

On behalf of the East Belfast Historical and Cultural Society I would like to extend to you all, including our friends from Glasgow, a very warm welcome to the opening and dedication of this memorial garden.

In particular the society would like to welcome the families of: -

1. Jimmy McCurrie
2. Bobby Neill
3. Tommy Reid
4. Sandy Gould
5. Danny Loughins, and
6. Billy Kincaid

The families have fully supported the society throughout and we are grateful for their encouragement and assistance. In particular the society would like to thank Kathleen McCurrie and Teenie Foster, Bobby Neill's sister, without their help and encouragement we may not be gathered here tonight.

In recent weeks the society has got to know the families of Tommy Reid, Danny Loughins, Billy Kincaid and Sandy Gould. To Elizabeth Reid and her children, particularly Alan, to Freddie Loughins, his sister Jeanie and Diane and Angela daughters of William Kincaid the society would like to say a very big thank you. Your immediate acceptance and support in what we were setting out to achieve was much appreciated.

The society has spoken to the family of Sandy Gould and they also endorse what we are doing and will visit the garden at a time when there are less people around.

Through our many conversations with all the families it is clear that Jimmy, Bobby, Tommy, Sandy, Danny and Billy have never been forgotten and now through this garden people can join the families in remembering those who have fallen.

Some people might say why do this 33 years after the event, let sleeping dogs lie so to speak. The community from which we all come have adopted this attitude for years and watched as

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the republican community remembers and demands every incident receive a public enquiry etc. As a result you would be forgiven if you felt the only victims in this conflict were nationalist, republicans call them what you will.

As a community we cannot let this continue.

On the 27th June 1970 Tommy Reid and his wife were watching the annual Whiterock parade as many of us have done this afternoon. Tommy and his wife watched the parade at Mayo Street. The parade was attacked by violent republicans using bricks and bottles before using guns. Tommy received injuries to his head when he was struck by a missile and died 6 days later. There is little doubt that this attack was pre meditated.

Within an hour members of the Provisional IRA launched another unprovoked attack on Protestant homes in the Woodvale area of Belfast. Over 200 shots were fired by PIRA resulting in the deaths of Danny Loughins, William Kincaid and Sandy Gould. All three died from a single gunshot wound. As recently as last year a book was released which describes the three as "loyalist snipers".

There is no justification for such a remark but it is a shining example of the lack of research by certain journalists into events about which they write. They simply accept the false propoganda emanating from the republican spin machine. Danny Loughins, William Kincaid and Alexander Gould were only doing what many of us have done in Madrid Street, Thistle Court and Cluan Place. They went to repel an attack by republican mobs and paid for it with their lives.

Meanwhile in east Belfast the representatives from Ballymacarrett No 6 District who took part in the Whiterock parade where returning home. Included were the Gertrude Star Flute Band who for many years now have accompanied a lodge Old Boyne Heroes from the west of the city. As the parade returned home the crowds gathered to welcome home the marchers. Some minor skirmishes broke out at the bottom of the road, nothing serious and calm quickly returned to the Newtownards Road. That ladies and gentlemen was the clam before the storm.

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As the bars and clubs emptied PIRA decided that east Belfast was next as they fought for supremacy in the nationalist community. They opened fire around 10 on a clam Saturday evening. One of their first victims was a women who was returning home with her husband. An IRA gunmen, who many believe was Henry McIlhone emerged from Seaforde Street and shot and seriously injured three innocent Protestants.

Jimmy McCurrie had been out with friends for a few pints on the 27th June and was on his way home around 10.45 with friends when another IRA gunman opened fire from Kilmood Street. Jimmy had quite simply been out for a drink with friends, they did not know there had been any trouble anywhere in Belfast that day. Remember this was 1970. Jimmy McCurrie was felled at Beechfield Street. As he lay there PIRA continued to fire at his lifeless body.

Bobby Neill had been drinking also that Saturday. He had gone home to Central Street for a sleep but heard the noise from the trouble on the road and came up to the junction with the Newtownards Road to investigate. It was to cost him his life. Bobby was shot dead by a sniper firing from inside St Matthew's chapel. Bobby fell dead more or less where the garden has been built.

Since 1970 the republican spin machine has ensured that the community from which we come has been portrayed as the aggressors on that fateful evening amongst others. As recently as last year Billy McKee in the Short Strand under Siege video referred to the events in 1970. The "defenders" as republicans would have you believe were heroes, they defended their chapel against unionist/loyalist mobs, their language not ours. Songs have been written, books written and no doubt poems. All state the same thing - we started the trouble - the army did nothing and the Provisional IRA emerged from all the events that day throughout Belfast as heroes. No longer did the letters IRA stand for I Ran Away. PIRA where now the defenders of the nationalist/republican community, the old guard the Official IRA where finished. As usual we were portrayed as the bad guys, despite the fact that quite the reverse was true.

Ladies and gentlemen that was how the republican spin-doctors want the world to remember the events throughout Belfast that day. Some 33 years later we have decided to tell the untold story, we have decided to tell the truth, we have decided to give the families of those killed and injured the opportunity to tell it as they recall it. A booklet called "Murder in Ballymacarrett - the

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"Untold Story" has been published and can be purchased from a stall at the junction of Susan Street or the Union Jack Shop and other outlets, price £3.00. All profits go to funding what you are here to open and dedicate. Joe O'Donnell the Sinn Fein representative from Short Strand has welcomed the publication of this booklet as long as it does not re-write history.

We ask Joe what history is he referring to? Is it the republican version? Or is it the truth? As a community we have nothing to fear from the truth. The society has sent Joe O'Donnell a free copy of the booklet. The questions that Joe O'Donnell must ask himself is does he have an open mind? Or does he simply believe the green version of events? Does he accept that the provisional IRA opened fire without reason on the Protestant community?

The simple facts are that all six Protestant men who died and the many who were injured, 28 in east Belfast alone, suffered at the hands of the Provisional IRA. It was all part of their strategy at the time, first of all equip themselves with the guns etc, defend themselves against the army and then go on the offensive. Who stated this you might ask? It wasn't us but none other than Joe Cahill in a recent book.

This beautiful garden to remember the fallen has been funded by you the community of east Belfast and further a field. The society is grateful for the support in particular of the businesses, community groups and individuals throughout east Belfast. The garden will be open to all during the day for remembrance and reflection; we would ask you to remember that as you contributed to the garden it is in effect your garden. To the young people of the area we would ask you to ensure the garden is treated with the respect it deserves.

In 1971 a plaque in memory of Jimmy and Bobby was unveiled at Central Street. Unfortunately with the massive redevelopment of the area the plaque has been lost. The society would make an appeal that if anyone is aware of it's location that they get in touch with us. While it remains lost the garden will to an extent remain incomplete.

According to republican spin machine we as a community are accused of being afraid of change. This like the rest is of course a blatant republican lie. This community has endured huge change over the years and further change will no doubt be asked of us.

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To cope with this change this community from which we all come needs to work together, we need to stand shoulder to shoulder against the common enemy. We should support our loyal orders, we should support our superb bands, our community leaders should ensure that our people are protected and our politicians should lead.

This community to survive needs to work together as one, our different sections must support each other, expertise should be shared and petty differences put aside. Our goal must and should be unity, unity to ensure that our culture is not taken from us by the stealth of republicanism. We should be proud of our culture.

Unity will ensure that we remain British for many generations; continued division will ensure that Gerry and his evil band make further inroads into our life and our culture.

**No Surrender**