Douglas Deering 12th May 1977

SEFF remembers Douglas Deering whose 43rd Anniversary is today. Douglas was murdered by PIRA terrorists on 12th May 1977 in his own shop in Rosslea.

It is understood the gunman walked in to the shop and shot Douglas Deering a number of times with a pistol. He escaped through the village and made off towards the border in a car and got away. Douglas had two ladies working with him in the shop.

The scenes of crimes people recovered cases of a .45 Colt pistol and they discovered that this same pistol was also used to shoot a part-time RUC reserve officer in Armagh City.

He was the last Protestant shopkeeper in Rosslea, in south-east Fermanagh and was not and never had been a member of the security forces.

Married with three children he attended a Gospel Hall in Clones (Plymouth Brethren). His shop had been bombed four times by the time of his murder.

It is believed that Douglas was murdered because he was a Justice of the Peace and would have also served members of the army in his business.

In the past decades, there used to be three shops in Rosslea village on the border run by Protestant or Unionist families and there was a fourth man who used to buy eggs for Gracies, and there was a sawmill here run by the Hazlett family. So there were approx five Protestant businesses, but one by one they were squeezed out of the border area.

There was also an explosion at the Protestant Primary school during the Troubles.  The terrorists had no conscience about planting a bomb close to a School.

SEFF member Ian Wiggins recalled how the Plymouth Brethren had a very small church group in the area and Douglas recruited the local Church of Ireland members to go to the Sunday School.

“They were very good to us, my brother and I went to the Sunday school, and I was very friendly with Douglas. I was on duty on that particular evening, when we got a report that a man had been shot dead that day in Rosslea. The sergeant called the patrol car back and off we went.

“We pulled up at Deering’s shop and the sergeant said come on in, and I said I’m not going in. I said I want to remember that man, the way he was. He taught me at Sunday school. I could not go in.”

The Deering family are in SEFF’s thoughts and prayers today and every day.