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By Eddie McIlwaine

19 November 2006

Former bass player Stephen Travers will make a pilgrimage to Belfast next month for a reunion with bandmates from the tragic Miami Showband at the Do Ye Come Here Often gala at the Waterfront Hall.

Travers (55) was horrifically injured in the terrorist attack on the band near Banbridge in July 1975. But he told Sunday Life: "I have no bitterness in my heart about what happened that awful night."

Singer Fran O'Toole and musicians Brian McCoy and Tony Gerrity were killed in the attack by loyalist terrorists at the height of the Troubles.

Travers and bandmate Des Lee were left seriously injured on the roadside beside the band minibus.

Two of the terrorists were also killed as a bomb they were carrying exploded prematurely.

Businessman Travers, who is now in entertainment management as A1 Bands and who still plays in a duo with his ex-Horslip pal Johnny Fean, will be in the audience for the show which runs from December 28 to 31.

He added: "But I won't venture up on stage with Ray Millar and the rest of them in The Sounds of the Miami. There would be too many memories stirred up.

"I had 13 holes in my chest and a collapsed lung after the shooting and my life was saved in Daisy Hill Hospital at Newry by surgeon James Blundell and his team.

"So, just 24 hours after the horror, my faith in human nature was restored by the skill of that surgeon.

"I was talking to Mr Blundell just the other day and recalling all the kindness and help that was offered to me in Daisy Hill.

"I have great hope now for the future of Northern Ireland and I think it is good that the Sound of the Miami gets together to remember the good days."

Travers, who lives in Cork, is co-writing a book on the Miami with journalist Neil Fetherston-Haugh, who also co-

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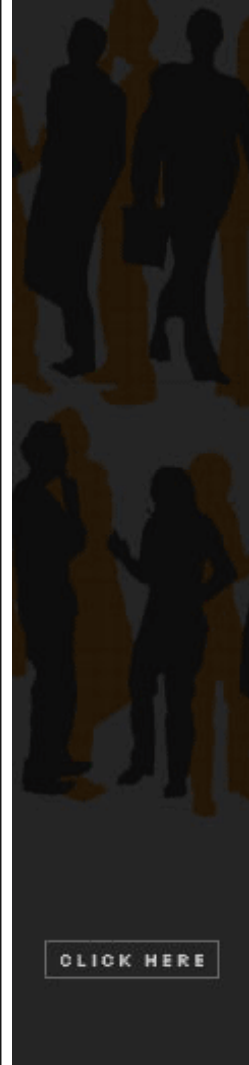
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wrote the book on the Stardust Ballroom tragedy.

Added Stephen: "It isn't easy, opening old files and memories.

"I can cope with it, though, and my co-author is of a younger generation with no baggage and of the kind of inquisitive mind that asks the right questions.

"But I don't want to go playing with the Miami again and having to answer the same old questions every night at the shows.

"My book will pay homage to Fran, Brian and Tony, who were all destined to be world stars."

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