



Recent Press Releases

| | |
|--|------------|
| HTR Seeks Meeting with 'Legacy' Group | 25/06/2007 |
| Community Support for 21 June ... A Day of Private Reflection | 20/06/2007 |
| Day of Reflection Letter to Editors | 25/05/2007 |
| 21 June - A Day of Private Reflection is launched | 01/05/2007 |
| Reflecting on the Past - Building for the Future | 04/04/2007 |
| HTR welcomes the call to deal with the past while urging caution | 20/02/2007 |
| MPP Letter to Editors | 18/01/2007 |
| TRUTH RECOVERY. A report on possible ways forward. | 31/10/2006 |
| Truth Recovery continued | 31/10/2006 |
| Wanted: Your Ideas on a Museum to the conflict | 30/08/2006 |
| Melanie Verwoerd to Launch HTR Conference Report | 19/06/2006 |
| International Lessons for a Day of Reflection | 30/03/2006 |
| HTR Voice Concerns Over Forthcoming BBC Programme "Facing The Truth" | 14/02/2006 |
| HTR Launch Storytelling Audit and Announce Conference | 18/10/2005 |
| TALKS MUST ADDRESS THE PAST | 16/09/2004 |

Select a item from the above list to read the full story.



Press Releases

21 June - A Day of Private Reflection is launched

Tuesday, 1 May 2007

Healing Through Remembering (HTR) today launched an initial Day of Private Reflection - to be held on 21 June 2007.

The cross-community organisation focuses on ways of dealing with the past relating to the conflict in and about Northern Ireland, with the aim of ensuring a peaceful and stable future for all.

And it says the Day of Private Reflection could help people make a commitment to a peaceful future, while also acknowledging the deep hurt and loss caused by the conflict.

In planning the Day, HTR sought a wide range of opinion, and it has received positive responses from various organisations (including churches, community groups and businesses) and also a wide range of individuals.

HTR has invited people across Northern Ireland, Great Britain, the Republic of Ireland and further afield to take part in the Day, which was launched today at the organisation's headquarters in Belfast.

Sean Coll, Chair of the HTR Day of Reflection Sub Group said: "This Day of Private Reflection on 21 June 2007 is a society wide initiative. However, private is the key word as we invite people to take part. Participation should be entirely voluntary.

"Some people may want to reflect on their own, others may decide to do so

within a family, a group or organisation.

“While no specific events are being planned for the Day, and public events will not be a feature of the Day, groups can be involved by raising awareness among their members, by making a place available where reflection can take place and/or by facilitating reflection.”

The launch - during Community Relations Week - began with a presentation by members of HTR’s Day of Reflection Sub Group and was attended by a range of people involved in the initiative whose lives have been affected by the conflict.

Andrew Rawding, a member of the HTR Day of Reflection Sub Group said:

“For me remembrance is both crucial and - as a former soldier particularly - is unavoidable, but if we only remember we will live in the past. We need to reflect on our memories, to think about whether the attitudes and actions linked to them contribute to healing and a better future for all.”

Maura Kiely, also a member of the Day of Reflection Sub Group said: “We must think about how things might have been had the present peace process come about sooner - nearly 4000 lives could have been saved, including that of my own son, Gerard, who was only 18. We must also remember not only those who have died but also the thousands who were severely injured.”

Sean Coll added: “Local and international research that we as a group have carried out suggests that an initiative like this can benefit both individual people and wider society. It is important, that we as a society have the opportunity to reflect on what has happened and also on the future that is before us.”

HTR has produced a range of information materials - leaflets, postcards, wallet-cards and posters - to help raise awareness of the Day and also to aid reflection on the Day itself. All items can be obtained free from the HTR offices at Alexander House, 17A Ormeau Avenue, Belfast or online at www.dayofreflection.com

Kate Turner, HTR Project Co-ordinator added: "A Day of Reflection is only one small piece of the jigsaw necessary to address fully the legacy of the past. However, it could provide a way of enabling us to begin to both remember the past and go forward as a society."

01/05/2007

[<< back a page](#) [top of the page ^](#)



Healing Through Remembering Alexander House, 17a Ormeau Avenue, Belfast, Northern Ireland. BT2 8HD Tel: 028 9023 8844 [email us](#)



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