



NIMMA NEWS

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April 2012

‘Book People’

See pages 2 & 3 for
the people who
feature in our book
‘Mixed Emotions’.

International demand for mixed marriage book

NIMMA’s recently published paperback, “Mixed Emotions” has sparked interest in mixed marriage here from as far away as Canada and South Africa.

Many callers and e-mailers to NIMMA are ex-pats who moved away from Northern Ireland when they married to avoid what one reader described as, “being treated as a traitor”.

They have ordered the book after seeing its launch featured in internet editions of local newspapers and one correspondent from Germany has already forwarded his parent’s story for future inclusion in this news letter.

NIMMA Chair Ken Dunn said: “We have been delighted with the local reaction to “Mixed Emotions”, which has seen a sharp increase in general inquiries and orders for it, but we have also been pleasantly surprised at the international dimension.

“Technology today means that news really is worldwide within minutes and people from this part of the world tend to continue to take an interest in affairs back home. We’re just glad that our good news is continuing to spread.”

NIMMA has written to the five Northern Ireland Education and Library Boards, enclosing copies of the book, to encourage them to promote it in local secondary schools.

Ken said: “It has always been our aim to get this book into all local secondary schools, regardless of denomination, and we are doing all that we can to achieve that.

“I can think of no better use for “Mixed Emotions” than as an educational tool that helps to spark debate and make our youngsters think.

“The road to tolerance and acceptance is a long one, but this book can help all of us take important steps along the way.”

Swedish Trio



Three Swedish sixthform students from the industrial city of Vasteras in the east of the country made NIMMA’s Belfast office a port of call during a three week sociology “field trip” to Ireland.

Pictured, from left, Anna Ludvigsson, Sara Haid and Lovisa Holmburg, who are taking courses back home dealing with global issues, learned some of the history and background to mixed marriage on this island from NIMMA Development Officer Paul McLaughlin.

Anna said: “We can use a lot of what we have heard and the material we have received that will help with our studies in reconciliation.”

Copies of NIMMA’s book “Mixed Emotions”, priced £5, are available from nimma@nireland.com

The 'Book People'



Chris and Roisin, who are in their mid-thirties, live in the Oldpark area of north of Belfast. Chris is a bakery worker, Roisin a supervisor in a solicitor's practice. They have been married for more than 11 years and are proud parents of seven-and-a-half-year-old Matthew. He says that the 'half' is very important.



Katherine is a former nurse who lives in the County Armagh countryside outside the border village of Forkhill. She is a widow in her mid-70s, but with the vim and energy of a much younger woman. They are attributes that stood her in good stead in the past.



Michael and Shirley live in a quiet cul-de-sac in Glengormley on the northern outskirts of Belfast. It is a mixed area. They are an outgoing, friendly and fun-loving couple who work as psychiatric nurses in the community. Both are in their late forties.



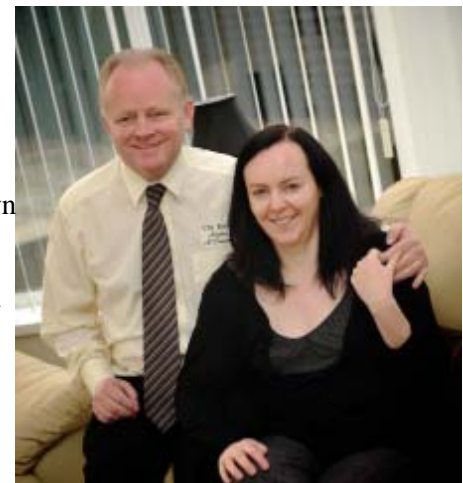
Ann and Stephen live in a beautiful lake-front house in County Fermanagh.

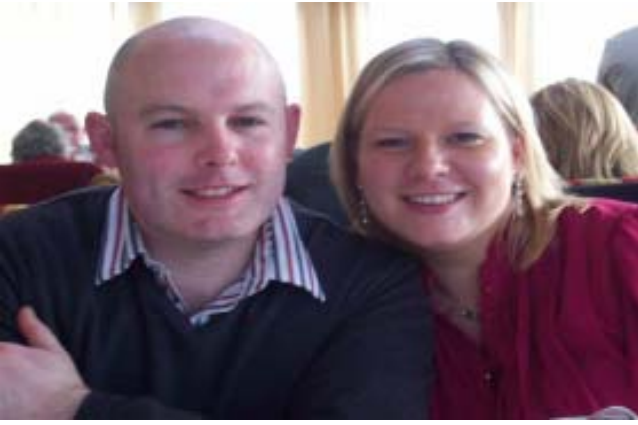
Stephen, originally from Belfast, is a former engineer and entrepreneur, while Ann, who was born and raised in Enniskillen, retired recently from a teaching career. They have been married since 1975, have two sons and a growing family of grandchildren.



David and Nuala are in their early forties. They have been married for nearly 20 years and have four children. David is an electronic engineer, while Nuala is a classroom assistant in a local primary school. They have known each other nearly all their adult lives. They live near Carryduff.

Martin and Sharon, who are both in their forties, are from Derry/Londonderry, have been married for nearly 30 years and have two grown up children. Martin is a successful businessman and runs a tour company in the city. They are a hardworking team and a resilient couple that has faced down both poverty and the violence of sectarian opposition.





Fermanagh couple Tom and Sarah, who are in their early thirties, live on farm in the hills near Enniskillen. They both work for an electronics company in the town and their newly-built house, which overlooks Topped Mountain, has a very special occupant, their son Conor.



Stephen and Sharon live in a small village in the Fermanagh lakelands. They have been married for five years. Stephen, whose father was killed in the 'Poppy Day' bombing of Enniskillen, has suffered severe ill-health as a direct result of being in the same explosion. Sharon, whose Mum died only days before this interview, works in retail in the town. They make a strong team that faces the future with hope and humour.

The 'Book People'



Roley and Jo live on the outskirts of the quiet village of Ederney in the beautiful Fermanagh countryside. "Close enough to walk to the shops and far enough away from the neighbours not to hear me guldering at the kids", according to Jo. Roley is a civil servant, Jo works in a local school. They have been married for more than 25 years and have four children.



Ruth is a remarkable 87-year-old widow whose husband Pat died nine years ago. She lives in a bungalow overlooking the centre of the new city of Newry and despite facing heartache as a result of her mixed marriage, found forgiveness and happiness in more than 58 years of marriage.

Dr Joan Turner

1933 - 2012

It is with great sadness that I record the passing of our dear friend Joan. She came to Queen's University in 1955 to study medicine and after qualifying in 1961 married our future first Church of Ireland Chaplain, Canon Edgar Turner. Joan was an active member of the General Synod and committees thereof serving, in particular, on the Marriage Council. She was deeply committed to ecumenism and an enthusiast for Mixed Marriage. This she showed as the historian of the first twenty-five years of the Glenstal Ecumenical Conference and as Secretary of NIMMA.

When the Roman Catholic Directory on Mixed Marriage in Ireland was issued in 1983, after major input from NIMMA, I well recall Cardinal O'Fee telling Joan and I that he had done his bit and that he had full confidence that we would successfully complete our enterprise. It has taken somewhat longer than we all anticipated!

Some years later when the Church of Ireland were producing new marriage preparation material, Joan spotted the opportunity and drafted a section on mixed marriage. We edited this over coffee one Sunday morning and it was accepted by the Council. It is now the formal Church of Ireland document.

Outside Church affairs Joan was deeply committed to her family, her cats and maintained a strong interest in gardening. We offer our profound sympathies to Edgar, Kate, Justin and Bláithín. We have lost a good and gracious lady and she will be missed enormously.

KD
April 2012



Canon Edgar Turner and his late wife Joan at the NIMMA conference in 2010.

They are a great example and I hope an inspiration to all who will read the book and I can't thank them enough for sharing their stories so freely with us and with the wider community.

We had long hoped for such a book and we know only too well the courage and commitment that our contributors have shown to make it a reality.

They took centre stage at the Long Gallery at Stormont and, we hope, had a day to remember. It's now nearly 38 years since a few of us in mixed marriages got together to form this Association. Throughout those years, we have concentrated on helping our members and other couples to achieve their aim of living a shared present, while working quietly to change the attitudes of the churches and wider society and should I say it, helping to promote a 'shared future'.

We take a natural pride in those things that NIMMA has achieved since the dark days of 1974, but we know that there is still much to do and we recognise that this little book will go a long way to increasing acceptance of and tolerance for mixed marriage on this island. For even though the stories tell us about the past, they voice a real hope for the future. We celebrate that hope and congratulate our 'Book People'.

Ken

'Book People' centre stage at Stormont

We in NIMMA took a little time to celebrate after the launch of our book, 'Mixed Emotions'. It was a time for celebration, for back slapping and no backs deserved to be slapped harder than those of the men and women whose stories feature in the little paperback.



NIMMA
Annual General Meeting
Maryville House Tearooms
2 Maryville Avenue, Belfast
Saturday 21st April 2012 from 9.30am

