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McAleese honours the 'debt' owed to young bomb victims

by



Unison **Comment**

By Mike Hornby

Friday June 06 2008

the relationship between [Ireland](#) and [Britain](#) is now the best it has ever been, [President Mary McAleese](#) said yesterday during her visit to England.

The president was speaking at the [Tim Parry Johnathan Ball Foundation for Peace](#), set up following the [IRA](#) bomb attack in [Warrington](#) in March 1993.

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[Tim Parry](#) (12) and three-year-old [Johnathan Ball](#) were killed and 56 people were injured when two bombs were detonated in the [Cheshire](#) town's main shopping street.

At the centre, President McAleese held a private meeting with the foundation's founders, Tim's parents, Colin and [Wendy Parry](#), who issued the invitation for her to see its work when they met former [Taoiseach Bertie Ahern](#) earlier this year.

She said: "The peace we now enjoy has been built at such an awful cost but built it has been, thanks to those who, despite terrible suffering, have always believed in the capacity of the human person to change, to open up to others they once despised, to make friends of strangers, to make good neighbours of old enemies.

"And, I think, that is the debt we owe to children like Johnathan and children like Tim."

[Mrs McAleese](#) confirmed that the Government would give the foundation €75,000 over the next three years.

Mr Parry said: "For a head of state to find the time to come and see us and see what we are doing is great.

Recognition

"It is great recognition for those who work here because they are so dedicated and talented."

The presid

ent, accompanied by her husband, Dr Martin McAleese, the Irish Ambassador to Britain, [David Cooney](#), and his wife Geraldine, was then given a tour of the centre.

Mr Parry said the foundation had worked with 20,000 young people and adults to tackle issues such as prejudice, discrimination and violence.

Mrs McAleese went on to [Liverpool](#) for an address to students at the Roman Catholic Metropolitan Cathedral of Christ the King.

In her speech, 'The Road to Peace -- With a Little Help From Our Friends', the president said: "When the laurels are being rightly given to the major and well-known protagonists like Bertie Ahern as taoiseach and prime minister Blair for the success of the peace process, it is also important to acknowledge the wind at their backs.

"That came from the irrepressible hope of tens of thousands of everyday men, women and children who refused to accept sectarianism, who reached out across the chasms of fear and mistrust, who quite simply took risks for peace."

- *Mike Hornby*

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