

CLAUDY

In the words of the Families



SEFF
SOUTH EAST FERMANAGH
FOUNDATION

VSS
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FOREWORD

BY BARRY MCGUIGAN

The Claudy bombing had the single greatest impact on me of anything that happened during the Troubles.

It grips me like a freezing cold hand on the back of the neck.

It is the one event that has had the most resounding affect on me, and perhaps on a subconscious level it has taught me to always try to treat people delicately and fairly, and to be good natured to everybody – no matter what area they were in, no matter where they were from, no matter where I went.

As an amateur and as a professional boxer I would go in and out of Belfast during much of my career.

When I was part of the high-performance team with boxing coach Gerry Storey, I would have been sparring with the guys in the Holy Family Boxing Club in North Belfast, and then we would go up to the Holy Trinity Boxing Club in Turf Lodge, which was a deeply republican area. Then we would go into the Shankill which was a deeply loyalist area. I always tried my best to create harmony between people.

The Claudy bombing affected me because we, in the McGuigan family, were very close to one of the families who lost a loved one, a child named Kathryn Eakin.

We had a grocery shop on the Diamond in Clones and across the road were the Mealiffs, who had five children – Linda, David, Sandra, Sammy and Ross. We were very close to them.

The Diamond was like the nucleus of the town. We had a grocery business and they had a hardware business, a smaller grocery business and a small, 12 bedroom hotel.

Sandra, who would become my wife, had just spent a week in Castlerock with Kathryn and Mark Eakin. Kathryn was only eight years old, the poor child. She was a beautiful, gorgeous little girl with blonde hair and blue eyes. She was just a super kid; lovely, cheeky, and fun.

I was 11 at that time, Sandra was also 11, and Kathryn was eight. Sandra's closest cousins were Pauline Mealiff and Kathryn. She had just come home from Castlerock and suddenly this tragedy, this disaster happened.

We were all so shocked and devastated for them. It just destroyed the family.

The death of a child in any circumstance is awful, but this was something else.

It was a dreadfully callous act to put three bombs into the centre of the village, where people would run away from one bomb straight into another. It was despicable and awful.

Both Catholics and Protestants were killed. The village had a mixed community who got on very well together and they were decimated.

The absence of an admission of guilt has meant the families have had to deal not only with the loss of their family members, but also the fact that the culprits were saying 'it wasn't us'.

It's hard to truly articulate just how dreadful and awful the situation was. Many people will just shake their heads in disbelief.

The Claudy bombing reverberated throughout the UK and the world. It was shocking. It was such a terrible disaster.

Although we lived in the south, things were every bit as tense as they were in the north because we were in a border town, but nothing ever affected me like Kathryn Eakin's death, with the ramifications and reverberations that caused. It was just a dreadfully sad situation that ravaged Claudy and destroyed families, both Catholic and Protestant.

I was a Catholic but my nearest neighbours were Protestants. I married

Sandra and we broke all the rules, I suppose, back in 1981. However we are still together almost 41 years later and still very much in love.

My daughter died three years ago, on July 23rd, and we are still suffering. We will do for the rest of our lives so I understand the pain of losing a child. Danika's middle name is Kathryn — Sandra and I did that as an acknowledgement of Kathryn Eakin's life.

INTRODUCTION

Three car bombs were delivered to the heart of a small, rural village during the height of the Northern Ireland Troubles on July 31, 1972 and exploded.

Nine people – including three children – were killed and dozens more were injured.

These pages describe how horror, grief and suffering were inflicted upon the people of Claudy 50 years ago, on what has come to be known as ‘Bloody Monday’, and how the scars remain half-a-century later.

Central to this work are the first-hand testimonies, written by the grieving families in their own words, of the loved ones that were stolen away in the slaughter that unfolded on that Monday morning, 50 years ago.

The reader is invited to learn from these pages about the children, the men and the women who were taken from their families in such a cruel and sudden way in Claudy, and how their memory lives on through those who cared most deeply for them.

CONNOLLY, JOSEPH

BY MAUREEN MCELHINNEY



Joseph was the youngest of a family of seven – four boys and three girls. Their parents were Frank and Lena Connolly, and they lived in the family home in Claudy Brae, about one mile outside the village.

He was a great young fellow, who could have talked to the Queen. He didn't speak or say anything until he was four, but he could talk to anyone once he started.

He came to Claudy every evening for cigarettes for my daddy, and

for a game of football before going back up to the house. He was back at nine o'clock every evening – not five past nine, but nine o'clock on the button, every night. You could have depended on Joe with your life.

On the morning of July the 31st, 1972, Joseph had an appointment with a youth employment officer to discuss work. Unfortunately, due to 'Motorman', the officer did not get out from Derry.

On finding the Claudy office closed, he called to my house with a packet of sweets for my oldest boy, who was four years old. He would visit when he came down to the village.

Joseph left me that morning, and I asked him if he would be back that night. I didn't know, because my father had taken a roof off a shed and was getting it fixed up, but he said 'I will see you at night'.

Joseph would stay only a short time in the village before he would make his return back home.



Joe in the tractor drawing Turf

He would stay about a half-hour and have a kick about with some school friends in the local cow market.

During the spring and summer months, he worked weekends with a local farmer. He also helped his dad about the fields.

I didn't think for one minute that there would be bombs. I was in my house when I heard the bombs going off, but it never would have occurred to me that's what it was.

My daddy came to me, it must have been about one o'clock, to ask me had I seen Joe, and I said I had because he was here in the house but it was a long while ago.

Joe was just coming out the door to a cafe to buy the cigarettes for

his father, as he always would do, when the bomb went off at McElhinney's petrol pumps on the Main Street.

I had to go up through the village that evening, and the dust was still rising up. I saw the houses with roofs off, a total, total mess.

Joseph was in hospital for eight days. The family were in to see him, and his other sister nursed him. Some members of the family continue to find it too difficult to talk about that time. It is too painful.

No one had experienced anything like it.

I remember at that time it felt like there was a funeral every day. The whole village mourned together.

Joseph was a happy and light-hearted young boy of 15 years. He was a very innocent and kind-hearted young boy. He was lightly made up and small in stature, but he was a very witty boy. He was very jolly, and he made everyone around him laugh.

Joseph treated everyone with respect and would not pass you without saying hello.

In Claudy, then as now, everybody would have known everybody, and everybody would have known and liked Joe.

He was looking forward to commencing work in the local factory. He missed out on so much because his life was taken away from him. He was just beginning the next stage of his life.

I know he would have lived a good, happy life.

Little did our mother and father think that, on leaving for his appointment that morning, that Joseph would never be back home again.

His injuries were so severe that he made no recovery for the better.

Joseph died on the 8th of August, 1972.

He was sorely missed by his Mum and Dad, who have since passed away.

He will be forever remembered by his brothers and sisters.

May his gentle soul rest in peace.



Joe with a smile that could light up
a room

EAKIN, KATHRYN

BY MARK EAKIN



There were just the two of us, myself and my sister Kathryn.

I was 4 years older and we were very close. Kathryn was a bit of a tomboy, always wanting to hang out with me and my mates. She'd tag along with us on fishing trips, even when we really didn't want her to. She loved animals and she loved being on her bicycle.

Sometimes she'd go next door to a neighbour's house where a woman we called Granny Duffy lived and she'd spend hours

helping her bake scones and pancakes.

That was her idea of a great day, footering about at the baking. We lived at the corner of Claudy crossroads. At the crossroads was our shop.

It was a busy store, the sort of place that sold everything from a needle to an anchor and we did funerals as well. The 4 of us lived next door on the Main Street; Mum (Merle), Dad (Billy), myself and Kathryn. Those were the days when you had to earn your pocket money and both myself and Kathryn did many chores around the shop. In July 1972, we had got our school summer holidays. We had a caravan in Castlerock and we'd gone up there at the start of July. Since mum and dad had the shop, they couldn't stay up there during the week. We would normally only get a few days away at a time. Family friends, the Arthurs, also had a caravan on the same site. They said Kathryn and I could stay with them and initially mum agreed to us staying on for



Eakins Corner 1970s

two or three days.

In the end, however, we got to stay for the whole month of July. We had a ball. Ironically, when I think about it now, it was the best month the pair of us had together.

On Sunday, 30th July, mum told us it was time we headed back home to Claudy. We arrived back in Claudy early on Monday 31st July. I set about brushing up the yard while Kathryn was told to clean the shop windows.

She had a cloth and windolene and the kitchen steps. I came up out of the yard and as I walked past her I saw she had set windolene on the ledge. The pair of us were always fooling around, and I reached for the windolene and squirted some on a bit of the window that she had already cleaned. Kathryn was at the top of the step ladder, and she went mad at me, roaring and

shouting and the next thing, boom!

I just remember being jetted through the air and, as odd as it seems, I landed back on my feet again. It was as if I had been lifted up and set down again. When I looked around Kathryn was lying on the footpath. She had been blown off the steps. It was approximately 10.15am and little did I know, that was the first bomb that went off up the Main Street outside McElhinneys.

My father had been on his way out of the yard when the bomb went off. He saw all the tiles starting to cascade off the back of the main building as if in slow motion and he threw himself into a corner. Dad then came flying around out of the yard to find us. I was standing there, shaking. I don't think I really knew what had happened. I saw dad down on the ground with Kathryn, and then my grandfather



Mark and Kathryn Eakin



Merle Billy Kathryn and Mark 1971

(dad's father), came running too.

Mum was in the shop and all she could do was scream. My granda knew a wee bit about first aid and they carried her into the shop and worked on her there for a while.

Granda carried Kathryn to the health centre. She was unconscious. Dad stayed with mum as mum was inconsolable. There were still no ambulances but the local factory, Desmond's, had minibuses which were used to bring women from the country into work, and the manager immediately ordered that the minibuses were to be driven to the health centre to start bringing the injured to the hospital. My granda went in the minibus with Kathryn to Altnagelvin Hospital. I don't think that at that point my father had any inkling how bad it was, he was just so dazed himself.

All around us was total devastation. Our wee shop was wrecked and open and dad needed to see to that. In the post office across the street, the people with cuts and bruises were being given tea. Dad went into our house and came out with a bottle of brandy and we sat down on the bonnet of a car outside the post office. Dad had a swig of brandy, he was badly shaken. And then this man who had been working on dry rot on our house came out of our front door and all I remember is him roaring across the street at my father "Look at the numberplates." And I can see it all yet.

I looked down and it was like tights or sacking around the numberplate, and suddenly my father was taking a look in the back of the car, he knew it was another device planted and then he was shouting at me: "Run, son, run."

Now, prior to this, dad had always told Kathryn and me that if we were ever caught up in a bomb, we were to stay near to where it went off because there was always a risk of running into the mouth of another one. So I raced up the street, to where the bomb had gone off, and then some

relatives told me to head for the fields. Myself and my cousins, Peter and John Eakin, went to the field behind their house on the Main Street. Other people from the village came to the field as well. That's when the second and third bombs went off. The second was at the Hotel and the third was that vehicle we saw beside the post office.

The engine from one of the car bombs landed in the garden at the front of Uncle Jack's house. Eventually, we went back to the village and if it had been bad before, then this was a hell of a lot worse. This was total carnage. I stood at the crossroads and no matter what direction I looked, everything was in bits. It was unreal. I saw a lot of things I



Painting of Kathryn

couldn't really talk about; people were walking about with blood pouring out of them and still trying to help other people. Later that day my granda arrived back from the hospital. My mother and father already knew.... but I will never forget my granda came towards me saying: "It's all over," Kathryn was dead.

Kathryn died a short time after she arrived at Altnagelvin Hospital. There was nothing they could do for her. Our family was devastated, totally devastated. My mother talked about nothing else, my father never mentioned it. He just bottled it up. If someone brought up the subject, he'd just change it or just dodge out of the way.

Once, I remember a reporter talking to dad about Kathryn and he just collapsed into a ball of tears. He simply could not go there. That day, we lost Kathryn, we lost our home and we lost our shop. Everything was gone. I have always felt it should have been me up the steps cleaning the window. I was only 3 yards away from her. She had died from a fragment of shrapnel that had pierced her brain. I escaped with some minor cuts. I was 12 at that time. Kathryn was only 8 and was the youngest

victim. As for me? the hurt was too great. I couldn't even cry about it, and for years I didn't cry. It was as if some kind of paralysis came over me. This was 1972, mind, and there was no talk of counselling then. You wonder how you didn't go mad, but perhaps in a way I did go a bit crazy. I rebelled at school, I didn't want to be there. Mum, dad and myself stayed with Jack and Deirdre Eakin as our house was destroyed. That's where Kathryn was buried from. The day after the bomb I was with my cousins Peter and John and we were sent to our best friend, Noel Anderson's house. His dad and mum, Canon and Mrs Anderson, took us a run to Portstewart for the day to get away from it all. But walking into a shop and seeing the line of newspapers with Kathryn's face on front of them all was too much to bare. Aunt Deirdre always used to say that the Lord sent rain that afternoon of the bombs to wash away all the blood from Claudy street. We ended up living for months in a caravan behind Jack and Deirdre's house until we got a place sorted. For years after the bomb the shop was essentially just a makeshift building, a bit like a portacabin. What compensation my father did get took years to

come through, but life as we knew it was never the same again.

The shop was restored again, fit for purpose. Dad put the shop up for sale in the early 1980's. However, there were still issues with structural damage and it was hard to sell. My uncle, Jack Eakin bought it from dad. Dad was glad that it was going to stay within the Eakin Family. In 1984 we moved to Castlerock, but we couldn't really ever leave Claudy behind. Dad and mum never had the same love of life again. They had their good days and their bad days, but there were more bad days than good. My mother died in August 2008. She had always blamed herself for Kathryn's death as she had taken us away from Castlerock. I guess she always knew we would have been safe if we had stayed in Castlerock that Monday morning. Dad died six months later. They both were only 77 and their birthdays were only three days apart. They were angry about the bomb until their dying days. They felt it was never properly investigated. I suppose, that's why over the years, I have always wanted answers, but none of us got the answers we needed. In 2004, Jack Eakin knocked

down the shop and all the buildings at Eakin's Corner. Shop units and a number of apartments above it was built in its place. My cousin Peter suggested to me, they would make a clock tower, to be a centrepiece in the village at the corner of the crossroads and the clock would be in memory of Kathryn. I am glad the site is still in the Eakin family name. I've two daughters myself now, and in a way that was hard on my mother. Samantha Kathryn (now 24), was named after Kathryn and then Rebecca (now 22). My mother was so protective of them. "Don't let them in the water, don't let them on the road, don't let them out." Samantha's eighth birthday was a whole ding-dong; mum took it so badly. "My God, she is eight," she would say to me. That's the age Kathryn was when she died. I always think, too, how they have outlived Kathryn. I can't picture how Kathryn would look like now or begin to imagine the life she might have had. To me she will always be eight.



Church Window in memory of Kathryn

HONE, ARTHUR

BY ANNE BRADLEY



I married Artie Hone on the 10th of August, 1964 and came to live in Claudy. I was 20 years old and he was 28. We got on well and were happy. We were also planning for the day that we could upgrade the house we were living in, which at that time belonged to the council. I started up my hairdressing salon in Claudy on the 1st of September and Artie worked for 'Betterware' and later for 'Refuge Insurance Co'

Paul was born on the 4th of June, 1966 and Michelle was born on the 5th of September 1969, so we had

our hands full – but the delight we had in the children made up for the hard work required. Paul was always very protective of Michelle, especially when she started school.

Artie was a talented musician. He played the violin, bass guitar and double bass, and passed all his music exams up to senior level. He played in a local dance band and was very popular, playing at local concerts etcetera. He was very lively and full of fun. He enjoyed playing games with Paul and Michelle.

Monday the 31st of July, 1972 started off as a usual Monday – washing and household tasks to be done on my day off work. Artie couldn't get in to work in Derry as the Craigavon Bridge was closed, so he went to Claudy to phone the office. Michelle went with him – she was nearly four years-of-age at the time.

Shortly after 10 o'clock there was an unmerciful bang, which shook the house and my first thought



Sharing a Joke - Artie and I 1968

was 'that's a bomb'. I took Paul, who was six-years-old, and ran down to Claudy. The street was a mess, covered with rubble, stones, slates and smashed cars everywhere. I told Paul to stay at the school gates until I came back, which he did, as otherwise he could have been caught in what was to come.

I met Brendan Burns, the local headmaster, and I was crying about Artie and Michelle. He would not let me go down any further – he told me to stay where I was and he would come back and tell me – which he did a short time later. A woman handed me Michelle and she was crying, and very frightened, but didn't speak. Artie had left her in the car to go into the shop and on his way back the bomb went off. Michelle's dress was covered in splinters of glass and she had a cut behind her

ear, which didn't require medical treatment. They were concerned in case her hearing was affected but thankfully there were no after effects. I learned, later, that the roof of the car had collapsed on top of her.

Brendan Burns came back to tell me that Artie was injured and was going to hospital. I later learned that Paul O'Kane (a fireman) and Sean O'Neill had stayed with Artie and prayed until the ambulance arrived. The police were clearing the street, so we went into Mina McClean's house. A few minute's later a policeman came to the door and told us to get out the back door as there was a bomb at Eakin's garage. So Mina, her nephew, Michelle and I went in the direction of the market square – we got to the middle of the square and a bomb went off at the Beaufort Hotel. I heard screaming and looked up. Black smoke filled the air and a large piece of a car – I'm sure it was part of the bonnet and front bumper – landed at our feet.

My first thought was to get back to Paul so I went through the chapel grounds and got back up to the school where Paul was still standing crying – thank God

he had stayed where he was. We ran up to our house and got down on our knees and prayed Artie wouldn't be badly injured. My father arrived at the door and I was never as glad to see him. After gathering a few clothes together we went up to Park, to my original home where my mother, brother and five sisters were.

My father rang my uncle, Fr W McGaughey, who was a priest in the Long Tower parish at the time, and he went over to the hospital. He rang back to say Artie was in theatre and to come in at 4pm. My father, mother and I went in and we were taken into a ward where Artie was. I didn't recognise him as he was all bandaged around his head and his face was swollen. That was when I was told he had serious injuries and had lost a lot of brain tissue, so the outcome looked very bleak. I spoke into his ear and told him I was there and that Michelle and Paul were okay.

He definitely moved his fingers, but that was the last time I got any reaction from him.

On 12th August, at around 7pm, he died. My mum and dad and I were by his side. I was in a complete daze.

Our 8th wedding anniversary was on the 10th of August. I was given two tablets in Altnagelvin and was taken home. My father organised the funeral, which wasn't until the 15th of August as there had to be a post mortem.

Why, oh why, did this have to happen? No words could describe how heartbroken I was. My mother was a very calm, caring person, and was a very good support to me. She comforted me when the reality hit me and listened to my fears. She had passed on her great faith in God to us as children. She said 'put your trust in God and he will see you through this'.

I found it hard to pray. In a way I was angry with God for letting this happen, and angry at the world for letting so many people killed. Where was it all going to end? How was I going to face the rest of my life without Artie? How was I going to keep strong for Paul and Michelle?

We stayed in Park until the end of August and as Michelle was starting her first day at Primary School on the 4th of September. I returned to Claudy to prepare for that and I had to go back to work. My friends and customers in



Michelle's first day at school 4th
Sept 1972 along with Paul

Claudy were very supportive of me and I knew everyone was praying and thinking of me as I received many cards of condolences.

In 1974, the opportunity came up to purchase our house in Claudy, so my brother Patrick who was a joiner and had good knowledge of the building trade helped me as I got plans to renovate the house. I went to sign for the deeds – another milestone without Artie. I had to move out of the house for six months while the work was carried out, so again I moved to Park to stay with my parents.

These months staying with my parents were a good help to me, as my mental state was at an all time low and it was a happy time for Paul and Michelle – they had cousins to play with when they came home from school.

In 1975, we moved back to Claudy, to a new house which Artie and I had dreamed of. Sadly, he wasn't there to share it.

He missed first communions, confirmations, special birthdays, Paul and Michelle's wedding and seeing his lovely four grandchildren who he would have delighted in.

Time has moved on. Paul and Michelle have their own homes, and their own families, and I am so happy for the way they have matured – and the great support and love they have given me over the years.

I am happy to say that after being a widow for 28 years, I married Michael Bradley in 2000. I now have his love and devotion and please God we will get good health to enjoy our years ahead.

By Michelle McKeever

Thankfully I don't have any memories of the bombing, but over the years I have been told of the details of what happened that day. My daddy drove to Claudy and I went with him. He parked in



Last photo of Artie, Paul and
Michelle August 1971

the Main Street, and he went into McElhinney's shop and left me in the car. He was walking back to the car when the bomb went off and he was thrown onto the road.

Thomas O'Kane, who was living in America, was home on holiday and staying with his sister Rosaleen Burke in a house at the bottom of Claudy. When the bomb went off he rushed up the street and he saw something move in the car I was in, and he thought maybe it was a dog. He went over the car and the roof had fallen in. The car was damaged beyond repair. He realised it was a child and he took me out of the car and passed me to a woman he knew, who then gave me to my mother. Thomas then asked everyone in

the area to move any cars that were parked in the street so that the ambulances could get in to help the injured. When all the cars were moved he noticed a van or var that was still parked outside the post office. He quickly moved everyone away from the car. That car contained another bomb, and Thomas's quick thinking saved a lot of lives.

I have no recollection of that day and I am very glad that I don't. It is a day I would never want to remember. My brother, Paul, was six and I was nearly four when Daddy was killed but, considering the size of Claudy and the damage caused by the bombs, we could have all been killed that day.

Growing up without having a father was very hard but Paul and I were so lucky to have a loving and devoted mother who, at 29-years-of-age, was a widow with two young children. She had to work full time to provide for us as we had no other income. Without her we wouldn't have had such a happy childhood. We also had Granny and Granda, and aunts and uncles, who protected and loved us very much.

Daddy missed all our childhood. He never saw us starting school or making our Holy Communion. He never attended our weddings or got to meet his grandchildren. He was only 37-years-old when he died. He should have had a long life with his family who loved him so much, but that was taken away from him in such a cruel way. It makes me sad that I have no memories of Daddy, only things that I have been told and we have very few photographs of us as a family.

every day. No matter how many years ago they died, the hurt and the loss is still the same.

A relative of mine attended a funeral In 2016 and they met a man who was originally from Claudy but was living in America. They discussed the Claudy bomb and he told them how he had rescued a child out of a car but he didn't know their name. It was Thomas O'Kane and I finally got to meet him a few days later. It was a very emotional meeting – he rescued me and saved countless other lives that day too.

So many people have been killed in the Troubles in Northern Ireland and they are all just statistics to everyone else, but to their families they are a loved one who can never be replaced and are missed

MCCLELLAND, JIM

BY COLIN MCCLELLAND AND
TRACY DEANS



Born in 1907, he was the first child of the then newly married Thomas and Fanny McClelland, and although named Thomas James after his father and his father's father, was always known as Jim. There would be eight more children, three girls and five boys including our Granda, Norman, who was the second youngest in the family and always looked up to his big brother Jim who was 12 years older than him.

The family lived on Thomas' farm in Brackfield, and Jim worked with his father both on the farm and in his butchery business delivering and selling their own meat in the Claudy area.

They also grew and sold vegetables, and that was where Jim's heart really lay. He enjoyed working the land; and loved the beauty and peace of the countryside.

The family home was close to Cumber Presbyterian Church where they worshipped, and the church was very much at the

We did not have the privilege of knowing our great uncle Jim, but when we talk to people who remember him, their faces soften and they begin to smile as they talk of a man who was quiet and unassuming, gentle and kind, with a great sense of humour and the loveliest laugh.

They also speak of his strong Christian faith, and his great love for Jesus and the church.

Jim lived and worked all his life in the Claudy area.

centre of his life.

Jim was a devout man with a deep love of God and the Bible. He loved singing in church, especially his favourite hymn, 'What a friend we have in Jesus', and he also enjoyed the different social activities the church ran, especially the bowling club.

Jim was a member of the Apprentice Boys of Derry, belonging to the Claudy Branch Club; and a lifelong Orangeman in his local lodge, Killaloo True Blues LOL 621.

The 12th of July was the highlight of his year, and he loved putting on the bowler hat and all the regalia as well as the parade itself.

Although hard-working, Jim was notoriously hard to get out of bed in the morning with one exception – the Twelfth!

During the 1960s, Jim's life took a dramatic change when the family's land was divested to facilitate the building of the then new A6 road.

He and his father moved to Ervey, where Jim took delight in planting trees all round their new home.

Ironically, this house has also recently been lost to the new dual

carriageway. Following the death of his father in 1968, Jim married Mary Laird, a widow who had lived with them as their housekeeper, and became step-father to Mary's daughter Elizabeth who adored him, and supported us in our fight for justice right up to her death in 2007.

Following the move to Ervey, Jim also had to find new work, and he became a roadman in Claudy. He was responsible for caring for the look of the village and keeping it clean, and he took great pride in his work.

He was well-known round the village, and enjoyed meeting people from all walks of life and having a wee chat and some craic.

On the day of the Claudy bombs,



Jim's funeral, being carried by his brothers

Jim was just a few weeks from retirement and would have been looking forward to life at an easier pace.

As he worked that morning, it would have seemed a very normal day until that first bomb went off outside McElhinney's on the Main Street. When the second bomb was discovered just further down Main Street, along with everyone else, Jim was moved away down to Church Street – unwittingly towards the car outside the Beaufort Hotel containing the third bomb.

Along with David Miller and William Temple, he was killed instantly when the bomb exploded. At 65, Jim was the eldest victim of the Claudy bombs.

Our Granda lived in Irwin Crescent at the time and had to pass the spot where Jim was killed every time he left his home and every time he returned, and the pain forced him to make the decision to leave Claudy. He never got over Jim's death.

There are so many people who still carry the pain of what happened in Claudy 50 years ago.

The passing of time does not

diminish the horror, loss, or sheer senselessness of what happened, and nor does it diminish the memories of those who died.

Jim lived a very ordinary life, but the mark he left in the memories of those who knew him is testament to how special he actually was. Jim lived an exemplary life of service to God, his family, and his community, and we are privileged to be part of his family.



In Memory, presented by Killaloo
LOL 621

MCCLOSKEY, JOSEPH

BY DEIRDRE AND DERMOT O'KANE

(DAUGHTER AND GRANDSON)



An old black and white photo adorned our home for many years. It was of a smiling, content man sitting in an armchair wearing a shirt and tie with a cardigan.

It sat on the living room sideboard and through the years moved to different places around the house as time passed, moving around through all the home improvements, redecorations, and even house moves.

It was present as the family began, the family grew and the family

moved on. Although the kind man was long since not present himself and not known to the little occupants of the family home, little occupants who grew up to have children of their own, he always remained.

When the photo captured attention of the little minds or hands of those little occupants they asked, who is he and what happened to him. They would be told "He was my Daddy, your Granda Joe and he was killed in the Claudy bombing when your mammy and your aunts and uncles were still very young."

They often found it strange that a young looking, healthy, happy man was their Granda and there was a peculiarity in that he was alive in the past but not the present. But the young minds accepted and went on.

Another photo in the family home, this one sourced and developed many years after the first black and white photo, this one was in full colour and was kept by the front door.



A young Joe with his Game face on!

The blue and red of the work uniform, the same man, looking slightly older, with his hair not as combed and neat yet smiling again. This was a photo taken for his work photo pass.

The same occupants, now not so little, grown into their teens, asked about this photo. They'd be told that was the same man, that was their Granda in his work clothes. He worked in DuPont, having previously worked in England for a time and also on a bread run.

To be in both black and white and colour, yet not here now, they found it strange and sad. He was

their Granda, whom they never knew nor ever met.

That same photo was the most recent one, after Joe, as he was known to friends and family, was cruelly taken in the Claudy Bombing.

He was only 39. As, has been reported throughout the years, it was his day off from work and he had popped into the village from his home just outside Claudy.

It was in this home where, with his wife Sheila, he was raising his young family. A family of 7, with the eldest only 11 years old at the time of his untimely death.

His children were left with stories to tell their own children.

Stories they could remember and those of others given to them, of their Daddy. They were stories from before the family moved to Claudy, of getting a lift up to the McCloskey family home, which they called Craig, where Joe's mother and siblings lived. They were stories of walking home down the Claudy Brae, holding Daddy's hand.

Aunts and uncles would tell stories of how much good fun he was,



Last family photo 11th May 1972

how many times over the years he would joke with the shopkeepers and café workers in the shops in Claudy. Great fun he was, they all said, and his kindness and generosity they often spoke of too as they reminisced about him with fondness.

Joe's real passion was football and did he take his football seriously. We can see this in a photograph of a younger still, much more focused looking Daddy in the line-up ahead of a football match.

The now all-grown-up grand children marvelled at the same smiling, friendly looking man looking so different with a neater, tighter haircut and so fit and youthful. Even further back in the past, there he was taking part in something he cared so much about.

Joe's siblings talked about how much he loved football, playing for his local club through all ages, along with his brothers who were all involved with the cub. He loved football so much that when his first child was born, he was in Croke Park at the all Ireland final. Vincent, who the last of Daddy's brothers, passed in 2019, following Tom and Jim.

If one can imagine it possible, the four brothers together in a higher place swapping football stories – would Daddy believe Derry won an all-Ireland in 1993?

Joe is survived today by his sisters Celine, Margaret and Eileen.

We love and cherish the memories we have, and photographs form a poignant reminder or source to recall special times from the past.

Conversely, the photos that Joe is absent from through the years are evidence of so much that Joe missed out on – how he has been missed on those wedding days, special birthdays, christenings and all family gatherings.

When his first daughter wed on her wedding day, his brother Vincent had taken his place at the wedding table. On other occasions

Vincent had taken on duties that Daddy should have been afforded the fortune to be there for.

Taken from us too soon, before we really knew what life was, all of us have kept him in our hearts, never forgotten.

One of the grandchildren, when studying The Troubles in school history class, became more inquisitive and asked the obvious question: “Why had that happened?”

Why had bombs been planted in Claudy that day? And why had no-one “been caught”. Why and what for? To what end? There was no answer as no answer would ever satisfy.

Through the years all sorts of enquiries, reports, investigations, arrests and media have produced nothing. Which is apt because nothing will ever replace that which has been lost.

What we would like to remember is the husband, father, son and brother Joe was. Memories held by Joe’s remaining siblings and his children are shared and passed on to the next generations and the photographs we hold on to keep his memory alive.



Last photo of Joe, taken from
a Work Pass

Even without physical memories we need not worry as his legacy continues down through the generations. His children have played on the same football pitches he had and their sons and daughters continued. His brothers and sisters, sons and grandchildren continued to be involved with the local football club until the present day. There is no escaping the legacy that lives on.

Becoming mothers and fathers ourselves, we have all lived longer than our father was afforded. Joe’s children – Deirdre, Maeve, Shirley, Emmett, Sinead, James and Pauline – have raised our own families and watched our children grow.

Instilled within us were some his own values; hard working, love of family, friendship and good fun—and football of course!

In all family gatherings there is laughter and love of life. Joe McCloskey is a grandfather-of-14 and great grandparent of 9. He has grandchildren who have been to America and as far as Australia, university graduates, musicians, and parents now themselves.

This year is the 50th Anniversary of the Claudy Bombing. We are just one of 9 families who lost a loved one on July 31, 1972. We remember the happier times and look forward with hope, together, to a continuing peace.

Fifty years is a long time in any lifetime. So much has passed. So much has happened that has been good. So much that Daddy would have been so proud of. Our accomplishments are his. And his legacy is through us. His triumph is in all we have won. The laughter and fun that we have had through the years are the laughter and fun he had. The points scored are all his.

Joseph McCloskey was a victim, unjustifiably killed at the age of 39. But his epitaph is much more.

He is a Son. He is a Brother. He is a Husband. He is a Father. He is a Grandparent. And he is a Football Fan. He lived a joyful successful life, taken from him too soon, and he will always have lived, always will live.

MCELHINNEY, ELIZABETH

BY TESS O'LOUGHLIN



McElhinney, a prominent business man in Claudy village, and they had no children.

As Lizzie's God child and infant of 3 months at the time of this catastrophe, I wish to share the remarkable stories I have unearthed, 50 years on, about a remarkable lady whose every actions were truly altruistic.

Elizabeth McElhinney; a modern day Florence Nightingale is how Lizzie might be fondly remembered within the confines of Claudy Village.

A "lady" by all accounts and a private individual, who having trained as a nurse in England, brought that same professionalism and caring nature to all those she attended.

"Always helpful", "very kind", full of wisdom", "a generous, selfless individual", are some of the words echoed about the character and charisma of this local lady.

Elizabeth McElhinney was one of five siblings born and reared on Gorse Road, approximately three miles from Claudy village. Commonly known as 'Lizzie', she had one sister Annie (Quinn) living in Achill Island and three brothers; John, Tom and Joe.

John stayed at home on the family farm whilst Joe resided in Wales and FatherTom was a missionary priest in China.

Lizzie was married to Eddie

In her earlier years, Lizzie worked as a Sister in Altnagelvin Hospital and was renowned as a strict lady who commanded respect and had exacting standards. Often stories were cited about ‘Sister McElhinney’: ” When you heard the click of those heels coming, the nurses would run to straighten the bed covers and make sure everything was in its place”.

That same professionalism and attention to detail was reiterated by the employees of McElhinney’s pub and shop when Lizzie helped out in her husband’s business in her later years.

She punctually provided 10 o’clock tea and dinner at 12.30, daily, for the shop workers. At the same time, she would often enquire as to their well being and offered advice and home made remedies to those she felt were in need of it.

Her kindness and unwavering dedication endured long after her nursing career on the wards.

Lizzie was the ‘go-to’ person in the village in times of sickness and it was often recalled if Lizzie was spotted running down the street “some poor critter was in need.”

Several stories relayed how Lizzie might make a diagnosis and then liaised with the local doctor and the hospital, if necessary, to ensure a bed was available that night if hospital treatment was required.

One story, in particular, told of how a local lady required surgery and Lizzie made contact with the then surgeon, Dr Fenton of Ballyarton. The lady in question was subsequently admitted to hospital that afternoon and surgery carried out that same evening.

Frequently on Sunday evenings, and when off duty, Lizzie was also known to visit the various wards in Altnagelvin, checking in on any locals from the Claudy area — once again depicting the kind and generous spirit and the love of her vocation.

Always at everyone’s beck and call, irrespective of language or creed; her unfaltering devotion to those in need was apparent.

That sunny July morning was a fateful day when Lizzie’s life, along with eight others, was so tragically and needlessly stolen from her.

It was Monday morning and the workers had arrived on their tea break when the bell rang for the petrol pumps. Typically, Lizzie jumped to her feet to attend the pumps and let the staff enjoy their break.

In a split second, and in the selfless act of giving, her life was decimated and destroyed, leaving a family in mourning and a community robbed of a devout carer. Her death was a great loss to one and all.

This poem by Francis Duggan is a fitting tribute to Lizzie and very apt for her legacy so that we can cherish the very special lady that she was:

Those born to altruism in any way
not small
The gifts of love and kindness are
the greatest gifts of all
To help those in need of helping,
they go out of their way
They are the unsung heroes of
the Human world today
For their acts of love and
kindness, greater credit they are
due
Special people of this world to
the higher self be true

MCLAUGHLIN, ROSE

BY THE MCLAUGHLIN FAMILY



Our mother was born in Munigh, she was one of nine children. In her early years she went to work in Learmount Castle as an auxillary nurse. Mum met dad and they were married in 1950. In those days people didn't move far from where they were born, and she could see her home from the street where she now lived.

Mum had 8 children – 4 boys and 4 girls with little age gap between them. When Evelyn was born it was cold with frost and snow and the ambulance had trouble getting

out to her. When mum came home with the baby the smell of baby powder would linger in the room and the fire would be burning and we would all gather with her in the room.

Combing curly hair before school:

-

Liam's earliest memories are of Mammy taking a wet comb to Kieran and his hair to make sure the curls were all in place before sending us off to walk to Kilgort Primary School (which we dreaded every day). Anyone who attended Kilgort Primary School needs no further explanation on why.

Another memory I have is when Seamus, Kieran, and I were being boys. We were playing with a piece of farm equipment with which we were quite intrigued. I think it's called a grubber. There is a bar that is used to attach it to a tractor and Seamus, and I were lifting the bar while Kieran stuck his hand underneath. We were too weak to hold up the bar and it landed on Kieran's hand. He had a tiny cut

on his finger and was crying like a big, big baby. He would not stop crying. I looked at Seamus and he at me, and together we decided we need to get out of Dodge. Sadly, the last train had left the station. So, we did the next best thing, which was to run across a field and climb a tree. We sat there for hours until one of our sisters came to negotiate us out of the tree. We agreed to come down only if mammy promised to not to punish us. Maybe I am wrong, but we only came down because it was dark.

Being altar boys: -

Nothing made mammy prouder than having her three youngest sons as altar boys.

Buying the business: -

In 1963 Mum and Dad had a chance to buy a local business in the village of Claudy. For our family this was about to be a huge change in our lives. During the next 9 years they both worked extremely hard. Rosemary remembers only being in Claudy once before for her confirmation. We visited the shop after the service and Mrs Donaghy, who owned it then, allowed Rosemary

to pick a bar of chocolate. She picked a Cadbury's flake.

At the time it was unusual for a woman to look for a bank loan. Mum wanted a better life for her family and worked very hard to succeed. Her plan was to buy another shop in another location. Being successful in the shop gave her the confidence to look at other ventures. Our mother was a brilliant businesswoman.

In the early days dad stayed at home as we were all very young, aged from 3 to 12, while mum went off to work. In the early days of the café Mick would have travelled with Mammy to Claudy as he was attending secondary school and he would have worked with Mammy after school.

Nellie McDaid, who had worked for Mrs Donaghy, stayed on and helped Mum in the cafe. The days started with breakfast and the usual people would come in and then come back again for lunch time. After school Seamus, Liam, Kieran, and Evelyn would help to prepare the potatoes for the evening rush. Friday afternoon was always very busy with Desmond's factory closing at 1.30pm/2pm. The buses would

stop and let the girls out to get their fish and chips. Mum worked hard and enjoyed the banter with the girls. When the new chip pan came it was twice the size of the old one and it was electric. Mum took great pride in developing her business.

Swearing while making chips: -

One of the joys of mammy and daddy owning the café were the lessons we learned. Seamus, Kieran, Evelyn, and I were peeling spuds and making chips every day. We didn't get paid but we didn't hate it because in the chipping area no one was around, and it was the only area we could swear like sailors. We felt grown up. We could never, ever swear around mammy! Oh, and we'd also sneak out and play soccer against the courthouse wall – and Seamus remembers sneaking the odd bottle of orange from the storeroom. She often caught us at that.

Tom Jones was mum's favourite singer and on a Sunday night work had to be finished early so she could sit with a cup of tea and her digestive biscuits.

American Pie: -



James and Rose on their wedding day

Years later Seamus and Brigid were in Chicago for their honeymoon. We were having breakfast at our local diner, when the song American Pie by Don McLean came on the Jukebox. We didn't realize but we both felt a deep sense of sadness come over us whenever we heard that song. It was the number one song in the world in 1972 and was never off the jukebox in the café. I suppose at this point in my life, I like to hear the song just to keep the



Nurses - Rose McLaughlin, Middle

memories alive.

That Day

Curtains blowing – Liam’s memory:

-

July 31, 1972. My memories of that day are flashes. Kieran and I shared a bedroom in the front of the house. The first memory I have is being awakened by the first bomb going off and the fluttering of the lace curtains. For the longest time I thought it was the bomb that blew the curtains in, which is quite silly. Mammy opened every window,

every day, before she went to the café to take in the early morning deliveries

Walking up to the café: -

I remember walking out of the Crescent and seeing a plume of smoke rising above the rooftops. Then, I am standing at the back door of the café and it’s locked. I am turning the corner at the public bathrooms and I see the scene of devastation the first bomb left on the streets. Then, I am passing some of the victims and will never forget seeing their horrific injuries. I am at the café door, there is a step down into the café and daddy is standing at the door with a trickle of blood on his forehead. He says “she’s dead”. I looked around him toward the dining room and mammy was lying face down. I turned around and there were so many people screaming, but I don’t know who. I think it was my sisters. I started walking back home – this was probably less than 5 minutes after the first bomb went off. I turned the corner and Kieran and Colin Lynch, our good friend who sadly became a victim of the troubles 4 years later at 18 years old, were on the opposite side of the street. The look on Kieran’s face is the most vivid

memory I have of that day. He didn't know what had happened, but he knew by looking at me that it was bad. He asked what was wrong and I said, "don't go up there". I don't know if he listened.

Laying down (and getting up): -

The shock was setting in and feeling faint I lay down on the grass verge opposite the Beaufort Hotel. I lay only for a short time, fortunately, because I was within 10 feet of the second bomb location. I made it home before the 2nd and 3rd bombs went off.

Katie (Mick's wife) was pregnant and when the bombs went off, she fell to her knees. We were all in shock.

Rosemary recalls: -

On Monday 31 July 1972 our lives changed forever when the bomb went off outside the shop. On the Sunday night we were out at a dance, so mum let us have a lie in, when the bomb went off, we hurriedly got dressed and ran to the shop. I didn't go inside the café to see mum, dad just said your mum's dead and she was then taken to Altnagelvin hospital. All 8 children witnessed the carnage on the streets of Claudy on that day

as they ran to the cafe to check on our mother, images which never disappear from memory no matter the number of years which pass.

I visited mum in hospital and gave her rosary beads and I felt a slight movement when I spoke to her, she survived for three days and passed away on the Thursday morning.

While mammy was in hospital some of the family went to stay in Park with our aunt's, Agnes and Maggie, and some of the family stayed in Claudy. Daddy had to give us the awful news that mammy was dead.



Back row L to R Evelyn McLaughlin, Patricia McLaughlin, Rose McLaughlin, Michael McLaughlin, Kathleen McLaughlin, James McLaughlin, Philomena McLaughlin, Rosemary McLaughlin

Front Row L to R Seamus McLaughlin, Kieran McLaughlin, Liam McLaughlin



L to R Mena O'Neill, Mary Celine Kerlin, Rose McLaughlin, Carmel O'Neill, Michael McLaughlin

After the funeral we, as a family, were in limbo, the business was gone and nobody in the family had the heart to do anything. Further down the years Philomena and Kieran started up the business again with the support of the Claudy community, they continued the legacy of the work our mum and dad had started.

Life for daddy after the bombing was horrendous because everything they had worked so hard for was gone and his life was shattered. His brother Charlie, who he was very close to, was a great support.

There isn't a day that goes by when we don't think about our mum and how she would have enjoyed her grandchildren and have been proud of all their achievements as

she would have been of her own children.

Mick, Rosemary, Philomena, Patricia, Seamus, Liam, Kieran, Evelyn, Katie (Mick's wife), Kieran (Rosemary's husband), Brian (Patricia's husband), Brigid (Seamus's wife), Maryann (Liam's wife), Deirdre (Kieran's wife)

Grandchildren: Damian, Roisin, Clare, Stephen, Paul, Veronica, Linda, Kiera, Cam Ly, David, Shaun, Keely Rose, Jack, Ryan, Mark, Dean

Great-Grandchildren: Oliver, Rose, Matthew, John, Mary Rose, Claire, Jamie

MILLER, DAVID

BY THE MILLER FAMILY



David Miller 1911-1972
Husband, Father, Grandfather and
Friend

A man who knew no malice
But rather to forgive
In life he thought of others
He died just as he lived

Davy, as he was affectionately known, was a loving husband to Annie, father to Jean, Derek and Gordon, devoted grandfather to all his grandchildren. A friend to all that knew him, he was always ready to offer a helping hand to those in

need. His mild, unassuming nature shone through in every situation. Davy had various jobs throughout his life. He had been a member of the 'ROC', the Royal Observation Core, and served as a B Special before working for Derry city council in his later years.

He loved singing, and, as well as being a member of his church choir, he was known to give a rendering of well-known songs in Eakin's Bar and in the Beaufort Hotel. Two of his favourites were 'Amazing grace' and 'Along the Faughan side'. His interest in music led him to become the 'Big Drummer' in Tullintrain pipe band.

His son Gordon had four young sons at the time Davy was so brutally murdered. It was a traumatic time for the family and the scars of that day still remain with us all. Gordon's daughter Judith was born ten years after the Claudy bomb, (1982). But to this very day she has a deep regret of being deprived of knowing her Grandad. This poem was written with her in mind:



Davy and Annie with their first born Grandson, Alan, sadly all are no longer with us

I never knew my Grandad
Or looked into his face,
I never held his hand in mine
Or felt his warm embrace
I only have his picture
To look at with regret
For if things has been different
He might have been here yet.

I never sat upon his knee,
His voice I'll never hear
I didn't have the chance to say
"I love you Grandad dear".
For he was gone so quickly
Ten years before my time
Without a chance to say
"Goodbye"
To those he left behind.

That fateful day in Claudy on 31
July 1972 was an unbelievable act
of terrorism in a quiet rural village.

People lived side by side, happy and content with what they had. Davy didn't have a car but rode his bicycle along the country roads to wherever he happened to be working. In fact, that particular day, a friend asked him to swap duties which was how Davy happened to be working in the village.

As it was, he saved lives by bringing families down to his house to safety, wrapping the children in blankets and hurriedly helping the parents out of harm's way. As Davy, accompanied by his friend and workmate Jim McClelland, hurried back a bomb outside the Beaufort Hotel exploded, killing them both.

Davy, like all the other victims on that day, deserved to grow old with his family around him, not to be annihilated by evil, faceless terrorists.

To date, no organisation has ever claimed responsibility for the bombing but it is widely known that the IRA were involved—possibly in response to operation 'Motorman' which had just started in nearby Londonderry.

We, as family members, are still seeking justice. A Police Ombudsman's report was

released on the 24 August 2010, but only focused on one individual priest. The PSNI, however, stated there may have been up to 18 others involved. No one has been investigated properly in recent years about Claudy, even though a 'Spotlight' programme identified a number of people, including an individual referred to as Man A, who was now back in the country.

There are also past RUC investigating officers who have information on Claudy and, to our knowledge, they have never been spoken to.

We have had meetings with the PSNI's new investigating team but questions put to them were not answered satisfactorily. The PSNI told us previously that they had the money and resources to investigate Claudy properly but, again, this was never followed through.

All of this has had an absolutely devastating effect on our family—none more so than David's son Gordon, who had never been able to come to terms with this atrocity.

We all suffered horribly throughout the years with this 'open wound never healing' and with no hope of justice or recompense. With

no counselling services available back then Gordon tried to get on with his life, but the trauma of the Claudy bomb affected him so badly that no later than 2011 he was diagnosed with Post Traumatic Stress and underwent intensive trauma counselling. This also affected the family as we all had to make sense of his abnormal actions and try to make sense of his disruptive coping mechanisms and alcohol abuse.

Although his mental health



Davy and Annie in their new Choir robes. Davy had a great love of singing for their Church



Davy and Annie in happier times.
Who was to know how their future
would change

suffered continuously, he did his best for us all and he always clung on to the hope that something positive would eventually be achieved and justice would be done.

Sadly, Gordon passed away on 25th March, 2018 with no closure, no answers, and no one having been held to account. We have promised that we will fight on and finish what he had started. We have come to learn that post generational trauma is passing down through the family and this

will not ease until we have the truth and potential closure we deserve. All we want is to understand why Claudy was blown apart and for our wounds to heal so as we can return to a normal life. Sadly, Gordon will never see this day but we hope and pray we will make him proud when we get the answers we crave and the closure we deserve.

So let us now remember
Each one of those who died
Their names are carved upon our hearts
Those names we say with pride
And pray that all the evil
Throughout the world may cease
That each and every one of us
May live in perfect peace



Taken on one of his many
visits to Limavady. Special
memories for his son Gordon
and family

TEMPLE, WILLIAM

BY DAVID TEMPLE



I was brought up to treat everybody as your friend. I went to Roman Catholic schools, I attended college – back then everybody looked out for each other. It didn't matter if you were Catholic or Protestant.

In '69 the terrorist campaign started. Everything went well until '72. I remember that day – 31st of July – when my brother was murdered in the Claudy bombing. I remember that day as if it was yesterday. I remember my uncle

calling us at work and telling us to come home. We all came home and sat in the house. My father and mother were there, we were all sitting on the sofa and my uncle Ernie says 'there's one of youse missing'. And I says 'what's wrong' and he says 'I want to tell you that you lost your brother – he's been killed in Claudy'.

At that time it was hard to take. We didn't know why this had come upon us, because we liked both sides of the community and we were a well respected family in and around Donemana.

As time went on, we had a lot of grieving and a big funeral with many people calling at our home. Our own friends called, Roman Catholic people called, clergymen called, politicians called – everybody called. But they couldn't bring William back.

The next thing then was my father couldn't take the strain of rearing a son 'til he was 16-years-of age, and at 16-years-of-age he was

taken away from him.

He couldn't take it any more and he died after a short illness. I remember getting the whole family together and saying 'David, you are the head of the household, you have to keep going, you have to look after the family, I will stay in the house and you work'.

I was 22-years-of age at that time, just started out working, and I worked long hours – day and night – to get the family a good standard of living.

We always think of wee Billy, he is always in our thoughts and prayers. Claudy never seemed to go away. Even to this present day Claudy is always on our minds. I look for justice for Billy and for the others injured and bereaved in the Claudy bombing.

It has come out that a Catholic priest was involved - Father Chesney. Many a time Catholics have come and shook my hand and said 'David we are ashamed to be Roman Catholics when we know a priest was involved in the bomb that killed your brother'.

I know that at the present minute

there are a lot of people out there who know everything about Claudy. Then, as you move on, the people I look to to give me answers are the RUC/PSNI, the British Government, the Roman Catholic Church, and the Irish Government. I know myself that the answers lie somewhere within these groups. I know that people from within those groups know who did it.

My good friend Michael Gallagher from Omagh gave me advice. He said 'David, keep fighting'. And fight I will until I get justice. I owe it to my brother, when I get to meet him in heaven, so that I can say to him 'I tried my best down there to get justice for you sir. Martin McGuinness once said he wanted to meet the people of Claudy. Had he met them? No. Why did he not meet them? The people of Claudy waited. I remember sitting in Claudy and a woman was sitting there with rosary beads and she said to me 'David I am ashamed to be a Roman Catholic'. I said 'don't worry about it, your loss is the same as my loss'.

I want a future where we work together, we die together, we die naturally together. I want a

future where everyone's culture is accepted and respected, where everyone is equal under the law, and where justice is done and is seen to be done. That's the kind of future I want – not the one that is being offered to us today.

As a family we will not leave this unturned. I will use every court in the land to get justice for my brother. The Roman Catholic Church has always tried to cover its tracks. As time moves on there have been other things that they tried to cover up. There are people who know about who is responsible for Claudy. The politicians – they always talk about it but they never seem to admit what they know.

To me, justice means that at least when I go to heaven I will know that I tried my best for wee Billy, for all the people of Claudy, for all the victims in the Troubles. I want to keep fighting for them.

My brother
The day that God called your name
It broke my heart in two
But heaven needed an angel
And the one he picked was you
I just wish he could have waited

And let you stay with me
But you have left memories in my heart
And that's where they'll always be.
From sister, Joyce Galbraith

I always remembered the way you looked
The way you used to smile
The little things you said and done
Are with me all the while
Your name I often mention
My thoughts are with you still
You haven't been forgotten
And you know you never will
From Desmond and Ernie

A very sudden parting,
I often wonder why
The hardest part of all
You never said goodbye
A little tear falls gently
Which others do not see
For a kind and loving brother
Who meant the world to me
From David and Adrian

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FAMILY REFLECTIONS

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To the Bereaved Families of Claudy

It has been our privilege to facilitate each of your families to share very personal lived experiences connected with the horrors of that day. Your loved one's lives mattered, each of them had qualities and values which you rightly will honour today but in every day that follows.

This publication is testament to each of your families and the dignity with which you have carried yourselves down the years. In contributing to this publication, you have ensured that a permanent record exists (in one place) which captures the TRUTH of Claudy and which ensures your loved ones are represented as you their families wish them to be - no-one knew them as you knew them.

(Kenny Donaldson, SEFF's Director of Services)



One of the brass plaques located on the wall next to the Claudy Memorial which explains the purpose of the Memorial.

"It was a dreadfully callous act to put three bombs into the centre of the village, where people would run away from one bomb straight into another. It was despicable and awful."

(Barry McGuigan)

"Why had bombs been planted in Claudy that day? And why had no-one 'been caught'. Why and what for? To what end? There was no answer as no answer would ever satisfy."

(Deirdre and Dermot O'Kane)

"No one had experienced anything like it. I remember at that time it felt like there was a funeral every day. The whole village mourned together."

(Maureen McElhinney)

"I found it hard to pray. In a way I was angry with God for letting this happen, and angry at the world for letting so many people be killed. Where was it all going to end?"

(Anne Bradley, formerly Hone)

"So let us now remember each one of those who died, their names are carved upon our hearts, those names we say with pride. And pray that all the evil throughout the world may cease, that each and every one of us may live in perfect peace."

(The Miller family)

"Those born to altruism in any way not small, the gifts of love and kindness are the greatest gifts of all. They are the unsung heroes of the Human world today, for their acts of love and kindness, greater credit they are due. Special people of this world to the higher self be true."

(Tess O'Loughlin)

"All 8 children witnessed the carnage on the streets of Claudy on that day as they ran to the cafe to check on our mother, images which never disappear from memory no matter the number of years which pass"

The McLaughlin Family

"Dad and mum never had the same love of life again. They had their good days and their bad days, but there were more bad days than good."

(Mark Eakin)

"The passing of time does not diminish the horror, loss, or sheer senselessness of what happened, and nor does it diminish the memories of those who died."

(Colin McClelland and Tracey Deans)

"To me, justice means that at least when I go to heaven, I will know that I tried my best for wee Billy, for all the people of Claudy, for all the victims in the Troubles. I want to keep fighting for them."

(David Temple)