Robbins, who later became President of the Dublin Council of Trade Unions and Tom Ennis who was later a Free State Army General.

A number of players from O'Toole's were on the Dublin team in Croke Park on Bloody Sunday when the Black and Tans attacked and Michael Hogan of Tipperary was killed. The golden age of the Seville Place club commenced when they amalgamated with Emeralds, another local club which was powered by the Synnotts and the Carey brothers. In the 1918 to 1931 period, ten Dublin Senior Football titles went to the "Parish" and O'Toole's players figured prominently on Dublin senior football sides in five successive All-Ireland finals (1920-1924). O'Toole's club selections won the 1922 and 1923 All Ireland senior football titles and the Leinster senior football championships of 1920, 1922, 1923 and 1924.

O'Toole's hurlers played at senior level in the twenties but the game declined for a period in the club and a revival in 1938 was due to the efforts of Johnny Mac Donnell, Miko Doyle and Sean Synnott. In 1969 – the 68th year of the clubs existence – O'Toole's won their first senior hurling championship. They also

won the three other Dublin senior hurling competitions of that year (the league, the Boland Cup and the Smithwicks Cup) – the first team to achieve this feat. O’Toole’s is one of the few Dublin clubs who have won the county senior championships in both codes, having also won the hurling championships of 1977, 1984 and 1990, 1995, 1996 and 1997 and 2002.

Commemorating the 1916 Rising and Its Connections with O’Toole’s Club

A series of events was organised to mark the occasion of the centenary. A historical talk was presented by Jimmy Wren on the involvement of O’Toole’s in the 1916 Rising. Jimmy’s father James was a member of the GPO Garrison during Easter Week 1916. There was an unveiling of Jack Carey’s collection of medals, an Irish Volunteer Exhibition opened by the Lord Mayor, a Commemorative Football match and a theatrical performance at the Sean O’Casey Theatre. The curtain came down on the celebrations on Saturday April 16th with a commemorative march behind the St Joseph’s Pipe Band from Croke Park to Seville Place. This was followed by remembrance mass in St Laurence O’Toole church and a social evening of traditional music and ballads in Sheriff Youth Club.

Our Easter 1916 Centenary events were two years in the planning, following the appointment of a hard-working and diligent sub committee led by the then Club Chairman, Andy Cunningham, and our club commemorations ran over two weekends.

Des O’Brien the Chairperson of the Centenary Committee writes of Saturday April 16th 2016, in the North Wall:

Our final event turned into a fitting and momentous occasion, where Club Members, along with Members of St. Joseph’s/O’Connell Boys, and Teachers/Representatives/Past Pupils from the old St. Canice’s CBS; St. Laurence O’Toole CBS; Gairmscoil Chonghaile (North Strand Tech); and O’Connell Schools, marched behind the St. Joseph’s Pipe Band from Clondalkin, from Croke Park to the Parish Church of St. Laurence O’Toole at Seville Place, for a special Centenary Mass with the local community. The march stopped at many milestones along the way to commemorate and acknowledge the clubs, schools and individuals who have contributed to our wonderful history. Special thanks to a number of people who worked closely with us to make this event such a fitting and memorable

finale to our centenary celebrations, including Fr. Robert Colclough; Councillor Nial Ring; Gerry & Mark Fay; the local community and Gardaí. The coming together of O'Toole's GAC members, many of us who now live outside the North Inner City, with our Seville Place "family", was very special and our night in Sheriff Youth Club will be long-remembered and appreciated for the outstanding welcome we received from the whole community, never mind the ballads, coddle and pigs' feet (thank you Mark!).

Conclusion

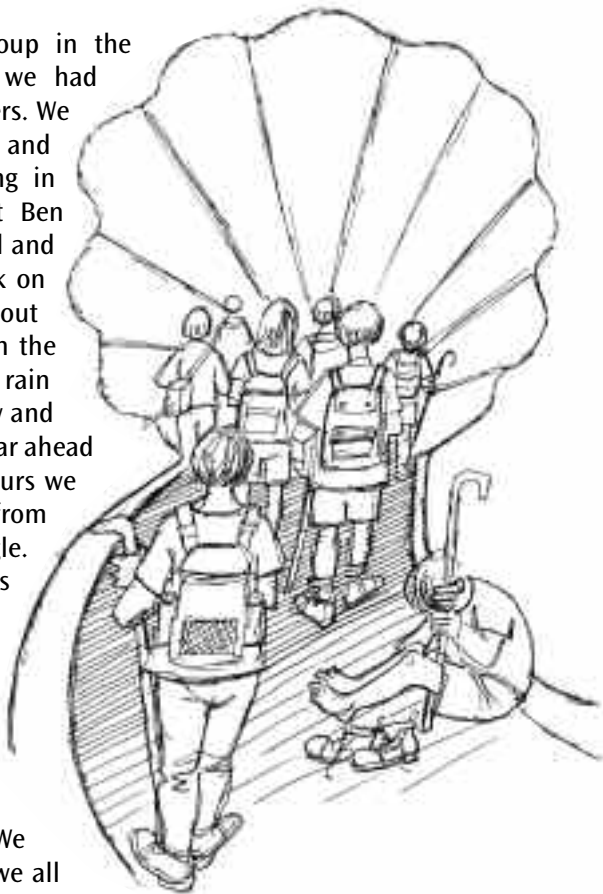
On behalf of "The Larriers", and as a very proud Chairman of the Organising Committee for the above events, I thank all O'Toole's people for your work over many years. In particular, I salute all of you in the St. Laurence O'Toole/Seville Place community for adding to this Centenary Celebration and for working with us to mark the relevance of these events in our common history. Your honesty and welcome for all of us only serves to reinforce my huge sense of pride in where I come from as a North Inner City Gael. Go raibh míle maith agaibh agus go mbéimed go leir in ann "Breathnú siar le bród agus aghaidh a thabhairt ar an todhchaí le dóchas". Thank you and may we always be able to look back with pride and face our future with hope.

From Cherry Orchard to Compostela

DAVID ROGERS²⁵

I was in the Young Fathers' Group in the Ballyfermot Equine Centre and we had Derek, Tracy and Paul as our leaders. We were working on our own health and went out every week hill walking in Wicklow. We decided to attempt Ben Nevis, the highest peak in Scotland and for training we hiked once a week on the Wicklow Mountains. In May about ten of us travelled to Scotland. On the way up Ben Nevis we got a bit of rain but half way up we were into snow and we were sliding and could not see far ahead of us. Eventually, after over six hours we got to the summit with support from the team but it was a real struggle. Derek who was with us had serious expensive mountain clothes on, but he was in the height of it, because he discovered that they were not water-proof.

It was then suggested that we should attempt the Camino in Spain; the Way of Saint James. We watched the film, "The Way" and we all agreed that we were up for it. We needed to do loads of training and walked once a week on the mountains. We also were given membership of the Base gym so that we could toughen up our leg muscles. I was thinking to myself, this pilgrimage will never happen, it will fall through.



25 David – a member of the Young Fathers' Group at Ballyfermot Equine Centre.

After an eight week fitness programme we did a load of fund-raising with a poker night in the 79, bag packing in Tesco's and getting our friends to support us with sponsorship cards.

The day came when we packed for the airport and stopped off on our way at St James' Church to get our camino passports. It then hit me. This is happening. This is for real! Ten of us went; three leaders and seven young fathers and each of us excited, as we knew what was ahead of us because of what we saw in the film.

Starting in Sierra it took us five days to get to Santiago and afterwards we took two days to relax and recover. From the start the walking was tough as we wandered through woods, along roads and up and down hills. We kept on the right road by watching out for yellow arrows and the famous shell way-markers. The second day I found the hardest because of the blisters. Plasters would not stick on our feet as our feet were so sweaty. We would stop every so often and in every village and take our socks off, so that the fresh air would get at our feet. Our lady leader, Tracy, had a terrible time with her toe, but she was determined not to give up or to take a taxi. However, she eventually went to a hospital where they told her to be sure to get her sore toe checked out when she returned to Ireland.

Each morning we set out together and if we became separated we would meet-up again in the next town and we usually stopped after every 10k. Walking in the sun killed us. We had to carry all our clothes which weighed about 10kg. As we passed through villages I'd buy some crisps, chocolate and a can of coke. Because of the tiredness and the pain, with the big group we sometimes got cranky.

In the afternoon we would get to the hostels and there we found very nice people. They called us pilgrims and treated us with respect. They never refused us a bed. I did not find the food in the hostels very nice as the beef burgers and chips did not taste the same as home. They were into squid and fish, so I lived off beef burgers. I might be in bed early but it was hard to drift off and to sleep in the hostels with people coming and going in the room. The next morning we would be up before seven to get washed and ready, as we would be kicked out to begin our walking at eight o'clock.

As we walked we met many interesting people. One person; Ed Rock from England left everything behind him and some four years ago he set up his tent

near the camino. He shared his experiences with us and has published a book on the camino which he sells. He is not a tapper.

The last day of our pilgrimage, heading into Santiago was hard, and people we met as they passed, were all encouraging, saying “Buen Camino, you are nearly there”. People were nice but those last twelve Km were very tough. I thought I’d never get there. However, getting to the final mass at Compostela was a brilliant experience. The large church was black with people and a huge incense thurible was swinging from the roof, the full length of the church. When all was over we felt great satisfaction and collected our certificates, got our passport books stamped, took some photos and got our St James’ pilgrim shell. We had two days to recover. Derek went out to Lands End and hung the Irish flag on the pole there, and we have been told that it still flies proudly. There we burnt our pilgrim clothes.

The most important part of the experience for me was praying for peace in the church on the final day. Also, it was lovely meeting with people from all nationalities. I’d recommend to any mate of mine to walk the camino and would advise him to bring both Moses sandals and a pair of runners, and to constantly carry water. I still keep in touch with my fellow pilgrims and I miss the fun of the group, as I’m now too old to be called a young father. In a few years’ time I would consider walking the camino again, as I know there will always be company along the way, or if I need to be alone, I can wander by myself.

Arise Artists, Activists and Artisans of Humanity in Dublin's North Inner City

MARTIN BYRNE²⁶

These past six months have been particularly violent and tragic in Dublin's north inner city with local communities rallying in solidarity, supported by civic and church leaders.²⁷ Overshadowed in a sea of generally negative publicity, this past fortnight, the heroic exploits of locals, Kellie Harrington and Weso Hoolahan have significantly lifted the nation's spirits. Around us in the inner city, our gritty children are in touch with various images of what is most inspiring, most beautiful and of what is best in humanity. Starting with their parents, grandparents and ancestors these families have struggled over generations with the violence of poverty and have been honed to live as compassionate humans. Spare us then, please, the stories, the stereotypes, the news flashes, the sociological data and the television shows which define us by poverty, by criminality and by violence.

As ever, it is up to us to struggle. It is up to us to defy all attempts, be they explicit or subtle, to paint us into a corner as 'good for nothing, low-life scumbags'.

In years past it was not unusual for members of my family to be stopped on the street by the police, simply because they were young and wandering along Ballybough. Today, it remains a regular sight on Seany Mac or Cathal Brugha Street to witness the gardaí opening out the pockets of local youngsters, while their contemporaries in Belvedere College uniforms scurry past on their way up to school. Often, I avert my eyes from these public encounters as the shamed youngsters are my pupils. 'Sure, aren't these inner city kids up to no good and on-the-make.'

26 **Martin** – a Christian Brother working in Dublin's north inner city.

27 As I pen this reflection in June 2016, seven people have been murdered in gang feuding.

The recent deluge of tragic news reports melding with the stereotypical images from such as Love Hate reinforces the sense that our homeland is an aberration and a war zone. In the eyes of the gentrifiers and of some developers our city centre would be better off if the traditional communities of Summerhill, Corporation Buildings and Sheriff Street could be erased off the map. Indicators such as unemployment, health, educational attainment and income show the north inner city as the poorest enclave in the country, but fail to show how these communities have courageously struggled over many generations.

How can we begin to melt, dismantle and disrupt the prevailing, cruel oversimplified middle-class stereotypes which reinforce the marginalisation of the people and communities of the north inner city?²⁸ The oppression is added to when media focus on mere partial aspects of inner city life and fail to give oxygen to resilience, spirit, humanity, community, creativity, wisdom and grit.

It is my privileged destiny and my claim that Ballybough has made me while the North Wall has refined me. My energies, along with many, many others have been invested in mutual gift-exchange; teaching, mentoring and theologising on the streets of the inner city. Like anyone who has immersed themselves in these neighbourhoods we share a strong feeling reaction to those who disparage in scorn our precious communities that have so much to teach. Pulses of rage, helplessness and guilt can overwhelm me when confronted with unfair negative publicity and with political unwillingness to address the local issues that fuel trans-generational, acute poverty.

As the scourge of feuding criminals stalks our neighbourhoods, it's an opportunity for us locally to promote further honest conversations as to what we want for our kids and what we value as communities. In our usual blunt and rigorously honest manner we can chat amongst ourselves and tell stories about what we think is best. Many anonymous extraordinary people down the years have built up these communities, not looking for recognition or for prosperity, but showing us how to live with compassion and to work and to stick together. They have passed on a dream to us and part of our empowerment right now is the task of inner city individuals and of communities to redefine for ourselves

28 This reflection on the power of stereotypes was inspired by my viewing of the YouTube TEDx Talk, Matika Wilbur, 'Changing the way we see Native Americans'.

who we are, on our own terms. So, all story-tellers, grandparents, activists, artists, photographers, educators, dancers, singers, youth workers, coaches, contemplatives, parents, poets, gardeners, dramatists, tea makers, hair dressers and artisans of humanity stick with what we are good at.

After Easter this year it was our privilege in the North Wall to publish a book on “100 Gritty Voices” where we quoted from one hundred local people who have transformed our community in many, many different ways. Look around the inner city and see the incredible, culture-bearing, beautiful, scholarly, loving, prayerful, fierce, fun-loving, talented, persevering, serving, kind, loyal, family-loving, creative, sporty, fashionistas, beauticians and singers ... and much more. The many voices were divided into five sections; twenty voices of resilience and destiny, twenty voices of social transformation, twenty voices from below, twenty voices of urban contemplation and twenty voices of belonging, memory, meaning and identity.

If we are lucky enough to befriend any one of these gritty people and walk a bit in their shoes and experience a sense of their hearts beating, we might then share their passion to reshape how the outside world sees the inner city. We are a humble, brittle tribe of humans who have fought in the past and have to continue to fight down to this present day. In some mysterious way it is our connection with each other as strugglers that gives us our spirit and that defines us.

This long-term struggle can leave us with the feelings we had when visiting the room of Anne Frank in Amsterdam. The traumatic violence of poverty or of evil leaves us reeling, especially when we know as friends, individuals with names and faces and stories. At the same time, it both costs us and changes us. More importantly, it keeps us alive and uncomfortable and stretches our feet down on the ground. Weekly, we feel the human struggle in its many guises but daily we are lifted in experiencing the human spirit enduring. Sixty-five years in Dublin’s inner city and I’ve been formed into a new way of loving, of teaching, of valuing, of brothering and of appreciating.

With my contextual, urban theologian’s cap on, I can feel with the community the unfair weight of straining to live under the yoke of being labelled as a north inner city person. Liberation requires critically shaking off this additional, toxic, insidious burden which divides our society into the good and the wasters. It is not possible to be a Christian in Dublin’s north inner city today without a

commitment to this process of identification, solidarity and liberation.²⁹ Aspirations for a more humane society abound.³⁰

Any young person growing up in Ballybough today;

- * Would love to feel that they are understood and treated with respect, irrespective of their accent or beliefs or culture.
- * Would love to feel that they won't be made to feel small or dirty or less.
- * Would love to feel that they have equal opportunity to go to further education and to gain quality employment.
- * Would love to be heard and have a say in the decisions that impact on their inner city community.
- * Would love to see their culture represented in the organisations and in the politics that shape society.
- * Would love to feel that working-class communities are not denigrated in the media and made into a by-word for low-lives and no-goods.

For a day longer let us not allow ourselves to be degraded, situated as sensational colour articles on the margins of the media's concern.³¹ Remembering the courageous strength, determination, power and spirit of the people of the north inner city, who though forged in struggle, went on to live heroic, human lives of compassion and community, can we together redefine for ourselves the identity, the dignity and the future that we value as precious?³²

29 If the communities of Dublin's north inner city are being constantly blackguarded and taken for a ride by politicians, the media and developers, then hope gets squelched and it is hard to proclaim the good news of God's reign.

30 It is very difficult also for a struggling people to help liberate themselves from prejudices that are ingrained in the social psyche.

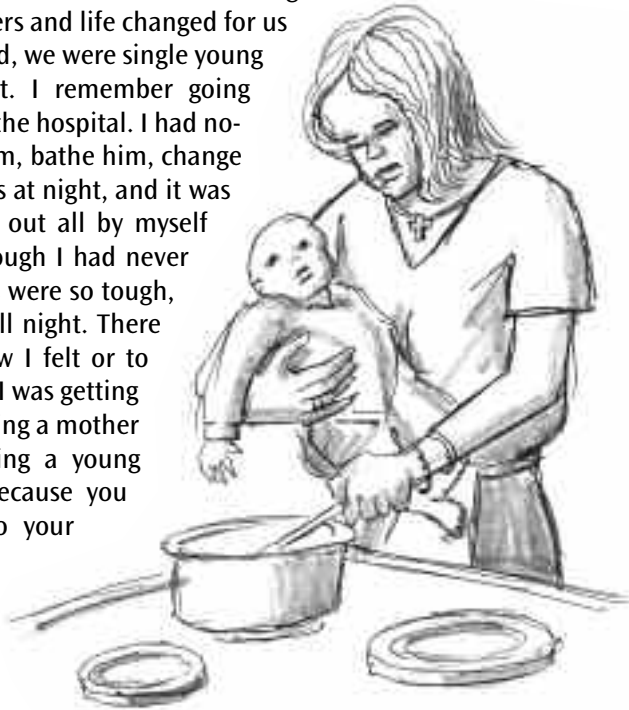
31 Popular stereotypes frame our consciousness and legitimise the prevailing social and economic 'achievement gap' and copper fasten the poverty-based, deficit social construct.

32 For generations, we in Dublin's inner city have struggled to survive and today an additional battle is the acknowledgement of difference and of conflict with the superiority complexes that come with being part of the middle-class or the elite in Irish society.

Creating A Support Network For Young Mums

RITAH MEREMBE AND DIANE IHIRWE COOPER³³

Hi all, my name is Ritah, I am twenty-four years old and I have a seven year old boy. Diane, who wishes she could be here today to read this with me, is twenty-three and has two boys who are six and four. We both got pregnant when we were teenagers and life changed for us completely. At eighteen years old, we were single young mums with no family support. I remember going home after my son's birth from the hospital. I had no-one to teach me how to feed him, bathe him, change him or what to do when he cries at night, and it was so challenging. I had to figure out all by myself how to look after him even though I had never even held a baby before. Nights were so tough, because he would stay awake all night. There was no one who asked me how I felt or to have a chat with me about how I was getting on as a single young mother. Being a mother is hard in this world, but being a young single mother is extra hard because you also have to be the father to your children, not just the mother. Diane was also going through the same struggles: like me, she had to grow up so quickly. She was meant to have social



³³ Ritah and Diane – were initiators of the Young Mothers Network (YMN). With support from Marie Williams, Kathie Larkin and Nadette Foley at the Dominican Justice Office they established regular meetings for young mothers in Hill Street Family Resource Centre. The project is coordinated and funded by the DJO.

workers but didn't and so was all alone with a new-born baby and the only option she had was to really fend for herself.

Life was just hard for so long and the road was tough, lonely and scary. But the two of us were determined to give our children a better life and we found an inner strength to carry on, to go back to school and try to achieve the dreams we'd had before. Diane and I became friends and we would speak about all the challenges of being a young mother and hoped one day to reach out to others. Because of what we went through, we never want to see any other young mother with no family support or other networks to go through the same challenges we did. We know how it feels to be alone with your child with no one asking you how you feel, check on you in the hospital, give you a call to find out how you are doing or have a cup of tea with you.

Some people need a holding hand, a shoulder to cry on, and we wanted to be people who can empathise with them. We also wanted to remind mothers that having a young child cannot stop you from reaching all your goals. It could be education, employment, engaging in different activities or anything. There are barriers such as child care, the stigma attached to being a young mother, mental health issues, but there is power in togetherness, and once we come together we can overcome these barriers and reach for our dreams.

We're both studying Social Care and when Diane heard about a Social Enterprise Award where people have to come up with an idea about something missing in Irish society, we applied. What we thought was missing in Irish society was help for young mothers, mothers who are alone, young mothers with no family around, young mothers who are completely isolated and lonely and having to grow up quickly. Our idea to create a peer support network for young mums won first place. After that we thought, "do you know what? We have to work towards this. We have to make it happen." So today we are working on our dream, we're working with Marie Williams in the Dominican Justice Office and we have our first meeting of the Young Mothers Network in a few weeks. We're starting small at the moment but the whole idea is for young mums to meet with other young mums, to find strength in being together, to help each other not to lose their goals, or to forget who they are. Yes, they are mothers, but they're still individuals with dreams of their own. Maybe someone here will want to come to our group. We want to tell you that you would be welcome.

Update December 2016

In November 2016 we started to hold regular meetings of mothers with the support of the Manager and staff of Hill Street Family Resource Centre. Since March 2016, these meetings have been held twice a month. Outside speakers have been invited to speak about topics which are of interest to the participants. Mothers can concentrate on participating actively in the meetings while their pre-school children can play under the expert supervision of the qualified childcare staff in the Hill Street Centre. Topics have included Child Protection and Women and Children's Health. In the first half of 2016, Martin Byrne delivered an excellent Positive Parenting course which participants enjoyed and found very useful. The birthday of each participant was celebrated with cake, a card and a small gift. In June, the senior pupils of St Catherine's Senior School in Cabra fundraised to buy brand new clothes for the babies and younger children of the YMN participants.

Over the summer months, outings were organised for participants, and all their children, including those attending school. Visits to Dublin Zoo, Tallaght Leisureplex and Tayto Park were fun days out for mothers and their children of all ages. Participants already have ideas for next year's outings.

The fortnightly meetings began again with the new school year in September. Some participants have taken up their own studies and are not always free to attend meetings. Others have secured better housing and have moved out of the Dublin region. Child Protection sessions with Doris Abuchi-Ogbonda from the New Communities Partnership and sessions on CV Preparation and Stress Management have been organised. Christmas presents for the women and their children were distributed at the last meeting before Christmas. YMN is now looking forward to further developing its support for mothers and their children during 2017.

“Where Peace Dwells Fear Cannot”

A MEMBER OF BALLYFERMOT STAR FAMILY SUPPORT³⁴

We are here tonight:-

- * to remember and celebrate the lives of those that have died from a substance
- * to lend our support to those that are still struggling to get their lives back from addiction
- * to support family members that are trying to cope

We are here:-

- * To celebrate the good times and to remember the not so good times with our loved ones
- * To remember the love our loved ones brought to you and your family
- * To remember the laughter and the fun times they created
- * To remember how important they were in your life
- * To acknowledge how much they are missed although they are always present to you
- * To know how much you loved them
- * To also remember the difficulties they brought to the home – at times it was not easy to cope with their behaviour

The effect this behaviour had on you and other members of your family.

The shame you and your family felt

³⁴ A member of Ballyfermot Star Family Support delivered this key note speech at the Annual Service of Commemoration and Hope at St Matthews, Blackditch Rd on June 16th, 2016, in support of families in Ballyfermot struggling with addictions. This service is organised by Ballyfermot STAR.

Peacefulness is an inner sense of calm - it comes from becoming still - in order to reflect and meditate on our inner wisdom and receive answers. A peaceful heart is one that is free from worry and trouble. It's becoming quiet so we can look at things quietly, so we can more clearly understand them and then come up with creative solutions. It is learning to live in the present.

FEAR

You gain strength, courage, and confidence by each experience in which you really stop to look fear in the face. You are able to say to yourself, "I have lived through this horror. I can take the next thing that comes along." You must do the thing you think you cannot do. Eleanor Roosevelt (1884-1962) American columnist, lecturer and humanitarian and First Lady in the USA, said, "where peace dwells fear cannot."

When family members experience fear they are traumatised. The trauma involves not being able to think clearly, feeling sick to the core, not being able to function normally. This fear, stress, or whatever we want to call it makes us sick both mentally and physically.



For many years family members believe their loved ones when they tell them that that was the last time and I Will Never Do That Again, I won't take another drink, I won't take heroin, weed cocaine or tablets ever again.

Each time we believe them and so many times we are let down. Each time this happens we are shocked, traumatised and in FEAR, the world has just collapsed AGAIN. We try to pick up the pieces.

We try to support our husbands, wives, partners, children, the grandchildren and everyone within the family. Deep inside ourselves we are struggling ALONE. Our needs come last.

We sometimes have to deal with drug debts owed, threats of violence, violence, trauma and always the shame.

This is where fear lies. This is where the isolation from friends happens. This is where we look inwards and ask why this is happening to me and my family? We blame ourselves that if I had only done this and hadn't done that, all the what if's and of course we are not to blame. Fear takes hold like a virus and consumes us and the longer we stay alone with fear the more consumed we are.

Within the Family Support Group people come together, in confidence, to share their stories, to learn new skills and meet other people that are in the same position as themselves.

They learn how other people have dealt with a son, daughter, husband, wife's drink or drug use.

How other people have managed when their loved one is continuing to use a substance.

The Family Support Service really helps people to work through difficulties by facing them, by facing the fear.

Don't stay alone, there are Family Support services, the Family support Co-ordinator is here tonight, Kathleen Cronin. Kathleen has supported many family members to look fear in the eye and change their lives and find peace and contentment.



A Blessing For Charlotte Rose

HUGH O'DONNELL³⁵

Word of your coming reached us. Expectation built up; a new baby on the way.

Nothing causes more excitement in a family than the prospect of new life, new beginnings; a child with whom to make friends or family.

Charlotte's life was short by our usual standards. She qualified for the Olympics in Rio, so to speak, but never got to the starting blocks. She was ready, steady...

For Charlotte Rose I am sure that every day of her life was important – 22 weeks, 154 days and no doubt she enjoyed what fun could be had swimming around in Aisling's womb, nice and snug, no worries, no bullies – getting bigger every day and familiar with the disco beat of her mother's heart.

Who knows what she knew. Whatever else, she must have been delighted with her life and its possibilities and been happy, in a pre-knowing way, to have been a little someone with a name.

She has gone ahead of us and there is an extended family to greet her. We don't really have the words to describe it except to say we know she is safely home.

³⁵ **Hugh** – a Salesian curate working in Our Lady of Lourdes parish, Sean McDermott Street. Following a random scan Aisling and Kevin were informed that their baby would not survive. In the following 6 weeks the waiting was tough before Charlotte's heart at last stopped beating. This blessing was given in the crematorium at a moving ceremony. The parents of Charlotte Rose, conscious of the pains that child loss can cause, hope that this reflection will give strength and encouragement to such suffering parents.

It would have been beautiful, awesome even, had she stayed longer but it was still awesome having her, even more so, despite the news that her life would be short.

Aisling, Kevin, baby James, grandparents, aunties and uncles, you are still her family – her roots are in you. She knows who she is. One day at the great celebration for which we use the word heaven, there will be a family reunion.

Although that sounds like future, it is a present future. From the first word of her being here, Charlotte was in your hearts and not just in Aisling's body. She will still be in your hearts as you will be in hers.

Charlotte Rose we bless you for coming to our family as the unique creature that you are. As you return to the God of love and life, you will take something of our hopes and hurts with you. We let you go and yet know that you are never far from us, just a thought, a mention of your name away.

My little one, down what centuries
of light did you travel
to reach us here,
your stay so short-lived.

In the twinkling of an eye
you were moving on,
bearing our name and a splinter
of the human cross we suffer.

Flashed upon us like a beacon,
we wait in darkness for that light
to come round, knowing at heart
you shine forever for us.

3rd August, 2016



Unexpected Beauty

HUGH O'DONNELL

A man sat in a metro station in Washington DC one January morning and played Bach on his violin. It being rush hour, thousands hurried past. Some gave him money but couldn't stay. The ones who wanted to linger were children who had to be dragged onwards by a parent. After forty five minutes, he had collected thirty two dollars.

His name was Joshua Bell. Two nights earlier, the cost of seats for his concert in Boston had averaged one hundred dollars.

As an experiment, the Washington Post had arranged for him to play in the subway that morning in 2007. Their enquiry was; what happens to us when we encounter beauty at an unexpected time or place?

It would seem that we miss those notes no matter how appealing. After all, only six people stopped and listened for a while, then moved on. So what else are we missing – voices, faces, food, flowers, love. It may be that just because something is not labelled lovely, special, healing or sacred, we don't recognise it. Or we have places to be, as in Robert Frost's famous lines, 'and miles to go before I sleep and miles to go before I sleep', the repetition drawing out the tedium and burden of all we have to do.

When Joshua Bell finished playing that morning, nobody noticed. On a Boston stage following the same exquisite piece, the audience had responded in a frenzy of applause, had stood up to acknowledge beauty.

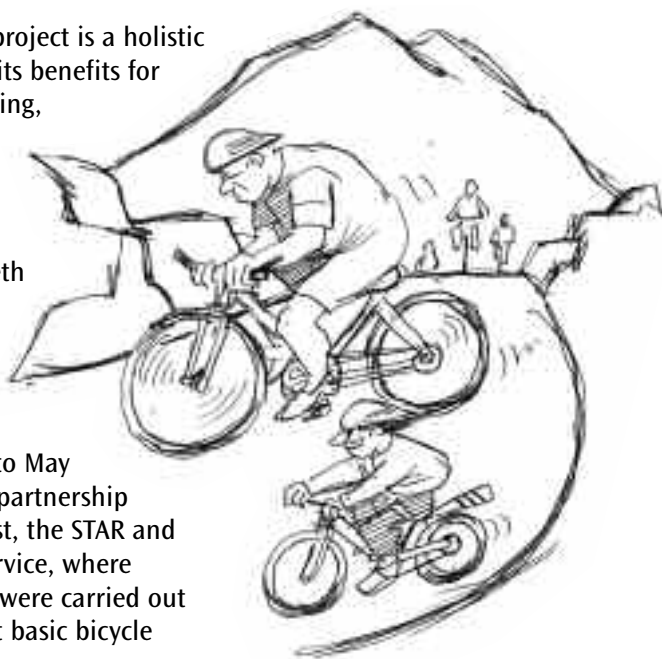
The Ballyfermot Cycling Project and the Matt Talbot Trust Charity Cycle

GARETH HERBERT³⁶

The Ballyfermot cycling project is a holistic approach to cycling and its benefits for a person's health, wellbeing, education and the environment. The programme is being developed and delivered by Derek Ahern and Gareth Herbert of the Dublin City Council Sports and Wellbeing Partnership.

The Project, through the months of February to May ran local programmes in partnership with the Matt Talbot Trust, the STAR and Cherry Orchard Youth Service, where maintenance workshops were carried out for people to learn about basic bicycle maintenance and up-keep.

In April participants from these programs participated in a Cycle Leader Programme, facilitated by Cycling Ireland. Then between the months of May and June, the STAR and Matt Talbot Trust participants and staff along with DCC



³⁶ Gareth – is a Sports Officer with Dublin City Council at the Sports Centre in Ballyfermot.

staff, Derek Ahern and Gar Herbert engaged in a six week training program to get ready for the Matt Talbot Trust annual charity cycle.

The Matt Talbot Trust cycle, is an annual event carried out as a fund raiser for the program, and this year the Trust Management and staff graciously opened out the cycle to participants from other local area groups and people involved in the Ballyfermot Cycling Project.

On the day of the event, June the 17th, on a mild, mid-summer day, we had almost 40 participants from the Matt Talbot Trust, the Ballyfermot STAR, Cherry Orchard Youth Service as well as Dublin City Council Staff, and other local people involved. We had young people from the age of 12 to veteran cyclists in their 70's. St John's Ambulance and DCC staff along with a bicycle mechanic was in support and played a great part in supporting the riders.

The Cycle started out from Ballyfermot Sports and Leisure Centre on Black Ditch Rd, and went almost 30k to Ballinascorney, where after a gruelling mountain climb, cyclists were treated to a wonderful culinary spread provided by staff and volunteers of the Matt Talbot Trust and the Ballyfermot STAR. After refuelling in the beautiful mountain landscape, participants completed the return leg, all returning safe and sound after a wonderful event and days cycling and smashing community day out.

Being Mother

DEBBIE MOORE³⁷

My name is Debbie and I live in East Wall. I would like to tell you a bit of my story. I was a single mother of two disabled children, Amy and Daniel. I was renting accommodation and was offered a council house. All my time was spent going up and down to Temple Street Hospital where my son Daniel was very ill.

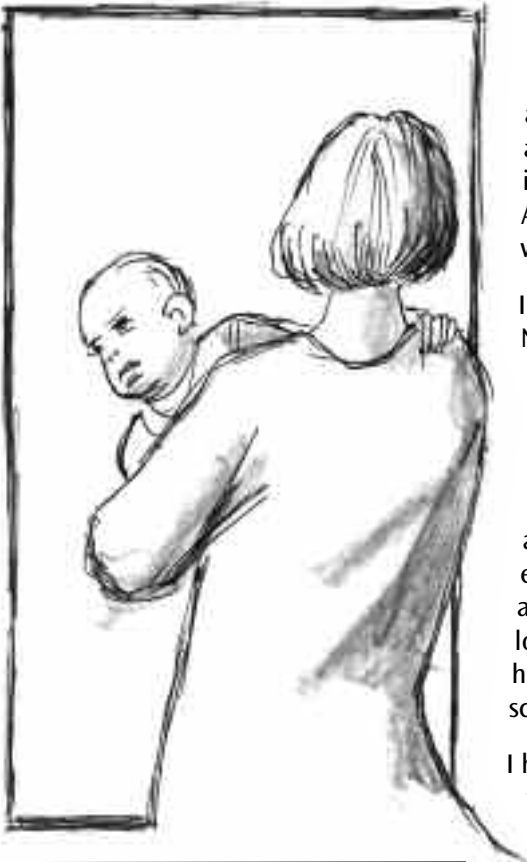
Unfortunately on January 15th 2002 Daniel died.

I was lost and went into myself and didn't know what to do. After a few weeks, I gave myself a kick in the backside as my daughter Amy needed me. At that time she was six years of age.

I heard there was work going in the North Wall Women's Centre and I got a job and some training there.

For three years I worked as a crèche assistant. I continued naturally to have good days and bad days. Then I went to work as a carer for the elderly, but found it extremely hard to hold down a job, as I needed to spend every hour looking after Amy. I needed to be at home when she got in from the school and the training centre.

I helped Amy to walk and to talk, to feed and to toilet. Believe me,



³⁷ Debbie – is a mother who lives in East Wall. Debbie told this story on Oct 17 at the gathering at the Human Rights and Poverty Stone, 2016.

though she is now twenty, I'm still doing these things for Amy. Luckily, she was in St Michael's House until she was eighteen years of age and at the moment she is in a training centre in Coolock. I'm dreading when she has to leave that centre.

The advice I have for any parent of a disabled child is, never give up ... keep fighting for your child. It has been a constant battle. I had to fight to get her a new wheel chair. It took months to get her a medical card, which was just for a twelve month period. To get Amy a place in the Training Centre was a hard struggle. Recently transport to the training centre for Amy was cut and Amy cannot be put on a bus without an escort, so I bring her to the centre daily. Right now I need a home with a bedroom downstairs, as Amy cannot climb upstairs. It is a never ending struggle.

What keeps me at my best and on my toes is Amy ... caring for her and enjoying her love. I know this love will keep me going until the end of my days. Of course, I still have good days and bad days. After ten years of being alone as a mother, I met my partner and he has made a very big difference to my life and to that of Amy. I am grateful to the family and friends I have around me. I look around and see parents out there who are much worse off than me, and I never feel sorry for myself and I never ask 'why me?' Actually I feel very lucky to have Amy in my life.

Thank you for reading some of my story and remember to keep fighting for your children.

Frilly

PATO BATT, SEAN McDERMOTT AND NOEL KELLY³⁸

My first loft was on Brigid's Gardens roof. It was more or less a hobby then. My brother got me involved on the roof of the flats looking after the loft. On the roof of each block of flats there could be two lofts and there were other lofts down on the verandas. There was fourteen blocks of flats with nearly eighty pigeons in each loft. So, around Sheriff Street, we are talking about over a thousand birds.

There was a lot involved in looking after pigeons. For starters, there was feeding, watering and daily cleaning the loft. This involved scraping the floor and setting fresh bedding with either saw dust or shavings. Most of the pigeons ate 'old bird mix' which was made with maple peas, corn and millo. At one time in my loft in Phil Shanahan's I had one hundred and thirty birds in five separate sections in the loft. About 1982, there was a fire in Noctors and with some of the destroyed sheeting from there, Sean McDermott, Noel Kelly and I built a new bigger loft.

When I later linked in with Sean McDermott and moved to Phil Shanahan it became a serious sport for me. It became my passion. It was an obsession. My pigeons kept me out of trouble. It was more than a hobby. It gave me something to be involved in. It's a great sport. It kept me sane with something to do, day in and day out. When other fellows might be up to no good, I had my pigeons.



³⁸ Pato, Sean and Noel – are pigeon lovers in the North Wall.

Sometimes we got pigeons by snaring them along the quays, or at other times, stray pigeons might come to our loft for food. Usually, we bought the father pigeon in Paddy's Pet Shop in Summerhill and often the hen was a stray. These would have a great family of racers who would be there or there about on race days. Most of us in Sheriff Street were affiliated with the North Road Pigeon Club on St Mary's Road in East Wall.

Racing pigeons in the North Wall was a very common sight. On a Friday night we would go to the club and get the bird marked with a rubber ring. Then on Saturday the birds would be liberated from places like Monaghan or Ballycastle, and they would race their way home.

The bird I want to tell you about is Frilly. She was a checker hen: ring number IHUC00421. She was my pride and joy. As a young bird she raced from Malin Head and was back home in two days. Unfortunately, she had a broken keel. I rested her for two weeks and then entered her in a race from Monaghan. She was first home. The following week in 1983, I entered her into a race from Troon in Scotland, which was 377 miles away. She was liberated in Scotland at six a. m. on Friday morning and she was back in my loft in Sheriff Street at twelve fifteen the following afternoon. I clocked in the bird and she was first home. She won a national cup and got a great write-up in the pigeons' magazine. More importantly, after winning two races in one week she got recognition from pigeon fanciers throughout the country. The second placed pigeon did not arrive into Wexford until four twenty that evening.

We had no money for betting but we actually did not believe that Frilly was such a winner. Later we paired her up with a stray pigeon and as a result we got a clutch of very good flyers. Frilly ended up flying both the North and the South Road and it was no bother to her to get home from Youghal, Skibbereen, Marybank or Barleycove.

In the 1990s when they began to knock the flats we gradually accustomed our birds to find a new home in Sean Mc Dermott's back yard on Oriel Street. Understandably, the pigeons were slow to move from their familiar lofts on the roofs of the flats. When the final flats were knocked in 1998, many local people got out of racing the homing pigeons. Yes, I still have some in my back garden now, but it is not the same anymore.

On Being a Loser

AUSTIN O CARROLL³⁹

I know it is incredibly self indulgent to talk about the experience of being a loser when one has just competed in the Paralympics which is the epitome of achievement in parasailing.

One day's sailing in the Paralympic sailing competition to go and we are in second last place with a chance tomorrow to improve to 11th out of 14. Teams we usually beat are beating us. We end up regularly at the back of the fleet. The back end of everything is unsavoury. So we are losers – real losers. What is it like to be a loser? It's depressing seeing myself at the back of fleet with no chance of catching up. It's depressing after four years of hard work seeing myself not improving – in fact disimproving. We were usually about 9th in most competitions, including the last three world championships. So we should not expect anything better. However you still dream you can do it. You start to believe you have improved so much you can do it. And you have improved – but so has everyone else! I have amazing support at home which has been so uplifting – but I want to do well in one or two races just for them and also to show them there was a chance we could make it. We did well in one race and they were so excited. I know how excited I get when my team is winning. I wanted them to experience much more excitement. We also wanted to put our best performance on, but are left with feeling we could have done better.

So why the hell did we spend four years preparing for this and why are we so on to sail tomorrow to improve to 11th? Why do losers continue to face losing? It's because those races we did well in are so ingrained in our memory – they were just so exciting. It's because we just might, just might win a race. It is also in knowing we are competing at the top level of our sport, and watching the skill of our fellow sailors is wonderful. It's the feeling of being out there in the boat trying to see how one can race better. A friend of mine once noted that sailing was like chess on water – first you must work on a myriad of boat rig

39 **Austin** – is a doctor in Dublin's north inner city with a passionate commitment to quality health care for homeless people. He is also a paralympian sailor and this reflection is an extract from his blog from Rio 2016.

factors and boat handling skills to make your boat sail as fast as it can. Then you have to look at wind strength, shifts and water current. Then lastly, you must watch what your competitors do. Mastering this skill, even if it only shows in one or two races, feels as if you have become tuned to the wind.

But mostly we race again because we really want to see if we can give our friends and family at home one last thrill ... one last exciting run to the line. Their enthusiasm amplifies our own.

Walking Down The Recovery Road

ACRG CREATIVE WRITERS GROUP⁴⁰

Fifty-Seven Years Of The Unknown

Spending most of my life being ashamed of what I've done,
Looking back it was not much fun,
It's never too late for me to change my addiction ways,
I know that was not the real me,
But I have found some people that will help me be free,
With these people I know I am not alone,
As with other people it caused friction,
It's not their fault they don't understand,
Because they never lived in my fantasy land,
Now the fog is beginning to lift,
It is time now to enjoy my gift,
I will strive to find the real person,
The spiritual, physical, healthy and emotional me,
To regain trust and the love of my family and friends is my dream,
To follow and leave behind the actor who is nothing,
May God look down on me with pride,
Because when I am finished my programme I will have nothing to hide,
I am coming out of the darkness and into the light,
Thank God I see my future is bright,
I will learn to laugh, cry and shout,
After all isn't that what life is all about?

B. N.

40 The authors are participants in a Creative Writing Group at the ACRG on Seville Place.

Brown Thomas On The Outside

Brown Thomas on the outside, I'm Primark at my core,
This masquerade so colourful but big grey clouds galore,
My friend, my frown lies,
My smile it cries,
Silently my spirit dies,
So costly to display, this passive side,
This pride, my pain hid behind,
Wall of joy, well covered and so coy,
A boy so shy, battling a man's plan,
For success, to make progress from an addicted mess,
Of solitude, of dread, life laid out ahead of me,
The sunlight I now see, but shade can still consume me,
So near and yet so far, my game has suffered and surely dropped,
So now I'm below par, self will won't allow me conceal to victory,
Hand it over to surrender, take some guidance to believe,
My knowledge, my wealth I cannot spend,
My mental health it recedes,
My future hindered by my past, what is my destiny?
12 Steps to freedom I must take,
Of tolerance acceptance and of faith,
New growth ahead, embrace this path,
My spirit I'll now feel,
Family, friends please join me on this journey to recovery
To be freed.

K.S.

Walking Down The Road

I walk down the road
I walk down the road
There's a big hole in the ground
I did not see
I fall in
It is dark and I am alone
I can't seem to find a way out
I walk down the road
There's a big hole in the ground
I forgot all about
I fall in
It is dark and I am alone
I struggle to find my way out
I walk down the road
There's a big hole in the ground
I see it
I fall in again
It's dark and I am alone
I get myself straight back out
I walk down the road
There's a big hole in the ground
I walk around it
I take another street home.



J.G.

My Recovery

Sitting here free at last
Happy and recovering from my past
It's all over, it has ended, no more
Slaving no gravey in green
I am so lucky I made it through, with or without you, it's the best I can do
No more shame, no more guilt, no more injecting all that shit.
So let the road on this journey of recovery begin

Let me feel the joys deep down from here within
Let the laughter come. Let the tears fall
I am starting to see all that can be
I just need to keep chipping away at this as I am under no illusion I have it
licked.
So thank you God, thank you friends that I never have to use as long as I am
with you's
So it ends on this with a big kill
Happy joys and free is me

Hope

I sit at home in the dark
Now I'm starting to see the lights
It was such a lonely place
Where I had my biggest fright
My mind had me trapped
A prisoner to the drug
When deep down
All I wanted was a hug
Now I sit here
Nearly 90 days clean
Wanting the life
Of being clean and serene
I'm in recovery
At time it's tough to cope
I keep doing the work
I'm full of hope
I will stay clean
Once I use my support
I will not give up
Never ever abort
My family have their son
My son, his father back
Against this disease
I will not stop my attack
I walk down the road



My Recovery

I first started in a drug and alcohol free project in Tallaght
And I had to start with giving up the alcohol
Then I started to cut down on my Zimmos and Benzos
And then I started to come down slowly off my Methadone
And 15 months to get clean
It was the best journey it was surreal
I am now in the A.C.R.G. and it is great
I do the gym but can't lose the weight
Groups are hard and I need to talk
I love the trips but find it hard to walk
Looking forward to the convention and the dance

Love buying clothes just not deep pants
I love to go to meetings I love it
It's great
To go to McDonalds for something to eat
I am nearly 5 months clean what a goal
I love my music house-rave body and soul
I got tattoos a robotic arm
I was doing my body a lot of harm
My escapes go from here to there
Where can it stop where where where?
I get up in the morning and have a wash
I have my breakfast and have a big slash
I come in in the mornings and hear Just For Today
And when I am finished it's time to play
This is my story
All about my day
Can't wait 4 Friday have some chips and ray.

J.W.

Recovery

It started 7 months ago, the 22nd February
I went to Cuan Mhuire to start my recovery
Shaking and scared, I walked through the door
Leaving the life I could not live anymore
Full of doubt but a glimmer of hope
I needed help to learn how to cope
With the support and guidance from the women
It wasn't long I began to listen
Prayer and meditation helped slow me down
I started to smile again and lose my frown
After 15 weeks of patiently waiting
My girls came to see me, it was a joyous occasion
And when it was time, to move to transition
All my fears and insecurities came up to position
Now I am here and trying to find the real me
Hoping I can find my answer in A.C.R.G.

The Insanity Of The Mind!!

The insanity of the mind seems so far behind
But it's back again
The hurt, the pain is driving me insane
The mental obsession of this mother fricking disease
Has brought me to my knees
I want to fuck everything and run
But that means my disease has won
The demons in my head want me dead
So I must fight to see the light
It's okay everything is going to be alright
The guilt of feeling like filth from the things I have done
Buts it's all in the past these feelings won't last
The sadness is deep but I won't let myself weep
But I can't go back
I've fought so hard to beat this addiction
One day at a time
Keep remembering that everything will be fine.
You destroyed my dignity, my relationships, and my self-respect
you brought me to a place I'll never forget
I was a whore, you brought me to the floor
Man I can't live like this anymore.
So fuck the attitude and express the gratitude
It's just for today and the mental obsession to drink will go away



Don't you give up
Look at the good things you have done
The freedom I've felt, the peace of mind, the feeling of love
Happiness and joy
The amazing people you have met
The belly laughs so don't throw that away
You have an amazing life ahead if you stay
In this journey of recovery, the journey of life
Because your disease will cut it with the sharpness of a knife
Stay strong and carry on
God is on my side to pull me up
So don't you quit or give up
IT'S JUST FOR TODAY. **A.S.**

What Recovery Means To Me

Recovery means a brand new life for me and the people close to me
It gives me a reason to get up in the morning and enjoy my day
And look forward to my day
Before my recovery my life was a real mess
I didn't want to live
I was a prisoner in my own bedroom and my head
I was paranoid seeing and hearing things that were not there
I could not look in the mirror at myself
I was not the man I once was
I was so alone I thought a good few times of ending my own life
I broke my families and my daughter's heart
And at the time it did not bother me
And to this day I don't know how I could have done that
To the people I love but I did.
I was caught up that bad in addiction I missed out a lot of my daughter's
birthdays, Christmas and time I could have spent with her
I wasn't there when my family members needed me there for them
Or even just a bit of support from me
when they were going through a bad time

I never felt so empty, worthless and lonely in my life
Now that I am in recovery things are a lot better
I have my daughter back in my life
I am always there for her now
I spent my first Christmas clean and sober in 2015
I have been there for my daughter's birthday this year
And I want to be in her life
I am getting on great with my family now
And they want me in their life.
I get up every morning now and thank God
For the day I am going to have
Looking at myself in the mirror now is easy
I have great peace of mind now
My paranoia is gone
I don't see things or hear voices anymore
I love being with my daughter and family now
And I know if any of them need me
I will be there for them
I am starting to enjoy my new life which is a big difference
From the time I was a prisoner in my own room
I am still not out of the woods yet
As I still have a lot of work to do on myself
But I look forward to it
And if I keep doing the right things
I will be grand
I look forward to the future

D.G.

The Street ⁴¹

EDDIE BYRNE

Remember ma and da would say, 'go out there, enjoy and play
But never bring trouble to this door.'

Hopscotch, marbles, kick-d-can, anything you want my friend
You can do so much more.

Fr Tonge sings from the Book of Genesis

'You are a child of the world, spread your wings and away ye go'.

Its yok-a-bob and thing-a-migigus, holy mackerel
Hear them ring the bells for mass every single morning of the week.
Remember this I'll clip your ears, slap your jaws, hey listen here!
You'll be grounded for all eternity and much, much more
If you misbehave yourself out there, on that street, on that street.

Every dream is lived there, every boy was soccer's best.
All the girls, great big movie stars, it was every dream to the wishing well.
Don't forget the Balcony Belles, some won, some lost, but we all had a go.
From the myth of being poor, therein the truth it lies.
But can you still hear the Larrier's cry, 'all you can do is get out there and try.'

Folk legend, pop sensation, Gaelic's greatest, white blues player
Boxing pro champ, lord mayor forever, premier basketballer, soccer stars
Enya's producer, top play writer, Hollywood director, Oscar winner, Catholic
bishop, head of Interpol
Believe you me, they were all just kids there on this street.

Exploding outa here into a great big world
But please, please come back again.
You'll always be our long lost friends, don't say 'will I, won't I'
'Can I, should I', jump and give it a go.
Don't say 'sheme me, don't say maybe', if you do, you'll never know

41 **Eddie** – a singer, songwriter from the North Wall who is the musical director of the St Laurence O'Toole Folk Group.

Remember its yok-a-bob and thing-a-migigus, holy mackerel
Hear them ring the bells for mass every single morning of the week
Enya's producer, top play writer, Hollywood director, Oscar winner, Catholic
bishop, head of Interpol
Believe you me, they were all just kids there on this street.
Folk legend, pop sensation, Gaelic's greatest, white blues player
Boxing pro champ, lord mayor forever, premier basketballer, soccer stars.

God bless our mas and das from our street.

The Parish of St Laurence O'Toole Dublin 1844-1850

ANN MATTHEWS⁴²

In the 1840's the North Docks area of Dublin city was located within the Civil Parish of St Thomas. (Marlborough Street). The main employment in the area was at the 'Ballast Office, Custom House Docks, the Railway, the Steam Packet Company, the Vinegar Works, the Vitriol Works, the Bottle Works, and the Lime Works'. In 1843 the building of the railway bridge in Seville was ongoing for the Dublin & Drogheda Railway Company and the Ordnance Map for 1847 shows a Railway Carriage factory located across the road from the proposed site of the new chapel. (now Ferryman's Crossing).

It was estimated that between 1843-48 the total population of the North Docks was about 4,000 and comprised members of various faiths, Catholic, Church of Ireland, Methodists, Presbyterian, and other evangelical faiths. It was calculated that the Catholic population was around 50% and their parish church was the Pro-Cathedral Parish of St Mary's, located in Marlborough Street, about one mile from the junction of Lower Sheriff Street/ Seville Place.

With over 2,000 parishioners living in the North Docks a decision was taken by the Archbishop of the Dublin Diocese, Dr. Murray, to create a new parish, with a new chapel and two schools for boys and girls. The parish was created within the boundary of the Custom House, Amiens Street, the North Strand Road to Anseley Bridge, then along the East Road to the Light House, (near where the Point Depot is located), then along the North Quays to the Custom House Quay, (where the Famine memorial is located). The architect, Mr. B. Keane, was appointed to design the chapel, a neo-gothic structure, described thus: (see image on next page)

The shape the Chapel will be cruciform - the total length within the walls, 130 feet, the length of the transepts, 75 feet by 35 and the lower shaft of the cross

42 Ann – originally from Coburg Place is a successfully published historian and lectures in History at Maynooth University.



NEW CHAPEL OF ST. LAURENCE O'TOOLE,
 NEAR THE RAILROAD:
NORTH-STRAND.

THIS locality comprising the district between the North-wall and the North Strand from the Custom-House, to Annally-Bridge and the Lights-House, contains a population of between three and four thousand souls, who are unprovided with Chapel accommodation, and deprived of all the advantages of a resident Clergy.

A Plot of Ground for the building of a Chapel has been generously granted, and free, on lease for ever, by Charles Kennedy, Esq. of Capel-street, who has aided, besides, his liberal donation of £100.—His Grace the Archbishop, has given his generous contribution of £50.

The shape of the Chapel will be Cruciform—the total length within the walls, 130 feet; the length of the Transepts, 75 feet by 35, and the lower part of the Cross or Nave, 75 feet by 35; the interior height of the walls, 40 feet; the breadth of the Tower, 20 feet; its height, 120 feet.

The style of Architecture will be Gothic; the cost of the work of the shell, £2,000

You are earnestly entreated to contribute towards this desirable object—to well calculated to secure the salvation of souls—to promote the improvement of the Neighbourhood, and to confer a lasting benefit on yourselves. The Holy Sacrament of the Mass will be offered up once every week for the spiritual and temporal welfare of the Contributors, Collectors, and other supporters of this charitable undertaking. Donations received by the Rev. JOHN HANCOCK, MacDonough-street.

or nave, 75 feet by 35, the interior of the walls, 40 feet; the breadth of the tower, 20 feet; its height, 120 feet...the height of the tower with spire to be 150 feet.

The cost of building the shell of the chapel was put at £2,000 and on 20 June 1844 at 6.a.m the Archbishop of Dublin, Dr. Murray laid the first stone. The land for the chapel and the two schools was donated 'free of all charges' by Charles Kennedy, Esq, of Capel Street, Dublin and the site described as

NEW CHAPEL OF ST. LAURENCE O'TOOLE.

Near the Rail Road, North Strand.

This locality, comprising the district between the North wall and the North-Strand, from the Custom-House, to Annesley Bridge and the Light-House, contains a population of between Three and Four Thousand Souls.

THE WORKS OF THE BALLAST OFFICE,
OF THE CUSTOM HOUSE DOCKS,
OF THE RAIL ROAD,
BY THE STEAM PAUERT COMPANIES,
THE VITRIOL WORKS,
THE VITRIOL WORKS,
THE BOTTLE WORKS,
THE LIME WORKS.

are all carried on within the limits of this district.

The Tradesmen and poor Labourers employed throughout (many of whom are residents of the district), are unprovided with Chapel accommodation,—and deprived of all the advantages of a resident Clergy, who would supply them with instruction, and ministry to their spiritual wants.

A Plot of Ground suitably eligible and ample for the building of a commodious Chapel in this neighbourhood, has been generously granted, rent free, on lease for ever, by Chas. Kennedy, Esq. who has added, besides, his liberal donation of £100.

The project is fully sanctioned with the approval and blessing of His GRACE, the Archbishop, and with his generous contribution of Fifty Pounds.

The Plot of Ground is triangular; the Apex, or Eastern point, faces the Canal Bridge,—one of the sides extends along the Circular

'triangular, with 'the Apex, or Eastern point facing the Royal Canal Bridge, with one side extending 254ft., along Seville Place, 236ft along Sheriff Street and the base of the triangle, at 180ft ran 'parallel to Oriel Street, and the Drogheda Rail Road'. Charles Kennedy also donated £400 towards the project and he continued to give donations annually for several years. Fundraising was extensive and for the year November 1843-45 a sum of £1,973 1s 81/2d was raised all over the city by businesses, shopkeepers, and workers. In 1845, a weekly parish collection was instigated to enable the families in the area make donations.

Table 1 - The Expenditure on the Chapel 1844 - 45:

Labour, Wages and Materials	£1,568 0s 4 1/2d
Architect	£55 0s 0d
Printing, Publishing, Lithography, etc.	£23 5s.10d
Stamps for contract	£5 0s 0d
Poundage to Mr Carroll collector	£6 13s 3d
Mr Fraser for Smiths' Works	£5 18s 9 1/2d
Collection Boxes	£1 0s 0d
Total	£1,975 6s 0d

Source: Account Book Chapel of St Laurence O'Toole and The Freemans Journal 27 November 1845.

The building project was managed by the architect and a clerk of works and in November 1846, more than two years after the first stone was laid 'the walls had been 'raised to a height within fifteen feet of the roof'. At the annual meeting of the project committee it was reported that the slow progress was due to the 'system of doing the work in small parcels' as the money came in and so the building work was done in fits and starts. The first reference to the chapel in the Ordnance Map was in 1847 and this states that 'chapel unfinished'.

In December 1848 a decision was then taken by the project committee to hire a competent contractor to 'undertake to finishing it all off at once'. They appointed an established builder, Mr John Bell, and he undertook to finish the shell of the building for £2,117. He was paid £617 upfront, with the remainder paid over a four-year period. In December 1848, a renewed and vigorous fundraising effort was instigated to have the chapel completed and again contributions came from all over Ireland and Britain. In December 1848, the project committee decided to give Charles Kennedy a family vault so that his memory would 'live for ever'.

The Ordnance Map for 1847 shows that workers' housing was built in clusters of cottages and small houses. This housing was largely concentrated at Aldborough Court, Church Road, Sheriff Street Lower, Mayor Street Lower,

Newfoundland Street, and the North Wall (see Table Two). Residents of middle and professional class lived in Amiens Street, Coburg Place, Seville Place, North Strand and Sheriff Street Upper and Lower.

In addition, those parishioners who donated to the weekly collection were recorded in the parish income and expenditure ledger by name, address, and donation. This is a wonderful document; it is essentially a social history because it records the multiple and varied occupations of the heads of households. To name just a few, these ranged from clerks, carpenters, dock workers, labourers, river pilots, shopkeepers, tailors, teachers, shoemakers, and many other skilled artisan class. The different grades of railway workers are recorded too.

For example, in Emily Place there was a teacher named Ferdinand, in Coburg Place there was a musician, a river pilot, and a policeman, and in Lower Sheriff Street a ship's captain. This street was also the chief shopping street of the parish with dairies, grocers and butchers. The most populated area was Newfoundland Street which contained many clusters of small cottages. In these cottages, there were mostly dock and railways labourers, and there were many widows. There were also in the area a few mansion houses, like Aldborough House, North Court House and Castle Forbes.

The building of the two new schools (Boys and Girls) begun in 1847, was completed by November 1848, and one of the rooms was used as a temporary chapel. However, the room could not accommodate mass goers and sometimes they 'knelt during mass in the dirt and mud of the open street'. By December 1848, the parish and its schools were fully active and on Christmas Day 1848, thirteen girls between the ages of twelve and fourteen years received their First Communion. Finally, on 24 June 1850, with the tower still incomplete Archbishop Murray dedicated the chapel to the patron saint of Dublin, St Laurence O'Toole, and three years later in October 1853, the parish was formally declared by Cardinal Cullen, Primate of All Ireland.

During the following decades, the North Docks expanded into a significant industrial and national transport hub, and as the population kept expanding more workers' cottages and houses were built. Many of the skilled and unskilled workers came from England and Scotland as well as rural Ireland. Nonetheless the North Docks area retained its original ecumenical atmosphere.

In 1869 the church of St Barnabas and a school was completed for the Church of Ireland community in the North Docks.

Table 2 Census of the Catholic families in the North Docks 1848

Street names and their Catholic population

Newfoundland Street	353	Sherriff Place	39
Mayor Street Lower	242	West Road	36
Sheriff Street Lower	196	Emerald Place	34
North Wall	180	Nixon Building	29
Church Road	150	Common Street	28
Aldborough Court	137	Seville Place	25
North Strand	80	St Laurence Place	25
Guild Street	78	Seville Place	24
Sheriff Street Upper	63	Whitworth Row	23
Unreadable	60	Coburg Place	22
Brady's Cottages	59	Back of Bennet's House	18
Mayor Street Upper	54	East Road	18
Oriel Street Upper	54	Tighe's Cottages	17
Murphy' Lane	52	Seville Lane	16
North's Court Cottages	50	Emily Place	13
Amiens Street	49	Oriel Place	10
Orr's Cottages	47	Story's Cottages	8
Thompsons Row	45	Scalley's Cottages	5
Canal Banks	41	Back of Maguire's Shop	4
Quay View Place	40		
Oriel Street Lower	39		

Source: Parish records of St. Laurence O'Toole.

Cherishing All The Children Of The Nation Equally

SHARON HARDING⁴³

This was the title of a photographic exhibition launched on 1 July 2016 in Hill Street Family Resource Centre by the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs, Katherine Zappone.



'Lisa' Jing xia Miao, her husband and four children

'Cherishing all the children of the nation equally' is one of the most profound statements in the 1916 Proclamation of Independence and the theme Hill Street Family Resource Centre used to look at the community in and around Hill Street, one hundred years on.

The exhibition was a collaboration with photographic artist Jeanette Lowe, who took photographs of families attending our resource centre and living in and

43 Sharon – Development Worker, Hill Street Family Resource Centre.



Nadia Douglas, her partner and two children

around Hill Street. The photographs were taken using a sofa as a metaphor for the heart of the family, and the concept behind this was a little like a photographic version of Gogglebox.

We wanted to visually communicate the changing face of our community one hundred years on. We used photography to cross cultural, generational and linguistic barriers, and to raise awareness of our similarities as people, regardless of our differences. Fifty families from eighteen nationalities, all living in the Hill Street area, were represented in the exhibition. The motivation behind it was to capture a moment in 2016, and to raise awareness of the changing face of our community and the wide variety of people we now call neighbours. It was a great opportunity to talk to the families living close to and using our centre about what community and belonging meant to them.

We live in an ever-expanding city where communities are constantly changing and families from around the globe are now living around the corner as our neighbours. The environment is much more diverse than the one I grew up in. It was a wonderful project to be involved in, and it was great to meet people from around the world who are now living in our community. Families spoke of their hopes for the future, about belonging and being part of the local

community, and what that feels like to them. We explored questions such as how do people see their community? Is community about where your family has lived for generations, or is it the people with whom we share our day-to-day lives? Is it the parents of our children's friends? Is it the person standing next to you in the local shop? Who does the community belong to?

Looking around, I saw neighbours from a variety of countries who have chosen to put down roots here in Ireland. Their children are Dubs, as many of them were born and are being reared in Dublin.

The exhibition was a real insight into the strength and diversity of our community, and people looking at the photographs were astounded by the changes that have taken place here over the last one hundred years. All of the families photographed call the North Inner City their home.

The photographs will be exhibited in the Ilac Centre during the month of February 2017.