

EXPERIENCES

• *that shaped our lives* •

.....



SEFF Members'
Take a trip down memory lane



South East Fermanagh Foundation (SEFF)

Preface

The compilation of short stories and pieces of Poetry that you are about to read is the culmination of many months of endeavour by a number of people.

The method of writing used within the Book is, the Language Experience Approach (open punctuation style) This method was developed originally in New Zealand, is widely used in United Kingdom, Canada and USA ie the English speaking world. The method is respected academically and is based on being true to the storyteller.

Firstly we wish to thank the Facilitator for the Project Mrs Maura Glendinning who worked tirelessly with participants to try and ensure that the integrity of what it is they wanted to say was represented in print format.

We also wish to recognise the Victims and Survivors Service who provided the funding which enabled the Project to take place, that investment was a necessity to turn an idea into something tangible.

Lastly we say a very genuine thank you to all those who participated in the Project, who shared experiences of deep trauma, humour and everything else in between.

The title of the Book aptly represents the journey that participants were on whilst engaging in the Project. 'Experiences that shaped our lives' is an interesting and compelling read which gets to the heart of how life was and the many restrictions and apprehensions people felt. However within the Book there is also a deep desire and hope for something better and it is in this vane why we are all involved in South East Fermanagh Foundation.

The Project links in with other initiatives which SEFF has developed in recent years including; our Book and DVD Project, 'I'll Never Forget' which depicts the experiences of over 60 innocent victims/survivors of terrorism and the traumas they experienced, the South Fermanagh Border Trail which provides people with an opportunity to pay tribute to those who perished at the hands of terrorism, the Youth DVD Project; 'The Past Cannot be the Future' (which features 30 younger people who share their views and impressions of the Past but also their hopes and aspirations for a better future)



Through reminiscence and the sharing of actual life experiences SEFF believes that a sense of Acknowledgement and Recognition is able to be offered to Victims/Survivors and that an empowering effect can result.

In having the courage to share difficult and traumatic experiences our members are also doing a service for others in providing them with an opportunity to learn and to engage with matters pertaining to the Past, walking in the footsteps of those who have experienced traumatic and difficult circumstances.

We thank all those who gave of their time in helping produce what is an interesting and inviting read.

Yours,

Kenny Donaldson
Director of Service
South East Fermanagh Foundation

Index

Telling Our Stories.....	5
Talking	6
I don't know	7
My Brave Daddy.....	8
Sam Clarke.....	10
Harry.....	12
William	13
Victor	14
Richie	14
Eva Martin	15
It was so bad.....	16
Army Training.....	17
Our Children.....	18
I was eleven or twelve then	19
I was fifteen.....	20
We all have to live in peace.....	21
Closest I came to a bomb	22
Bombs	23
Car Bomb.....	25
Our House Bombed	26
Our Filling Station	28
My Christmas Cake	30
Sweet Pea.....	31
Over My Dead Body	32
An Awful Week.....	34
Meting the Prime Minister	35
Trooping of the Colour	36
A Day I Will Never Forget.....	38
Fifty Years Ago	40
Cousin Terence.....	40
Enniskillen 1987	41
Enniskillen 2012	42
Love is Eternal	43



Telling Our Stories

Some people are not ready to tell their story
 But for those who are ready
 If they are comfortable
 They can speak about harrowing stuff

I do believe that the book helped
 A lot of people were able to speak
 About things they never talked about before
 Some people cannot
 I know that

My Dad feels better that his story is told
 Things he couldn't tell his family
 Now it is down on paper
 Everyone got the DVD
 It encourages families to talk about events in the past

Children had picked up on much more than first thought
 Maybe it is about time
 Stories need to be told, shared
 Lots of relief, release

When we shared the book
 We heard about a time when a bomb went off here
 A girl at college in England
 Was asked to support her friend
 'Can you bring her home?'
 She had to travel home
 Knowing that her friend's sister had died
 But that she could not tell her!

It was a long and difficult journey
 She had never told anyone that story
 She kept it hidden all the years

*By one person telling their experiences
It triggers memories in others
Hopefully encouraging them to tell their story*

*It can be traumatic
So help is always offered
To those who may need support
When remembering
Difficult times of their lives*

Audrey Watson



Talking

*The more you talk about it
The easier it is – they do say
Talking, expressing yourself helps you to cope better*

*There are days I am stronger than others
There are days when I am weak
I am now widowed thirty three years*

Anon



I don't know

*Where we were living, there were twenty houses
Four Protestant, sixteen Catholic
My husband was in the UDR
He was a baker
So he went out at all hours*

*I said to my daughter
If anyone asks you
What time your Daddy will be back
Say 'I don't know'*

*Sometimes I used to think
That the answer suited her
I would ask her things
And she would say
'I don't know!'*

*One day I was in her primary school
I met her teacher
She said
'Your daughter will not pass the 11 plus
Anything I ask her
She says - I don't know'*

*My daughter did pass the 11 plus
She went to college
She became a teacher*

*I would often think
I would like to speak to that teacher
I would tell her
She didn't know!*

Anon

My Brave Daddy

It all changed with the Troubles
 I was born in March 1969
 School was grand, but when you went to the high school
 You talked with friends and you understood what was going on
 Daddy was a school bus driver
 He was killed on the 1st February 1985
 I was 15 when Dad was killed
 I was doing work experience at Heather McFarlane's hairdressers.
 Heather's sister brought me down to Carrowshee where she lived
 I could hear the sirens through the town

Mum had been working in the primary school
 She had just come out of the post office
 Roy Kells told her that there had been an accident on the school bus
 The school bus was waiting outside the gates at Derrylin Primary School
 It was a certain run, every Friday to the Lakeland Forum
 Dad had to wait fifteen to twenty minutes
 The Principal kept the children back that day

Three gunmen got on the bus just after 9am
 They shot him
 He had no face left, no hands
 Dad was taken to the Enniskillen Hospital morgue
 Roy Kells and Jack Leckey were able to identify Dad
 The only reason we were able to bring him home was if the coffin
 was not opened
 Jack Lecky told us afterwards how Dad was

He was the third brother in his family to be killed
 Ronnie on 5th June 1981
 Cecil on 1 November 1981, just five months between them
 Ronnie was 39, Cecil 32, Dad was 39 - all in their thirties
 Granny was dead then but Granda was still alive
 It was awful to see him at the funeral - his three sons wiped out

Dad had been shot at and threatened to get out, but he wouldn't go
 He got threatening letters
 We didn't know about the letters - one every week for three weeks
 'Get out of your house or you will be dead!'
 He came home around lunchtime and got the letters
 He told his friend who was in the UDR, another bus driver
 He didn't tell Mum or the rest of us

I was the first in the family, I was very close to Dad
 I felt anger, just felt - why us again!
 Anger was the main feeling
 I kept his beret and his belt
 We kept some things for ourselves

You dream when you get married your Dad walks you up the aisle
 I missed him big time on my wedding day
 My brother stood in
 My girls have missed out on knowing him
 I used to stay with my grandparents, they can't do that
 Kirsty did something for him at Remembrance
 Zara is not old enough

We used to get 20p to spend on sweets
 I would buy polo mints
 I would leave them on the mantelpiece beside his keys
 He would take the polo mints with him when he went out on duty

When I see polo mints, that's what I remember
 I would never buy a packet of polo mints now

Sharon Clarke



Sam Clarke

*Sam Clarke was a born and bred Fermanagh man
He served in the army and the RUC
He was always in a uniform
He was murdered at the age of fifty three*

*We got married in June 1975
I remember we were listening to the late night news
It was November 1975
We heard that there had been an incident
My husband just knew that it was Sam
He just knew*

*The door bell went
We were told that Sam had been murdered
My husband headed to Castlecaulfield
Sam's father took it really hard
I was eighteen at that time*

*The RUC had received a phone call from the Garda
To go out and give notice of a death to a family
It turned out to be a bogus call
The gunmen jumped out of the hedge
Sergeant Maxwell was killed too
He left young children*

*Afterwards, Sam's father called for no retaliation
They had all served in the forces
His brother had been blown up while serving in the UDR
He had been injured
Sam had been shot several times
I remember Sam's coffin was open*

*Sam was the straightest man
He had great values*



*He was humourous
His wife, Helen, was in the police
His daughter joined too
The house always stayed as a shrine to him
Nothing ever got moved*

*Sam was in the Howard Memorial Band
He carried the staff
The 21st of June was the pipe band's big day in Enniskillen
I chose to remember him in the band
I feel that no one else is left to do it
His sister is in Chester, she is eighty three
I do not think that he should be forgotten*

*He was proud to be a Fermanagh man – born and bred
He should not be forgotten*

Phyllis Clarke



Harry

I t was the shooting of Harry Creighton that really affected me
 That was the first thing that hit me hard
 He was a librarian and had his wedding date set
 He was trying to get some money together to set up house
 I got to know him through farming

*Harry impressed me as an honest decent young chap
 He chose to wear a uniform
 My brother in law was a member of the UDR
 He was living at Magheraveely when the shooting happened
 He got the call and went to Creighton's
 My wife's family and the Creighton's went to school together*

*I had a stake – a farm and a young family
 I thought it was my duty to do something
 I made up my mind to join the UDR*

George Latimer



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William

*O*ne of the hardest things I had to do was not actually to do
 with the UDR
 It was a farmer on the other side of Newtownbutler
 The IRA set a booby trap bomb for the soldiers foot patrol
 Next morning the farmer was looking at his cattle
 He stepped on the booby trap and it blew him to pieces
 He had a little dog with him and it blew it to pieces too

*I heard that explosion
 It was near the hall
 I am a member of the lodge
 I came to the end of the lane where the explosion was
 The police said to go on up, they could need help
 I walked around the field and picked up pieces of the man's body
 It was a terrible experience*

*That man was William Trotter
 He did nothing but good
 He would have called with people that were house-bound
 He read the Bible to them*

*It was true what the pastor said at the funeral
 'He died that others might live'
 That still sticks in my mind
 It's something I can't forget*

George Latimer



Victor

Another incident was when Victor Morrow was shot
 We were called out
 He was walking in to Newtownbutler to get his lift to work
 As we walked up, I saw a chip on the road
 I was told afterwards that it was part of Victor's skull

They shot him in the back, from behind
 That's an example of the cowardice of what they did
 He would have been in his fifties
 A man that did no harm to anyone

George Latimer



Richie

Richie Latimer served along with me
 He was shot in his hardware store in Newtownbutler in the
 middle of the day

About a week before he was shot
 We were on patrol together
 After the tea break, he couldn't find his beret

He said to me
 'Its not much difference whether I find it or not,
 I think I am high on the list'

He may have been told that
 A Catholic neighbour we knew would have told him
 If he had got any inkling, he would have let him know

Richard was a modest bloke
 He treated everyone the same

George Latimer



Eva Martin

Eva Martin taught me in school
 She was our French teacher
 She lost her life in Clogher
 The first Greenfinch to be killed

She was only twenty eight
 I remember we heard the bomb
 My father said
 'That's definitely Clogher'
 It was seven miles away

Eva was pretty
 In school we always waited to see what she wore
 Her skirts were short, shorter than the other teachers
 She wore long knee boots

She was a Lisbellaw girl
 She married Richard from Fivemiletown
 She was a great role model
 A really lovely girl

Phyllis Clarke



It was so bad

*In the 1980's at one stage it was so bad
We were discussing in our UDR section who would be next
The most vulnerable time was getting out of the car at home
You had to get out and walk to your door with your kit and rifle
We did our best to escort each other home
We just hoped we would come through it*

*Everything I did on the farm, I had to be careful
Opening gates or lifting bales of hay
You were always waiting for something to be there
The regular army members were sleeping in our out-offices
They were billeted in Crom and would do night patrols*

*One night they knocked at our door
It was a winter's night about eight or nine o'clock
It was not usual for anyone to call
The children were small and in bed
My wife was brushing the floor when the knock came
She said she wished the brush was a rifle to protect herself*

George Latimer



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Army Training

*In the early stage of the Troubles
The Earl of Erne did not want staff on the estate joining the UDR
Then the IRA placed a bomb in the milking parlour
He addressed them and asked them to join the UDR*

*The gamekeeper asked me if I would join
I lived convenient to the estate
We discussed it and I made up my mind to join*

*I thought it would be a matter of two or three years
Both of us would serve twenty years of hard times
We came through it together*

*There was one time we were on training on explosives in Crom
We were using an old car to demonstrate the power of explosives
Following training, the instructor asked a member of Crom staff
'Will you dispose of this?'
He just tipped the car into waste ground*

*A Catholic neighbour came to me and said:
'George, be careful
They have put a bloody bomb at the end of the road!'*

*When I heard about the old car
With the wires hanging out of it
I knew what it was!*

George Latimer



Our Children

One time I had a minor car accident on the way home
 I hit a bump on the road and lost control of the car
 I had to go to the hospital to get stitches
 I came home with a bandage on my head.
 Our son said: 'Has Daddy been in a bomb?'

When our oldest girl was about eleven
 She was having nightmares about me going out on duty
 She was a worrier
 We took her to the doctor
 He advised that she should not see me in uniform
 He prescribed medication
 She would lie awake at night
 Waiting for me to come in from duty

George Latimer



I was eleven or twelve then

Daddy first got shot at in 1980
 It was a couple of hundred yards from the house
 He was leaving home to go to work and was in the car on the main road
 The bullets riddled the car
 He lay down over the two front seats

Mum was at home
 She was taking ashes out of the fire when she heard the shots
 She ran down the lane
 Daddy shouted to her to get back
 He ran upstairs to get his rifle and shot back
 There were three boys coming through a gap in the hedge
 They were coming for him

A neighbour was bringing in his milking cows
 They hijacked him and his car
 They brought him to the Knocks and held him there
 The car was later found burnt out
 They later let him go
 I was eleven or twelve then

After that the soldiers stayed in our hay shed for about six
 to twelve months
 We felt safer then
 We got flares and big heavy mahogany doors

We travelled on the school bus from Brookeborough
 The Catholics on the bus called you names
 My brother used to get into fights with them
 Many a time he got a black eye and a cut lip

They called you
 'Orange trollop'
 'Protestant bitch'

'We will put you out!'

*In class you would be waiting to go to Mr Morrison's office, the Principal
When anyone was called
You knew something had happened*

Sharon Clarke



I was fifteen

*When Daddy's remains came home
All the lights in our house went out*

*My uncle was sitting with Daddy's coffin
He was an electrician and he checked all the fuses
They were all ok
Then the lights went on again
It only lasted for about five seconds*

*Then the boys went driving up and down in cars
They were cheering and shouting
They were beeping the horn*

*The funeral was on a frosty morning
There were hundreds of people outside the house
When we got to the church
It was all a blur for me
All these people*

*I was fifteen
It was one of the biggest funerals*

Sharon Clarke



We all have to live in peace

*My husband worked with British Telecom
He did maintenance work in police stations
All the men in BT had to make their wills
They drove an unmarked car, not a van.
He worked out of Thiepval Barracks in Lisburn
He covered a huge area, as far as Claudy*

*He had a stroke at fifty on 1 August 1993 in Lisnaskea
After the stroke he couldn't climb a ladder
At fifty five he died, following a massive stroke*

*I have two sisters married to policemen
They maintain that I had life very easy during the Troubles
They talked about when their husbands 'went out on duty'
I was the same
We were all caught up in the Troubles*

*We never had a social life
You never knew when people were going to open their mouths
We had our fortnight's holiday every year
But we were never away too long until we were recognised
Every year, on the ferry you would meet someone
One year we did a coach trip in Cyprus
We met the tax man from Enniskillen*

*If you think it is over, you are in cloud cuckoo land!
It is not over by any means
It is there bubbling under the surface
I read the papers and I listen
A bomb under the car of a policeman in Belfast
A prison warden killed
The flags issue*

We all have to live in peace

I was a telephone operator for twenty seven years
 I listen
 I read newspapers
 My books are reference books
 Politics don't matter
 Peace does matter
 It is very important

I have peace of mind
 When you have peace of mind
 You have everything
 You are at peace with yourself
 At peace with the world
 And you get on with it

Joyce Greaves



Closest I came to a bomb

The closest I came to a bomb was one day I was home at lunchtime
 I worked in the Police Station and just lived across the road
 I was clearing out the fire
 I had just unlocked the back door
 I was going out with a tray of ashes when a bomb went off
 The ashes went up in the air and then fell down all over me
 The windows came in around me

It was a mortar bomb that fell short of its target and hit the road
 A man driving down the hill lost an eye
 All the houses in the park had roofs blown off
 I had windows blown out
 - then I went back to work



We had threats all the time
 We were told to vary our route
 But we didn't have much choice of routes
 You had to go through the police gate
 Or the UDR gate
 The UDR station was beside the police station then

Edna Simpson



Bombs

One evening around Easter time 1976
 I was working at the window of the shop
 A lady standing outside said
 'There is a duffel bag there'

It was a bag with wires and a battery showing
 I realised what it was
 The whole town was sealed off
 It exploded
 The whole front of the shop was lifted

Before that on one Saturday afternoon in November 1972
 There were some girls in the ladies' fitting room
 They were there a long time
 We didn't know what they were doing
 Then about 9pm that evening
 A fire bomb went off

The police alerted us
 The shop was on fire
 We looked in
 We saw the central staircase light
 Then the whole place went up

The shop was completely destroyed
That was our big bombing
The shop was burnt, rather than bombed
They didn't come from Cork to do it
During the Troubles, it was 'them and us'

We had ten bombs in the shop
Between that and the Post Office
Early on in the Troubles
A bus came down from the Knocks
There was a massive bomb in it

After that there were regular bombs
Every two or three weeks
On 4th November 1974
We were left with four walls
After a fire bomb

We got going again with a mobile shop
In the market yard
We put an ad to say
'With God's help
We are back in business
Bigger and better!'

We were congratulated for our courage
That congratulations was genuine
From all sides
I have always had good friends on the other side
And still have

I joined UDR C Company in 1971
I was returning from Frank Veitch's funeral on the first of February
He was shot at Kinawley, the first UDR man to be killed
I said to Albert Liddle, then Company Commander
'I am joining the UDR
He said 'It will never last eighteen months!'

I served for twenty two years
We lost ten members of C Company

Roy Kell



Car bomb.

In 1987 I joined C company UDR
I was platoon commander
In Lisnaskea you would get abuse in the street
Young ones would say
'We will get you!'
I never let it get to me

We ran a business
One day a local Catholic girl came in
She said to my wife
'Your husband needs to watch out
There are people who would do him harm'

There were incidents in Lisnaskea
I was on the phone one Sunday afternoon
When a bomb exploded
It was behind the Weavers pub

I knew it was close
There was a plume of smoke
A guy was lying in the road
Part of his lower leg was missing
He was a member of our C company

First Aid arrived in moments
Off duty firemen arrived

They told me not to let the guy drop off
 I slapped him to keep him conscious
 - maybe harder than I should have!
 The ambulance arrived in twenty minutes

That lad is walking around today
 You wouldn't know a thing happened to him
 The bomb went off before he got into the car
 He lost his lower leg
 He made a wonderful recovery

Eric Brown



Our House Bombed

On 7th May 1992 we lost our home
 We were bombed in Fivemiletown
 My son Keith was two
 His cot was flattened
 My girls never forgot it
 Lady Brookeborough asked if she could come and visit

In school my daughters class were writing about
 'The Worst Day of our Lives'
 Kelly spoke about the bomb
 The teacher said:
 'Your Kelly is the only one who has ever reduced me to tears
 I had to leave the room and go into the store'

People used to come to look at our bombed home
 They came to sight see!
 That would anger me
 It does more harm than good
 Anyone would know that



People would say
 'But you are alright'
 We were alright
 But so hurt on the inside
 To this day it hurts

We were not sure
 If the children would want to go back
 Baby Keith used to stiffen in the buggy
 When I was wheeling him past
 It was very obvious

The girls had counselling - on their own
 We wanted to be sure
 That they wanted to go back to their home
 The counsellor said
 'Absolutely no problem,
 The children want to go home'

We were looking at a bungalow
 The girls said
 'We are not going!'
 So it was definite
 We were going back
 But they had lost all their things
 Their toys, their bedroom

It took ages to sort things
 Between the building society
 And the Northern Ireland Office
 It took a year and two months
 We had no control over it

Phyllis Clarke

Our Filling Station

I got married in 1957
 I moved with my husband to Lisnaskea
 He had a job driving to Belfast while I worked part-time in an office
 I gave up work when I had our son

A few years from that we decided to start a filling station in Lisnaskea
 I worked with my husband in it
 Then my daughter, Yvonne, was born in 1965
 A few years went by and the Troubles became very active

One night there was a bomb left at the door of our filling station
 We were completely demolished
 It was very frightening for us as a family.
 It affected my young daughter more than any of us
 She was just six at the time
 She still suffers from the effects of it
 She would suffer from depression.

The company, Munster Simms, was very sympathetic to us
 They got us going again
 We worked from a mobile and got the pumps going
 We eventually built again

After a few years though
 My husband took a heart attack
 He was fifty
 He was in and out of hospital a lot
 He had a by-pass operation
 I continued to run the filling station
 While going up and down to the Royal to see him.

We decided to sell the filling station.
 It was for sale for two years but eventually it was sold
 We did not get a good price for it though

We were living close to the station at the time before moving to Maguiresbridge
 We bought land and built ourselves a nice bungalow

After we moved, my husband's health improved
 We were very happy there
 We went on holidays, we bought a caravan
 He loved driving, he was a good driver
 We would go to Scotland and England
 My daughter would come with us, my son was working

My husband's health was up and down
 But he was determined not to let it stop him
 He had different hobbies
 He learned to fly, but had to give that up
 He went clay pigeon shooting and played golf
 It was a new life for him and he enjoyed the company
 We made the garden together at the new place

My husband passed away in 2003, he was seventy-two
 It was a lovely Monday evening
 My son came in from work
 He was going to the clay pigeon shooting
 Norman said he would go too and he would drive his own car

After he had gone, about an hour and a half later
 I got a phone call to go to the hospital
 I didn't think the worst
 When I got to the ward where he usually was, I saw my son
 'Daddy's gone', he told me

Norman had just bought a new car the Wednesday before he died
 The firm kindly took the car back
 He was always changing cars
 He loved cars
 He bought in Gormley's in Dungannon

We were great company for each other
 We worked together in the filling station and in the garden
 I still feel lonely some times
 He was one of the first around here to have a by-pass operation
 I am thankful for that

Dora Lee



My Christmas Cake

In 1971 I taught cookery on a Monday night in Lisnaskea.
 The class was held upstairs above the library in the old courthouse.
 In November I made a Christmas cake.
 I stored it in one of the cupboards.
 The plan was to demonstrate icing the cake the following week.

However a bomb went off.
 The building was destroyed.
 My visual aids, the sewing machines and the fixtures and fittings were all blown
 to pieces
 The principal, Mr Hanna went out to inspect the damage
 When he returned I said "Did you find my Christmas cake?"
 He replied "No, not even a raisin".

Florence Creighton

Sweet Pea

I was only married when the Troubles started. Tommy was a second cousin of my
 husband. He and Emily lived on the next farm about a mile away. You would see
 Tommy coming down to the Customs post, he had a small job there

We had two children at the time and we had a filling station. I was bringing my
 mother-in-law to visit an old friend in Derrylin. Emily had just arrived at the filling
 station on her bicycle, she had a bunch of sweet pea with her from her garden. She
 said she would leave the bicycle at the shop and come with us in the car.
 We drove the six miles to Mrs McMullan's and Emily gave her the sweet pea.

When we got back to the filling station Emily got her groceries and we were talking. A
 car drove past very slowly, crawling. There were four boys in the car, it was a full car.
 The boys in the back seat kept looking at us
 Emily said
 'Those boys will know us the next time they see us'
 Then she said she would go on and make Tommy his tea. He was cutting the hedge

Less than two hours later, the boys returned. They went to her door, she tried to stop
 them. They went to the back door
 They shot her and shot Tommy. He was fifty four
 Albert heard the shooting and found Emily and Tommy both dead
 Emily and Tommy were close. I don't know how she would have lived without him

They also visited John Darling's house that same day. John was lucky, he was out in
 the fields and his wife and son were doing the milking
 Frances saw the men coming, she locked the door
 The men went in, John was not there – an unusual thing
 It was trauma for the whole family

You don't think anyone is going to stoop as low as that
 You never think that these things are going to happen

We had two bombs at the house, both at night. One was in November, we had to get
 the children out. The slates were blown off the roof. We didn't have a phone then, we

had to go to the post office to phone

I am glad I was young then

I had so much to do, I hadn't time to think

Joan Bullock



Over My Dead Body

Emily was my aunt, a sister of my mother. My mother visited Emily and my grandmother twice a week. She used to cycle to the pier, then put her bike on the boat and row across Trial Bay. She made that journey twice a week on a Tuesday and a Friday regardless of the weather - hail, rain or snow. Many a time we stood and watched her, you would see the boat disappear under the waves! On stormy days the wind and big white waves would come down Trial Bay

My mother passed away in 2000, Emily died in 1972, she would have had a good few years left. My earliest memory was of Mullinacoagh gate lodge on Lord Erne's estate. We lived in Derryvore from when we were children. Then my Mum and Dad moved to the Crom estate, they were there until my father passed away. He worked as a gardener and my two brothers followed him into gardening for some years

Tommy lived up the road in a farm house at Killynick. Emily and Tommy were going together for many years, we used to joke about it. She looked after her mother and it never entered her head to do anything else. After Granny's death, she and Tommy got married

After Granny died I stayed with Aunt Emily for a few weeks. I was working in the Earl of Erne School in Teemore, I was cook-in-charge. They decided to go to England to get married, her sister lived in Southport. They got the legal details sorted and got married there and came back to Killynick

I got married and had started my family. My son, Gary, was just a baby, he was born

in April 1972, and my daughter, Joan, was a toddler when Emily and Tommy were shot. We had moved to Crom, my husband was assistant gamekeeper

We had no phone. Lord Erne came to tell us. My husband and Lord Erne went round to Killynick. I can't remember if they were allowed in or not - probably not. I can remember Lord Erne coming to the house. I remember Gary clinging to me as if he knew something was wrong

I didn't go to the funeral, my husband went. Then there was the whole outrage of the blocking of the hearse going through Derrylin to Enniskillen. A crowd shouted and jeered and stopped the hearse, they shouted 'Two more bullocks for the abattoir'. It was dreadful. There were some dreadful things

Emily would have said 'They will shoot Tommy over my dead body'. He was in the UDR, they lived off the Derrylin Belturbet Road on an avenue. She always thought they would be waiting for him when he came home from duty. Emily would sit with the dog and the gun at the window

They did shoot Tommy over her dead body. They were both watching the six o'clock news. She had just come in and still had her coat on. She opened the door to them, she lifted the carpet sweeper to defend herself. She was found dead in the hall way. They knew they had to shoot her, it was reckoned she knew who they were

It was a September evening just after 6 o'clock, it was completely unexpected. They shot Tommy in the chair. They went cheering across the border after they shot Emily and Tommy. It turned out to be true what she said - they did shoot Tommy over her dead body!

After that there were so many tragedies. It divided the community. Catholics were told not to serve the security forces. Protestants shopped in their own shops, Catholics in theirs. You wouldn't be seen going into the others' shops. It was a sad state of affairs

Edna Simpson

An Awful Week

*I was walking up to the filling station with my two children
The baby was seven months in the pram and my two and a half year old
I met another lady with a child on the road
It was the 26th September 1972
The week after Emily and Tommy had been killed and after the funeral*

*A car came down the road with the windows open
My brother in law came running down the road waving his hands
He shouted
'Get back! There is a bomb in the station and in the tyre depot'*

*My husband then came back from Lisnaskea
He began throwing out the tyres
It was really bad
You couldn't believe it*

*They robbed the station, took the money
They said:
'That's what you get for talking to the media'*

*The BBC reporter, David Capper, quoted the man in the filling station
When he reported on Emily and Tommy
After that we did not talk to the media or to anyone
You wouldn't know where it would go
It was an awful week*

Joan Bullock



Meeting the Prime Minister

*We were the first widows to meet Margaret Thatcher
The three of us were in a room with her at Number 10
The Prime Minister had her private secretary there
We were not rushed
She listened to us
She asked us questions
It was a moving experience for us
We were all shedding tears*

*She was Prime Minister but she was a woman with feelings
She got to our level
We knew she was understanding
She was feeling for us
She gained my respect
I do believe our visit broadened her knowledge
About the victims in Northern Ireland*

Anon



Trooping of the Colour

*We were three widows
Who were invited
With our eldest child
To the Trooping of the Colour
We went over to London on the Friday
A chauffeur driven car met us at the airport
It was ours for the weekend
We stayed in the Victory Services Club*

*On Saturday morning
We were collected
We arrived at Number 10 Downing Street
The Trooping goes out of the back of Number 10
The Prime Minister met us
And spoke to us
We had dainty little bites
Smoked salmon on toast
That was the first time
I tasted Pimm's*

*We had allocated seats
We were seated with the dignitaries from overseas
It was a real regimental occasion
A great spectacle
My son does not remember much about it
He and a sheik's son
Played hide-and-seek around the curtains*

*On Sunday morning
We went to the church service at St Paul's Cathedral
I wanted to go there
Because it was where some royalty got married*

Then we had a tour in the tax



*Of famous places in London
On the Friday night
We went to Paul Daniel's Magic show
It was brilliant
We were treated so well*

*While we were made feel important
We were feeling very sad within
We were in the early stages of bereavement
We were still very raw with our emotions*

*While outwardly, it appeared we were enjoying ourselves
We were crying within
And left with no-one to share your life with*

Amor



A Day I Will Never Forget

The past twenty-two years often seem like a lifetime away while, at other times, it feels like only yesterday.

Twenty-two years ago our family life was disrupted when we had to leave our home in Brookeborough as a result of Cullen Stephenson (our good neighbour, a retired RUC Reservist) being murdered in January 1991 by IRA gunmen just a short distance from our front door. Dougie was serving part-time in the RUC Reserve at the time.

We were only a short time in our new home in Lisbellaw when my husband, Dougie Carrothers, was murdered in an under-car booby trap bomb outside our home on Friday 17 May 1991. That is a day I will never forget – the day my husband was so brutally taken from me and I was catapulted into the role of provider and head of our family. I had to fulfil those roles for our three children who were now deprived of a father and who were now solely dependent on me. I will never forget that afternoon that I had to break the news to my children that their father was dead. Only someone who has gone through that experience can truly know how it feels. It hurts me deeply every time the word ‘atrocious’ is attributed to the loss of multiple lives in a single incident and very very seldom to single murders. For an individual family the loss of a husband, father, or other family member is an ‘atrocious and a travesty’ for that individual family.

My children have been a great support to me and, on many occasions, when I felt vulnerable they have been strong for me. We have got this far together. Life has been difficult, and so different to what it should have been, but we are a strong family unit which now includes two daughters-in-law, a son-in-law and six grandchildren all of whom Dougie would have been so proud.

Over the years I’ve been part of the public face of the RUC GC Widows Association. In November 2005 I was one of two RUC widows plus two parents of two murdered RUC single officers who travelled with the Police Federation of Northern Ireland Chairman and Secretary to oppose the proposed QPR legislation. This legislation would have given these On-the-Runs a virtual amnesty. We first had a meeting with the Irish Ambassador at the Irish Embassy followed by meetings in Westminster to speak to the political leaders of the SDLP, DUP, Labour Party and Conserva-

tive Party. We then went to 10 Downing Street to meet the Prime Minister, Tony Blair, and the Secretary of State, Peter Hain. At that meeting the four of us told our experiences; I appealed to the Prime Minister as a family man to look at a photograph taken of Dougie and our children a short time before his murder. I also showed him a card which included other photographs which our older son had made for our anniversary a few months before our family life was blown asunder. As we left 10 Downing Street we were met with a barrage of cameras and microphones and we were able to tell the media how our loved ones deserved justice. Mine and the other experiences told that afternoon affected the Prime Minister. I know that because the Secretary of State told Terry Spence of the PFNI that the Prime Minister had been moved to tears. A few days later the Secretary of State made a statement to the House of Commons which withdrew the proposed legislation and the PFNI acknowledged that “the RUC widows and parents had been strongly instrumental in persuading the Government that the legislation was morally offensive”.

I can’t help wondering how different my life would have been if Dougie was still alive.

Phyllis Carrothers MBE



Fifty Years Ago

Today, fifty years ago
Terence O'Neill became Prime Minister

I believe Terence O'Neill was right
He wanted a more inclusive society

One wonders how Northern Ireland would have moved forward
If there had not been so much opposition

I believe in letting others live
If they let me live

Anon



Cousin Terence

Soldiers used to borrow dishes from us and in exchange they would bring us in some of their surplus tinned foods. One of them told me his name was Terence Irvine, he had red hair, so I said "You must have Irish blood in you." He told me his grandfather was from Belfast.

The following year I visited my Aunt Emma in Bedford. Imagine my surprise when I saw his photograph hanging on her wall.

I discovered that this soldier's grandmother was my father's sister.
It's a small world isn't it!

Florence Creighton

ENNISKILLEN 1987

Every year we remember the dead of two world wars
No one ever told us not to

Now we will remember every second, of every minute, of every hour, of every day, of every week, of every month, of every year, forever

Is there never going to be an end to our 'troubles'?

So many innocent victims have been murdered

Killing is not the answer to our problems

Ireland used to be known as the land of saints and scholars

Live and let live should be our motto

Let us endeavour to love our neighbours as ourselves

Enniskillen was called the watershed of the 'troubles'

Now we must strive for a better future for our children and grandchildren

Florence Creighton



ENNISKILLEN 2012

Elizabeth, the Queen of England, visited our town

Nobody objected to her visit

Now the whole community united in welcoming her as she visited the two main churches in the town

Irish people in the Republic also gave her and Prince Phillip a very warm welcome when she accepted President Mc Aleese's invitation last year

Slowly but surely, relationships between our two communities and two countries are improving

Kindergartens for pre-school children are generally cross-community

Ireland is a popular destination now with tourists because of its scenery, good food and friendly people

Let us praise God that prayers for peace have been answered

Long lost friends are being united in lasting friendships across the religious divide and the border

Enniskillen will never forget the Poppy Day bomb but the town seems to have moved forward and has become a prosperous shopping centre for people from both North and South of the border

Now we can look forward to a better future for our children and grandchildren

Florence Creighton



Love is Eternal

They are not dead
 Who leave us this great heritage of remembering joy
 They still live in our hearts
 In the happiness we knew
 In the dreams we shared

They still breathe
 In the lingering fragrance
 Windblown, from their favourite flowers
 They still smile in the moonlight's silver
 And laugh in the sunlight's sparkling gold

They still speak in the echoes of the words
 We've never heard them say again and again
 They still move
 In the rhythm of waving grasses
 In the dance of the tossing branches

They are not dead
 Their memory is warm in our hearts
 Comfort in our sorrow
 They are not apart from us
 But part of us

For love is eternal
 And those we love
 Shall be with us throughout all eternity

Anon





Supporting Victims and Survivors, Strengthening Communities

South East Fermanagh Foundation
1 Manderwood Square
Manderwood Park
Lisnaskea
County Fermanagh
BT92 0FS

Tel: 028 677 23884 / 028 677 22242 | Email: info@seff.org.uk

Website: www.seff.org.uk | Facebook 