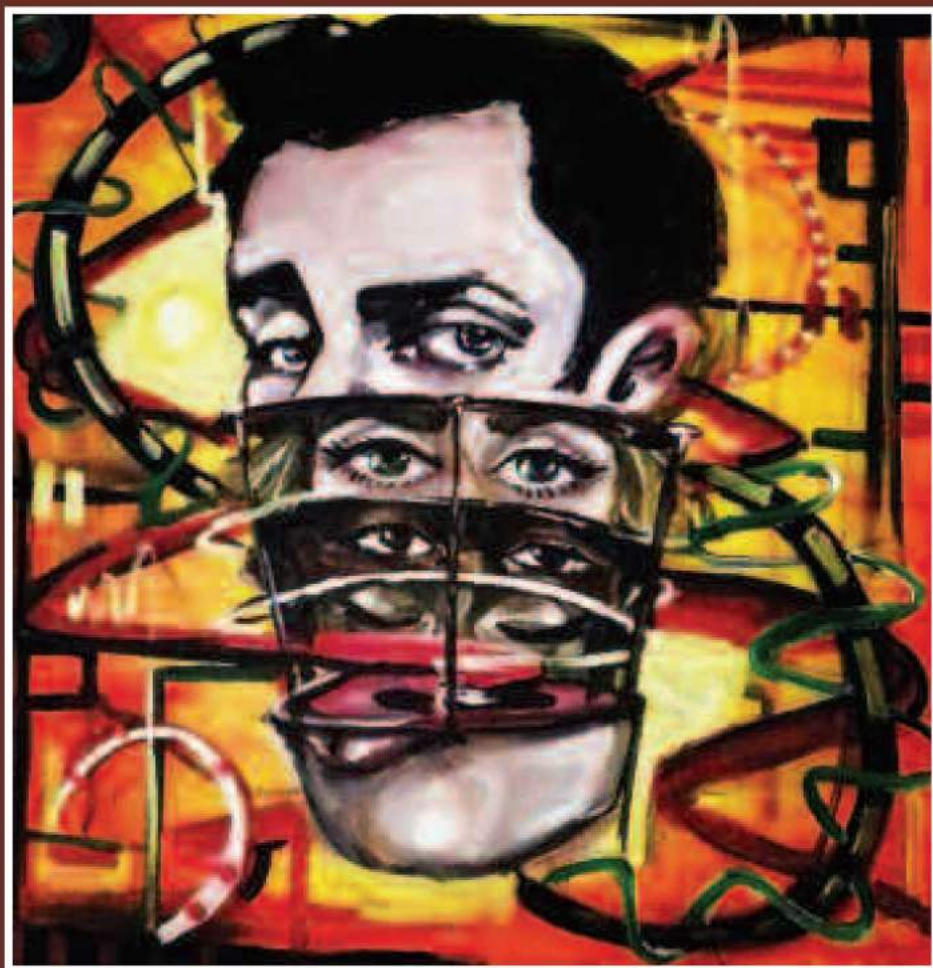


OUR NORTH WALL STORIES  
**DIVINITY WITH SKIN ON**



**Martin Byrne**

**ETERNITY CAMOUFLAGED IN OUR  
EVERYDAY EXPERIENCES OF HEAVEN AND HELL**

# **OUR NORTH WALL STORIES**

## **DIVINITY WITH SKIN ON**



*Oct 17 UN Day for the Eradication of Poverty Commemoration  
at the Human Rights and Poverty Stone.*

Photo courtesy of ATD Fourth World

**MARTIN BYRNE**

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# FOREWORD

## *Dreamer*

*Never let it be said that to dream is a waste of one's time, for dreams are our realities in waiting. In dreams, we plant the seeds of our future.*

I have a few dreams!

As I discover these new North Wall stories,

I have a dream.

In four months time, Pope Francis will be walking in some streets of Dublin 1. Croke Park will welcome him for a Holy Mass on the 26th August 2018. Will he leave the area without your gift? Is it possible that the Pope of the people misses the North Wall stories that Martin Byrne calls, "Twenty Years Of Urban Contextual Theologising". So here is my first dream: Pope Francis is meeting members of the Dublin 1 communities at the Famine Statues and the Human Rights and Poverty Stone to pray together. As they are together, he is receiving as a present, the twenty-two theology books written in the North Wall area, by the very communities who know what struggle and humiliation mean.

As I read the 'If I were a fairy' quotes from the girls in St Laurence O'Toole School, I have another dream.

I start to wonder what kind of special powers I should have after finishing reading these North Wall stories.

So my second dream is: I have special powers to make sure that one day each of the authors in this book will have a very special reward. Someone they don't know at all will come and tell them: 'you know, your story made a difference'. Or 'It gave me the courage to change'. 'It helped me to recover'. 'It whipped out the shame and gave me pride'. 'It pushed me to go out and meet new people'. 'I decided to use my vote in elections'.... Yes, the authors deserve this. They should feel that their effort to write transforms lives for the better.

Now I close 'Divinity with skin on' and I still dream.

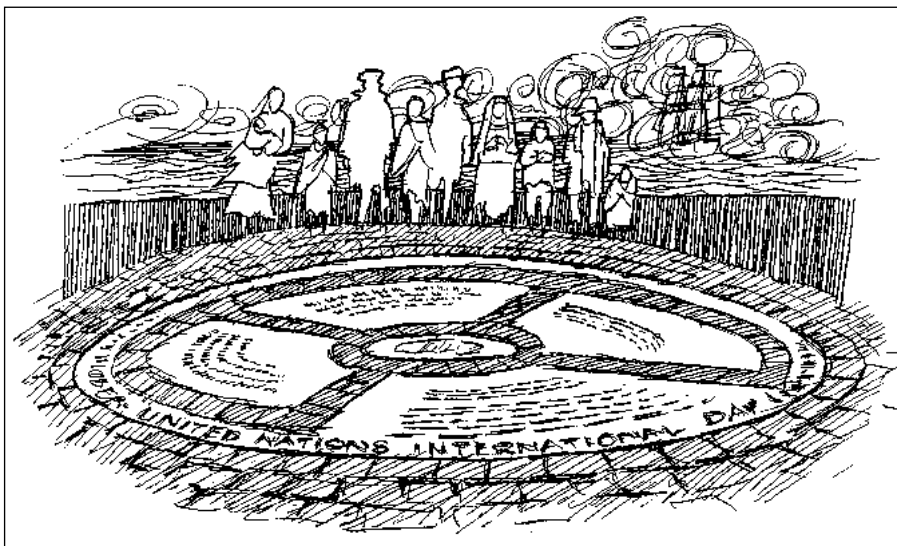
For the past five years I have been living in Mountjoy Square. These five years in Dublin 1 were probably the years of my adult life during which I had the most opportunities to sing. The songs and not only the stories of the North Wall will stay with me, - people struggling but people singing. This is for me another strong visible sign of 'divinity with skin on'.

So a third dream is as follows: I have the opportunity to meet the authors of the stories and together we are happy to sing 'there is something inside so strong'. As we sing together, I believe even more that 'walking as one' to end poverty and all the sufferings it creates, is possible.

“We are one, but we are many,  
We come, from every land and sea,  
We share a dream, and sing with one voice,  
I will, you will, we'll end world poverty.”

**Pierre Klein**

National Co-ordinator  
ATD Fourth World - Ireland





*Parishioners tidying the church grounds in preparation for celebrating  
300 years of the North Wall above and below,  
Local participants enjoying the day of street games*



These amazing photos have been generously gifted to this book by Paul Kelly whose North Wall Collection has been exhibited in the CHQ, Wood Quay and City Hall. Paul's evocative photographs tell a story and help situate this book in a very particular context.

# INTRODUCTION

2018 is the twentieth anniversary of the demolition of the Sheriff Street flats. What sort of a North Wall community has emerged in the intervening years, I wonder? The developers with their dreams and their money have come and gone and are now back again. The recession has come and left us many scars. Within the community there have been many signs of hope and equally many indications of despair.

The charity, Oxfam in its Christmas 2016 report, said that Ireland is part of a toxic global tax system servicing the very wealthiest, while ordinary people pay the price and lose out on essential public services. Research conducted by the charity puts Ireland sixth in a list of fifteen countries which, it says, are helping big business to cheat countries and their citizens out of billions of euro in tax every year. Chief Executive of Oxfam Ireland, Jim Clarken said governments were falling over themselves to ensure corporations paid as little tax as they wished. He said that, in the process, governments were starving their countries of the money needed for education, healthcare and generating jobs. Mr Clarken said it was “no badge of honour” for Ireland to be known as a haven for corporate tax dodging. He complained that not only did Ireland turn a blind eye, - it put out the red carpet for those companies that get away with large-scale tax avoidance through profit-shifting and sweetheart deals. This global and national backdrop colours what happens in the North Wall. In 2018, Pope Francis intends to visit Ireland and I wonder what might he have to say to the community of struggling and hope-filled people in the parish of Saint Laurence O Toole?

A gritty spirituality of resistance and hope endures. As a community we have stood and struggled and survived together. Though we may be small and often unseen we are oozing humanity and have not allowed ourselves to be anaesthetised or domesticated. We are proud to be Larriers and to keep an eye out for our neighbours. Our stories help us to make some sense of life.

Embracing our history is an important path to greater wholeness and this involves remembering our own, our family and our community’s story. As we ourselves grow and change, and as the dockland’s community about us is in constant transition, we try to weave together all the strands and make sense of life and of mystery. In the ups and downs of our stories we try to make sense of the mystery we call God. It is difficult. In this age of post-truth we have



somehow moved beyond labels and organisations and religions and categories that once gifted us supportive frameworks but also maybe kept us that bit stuck. Many institutions and churches have become objects of suspicion and are often no longer experienced as guarantors of meaning, or of ethics or of spirituality.

It is scary now not being grounded in such traditional identities. We are no longer docker-families from the flats, nationalistic and catholic. To what does my life belong and what do I embrace? We desire and thirst for a spiritual bedrock. The scaffolding has collapsed but a mysterious building of connectivity, kinship and spirit persists. Our challenge is to recognise, to honour and to respect this inner reality. The precious contents of the wineskins flow generously around the streets of the North Wall.

The people of the North Wall continually gift me with life, humanity, purpose, divinity, belonging and a fresh way of seeing. In response, as we offer our lives in mutual gift-exchange to each other, I certainly am not trying to impress people back to the sacraments nor am I trying to change people into active church goers. To be Eucharistic, to be contemplative, to be converted and to be a brother we must live in a close and familiar way within a community of struggling humanity. We are in this together. Jointly in concert, we are on a spiritual path of bridge-building and all the while society about us cries out for walls. In this dockland's parish, named after a wall, it is our ironic privilege to try to live an inclusive, human, communal existence together. It is a mutual, spiritual odyssey of exploration, of identification and of solidarity where through kinship, we experience hints of inclusion. As Christians we hope for a final consummation 'in Christ' and as humans struggling together in kinship, we assert the opposite kingdom to where jihadis sow fear, demagogues stir up hatred and the privileged feather their nests with the world's scare resources.

Structures of vice deform our North Wall context, thwart community development and limit our dreams. These structures can be both global and home grown. Most individuals and families in the North Wall seek a better future for their children and pray that another kinder and fairer world is possible. We all thirst for a sustainable spirituality of hope.

In telling our stories together and in aspiring for dignity and for freedom, the theology we do together in Dublin's docklands is very much non-neutral. Our fundamental dignity and our equality are dear to God and these are the corner stones of our faith. We are, in an ever more complex and changing community,

articulating our wisdom and our gift, from the ambiguous place of standing together, violence, community, resilience, degradation, humanity and impoverishment - that we call home. We speak of the God-reality very differently from scripture scholars and from academics and many of our metaphors, symbolic actions, visions, songs and imaginations have a grounded starting-point in solidarity, care, community, survival and connectivity. Our spiritual nutrients are diverse and many of us retain a social preference, as often we find light and hope and life on the street and in neighbourliness. Where is Christ to be found in Sheriff Street? We are living in a fluid society, - an uncharted territory foreign to our docker ancestors and we usually strive to survive on blended spiritualities. Into this North Wall maelstrom the narrative and the reality of Jesus the Christ is incarnated.

It is not easy in our modern dockland's world to remain attentive and in awe of the living sacred power of God's Spirit all around us. How as a community of ordinary North Wall mystics can we remain wakeful, attentive and conscious of the sustaining, sacralising, sensitising and suffusing Spirit of God, in the everyday events of our small and often hidden lives? Thankfully, our stories point the finger towards the unsayable mystery of God, especially when we remain humble and searching in naming the activity of the Risen Christ among us locally.

Many in Irish church and society consider that we are living today in the grey, cloudy, open, swampy landscape of post-truth, post-doctrine and post-church. Some people are in a despondent groove and long to escape the smells of decay and corruption, wishing instead to transplant themselves into the fantasy of a new flowering, utopian consciousness for humanity. Our traditional sharp distinctions in matters of theology and spirituality have eroded considerably and luckily we are being reprogrammed by a very busy Holy Spirit. In this process, we are somewhat bewildered as we distance from our old comforting attachments, and it is not for us to forecast or to determine or to specify how God's love will ultimately take root in contemporary and in future Irish culture.

This book contends that when we stand together, open-hearted, shoulder to shoulder at the margins of Irish society, be it in the North Wall or Cherry Orchard, that here at society's edges, we are in the privileged, sacred, secular place to be better guided to where mystery is beckoning us. These stories may appear simple and for those with tunnel vision, this book may not present as decent theology. This collection of imaginative narratives is a deceptively

sophisticated mode of communication, one which first listens to experience, speaks from beside rather than from above, and is accompanying rather than dictating the way. In these respects hopefully, it's reminiscent of 'Gaudium et spes' and the way of Pope Francis and of course the Word Incarnate communicates.

If you wish to feel and to listen to and to hear the fearsome and awesome heartbeat of Christ, then placing your stethoscope near the compassionate and the struggling reverberations of the North Wall, may help your soul to resonate to the rhythms of God's paschal song.



*This photo of Oriel Street is included with permission from Focus Ireland.<sup>1</sup>  
The mother with her child in this photograph is a staff member of Focus Ireland.  
Focus Ireland's Christmas appeal for 2017 reads 'Our children are homeless tonight'  
and states, "The first night in the hotel she just broke down.  
I told her we were on holidays. But she just kept crying."*

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<sup>1</sup> Focus Ireland's Reported Figures on Child Homelessness on Nov. 22nd 2017 reads, Christmas 2016 saw 2,400 children who were homeless in Ireland. By Christmas 2017 a 25% increase saw a new record number of 3,194 children who were homeless in Ireland.

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This book is blessed with the generous creativity of eighty remarkable people. To each I am deeply indebted. I am delighted and really grateful also that Pierre Klein of ATD Fourth World Ireland has penned such a challenging and affirmative Foreword. Thank you all most sincerely.

This book is not a commercial venture. As with previous books the provocative and reflective illustrations that enliven the text and enrich each story are the beautiful compositions of Joe Connolly. Thanks also to Tara Kearns for her remarkable illustrations that adorn the front and back covers. The inclusion of additional local landscape paintings from Tara are a powerful embellishment to this volume. Likewise the evocative photographs of Paul Kelly tell a story in themselves and greatly help to situate this book in a very particular context. A sincere thank you is extended to Joe, Tara and Paul for their generosity and for their craft.

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

This type of book requires competent professional support and I acknowledge with gratitude the skills and commitment of Christy Hammond and his team at CRM Design and Print for such a wonderful publication. Finally, a special thank you to the Christian Brothers community in Marino for again part-funding this book.

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# DEDICATION

This book of stories is dedicated to my godchildren who enrich the world with their vitality and goodness: Jessie Byrne, Anna Fairhurst, Saoirse Keaveny, Ellie May Fogarty and Sorcha Greene. This book is also dedicated to Marie Maher who died this past year and who generously contributed to this book in “A Knock At The Door” and to many previous publications. I have accepted in good faith that each presented story carries the correct copyright ownership and if there has been any inadvertent discrediting, or if facts are found to be incorrect, then I apologise in advance and will carry the corrections in next year’s book.

## ***Twenty Years Of Urban Contextual Theologising – North Wall Stories To Date***

“Listen Up!” 1998, A New North Wall Spirit, 1998, “Tell Me About It ...” 1999, Walking Along With Dockland

Mystics, 1999, The Boundary Wall, 2000, A Guttled God, 2003, Unmasking God, 2004, Hope In The Shadows, 2005, Word On The Street, 2006, Small Stories Matter, 2007, Freshly Baked Bread, 2007, Writing On The Wall, 2008, Seepings From The Margins, 2009, Detecting A Break In, 2010, North Wall -Our University, 2011, Rummaging for Mystery in the North Wall, 2012. Old Yarn Theology, 2013, It Takes A Village, 2014, Spinning Straw into Gold, 2015, 100 Gritty Voices, 2016, Our Stories Moving Us From Shame To Dignity, 2017. Our North Wall Stories – Divinity with Skin On, 2018.



*Shrine to Martin O'Rourke  
shot in North Wall*

***OUR NORTH WALL STORIES – DIVINITY WITH SKIN ON***



***ETERNITY COMOUFLAGED IN OUR EVERYDAY EXPERIENCES  
OF HEAVEN AND HELL***



*(These paintings of the North Wall landscape are by the local artist Tara Kearns)*



# Stopping to Appreciate How Amazing Life Is

Ciara Lindsay<sup>2</sup>

Sometimes we forget to stop and appreciate how amazing life is - even the little things. Growing up, I would complain about not having the best of clothes. I would get into a bad mood because I wouldn't get my own way at home. I would sometimes take for granted all the great times you would have with your family; special times of the year like birthdays or Christmas. All it takes is one thing to happen, to bring you close to death, for you to realise how precious all of these things really are.

I was in my second year of living in Berlin and the city was slowly becoming my second home. I love everything about Berlin. The perfect summers when the sun is constantly shining down, to the depressing grey winters when it never stops snowing. I loved the people and their way of life and the sense of freedom around the city.

After a long Tuesday at the office, I cycled to meet some friends for dinner when I was overtaken by another cyclist who didn't give me enough space. His bag got caught in the front wheel of my bike and I lost control of the handle bars. I was hit by a car. Just like that, my life changed forever. I was rushed to the nearest hospital where they performed immediate surgery to remove one of my kidneys. Most of my insides had been damaged from the impact of the car. I

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2 Ciara – from Spencer Dock in the North Wall was working in Berlin in 2016.

broke all of my ribs, my hip, my pelvis and I fractured my collar bone. My skull was fractured and I suffered a small bleeding on the brain. I don't remember much after the car hit me apart from standing up in a panic, just after I had hit the ground. I was knocked out after this for a long while. I was taken to the University Hospital in Berlin because they specialised in lung damage. I also had one of my lungs crushed and needed to be on life support to keep me breathing. I was induced into a coma for three weeks. Most of it was a blur. Seven surgeries and some blood transfusions later and they let me come around from the coma. I heard some funny stories about my behaviour while on anaesthetic and morphine and I couldn't help but laugh. I remember when I started to realise where I was. My ma and my sister were there by my side. These situations can be so hard to process in our mind, because we always hear about stuff like this happening to people around us. We never think it could ever happen to us.

After six long weeks in intensive care, my health insurance had finally chosen a rehabilitation centre suitable for me. I remember being so happy to move on to the next step. It was one step closer to getting stronger and going back to Dublin to my family and friends. I was moved from Berlin to Brandenburg. I was sad about this because my friends would be so much further away, but all I could think about was getting ready to go home. At this stage I had stopped taking as much medication and became more aware of my situation and how serious it was. I became more emotional and I struggled with my mental health. It became worse when I left and moved to the Rehab Centre because I didn't know anyone and my friends were a two hour train journey away. So my visits became less frequent. Moving to Germany, I didn't take the language too seriously and I never learned any German before I moved. I picked up very little in my time in Berlin. Most people spoke English (that was my excuse). I couldn't communicate with any of the patients in the clinic. I found it difficult to even communicate with some of my therapists because of the language barrier. I did therapy Monday to Friday. The physiotherapy entailed using my brain to complete puzzles, relearning to write and learning to walk again. Therapy was from 7 am till 12 pm. So the rest of the day was pretty boring. I would spend the rest of my day walking on my crutches around the grounds of the Rehab.

I used to take my family and friends for granted but after an ordeal like this you realize how important they are. I was grateful that my family and friends would take to the skies and fly over to see me. Some of the kids in the Rehab Centre would rarely get a visit. I was totally overwhelmed with the amount of support



shown to me and my family during this really difficult time. My best friend Matthew had set up a 'Go Fund Me' on Facebook. This was a link that people could click onto and make a donation to the cause that it was for. I couldn't believe my eyes when I saw that he had raised a whopping 4,500. Once I was stable enough to have my mobile phone again I looked at the Go Fund Me set up and saw all the people who had made a donation - so many 'anonymous' donators. It was so shocking to see the amount of people that didn't even know me, wanting to help out. My friends were amazing throughout it all and made sure they could help out at any point. All of the money donated and the collections made were so helpful to my family for flying back and forward from Berlin.

The people of the North Wall community also did a great deal for my family during this time too. From mass cards to collections made in the Sheriff Hall. As far as community spirit goes, in the North Wall it truly is amazing. I remember coming back from Rehab one morning to find a huge brown parcel on my bed. When I opened it I found a card from Breda Walsh and Dolores Mc Dermott. Inside was a lovely message encouraging me to stay strong, along with bags of King crisps, Manhattan popcorn, Lyons tea bags and some Dairy Milk chocolate to go with it. These acts of kindness will never be forgotten. Father Robert had mentioned my name at mass a million times and everyone prayed for me. I had never felt love and support like this from the people in my community, until then. My neighbours were there to greet me on the 7th of October 2016 as I got out of my taxi, knackered from travelling all day. I was greeted with flowers, pyjamas, hugs and kisses. I couldn't explain how it felt to finally be home and to see all the familiar faces. Writing my story gives me an opportunity to thank all of these people that helped my family and me last year. Without you and all the kindness shown, it would have been that little bit tougher. I am forever grateful and forever proud to be from the North Wall.

We should always look out for one another. It is so important to stick together as a community and be the best we can for each other. Life is very precious. We never know when it is going to end. So try and live every day like it is your last. Thanks to Brother Martin for asking me to be a part of this amazing project and for giving me a platform to share my story.



# Prehistoric Fish Traps Found In Spencer Dock

Melanie McQuade <sup>3</sup>

We didn't find any artefacts associated with the wooden structural remains but the remains themselves (and especially the dates obtained for them) were very exciting. The prehistoric fish traps we found in Spencer Dock were the remains of several prehistoric fish traps, dating between 7,000 and 4,800 years old. The fish traps were all made of wood and had been preserved in the waterlogged silts of the Liffey estuary, below later reclamation deposits, at depths of between 6m and 4m below present sea level. The earliest remains were rows of fence posts and a fragmentary basket that would originally have been part of larger structures. Typically these structures comprised two fences set at an angle to the shore and a basket positioned at the junction of the fences. Fish that swam into the basket would have been trapped there and could be gathered once the tide went out. The traps were made from young pieces of

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<sup>3</sup> **Melanie** – was the lead archaeologist on the excavations under the PWC site in the North Wall.

<sup>4</sup> *Antiquity Journal* Vol. 81 Number 313 September 2007. *Archaeology Ireland* Spring 2008 vol. 22 Issue No. 83 to see McQuade, M. 2008. 'Gone Fishin' an update on the discovery of evidence for 3,000 years of prehistoric trap fishing along the Liffey estuary, p. 8-11.

hazel wood which had been cut with small stone axes. Radiocarbon analysis has dated the wood to 5700BC (7,000 years ago). Several thousand years later (3600BC) after c.2m of silt had covered the earlier remains another fish trap was constructed in the same area. The remains of this trap comprised a beautifully constructed wattle fence made from hazel pieces. There was no evidence for any prehistoric settlement on the development sites at Spencer Dock but the people who used these traps probably lived somewhere nearby. They would have caught salmon and/or eel in these traps but they could also have trapped other estuarine species such as flounder. The finds were a very important discovery in the context of Irish Archaeology since they provided the first definite evidence for the use of fish traps during the Mesolithic (the earliest period of human settlement in Ireland dating c. 9,000BP - 5,000 years ago).

The Clowanstown trap illustrated on the new 2017 An Post stamps was found not long after our first discovery at North Wall Quay. It was uncovered during excavations in advance of the construction of the M3 motorway and is slightly later in date than the Mesolithic fish traps from North Wall Quay, but because it came from a lakeshore setting it is far better preserved as it was not subject to the kind of tidal fluctuations that would have prevailed at North Wall Quay. The Clowanstown example therefore lent itself to preservation and is currently on display in the National Museum of Ireland, Kildare Street.

I have written a couple of articles on the fishtrap remains from the North Wall Quay which you may find interesting.<sup>4</sup>



# Duffy Bookbinders Seville Place

## The Duffy Family

Now in our fourth generation in the trade, Bookbinding is a family tradition. In the 1940's Paddy Duffy, grandfather of proprietors Tom and Pat Duffy, was bindery overseer for one of the city's most famous publishers, Alex Thom's of Glasnevin. Paddy's original Bookbinding apprenticeship was interrupted by his participation in the 1916 Rising. He only completed on his return from Frongoch Internment Camp.

A former president of the Irish Bookbinders and Allied Trade Unions, Paddy's son Tommy Duffy and wife, Kathleen, set up the present company in 1970. Duffy Bookbinders started up originally in the rear of the family home, on Beneavin Road. Their sons, Tom and Pat, the current proprietors, both began their apprenticeship under their father, Tommy, who also taught and lectured the bookbinding apprentices at Bolton Street College. Sadly, Tommy passed away in 1978.

Within a few years it was time to move on the bindery and in 1978, Duffy Bookbinders moved into a building on 106 Seville Place in Dublin 1, where it operated out of for over twenty-five years before making the short move to the premises at the rear of 106. With its entrance from Seville Terrace, this is the current home of Duffy Bookbinders, who along with Tom and Pat are joined by Tom's wife Patricia as well as their son Tommy who on completion of his apprenticeship became the fourth generation of binders in the family.

### ***Ireland's Oldest Bindery***

Throughout these generations of experience, Duffy's have earned a reputation for quality workmanship that is respected throughout the industry. Our vast

knowledge and skill in the binding trade has led to requests to bind presentation books for Popes and Heads of State throughout the world. In 2011, Duffy Bookbinders were commissioned to bind a reprint of a five hundred year old Irish language grammar book with hand made presentation box, which was presented by President Mary McAleese to Queen Elizabeth 11 on her historic trip to Ireland.

After numerous requests and queries over the years, Duffy Bookbinders have now started their own range of quality hand-bound notebooks. These notebooks are available in a range of different colour quality cloths as well as a range of different sizes. They can be purchased using Duffy's own design which uses the foiled image of the iconic Dublin land mark of The Five Lamps, situated only yards from their bindery or can be customised to your own design.

### ***Our 1916 Easter Rising Connection***

On Easter Monday over one hundred years ago Paddy Duffy, the first bookbinder in our family, entered St Stephen's Green armed, along with other members of The Irish Volunteers and Irish Citizen Army. Under the command of Michael Mallin and Countess Markievicz they had planned to dig themselves in for the long haul but British machine gunners were moved into the Shelbourne Hotel giving a significant height advantage over the Green.

The constant raining of machine gun bullets forced the order to evacuate and the order was given to take cover in the College of Surgeons, adjacent to the Green. At the same time, over at City Hall, a young nurse and a member of the Irish Citizen Army, Brigid Davis, was attending to the dying Sean Connolly. Brigid's blood stained apron can be seen in the Museum at Kilmainham Jail. After Pearse's surrender, Brigid herself was brought to Kilmainham Jail before being released. Paddy was sent to the Welsh Prison Camp of Frongoch. Upon his release Paddy returned in ill health. Brigid under the orders of Dr Kathleen Lynn, was assigned to Paddy, to nurse him back to full strength, and it was during that time that they fell in love. After an active part from both in the War of Independence, they would get married and start a family.

The Rising brought two active participants together in life. This would lead not only to a family but to a family craft in bookbinding, started by Paddy and still going strong four generations later on Seville Terrace.

# My Dockland Memories

Noel Gregory <sup>5</sup>

The Port of Dublin has been Ireland's premier gateway for shipping and trade since the age of the Vikings. Memory is sacred. Memory according to Oscar Wilde "is the diary that we carry about in our heads." Photographs are a repository of memory. Dublin's docklands are an integral part of my family's memory. I feel a great affinity with the Port of Dublin. My brother Tony and I were raised and brought up on wages earned in Dublin docks. My grandfather, Robert Gregory settled in the North Dock Ward in the early twentieth century in 162 North Strand Road just about where Larkin House now stands. It was demolished after the North Strand bombings in 1941. My father, Anthony Gregory went to school in St Laurence O Toole parish school in the docklands. I was born in 1945 and Tony came along in 1947 further down the North Strand in Charleville Avenue. This was the year my father entered service with the Dublin Port and Docks Board as a warehouseman. He retired in 1971.

My father's brother-in-law, Jimmy Hannon who was born in St Laurence's Place East, off Seville Place in the docklands, was a shipping clerk with Dublin Port and Docks in their headquarters at the Custom House Docks in Amiens Street, where the Financial Services Centre is now. This was the famous forty-seven acre site that featured in the "Gregory Deal". Jimmy used his influence to get my father the job in the docks. They say the harp is the symbol of Ireland because everything works by pulling strings. My father's brother Tommy was also employed by the Dublin Port and Docks as a carpenter. He was regarded as being honest enough to be entrusted with the keys of the warehouse in the docks. I was told this by Luke Kelly's brother recently. My uncle, Tommy's son-in-law, Tommy Hayes was also employed there.

My father was not a docker, strictly speaking, as he did not work on the quayside unloading ships. He worked in the stores and warehouses where the various commodities were brought from the ships. My father worked mainly in Stack D in Alexandra Basin which was a tea warehouse where chests of tea, unloaded from the ships were stored. On occasion he would be sent to the

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<sup>5</sup> Noel – a retired secondary school teacher who lives in Ballybough, whose brother Tony represented the local community in the Dáil over many years.

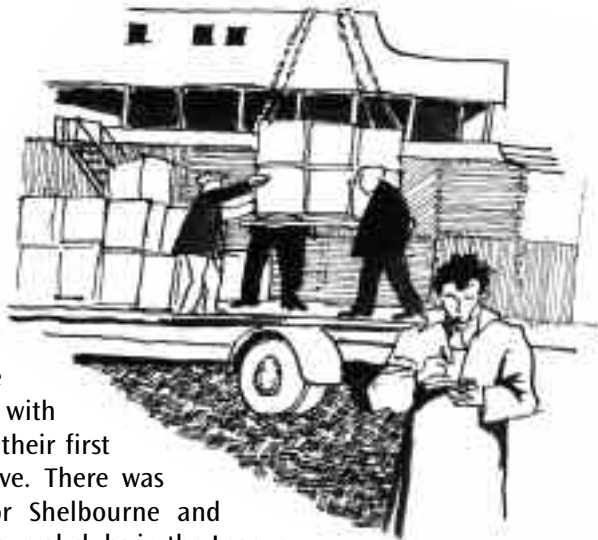
tobacco warehouses in Amiens Street. Another commodity he worked on was sacks of chocolate crumb. It might surprise people to know that the Dublin Port and Docks Board had a warehouse as far up the Liffey as Chapelizod. Occasionally my father would be sent to work there. He never looked forward to cycling out there on his bike at seven o'clock in the morning. He also worked in the stores in Bonham Street.

In those days in the 1940s and 1950s there were more than two thousand men working in Alexandra Basin. They all cycled down East Wall Road to work or down Sheriff Street. Every morning around seven-thirty, I would hear my father getting up on his bike in Charleville Avenue and saying to my mother, Ellen that he was off now down "to the point of the wall." As a child I never understood what he meant by that expression. It was only when the Point Depot came into national prominence, when it was developed as a concert venue that I fully realised that "the point of the wall" was a real place. In the dark winter evenings at five thirty when the hooter would sound in the port to signal the end of the day's work the men would cycle along the Wharf Road and the cops would be waiting for them on the East Wall Road to catch them with no lights on their bikes. The hooter in the port could be heard four times a day all over the north inner city at 8am, 1pm, 2pm and 5.30pm, and you could set your watch by it.

My mother Ellen would pack my father's lunch-box every morning. He would have a small container to hold a little sugar for his tea and a little Baby Power bottle for his milk as well as his sandwiches. The little container that held his sugar going to work would come home in the evening with tea in it on any occasion where a tea-chest fell and broke and spilled its contents on the floor of the warehouse. My father would empty the container of tea into my mother's tea-caddy. There were no tea-bags in those days and it would not be long until the tea caddy was full. On a rare occasion my father would bring home a small piece of chocolate crumb for Tony and me. We would look forward to this when a shipment of chocolate crumb was in. This commodity came in sacks which sometimes burst when they fell. My father would often talk about the "coolies" on the tea ships from Ceylon, now called Sri Lanka. These were native workers on the tea ships. The type of tea my father most often spoke of was "Broken Orange Pekoe."

The Dublin Port and Docks Board was the biggest employer in the north inner city in those days. This ended with the introduction of containerisation and

mechanisation in the 1960s and 1970s. My father used to stack tea-chests ten high. This was done by hand. Then the escalators and the fork-lift trucks came along and one man did the work of a gang of men. I should mention here some of the men who worked with my father, if I can remember their first names correctly at this remove. There was Peter Keeley who played for Shelbourne and whose son Dermot managed several clubs in the League of Ireland, including Shelbourne. There was Mick Stapleton who was the father of Irish International, Frank Stapleton who played for Arsenal and Manchester United. There was Ned Laycock from East Wall and Arthur Worley from Ballybough. I want to give special mention to Billy Dee who was his charge-hand and who was a member of the confraternity in East Wall church. He was much loved by my father. I remember when my father would be out of work sick, Billy would bring his wage-packet up to the house to my mother. I thought this was most kind of him. Sadly, he is recently deceased.



In the 1950s there was a great economic depression in Ireland. This affected trade through the port of Dublin and at times, not very often, when business in the port was slack my father would be laid-off for a couple of weeks or so. My mother Ellen would then become the bread-winner in the family and work as a waitress. Then my father would get the word that there was going to be a “read” the following Monday. A read was a general assembly of men who had been recently laid-off, where they would gather down in the docks and the foreman would get up on the back of a lorry or a platform and read out the names of the men who were going to be taken back on as the business in the port had picked-up. Invariably my father was among the lucky ones whose names were on the list. This was a great relief to my mother. Around 1958 my next door neighbour, Tommy Mooney lost his job in Johnston Mooney and O Brien, the bakers. When I heard this I asked my father could he get him a job in the docks, as he had a young family. This my father succeeded in doing and Tommy worked in the Port and Docks for the rest of his life. He ended up a fork-lift driver and a shop-steward, I think, if I remember correctly.



If my father forgot to bring his lunch-bag with him in the morning and if it was during the school holidays, my mother would send me down on her bike with it for him. This journey down to Alexandra Basin and back was an odyssey of discovery for me at eleven or twelve years of age. I would cycle past the Fry-Cadbury's factory with its tall iconic chimney on the East Wall Road. This was before they moved out to Coolock. I would pass Merchants Warehousing and The Dublin Port Milling Company with its huge grain silos. I would wonder at the stockpiles of timber and the distinctive smell of new timber in the timber merchants' yards. These were T and C Martins where Matt Talbot worked and Brooks Thomas. I would go through the massive iron gates of the Dublin Port and Docks with the harbour police on duty. I would be filled with awe at the huge oil storage tanks with their colourful logos Caltex, ESSO, Shell, B P and Castrol. Finally I would arrive at Stack D the warehouse where my father worked, with his lunch box. On the way back I would make a de-tour up the North Wall Quay past the shipping offices of Burns and Laird, the Dublin to Glasgow line and the Isle of Man Steam Packet Company as well as British Rail and B and I. I used to gaze at the distinctive Guinness ships on the Liffey and the Guinness barges that brought the barrels of porter down the Liffey from James' Gate to the ships at Butt Bridge. I also marvelled at the iconic and distinctive Gasometer tower of the Alliance And Dublin Consumer Gas Company.

I noted on my odyssey through the Docklands from Ballybough to Alexandra Basin that the coal lorries from the many coal merchants in the port, Tedcastles, Heitons and Donnelly's, to name but a few, sped along the roads from the port and shed pieces of coal all along the way. These were huge open coal trucks with tons of coal on board. Huge mechanical shovels would lift the coal out of the holds onto the trucks. There were no sacks involved at this stage. Anyway I noted that pieces of coal littered the roadways in the Docklands. This was useful intelligence to have because one could go down in the winter with a small shovel and a bag and bring it home to my mother for the fire, otherwise the traffic would mush it into dust. The loose coal on the road was a traffic hazard. An enterprising lad like myself would sweep it up and remove it. Coal was not the only thing one could take off the roads in the docks in those days. Horse manure was also in plentiful supply to fertilise your back garden anytime you wanted it.

A lot of people from the tenements in Summerhill among whom Fr Michael Sweetman S. J. and Fr Peter McVerry lived in the 1970s would have formerly

worked in the Port and Docks on the quayside until they were made collateral damage and surplus to requirements by mechanisation and containerisation. I enjoyed the recent television documentary about Peter McVerry, "A View From The Basement." I knew Peter McVerry before some of the people interviewed ever heard of him. I was a member of the teaching staff in Belvedere College from 1967 to 1970 and Peter was also on the teaching staff at that time - a fresh young Jesuit with a northern accent. I also knew his confrere Fr Michael Sweetman S. J. who was with the Jesuit community in Upper Gardiner Street. He used to come to St Joseph's Marino to say mass for us when I was in the Christian Brothers Novitiate and St Mary's Training College in the early 1960s. He also gave retreats for us in Marino. Then lo and behold both Peter and Michael were living in the tenements in Summerhill in the 1970s in a manner that the Nazarene would have approved of, living out the Gospel of the Poor and liberation theology among as I have said above, many unemployed former Dockers.

Another great man of the Port and the Dublin Docklands was Des Brannigan recently deceased. He was born in North Great George's Street in the north inner city and lived in Sheriff Street in the Docklands for a while. Des was a trade unionist for ship and port workers among many other notable achievements. I mention him here because when my brother Tony was elected to the Dail in 1982 Des was one of the first to come down to our house in Sackville Gardens to lobby Tony to vote for Garrett Fitzgerald and not to put Charlie Haughey in as Taoiseach. As history records it was not to be and Tony did what he thought was best at the time for his constituency - the Gregory Deal with Charles Haughey who became Taoiseach.

The crowning glory of my family's relationship with the Port of Dublin was when my brother Tony ended up a member of the Board of the Dublin Port and Docks representing Dublin Corporation of which he was a Councillor, like his uncle Jimmy Hannon. That was some journey for our family, from my father who was a labourer in the Dublin Port and Docks to his son Tony who sat on the Dublin Port and Docks Board.

I will always support any scheme to create jobs and industrial development in Dublin Port whether it be reclaiming land from the sea or the Poolbeg incinerator. Communities need jobs. At the time of the Gregory Deal I asked Charlie Haughey if he would build an oil refinery in the port. I said the Russians would do it for him but he declined.

# We Are Humanity <sup>6</sup>

I come from Eritrea, and we come from Poland  
We come from Mauritius, and we from Ireland  
We all live together, in peace and harmony  
Here in Dublin city, we are humanity.

## **Chorus**

***We are one, but we are many,  
We come, from every land and sea,  
We share a dream, and sing with one voice,  
I will, you will, we'll end world poverty***

We gather here together, on this October day,  
We want the world to listen, to what we've got to say  
Millions live in hunger, millions live in fear,  
The cries of children dying, some refuse to hear.

## Chorus

Yes, we must all stand together, or at least we must all try,  
To help our fellow human beings, and listen to their cry.  
So let's stand beside our refugees, and keep an open door  
Let's open up our hearts and minds, and stand beside the poor

## Chorus

Let's make the world a better place, where everybody shares,  
Where peace and justice they prevail, and everybody cares.  
We can talk about our values, and preach solidarity,  
But we are all just hypocrites, unless we end world poverty.

## Chorus



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<sup>6</sup> This song was composed by John Weafer and sung by the young people of the NYP2 group at the October 17th commemoration at the memorial stone on Custom House Quay. The young people of **Neighbourhood Youth Project 2** also sang it at the “When Voices Unite” concert in St Agatha’s Hall William Street on April 11th 2017.

# This Land Is Made For You And Me <sup>7</sup>

*This land is your land, this land is my land  
From Europe's plains to Asia's highlands  
From American shores to African islands  
This land is made for you and me*

We share this world, this world is one  
Its lands and seas to us all belong.  
To deny this truth is just all wrong  
This land is made for you and me

## **Chorus**

Throughout this world migrants are crying  
Throughout this world refugees are dying  
Throughout this world many are denying  
That this land is made for you and me

## **Chorus**

The land of the brave, home of the free  
Use to welcome migrants and refugees  
Now angry voices disagree  
That this land is made for you and me

## **Chorus**

Yes we live in troubled times,  
But hope and history will one day rhyme  
And the bells of justice they will chime  
That this land was made for you and me

## **Chorus**

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<sup>7</sup> This song was written by Woody Guthrie in 1940 based on an existing Carter Family melody. The text above was adapted by **Fergus McCabe and sung by the young people of the NYP2 Group** at the "When Voices Unite" concert in St Agatha's Hall William Street on April 11th 2017.



# **20 North Great Georges Street - An Acorn Was Planted**

**Patrick Deery and staff <sup>8</sup>**

## **A Seed Was Planted**

The building which today houses City of Dublin Education & Training Board, Youthreach centre on North Great George's Street has an interesting and varied history. The house was built around 1798 and its first inhabitant was a Mrs. Weatherall (1821). Other occupants included Sir Samuel Ferguson who married the eldest daughter of Robert R Guinness, one of Dublin's foremost families. They settled permanently in the house until the early 1900s when the house, in common with many Georgian houses, became shared accommodation to a

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<sup>8</sup> Youthreach North Great Georges Street celebrates its thirtieth birthday in 2019.

number of different families. In 1945 the house became the property of the City of Dublin Vocational Education Committee. At the same time, Comhairle Le Leas Óige had the use of the top floor of the building twice weekly, as a Youth Club. The Youth Club was established to provide a much-needed social outlet for young boys in the locality. The Youth Club remained a very active and vibrant community group up until 2014 when it closed due to the retirement of one of its founders, Jack Farrell.

From 1967 to 1974 the building was used as an annex to Denmark Street School. From this time on the building continued to be utilised as a Centre for extracurricular activities, particularly the Work Exploration Project, an Out-Centre for school groups, that required facilities for woodwork classes. Over the years the facilities developed to meet the ever-changing educational needs of those availing of its services. These changes included providing facilities for FAS Training, in the form of a Youth Skills Course, which operated for six months.

### **Branching Out**

In April 1989, the building opened its doors to Youthreach, an innovative and progressive concept initiated and sponsored by the Department of Labour and the Department of Education, through the auspices of FAS. This was the first Youthreach. There are now in excess of one hundred centres in the country. The seed that was planted in 1989 has grown into a large oak tree. Funding for Youthreach was provided through a European Social Fund. The people involved in the setting up of Youthreach included Colm Rock who had been seconded to the building for many years, Tony Crooks, C.D.U. and Liam Maguire, FAS. After much discussion the programme for Youthreach was up and running by April 4 1989 with Colm Rock as Co-ordinator and three full time staff, Patrick Deery, Woodwork, Brendan Sheenan Computers and Blanch McGee, Catering.

The first group of young people both male and female, aged 15-18 years totalled twelve in number and increased to twenty five within a short space of time. The only requirement to join the Youthreach programme was to be, or have been, an early school leaver without qualifications. Within six months of operation it became clear that these young people had other needs that were not being met. A counselling facility was initiated at this point. This was originally designed as an in-centre support service. Over the years it has further developed and counselling is now provided by Winstead, the psychological arm of Dublin City ETB.

During the ten year period from 1990 to 2000, the Centre changed and evolved, always meeting the challenges presented by a very diverse group of young students. These developments included the introduction of NCVA – FETAC courses in 1997; the Junior Certificate programme in 1999 and the European Computer Driver’s Licence in 2001. In September 2000, Pat Deery took over as Co-Ordinator at the Centre. The Centre’s outdoor pursuits programme is tailored to meet the needs of all students with activities including football, hill-walking, rock climbing and canoeing. Students have, throughout the years, taken part in competitions and sports days organised by the CDETb. In 2008 we had a Whole Centre Evaluation from the Department of Education and Science. We received a very favourable report and felt it was a very worthwhile exercise. Over the last number of years the Centre has undertaken some refurbishment. In 2010 the kitchen underwent a major refurbishment and re-opened for classes after many months to the delight of the students. In 2011 the Computer room was networked and projectors installed throughout the Centre.

The Centre had the honour of visiting our President Ms. Mary McAleese at Áras an Úachtarain. We brought 15 students accompanied by three staff members. In 2010 the FETAC and Junior Certificate results were outstanding and many of our students progressed to further courses and to the Transition Centre. During the year the staff participated in staff development by taking part in a wide range of In-service days. In 2011 The Centre staff ran the Sports & Cultural Council Orienteering competition for CDVEC schools. Many of our students took part. We have had much success on the football field having won the Youthreach All Ireland 7 aside football competition on two occasions. In 2012 we hosted the competition in Coolock. The event was very well organised by our staff and was a resounding success receiving great feedback from the twelve Youthreach Centres who participated from all around the country. The students also take part in the annual Youthreach Arts Crafts and Cake competition where they can showcase their work to a wider audience.

### **Exchange Programmes/Work Experience**

In the summer of 1989 a link was formed with Heidelberg University in Germany when that university approached Youthreach requesting a student placement for a six- month period. This arrangement proved to be mutually beneficial and continued until 2002. The policy of taking students on work placement continues to date. As part of their studies, students from the following institutions have completed work placements with Youthreach, North

Great Georges Street: Tralee Institute of Technology; St Angela's College, Sligo; Crumlin College; Ballyfermot College and Coláiste Dhúlaigh in Coolock. These students have proved to be of invaluable assistance in the work of the centre. Today, we still offer work placement to students and continue our links with IT Tralee and St. Angela's in Sligo.

### **Community/Outside Agencies**

In July 2011, we were invited to participate in Community projects funded by bankers JP Morgan. This initiative led to some very worthwhile opportunities for a number of students. It was also very beneficial to some local groups who were involved with us in the project. Students also got the opportunity to get certification to coach football, at level one, when they attended FAI Kickstart 1 football course which was also funded by JP Morgan bankers.

### **Visitors To Youthreach**

From time to time various organisations have visited the Centre in order to observe the work of the Centre. As part of a European Social Education programme, Marita, a teacher from Denmark, working with socially disadvantaged young people in that country, included Youthreach, North Great Georges Street in her itinerary on her annual visits to Ireland. She continued to visit the Centre for a number of years. In 1999, An Taoiseach, Bertie Ahern, who was also the Fianna Fáil T.D. for the area, visited the Centre in order to launch the 'Buzznet' Programme. This initiative was introduced jointly by CDVEC and IBM Computers to encourage Local Area Net-working between various centres. In 2011, Ms. Maureen Hughes, Director of the hugely successful TV series Love Hate visited the centre to host a workshop and held some auditions for our Drama students. We program guest speakers from outside agencies to speak to students throughout the year on a variety of subjects from Drug addiction, Alcoholism, Racism, Smoking, Equality and Social, Personal, Health education issues.

### **Summer Programme**

To provide a different and more relaxed atmosphere a special summer programme, including an annual sports day, was introduced. Activities for this programme include day trips for parents and young children to places such as the zoo; fun day trips in the park and at the beach; bowling and cinema outings and special interest outings to a chocolate factory and on sea safari. In



addition, canoeing and sailing lessons have also been introduced which have proven very successful. In 2016, we offer a more limited Summer programme as some of the summer programmes have been expanded and delivered all year round as part of the Outdoor Pursuits curriculum. The Youthreach Sports day continues to be held annually.

### **From Small Beginnings**

Through the years Youthreach, North Great Georges Street has, from small beginnings, developed into a friendly, safe and supportive environment for young people. Youthreach offers a programme of practical and academic activities which enables these young people to pursue further training and education on the road to adulthood. Many of the staff have seen the transition from NCVA through FETAC to the present QQI (2012) certification.

The teachers regularly participate in In-Service staff development days. We are very proud of how many of our students are successful in obtaining certification at QQI level 3 and 4 and progress to further courses of study or employment. In early 2016 due to demand and interest, we offered our first module at QQI level 5 in Beauty Therapy; Skincare, Eye Treatments and Make-Up.

### **Distinctive Character**

The turnover of staff is very low in Youthreach North Great George's Street. We are very fortunate that we have a team of loyal, dedicated, committed and supportive staff, who have created a distinctive character and atmosphere within the Centre and who have placed the needs and interests of the student at the core of what the Centre does. This was duly noted by the Inspectorate in the Department of Education and Science evaluation report.

### **Conclusion**

Next year we celebrate the thirtieth anniversary of this vital educational initiative in Dublin's north inner city. To date circa 1,500 students have passed through the famous Georgian door of number 20 North Great Georges' Street.

# Mystery Searching for Us in Cherry Orchard and North Wall <sup>9</sup>

*The artisans of humanity in Cherry Orchard and the North Wall  
herald a gospel of grit and joy and hope, and generously  
draw us into the real space where God is.*

## *At The Heart of Searching for God*

**Miriam Weir**

At the heart of searching for God within Cherry Orchard is rawness –  
Rejection, being at the bottom of the heap,  
Promises by others but little following the promises  
Broken glass, rubbish,  
Skid marks, horses, dogs,  
Houses and little services,  
One bus, one shop and no bus shelters!

A regeneration programme

Out of the rawness comes The Bungalow, Orchard Centre,  
Equine Centre, Life Center, St Ultan's, Tommy's Shop  
Parish, SpRED, Candle Week  
Football, and running.....

This is what makes the heart of a great people –  
Neighbours who rally around in times of crises

And really mean it when they sing  
“You're my forever friend”

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<sup>9</sup> The contributors were participants in the “**Searching for Mystery in Marginal Communities**” retreats in Cherry Orchard and the North Wall.

## *Time To Fall In Love With Magpies*

**Joe McDonald**

Now is the time,  
I have the time,  
Important to take it,  
The time to fall in love with magpies  
Of course you know I had no time for you  
Robber, bully, herald of bad tidings  
How did I miss your beauty?  
Stark uncompromising black and white  
Stunning hood and coloured fulsome tail.  
Sorry I missed you, misjudged you.  
Thanks for your caw of encouragement  
to look afresh and  
Walk.



## *Im-prisoned*

**Phil Ryan**

I have been im-prisoned myself. The chains of freedom in the form of non judgement, compassion and anger have freed my mind. Where I live and work and minister to, I am now more aware. In many ways I have been shown my comfort zones, my prejudices, my status quo and my over adherence to the law. These are the chains that entwine me. It begins with a look, an acknowledgement, a hello and a thank you. Hope is the repetition of simple kindnesses time and again. So the change is with me and I alone can respond.

# *Tea, Clowns and Jesus*

**Bill O'Shaughnessy**

I'm not fond of tea,  
I fear clowns  
Yet, tea not alone  
Opens my heart  
To he who drinks this cup with me.

On many occasions I am laughed at.  
A clown in the world's eyes.  
Yet, a friend in the poor man's eyes.  
So, there you have it.  
I'm a clown drinking a cup of tea!  
And I am smiling because I'm not alone

No wonder they recognised Jesus  
At the breaking of bread  
Together.

## *I Exist In The Mess*

**Patrick Corkery**

Reaching out for hands,  
which may not come  
Deeper and deeper into worlds unknown  
Seeking silence in the noise  
Finding light in the dark  
And a hand comes, grasping the heart.



## *Where Suffering and Hope Meet*

**Ronnie McCabe**

Fear sits in my guts  
Paralysing me, locking me in  
Sounds of gunshots, of sirens  
Silence in the night, petrifying stillness

A rap on the door, opening a creak  
Daylight a smile, a hug, a hand in friendship  
We bridge our suffering with hope  
You and me,  
Together.

## *Opening Eyes*

**Finian Gavin**

May my eyes,  
my ears,  
my mind,  
my heart... be open to people who are  
living on the margins of society.

May my inner being find expression along life's journey.

May I be led by the Spirit ... to engage with those who are  
neglected by officialdom and other sections of society.

May I also journey with those who are in constant contact with  
marginalised people ... as I too need ongoing enlightenment ...



## *Here Now*

**Dominic Sassi**

The theme of our retreat based in Cherry Orchard and the North Wall was Mystery searching for us at the edges of poverty. On reflection I had to ask myself, “Is God really searching for me on the borderlands of poverty?” My response: “Well, if he is he won’t find me there normally because I don’t live in poverty – except my own personal poverty. And God is certainly there. I have experienced God there.”

But this week I have witnessed poverty in a new way. The poverty of people being chained up in different ways – in prison cells, in fear, in addiction, in loneliness, in rejection, in boredom, in unemployment..... And Jesus tells us that it is precisely in those places where God does search for us. “Come to me all you who are heavily burdened and I will give you rest.”

One of the songs that Sean shared for us during the retreat was about the gaze of God searching for us: The good news is that God is with us as we live our daily lives. It reminds me of the love-tossed words of the Song of Songs:

*I hear my Beloved; see how he comes leaping over the mountains*

*My Beloved is like a gazelle, like a young stag*

*My Beloved says to me, “Come then, my love, come”.....*

Do I really believe this promise of God? The retreat has helped me to understand a little more about God’s love - not only for me but for all those suffering people I heard about and met during the week.

# *Cherry Orchard Retreat – July 2017*

**Seamus Gill**

This was a retreat with a big difference! On reflection on this unique experience now, it occurs to me that there were three special elements that made it different, and which helped to have a big influence on me. I don't expect or suggest that it is going to have an immediate impact on my lifestyle or ministry, but I believe that it has influenced some of my fundamental attitudes. For me, the first of these elements was the opportunity to meet some significant direction-changers in informal and formal situations. Next, there were factors – such as example, significant statements or experiences that helped to challenge some of the basic concepts which I inadvertently held. Finally, what we experienced did not seem to come from a nicely crafted and presented programme, but seemed to come from the normal life practice of those whom we met, and was presented in an easy yet well structured way over the four days.

On day one – Reflection Day, as three of us strolled around the local area we had the good fortune to meet two men who spend long hours every day working voluntarily on a Memorial Garden commemorating the tragic deaths by suicide or accident, of many local youths. The creativity and beauty of their work, and more especially the fact that their time is given voluntarily, is having a profound influence on other young people, whose lifestyle is often very anti-social, and it also creates a sense of local pride and of community among the local residents.

Our 'North Wall Day' gave me a greater insight into the struggle for survival of a small but vibrant local community against the power and influence of those with vested economic interests in this prized area, supported by the policies and decisions of those who wield political power. It seemed to me that a fundamental life value was being trampled on, and a glorious opportunity being missed to show that their competing values could be mutually supportive if the parties could meet with respect for each other and a willingness to listen with openness. Listening to the intimate and articulate account given to us by the Chairman of the local Community Association gave me a new respect for the issues at stake and for the depth of what appears to be a losing struggle on the part of this vulnerable but spirited group.

Day three presented the other side of life in a marginalised society, when we spent some hours attending Court hearings in Clover Hill Prison and being led on a conducted visit of the prison by the Chaplain who, afterwards, gave us an insightful talk on his experience and views on life there. It was obvious that this was a young man of deep compassion and respect for these ‘prisoners of circumstances’, and that his vision and dedicated service to them, influence not only these men, but also the wider community of their family members and of the Prison Staff, with whom he has a friendly, respectful relationship.

Then a day with Fr. Peter McVerry S.J. helped to bring the theory and practice of compassionate service together. Like many others, I have heard the name of Fr. Peter mentioned with respect frequently, and regarded his work as commendable and exemplary. I had worked for much of my life with marginalised youth and held them in respect, and had a healthy relationship with them. But, listening to Fr. Peter close up gave me a new appreciation of the situation. I had seen and heard much of the sad effects of drug abuse among many, and had often wondered and expressed the thought that I continued to be surprised at one aspect of their lives. How was it, having seen the dire effects of drug abuse in the lives of others, that ‘the penny didn’t drop’ for them, and that seeing what it would inevitably lead to, they did not decide to quit the habit before it took complete control of their lives. Fr. Peter presented a different picture. Many, if not most, of these would have had a horrific experience of abuse in their childhood, and the drug habit was to enable them to forget the pain in their lives. If they were to simply break the habit and quit their drug dependence, it would create a worse situation for them – allowing the memories of the hurt and pain to come flooding back into their minds. For most, this would be an intolerable choice.

Another viewpoint that Fr. Peter expressed and illustrated with many examples, helped to clarify another misconception for me. When I think of the many homeless people in our country at present, I tend to think of those we see sitting and lying on the side of our streets or sleeping rough at night. But for Peter this is but the more visual side of the problem, and tends to hide the reality of the hundreds who are homeless having lost their homes through payment of raised rents and high mortgage repayments. These include many who are in employment but who cannot afford the payments that home ownership demands.

Finally, there was the lived example of the small Christian Brother Community,



who prepared and presented the retreat. There was a seamlessness about the daily experiences, which were nourished by well structured prayer and reflection time. Most of all this was a real community experience for us as we came together in the living room of the Brothers', sharing the food and facilities which they prepared and provided so generously. I did not come away from this retreat with a profound change of direction, or even with a clear resolution, which might gradually evaporate, but with my values and hopes for a more equitable distribution of life's blessings more firmly grounded and embedded in me. It had quietly fulfilled for me the purpose of a spiritual retreat as a spirit-awakening, mind-changing experience.

## ***God Searching For Us***

**David Ryan**

God found me feeling for those who do not feel heard,  
Feeling for the woman whose husband was shot,  
Feeling for those whom the system has failed,  
Feeling for those who dedicate their lives for the betterment of the whole,  
Feeling for those who are broken and yet will not give in,  
Feeling for those who are angry because we are  
not caring for all of God's family,  
Feeling for those bound up in chains of different sizes  
and shapes and are unable to be set free.  
Feeling for those locked up in a 3 bed cell and have to adapt.

Keep me Lord free from judging the motives of others. I am conscious of those who mean well and yet make the poor poorer. I am brought to see the pain in people's faces, the pain expressed through violence and crime, through drugs and alcohol, through turning away from the rules and regulations and from the orthodox way of living. I see people searching and longing for inclusion, for friendship, for acceptance, for support.

Yet in spite of all this I find many signs of hope and resilience and warmth in my heart, trusting that what is, is, and that we are all connected and that Eucharist is enfleshed in my relationships and my day to day activity:

The women in North Wall,  
The Gerrys who devote their whole lives to advocacy,  
The Chaplains and the Officers,  
The Life Centres, the developments centres,  
The Projects,  
The Allotments,  
The Remembrance Garden and the parks,  
The Equine Centre,  
The sisters, the brothers, the priests,  
The love of the mothers for their sons.



# Creative Musings From The Larriers CBS<sup>10</sup>

## *Tongue Twisters*

Jake, the pancake snake, will bake a cake with a flake.

By Jake F

Calvin, the crocodile, was crocking the careful kangaroo.

By Calvin B

Evan, the egg, had an excuse for being executed.

By Evan C

Cian, the curly haired cat, cries when he can't get cake.

By Cian F

Leonda, the leopard, liked Lexi and Lemons baby, Lime.

By Evan C

Sam, the sardine, smells like salmon when she is in the sea.

By Cian F

Dominic, the deadly dude, made a deal date so he dashed  
to the shop but dropped to the deck.

By Dominic M

Úna, the unspeakable person, was unreal.

By Evan C

I could I could have caught a kangaroo a kangaroo  
then I caught a kangaroo a kangaroo then then I could  
have caught a cat a cat a cat then then I put it in the cage the cage.

By Kaylem O'R

Tadhg, the tackling tiger, took a television.

By Tadhg B

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<sup>10</sup> The authors are students at **St Laurence O Toole CBS** on Seville Place.

Tommi, the tiger's dad, had tighter tights than Tim, the tortoise.

By Tommi O'C

Bradley, the bee, buzzes a bat boy bee.

By Bradley P

Harley, the hungry hippo, with a horse in the hospital.

By Harley L

Cian, the chimp, was in the chapel,  
went to Centra for a chicken crunchie and a cigarette.

By Cian K

Jolly Jack got a whack off Jason.

By Jack McC

Thamas, the terrifying teddy, played tongue twisters  
and he thought that was that.

By Thomas B

Lucas, the lock, locked the lock on the lobsters.

By Lucas O'B

Arthur, the ant, was very angry.

By Arthur C

### **3rd & 4th Class St. Laurence O'Toole's CBS**

## **€50 Curry**

First my family and I went to the Yacht. I was with my brother and da and ma. We all got something to eat. We had a Sunday dinner. When we were finished we went outside the restaurant to the car. I found 50 at my car on the ground. IT WAS REAL MONEY!!! It made me feel more than happy. Everyone went home and I spent the money on a curry. I felt guilty when I spent the money but that was only at the start. I didn't feel guilty when I was eating the curry because I stopped thinking about it.

**Blaine Maher, 2nd Class**

## ***Me!***

My name is Blaine. I am going to Scoil Uí Chonail today on the bus. I am going to GAA with Temi. I am eight years old and I play ball and I am too good for the under 8's so they put me in the under 11's. I felt good about that and Mark wanted me to go back and I said yes. I have one sister and two brothers and one of them went to see me play at football. He thought my football skills were very good.

**Blaine Maher, 2nd Class**

## ***Hot Noodles***

Yesterday I was in school and I was doing Monopoly Club. It was over at 3.30pm so I had to go home.

When I walked through the door I was hungry. So, I got some Pot Noodles and I walked very slowly into the sitting room.

I poured some Pot Noodles gently into my cousin's, Lily May's bowl because she was hungry too. Lily May poured the noodles onto my other cousin's lap by accident I think.

My cousin said "Don't do that!" but Lily May is only two years old so I don't think she did it on purpose.

**Calvin Byrne, 3rd Class**

## ***Jayo***

I am sad today thinking of you,  
But I know I'll be happy again,  
The things you taught me,  
The stories you told, I will always remember  
You'll never grow old.

**Calvin Byrne, 3rd Class**

## *Some of My Favourite Jokes*

Knock Knock!! Who's there? Boo!! Boo Who? Why are you crying??

Knock Knock!! Who's there? Eileen! Eileen Who? I lean on doors!!

Tick (point to the other person) Tock (point to yourself)

REPEAT 10 times I'm Tock (pointing to yourself)

What are you? (pointing to the other person) THICK!!!

Person 1: Are you doing it???

Person 2: WHAT?

Person 1: Picking your nose and chewin' it!!!

Where does SUPERMAN come from? SUPERVALUE!!

What's white, red & white and goes up and down,  
up and down, up and down?

A tomato sandwich in a lift!!

Knock Knock!! Who's there? Phyllis !!

Phyllis Who? Fill us a glass of water??

What's black white and red all over?? A newspaper!!

What do you call a donkey with three legs?? A wonkey!!

Person 1: What happened there??

Person 2: Where?

Person 1: Under!!

Person 2: Underwhere?? (UNDERWEAR!!!!)

**Jake Fay, 3rd Class**

## *Bloody Mary*

One dull day, my friend, Scott Reynolds and I were in Walmart and a few people recognised us because we have a YouTube channel that has over ten million subscribers. As we were walking down the hall we came across an Ouija board. We thought that it would be a good idea to make a video about it so we put it in our trolley and walked up to the till. The woman scanned the board game and told us it was 2.99, so we just assumed that it was a fake. But after that the woman gave us a warning not to call “Bloody Mary”.

So, Scott and I were leaving the shop and I opened my Nissan GTR skyline and we got in and left. When we got home, I opened the door and went into our room. As we got there, I opened the box and Scott got the camera and the candles. Scott hit the record button and off we went.

Scott and I explained to the viewers what it was and we lit the candles with my 10,000 euro lighter. All of the candles were lit so we sat in silence and put our fingers on the little magnifier. We asked “Are you there?” There was no movement so me and Scott knew it was a fake, but we still had our fingers on it. Then suddenly it started moving. I asked Scott if he was moving it and he shouted “No!” We were both scared and then it spelt out “I AM BLOODY MARY”. Then we were so scared that we ran into my room with the camera.

Before we started, we read the instructions and it said that worst case is that Bloody Mary will spell out her name, then you have to leave your hand on it and ask her questions. But if you do take them off, you will have bad luck for the rest of your life and Mary will haunt you as well. So me and Scott went back to the room.

But, when we went back, the candles were blown out and the magnifier was moving by itself and it spelt out another sentences and it said “Your bad luck starts now”. So we quickly tried to go live and record it, but my iPhone 7 Plus was missing. “It is the bad luck!” I said. There was nothing to do. We tried to leave but we couldn’t because the door was jammed. All we could do was to continue the game and ask questions. So me and Scott ran back into the room and put our fingers on the magnifier and we asked if we could end the game and she said “Yes, but it will not end the bad luck”. So me and Scott begged her and she said it is not up to her, that there was something else controlling the game...

**Christian Elliot, 5th Class**

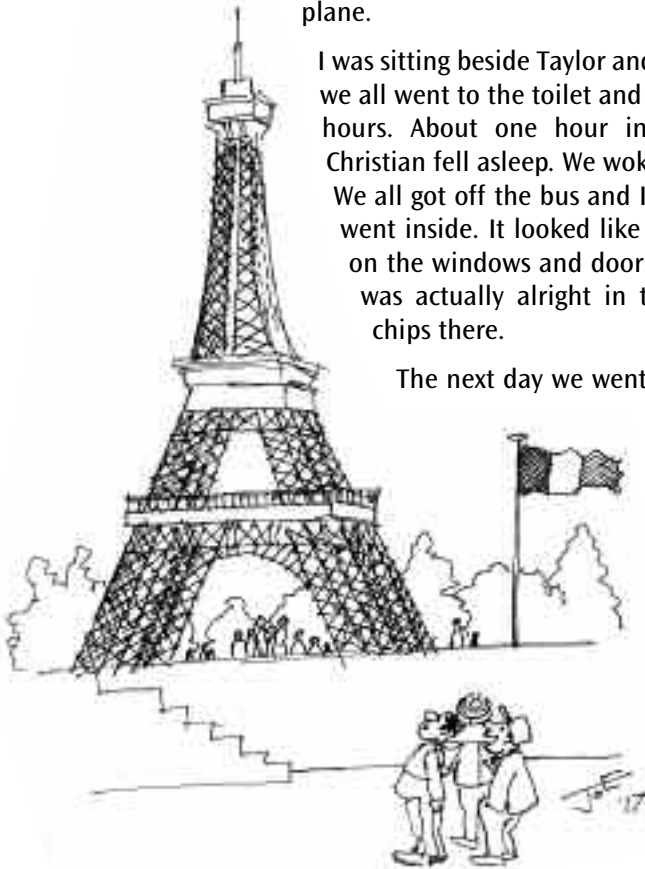
## *Noel's Trip to France*

On Monday, everyone came to school with their suitcases ready to go to the airport. Finally, the bus came and all of us got on and waved goodbye to our ma's. We were off! After the bus ride, we arrived at the airport. But, we were in the wrong terminal so we had to take all of our suitcases and head to terminal 2.

Una checked our bags in and we headed to Burger King. I got a Chicken Royale meal with Fanta. After that, we went to security and Aaron got beeped because of his watch. I was walking around with Christian and I saw our gate boarding. Mark Fay got all of the kids together and we got on the plane.

I was sitting beside Taylor and Demi. After the plane ride we all went to the toilet and then got on a bus for three hours. About one hour into the bus ride me and Christian fell asleep. We woke up just as we entered Eu. We all got off the bus and I ran to get my suitcase. We went inside. It looked like a prison. There were cages on the windows and doors. We all went inside and it was actually alright in there. We got chicken and chips there.

The next day we went up a big hill. We got to go to the Eiffel Tower. I walked with Una while the others went up to the second level, I don't like going in lifts. We got to go to the Aqua Boulevard too. I had a really good time on the trip to France. The weather was great and I had loads of fun. I would love to go back.



**Noel Ryan, 5th Class**



## ***Farewell The Larriers (2017)***

To 2nd class in the Larriers we arrived,  
At learning we really thrived.  
We were brilliant at swimming and practiced our strokes,  
Our teachers all had such high hopes.

In 3rd class we were back learning and getting the knack,  
Lennon won a bet on the World Cup, but at Gaelic we were sadly muck.  
Breda and Niall were our SNA's,  
At reading and maths we were set to amaze.

In 4th class we were split up, With Miss Wrynne and Mr. Mc,  
We really worked hard and swapped Match Attaxs.

In 5th class we were put back together,  
We went to France and enjoyed the weather.  
Then onto Facebook to learn new skills,  
We had lots of fun with no drills.

In 6th class we're finished and can sing it loud,  
We're fully-fledged Larriers "Strong & Proud"

# Duil sna Leabhair

Ragnall Cooke <sup>11</sup>

Leabhragán, feiceálach sa chúinne le fada ann

Mo thaisce léitheoireachta tearc is gann

Lóchrann aibhléise díomhaoin,

suanach

Suaimhneas ón mbrúchnaipe

Leigheas mo mhiangais,

uimhir a sé, An Siopa Leabhar

Foinse spéise, athnuachan,

láithreach bonn.

Scáthach faoin droichead iarnród

sa Bhaile Bocht

Mo charbad gorm is buí, uimhir a

haon, dó, trí, fós as amharc

Néal doininne ag bagart

an mochóirí

Bruchlas na gcolúir

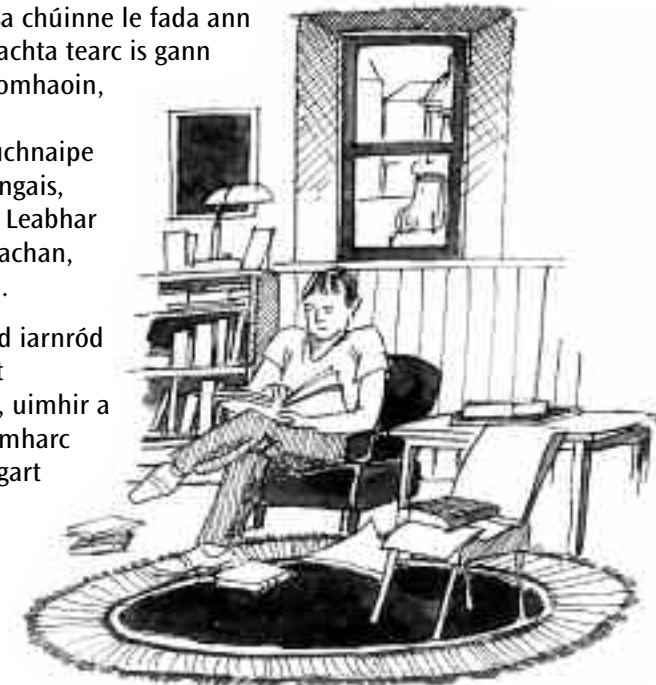
bhroidiúile

Sciurdadh siar is

aniar gan sos

Corr cleite foluaineach

thart timpeall, anuas chun



dromchla tarra tráchtchaite

M'aird ar ghreasáin ealaíonta damháin alla

Ar bhranra bhalla

A bpéarlaí drúchta ag lonnú, spréacharnach, le gach ga gréine

Is cuileog faoi cheangail i gceartlár a neide

Achrannach, fannlag i ndeireadh na feide

A bairdéir go foighneach ag faire a chime

Goblach súmhar, tráth bia blasta geallta

Sé a locht a laghad, an créatúr bocht.

<sup>11</sup> Ragnall – as Baile Bocht a chum an dá dhan seo.

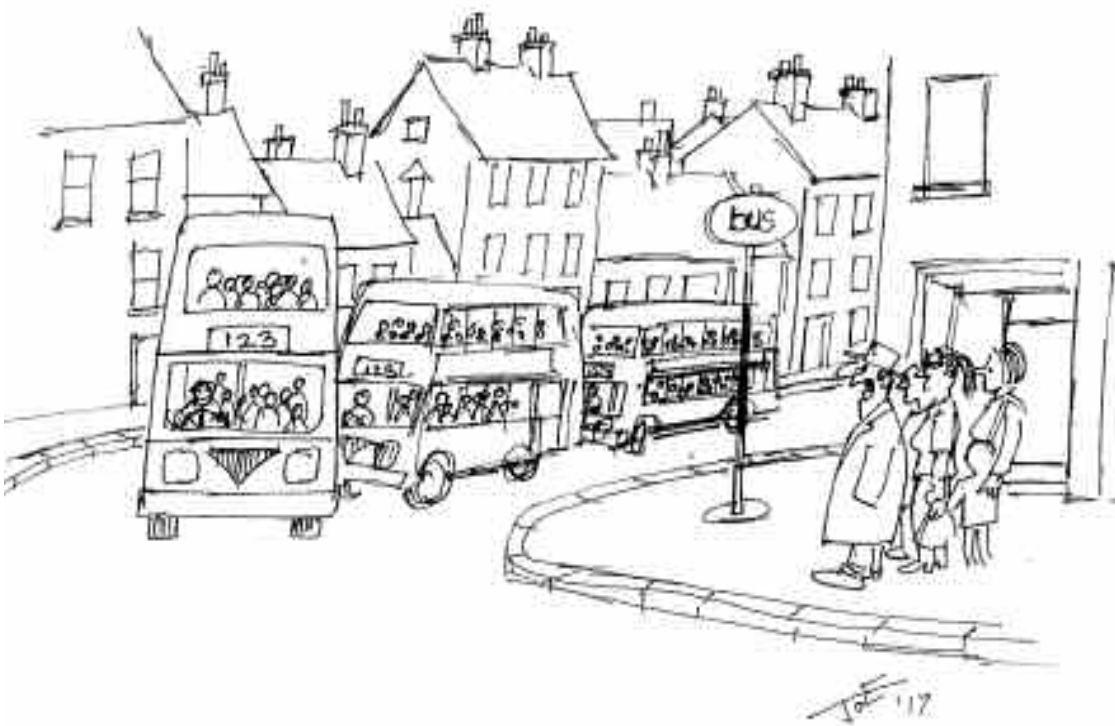
Seabhrá tráichta ag sleamhnú thart chun  
freastail ar chuile ghnó  
Scuaine á mhéadú, néal gréine, aiteall  
Nochtann ár gcarbad thar tulcan le luas  
An Siopa Leabhar um mealladh ón dtús  
Báite i dtaitneamh, tíolacadh ó dhia, neamh ar thalamh  
Ar meisce le draíocht na leabhair  
Áthasach sonas, mála taoscach, tiach g dealbh, is pócaí éadrom  
Luach as cuimse, gan aon agó.

## Muintir an tSraidbhaile seo Againne

Sceitimíní lúchcháireach mar is dual d ibh  
An ghairm scoile fógartha do chách.  
Scaip an dea-scéal le mire,  
Le macalla ó chluas go cluas  
An Baile Bocht ag éirí on ngriósach,  
Leac chuimhneacháin le nochtadh le meas,  
Ceiliúradh i gcuimhne ár laochra.  
A sheas le dánacht, le calmacht an fód,  
In éadan forneart i 1916.  
Éacht nach ligfear i ndearmad go deo,  
Fad is atá sliocht ár sleachta beo.

Dé Domhnaigh, 24-4-2016 an sprioclá  
Binn an tí, Teach Chluain Life, an láthair,  
Bígí ann in éadaí treimhsí,  
Aoibhneas is soilbhreas ar chách,  
Na sluaite at teacht sna sála ar a chéile  
Soineann in am agus i dtráth.

Sheas Nial os comhair an scata mór,  
A aitheasc uaidh le mórtas is fuinneamh,  
Nocht Críostóir an phlaic le hómós is bród.  
Is Jimmy an taighdeoir ag tacú leo.  
An fórogra fógartha le girseach ghleoithe,  
Amhrán na bhFiann canta go díograiseach,  
Is ballaí Chill Mhaighneann ag crith leis an nglór,  
Ár mbrathacha ar foluain, réidh le siúl,  
Buíonta cheoil ar bís, chun seinm,  
Rolladh an drumadóireacht as go brách linn,  
Meáite, an G.P.O. ceanncheathrú, ár gcuspóir.



# Poetry - Cherry Orchard Imaginations <sup>12</sup>

Every Thursday night from September 2016 to May 2017 a group of mature students gathered at the Life Centre in Cherry Orchard to express themselves through poetry. The nuts and bolts and the techniques of crafting poetry were not as important to them as expression, as story-telling and as shared inspiration. The focus was on putting pen to paper together and certainly not on some readership out there. This group of Cherry Orchard people have survived a lot and have mastered a profound wisdom in the local school of hard knocks. Each Thursday night their grateful hearts were bursting to express themselves and to help each other to see and to feel ‘the more’ of mystery in their lives.

During the hour together they would consider a topic and chat a bit about its impact on their lives. Then they would take some quiet time before lifting pens and letting the poetry flow. It was amazing. Their honest voices had a power and a beauty that helped to repair their bruised souls. Some nights they would remain silent or pens would not flow, as words got in the way of explaining what was going on in their hearts. Enjoy the creations. - Martin the class tutor.

## *Fuck It Ok*

Last Thursday week I got the fright of my life  
I got up and washed and went to brush my teeth  
I realised my mouth was going down on one side.

I was getting ready for work, so off I went  
Down at the bus stop I met my son Graham as he drives  
He offered me a lift, so I got in...

He looked at me and said, “Ma what’s wrong with you?”  
“I don’t know, I might have been lying that way in the bed”  
He got a fright and thought I had a stroke.

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<sup>12</sup> These poetic reflections were written by the **parents’ group at the Cherry Orchard Life Centre.**

He drove me to the doctor who sent me straight to the hospital  
I was there for a while when the consultant came  
He gave me a load of tests and sent me for an M R I.

They said I had Bell's palsy which I hadn't got a clue about  
What was he on about?  
Long story - short is.

I was put on steroids for a few weeks  
I'm grand now though not completely better  
It could have been a lot worse.

When I came home from hospital  
I thought, fuck it, I'm still alive  
There were worse things that could have happened.

I'm lucky  
It frightened the shite out of me  
It's the not knowing.

**Gwen Sheils**

## ***Next Stop Your Uncles***

My Dublin was going in to Thomas Street  
With my ma on a Saturday to get her shopping  
Then into Meath Street to get her meat in the butchers  
I was only a nipper but I have great memories.

On Mondays that was when we used to pawn my dad's suit  
I remember the conductor on the 79 bus calling out  
"Next stop your uncles!" and a gang would get off the bus  
I thought my uncle lived in Queen Street.

His house had three brass balls outside  
And we were regular visitors to him  
With our brown tied paper bags  
And our return visits shortly afterwards.

And there were good times too  
With my ma sending me to the shop to get a 1/4 lb of butter and tea  
The shop keeper wrapped the butter in greaseproof paper  
And the fresh loaf for my da had to be hot.

I couldn't resist taking a piece off the middle  
And telling my ma when I got home that the birds attacked it  
Then I got a clatter as she knew well it was not attacked  
Those were the days.

I always remember da bringing home broken chocolate from work to us  
It was lovely and we used to bring it with us to the pictures in The Gala  
Sometimes now, getting older, I wish I could go back there  
So many things have changed, but back then they were good times.

**Gwen Sheils**

## *A Child Shows Me The Way*

Oh my happy little child  
Your beautiful, big eyes  
Your laughter, your smile  
Show me the way,  
Let me see through your eyes

Hold my hand nano  
I'll show you the way  
So me and you can smile  
All the way

**Anita Maher**

## *The Mirror of Alzheimers*

Oh mirror on the wall  
Who is that woman looking at me?  
Oh look behind her and see the room  
Is my dad there?  
And look at the woman  
She does not recognise me  
See a window, and the  
    beautiful sun outside  
And see a chair and bed.  
Why is she still looking at me?  
I think I know her  
I'll wait and see  
She is very quiet  
I think we could be friends  
Oh mirror on the wall  
I think I'll wait and see.

**Anita Maher**



## *Hope For Our Children*

I know a small place that time has forgotten,  
Through violence and crime  
Word on the street, its hard men do time.

Come play in our playground of destruction  
The violence contagious, the profit is tempting  
Culture screaming in our streets  
Negative messages, unrelenting.



The wise man needs courage not to follow the pack  
But the norm street culture wants to draw him back  
Torn between a conflict of what's right and wrong  
While his surroundings still sing loudly the devil's song  
He comes from good stock, he is aware  
This dead end life is going nowhere.

I applaud all you parents, sleepless nights  
Worry and despair, consumed by your children  
    "who don't seem to care"  
Don't give up, lay down an honest foundation  
Cursed that enables self-destructive behaviour  
Your very best intentions will be your only saviour  
You can criticize, judge or blame  
Remember this can be anyone's game.  
While the untarnished parents on the sideline  
    lower their heads in shame.

With love for their child they cannot reach  
Hoping the penny will drop and them too can teach  
Their upcoming family with a legacy of love  
With a little help from the man above.

A fine pasture that's perished by chaos and greed  
But they cannot spoil the spirit of our  
    community mentors planting good seeds.

The vulture of vulnerability is looming above the skies  
To verge upon our youngsters, devour and despise  
Our stories transcribed, our paths are laid  
With substance and courage in hope we bathe.

With healing intention new beginnings are made  
Congregate in laughter and tears our solid supports soothes our fears  
Sustained by courage, driven by pride  
Family is our anchor, endurance our guide.

**Siobhan Mokrani**

## *To Hannah Rose With Love*

You awoke my soul from a slumbered space  
Now smiles and purpose are in its place

Your mother's silently humming to you  
a sweet and loving song  
Empowering a solid unbreakable bond,  
guiding you, won't put you wrong

The wonder as I watch her communicate  
with you and play  
I could not be prouder, a magic on display

My first knowledge of your creation fuelled fear  
in me  
But you were in God's hand, you were meant to be

Your soft blue eyes, fair skinned with blonde curly hair  
Displaying a strong will, determined to get there

Devouring life's obstacles, truly alive and aware  
May the gods look down on you and shower you

With a thousand kisses and seal your good faith  
Your courage will reward you in abundance  
Hush now big girl, be patient just wait.

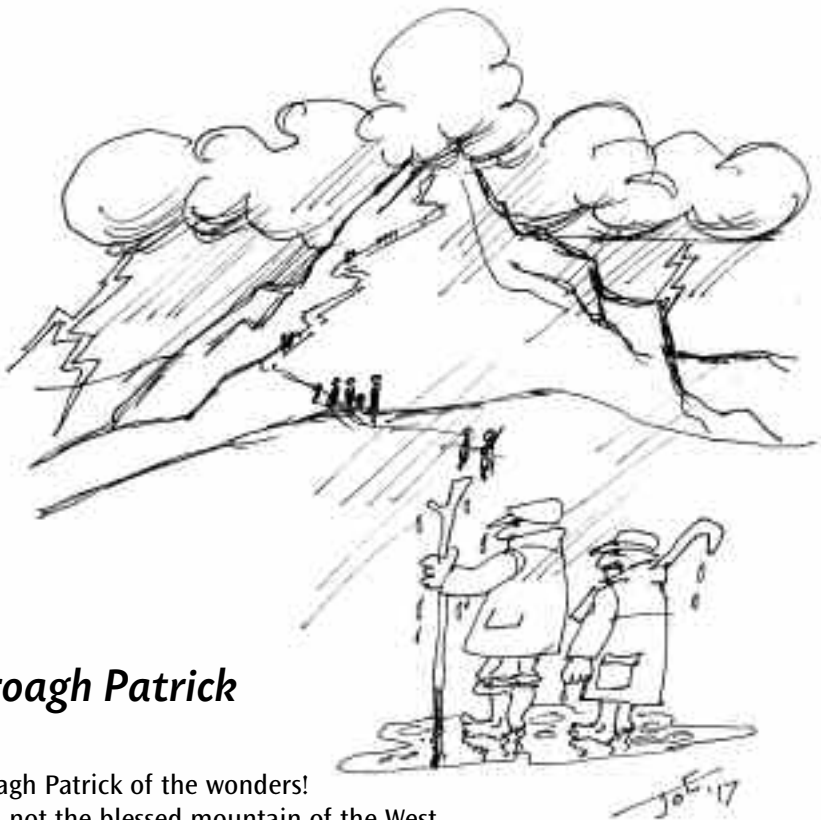
I thank your father for planting and sowing your precious seed  
Like a field ripe with golden corn you are a blessing indeed

You're so much like your dad with your teddy bear nose  
And cheeky grin, he loves you unconditionally, with him you'll always win

Your laugh is contagious, your character magnetic  
You're like honey to a bee, honoured to be your nanny  
Thank you universe for choosing me.



**Siobhan Mokrani**



## ***Croagh Patrick***

Croagh Patrick of the wonders!  
Yes, not the blessed mountain of the West  
But now, at this dying time of the year  
The road in Cabra West  
Where the trees catch the sun  
And become  
A blaze of light  
Shaking it out through their multi-coloured leaves  
In blessings on all  
Who live there or drive by,  
Capturing the colours of life  
And holding them  
Momentarily  
Before sprinkling them  
In shimmering brightness  
Preparing for our death  
Or is it a new life?

**Seamus Gill**

## *To Poetry*

How little regard we had for you  
Something to be got through or maybe forced to learn  
That did not help our love relationship with you  
For you were all about rhyme  
Later we heard of sonnets and iambic pentameter  
How dull?  
Even the best was lost on us.

However, some did stay with me  
Captured my imagination  
Created a word picture that nothing else could match  
The Lady of Shallot comes to mind  
Sitting lonely in the castle prison room  
Where she viewed the passing world  
Only by reflection in a mirror  
Yet for me, it came alive  
I still see the lords and ladies and knights  
In shining armour riding into town  
Along the river bank with  
Long fields of barley and of rye on either side.

We wondered why this beautiful lady  
Was held so cruelly in captivity  
While we were free to romp and roam  
Among our fields of wonder  
And enjoy the bracing, fresh air  
And the sudden chase of a startled hare  
Bounding up the hillside with loud cries in pursuit  
Secure in the thought that freedom may be ours  
But for him flying speed was on his side.

Such distraction and flights of fantasy  
We're not in keeping with you  
Or maybe not with the one who introduced you to us  
Still, I know that your kind has so much to offer

To the growing youth  
Or even to the octogenarian  
All you ask for in return is for your friends  
To take time to enjoy your richness and wisdom  
Poetry you are the distillation of life  
Merci!

### Seamus Gill



### Love

Love is a very strong emotion  
It comes from the heart  
There are many kinds of love

The biggest love that certain people have  
Is unconditional  
Mothers and fathers carry that love around with them

Unconditional is the love that I have for my family, my brothers and sisters  
No matter what goes wrong in my life my children are my world  
As are my grandchildren, I would always be there for them.

Then there is the love for nature  
To plant flowers and to do the garden  
And to watch them grow.

I also love my fellow students in school on Thursday nights  
We are always there for each other, no matter what  
Also, I love my teacher Martin

There is another kind of love called tough love  
I know it's hard to forsake someone you love  
But if they won't help themselves you have to show tough love

It can hurt you more than the other person  
There is love in my heart for people and it comes back to me  
I don't like the hate word.

**Mary Mooney**

## ***Woman - Making Our Mark***

I'm glad I was born a girl  
Being a girl I learnt a lot from my mother  
(So he won't be put out, I also learnt a lot from my dad).

My mam taught me right from wrong  
Also to respect other people  
In some countries women are second class citizens  
It is very disrespectful to a lot of women.

In your teens you could be a bit wild  
But once you are an adult you get more serious  
With what life is all about.

Some women get married and have children  
Others have a career and are happy with their life  
I look at my five children now and I hope I brought them up  
Like my parents brought me up.

Women today can achieve a lot if they put their minds to it  
Women are on this earth to be mothers if they want to be  
And to rule the world if they could  
God bless all women.

**Mary Mooney**

## *Music*

Music is something I love  
Growing up I would have just sang along to the words I could pick up  
Only in recent years have I started to really listen to these words  
I can see that with most of the songs there is a meaning  
and a story behind the words  
Now that I really listen and take time I find that  
I enjoy the music much more.

**Dolores Cox**

## *A Nice Cup of Tea*

As I was sitting in my kitchen  
Feeling tired and fed up with everything  
that happened throughout the day  
The house was now quiet when the last  
of the grandkids had gone home  
"A nice cup of tea," I said to myself  
Put the kettle on and sit on the chair  
As I looked down two big sad eyes were  
looking up at me  
And the lead hanging out of his mouth.  
"Jesus" I said. "Can I not have five minutes?"  
Then got my coat on and out the door.



Just as I got to the park I smelt the scent of the flowers  
The grass had been cut  
The sun was shining and with the sounds of the birds tweeting  
It was heaven  
As I strolled along I could see in the distance  
This big, black Alsatian running like a greyhound on a track.

He was heading for me and my little Jacker  
A voice in the distance roared, "Run Mrs, Run!"  
All of a sudden it was like a big black cloud  
My heart had stopped  
I froze and my Jacker ran behind me  
The Alsatian ran straight past me

I looked at my dog and said,  
"I should have stayed at home with my mug of tea."

**Geraldine Griffin**

## ***Sure Isn't That What Mammy Is For!?***

My eyes open to the sound of the grandkids  
'Will you sit down till I put your shoes on,' I hear  
Oh God another day has begun  
What's in store for me today, I ask myself as I drink my cup of tea.  
I hear someone roaring next door.  
'That's it I'm leaving and I'm never coming back'  
Oh Jesus, it's that little fecker, next door giving lip again  
Poor woman; hard worker, putting up with that crap, God help her.

I clean the window of all the little hand prints  
They keep me on my toes  
There she goes making sure that little fecker isn't about, poor soul.  
The phone rings.  
'Hi mam, need to talk'.  
'Come down', I answered  
You sit and listen to someone you love  
Telling you everything  
that's going on in their life

Ah and you thought everything was well  
The tears roll down my face  
'It will be ok love, we will work through it'.  
Sure isn't that what mammys are for?





The day goes so fast. I better get the dinner on  
Grandkids will be home soon. Time for a cuppa  
We are home nana.  
Jesus that was quick, that flew in.  
Bags thrown on the floor, coats thrown on the chair.  
Their mammy saying, 'pick them up.'  
'Dinners ready'  
'I'm not hungry.' 'Well you're eating it or you'll get nothing for your tea.'

I laugh and I think to myself.  
Life is a circle. It just goes around and around where families are concerned  
It is like listening to your mother in you and  
you can hear and see you in your daughter.

**Geraldine Griffin**

## ***Remember The Flats***

Ah remember Grace sitting and knitting on the wall  
Tasha tormenting her, Jesus there's times I thought she would fall  
Remember the parties they were great  
We would all make our own cakes.

The kids on the lamp posts had a great time  
We would be roaring, 'come on it's nearly half nine'  
The singing, the dancing, we had great times  
Then a knock on the door, ah it is just Mary Ann  
'June, I just came up with your frying pan.'

'Oh what a beautiful morning', 'get up and get washed'  
'Ma where are we going?' 'We're going to Butlin's'  
Up comes the bus, all the kids cheering  
Ah look at those faces, you think we won the lotto.

Great buzz, children having a great time  
Six p.m. Time to go home, all the children nearly asleep  
Back home to the flats, everyone cheering again.  
Time for bed, ah Teddy look at all the sleepy heads, great day!

Sitting down now, relaxing  
Thinking of the laughs we had today  
There's a knock on the door  
It's the girls. We deserve a beer  
Oh my God, the joy, the laughter,  
we would be in tears.

Monday morning, down to get paid  
I put on a stew, it can be shared  
Before you know it, the pot would be cleaned  
Children, neighbours eating, sharing their dreams.

What I'd give to have my flats back  
The joy, the laughs  
Oh the craic.



**June Howell**

## ***Stand On Your Own Two Feet***

Kathy is fourteen and is trying to make up her mind which path she will take.  
There is so much pressure on her at this age.  
She is asked to parties and she knows there will be drink and drugs there.  
First she has to ask her mam if she can go.  
When she gets there she is offered a drink. She hesitates and then says “no.”  
Later she is offered drugs and again she says “no.”  
She gets called boring and she is not asked to join in the dancing.  
She then goes home.

Her mam says to her, “You’re home early.  
What happened?” She just answers, “It was not my kind of party.”  
She could very easily have been roped-in,  
but thank God, she had a head on her shoulders.

**Dolores Griffiths**

## Homeless

I am thinking of the homeless people  
It is as bad as it was  
    during the war times  
When people were sick and tired  
When all the time there was no help  
When children were put in homes  
    and abused

It is still the same today  
With things happening in their own  
    homes by their own family  
I thought it had all stopped  
But it is still going on  
And it makes me sick

I was lucky  
That I had a great life in the flats  
I hope help will be here soon  
And for good  
For people who are struggling  
Please God.

**Monica Sheppard**



# The Passion Project Ballyfermot/Cherry Orchard

Laura Larkin <sup>13</sup>

The Passion Project took place on the 8th and 9th April 2017. It has been one of the most spirited projects I've ever had the pleasure of working on.

The Passion Project was a partnership with Dublin's Culture Connects, Dublin City Arts Office and the Area Office in Ballyfermot supporting the community vision which was for a contemporary reimagining of the Passion of the Christ. The project started for me in December 2016 when I was introduced to Joyce and Tom from Ballyfermot Civic Centre and to the artists Brokentalkers. Brokentalkers were brought on board to write a script in which the community were given a louder voice and platform upon which to address issues in their community through the arts, while at the same time demonstrating the positive activities taking place in the localities of Ballyfermot and Cherry Orchard every day.

In the beginning I heard stories of local suicides, drug gangs, a mother losing her son to an overdose in the middle of the village, and families being evicted from their homes. My initial concern was that the story be displayed in a sensitive way to families of the area, with their



*Roxanna Nic Liam played The Messenger in  
The Passion Project.*

Image by Marc O'Sullivan

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<sup>13</sup> **Laura** – Project Manager, Dublin's Culture Connects. This powerful story of community empowerment and partnership appeared on Dublin's Culture Connects website, April 19th 2017, and is presented here with permission. Thank you to Rowena Neville and Laura Larkin.

advice. This concern I soon realised was not needed, as Brokentalkers are particularly conscious of this throughout their work. They take the communities and audiences very much into consideration when plotting a script.

As time went on, I met community groups, managers of local facilities and the locals themselves, who all showed the rich diversity and positive side of what goes on in the area and how much goodness there was to tap into. However it did seem there were many facilities, and not enough accessible content.

A balance between the issues and the strengths of Cherry Orchard and Ballyfermot had to be achieved, the piece of work needed to make a difference while thinking about forward planning and investment in the arts within the area with a developmental strategy, steered by the community.

My role here was basically to keep everyone together and on track. There was a steering group made up of 11 people mostly working in the local area, the artists Gary and Feidlim, an additional production team of 5, a PR and Marketing team of 6 and an event production team nearer the time of, in full, 23 people. In addition to staff and volunteers, there was a local cast of 8 people and 18 community groups involved (about 200 people in total). There are many



*Kian Bingham of Cherry Orchard Equine Centre at Rehearsals for The Passion Project.  
Image by Marc O'Sullivan*

challenges working on one project with many voices. The project also had set resources in terms of budget and a short timeline, so the challenge was to achieve the vision of a large creative project of its kind while not ripping up the blue sky dream too much.

As we went on, a couple of ideas had to be changed to make the project a feasible one, however in the end we managed to find a reasonable balance together with what we had, versus what we wanted to do. The fusion of street theatre, festival style, event structure and the theatre world was a brave concept, but it is one that fell into place eventually, with a lot of dedicated team work.



Locals line the parade route on day one of The Passion Project.  
Image by Sonia Redmond Zhao

The result of everyone's hard, diligent and creative, resourceful work, was an extremely poignant, epic, special event preceded by a huge amount of rehearsals and workshops. The community took the reins and every age attended, embracing the truthful darkness in some of the scenes while at the same time brightening the entire production with hopeful song, statements and smiles.

The people in Ballyfermot and Cherry Orchard really care about the power of positive change. There is an urgency for it and this was displayed so honestly within each scene. The rich way in which it was displayed gave everybody goosebumps, the parade was a local protest with heart.



*Project Manager, Laura Larkin, oversees the performance on day 2, as Roxanna Nic Liam, plays The Messenger at Ballyfermot Church.  
Image by Sonia Redmond Zhao*

Their chant “Tell Them What We Want” will always ring in my ears.

I truly hope that the project is the beginning of everybody in the area getting more of what they want, and less of what they don't. It is a brave place, with a huge amount of brave hearts living there, amongst a real sense of solidarity. They will fight for what they want and what they are entitled to. I know BCCC is planning on keeping this seed growing through arts and cultural programming being developed and planned from the ground up over the next few years.

I see a huge amount of potential and future change taking place and I am proud and grateful for being brought in to be one of the wheels in helping something so stirring and ultimately positive to happen. I have only just begun my evaluation process for the event and anything that I have listened to from the community so far is truly optimistic.

Individually, as well as collectively, a lot of good has come out of this project, including children finding their true interests and talents and adults making a stand for what they need. I look forward to hearing more and more stories as I continue and I look forward to see what is to come from such a strong, valiant locality.

# Imaginative Expressions From The Girls At Saint Laurence O'Tooles<sup>14</sup>

## *If I Were A Fairy*

- Layla Brennan Davidson – I would have special powers to turn you into an alien
- Kacie Cromwell – I would have special glitter powers.
- Srna Drasinac – I would be a tooth fairy and hide under the bed.
- Toni Martin – I would have special powers to freeze things
- Lorena Buzau – I would have special powers to turn things blue.
- Niamh Doyle teacher! – I would be a fairy monster and turn you into a teacher!
- Darci Hynes – My fairy name would be 'Shine bright like a diamond' and I would turn you pink.
- Priya Kelly – My special powers would be freezing everyone.
- Bonnie Leeper – My special powers are doing flips and catching.
- Layla Byrne – My special powers are freeze powers.
- Lalya Knowd – My special powers freeze things like Elsa.
- Isabelle Hutch – My special powers are flying and turning people into butterflies.
- Beau Leeper – My powers are turning people into bugs.
- Mollie Connolly – I would have glitter powers and give everyone glitter lipstick.

### **Prep Year Girls**

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<sup>14</sup> All of the writers are students at **St Laurence O'Toole Girls' National School** on Seville Place.



## ***What Do I Like?***

- Penni – I like playing with my friends.
- Harlow – I like playing out in the yard. Don't be shy.
- Lola – I like playing with my cousin
- Niamh – I like doing writing
- Madison – I would play with a new girl if she was all alone in the yard.
- Ruby – I love being reader of the day because I love reading.
- Darcey – I have lots of friends.
- Shanna Lee – I love doing homework
- Ciara – I like painting in Aistear.
- Layla – I like colouring.

**Junior Infants**

## ***Friendly***

Friend  
Rare  
Independence  
Extraordinary  
Nice  
Dignified  
Love  
Yourself

**Amber, third class**

## ***International Women's Day 2017***

Women can be ...

**Omnipotent ...** that means powerful

**Magnanimous ...** that means kind

**Earnest ...** that means sincere and honest

**Noble ...** that means honourable like a princess or queen

**Strong ...** well, you know what that means

**Determined ...** that means she never gives up

**Amazing ...** we all agree

**Yes ...** a woman can be all these things

**third and fourth class**

## ***Valentine's Poem***

There once was a Valentine's kiss  
Who said I will not miss this  
He knelt on his knee  
And said, "Will you marry me?"  
And now there's a missus kiss.

**Lacie and Jayla, fourth class**

## ***All About The Night***

The sun is down  
The moon is bright  
We're all together for the night.

We sit by the fire  
All through the night.

Up in the sky  
The stars are shining bright.

As we lay down to go asleep  
When we wake up the sun will peak.

**Gerianne Downey, aged eight**

## ***Black Shirt***

Janeymac my shirt is black what will I do for Sunday  
Get into bed and cover my head and don't get up till Monday.

I want to be a hairdresser because I love hair.  
It is fun to play with hair because you can do different styles.  
I like to do people's hair.

**Toni McCarthy, aged eight**

## ***All About Me***

My name is Layla and I have a dog named Jack. I like the Zoo. I like to dance. I want to be a zoo keeper when I grow up. I like the book, "Daisy And The Trouble with Kittens." I love my mammy and daddy and my two brothers.

**Leyla Carr, aged eight**

## ***Our Lives***

When I am in school my friends are always there. They inspire me to have confidence. This is why we can get up every day and be ourselves. It does not matter what you look like. We can always be a friend.

When I am older I would like to be a football player or a designer and go to Paris and start a dancing club with my friend. Demi and I will design the costumes and I would like to go all around the world.

**Chloe Lawless, aged eight**

## ***The Wishing Box***

Once upon a time in a far away land, a castle stands tall. A princess longed to get out and face the real world. "I wish I could get out of this tower where danger lies," she said. Just then the ground began to shake. "What's happening?" she said. Then the ground stopped. There was silence in the room. "Hello, who's there?" "I am," said a voice. "Come out into the light," said the princess. Just then a little figure came in sight. "Who are you?" asked the princess. "I am a seller from a village nearby", she said. "Why are you here?" asked the princess. My mother sent me here to give you a gift. In her hand was a box. "A box!" shouted the princess turning her head. "Not so fast my princess," the seller said. "It's not an ordinary box. It's a wishing box", she said. Taking it out of her hand she said in excitement, "I wish I could get out of this castle." Poff and then she and the seller were outside free. "Thank you", the princess said to the seller.

**Mia McInerney, aged eight**

## *My Dream*

My dream is to be an author because I like reading and I love books. I love David Williams. I love his books like, Gangsta Granny, Billionaire Boy and the Ratburger. That is what I would love to be when I grow up. Thank you.

**Cody O'Brien**, aged nine

## *Daisy and Maisy*

Daisy had a best friend, Maisy. Maisy loved Daisy and Daisy loved Maisy. They played and danced and sang and sometimes went ice skating. But one day when they were in school the friends were awful fools. They did not play and they did not share. Their teacher thought it was very unfair. But one day they shrugged their shoulders and played away. "You know what", Maisy said. "Yes", Daisy said and, "Best friends are hard to find, because the bestest one is already mine!"

**Zara Fay**, nine years old



# My Story of Darkness into Light

**Damien Murray**<sup>15</sup>

On Friday night Saturday morning I had the pleasure of taking part in my very first Darkness into Light walk for Pieta House. The reason we did this walk was to raise people's awareness on the subject of suicide. I also wanted to do this walk for personal reasons. I have lost too many relations and friends to suicide. We all met up at the school on a bitterly cold Saturday morning. We had to wait for the bus to arrive and also for the rest of the group to come. Even though we were half asleep everyone was in great form and there was a brilliant atmosphere building already.

The bus finally arrived at half three and we were on our way to the Phoenix Park to do the walk. I hadn't been in the park since I was ten when Pope John Paul visited Ireland. The bus left us at the gate beside The Hole in the Wall pub and we made our way through the dark fields to find the start of the walk. The only light we had was the torch on our phones. I have to say it was quite spooky walking through the field in the pitch dark. Thank God there was a big crowd of us and we finally reached our destination.

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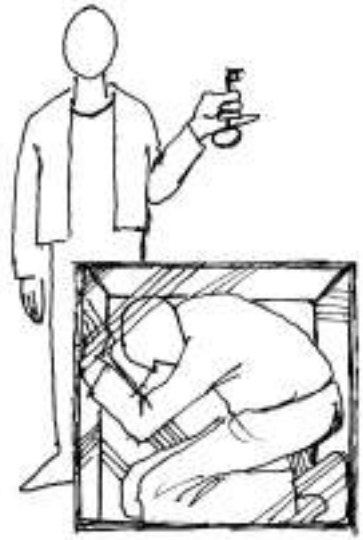
<sup>15</sup> **Damien** – is a Special Needs Assistant at O Connell School, North Richmond Street.

I have to say I was overwhelmed by what met us; a sea of yellow t-shirts, people singing and dancing. It was a brilliant start to the walk. We made our way along the narrow road. There was hardly any room to move with the enormous crowd. At about four thirty we crossed the start. We were greeted with cheers and applause by those who were supervising the event. As we crossed the start there was a choir singing 'Freedom' by Robbie Williams. We decided to join in. It seemed like ages before we really got moving because there was so many of us walking. It was brilliant to watch everyone encourage each other along the walk. There was no age limit in this walk; young and old walked together side by side. At one stage I spotted four dogs walking with their owners with yellow shirts on and flashing coloured lights. It was a sight to behold.

We were carried on a wave of yellow shirts all the way around the course. The atmosphere was brilliant and my emotions got the better of me when I saw those walking in memory of a lost one. This was a brilliant way to remember them and honour them. I also had time to remember those who had been taken too soon because of suicide. I had an image in my head as we reached an open part of the park near the Papal Cross. It was a sight to remember forever as the sun was rising at a quarter to five. Many of the people walking stopped to capture this on camera. I wish I had. This was what was meant by Darkness into Light. We were on the four kilometre mark now, one more to go. I was totally walloped at this stage and was determined to finish. I had lost my group but I wanted to find them to finish altogether. So I decided to push myself to finish with a flurry. No hope. I did catch up with them, but to say I crawled over the finish would be an understatement. To finish this walk was the highlight of this year in OCS and the proudest moment of my life to date. I was honoured and humbled to be part of this brilliant event. Please God I will do it again next year. Thank you O'Connells Secondary School and Pieta House for letting me be part of Darkness into Light 2017.

# Courage to Change

Kathleen Cronin <sup>16</sup>



Fear of change stops us from taking action.

This happens when we are uncertain of the future, uncertain because we question and doubt ourselves. Do we get anxious about the possibility of our lives changing?

Feeling fearful can stop us from learning something new, do you catch your self-saying “isn’t it easier to stick with what we know?”

When family members are feeling fearful we can choose to stick with what we know rather than face a future of uncertainty.

As we know, when there is someone in the family who is using a substance or a bereavement in the family, self-care goes out the door.

Is this the time when family members find the “Courage to Change”?

This is what I see as the Family Support co-ordinator in Ballyfermot STAR on a daily basis, - family members having the courage and openness to choose a change in their lives.

Family members having the courage to look after themselves, not only caring for everyone else, but taking the time and the courage to care for themselves - this takes real courage to value and to mind yourself.

What I see on a daily basis are family members deciding to make changes in how they react to someone’s problematic drug or alcohol use.

How they have decided that shouting at someone who is affected by drug or alcohol misuse is not going to do anyone any good, especially themselves.

Perhaps waiting until the next day when the person is a little sober and explaining to them how their behaviours have hurt them. “This is real courage”.

As Nelson Mandela said, “I learned that courage was not the absence of fear, but the triumph over it. The brave man is not he who does not feel afraid, but he who conquers that fear.”

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<sup>16</sup> **Kathleen** – is Family Support Co-Ordinator at Ballyfermot STAR and this is the key note speech delivered at the annual Service of Support and Remembrance in June 2017 at Cherry Orchard parish church.

# One Life Makes a Difference

**Morgan Rafferty**<sup>17</sup>

Hello my name is Morgan. I'm from Cabra. I went to Larkin Community College on Champions Avenue in the inner city. My family is a working class family. I am an only child. In deciding to attend Larkin College I experienced many opportunities that showed me how to respect others, no matter what background they were from. Also, we had many opportunities to help with local charities in the community, from the homeless to people with disabilities. We were taught to show compassion and empathy for others. As a young person this has helped me to become a better understanding adult. My time in school flew by and I was certainly kept busy with achieving Gaisce bronze and silver medals.

Speaking on radio and also appearing on Korean TV, addressing the Cyber Bullying Conference in Dublin Castle, attending various Gaisce awards, giving the President Higgins speech in Farnleigh House on his behalf and attending his annual tea parties in Aras An Uachtarain as a volunteer are a flavour of some of my experiences.

From doing a school project to take part in Junk Kouture, to making an outfit from recycled materials, and then ending up winning the best performance in the 03 arena in 2015, and finally making it to the grand final again in 2017 were stand-out moments. Also in 2015, I was awarded overall winner of the SCC Art Competition with my Junk Kouture costume.

In the past I have done work experience with Localize and also with the Irish Wheelchair Association through contacts in my local community. In January in 2017, I was one of twenty-four students from all over Ireland who won the Michael Sweetman Competition. I was picked to represent Ireland in Strasbourg, debating social problems in the European Parliament

Attending many meetings, giving a young person's opinion and views of many social issues that affect the youth in our local communities, meeting with the

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<sup>17</sup> **Morgan** – from Cabra, graduated in 2017 from Larkin Community College after achieving amazing goals and contributing richly to both her school and her social life. One person can make a big difference in transforming our world.



Minister of Children and Youth Affairs and discussing the work of Localize with the youth, were important to me. There was support to be found for two years on a mentoring programme with Irish Life, where we would meet-up once a month to see if I wanted help with any issues I may have had with school and also discussing college advice.

As a member of Cabra For Youth I recently played the part of a homeless person. I spent three nights on the street for a few hours and I learned a lesson that will stay with me forever. What is it like to be invisible, to be vulnerable and crying out for help while many people have no compassion for others? After my short but real immersion into the experience of homelessness I wrote this poem.

## ***The Cold, The Fear, The Unknown***

The cold, the fear, the unknown,  
Just another night in town, being told to move on,  
you can't sleep here,  
Where do I go from here ....  
Will I get something to eat or even  
a couple of hours to sleep,  
The cold seeping through, waiting for the morning dew,  
Just another night in town ....

What's facing me at dawn,  
bag and baggage being brought along,  
Finding a corner to be alone, God I wish I had a home.

The regular faces that pass me by, God I wish the time would fly,  
The peace, the quiet is all I need here, how did I end up here this year....  
I still have hope and good cheer, for what can bring me in the new year,  
The help we get is oh so kind from the fellowship of our mankind.

The cold, the fear, the unknown ...

So, the work that the local communities do is invaluable in starting to educate the youth, particularly on social matters. Even if one child goes on to help, that is a step in the right direction for everyone.



*(Morgan's winning Junk Kouture creation)*

# Nasret

Hugh O'Donnell<sup>18</sup>

It was late  
four of them took him out  
took him off in a truck at gunpoint  
down a narrow lane an alleyway  
along a border-crossing  
dragging him  
over sleepers the clink of loose  
stone-fill under his feet

overtook him on his way home  
his back to the wall  
took him in feet first scratching  
with the nails of his hands  
upstairs to an empty room  
a refuge now  
of sorts where tourists pay  
to spend a little time  
reading the walls he climbed

took the body away before daylight  
out past the last house  
in that direction  
as far as you can see  
took him for an informer, a mole, a  
dissident, a graffiti artist,  
an outsider, a boy who couldn't spell  
Nazareth who had never been near the place.



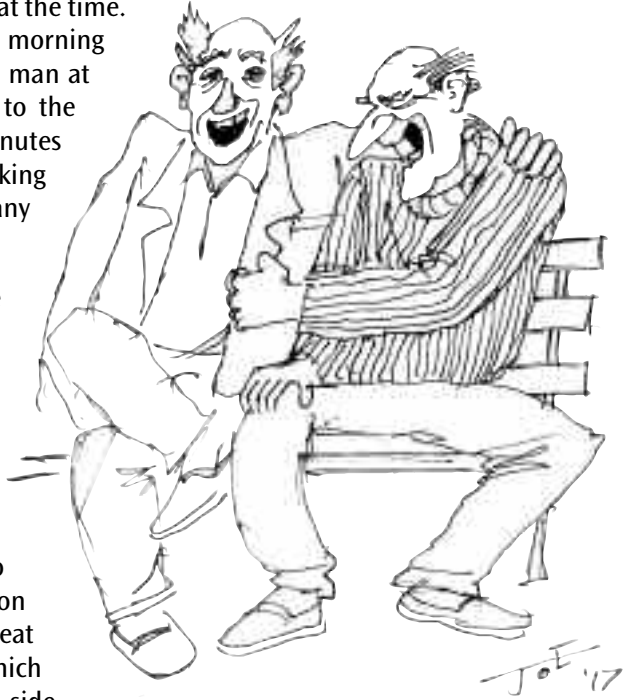
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<sup>18</sup> **Hugh** – is a Salesian curate working in Lourdes parish, Sean Mc Dermott Street.

# Bruce

I met Bruce six years ago in a B&B in Belfast where he was lodging at the time. After breakfast, with a free morning ahead of me, I approached a man at another table for directions to the Ulster Museum. Fifteen minutes later, he was at my door asking would I care for some company as he knew the town well.

In a short time we were friends and he would write me long detailed emails of his travels which often included a line of poetry, or a passage from 'The Lady of Shalott,' which he had by heart. Sometimes he came to Dublin by train to see me and we would dine on soup and a sandwich. And great conversation, the kind in which you travel together side by side but with no destination in mind.



Last year I went north to see him because his cancer prevented him walking far. I only managed a couple of visits before he died. He didn't hoard. Friendship has no baggage. Like the old Buddhist monk, all his possessions were stored within. His room was cleaned out in an hour.

I miss Bruce. I will not get used to the silence between us and the absent music my name made in his mouth. When I anointed him before he died I see now that it was also our friendship I was anointing. That rare thing so well described in the book of Sirach as 'a real shelter', as 'the very essence of life'.

# Women Who Use Drugs

Gary Broderick and SAOL Women<sup>19</sup>

**Are you still on the heroin and smoking the weed?  
Are you looking for some tablets, home-made or from over-seas?  
Are you still on the clinic, drinking that green stuff?  
For god's sake, girl, when are you going to realise that enough is enough?**

Do you think I'm stupid, do you think I want this for myself?  
Have you even noticed which way my mouth curls  
as you're looking down from your upper shelf?  
Do you think I worked this all out  
and that it's part of my master plan?  
Do you fantasise that I'm a one woman army  
taking drugs to sock it to the man?

Do you think that I wanted to become addicted when I had my first joint?  
That my unique plan was to spiral through hell and  
set up home at my lowest point?  
Or that I dreamed of queuing for green liquid in a shiny plastic cup?  
So that I could start my recovery singing, 'The only way is up'?

Is that what you think, because that's what's in your eyes.  
Am I the devil to you? Am I selfishness and weakness, all that you despise?  
It's in your tone, and your sneer and your 'no' before I even ask  
Or am I your greatest fear personified, so I must be brought to task?

I was 16 and out dancing, all the girls together  
passing round tequila slammers  
The only point of drinking that stuff is as quickly as you can  
to get totally hammered  
Giving it loads on the dancefloor,  
each one of us 'girls allowed'  
Till I saw his skinny, pimply, unwashed complexion  
standing out from the crowd.

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<sup>19</sup> Gary with the SAOL Women – wrote this poem which was performed by them at an event hosted by the Abbey and The Complex Theatre. Gary is the Director of the SAOL Project on Amiens St.

He was gorgeous, well not quite gorgeous,  
he was ... wearing a nice shirt  
And he said I was lovely, well, actually,  
he called me a cock-teasing bit of a flirt,  
He was 23, handed me his rollie and said, 'Have a toke on this'  
And then he kissed me, and slipped me an ecstasy,  
then I was truly his.

I was loved up on the dancefloor and in passion we headed,  
straight back to his mums.  
We rolled round for hours and no matter how hard we tried,  
he wasn't able to cum  
I should have known then, cos he said if I told anyone  
he'd definitely break me in three,  
And then he lay back tucked up in the duvet,  
said he took 2 sugars in his tea.

Said he'd look after me always and so he waited in shadows,  
as I lifted everything loose from the store  
Walking round like I owned it, I'd casually re-zone it,  
to him safely outside the door.  
Until security noticed that profits had decreased  
every time I'd exit their stead  
So they barred me and tarred me, arrested and charged me,  
while he was at, stoned in bed.

It ended soon after, I was pregnant, third trimester,  
said for him I'd grown far too fat  
He won't have anything to do with me and my daughter,  
he said, 'I'm not related to that'  
But I didn't touch anything while I was carrying my little queen,  
she is my 'angel with no shoes'  
But soon after she was born, my mind was all torn,  
doctor called it my 'baby blues'

But it wasn't just the baby, it was my brothers,  
my dad and my living back home.  
Social workers said I wasn't capable of minding the baby,  
so I couldn't live alone.

My ma is a marvel, keeps the family together,  
though we don't really get on  
My youngest brother takes advantage,  
says he's her favourite one.

So we're all stuffed together in a three bedroom terraced house  
And when me da has been out drinking,  
I've to keep the baby quiet as a mouse.  
No matter how quiet, he'll still bully my brother,  
saying 'You're nothing but a 'queer',  
And he'll punch him, like the old days,  
and then settle down to another beer.

My mother has learned to say nothing;  
her tongue has often led to a clatter  
I've to mind me manners too or I'll lose my bed  
and then my baby and spend the night in the Mater  
He's a sadistic little prick who has the whole house ruled  
with a drunken fist,  
Bad on weekdays, worse at weekends,  
ferocious when he's pissed.

So I'm not telling you all my 'David Copperfield kind of crap'  
Let's just say my childhood was a convoluted,  
catastrophic joke of a very sad mishap.  
And as a result, when I think about it,  
I'd go on a series of dangerous benders  
If I wrote down all my stories they'd be too over the top  
even for 'Eastenders'.

I met Dazzler McKenzie in the Fiddler's Rest  
on the night of my 21st  
He was the love of my life (so far anyway)  
but from the start our love was cursed.  
We boogied and partied and laughed  
our way through kilos of cocaine  
Though the high was a fuel, the come down was cruel,  
needed heroin to settle our brain

I'd had speckles of peace in my life, once or twice,  
but never a bliss like this,  
Every ache, every pain, just wandered away  
and the world was in Dazzler's kiss  
The days were a wonderful, wondrous calm,  
like a boat on the sea in the sun,  
And I was tanned golden brown, as the sun sunk down  
and my nose first started to run

The dragon, this deathly taskmaster, unexpectedly craves your attention  
As you shiver and beg, gently turns his head lets his smoke craft a solution  
Then with a furious blast withdraws love and  
you are cast, once again into fiery hell  
Until you acquiesce, feeling forced to say yes  
to press pause with the clinic doorbell

Don't get me wrong, if it wasn't for them,  
I'd be in a grave somewhere all alone  
It's just that on so many days I crave a life far away  
from this role as a methadone clone.  
And Dazzler my gem, (always stoned),  
spent most of our time in prison custody  
Temporarily released, his life ceased,  
found him dead in the bed beside me

They were afraid I'd injected so the doctor suggested  
she'd put me up on my methadone  
And she prescribed me Xanax and Ativan and Valium  
and Librium because one won't work on its own  
And they tasted so lovely, a prescribed bitter-honey,  
that I ended-up buying a tonne,  
My body slurched upright, a zombie-chic delight,  
my mind uncomfortably numb.

They took my baby away, said I could see her  
one day out of every 14, supervised.  
But I couldn't keep going, my heart was broken,  
from the hurt I'd see in her eyes.

So she's in foster care, in the country somewhere,  
and I'm the drug using scum of a mum  
Oh I pray that she knows, how I dream of my rose,  
of my little angel with no shoes.

Heartbroken, I bumped into Johnny, a rotten 'ould fucker  
all the way from Inchicore  
To be realistic, his most attractive characteristic  
was he always knew where to get more.  
There wasn't a day together we were sober;  
nor a night when he kissed me goodnight,  
But every day he marked me with bruises, any excuse for a fight.

Slowly we realised that we were up to our eyes  
so he quickly had me on the game,  
As I said before, no need to say more,  
but doing that never leaves you the same.  
The guilt and the shame and the fear and the pain  
turned everything into a blur  
Said he loved me so deeply yet he sold me so cheaply  
and soon only called me 'her'

It took me ages to leave him, don't know why  
but it helped that our last fight was really bad  
My brother was there and Johnny called him a queer;  
I finally saw he was just like my dad  
I threw him out on his jack and (so far) he's not come back,  
must have read the look in my face  
So I redecorated, and now it's generated a home that I can call 'my place'.

I'm not telling you this for your sympathy  
or for your money or for your advice  
I just want you to know that as some stories go,  
they don't often start or finish up nice  
Sometimes the hand that you're dealt is loaded,  
and there's no avenue for an appeal  
So though you'd like that all people in Ireland are equal,  
we don't all start on level playing fields



# Open Water Swimming On Lough Erne

Clarice O’Leary<sup>20</sup>



The staff at Swan Youth Services asked me to take part in open sea swimming. I was the best swimmer in the neighbourhood, along with two of my friends. We spend a lot of time in the Spencer Dock swimming and jumping in. SWAN then asked us to do an open water swim in Enniskillen.

They said we would train each week for an hour in Sean McDermott Street Pool. This was easy enough for me. We would do ten lengths. This was all building us up for the open water swim.

We went to meet a swimming club at the Forty Foot. They were called the Dublin Dippers. They encouraged our group to swim 800 to 1000 meters. Some of us completed it and others didn't.

It took me about ten minutes to get in the water. It was very cold at the start and I didn't want to get in. When I did get in I had a life preserver around me. We had to swim out to a yellow buoy and back. Because of the jelly fish I didn't want to go out that far. I was so used to swimming in the dock which has no jelly fish. Swimming in the ocean was new to me. Although I am a confident swimmer I felt uncomfortable, as there were a lot of other people who were really good swimmers there.

On the day of the open water swim we went down to Enniskillen. It was a hike. It was a Saturday. We were to swim one and a half kilometres. We met a donkey on the way down. We got out to go to the shop and there in front of us was a donkey.

When we got to Lough Erne the bleeding water was freezing. We had to wait around for the start of the race. There was a boat, a big bleeding rotten boat. It had about eight dogs on it and it marked the spot where we were jumping in from before the race started. We walked around to where they were all setting

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<sup>20</sup> **Clarice** – is from Ferryman's Crossing in the North Wall. The story of Clarice arises from her engagement with Swan Youth Service on the Summer Swim Programme 2017. The young people involved are of mixed gender and aged from 12 to 21 years from the North East Inner City where there are high instances of early school leaving, drug misuse, crime and where many experience barriers to education and employment. All the young people use the canal as a resource for recreation.

up. We started talking to a man about a speed boat. Actually he told us he would take us out on that boat. He only said that to get us in the water.

We found a football and played on the bank for a bit. Mick's bird kicked the ball in the water and some little young fellow got it for us. I forget his name. It took us awhile to get in the water because it was a bit too shallow and we were all afraid we were going to break our ankles. We met a lot of the best long-distance swimmers in Ireland and some woman who swam the seven seas.

I kept stopping while swimming because I knew it would annoy Eibhlin who was one of the Youth Workers who was with us. I enjoyed the swim overall and would do it again. If I was to do it again I'd feel much more prepared and would know what to expect but I'm not going to do it again in the near future. On the way back home in the van we had a bit of craic doing riddles and having a laugh.

The aim of the programme so well described by Clarice was to include young people to be active and healthy with physical and mental wellbeing while being connected, respected and contributing to their world. The planned outcomes were as follows:

- *Young people developed physical health and wellbeing through a swimming programme.*
- *Young people identified positive and safe ways to use open water in their community in a positive way.*
- *Young people connected with other groups who also use open swimming as a form of recreation.*
- *Young people connected the waterways they use with waterways in the North of Ireland.*
- *Young people developed positive relationships with Youth Workers and identified the service as a support to them.*
- *Young people developed positive peer relationships with other young people in the service.*
- *Young people developed their self-confidence through developing their own competencies at swimming and diving.*
- *Further opportunities were identified for young people to positively use water based activities in their community.*

Swan Youth Services and the young people wish to acknowledge their partners and collaborators in this venture; Swim Ireland, Waterways Ireland, Sean McDermott St Swimming Pool and Dublin Dippers.

# Beauty Without A Kind Soul Is Merely Decoration

**Hannah, Rebecca, Chloe, Nakita, Leanne, Kirsty, Monique,  
Denise, Keleigh, Bernie and Angela<sup>21</sup>**

It was a late September Thursday morning in the FAS and we sat and wondered together out loud. What was it that attracted us to train to become Beauty Specialists? Our answers were varied, revealing and wise. We certainly all have gifts, dreams and ambitions to work in the Beauty business. Angela spoke of her passion since childhood to work in the business as, “She always wanted to pamper people and to make them feel good about themselves.” Similarly, for Leanne it is important, “To make people feel good about themselves.” Kirsty who loves to pamper herself always wanted to help people, and as she grew up had a keen interest in helping others. “Old people,” she said, “love having people to talk to as they get their hair done.” Keleigh agrees that the beauty business, “Gives the elderly someone to talk to and a reason for getting out of the house for a little while.” What attracted Keleigh to a career in Beauty is the opportunity it provides to make people feel confident and beautiful in themselves. For Chloe and Denise, besides making themselves and others feel good, there is the excitement and the challenge of learning new skills such as facials. Monique states, “That every girl loves to be pampered and that her interest is in all aspects of Beauty.” Finally, Nakita who takes an interest in looking after herself saw the Beauty industry, “Helping people who feel down to feel better about themselves and it also helps some people to come out of their shell.”



The Beauty industry does so much good but it should not distract us from our inner beauty. Our inner beauty never needs make-up or a stylist or a nip and tuck. No need for filters on our camera or a photo-shop programme on our smart phone to see ourselves as beautiful. Be the best possible version of ones self, inside and outside, and be confident in our own unique value and destiny.

<sup>21</sup> The authors are all **Beauty Therapy students in the North Wall Community Training Centre.**

One of my strongest memories is of holding the wrinkled hands of my grandmother as she lay in her bed in the week before she died, and knowing I was in the presence of the world's most beautiful woman. I've seen beautiful children struggling with cancer in Temple Street Hospital. I've seen mothers worn out looking after their families with love and dedication and I'm left wondering about what really makes someone beautiful on the inside?

We chatted in class too about human beauty and these are the answers we came up with. It strikes me that someone who has a kind personality and who will listen to you without judging is beautiful. They have an amazing helpful heart. (Angela) A person who stood by me with help and advice and who understood the difficult bits of my life is beautiful. (Rebecca) For me a beautiful person is someone who will sit down with me and listen and who will check in on me regularly. They can show affection and try to make another happy. (Chloe) Some one who is loyal, honest, kind, hard working, good hearted and strong and who will take time to be present to and listen to others is beautiful. (Leanne) Inner beauty is shown when no matter what you have been through or if you are getting into trouble, they are so kind and will do anything to get you away from the struggles. Even if they are going through a bad patch themselves they are still there for you. (Nakita) A beautiful person is the type that will help you out no matter what. If you are feeling down, it is to this person you will go, and they are amazing. (Kirsty) I believe a beautiful person puts others before themselves and does not expect anything in return. (Hannah) I was new to the Beauty class and was uncertain of my ability to learn the trade. Yet each individual girl helped and encouraged me. I witnessed beauty in the quiet, silent gestures, as Maura and the girls engaged with each other. (Bernie)

Forget about looking in the mirror so often, and imagining ourselves posing, and a selfie of Cheryl Cole peering back. Good enough, warts and all, a broken nail, no false eye lashes, au naturel ... but kindly, considerate, affectionate, loyal, good-hearted, mindful, generous, grateful and secure in our own skin, is where beauty resides. Our scars and our bruises and our blemishes and our wrinkles all tell our story. Nothing is more beautiful than a smile that has struggled through tears and a face that has lived its dreams, and a body that is knackered and sweaty after running a marathon, but has achieved its goal. Beauty may catch our eye but it is kindness that attracts our heart.

# Dancing the Minuet in Sheriff Street 1961

Ann Matthews<sup>22</sup>

The minuet was a dance popular in the 17th and 18th centuries in France. It was danced by the aristocracy, and became popular with the upper class in England and the Irish gentry. The minuet involved a line with the men facing a line of women and only hands touched. It was all very respectable and everything was kept at arm's length. The minuet was shoved off the dance floor in the 19th century by the waltz where the man held his partner by placing one hand on her waist and he held her close. The shock horror of it all was mirrored in the 1960s when rock and roll gave way to 'shaking it all about' and the twist. Another marker for a decline in respectable society!



*Ann in sixth class in  
St Laurence O'Toole School  
1961*

So, who was doing this 300-year-old dance in Sheriff Street in 1961? Well, therein lies a tale. The girls' school St Laurence O'Toole's in Seville Place was founded in the 1840s and in the 1950s each class had a one-hour weekly elocution lessons taught by the very respectable Miss K. She taught in many of the primary schools in the city, and we paid one penny for the one-hour class, and she had our respect because she was so genteel.

She taught us how to pronounce and understand the vowels A,E,I,O,U and the consonants and their importance in the alphabet and in our speech. We learned tongue twisting rhymes to teach us how to use them to talk properly. 'She sells sea shells by the sea shore. And with nod to Rudyard Kipling

*The change of the guard at Buckingham Palace*

*Christopher Robin went down with Alice.*

*Alice is going to marry a Guard.*

*'A Guard's life is very hard'*

*Says Alice.*

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<sup>22</sup> **Ann** – originally from Coburg Place is a published historian and dramatist who lectures in History at Maynooth University.

We played ball to that one, it has a great rhythm. We also made some of our own.

*If a chip shop could chop chips  
How much chips could a chip shop chip  
If a chip shop could chop chips?*

One more for old time sake;

*If a Chinese could sneeze cheese  
How much cheese could a Chinese sneeze,  
If a Chinese could sneeze cheese?*

There was no racist intent here, none of us had ever seen, let alone met a man of woman of Chinese origin. It was all about the rhyme.

When spring arrived and we were deemed to be sufficiently well-spoken, by Miss K so she took us across the road to the boy's playground on Sheriff Street to do drill exercises. On wet days we used the indoor facility, (a kind of hall). There was a girl's playground but it was on Mayor Street and too far away. I got my first scar in the girl's playground.

Age seven, I was pushing a girl on one of the wooden bucket swings hoping she would let me have a go, when it hit me in the forehead. A trip to Temple Street Hospital and a few stitches resulted. I still have the scar, my very own personal legacy. The next day I was sitting on our doorstep in Coburg Place displaying my injury and two big girls (age about 12) who were passing, came over to have a good look and told me I was really lucky that I'd already made my first communion, because my impressive scar would have spoiled the photograph. This was a revelation, which was, that looks were important and girls can't have war wounds. Funny thing is, I don't have a communion photo, but that's another story.

By 1961 I was in fifth class. Every year Miss K organised a grand drill display so the mummies and daddies could see how their one penny a week was being spent. We were of course speaking beautifully by this time because we were fast learners. Every class had a special drill display and the finale was when the girls of the 5th and 6th class performed the most outstanding drill of the day. In 1960 the girls had performed the Maypole, around a Maypole specially built for the occasion. They danced around it with multi-coloured streamers made of crepe paper, and it was magical. I was really looking forward to our class doing something equally fabulous, and my scar was now living behind my eyebrow.

Every year, music had to be arranged for this great show and May Kavanagh whose mammy had a piano did the needful. Mrs Kavanagh was the postmistress in Sheriff Street post office which was directly facing the playground and the family lived above the shop/post-office. The piano couldn't be carried down the narrow stairs from her parlour on the second floor, so every year it was taken out through the widow. Nothing was too much trouble for this glamorous annual event. We waited with excitement to hear what Miss K had in mind for our class and she clearly thought we were a very refined bunch, when she decided we would dance the minuet. "The what?" we asked. We had learned how to do the 'Siege of Ennis' and the 'Walls of Limerick' not by the very refined Miss K, but from our regular teachers who taught us the dances in the cramped little yard at the school. I was always the boy, because I was tallish.

Miss K set about teaching us our drill exercises and then how to dance the minuet. We lined up in two rows the taller girls (the boys) lined on one side and the smaller girls in the facing line. I was a boy again. To help us with the gentle rhythm of the minuet Miss K taught us to sing as we danced...

*My Grandma told me yesterday  
When she was very young.  
That she remembered well the day  
She went to her first ball.  
And Grandpapa and grand mama had never even met,  
When Grandpapa kissed grand mama in the second minuet.*

So there and then grandpapa in public view had placed his claim on grand mama by kissing her, and the rules of respectable society deemed that they must marry, like a posh version of a shotgun wedding. To us working class children, average age twelve, this was portrayed as romantic, a notion way beyond our ken. But Miss K thought this was suitable for our finale, so who was going to argue with the expert? We had no multi-coloured ribbons of coloured crepe papers and we were so disappointed. However, over the years when I think about it all, it brings laughter to my heart. So who's to say it wasn't a learning experience - a peculiar one? Looking back it was a lasting one, because I can still see the upright Miss K very clearly in my mind's eye. God love her.

# A Knock at the Door

Marie Maher<sup>23</sup>

When I started in the Life Centre I couldn't even read or write. Paul used to give us books to read and I'd be giving out. Now I forget myself and I'd be there reading it aloud and Paul would say "Don't worry Marie if other people can hear you, at least you're reading it". One day he said to us, "Would ye like to do your Junior Cert?" So we said yeah! We used to do two subjects each year. So out of the Junior Cert, I ended up doing English, Maths, Home Economics, Business Studies, Woodwork, Arts and Crafts and History. So I did seven subjects. There was only one I failed in; History. I had no interest in that. But I said, at least I've done something.

I still go now... We go on a Thursday. We're after doing ragdolls. I do embroidery, I do crochet, anything like that! I've done a thing for the Church. I've done a peace sign in a Celtic design. They never had anything in the church for confirmation, so I did something like a symbol of fire in embroidery, for when they have the confirmation.

They say to me "Marie when you're doing anything and you put your mind to it, you get it done. You wouldn't even talk!" I asked Mary, the nun, "Would you try and get some more patterns and I can do a bit of embroidery?" I don't know what we're gonna be doing in September. We do pottery as well; I've done one of them moulds. I gave it to Paul for his back garden. When class doesn't be on of a Thursday, I say 'Oh God'. I miss it. Tomorrow night it's not on though, because we're going out for dinner, all seventeen of us. Then next week we're giving Paul a birthday party, - he's seventy.

There's only one woman from not around here that comes. She's from Inchicore. Her young fella went to the Life Centre and then unfortunately he died. But she's the only one that's not from the area. It's important to have the community. It gets you out of the house for a while. We go down there at seven and we'd be there till about nine. When we go in first we have a cup of tea and

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<sup>23</sup> **Marie** – from Cherry Orchard died this past year and was a regular contributor to these books. This piece along with the accompanying anonymous poem was first published in November 2017 in ATD Fourth World's book, 'If Only You Knew - Stories of Change' and is included with permission.



a chat and then say at about half seven we start doing our classes. Martin does say “Who have I got for Creative Writing tonight?” And Barry does say “Who have I got for Pottery?” And Mary might say “Who have I got for Sewing?” So we've a choice of three. They used to take us away for weekends around August. If it was given up now I'd miss it.

There was a woman who lived down the end of the road and she was experiencing a tough time. So it was getting to the stage where she wouldn't even come outside the door! I put her name down for the school. I said to one of her daughters “I'm after putting her name down for the school and tell her I don't care what she does but starting September I'm knocking at this door and if I've to drag her out, she's coming out”. And she's in the school ever since now. She said to me “It's the best thing Marie you've ever done. It gets me outta the house”. You have to be careful though, sometimes I knock and she won't answer. I think it's important to keep knocking and to let her know you're there.

We need more for the kids up here. There is a playground there across the fields and they have half of it dug up. Then over in the Equine Centre if the kids want to do anything they have to pay for it. Down the end of the road there, we asked about that bit of field and we were told, “No! No! No!” But they ended up doing garden allotments there. Around the back there is a big green space too. We asked, “Why couldn't they even put a playground on that?” But no, they're building houses. Now don't get me wrong, I don't object if it's houses for the homeless. But they're taking all our green spaces. We definitely need a shop. The shop is very far from here; you'd have to walk half an hour for a supermarket. To have a sense of community, you need these kinds of things. With all the new houses that are being built, there isn't enough here for people. When the new families come, there won't be anything for them. We need these things: a shop, and facilities for the kids and that. It would give life to the community.

# I Thank You

From the shoulder up to the head  
I thank you for the years.  
For hearing these things around me  
Thank you for these years and music.  
I thank you for these eyes that see  
How wonderful it is  
To pick all those colours up  
From the flowers and the people  
And now I put my hands over my ears and my eyes  
And keep them there for about ten seconds, and taking them away  
And listen to the sound, that's wonderful  
And the eyes, they're wonderful

I thank you for the mouth  
Which actually keeps me alive  
As a young child how I looked at food  
I loved the food and had a longing for it  
I thank you for the few teeth I have left  
I'm thankful for being able to talk  
I'm thankful to the mouth.  
I thank you for the nose, for smelling change, that is breathing in and out

I thank you for my hair old and grey, now I don't have time for it  
And the brain inside there  
How sorrowful it is for others  
Who can't cope with it  
And others who can  
Some people can't cope with the brain  
And some can't cope with the other person's brain  
I'm thankful for the brain  
I'm getting used to the pain  
I'm thankful.

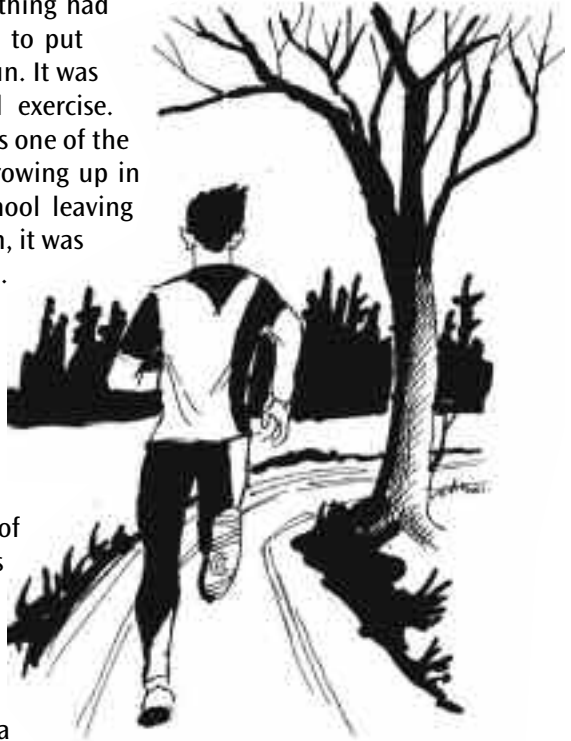
**Anonymous**

# Steps In The Right Direction

Ken O'Driscoll <sup>24</sup>

In late 2008 I had decided something had to change. It was then I decided to put my runners on and go out for a run. It was a bit of clearing the head and exercise. From that day to this, I view this as one of the best decisions I've ever made. Growing up in an area of high crime, early school leaving and a very apparent drug problem, it was always hard to stay out of trouble.

From that first run alone in 2008, people began to see me along the way, and message me on Facebook with an interest in getting fit or in filling their time with positivity. With a bit of encouragement a couple of lads started doing a few km with me twice a week. We would run and have a bit of craic, nothing serious but it was good for the soul. This went on for a while with different faces and growing numbers. So, we decided we would form Cherry Orchard Running Club. In 2012 our club was born.



We now have fifty adult members. Eighteen to twenty of this group have reached the amazing feats of running both the Rome and Dublin City marathons. The club offers from 0 to 5k runs, a chat, a laugh, huge mental

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<sup>24</sup> Ken – from Cherry Orchard is the inspiration behind the establishment of Cherry Orchard Running Club.

health benefits, right up to training for a marathon. Early last year I was approached by two local community groups to get involved with setting up a junior group of runners in the Dublin 10 area.

In December 2016 Familibase, a local Youth and Family Centre in Dublin 10 and The Life Centre in Cherry Orchard were thinking of new activities to engage young people from the Cherry Orchard area. Niamh Kearney writes, “We had noticed some older lads in the community had started running groups and wondered would they help us start some running groups for the younger people. Everybody agreed to help out and in February 2017 we started our younger running groups. Each week the numbers have grown and we now have over seventy-five young people from the area involved in the junior groups. The younger ones have participated in 5k races including a Zombie Run at Halloween in the local area which proved to be great fun. We have older groups doing 10ks without a problem. Over twenty-two participated in the Virgin Night Run. We recently registered the club with the Athletic Association of Ireland. Cherry Orchard Running Club is now the official club of the area. The original older lads, the juniors and all the new groups that have started up along the way, as a lot of mummies are now running too, have all come together as one club. We have recently formed a club committee and intend on running our way to a healthy, positive community.”

A year on and we have seventy five runners training every Tuesday and Thursday in the local park. This is a wonderful achievement against the backdrop of constant negativity in our area.

Is the dream alive? I would say it is now a very real reality!

# 'She Is And Always Will Be An O'Leary'

**Paul Kelly**<sup>25</sup>

The North Wall Series began in the summer of 2014. The Facebook page has 1,700+ likes and the work has exhibited here in the North Wall on five occasions. I've lived and worked happily in the community for fourteen years. I am raising a family here; two boys: Luke and Alex Kelly. My first job as a photographer in the area was a wedding nearly ten years ago, then I shot a communion and a confirmation. In the years since, I have photographed wakes, funerals, glamorous granny competitions, the Luke Kelly night, Easter parades - celebrations and events of every kind. It has been an amazing time and I'm thankful for the trust and the welcome which I've been offered. Mostly I've been told, 'Come in, have a cup of tea.' 'Thank you for the prints you left in Gerry's for me.'

Halloween is always a busy time, especially for the kids in the North Wall. This year as a treat to myself I took the day off my commercial work and family duties and devoted my day to covering the activities that surround the build-up to the Halloween bonfire. For weeks, months really, the local kids have been collecting material for the annual bonfire. This year some were veterans of 3 years of collecting. They are seasoned and they know the dangers, the arrival of the Dublin City Council 'claw' or raids and burnouts from East Wall, Ballybough and Ringsend. They know the difference between a 'Sheila' and a 'Marine'. They work hard and each year a determined well-organised group emerges to ensure the efficient collection and safe guarding of materials ahead of bonfire night.

This year I arrived into the dock around noon. Amber gave out to me for not arriving earlier 'when everyone was out.' I explained I was getting all my other work out of the way to allow myself the rest of the day for photographing the

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<sup>25</sup> **Paul** – local resident and photographer who celebrates the community with his North Wall Series exhibitions. This evocative photo of Paul's is titled, 'Empires' – Halloween Morning 2014.



collecting. I photographed happily all day. A beautiful dog, 'Chief' arrived and I captured some nice shots of him. His owner asked me to take some pictures of his kid too. I was lucky enough to capture a timeless shot of two little buddies. Logan was worried that he'd fall off the pallets, so he held on tightly to his friend's hand - making for the sweetness in this picture.

Darkness fell and having organised a babysitter for my youngest, Alex I was able to continue shooting. I set to work photographing as the kids began to build the fire – under cover of darkness wheels began to arrive, each rolled along by a hard-working kid. The fire was as yet unlit and I set to work shooting images of the boys and girls silhouetted against the dusky sky. The cops arrived down, had a chat with the lads about safety and then left. Immediately after that, a lad arrived that I didn't recognise – he asked the others who I was and they said, 'that's Paul. He always takes photos of us.' The new arrival was a bit edgy but when he asked for a turn with the camera I gave it to him, as I normally do when anyone asks – plenty of the North Wall Series pictures have been taken by the kids themselves. I showed him how to use the camera and put the flash on for him as he was getting blurry images. He shot some pictures and gave me

the camera back. His work wasn't great. He came back a few minutes later and told me to go on top of the pallets that he wanted to take a picture of me and the lads – I said shoot away but I was staying where I was, as I hadn't built the pallets up myself. I gave him the camera but instead of photographing us he turned around and said, 'I'm off' and off he went over the wall and out of the dock. The lads were all asking me what I was going to do. 'Nothing I can do,' I said, 'let's see if he comes back'. But he didn't come back, so I chilled for a while and considered the situation. Probably the end of the North Wall Series was my conclusion. I couldn't risk losing a second tool of my trade. Not so bad I thought – I've had a good run and I have captured and shared lots of great work. I was a bit sad to think I'd have to move in another direction and miss out on all the fun I'd been having.

Then I got a call from the other side of the wall to go over and meet someone – I wasn't sure what to expect and I wasn't that keen on jumping the wall into darkness to have a conversation with someone yet unmet. The boys assured me I'd be ok and if I wanted my camera back that I should go. I jumped the wall and into the alley. I saw the little red light of the camera bobbing along in the darkness of the alley, a black shadow behind it, completely unrecognisable as either man or woman. I met the shadow half way and the undamaged camera was pressed into my hands with the words, 'I'm sorry Paul, that fella isn't even from around here - there you go.' I followed the girl out onto the street. As she got back on her bike she seemed six foot tall to me. She had changed the future by adjusting the present – the North Wall Series would continue after all. I asked her how she got it back – she said, 'I saw him come out. I knew it was your camera, so I just grabbed it off him. It's not right. Who is he anyway?'

I happened to bump into Martin Byrne the following weekend and I related the story to him – he beamed with the pride only one who has spent decades in the community can wear. 'Who was it that looked after you Paul?' he asked. 'Clarice O'Leary,' I said. 'Ah Clarice' he said: 'She is and always will be an O'Leary.' I asked him what he meant by that. He just smiled and said that I'd been lucky. Later, I realised what his tone was, when he mentioned the name suggested that to call someone an 'O'Leary' is one of the highest accolades you could place on anyone. Once again, I had had a brush with pure class in the North Wall.



# A Playful Neighbourhood

**Lisa Purcell**<sup>26</sup>

At a Playful City, we recognised the growing impact which the lack of space is having upon our communities and consequently on the children. Within Dublin, we want to carve out interesting areas to live, work and play. We draw inspiration from the surrounding area of Dublin – the laneways, the paths, the streets and create important social spaces through small scale, low-fi but highly impactful playful design. Re-imagining Dublin through this playful lens provides purposeful, unique and inclusive nodes for the communities that inhabit them, and adds to the health and happiness of our city. Children within this playful environment are afforded spaces which allow them to explore and understand the world around them. Such places provide positive scenes for social interaction within communities and help build a more inclusive, culturally aware and socially accepting Dublin for all ages and abilities.

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<sup>26</sup> **Lisa** – is Childcare Coordinator, Little Treasures Community Creche, North Wall.



Playful City invited me onto the committee where I contributed to the planning of the event on Sheriff Street by representing the local community, including local crèches, schools, recreational centers, Gardaí Síochána and the local parish priest. I spoke with members of the community to encourage participation in the planned events and received a very enthusiastic response. We had a very busy day, beginning at 7am with a clean-up by Dublin City Council. The staff from Playful City and the members of the local community came together to decorate the street and to prepare for the event, with colourful banners and flags. We drew inspiration from 'old-fashioned' games, such as skipping ropes, hoola-hoops, hopscotch, rounders and well-loved games such as red rover, round towers and tip the can. This was a great success. It allowed the children to do what they love to do - play! The response from the locals was fantastic as these games reminded them of their youth, allowing the old and the young generations to come together and share the experience.

We received a great deal of positive attention from the media. The Six-One News and three pages in The Irish Times covered the event. This really shone a light on the positive side of Sheriff Street where there is an excellent sense of community and belonging. The positive feedback which I received, was overwhelming, with members of the local community coming to me and telling me that the event gave them great pride in Sheriff Street. Given the success of this event, it gave me great inspiration to continue to represent my local community and to encourage positivity in Sheriff Street. September the 13th 2017 was a very memorable day for Sheriff Street!<sup>27</sup>

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27 To learn more about this community day of fun and games consult the following site:  
<https://www.rte.ie/eile/tech/2017/1011/911587-a-playful-city-making-dublin-into-irelands-first-city->

The cover image of this book is based on a Russian doll. We all have many people inside our one body. For example, an eighty year old woman still has cooped-up inside her a seven year old girl, a twenty-one year old woman, a thirty year old mother and a fifty year old grand mother. We are constantly changing, as is the community about us, and the people we meet frequently influence and form us. However, our memories and our stories keep us connected to our core. I have included two blue roads in the image to symbolise the paths we choose that continue to define us.



### **LISTENING TO STORIES OF PAIN**

It's the problems we face and overcome that make our stories worth telling. Within our stories are lessons of interdependence and karma. On the back cover I've painted two figures, with one in a spot of bother and the other simply listening, as they search together for wisdom. I feel zooming in on the face is the best way to show attentive listening. What is going on in our minds and in our souls as we tell or as we listen to stories of human struggle in the North Wall?

**TARA KEARNS** *artist*