

The Northern Ireland Memorial Fund

Peace – Reconciliation – Support

Memorial Fund News - In Brief

New Directors

Several new Directors have joined the Memorial Fund replacing Sir George Bain, Ann Shaw, Reverend Ruth Patterson, Patrick Haren and Professor Mari Fitzduff who stepped down at the last AGM.

The new Directors are:

David Bolton – Director of the Northern Ireland Centre for Trauma and Transformation;

Dan Harvey – a retired banker;

George Lavery – Managing Director of AV Browne Ltd;

Donna Marie McGillion – a survivor of the Omagh bomb;

Sr Marie McNiece – a founder of the WAVE victims' group;

Joanna McVey – proprietor of the Impartial Reporter;

Jane Wells – Managing Director of John Laird PR.

Directors elected **Dennis Licence** (Managing Director of First Trust Bank) to be the new Chairman of the Board.

Third Gala Dinner

The Memorial Fund held a tremendously successful Gala Dinner at the Ramada Hotel on 11 April raising £104,000. This together with a separate donation of £50,000 from Sir Anthony O'Reilly has secured the Fund's place in the record books as the charity that has raised the most money in one evening in Northern Ireland. Generous sponsorship on the night means that all the money raised has gone directly towards funding the NIMF's schemes.

Fund widens eligibility criteria to schemes

Important changes took place to the Fund's eligibility criteria on 1 April. All applicants who have lost a brother or sister as a result of the troubles are now eligible for a Small Grant along with those who have lost a parent, partner or a child. All applicants who have lost a parent as a result of the Troubles are now eligible for a Short Break.

Additionally, those single applicants who currently have to travel alone on their Short Break will be allowed to take a companion with them free of charge.

Finally, the maximum grant payable under the Chronic Pain scheme has been increased from £500 per year to £1,000 in respect of treatments and therapies recommended by the pain specialist.

Education and Training Scheme

From 1 July the entitlement criteria to the scheme will be widened to include all children of those injured in trouble-related incidents. The application form has also been simplified and packs will be sent out to groups at the end of June, along with forms for the New Back to School Grant described on page 7.

Trips to England

144 victims spent an enjoyable weekend in April in the Daresbury Hotel outside Chester. Despite the long coach journey everyone seemed to have a great time – although the Country and Western group booked for the first night somehow turned out to be a group specialising in English Country dancing!

Some victims from Great Britain joined those from Northern Ireland for part of the weekend and there was also an opportunity to visit the Warrington Peace Centre which is dedicated to the memory of Tim Parry and Jonathan Ball who were killed in the Warrington bomb.

A further trip is planned for children and their parents to the Camelot theme park in Lancashire at the end of June.

Information Day

The next Northern Ireland Memorial Fund Information Day will take place in the Lecture Room at the Library at Omagh on Tuesday 2 July. Staff from the Grants Office will be available from 10:30 to 18:30 to provide information and help with the completion of application forms. There will also be a special presentation by Directors on the Fund's schemes from 12:30 to 13:30 to which all are invited to attend.

A Web Site for the Fund

The Memorial Fund website is nearing completion. Once it goes live in the next few months it will be possible to download application forms for each of the Fund's schemes. One section of the site will be set aside for victims and survivors to record their story and say how the Memorial Fund has helped. If you would like your story to be recorded then please write for further details to:

Clive Barbour
Northern Ireland Memorial Fund
Room 125 Stormont House
Belfast BT4 3SH

Minister Reflects on Past Year

It's almost a year since Des Browne was appointed Victims' Minister. In this issue of the newsletter, he tells VLU about his experiences of the past year and his plans for the future.

You've been in post as Victims' Minister for almost a year. Looking back, what are your reflections on the past year?

DB: Well, it has been a humbling experience. I try to get out and about as much as possible and I reckon I have now met representatives of more than 30 victims' groups. It has been a great privilege to talk to individual victims and see at first hand the work that support groups are doing.

Over the past four years I think we've achieved a lot; we've implemented the Bloomfield Report and now we have a Devolved Administration which is gripping front line victims' issues. Of course, not all victims' responsibilities are devolved at this stage, so I'm working now to develop Phase 2 of our Strategy, looking at things like core funding and the future of the Memorial Fund for example.



What has made the biggest impression on you?

DB: Oh definitely the stories I've heard from victims. No doubt about it.

What are your priorities now?

DB: Well, I'm determined to keep victims at the top of my agenda. Not enough was done for victims in the past and I want to do what I can to put some of that right.

Finally, do you have a message for Newsletter readers?

DB: Yes. I applaud all those who are working to support victims regain some fulfilment in their lives. I know funding and sustainability are issues which concern groups. I don't have answers to all the problems, but I and my officials will work very hard to make sure the system for the distribution of core funding operates fairly and equitably. To those readers who are victims not aligned to groups, I have your interests at heart and I will be doing what I can to ensure that victims' voices are heard.

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Des Browne visits Victims' Groups

Since his appointment as Victims' Minister last July, Des Browne has met with more than 30 groups to hear their stories and issues that concern them.

In all his visits, the Minister has been greatly moved by the stories he has heard and is grateful that people felt able to tell him of the trauma and suffering they have endured. He has also been impressed by the valuable work done by groups to support and help their members.

Among the groups he has visited are CALMS, Londonderry; F.A.I.R., Markethill; The KORAM CENTRE, Strabane; VAST, Belfast; and WAVE, Ballymoney. Many of the meetings have been private, at the request of group members.

At CALMS, the Minister had an opportunity to see the beautiful mosaic artwork completed by group members. He was also given a demonstration of Tai Chi, used as a relaxation technique at the Centre.

Speaking after the Minister's visit, Jeff Barr, Project Co-ordinator at the Koram Centre said:

"This has been a welcome acknowledgement and show of faith by the Minister in the work of the project for the district. The Minister's foresight and willingness to engage with the victims and survivors has served to inspire some hope and confidence for the future."

Willie Frazer, Project Co-ordinator of F.A.I.R., said of the Minister's visit:

"We were happy that the Minister took the time out to meet victims face to face. It is a reflection of the man himself that he is prepared to do that. He showed that he is prepared to listen, which is very important."



CALMS, January 2002



WAVE, October 2001



Koram Centre, January 2002



F.A.I.R., March 2002

Entertaining children at WAVE

New NI Centre for Trauma & Transformation

Last December, Des Browne announced funding of £1.5 million of victims' money for the development of the NI Centre for Trauma & Transformation. The Centre, which will be based in Omagh, will be a valuable resource in the treatment of trauma for Northern Ireland and beyond.

We spoke to **David Bolton**, Director of the Centre about how work on the Centre is progressing.

What stage are things at?

David B: We are at an advanced stage of development and hope to be operational from September. Our efforts have been focussed on very practical things like sorting out the funding, premises, and putting in place arrangements for staff.

What particular challenges have you faced?

David B: Starting up a new organisation from scratch is a major piece of work. It is important to relate everything back to the mission of the Centre, and to decide what arrangements will best support the main work of the Centre. This has been a good guiding principle.

I think it has also been important in terms of people affected by the violence and the conflict, at some time no longer seeing themselves as victims. That kind of thinking

has implications for the services we provide and the way we offer help. It means we need to ensure that the ways in which we help, enable men and women, boys and girls affected by the Troubles, to re-discover life, to reclaim those parts that can be reclaimed and to find a settled place in the memory of our community.

What are your wishes for the Centre?

David B: I hope we will establish a Centre which will provide effective treatment for trauma related conditions including post traumatic stress disorder, which will make a real difference in the lives of people affected by violence. I want to see a Centre that will act as a resource for others working in this area of need, through training and education, and by developing new approaches to trauma treatment and care. The Centre can also play a part in promoting an evidence-based approach to the care and assessment of people suffering from trauma. I also hope that the Centre will become a part of a network of other centres, organisations and individuals who are

working in their respective areas, with a view to making available the best range of services possible.

One of the drivers that led to the development of the Centre was the strongly felt desire by the Omagh community, expressed in the months after the bombing in August 1998, to someday mark and respond to the generosity and support shown by many many people in Northern Ireland, the Republic and further afield. I see the Centre as playing a part in that response, through which others will be supported in their time of need.

How do you see those wishes being realised?

David B: Our first task is to get the Centre up and running. Thereafter we will want to talk to others working in this area to see how best we can work alongside them and respond to the needs that are being identified. I am encouraged by the idea of learning from the experiences of others and I hope that such learning will help the development of services and standards.

Search for the Remains of Charles Armstrong

We were greatly disappointed that despite the supreme efforts of the Gardai, the recent search for the remains of Charles Armstrong proved unsuccessful.

Our thoughts are with Mrs Kathleen Armstrong and her family and with all the other families who are in similar circumstances.

Core Funding NIO to review its Victims' Strategy

Victims groups are set to benefit from a further round of Core Funding announced by Des Browne in December. A further allocation of £3m will support and develop the work of groups over the next two years and builds on the current scheme, which was established in 2000 and is now closed to new applications.

When will groups be able to apply for the New Scheme?

We hope the New Scheme will open for applications in the autumn and that the first payments will be made in December.

What if groups run out of Core Funding before then?

The existing scheme has been extended to sustain those groups for whom funding would have stopped in the intervening period.

Will the criteria for the New Scheme be the same as before?

As many of you are aware, an evaluation of the Core Funding Scheme has recently taken place. The findings of the Clío Evaluation Consortium, (CEC) who carried

out the work, were presented to victims groups at a seminar held on 7 May. A workshop was also held to discuss how the recommendations might be taken forward.

A second seminar was held on 24 June at which VLU gave details of its response to CEC's recommendations. As before a workshop was held at which we sought the views of those attending on our emerging conclusions.

The views expressed at both workshops will make a valuable contribution to the criteria for the new scheme.

Copies of CEC's evaluation can be obtained by contacting VLU at: **028 9052 7861** or **e-mail, victimsliaison.nio@nics.gov.uk**

Four years on from Sir Kenneth Bloomfield's report "We Will Remember Them", Victims' Minister Des Browne is turning his mind to Phase 2 of the NIO's Strategy on victims (Phase 1 having been the implementation of the Bloomfield report). The following issues are being considered:

- **Core Funding;**
- **The future of the Northern Ireland Memorial Fund;**
- **Compensation arrangements;**
- **Truth;**
- **The 'Disappeared'; and**
- **Exiles.**

Work which is currently ongoing in some of those areas will feed into the Minister's considerations.

And as already mentioned on page 2, Des Browne is continuing his programme of visits to groups and has been greatly moved by many of the stories he has heard.

All of this will help inform his view of where we go from here. VLU will, where possible, keep everyone abreast of developments.

Please Let Us Know...

We are currently updating our Newsletter database. Please let us know if your contact details have changed.

Please contact the Community Relations Council at :-
6 Murray Street
Belfast BT1 6DN
Tel: 028 90227500
Fax: 028 90227551/2
E-mail : info@community-relations.org.uk

Small grants for children and adults

Small grants will soon be available for projects involving adults and children affected by the Troubles, thanks to the introduction of the Victim/Survivor groups Development Grant Scheme.

£750k has been allocated by Des Browne to the Community Relations Council-run initiative which is based on the Victim Support Grant Scheme launched in 1999 as a pilot scheme. More than 50 groups benefited from the original scheme which received funding of £225k.

Full details will be available from the Community Relations Council after the launch on 1st July.

VLU Programme Funding

We have a limited amount of funding available in the current financial year for projects which will:

- **benefit victims of the Troubles across NI and/or GB**
- **improve the capacity and professionalism of victims' organisations**
- **promote the sharing of best practice**

For an application form and details of eligibility criteria please contact us.

Counselling REVIEW...

Anyone interested in counselling services will want to get hold of a new report which has been published by the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (DHSS&PS).

The Department commissioned the Counselling Review in response to a recommendation in the Social Services Inspectorate (SSI) report "Living with the Trauma of the Troubles" (1998).

Who will be interested in this Report?

The report will be of interest to users of befriending, counselling and psychotherapy services, practitioners, employing organisations, professional bodies for counselling and psychotherapy, trainers, purchasers and funders of these.

How can I access the Report?

The Report "Counselling in Northern Ireland" can be accessed on the internet web address, www.dhsspsni.gov.uk/publications/2002/counsel
 For a hard copy, Tel: 028 9052 0624.

OFMDFM's Victims Strategy Unveiled

A £3m strategy to deliver practical help and services to victims has been launched by the First Minister David Trimble and Junior Minister Denis Haughey.

Named "Reshape, Rebuild, Achieve", Mr Trimble said it would address the needs of those who have suffered over the past 30 years. The strategy, which has been supported by £1.5 million from VLU, contains almost 50 action areas including recognition, access and information, health, education, housing and the development of business skills.

A key contact list for Government Departments and Agencies was also published alongside the strategy.

In order to help raise levels of awareness of victims' issues the Unit has also launched a dedicated website (www.victimsni.gov.uk). This gives information about conferences and training events, links to government departments, agencies and other public bodies, contact details for victims groups, and announcements on funding or new initiatives.

To find out more about the work of the Victims Unit or to receive a copy of the Strategy or Key Contact List, contact the unit on:
Freephone 080 8127 3333,
textphone 02890 522343 or
e-mail info@victimsni.gov.uk.

We are grateful to Fergus Devitt for this contribution to the Newsletter.

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In October Clive Barbour came to join the Memorial Fund as its new Secretary. VLU asked him how he was getting on.

VLU: So how did you become Secretary to the Fund?

CB: To be honest with you I hadn't heard of the Fund before I was offered the job, but after learning what it entailed I jumped at it. I have had a variety of jobs within the civil service but this has been the one where I feel that what I am doing is helping make a real difference to people.

Committees with the help of Carolyn and Wendy. Quite a lot of the time the work consists of my drawing up policy papers for Directors but on another day I might be out somewhere making arrangements for a Fund Information Day or I could be down at the Grants Office with Donna and her team countersigning cheques or considering appeals.

VLU: What do you like best and least about the job?

CB: The most valuable part of the job is definitely when you get to speak to victims of the troubles and just listen to their stories - there's so much to learn. One of the things that is a priority for me is to get victims' views on the Fund's schemes and I've introduced a

VLU: What do you actually do?

CB: The job is very varied. On the one hand I service the Board of Directors who set the policy for the Fund and each of the four

questionnaire that is sent out to a number of applicants randomly each month asking for comments and suggestions on the Fund's schemes. I collate these for Directors. I suppose the least enjoyable bit is having to deal with applications that are clearly a try-on to get money from the Fund. It makes me angry whenever someone tries to abuse the Fund like that.

VLU: What are these information days that the Fund has been holding recently?

CB: When we looked at the applications that we had been receiving we noticed that we weren't getting as many from West of the Bann that we would have expected so we decided to hold a series of Information Days taking the Fund to the people as it were. We held a very successful day in Derry/Londonderry, that increased applications from the City by 55%, and we're planning another Information Day in Omagh on 2 July and one in Enniskillen later in September.

VLU: So what's on the horizon for the Fund?

CB: Well the next big event is the launch of the 'Back to School' Grant on July 1. This will be the Fund's 7th scheme. It's targeting victims who

have dependent school children living with them where the family is in receipt of either Income Support/Jobseekers Allowance, the Working Families Tax Credit, the Disabled Person's Tax Credit or Housing Benefit. If you fall into this category then the Fund will make a contribution of £100 to each child attending primary school or £200 for each child attending secondary or grammar school towards the cost of a school uniform.

VLU: How do you apply?

CB: We'll be sending packs of application forms to all the victims' groups we're in contact with, but if anyone wants an individual form they should fill in the coupon below and we'll post one out.

VLU: And is there a timescale for applications?

CB: Yes, because it's a 'back to school' grant designed to help at the beginning of the school year the scheme is only going to run for the months of July, August and September, so get those forms in on time!

VLU: Clive, thanks very much for speaking to VLU.

Who's who in VLU?

Over recent months there have been many staff changes in VLU. We thought it might be helpful to let you know who they are, what they do and how they can be reached.

Victims Liaison Unit
victimsliaison.nio@nics.gov.uk

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90 245965

PAUL BROWN
Grants Officer
90 245965

Can the Northern Ireland Memorial fund help you? Fill in the coupon below if any of the boxes fit your circumstances

NORTHERN IRELAND MEMORIAL FUND

Please tick all the boxes that apply to you and we will send you the relevant forms:

- I lost my partner/parent/child/brother/sister in the troubles; (please circle)
- I received an injury as a direct result of a troubles related incident;
- I am the primary carer for an immediate family member injured in the troubles;
- I am wheelchair bound as a direct result of the troubles;
- I suffer from persistent chronic physical pain as a direct result of the troubles;
- I became an amputee as a direct result of the troubles
- I am in receipt of Income Support/Jobseekers Allowance/Housing Benefit/Working Family Tax Credit/Disabled Persons' tax Credit and have one or more dependent school age children living at home.

Name

Address

.....

.....

Postcode

Telephone number (optional)



PLEASE RETURN COUPON TO:
NORTHERN IRELAND
MEMORIAL FUND,
FIRST FLOOR,
ALBANY HOUSE,
73-75 GREAT VICTORIA STREET,
BELFAST BT2 7AF