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M. Bassett see Gallagher tape 5's noted, filed

16 MAR 2000

2

Note of meeting with Governor (Mr Alistair Simpson) and Secretary (Mr Billy Moore) of Apprentice Boys of Derry and Secretary (Mr James Wilson) of Ulster Society in Derry on 1st March, 2000.

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I met with the above to discuss a forthcoming visit to the Battle of the Boyne site and their application to the Department for funding towards the Maiden City Festival. Mr Simpson was very generous in his appreciation of the Government's decision to purchase and develop the site. Mr. Moore stated that if Bertie Ahern was to stand for election in Derry many unionists would consider voting for him !!

I explained that it would be some time before the site would be fully developed and a visitor centre will not be opened in the short term. Simpson advised that they weren't concerned how long it took provided it was done properly and he expressed amazement of how little development had taken place in the area.

Simpson and Moore said that the Apprentice Boys were constantly seeking to reach accommodation with nationalists in Derry and were planning to have a St. Patrick's Day festival to make Protestants aware that St. Patrick was not only a Catholic saint and that the shamrock had a religious significance that Protestants could embrace. The Maiden City Festival this year would last 8 days and it was hoped to extend it out to reach all communities in the city. The Apprentice Boy's had agreed to have their Lundy celebrations earlier last year to assist the shop owners in the city who were concerned about disturbance to their Christmas trade. They had also supported a school in the Creggan area doing a project on the siege and that they (the children) had displayed this in their local nationalist shopping centre.

The Apprentice Boys will be making a visit to the Battle of the Boyne site on Saturday 8th April and they will have over 50 members from Derry and Belfast on this trip. At the end of their visit they will be having a discussion on the topic of "what visiting the Boyne means to me". They have invited me together with other officials from DFA that may wish to attend this. I have made arrangements with Dúchas for some hospitality for them on arrival at Brú na Bóinne and also for the use of the Dúchas mini bus service to facilitate them getting around the site.

When we were alone, Wilson passed me the attached note which he considered would be worth considering in the wider content of decommissioning, which he requested that I bring to the attention of the relevant officials. Wilson is a former member of the British army and he also made the point to me that the British Army couldn't be trusted and that rogue elements could work to destabilise the current ceasefire..

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Mr Wilson is a consultant to various protestant groups and is very keen to push the "protestant culture/identity at every opportunity.

Moore and Simpson indicated that they hoped to visit Dublin some time after the visit to the Boyne and I told them that they would be very welcome. They advised that they provisionally were looking at the week of 13/14 May. I advised that when they confirmed the dates, I would meet them during the visit and also see if I could organise informal meetings for them if they so wished. They advised that they would appreciate this and would get back to me nearer the date of the visit.

Peadar Carpenter
13 March 2000

March 2000.

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To Mr Carpenter

From

28 02 00

Decommissioning and potential 'equivalence' measures

It is abundantly obvious that the PIRA cannot be asked to deliver meaningful product on the issue of arms being put beyond use without some equivocal measure by the other 'forces' that have engaged in the conflict.

The GOC has expressed reluctance about the Regular Army being involved in any Day of Reconciliation. However, this does not include the TAVR (107 Brigade) and the Army Cadet Force (NI).

Both the TA and Cadets recruit for hard loyalist areas; East Belfast, Waterside, Ballymena, and Portadown – there is a corollary of para-military activity with these base areas. Many UDR/UVF leaders were ex-TA/Cadets. The ACF are of particular concern as they are active in teaching children aged 13 to 18 years in how to use firearms (5.56mm Cadet GP rifle and LSW) set up 'killing grounds and use 'fire team tactics'. At present 1000+ children are 'underarms' in two battalions. In Derry the ACF have detachments in Foyle College, Clondermot, Nelson Drive, Caw, Faughan Valley and hope to found a new detachment in Newbuildings.

It would be a sincere gesture towards genuine decommissioning of the mindsets if this capacity to learn warfare was removed. It would remove the Loyalist access to training and tactics – something that their death squads have been able to demonstrate. If the British are serious about promoting peace and reconciliation in the north, then their Army should demilitarise its imput into the Loyalist community, and the professional soldiers confined to their respective camps. Children should be taught more peaceful pursuits – we cannot afford to have a new generation growing up in this Island who are taught to think that guns, killing and violence are cool and the norm.

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Celebrating St. Patrick's day

On the 17th of March every year, Irish people all over the world celebrate Saint Patrick's day. Even those with only a remote claim to Irish ancestry are eager to join the festivities, proudly displaying the shamrock as a symbol of their Irish roots. It is only here in Ireland, where Patrick spent most of his life, that the day's events have become a source of division.

The only way that the event can become truly cross-community is to remove the politics and symbolism. When Saint Patrick preached the gospel in Ireland, tricolours and Ulster flags were over a thousand years in the future. The difficulty for many Protestants is the fact that Patrick is the patron saint of all Ireland. To a Unionist, the island of Ireland consists of two separate entities: the Irish Republic, a sovereign independent state, and Northern Ireland, an integral region of the United Kingdom. In order that the Unionist community can fully embrace the concept of their Irishness, the Nationalist community must show a degree of sensitivity and recognize the British identity of the Unionists. For both communities to celebrate their Irishness, these facts must be recognized and then set aside.

When Saint Patrick's day is celebrated throughout the world, it is Nationalist symbols which are prominent. This need not be the case. The sash, Lambeg drum, flute and Bushmills whiskey are as much a part of Ireland as the hurley stick, tin whistle, bodhran and poteen. The name Northern Ireland was chosen by the founders of our province and echoes around the terraces of Windsor Park on international match days. Many Unionists are proud to serve in the Royal Irish Regiment and receive the shamrock on their uniform in ceremonies on the 17th of March.

Just as it is possible to be Welsh or Scottish and British then it is also possible to have a dual Irish and British identity. Few Unionists will wear the shamrock on their lapels on the 17th of March, but if we address and recognize our differences, then perhaps in the next millenium a few more unionists might wear it on their sash.

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****** PROGRAMME OF EVENTS ******

Friday 17th March

12:30 pm. - 4:30 pm. Country Market

Lunches available with Irish stew,
apple pie & cream with tea or coffee.
(Traditional musicians in attendance)

9:00 pm. - 1:00 am. Dance & Cabaret

Tullintrain Pipe Band
Dancing to New Moon
& Cabaret with Robert Ramsey
Admission £ 3.00

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Saturday 18th March

12:30 pm. - 4:30 pm. Country Market
(Lunches available)

2:00 pm Comedy Sketch :
' Finnegan's Wake ' by the Crimson Players

3:00 pm. Workshop and discussion on Saint Patrick.

Guests: Nelson McCausland : Ulster Scots Heritage
Charles Doherty : University College Dublin

9:00 pm. - 1:00 am. Dance & Cabaret

Raphoe Pipe Band
John Edgar
Terrence McKeague

Life in an early Irish monastery





The Maiden City Festival Committee acknowledge the support of Co-operation Ireland and the Community Relations Council

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SAINT PATRICK



St. Patrick was born around the year 390 A D in Western Britain. At the age of 16 he was captured as a slave by Ulster scots and sold to an Antrim chieftan called Milchu.

He was set to work as a shepherd boy, spending many lonely days and nights tending sheep on the hillsides. Alone on the bleak hills of Slemish, he sought comfort in prayer.

Despite his longing for home and family, Patrick came to love this land of his exile, with its beautiful mountains, and green glens. During his 6 years as a slave, he came to know the people and their ways, and learnt to speak their language.

Eventually, Patrick escaped on a ship to the continent landing on what is now called the South of France. He studied religion and in a few years began to get restless. Legend has that an angel appeared in a dream and urged him to go back to Ireland.

Patrick came to Ireland as a missionary bishop, landing with some helpers around 432 A D. There were probably small groups of Christians in Ireland before Patrick came, especially in the southern areas where there were trading contacts with Europe. Patrick's mission however, involved work over a wide area in North-east, Central and Western Ireland, preaching the gospel and establishing monastic settlements. It is believed he died at Saul in 460 A D. In the graveyard of the Church of Ireland Cathedral of the Holy Trinity in Downpatrick, you will find a granite stone to mark his traditional burial place.