

**The**

Free Copy

# **Other View**

**Issue No. 4**

**Spring 2001**

## **The Ulster Canal**

**Restoration would open a gateway to the heart of Ulster**

**See Pages 12 & 13**

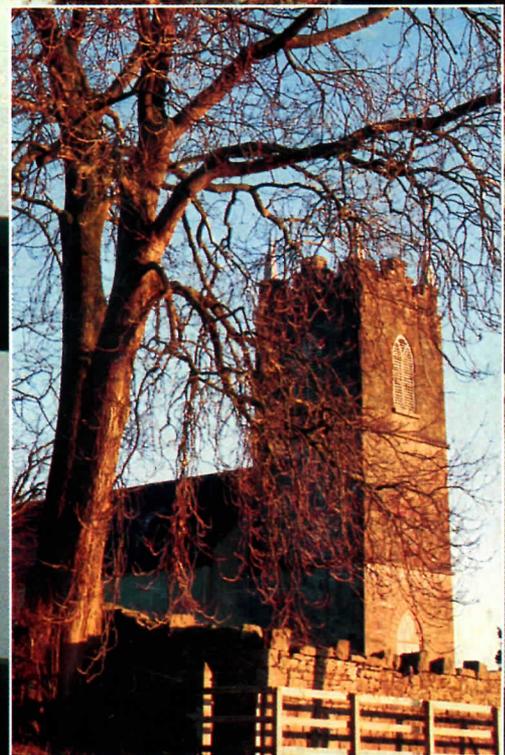
**The beauty of Mid-Ulster**

**Inside**

**An All-Island Economy**

**The Private Finance Initiative**

**The Patten Report**



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published by*

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*The*

# Other View

Issue No.4

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## the Overview

**T**he *Other View* is delighted to present the public with a fourth issue. We are also happy to draw our readers attention to a new layout which includes a full colour cover. This improvement is very much in keeping with the intention of the management and editorial board of this magazine to offer a quality product as well as a ground breaking approach to dialogue.

In previous issues, *The Other View* offered its readers a wide range of topics – some controversial, others less so. This issue continues in the same vein with an examination of the debate surrounding The Patten Report and an opinion on the wider impact of the Battle of the Boyne.

As always, there is a number of articles that demonstrate not just the areas of commonality but the extent to which the different communities in Ireland, North and South have shared a common history if not a common outlook. A very interesting article by Ulster Unionist Party member Gordon Lucy on the Presbyterian involvement in the United Irish movement, nicely illustrates this point. One cross-border project that has cross-community support is the current effort to restore the Ulster Canal. The project's potential is well advocated in an article by Tarka King.

Tourism is an area that requires an all-island dimension and one which has much to offer by way of generating income, investment and employment.

We are happy therefore to report that interest in the magazine continues to increase. Many enquiries have been received from a variety of sources. One of the many interviews conducted by the editorial board was with a major German radio station and a journalist from India.

The publishers hope that you enjoy this issue and find it of ongoing relevance.

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## **Policy statement**

*The Other View* is a cross-community, cross-border magazine that is published by the Expac and LINC community groups.

The objective of this publication is to provide a forum for those anxious and willing to discuss and debate the issues and topics that have and continue to divide the people of this island. It is the policy of the editorial board to encourage frank, honest and even controversial debate.

There are, however, some basic rules to the exercise. Articles that promote sectarianism, racism, sexism or ageism are not tolerated in this magazine. Moreover, while we welcome the exposition of strongly held views, we insist on writers observing the standard rules of courtesy, good manners and avoidance of slander or libel.

# Contents

Introduction.....	3
Island-wide economy.....	4 & 5
	<i>Tommy McKearney</i>
PFI initiative.....	6 & 7
	<i>Billy Mitchell</i>
Catharsis or catastrophe.....	8
	<i>John Nixon</i>
Policing .....	9
	<i>Carrie Twomey</i>
Exploited workers .....	10
	<i>Brendan Hughes</i>
More Spotted Ulster.....	11
	<i>Eoghain O'Neill</i>
Restoring the Ulster Canal.....	12,13 & 14
	<i>Tarka King</i>
A need for critical voices.....	14 & 15
	<i>Anthony McIntyre</i>
Assessment of Battle of the Boyne.....	16,17 & 18
	<i>Billy Hamilton</i>
United Irishman Part 2.....	19, 20 & 21
	<i>Gordon Lucy</i>
Book review: <i>The UVF</i> .....	22
	<i>Liam O'Ruairc</i>
List of contributors.....	23

*The Other View* is distributed free to a wide number of readers. Publication costs are covered entirely by grant aid. If any of our readers would like to subscribe to the cost of this production, they can do so by contacting Mr David McCombe Tel.: 028 93 350377 for details. All donations will be acknowledged by letter.

Front cover: Ulster Canal by Tommy McKearney for Seesyu Press

Back cover: Winter in Co. Monaghan by Tommy McKearney for Seesyu Press

The largest and closest untapped source of custom for the businessmen, shopkeepers and tradesmen of the greater Shankill area lies in the nearby Andersonstown, Falls Road and Ardoyne areas. With a different political/business environment, the commercial life of the Greater Shankill might expect to expand by anything from 20% to 50% if regular trading between all these areas was the norm.

A profitable impact of this nature would have a measurable and beneficial effect on an area that is currently struggling financially and socially. It goes without saying too, that any such positive development necessitates a mutual understanding. If the Shankill area is to enjoy these benefits, trade would have to flow in both directions and clearly the neighbouring districts would also experience an increase in prosperity also.

The reason why trading barriers exist between the Greater Shankill on one hand and Andersonstown and Ardoyne on the other needs no repeating for the readers of this magazine. Thirty years of civil war leaves an indelible mark that will not be easily overcome. Nevertheless, the basic rationale behind the above assessment remains incontrovertible. Any radical programme designed to improve the economy of post-troubles West Belfast would at least identify the opportunity existent in inter-community 'free-trade' and thereafter seek means of promoting it.

Under present circumstances, it may prove difficult to rush this process along. The respective communities may have to wait a little longer, allow

# An island wide economy

**By Tommy McKearney**

memories to fade and to perhaps see the policy produce results elsewhere before they can be tempted to experiment with the idea in Belfast.

Such an example, however does not have to be found abroad. Everybody in Ireland would benefit from a determined effort to make the island a genuine single economy. Under current economic conditions many areas and towns north of the border are suffering a serious reduction in retail income as a result of the diverging values of the sterling pound and Irish pound and different VAT and excise rates. There has been a noticeable decline in the vibrancy of towns such as Enniskillen, Armagh and Newry over the past three to five years and this economic sluggishness has rippled over into the surrounding hinterlands.

Reduced retail income in the trading sector is paralleled by a poor record for output in the North's manufacturing sector. The cause of the flagging

manufacturing output is not due solely to the troubles. In large part it is due to more generous rates of corporate taxation in the Republic coupled with the South's success in exporting to the European and US markets. Southern Ireland's export led boom moreover is assisted by its participation in the Euro currency zone.

A recently published survey *North and South: A statistical profile* emanating from a piece of work undertaken jointly by the statistical offices in Belfast and Dublin indicates the extent of the disparity in manufacturing output north and south of the Border. In the early 1950's, the Northern Irish economy produced 40% of the Island's entire output. By 1997, this percentage had fallen to 25% and is believed to be still falling. The statistic illustrates the task faced by northern manufacturing.

In contrast to manufacturing output and retail trade figures, other statistics demonstrate that there is no enormous

differences between the two areas. Education standards are similar in both parts of Ireland, both regions have a higher percentage of young people than other EU countries and that broadly speaking health standards and life expectancy are similar. In other words, there is no inherent reason why the Republic's economic performance should outstrip that of the North. On the contrary, the reasons are structural rather than due to any character defect in the Northern Irish personality.

To remedy the structural impediments to the northern Irish economy, it is important that several policies are pursued. First is the recognition that it is always easier to participate in economic success than create it from the bottom up. Any tutor of business studies can demonstrate that the surest way to succeed in business is to buy into an already flourishing one. By the same token, Northern Ireland can very quickly share in the Republic's prosperity - if the two economies are brought closer together that is.

All else being equal Northern producers will always find it easier to sell their commodities in the Republic than either GB or Europe. The reason is simple - the South is closer and therefore more accessible more convenient to

monitor and ultimately, a surer market to capture. Moreover, the Republic is now relatively well off and with greater purchasing power than ever before.

However, in terms of a manufacturing base, the North holds many attractions for already established I.T. companies in the Republic. Many of the factors that apply to retailing also apply to manufacturing. Any management will always find it more convenient to commute by rail or car, to come to terms with similar working cultures and to move material and stock within the same island. In short - most manufacturers would prefer to expand from Dublin to Belfast than from Dublin to Liverpool.

To achieve this happy outcome, it would be important that North and South would agree to a one-island economy. It would be vital that a common corporate taxation rate be agreed for North and South. It would be essential that the two areas share a common currency and that a major effort be made to upgrade road and rail communications, not just cross-border but across the island. It would also be very important that similar VAT and excise duties apply both sides of the border.

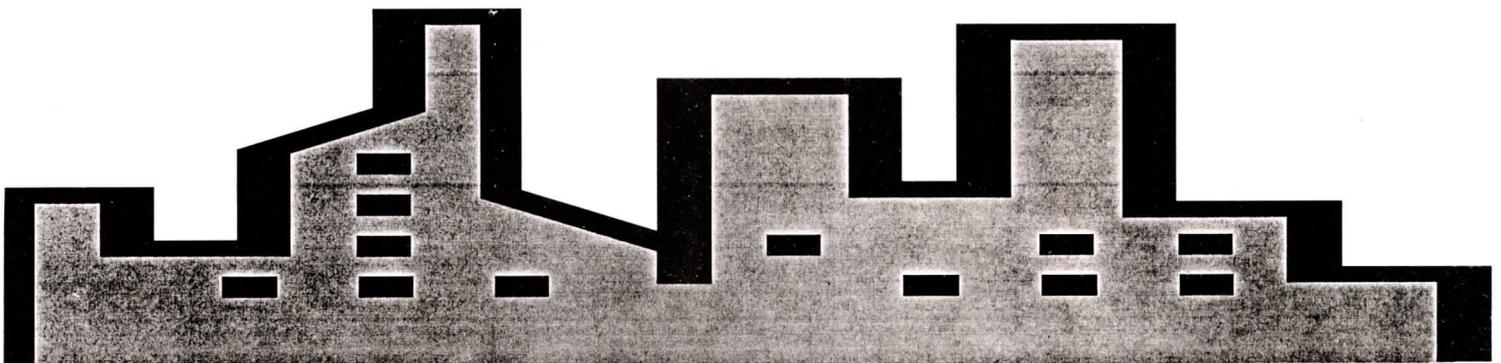
There are no great technical difficulties standing in the

way of carrying out the measures advocated above. Enormous political difficulties exist though. Many in the North fear that such measures would undermine the Union. On the other hand, people in the South might view these measures as quite simply unnecessarily disruptive of their prosperity, involving in their opinion a sharing of wealth with the North.

In reply to the above it might be possible to say to unionists that France still exists after 50 years of free trade with Germany and to Southerners that a 'beggar thy neighbour' philosophy is one that beggars you too. Others might though, argue differently. In the long run we simply have to decide whether we are willing to pay the price for increased economic prosperity or not. That is one of the ever-present dilemmas of political economy.

However, by way of concluding, it might be worth recounting an observation once made by Henry Ford. He is reported to have told an acquaintance that he had never known of a good business built upon friendship. Alternatively, he said that he knew of several strong friendships built on sensible business relations.

We may not always view Henry Ford as a role model but surely there is a lesson somewhere in that for us all.



*'PFI funded services are creating a two-tier workforce'*

*says Billy Mitchell*

One reason for me wanting to see some measure of legislative power returned to Northern Ireland was the naïve belief that local politicians would be more in tune with the needs of our people than Westminster-based ministers.

One issue which I fully expected local ministers and assembly members to tackle is the trend towards the privatisation of public services. At a time when public service workers and their union representatives are intensifying their nationwide campaign against privatisation, it is disheartening to learn that ministers in the Northern Ireland Executive have decided to embrace New Labour's programme of PFI (Private Finance Initiative) or "privatisation-by-stealth."

Three of the ministers who make some profession of

socialism – Sean Farren, Martin Mc Guinness and Bairbre de Brun – have committed their departments to the principle of PFI, and the lack of criticism from their unionist ministerial colleagues and members of the departmental scrutiny committees suggests that there is widespread support at Stormont for Tory Blair's policy of creeping privatisation.

Elected representatives are supposed to represent the needs and wishes of the people. Yet the voice of the people in relation to public services is clearly against privatisation. A recent MORI poll commissioned by UNISON has found that 77% of people believe that public services should not be run for profit. Of that number 66% stated that public services should be run by the government or by local authorities rather than by private companies.

The publicly expressed wishes of the people in relation to public services are falling on deaf ears within the new Executive and it appears that the interests of the people are as irrelevant now under the new Executive as they ever were under the old Stormont regime. Cries about democracy and social justice ring hollow in the mouths of those who have become apologists for greedy private sector interests.

We would do well to examine recent reports which express serious concerns about the quality of work provided by the private sector under PFI in England and Scotland. An article in the British Medical Journal notes that "the private finance



**Northern Ireland's Minister for Health**  
**Ms Bairbre de Brun**

# Private Pie in the Sky

by Billy Mitchell

initiative poses a major threat to the ability of the NHS to provide the sort of comprehensive care that the people of the United Kingdom expect". Hospitals built under PFI are generally much smaller than the old public funded ones, creating additional demands for primary care services. They are generally more expensive, leaving the Trusts with less money to pay for nurses and doctors.

PFI funded services are also creating a two-tier workforce. One set of staff are transferred to new private sector employers on their existing terms and conditions while other staff already working for that company, or new staff taken on after the contract begins, are on inferior pay and conditions, mostly without a pension scheme.

Our ministers must listen to the voices of those who have examined PFI initiatives and found them to be wanting. They must also listen to the voice of the trade unions and to the real

life experiences of both workers and consumers.

When Anne Picking of UNISON accuses PFI of mortgaging the future of the Health Service, our politicians need to listen. When union representatives claim that under PFI health workers are "being bought and sold as if in a cattle market into private companies", our politicians need to listen. When Mick Graham of the GMB tells us that the supposed 'efficiency' of PFI run services comes "at the expense of staff pay and conditions", our politicians need to listen. When Andy Gilchrist, general secretary of the Fire Brigade's Union, criticises PFI for cost-cutting measures that compromise safety, our politicians need to listen.

The people of Northern Ireland deserve the very best public services. These services must be of the highest quality possible. They must be accessible to those who need them most and they must be respon-

sive to those wishing to use them. More importantly, they must be delivered by well paid, well trained and highly motivated staff.

Such services cannot be delivered under the Private Finance Initiative. PFI is increasingly being shown to be one of the most serious threats to publicly funded and efficiently run services. To suggest that PFI will solve the problems facing our health and education services is, to use the words of Allyson Pollock and Neil Vickers of University College London, 'private pie in the sky'.

PFI just doesn't pay.

*Billy Mitchell is a former UVF prisoner and is now a senior member of the Progressive Unionist Party. He is a member of the Greater Belfast Voluntary & Community Sector Branch of UNISON, the Public Service Union and a columnist with the North Belfast News.*

# What of the Working People

by Brendan Hughes



So, what of the working person in our new set up in the six counties? We are in the process of seeing 'our' police force being dry-cleaned. We are in the process of seeing 'our' Stormont being whitewashed. We are in the process of seeing 'our' Republican Movement shedding its skin. We are certainly not in any process of seeing the conditions of the workers being improved. Women are still being forced to work for £2 an hour; men for £20 a day. What has the Good Friday Agreement done for the working class people? As a republican, as far as I can see - nothing!

For the working people the GFA may as well mean 'Got Feck All'. It has delivered absolutely nothing. What should the Republican Movement be doing for working people? Absolutely everything. The rogue builders that plague and prey on working class republican communities should not be allowed to treat workers as slaves - in work one day and out the next because the boss takes a dislike to you or may resent the fact that you do not drink your wages in the bar that he owns and in which he pays you. He can quite easily find some other

wretched soul who feels compelled out of poverty to work for less than the £20 a day he gives you. Whatever happened to the old adage of a 'fair day's work for a fair day's pay'?

It seems to me that after thirty years of struggling we are still facing repression - by the British, by our so-called 'own people'. If after thirty years of gruelling war, death and hunger, we end up with a British administered six-county state alongside a 26-county republic, both of which exploit and repress working people, then it has all been in vain. Any internal arrangement (and it is an arrangement for the prosperous not a solution for the poor) or for that matter a thirty-two county arrangement that leaves the condition of working people untouched was simply not worth thirty years of war and death.

Do the Unionist communities have a similar experience? How are their ex-prisoners treated? Would the PUP, which claims to be radical and for the working man and woman, allow those who are nothing better than the slum landlords of the building industry to build their party offices with a grossly un-

derpaid workforce who are not allowed to be unionised? How do those who claim to be socialist within the unionist community resist such exploitation? If there is to be a meaningful debate between republicanism and loyalism, let it begin there rather than with the waffle and nonsense about flags that passes for dialogue up at Stormont.

James Connolly was right when he said Ireland without its people meant nothing to him. In all honesty, if it were the only way to avoid exploitation and the rule of poverty creators, and if such a thing were possible, I would prefer a six-county democratic socialist republic where the workers would have control of their own destiny, the right to work and security of employment. A republic where it is a crime to exploit workers and where the employment of rogue builders would be banned by sheer morality never mind the law.

In other words a society where there is ...

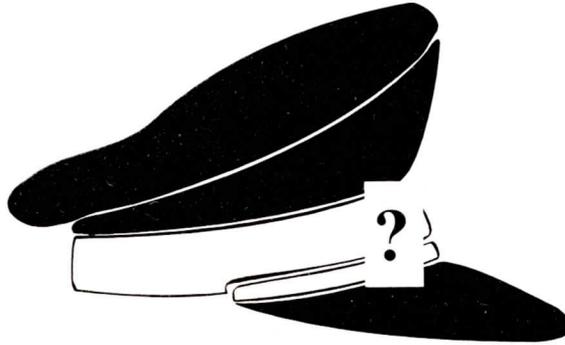
**JUSTICE**

**W**hen something as fundamental as policing is used as a political gambit, it is the community who is held hostage to negotiation. One of the most frustrating aspects of the negotiations of the peace process for those who are not participants in the talks but who must live with the results of them is the lack of any substantial movement or change on the basic, common sense issues. Policing is but one example of this, and the need for decent, accountable policing is a need deeply felt in all communities, despite any political or cultural divide.

There is nothing radical in demanding a just police force, that acts as a neutral arbitrator of the law; a police force that is accountable to the people it serves and whose standard operating procedure is transparent. There is nothing radical in wanting to feel safe in one's own neighbourhood, to have the confidence that nothing untoward will happen to one's self. There is nothing outrageous or over the top in wanting the security of knowing there is someone to be called and relied upon, who will be fair and consistent, when trouble does arise.

And yet, we, the ordinary people who live in the ghettos of Belfast are told that it is too much to deliver. That it is too controversial. Things such as what symbol goes on top of a hat that may or may not be worn are of much more importance, and must be fought over tooth and nail before anything such as actually allowing the police to do the job expected of them for all the people they are meant to protect and serve gets talked about! I imagine that for those people who have signed up to

# Political Policing



by **Carrie Twomey**

join the police out of a desire to see justice protected and upheld, to serve their community, and who believe in the rule of law must be just as frustrated with all the political dickering going on as those who must suffer without any sort of police service at all. It is not as though creating a police force that operates in peacetime and does not serve as an auxiliary to the war is rocket science, or without precedent or examples from across the world of how good police forces work, and how bad ones don't.

As the times here have evolved and changed throughout the peace process, so too has the role of the police. The ironic part is that the needs of the people have stayed constant throughout. It is time to stop making the police a tool of the state, an arm of repression, an instrument of terror and intimidation, and to get down to the

business of creating a police force that all of the people they protect and serve can have confidence in.

Without a police force that the people whom they serve have confidence in, too many social ills run rampant. We see that in the increase in our neighbourhoods of hoods and thugs and joyriders and drugs; we see that in a generation of children who have no respect whatsoever for any sort of authority, and little concept of why they should respect it at all. Until we get our act together, and hold our politicians accountable for representing us outside the remit of political point-scoring and actually delivering on our basic needs, we have little hope of ever enjoying a fair and accountable police force for all.

That, unfortunately does not auger much hope for the future or the peace process. Time will tell.

# Catharsis OR Catastrophe

John Nixon examines the controversial issue of victims of the recent conflict from a republican's viewpoint

by John Nixon

The issue of victims is very much in vogue these days. It is a tentative and disconcerting matter that evokes much pain, anguish and blame. The diversity of victim's groups in existence testifies to the variety of interpretations of who is victim and why. This issue goes right to the core of the conflict and most likely will never go away. Every day (and night) there are new victims. Someone once said that victims are not liked; they challenge our allegiances and our consciences. Despite the period of relative peace and the blood, sweat and tears of individuals, groups and governments there will always be the threat of violence and thus the potential for more victims.

If there is one thing that we have learned from the faltering implementation of the peace process it is that we cannot legislate peace. Genuine and lasting peace can and will only be brought about when we commit ourselves to frank and honest dialogue and face up to the issues which have divided the two communities here for centuries.

We must look to other countries and learn from their example to resolve the serious dilemmas that are at the heart of the conflict. The relative peace has allowed some of the sediment to settle and hopefully we can begin to focus more clearly on the difficult tasks that lie ahead.

The issue of victims is being addressed by various government and voluntary agencies. Kenneth Bloomfield has proposed a monument to all the victims of the 'Troubles'. What type of monument does he envisage? There are inherent dangers in monuments and how people read into and interpret them. Hundreds of monuments erected to commemorate the fallen

of two world wars derive homage from only one section of the community.

A detailed report 'All Truth is Bitter' from Dr Alex Boraine, Deputy Chairman of the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission, on the issue of victims here has recently been published. It deals with almost every aspect of the victim dilemma. We can learn much from it. Who are the victims ... all of us? This could be debated and discussed until the next Millennium but is there really one answer. Who are perpetrators ... all of us? Are we all not victims of circumstance and of history? Are those killed at Loughgall any less 'victim' than those killed at Loughinisland? Is Bobby Sands M.P. any more 'victim' than Airey Neave, M.P? There are many facets to the victim question. We can all fall back on the 'blame game' or the 'what aboutery'. Republicans blame the creation of an artificial statelet, decades of structural endemic bigotry and discrimination. Loyalists fear a change in the status quo will ultimately lead to a diminution of their perceived privileged status. They fear that a united Ireland would herald an end to their distinct cultural, religious or 'ethnic' identities. The fears of both communities and the issues that go to the heart of the conflict are laid bare on a mile of road called Garvaghy every summer. There are bitter truths we must acknowledge and come to terms with before we can progress.

We must acknowledge that the 'Troubles', in whatever era, primarily impacted on the working class communities. There has always been that class dimension. There must be a salient lesson in this salient fact for everyone whose concern is for lasting peace and reconciliation. We only have to look at the

class make-up of the thousands who went through the gaols. Not from Malone, Cherry Valley or the 'barrister belt' on the County Down coast.

Despite the relative peace and relative violence we know that things are changing ... big time. Old arguments are losing validity in this fast changing globalised society. Loyalists are uniquely looking at and even challenging the issue of their allegiance and identity. Goals espoused by Republicans have been diluted to aspirations. Stormont has not been 'torn down stone by stone' and those who advocated it by bullet or ballot are now part of its fabric. We have entered the realms of *real-politik*. Some of us have faltered out of our entrenched doctrinaire corners to get a better look at our rivals.

It has often been stated that those who have been at the interface of the 'Troubles' are the real victims. That is not to say that some victims are more unequal than others. If there is a healing process then it surely must begin by acknowledging that there is always 'the other victim'. Realistically we cannot expect ultimate solutions to the conflict but we can transform the nature of and address the issues that lie at the heart of it. It may take a long time, maybe generations, before we emerge from or alter the entrenched mindsets created by centuries of difference, division and war. No one can claim a moral monopoly on suffering. Yes there are innocent casualties. Such are a bye-product of war and conflict. Yes, the causes and origins of our communal strife will not go away. Dishonesty, anger, fear and mistrust still permeate our dealings with each other but the journey of a thousand miles may well begin with the first step. Lets hope we have taken that step in the right direction.

Undoubtedly there is great potential for a country that can harness its natural and man made resources, its culture and heritage as prime tourist attractions. It's all grist to the mill of the economy and generates employment in numerous sectors. Obviously the North has a long way to go before it is on a par with the south's tourism industry. The legacy of the 'Troubles' and indeed the current patterns of violence have impacted negatively in a big way. There is much to be done and with a new dynamic and will a lot can be achieved within a short space of time. Tarka King's article on the potential of the Ulster Canal resonates with an optimism and vision that is required in order to make the tourist industry a success. The market is there and in order to exploit it to the full we must take a serious and in-depth look at what there is on offer and to whom. We don't have to compete with package-tour countries whose only offer to tourists is sex, sun and sangria. Ireland attracts a different and more discerning post-modern type of visitor. Despite its problems northern tourism is on the increase and the public and private sectors along with local communities are working much more closely together to tap into existing tourism potential.

So what do we have to offer? A short trip on a restored Ulster Canal takes us into the mid-Ulster hinterland where visitors can experience the unspoiled beauty and heritage of the countryside. Coalisland and Benburb heritage centres will put history and heritage on the tourist map and provide a backdrop for the journey ahead. A stop-off at the villages of Charlemont and Moy where the history of native and planter is well illustrated in Charlemont Fort, and Moy Village with its wide Italianate square and late 18<sup>th</sup> century buildings and architecture. A

# More Spotted Ulster

By Eoghain O'Neill

short tour will encompass the famous sites of the Battles of Benburb and Yellow Ford and the Somme heritage centre near Loughgall. Into the heartland of the orchard county of Armagh in early May when the myriad orchards are awash with the pink and white flower of the apple blossom; an unforgettable sight and experience.

The undulating drumlin countryside has a lot more to offer than scenery: golf, coarse and game angling, walks, outdoor and indoor amenities, sport and of course any itinerary must include the *craic agus ceol* in an Irish pub. There is no dearth of choice here. That's where the visitor will meet our most important tourist commodity; the plain people of Ireland. Despite our differences and negative media portrayal we are very much a hospitable and friendly people. If you want history and heritage a visit to the ecclesiastical capital of Armagh will cater for all your needs. Visitors with even the remotest Irish connection or genealogy will find a sense of belonging in the city where the two cathedrals sit atop of two hills ... like the horns of a dilemma. Here St Patrick founded his church wherein lies the remains of the King Brian Boru who defeated the Danes at Clontarf. In Armagh there is history on every door-

step; along narrow streets the old perennially meets the new. Historically Armagh is on a par with Winchester and Canterbury. The canal route winds by the picturesque villages of Tynan (and its early Christian stone crosses), Caledon, Killylea and on toward Monaghan via the woodlands and deer stocked demesnes of the local gentry.

Visitors can stop off at Castle Leslie for a meal or a night of traditional Irish craic or take a guided history of the castle which boasts and hosts the baptismal gown of Sir Winston Churchill, the works of famous artists and writers and a very haunted bedroom. Nearby is the thriving border town of Monaghan that offers unrivalled entertainment, shopping, scenic parks and lakes. From here the journey veers westward into county Cavan, to Belturbet and Ballyconnell where the newly restored canal is the prime attraction for tourist and dweller alike. At this juncture the canal links with the extensive Shannon/Erne waterway systems and opens up the vast expanse of hinterland around Fermanagh's Lower and Upper Lough Erne. After that there is no end to potential. Time and tasks can wait another day. It may all sound somewhat idyllic but it is the reality of what can be put on offer. The onus is on us all to make it that reality.

# Waterway to the Heart of Ulster

*A member of the well known  
Leslie family argues passionately  
to have the Ulster Canal restored*

**by Tarka King**

**A**cross the boggy wetlands of four counties in Southwest Ulster lies the 67-mile skeleton of an engineering undertaking that almost pre-dates the 19<sup>th</sup> century industrial revolution. Though not quite on the scale of the Great Wall of China it is an important historical artefact with strong symbolic ties to the island's past turbulent history, present day anxieties and future politi-

cal aspirations.

What became known as the Ulster Canal in Victorian Ireland, was originally commissioned in the 1840's as a private undertaking by some enlightened souls in an effort to provide employment in the poverty afflicted region that had yet to be hit by famine. By 1851 it was in operation and provided the dynamic connection between Lough Erne and Lough Neagh. Financial restrictions

had dictated restricted dimensions of the 26 locks and the waterway became known as the meanest one in Ireland. The original goal had been to provide a method of transporting coal south from Coalisland but the speedy arrival of the railways soon stole the trade. Apart from supplying a method of moving flax, demand for water transport declined and by 1900 the ownership and running of the canal had passed into civic hands.

When partition came in 1923, the complexities of management were a deathblow as the bed of the waterway crossed and re-crossed the new international border. The ends of the canal were in the new Northern Ireland but 50% of the centre section, and key water supply from Quig Lough to the highest pound, remained in the Free State. When the dust settled around the newly formed but still embryonic political institutions in Dublin and Belfast, interest in the region was abandoned and the slide into economic dereliction and social isolation began. Slowly the lock gates rotted away and the puddled clay bed became a convenient dumping spot. In places the towpath provided convenient all-weather smuggling routes for the cattle trade but, generally, the engineering feat of the 19<sup>th</sup> century navigators was deemed to be destined for eventual oblivion.

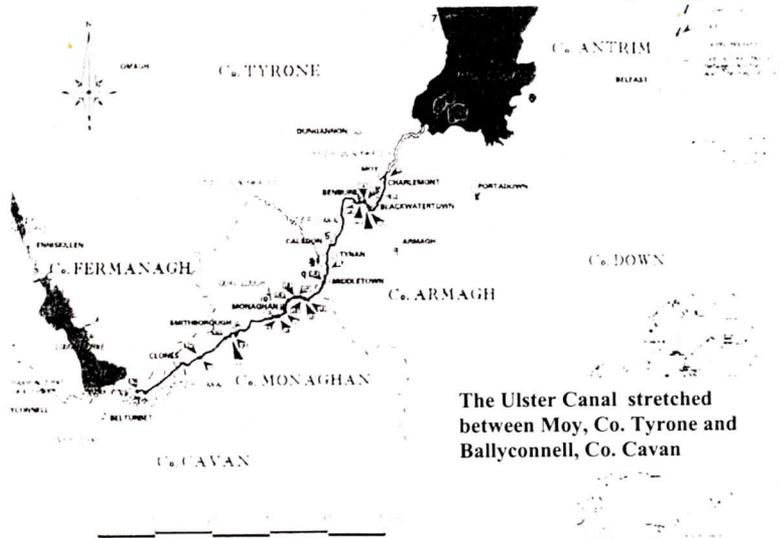
Today, however, sixty per cent of the original canal still exists and is located between the ten centres of population through which it once passed. Most of the locks and their keepers' houses remain and a number of motivated individuals with vision have begun to make waves about arresting further decline and preserving what has survived.

Much has been written about

the positive social implication aspects of restoration, the 1997 in-depth feasibility study outlined how the successful re-opening of the Ballyconnell-Ballynamore waterway has set a striking precedent. Completed in 1985, the latter's restoration has surpassed all expectations and has completely changed the image of county Leitrim. The 32-mile task was a cross-border operation and was undertaken during the period when the administration in Northern Ireland was subject to direct rule from Westminster and C J Haughey was in power in Dublin. It was completed for a cost of under £40 million proving that where there is political will there is always a way to be found. In 1997 the restoration figure for the Ulster Canal was calculated to be in the region of £67 million but that may eventually escalate to nearer £200 million. It is estimated that the operation will take about four years to complete.

The facts surrounding the Ulster Canal are only slightly different to the Ballyconnell undertaking but, sadly, an able champion with sufficient punch to lead the project has yet to materialise. Work has already started to ensure that the positive aspects that could be delivered to the rural areas of south and east Tyrone and as well as Armagh are fully exploited for the benefit of all sectors of the community from the marginalised upwards. Official commissioning is still uncertain but taking advantage of the present across-the-divide aspect where all are at the same starting line cannot be allowed to simply fade away into history.

There are arguments against completing the last link of the original canal network but



The Ulster Canal stretched between Moy, Co. Tyrone and Ballyconnell, Co. Cavan

then it is easy to find an excuse to not get out of bed in the morning. It is the idea that Limerick or Belfast lurks at the end of the ribbon of water that makes the routes come alive. One doesn't ever have to get to the end but you can think about it.

The threat and implications of the Zebra mussel gaining access to Lough Neagh from the Shannon river system has been researched in depth and the successful natural containment of the problem in Hungary, from whence it came originally, through the balancing of natural predators has been noted. The fear that there will not be enough boats or that the tourist numbers will be too thinly spread to make fleet operations viable are hardly arguments and reveal blinkered thinking. The middle of Ireland is a huge almost untapped recreation area very much suited to central European tastes. Counting both banks a stretch of 120 miles of water frontage would be created thus providing routes for agricultural diversification and points of contact with the tourist traffic for neighbouring landowners.

One doesn't have to be a brain surgeon to grasp the stimulating opportunities for emerging

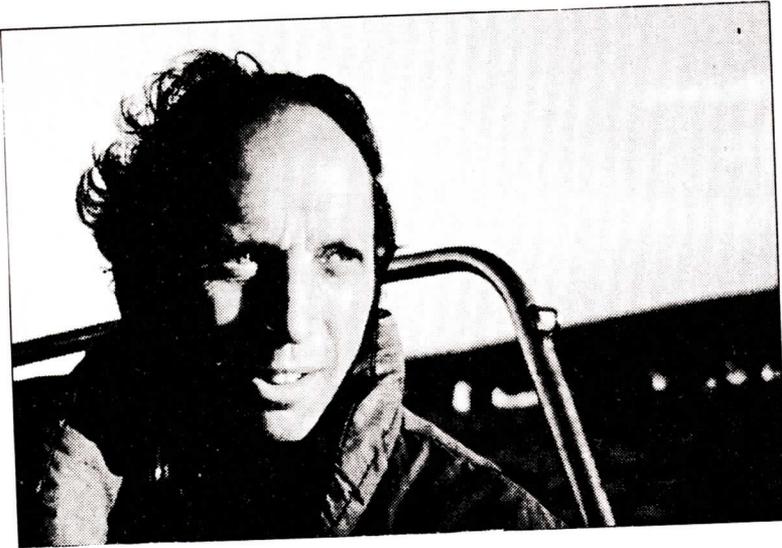
generations that would quickly start to develop in the current underdeveloped border counties region of Monaghan, Armagh, Tyrone and Fermanagh should the project get the go-ahead. Even with my 1950's west of Ireland education the enormity of what is at stake is glaringly obvious and at risk of being lost if bureaucratic inertia is allowed to permeate too far into the process. What is at stake is the chance to dramatically boost the image of a somewhat socially deprived region in ways that raises self-esteem across the sectarian divide without loss of face to any quarter. The only worry is that the operation is in danger of being rendered inoperable by the mushrooming bureaucratic sector that may follow in the wake of any ministerial approval that might be forthcoming in the near future.

If this canal project is allowed to collapse now it will tend to discredit any other work to broaden the present peace initiative that is being attempted. And that would be a real shame.

**Tarka King**

## Tarka King

### The Author in his own words



Tarka King was born in Dublin in 1949 and reared in Co. Galway, five miles from the city, attending the local national school until the age of 13. His mother was a writer and daughter of Shane Leslie, an early Irish nationalist. His father was a submarine commander throughout World War II and later took the Irish tricolour round Cape Horn alone.

After a brief spell in an English school he travelled to Australia to work. A short but extremely violent incarceration in Alice Springs jail triggered a desire to return home overland. In Malaya contact was made with Chen Ping's communist fighters on a hijacked train and in northern Cambodia in 1969 direct confrontation with more brutal aspects of the Vietnam War was witnessed first hand.

On reaching the UK in 1970 he was recruited into the British Army and sent to the Lebanon to report on the emerging Russian puppet Syrian regime of Saddam Assad. A family connection with Trotsky and Lenin

helped with Russians encounters and a relationship with a Palestinian dancer provided insights on the Druze and coming war. In Cyprus he had a friendship with Nicos Sampson and Dimi Dimitriou who, with their coup attempt to depose Archbishop Makarios, triggered the Turkish invasion of 1974.

Eye-witnessing the Balcombe Street siege he realised the enormity of British misunderstanding about the root causes behind Ireland's social problems and having declared his case, resigned and returned to his mother's home in Co. Monaghan to farm in 1976.

He now lives part time in Dorset, UK, where he has a small ceramics business when not travelling with his brother-in-law's band 'de Dannan'. He has recently visited Nepal and accidentally witnessed the growing tensions triggered by corrupt government and Maoist Peoples' Liberation Army activities of street violence, summary executions, curfew, general strikes and mob intimidation.

# THE NEED FOR CRITICAL VOICES

Censorship is  
examined  
by the author  
in  
this  
article

by  
**ANTHONY  
MCINTYRE**

The recent controversy generated by Marion Finucane interviewing Pat Magee on RTE has allowed the thorny issue of censorship to come out from whatever totalitarian stone under which it had temporarily sought refuge. Whatever one may think of Muiris MacConghaill's onslaught on both Magee and RTE there was at least a brazen honesty about the former RTE controller's advocacy of censorship. MacConghaill, to his credit, makes it possible to deal directly with his position.

On another level there seems to exist a form of self-censorship which is all the more insidious because it operates under the guise of openly reporting the news. In an *Irish Times* article on the 2nd of October, under the title 'Working for common good to transform relations' Mary Minihan, reported on the comments of Dr Martin Mansergh at the previous Saturday's European Cross-Border Co-operation Conference. Of specific interest were Mansergh's views on the Good Friday Agreement. The most germane part of Minihan's article referred to Mansergh saying that 'Democratic decisions by the people, and nothing else, will determine the constitutional status of Northern Ireland, which will not be changed over the heads of the people of Northern Ireland without their agreement and participation. This view is all very true, to the extent that it has been reported many times before. Considered the most nationalistic in orientation within the senior diplomatic echelons of Fianna Fáil, Dr Mansergh's reiteration of this point will no doubt cause some reassurance within the Unionist community.

But there is a dimension to the activity of Martin Mansergh which requires deeper analysis of his observations on such matters. He was after all the main point of contact between the Dublin government and the leadership of the Provisional Republican Movement at key points in the peace process. So considerable were his talents re-

garded in this respect that he was retained by three Taoisigh. Over the years he has provided a remarkably candid account of what, from a republican perspective, would be the limitations of the peace process. In 1995 he pointed out that a definition of self-determination existed in which partition would remain. In 1998 he contrasted William Drennan of the United Irishmen with Wolfe Tone, claiming that the former's constitutional vision of republicanism as distinct from Tone's had triumphed in the Good Friday Agreement.

Evident in an account by Ed Moloney of the *Sunday Tribune*, but absent from that of Mary Minihan, was a further elaboration of this theme. Moloney reported Mansergh as saying ;

*'There is no evidence, let alone inevitability, from international experience that limited cross-border co-operation necessarily leads to political unification... North-South co-operation ... left to itself will develop, I suspect, along the lines of a compromise between two schools of thought to be found particularly both in the business and the more middle-of-the-road sections of political opinion... On one side are those enthused by the potential of an all-Ireland domestic market and for example the Dublin-Belfast economic corridor, without prejudice to existing constitutional arrangements. On the otherside ... Northern Ireland given the chance will develop a dynamic economy of its own as a regional economy within the UK and the EU, parallel to and to a degree in competition with the Republic's economy, with North-South co-operation playing an auxiliary rather than a determining role.'*

This is a clear demonstration that at the senior levels of the Dublin establishment there is no belief that the Good Friday Agreement is remotely transitional to Irish unity. Surely comments of such strategic significance by such a centrally

placed figure should not go unmentioned in any serious report. While sub-editing, rather than the particular journalist, may be responsible the suspicion remains that a conscious attempt is continuously being made to suppress the public's access to information.

In this respect it is instructive that a number of days prior to Mansergh's comments, Jane Fort, the US consul in Belfast, contacted Trevor Birnie of UTV to complain about a broadcast on the importation by the Provisional IRA of arms from the USA to Ireland. Pointing out that damage could be caused if the broadcast went on air she claimed 'in Northern Ireland I have generally found journalists have been supportive of the peace process'. The clear message was that generally journalists tailor the news to bring it into line with the requirements of the peace process and any journalist unwilling to conform is not being helpful to the pursuit of peace. To his credit Birnie chose moral courage over short-term pragmatism, ignored her and put out the programme as planned.

Authority's view of a particular writer's contribution or otherwise to the peace process should never be allowed to shape public access to information. As the *Irish Times* columnist Breda O'Brien has remarked: 'People who are outside the inner circles and who are beholden to no one can act as important critical voices, or as advocates for those who otherwise would not be heard.'

Journalists like Ed Moloney and Tom McGurk have both fought admirably against political censorship, underlining their case with the assertion that censorship in the Republic helped prolong the conflict in the North. Without a willingness to ignore the political imperatives of the powerful, writers merely become an extension of those wielding such power and accomplices to their abuses.



# When two mighty armies

*Former Mayor of Carrickfergus, Councillor Billy Hamilton (Independent Unionist) writes from a unionist perspective on the European wide impact of The Battle of the Boyne*

The Battle of the Boyne – was it a minor sectarian squabble between two royals of different religion or, was it a battle the outcome of which would have unimaginable consequences for the future of Europe and indeed the world? Few people in Ireland today either fully know or understand the events or reasons that were to lead William and James to the banks of the Boyne on that sunny morning of July 1<sup>st</sup>, 1690. William would triumph and create the myth that he had come to save the Irish Protestants. But, on that morning nothing could have been further from William's mind: he did not want to be in Ireland, and he most certainly did not want his troops to be in Ireland. William desperately wanted to be in Holland where he had much more important work to be doing.

Europe of the late 17<sup>th</sup> century was a much different place from the Europe of today. Protestantism was still a young religion centred in Northern Europe and surrounded by Catholic countries and empires. Catholic and Protestant alike believed deeply in their chosen faith. Europe had become a battleground between the faiths

for political as well as religious reasons. The main power blocks at this time were France under its king, Louis 14<sup>th</sup>, Spain and its possessions, the Austrian Empire and the Pope of Rome with his territories. All were mainly Catholic, but were distrustful and wary of each other. The other main power block was centred in Northern Europe with Holland and its Prince, William of Orange, as its leader.

Louis of France hated the Protestants and wished to destroy them, and conquer their lands; he also had ambition to become the leader of all Europe. Because of this the other powers feared and distrusted him, and worried that if he defeated the Protestants the way would then be clear for him to turn his attentions to their lands. Louis even had the ambition to become the leader of the Catholic Church, much to the dismay of the Pope. But first, to achieve his ambitions, Louis would have to defeat the Protestants and their armies, and this seemed highly unlikely. Unlikely, that is, until the death of the English king, Charles II, in 1685. Charles, a Protestant, died without an heir

leaving James to inherit the crown, and James was a devout Catholic.

Such a situation had been foreseen by the English Parliament and church, which had already taken steps to limit James's power. But their measures were ignored by James who became more and more blatant in his moves to replace leading Protestants in the country, army and navy, with his Catholic supporters. Although further minor steps were taken to limit James the general feeling was that as James was getting on in years, his daughter and heir, Mary, would come to the throne on his death – and she was a Protestant, married to Prince William in Holland. Imagine the dismay then when it was announced that James's wife, the Queen, was pregnant, for such a child when born, if male, would not only inherit the crown, but also be brought up in the Catholic faith. The fear of a new Catholic dynasty united the English Protestants against James.

Prior to this, minor conspiracies had been working against James, who was not behind the door at organising the odd conspiracy himself in order

# did join

by Billy Hamilton

to gain loans and support from France. James had let it be thought that France and England could form an alliance. Louis was eager, but such a thought horrified the rest of Europe. With the added power of the English army and navy Louis would be in the position to defeat the Protestants and then turn his attention to the rest of Europe.

William had been approached a number of times to come to England and take the crown from James. He had refused, in the knowledge that on James's death his own wife Mary would inherit the crown. Now, with the imminent birth of a Catholic heir all had changed and the very existence of the Protestant faith put in danger. William, now assured of English support, sailed for England. But, as he sailed he carried with him the blessings of the Pope and other Catholic rulers of Europe.

Upon landing in England the ranks of William's army were swelled by welcoming English Protestants. James was hesitant – advanced, retreated and finally fled to seek refuge in France. Captured before he could escape James was im-

prisoned, but quickly allowed to escape and get to France. After all, he was William's wife's father. England secure, William now hoped to return to Europe and his army fighting Louis.

The English Parliament had other ideas. They imposed a settlement on William that gave Parliament more power. William was forced to stay in England while these problems, and the problems of Scotland, were sorted out.

Meanwhile, conflict raged in Ireland where James was still king. The Protestants were forced onto the defensive and were under siege in Derry. James landed in the south with a small French force and gathered an army.

William could not return to the European war while this army was poised to enter England by the back door. Before William could return to Europe he had to first defeat James's army in Ireland. James saw in Ireland a last chance to regain his lost crown and although the vast majority of the Irish were Catholic, James detested them, and looked upon them as barbarians. The Irish likewise had no love for the English king, but he was at least a Catholic, and in return for their support could return their lost lands. So it was that both the king and his army saw in each other only a means

Cont. Page 18



[Cont. from P.17]

of regaining their lost possessions.

To William, Ireland was an unwelcome irritant delaying him from his main purpose of defeating Louis. When William landed in Carrickfergus on 14<sup>th</sup> June 1690, he was welcomed as the saviour of the Protestant people, yet he was prepared to return to the Catholics much of their confiscated lands.

In his army he had many Catholics, and some of the most notable Irish lords of the time. Just over a fortnight later the two armies met at the Boyne. James again showed no real stomach for the fight and fled the field leaving his troops to their fate. James returned to France, but the fighting in Ireland continued for another year before the surrender at Limerick. In the treaty there was a clause to return land to the Catholics, but the Protestant Parliament in Dublin refused to agree to the clause. William could not change their minds, but because of his efforts on their behalf, when he died in 1702, he was little mourned in Ireland by either Catholic or Protestant.

When news of William's victory at the Boyne reached Europe it was widely welcomed. In the Austrian Empire, which was Catholic, the Emperor ordered that a *te deum* be read at mass in every church throughout the Empire. (A *te deum* is a well-known Latin prayer of thanks often used on solemn occasions). William and Mary now ruled a secure England. Mary stayed in England while William carried on the war in Europe. When Mary died in 1698 William's long stays in Europe led

to much of the power in running the country being delegated to politicians, (the first cabinet).

***'The sectarian divisions in Ireland were not of his making or his wish'***

Louis' dream of ruling a Catholic Europe would never be realised. It's also ironic that now, after over 300 years, the people of Ireland both Protestant and Catholic can have such altered perceptions of William, who at his death was reviled by most Irish Protestants and is now a revered here, yet while he had sympathy for the Catholic grievances they now hate his memory.

But, to get back to the original question. Was the Battle of the Boyne merely a sectarian squabble between two kings or was it a major battle that would forever alter the destiny of the world? Ponder the following points:-

Had William lost the battle the system of Parliamentary rule by cabinet that evolved while William was off fighting, and which Britain has given to so many other countries of the world, would never have been able to evolve.

At a time when so many new lands were being discovered and settled throughout the world, if James had won the battle and become the junior partner in a French/English alliance, would

the Anglo/French wars in North America ever have taken place? Would the British Empire have ever existed? Would N. America, Australia, New Zealand and the English speaking parts of Africa now be speaking French?

Would the Catholic Church have split - as it had previously - in two with a Pope in Rome and a Pope in Paris?

All these things would have been possibilities had Louis achieved the power he craved. Victory for William at the Boyne ensured Louis never achieved victory in Europe. It achieved for so many countries throughout the world their parliamentary and legal systems, language, and in many instances, the very people who settled them.

Had William lost the Battle the world would be a vastly different place than what we know today. Many commentators would have us believe the Battle was a sectarian irrelevance, long over and better forgotten, but the Battle of the Boyne should never be forgotten. When William III, Prince of Orange, emerged as victor on that bright July morning so many years ago, he laid the corner stone of the world we know today. The sectarian divisions in Ireland were not of his making or his wish.

**Website**

[www.theotherview.org](http://www.theotherview.org)

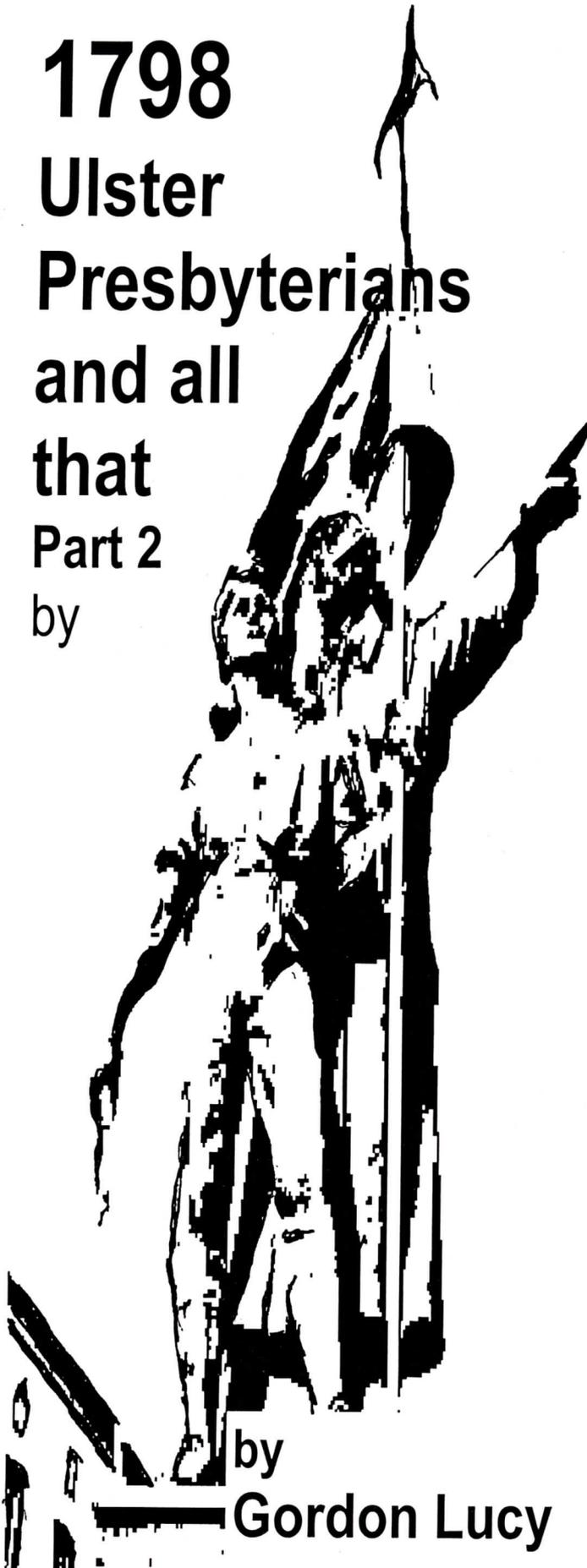
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*Gordon Lucy concludes his article on Presbyterian participation in the United Irish movement of 1798*

# 1798 Ulster Presbyterians and all

that  
Part 2  
by



by

**Gordon Lucy**

The rebellion lacked overall co-ordination and, as a result, varied enormously in character from area to area. The arrest of most of the United Irish leadership in Leinster in March 1798 and the arrest on 19 May of Lord Edward Fitzgerald, one of the few United Irish leaders with a military background, shaped the nature of the rebellion in south Leinster when it erupted on 23 May. It was disorganised, incoherent and sectarian.

The two Father Murphys were prominent figures in the rising in south Leinster. The paraphernalia of Roman Catholicism was more in evidence than the symbolism of the United Irishmen. Protestants would appear to have been murdered because they were Protestants rather than on account of their politics. Roman Catholic loyalists - and such people did exist - were often left unharmed and unmolested.

Although revisionists would have it otherwise, it is exceedingly difficult to view the rebellion in south Leinster as being other than largely sectarian rather than political in character with theological fanaticism playing a significant part.

The massacre of between one hundred and two hundred Protestants (and some Roman Catholic servants) in a barn at Scullabogue, Co. Wexford, cannot easily be conjured away. This appalling incident has coloured Protestant and Presbyterian perceptions of 1798 down

to the present day. It almost certainly occupies a place of greater prominence in Ulster Protestant and Presbyterian consciousness than the Battle of Antrim of 7 June or the Battle of Ballynahinch on 12 and 13 June.

The rebellion in Antrim and Down had none of the hallmarks of a *jihad*. The rising in Ulster was as uncoordinated as south Leinster and for similar reasons. On 5<sup>th</sup> June the Revd Dr William Dickson, almost certainly the United Irish leader in Down, was arrested by the authorities. Four days previously Robert Simms, who had been the first secretary of the Belfast Society of United Irishmen, resigned as adjutant general of Antrim because he refused to rise before the arrival of French help.

Henry Joy McCracken, a humane and gentle man who had been the founder of Belfast's first Sunday school, replaced Simms in Antrim. Dickson was replaced by Henry Monro, a Lisburn linen draper and a direct descendant of Daniel Monro who in turn was a cousin of Robert Monro, the commander of the Scottish army in Ulster in the 1640s.

The rising in Antrim had been defeated before the United Irishmen of Down swung into action. In both Antrim and Down Presbyterian tenant farmers and agricultural labourers put on their Sunday best and made their protest in arms against the venal and corrupt parliament in Dublin.

In both counties the Presby-

terians largely stood alone. There was very little Roman Catholic support for the rising. Ironically, Roman Catholics serving in the militia and Protestants serving in the yeomanry largely suppressed the rebellion in Ulster. Thus the United Irish ideal was most closely realised in the forces of



the Crown.

The rising in Connaught was prompted by the arrival of General Humbert's French force at Killala Bay on 22<sup>nd</sup> August. The United Irishmen were weak in Connaught and the local peasantry rallied to support Humbert in the mistaken belief that he was a crusader on behalf of the Pope and "the Blessed Virgin". After a short but rather impressive campaign Humbert surrendered at Ballinamuck, Co. Longford, on 8 September. Protestants were few in Connaught and Humbert imposed strict discipline on his followers, so al-

though the trappings of sectarianism were in evidence, there were no sectarian massacres.

The final act of the 1798 rebellion was played out in October when Wolfe Tone arrived with a French squadron that was defeated off the coast of Donegal.

The rebellion of 1798 was radically different in character from what was envisaged and desired by the United Irishmen. The Society of United Irishmen was a largely middle-class movement, largely Protestant (and mainly Presbyterian in Ulster) and anti-clerical in tone. Yet, the course of events was heavily influenced by the sectarian passions of the Roman Catholic peasantry of south Leinster under priestly control.

The most important consequence of 1798 was the Act of Union. The Union abolished the quasi-independent medieval Irish parliament. As the United Irishmen had originally sought the reform of this Parliament, many United Irishmen were not unhappy at its abolition, especially as it held out the prospect of reform, Catholic emancipation and the liberalisation of trade. By depriving so many boroughs of their parliamentary representation, the Act of Union was, in effect, a significant measure of parliamentary reform. Trade was liberalised. The only failing was that Catholic emancipation was delayed for a generation.

In many respects not a great deal separated the aspirations of the United Irishmen on one hand

and those of Pitt and Castlereagh, the principal architects of the Union, on the other. Therefore, one should not be unduly surprised by the fact that Samuel Neilson and Archibald Rowan Hamilton warmly welcomed the union. They were not alone.

Almost exactly a century after the founding of the United Irishmen in Belfast Dr William Drennan's son, John Swanwick Drennan, attended the Ulster Unionist Convention of 1892 and, a poet, like his father, wrote verses to celebrate Ulster Unionist resistance to Home Rule prior to the election of July 1892 and the formation of Gladstone's fourth administration.

Dr J S Drennan's sister Sarah married a John Andrews of Comber. Among their descendants were Thomas Andrews and J. M. Andrews. The former was an active Liberal Unionist, being president of both the Ulster Reform Club and the Ulster Liberal Unionist Association. He also delivered one of the best speeches at the Ulster Unionist Convention of 1892. The latter, Thomas Andrews' son, was Northern Ireland's second Prime Minister.

Dr J. S. Drennan's daughter Ruth married Adam Duffin, another leading Liberal Unionist. Ruth was responsible for the preservation of the Drennan letters, the correspondence of her grandfather and an invaluable source for the study of Belfast radical politics in the 1790s.

Adam Duffin's own papers are a source for the study of late nineteenth and early twentieth-century Ulster Unionism. His son, C. E. Duffin, was to serve as a "B" Special. It must be em-

phasised that it was not only Dr William Drennan's descendants who were strong and committed Unionists. Drennan's descendants are a paradigm for the wider Presbyterian community. Alexander Crawford, the great grandfather of

**'The rebellion of 1798 was radically different in character from what was envisaged and desired by the United Irishmen'**

Fred Crawford, the Lame gun-runner, was a close friend of Henry Joy McCracken and shared his political outlook.

Many solidly Unionist families in Antrim and Down remain proud to boast of ancestors "oot" in 1798, although to Unionists in Fermanagh and Tyrone this is often incomprehensible.

In 1888, J. J. Shaw, a Presbyterian barrister, future Recorder of Belfast and a former

academic at Magee College in Londonderry, in a publication entitled *Mr. Gladstone's Two Irish Policies* attempted to explain the conundrum which perplexed not only W. E. H. Lecky but William Gladstone and Irish nationalists then and now:

Catholic emancipation, a reformed parliament, a responsible executive, and equal laws for the whole Irish people – these were the declared and rear objects of the United Irishmen. And it was only because they saw no hope of attaining these objects through an Irish parliament that they took up arms...

These benefits, Shaw explained, everyone enjoyed as citizens of the United Kingdom as the result of the Act of Union. However, Shaw feared that might not be so under a Home Rule parliament dominated by one faction of the Irish people.

Presbyterians and Roman Catholics alike had been excluded from political power and influence by the Protestant (i.e. Church of Ireland) Ascendancy in the old Irish parliament that had existed prior to 1800. Shaw, as a good Ulster Presbyterian, could not view with equanimity the prospect of a return to ascendancy government, which is what Presbyterians believed Home Rule would herald. Presbyterians feared renewed exclusion from power and influence, this time at the hands of a Roman Catholic ascendancy.

*Gordon Lucy is a member of the Ulster Unionist Party and a leading member of the Ulster Society. He has written a number of books, booklets and articles on Ulster's British culture and heritage.*

## Review

*The UVF* by Henry McDonald and Jim Cusack, Poolbeg Press, 2000

### Review

by

Liam O'Ruairc

In comparison to what has been written on the IRA, very little has been published on loyalist paramilitary organisations. Henry McDonald and Jim Cusack's *The UVF* (revised and updated edition, Poolbeg, 2000) is one of the very few books to have been written on the oldest loyalist paramilitary organisation. The book is a chronological history of the UVF since 1966, from the Malvern Street killings to the current feud with the UDA. The style of the book is journalistic rather than academic, and is easily readable. The narrative centres on personalities, facts and events. Those not very familiar with the world and history of the UVF will probably find this book quite informative. The book is a useful complement to Steve Bruce's *The Red Hand* (1992) which dealt mainly with more general socio-political considerations on the nature of loyalist and pro-state terrorism; something which is a bit lacking in McDonald and Cusack's book.

To their credit, the authors have analysed the loyalist organisation in a serious manner. Even if they are obviously not sympathetic to the actions of the UVF, they have given the movement more than a fair treatment. As opposed to the Martin Dillon school of journalism that treats the UVF as no more than a bunch of gangsters and psychopaths just worthy of a few "true crime" books to be placed among those published on the likes of the Yorkshire Ripper and the Mafia, McDonald and Cusack analyse the organisation as an extreme

political, rather than criminal or pathological, expression of unionism. The authors are very impartial, and some might accuse them of not being critical enough of the UVF. Even when dealing with some of the worse atrocities committed by the UVF, like the killings carried out by the Shankill Butchers and in the 'Romper Rooms', the authors describe those in a cool, neutral and dispassionate style.



The book contains a number of very interesting stories, some not very well known, such as Catholics that have helped the UVF, or the very suspicious activities and individuals of the bizarre and extreme 'Red Hand Defenders'. The best part of the book is that which recounts the "other peace process", that is how loyalist organisations were drawn into the peace process thanks to the key role played by individuals such as Chris Hudson.

For the authors, "the modern UVF straddles two worlds – sectarianism and political innovation. At times the organisation can swing from one extreme to another." (p.274) The main weakness of the book is that the authors pay insufficient attention on the various structural factors that cause such radical paradigmatic shifts. How can one day the UVF produce the likes of the Shankill Butchers and the

other the civic unionism of the PUP? Or even, how can they simultaneously co-exist? How can Billy Hutchinson address a Socialist Party meeting on the future of the working-class and the UVF intimidate Catholics in Larne the same day? The authors haven't explored enough this contradictory nature of the "progressive unionism" of the UVF. The authors also do not really ask whether "political innovation" could one day the upper hand over "sectarianism". Is sectarianism a necessary or just a contingent element of the UVF's ideology? If it is a necessary element, then isn't the dynamic of the UVF such that the sectarian element will inevitably have the upper hand?

This reviewer found the author's view of Irish nationalism and republicanism highly irritating. Readers from Unionist and Loyalist backgrounds might find it more appealing, but nevertheless it raises a number of important questions about the relations between Irish nationalism and the UVF that they answer in an unsatisfactory manner. For the authors, the UVF is essentially an autonomous extreme reaction of the loyalist population to Irish nationalism. So, they conclude the book by writing that it is now up to republicans and nationalists to lift the siege. But is the UVF's dynamic solely related to Irish nationalism and republicanism, has it not got a dynamic independently of them? For example, the first few killings carried out by the UVF in 1966 were done at a time where the IRA was quasi-inexistent. Or when republicans were killing many off-duty soldiers and policemen in the 1980s, UVF activity was very low. Has the UVF got a dynamic outside its confrontation with nationalism and republicanism? There are sufficient grounds to think that such an independent dynamic exists, but the authors quite neglect it.

In spite of its shortcomings, *The UVF* is a useful and informative book that is worth reading, especially at a time where loyalism is facing a difficult and uncertain future.

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**Rev Jack Shearer  
1926-2001**



**The Very Rev. Jack Shearer  
An Appreciation**

The recent death of Jack Shearer has saddened many. I appreciate this opportunity to pay tribute to a man I didn't know personally, but whose life has touched me, as it touched countless others, with his generosity.

Jack Shearer's annual sit out as Black Santa incarnated the spirit of generosity which is at the heart of Christmas. He gave freely of his time and friendship as he greeted everyone who met him there. He enabled others to give generously of their money, and at the heart of the sit out was the concern to help others in this country and worldwide.

Jack Shearer was much more than Black Santa however. A Shankill man, he remained a man of the people with their concerns at heart. He is spoken of also as an innovator, ahead of his time in the imaginative use of I.T. in the church, and in initiating stewardship schemes. His sense of humour often diffused tense situations and no doubt helped him not to take himself too seriously. "He hung lightly to his institutions," it is said. At his heart, though, there was a deep seriousness in his commitment to sharing the love of God with all those whom his life touched. We are all the poorer for his death.

Our sympathy goes out to his family and his many friends who mourn his loss.

Shelagh Livingstone

# Blackwater in Winter



*The River Blackwater flowing towards Lough Neagh. Along the way, it will pass the mouth of The Ulster Canal.*

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