

do you
know
what's happened ?



...personal stories and images of the Troubles

The Cost of the Troubles Study

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background...

Living with the Troubles of the last three decades, we all have stories to tell, based on the areas we live in, the jobs we do, the circles we move in. Northern Ireland is a deeply divided society. We each live in our own world, often with little access to the worlds that others live in. This exhibition is an opportunity to explore the worlds of others, their experience of the Troubles, their sorrows, fears, ways of coping, and the way their experiences have affected them. The personal stories are presented alongside powerful images, and other findings of *The Cost of the Troubles Study's* research. Some of the stories might challenge accepted ways of seeing the Troubles. The stories are moving, humorous, contradictory, heart-breaking, inspiring and thought-provoking.

We would encourage you to visit, read, look and listen. A visit to the exhibition is also an ideal way of school groups stimulating discussion amongst pupils, so school groups and youth groups are welcome. Talk to the staff in attendance at the exhibition, or ring Lisa Mitchell now on (01232) 742682/747470 and book your group's visit. Entrance is free and individuals and small groups can come at any time.

This catalogue contains a selection of excerpts and images from the exhibition.

...credits

The Cost of the Troubles Study is funded by the Central Community Relations Unit; the European Special Support Programme for Peace and Reconciliation through the Northern Ireland Voluntary Trust; Making Belfast Work, North and West Teams; The Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust and private donation.

Additional funding to support this exhibition and dissemination of our work was provided by the **Belfast European Partnership Board**.

Additional funding to support work with children and young people was provided by Save the Children Fund, Barnardos and the Cultural Diversity Programme of the Community Relations Council.

one LOSS after another...

The Troubles for many families in Northern Ireland has meant not only one death in the family but multiple deaths.

*My brother was killed,
in an explosion
along with his two mates.*

*I was shot eight times altogether.
My best friend was also shot
She died a week later in hospital.*



*Then when my husband was killed
Davy had been out to clean the windows.
They came running round the corner
and he went to run,
and as he ran
they shot him in the back
and he died there
as he fell.
I thought I'd went through enough.
I couldn't go through this again.*

left like this...

There are many people in Northern Ireland who have been left maimed and injured in the Troubles.

*They all went out to the prison.
There was four of them
and as they were crossing the road they
saw nothing.*

*They were actually checking their pay.
They were going over to have a meal in
the Wagon Wheel.
She thought she heard a noise,
and she felt the pain in her finger.
She slid straight down to the ground.*

*She said it was like going in slow motion
and when she went down to the ground
the other girl she went to sit up
and she says "they're shooting".
"Lie down, they'll think we're dead"
and the other girl,
she was standing up...
And they threw the grenade...*



Other extracts include: a former Republican paramilitary who was shot and paralysed by members of his organisation; now in a wheelchair as a result. A man from Belfast who was severely injured in a bomb explosion whilst imprisoned on a non Troubles-related charge. A man who developed diabetes as a child as a result of the trauma of losing his family home to sectarian violence in the 1970's.

on the inside...

This section describes what prison life has meant for the many men and women who have served sentences for Troubles-related offences.

*I was on remand nine months.
I was sentenced for five counts of life,
I got four hundred years.
Then I was moved to the H-Blocks.
There had always been talk about
a hunger strike
I put my name forward
I was young, I wasn't married,
didn't have children,
I believed that it was right.
You just get weaker and weaker
but initially the only thing is
feeling fairly cold
because you were meant
to drink only water.
You felt an emptiness in your stomach
for the first few days
and after that your stomach starts to shrink down.
After the fortieth day round at that stage
the eyes started to get fuzzy,
double vision.
I had lost consciousness round about dinner time on the Sunday,
and my mother authorised intervention.*



Additional extracts from: a man whose son was imprisoned as a member of a Loyalist paramilitary organisation; a female who was wrongly convicted and jailed, her husband and two sons have also been imprisoned; a prison officer who worked during the dirty protest.

a mother's tears...

There have been all too many images of women in Northern Ireland walking behind the coffins of their sons and daughters and mothers suffer tremendous pressures trying to rear children in communities affected by violence

*You look back and
you have my brother,
and then you have my sister,
and then you have my nephew
and then you had my son.
It was like your whole family
was going to get wiped out.
It just seemed like a big circle,
there was going to be no opening in it.
It was going to revolve around us
all the time.
And that's why now, I fear more now
for the bigger ones I have.*

Additional extracts from: a mother whose son has been the victim of multiple punishment beatings and a mother whose son was killed on Bloody Sunday.



a bystander's view...

There are many people who have been traumatised as a result of being eye-witnesses to shootings, bomb explosions and punishment beatings.

*I was getting into bed
and I looked out the window
I saw a car
and two men got out
and petrol bombed our house.
I actually jumped back from the window
when the petrol bombs hit my window.
We had to get out.
It had been my home for twenty-one years.*



.....

*The rioting had started that night [in Drumcree]
The lights were out,
the smell of petrol was everywhere,
there were people in corners,
young fellas with balaclavas throwing petrol bombs,
you could see the police.
I looked down an alleyway,
and at the top of it was a police jeep
and my son saw me
but he ran towards the police
and the police opened up with rubber bullets
I was actually thinking we are going to be shot here.*

.....

*You also had to go through a checkpoint to get into work.
It was a very important part of your day.
It was the first thing that happened to you.
My own office was either blown up
or burnt out more than once.
Everything in town shut down
and there was an exodus at tea time.
The bombs would have had the most personal effect on me.
I knew people who have been shot,
I know people who have been killed in explosions.*

lost childhoods...

The Troubles have impacted on children and young people. Many children have had difficult experiences and the direction of many young lives have been influenced by the violence.

*I was with my aunt whenever she was killed
It was my eleventh birthday.
I was linking her.
My head was so blank
and I got up and run.
Then over in my house two years ago
the UVF came into my house
and killed my cousin.
This fella came in
and he'd shot him in the neck
then shot him another twice in the head,
and I was there.
I froze - I couldn't do nothing
I lost a brother there seven months ago.
He was dead close to me that one.
And that wrecked me so it did.*

.....

*There was a sort of security with me.
I was never allowed out on my own, ever.
We always had to be with other people.
We weren't allowed to give our 'phone number
to anybody in school or anything.
If anybody asked what your dad did,
we had to say he was a civil servant.
Every night, when I went to bed
I always kissed and hugged my dad goodnight,
because I knew there was a real chance
he wasn't coming home the next day.*



all in a day's work...

For many people the Troubles has become part of their everyday working life. Doctors, firemen, ambulance men, priest and ministers have all had to deal with the impact of violence in their careers.

Drumcree '96.

It was intense,

one of the most traumatic events in my life.

I found myself hardly able to eat

On the Sunday morning

it was a bit like Vietnam or 'Apocalypse Now'.

The day after Michael McGoldrick was shot

we received a fax in our house

which read

"One down, 5,999 more to go!"

That was a chilling message.

I was uneasy that there might be killing

that guns might be used rather than plastic rounds.

I thought, as a priest

I might have to minister to dying people.

But it was quite unreal

to find yourself in a war situation

in your own neighbourhood.



I worked in the Casualty Department of the Royal Victoria Hospital.

Dealing with injuries, in order to do your work efficiently

I had to think in terms of what is the blood pressure?

Where can I get a needle into a vein to get a blood transfusion going?

Do I need to take x-rays?

During the worst periods I would have been involved with maybe

eight seriously injured people on a bad day;

If somebody was found to be dead on arrival at hospital

or if they got into the resuscitation room and then died there,

it was my responsibility to break the news to the relatives.

So I met Catholic families,

I met Protestant families,

I met paramilitary families

and I met families with no political involvement.

Although I saw a lot of patients with severe injuries

this didn't effect me emotionally the way the deaths did.

Additional extracts from: Baptist pastor to Loyalist paramilitaries, firefighter who worked in Belfast at the height of the violence in the 1970's.

far from home...

Emigration has been a feature of the Troubles in Northern Ireland. Many people have made the choice to leave Northern Ireland in search of better employment and a better way of life. There are those however, who have been forced to flee the country by paramilitaries and were left with no choice but to leave their homes and their families in order to protect their own lives.

*I got a job in London;
that was in '86,
I've been here ever since.
I think when you are subjected to the Irish abuse
that reinforces and makes it more concrete.
I think that's why a lot of people
from the North of Ireland
continually think about going home.
One incident which after 11 years,
put extra pressure on me.
I was arrested by the police,
walking down a road hailing a cab.
I was surrounded by police officers
who were calling me an Irish Bastard
basically being thrown in the cell
and being denied a solicitor.
They never even asked me my name,
in the whole duration of the situation.
Then let me go without charge
after I'd been subjected to all that abuse.
They basically were out to get a Paddy that night*



Additional extracts from: a young man forced to leave Northern Ireland by Republican paramilitaries; a man who left because of a good job offer, a young man who left because of deaths in his family and the violence in general.

making ends meet...

Losses of homes and businesses as a result of the Troubles has meant severe financial hardships for many people. The financial costs of violence to people's lives is described in this section.

*I have a chemist shop in
a location greatly affected by the Troubles.*

*To repair damage caused by vandals costs
between £300 and £1,200 per annum.*

*Two years ago I spent £65,000 on refurbishment
but still the defacing of the property continues.*

*You know you are losing money
but it is accepted as a war situation.*

My commercial property is continuously damaged by sectarian louts.

The door and walls are covered in slogans.

*The most I paid for one night's damage was £900,
last October I paid £200 for one night's damage.*

*We had a remoulding factory in the bottom of the Donegall Road,
it got burned out*

*I opened up premises in May Street
then I got bombed there.*

I had about £200,000 in stock and tyres.

I had about £50,000 in the bank, in cash,

The police refused to give me a certificate.

I owed the bank £80,000.

I was doing business with a Swiss firm

I owed them £50,000

[The Northern Ireland Office] offered me £117,000.

I lost everything.

I took two heart attacks in a week.



Additional extracts from: a woman wrongly imprisoned for ten months and who received no compensation for the time she spent in prison; a woman who lost her home to sectarian violence; a former prison officer.

rough justice...

Justice in Northern Ireland has also meant paramilitary policing in certain communities where relationships between police and the community have failed. Informers are interrogated and shot, and punishment beatings by paramilitaries are viewed by many as community justice.

*I've had 13 punishment beatings by paramilitaries
I got 35 stitches in my leg.
I was bandaged from my ankles,
my elbow was broke, my wrist was broke,
I'd fractured kneecaps,
swollen kneecaps,
and I'd slices all over my arms and legs and my head.
My eyes sitting out, my nose.
They just didn't care where they hit me.
They were hoping that they would maim me for life
or half kill me.
Leave me for dead.*

*I was expecting my last baby
and 11 days before she was born,
[my husband] he was kidnapped by the IRA
and shot.
I saw it on 'teletext'.
He wrote me a letter
those 13 days he was away,
and at the end of the letter he wrote
"I'll never know if I ever have a daughter"
I hated the IRA.
They had just destroyed my whole family life.
I come from a loving relationship,
two beautiful children.*



Additional extracts from: a woman wrongly convicted and who spent ten months in jail.

serving the Crown...

Members of the security forces in Northern Ireland have been targeted by paramilitaries since the early Troubles and many have been killed and injured. Officers and their families must be constantly vigilant and high levels of personal safety means the necessity of secrecy and isolation for these families.

*I was a full-time member of the RUC
I was travelling home from Andersonstown
in a private car.*

*A car came along as if to overtake
and the passengers rear seat opened up
with an armalite rifle and
a Thompson sub-machine gun.
My companion and I
were very seriously injured.*

*As a result of my injuries
I've very restricted movement
in my right arm.
My walking is impaired
as a result of injuries to my left leg
and I am a permanent epileptic.
My eyesight is also affected.
I'd two bullets went in here at the temple
and right through the front.*



Additional extract from: a former prison officer.

loss of a loved one...

Over 3,600 people have been killed in the violence in Northern Ireland. This has left many homes and families devastated by the loss of loved ones.

*We were a mixed marriage.
My husband just went to work
and the next thing I heard five shots.
Then the door wrapped
and my blood just ran cold.
The police knew it was the UVF
but they never ever got anybody for it.
He had been shot in the back
and when he lay on the ground they went over and shot him in the head.*

*I got home from work
and my mother told me my father was dead
but then within a couple of seconds
his photo came up on the TV.
His body had been found in Glencairn
and it looked as if it was the Shankill Butchers.
The police came for us to go and identify the body.
You probably go through your whole life
and never see a sight like that,
I remember I never cried
until the day we buried him
I wondered before they killed him,
was he begging them to kill him
because he must have suffered terribly
and I wondered was he saying to them
put an end to it.
I just didn't have nightmares every night,
it got worse later on.*



Additional extracts from: a woman from the Hindu community who lost a member of her extended family in crossfire; a woman whose husband was killed by a plastic bullet.

the disappeared...

Statement on behalf of relatives of the disappeared

We the mothers, daughters, wives and sisters of the disappeared still yearn for the return of the bodies of our loved ones. We have no interest in gathering incriminating evidence. All we want is the return of our loved ones bodies so that we can give them a Christian burial. We would plead with anyone who might have the slightest shred of

information to contact us on the freephone unstaffed answer service, 'phone number **0800 3898749** or give information to priests, solicitors or other people who can help us.



The Cost of the Troubles Study...

We are a group of people from both of the main traditions in Northern Ireland, who have been bereaved or injured in the Troubles, and who work with two researchers.

We have been collecting evidence on the effect the Troubles have had on everyone in Northern Ireland. The researchers have carried out numerous in-depth interviews with men and women, young and old, Catholic, Protestant and 'other', from various parts of Northern Ireland. These interviews have provided a variety of personal stories of people's experiences of the Troubles. The staff have carried out a survey of a sample of 3,000 people throughout Northern Ireland who were randomly chosen. The survey asked about the economic, health, social, occupational and other effects of the Troubles on them.

The results of what we find will be published, so that voluntary and government agencies can take into account the effects of the Troubles and so that everyone becomes more aware of the issues.

do you know what's happened?

After the ceasefires from 1994 onwards, a group of people from all sections of the population in Northern Ireland who had direct experience of being bereaved or injured in the Troubles were brought together to discuss their contribution to the new political situation. The widespread determination to have violence permanently ended seemed to be based on the unspoken recognition of the damage done by the violence of the Troubles. This group formed 'The Cost of the Troubles Study', which became a limited company and a recognised charity. In partnership with academic researchers from the university sector, a study of the effects of the Troubles on the population was planned and initiated.

The research is conducted in line with participatory action research principles. This means that the management structure involves a range of people with direct experience of the effects of the Troubles. There are ethical questions about researchers becoming involved in this field of research which led to the need to make researchers accountable to those with direct experience of bereavement and injury. One of the most devastating after-effects of trauma is the sense of disempowerment that it can bring. Working according to a principle of partnership is an attempt to avoid further disempowering those we research.

The Cost of the Troubles Study is an organisation composed of people who have been bereaved and injured in the Troubles, working with researchers. Over the last two years, they have been documenting the impact of the Troubles on the population of Northern Ireland. They have done this in a number of ways: by compiling a list of those who have been killed since 1969; by a survey of the population; and by collecting over 70 personal accounts of individual experiences and the effects on individuals of the Troubles. It is mainly these accounts that form the basis for the major exhibition, 'Do you know what's happened?'

...personal stories and images of the Troubles

£1.00

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