

[Most Popular](#)[Most Emailed](#)

[Breaking](#)[Sport](#)[Business](#)[World](#)[Gossip](#)



Issue Changer:



[NEWS](#) | [COLUMNISTS](#) >

## Fitting heroes emerge along the road to peace

**Susan McKay**

By Susan McKay

19/08/08

A lovely man has stepped quietly into the public eye. Mick Grimes, now aged 81, has broken the 10-year silence he maintained since the Real IRA's Omagh bomb brutally robbed him of his wife Mary, his daughter Avril, his granddaughter Maura and the baby twins, who, almost ready to be born, were instead slaughtered in their mother's womb. Evelyn and Eimear, they were to be called. We didn't know that, until Mick Grimes told us,

and it is unspeakably poignant to think of the love that went into the choosing of those names, the fact that two little girls should be about to celebrate their 10th birthdays.

Asked what it was like to lose so many out of his family in such a way, Mick Grimes said simply: "It is indescribable."

It is the same, he told RTE, for anyone who loses a wife or someone they love.

"I don't know if you can pile any more agony on top of that. But it sure hurt."

Mr Grimes has never been able to walk down Omagh's main street since.

"I was never past where the bomb was," he told the Belfast Telegraph.

The girl who served his wife and daughter in the last shop they visited told him that as they left, Avril picked little Maura up in her arms and they waved back at the shop staff.

"Everyone laughed," the girl told him. Then they walked out to their deaths.

During the trial of one of the alleged bombers, who was later acquitted, a woman told the court that she had seen a man getting out of the car which would turn out to hold the bomb.

He turned around and looked at her, she said. He grinned. Then he walked away to safety.

Mick Grimes is not interested in revenge. He said he had "no feeling" for the bombers.

"What they did was wrong, very wrong and useless," he said.

He was incapable of imagining that they had set out to kill. Nor is he concerned about seeing anyone sent to jail.

"So many people had a part to play in these things, so it would be wrong to single anyone out," he said.

"There is no point in dwelling. I just have to get on with my life."

Such generosity of spirit amazes.

Mick Grimes's gentle voice joins others like it that have spoken out down the long years of violence, from Patsy McGurk in Belfast in 1971 to Gordon Wilson in Enniskillen in 1987, with many others before and since.

Many will feel that the Real IRA does not deserve it.

Those who are bitter and angry and those who are struggling to find out the truth about the Omagh bomb and to have the bombers convicted, are no less worthy of respect. It is appalling that they have had to spend the last

decade campaigning for justice and that they are now faced with coming to terms with the fact that they are highly unlikely ever to get it.

While the relatives of the Omagh dead took part in commemorations, private and public, dissident republicans used the opportunity to show how little they care for their obvious suffering or for the will of the people.

Rockets and burning cars were back on the streets of Lisnaskea, with police officers lucky to escape with their lives.

Omagh rightly got a lot of attention last week. But all over this country people struggle every day with the same agony and cry hard, lonely tears for loved ones who were murdered.

Those who carried out the killings argue that there was a war going on, that their people supported them, others vehemently disagree. It is not an argument anyone can meaningfully win and it brings little comfort to most of the bereaved, but at least it is about a time that is past.

Lisnaskea is the town in which young Darren Graham last year bravely spoke out against the sectarianism he had been subjected to in the GAA.

His father, a UDR man, had been murdered in the 1970s by the IRA ,but he urged that the past be left behind. Otherwise, he told me, its hatreds would be passed on to another generation.

Darren Graham is a sportsman. Mick Grimes writes poems.

A young woman blinded in the Omagh bomb spoke on a BBC documentary last week about how she is now counselling other blind people. These are fitting heroes for a generation emerging from bloodshed into peace.


s.mckay@irishnews.com

## Related Stories

- [Obama sounds like someone who really can save America](#)
- [Forgiveness is a gift only bestowed on chosen few](#)
- [Fair's games won't include hideous truth of Glenanne](#)
- [Damning report does little for social services' image](#)
- [McCartneys join list of those who have failed to get justice](#)
- [Time to prove cheap clothing does not spell child labour](#)
- [Good thing about Bush visit is it will be his last](#)
- [Fitting heroes emerge along the road to peace](#)

 Print  back to top

Bookmark:  Delicious  Digg  reddit  Facebook  StumbleUpon

 Email this story

[print advertising](#) | [media pack](#) | [online advertising](#) | [privacy statement](#) | [about us](#) | [contact us](#) | [subscribe](#) | [login](#) | [archives](#) | [sitemap](#) | [careers](#) | [home](#)