



NIMMA NEWS

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'Mixed Childrens' book on the way



NIMMA's book about the children of mixed marriages is in the final stages of production.

The paperback, with the working title 'Both Sides Now' will feature a dozen stories from around the Province and across the water and give mixed marriage children from 16 to 60 the chance to tell their stories in their words. NIMMA Chairman Ken Dunn said: "We are gearing up for a Spring launch and determined that the new book will make as great an impact as its predecessor, 'Mixed Emotions'".

"There is a constant demand for information about both the logistics of mixed marriage and the actual experience itself from prospective couples, the press, the churches and community groups and the children of such unions have an important story to tell.

Blueprint

Experience has shown us that our young people, in particular, are keen to know more about mixed marriage, how things have changed over the years and how compromise and accommodation within such relationships are like a blueprint for a shared future.

There is still much to be done to create a situation where an organisation like NIMMA is no longer needed and the new book, like its predecessor, can be a catalyst for debate and discussion about what for so long has been a taboo subject.

It will be about increasing awareness through publicity and an educational programme involving local schools, and promoting inclusiveness.

We recognise that the people who contribute will need to show real courage to take part, but it is courage that will inspire others to see the acceptance of mixed marriage as a reflection of a healthy society. See Page 3

A Magical Mix



The intro hymn 'O God of All the Nations' could not have been more appropriate when members of five of the world's leading religions came together in Belfast to enjoy an inter-faith service at Belfast's All Souls Church.

The magical mix included Jews, Muslims, Sikhs, Christians and at least one Shinto believer who sang a religious

song in Gaelic.

Organiser, All Souls Minister Chris Hudson, far right, said: "A great evening of religious and cultural diversity. The mix of music and song from our talented choir was incredible and included Irish, Japanese and Jewish pieces.

NIMMA's Paul McLaughlin described it as 'a unique and uplifting experience that made a joy of difference'.

Stories Network Launched

Putting 'the conflict' into context

NIMMA has joined a network of story gatherers that is documenting more than 30 years of conflict in the Province. Belfast's MAC hosted the start of the 'Stories Network', as more than a dozen people and projects involved in gathering personal narratives and stories about 'The Troubles' and so much more came together for its official launch.

"The network will encourage practitioners, contributors and researchers to learn from each other, share expertise and experience and promote good practice, according to Kate Turner, Director of Healing Through Remembering the host organisation.

She said: "It is about bringing together people and projects which are interested in or involved with sharing of stories and personal narratives relating to the conflict here. "Both story gathering and storytelling are used to help the divisions of the past by talking about it, writing about it and sharing experiences.

"We want the network to promote links between projects, those that have been completed, as well as those that are planned, and to attract as diverse a membership as possible.

NIMMA's Paul McLaughlin said: "Any group that adheres to the Healing through Remembering ethical principles on storytelling and personal narrative as a foundation for their work can join the network."

"The network intends to hold quarterly meetings that will allow it to respond to the local political and social context as it evolves."

Kate Turner said: "To be as active as it can be and to hold regular seminars and events relating to the sharing of stories and personal narratives about the conflict, we need the network to be as wide-ranging as we can make it."

The following projects are the initial members of The Stories Network:

- * Accounts of the Conflict, INCORE;
- * WAVE Trauma Centre, Storytelling Projects;
- * The Recovering of Living Memory Archive Project, Pat Finucane Centre;
- * Prison Memory Archive;
- * Five Decades Project, Forthspring;
- * Border Roads to Memories and Reconciliation;
- * Upstanding, Corrymeela;
- * Glórtha Aduaidh;
- * RUC George Cross Foundation Oral History Project;
- * Border Lives Project;
- * Peace Process Layers of Meaning Project;
- * Dúchas Project;
- * Pieces of the Past Project;
- * Mixed Emotions, NIMMA;
- * Sharp Focus: Crossing the Divide.

The Network is supported by the European Union's European Regional Development Fund through the EU's PEACE III Programme for Peace and Reconciliation managed by the Special EU Programmes Body.

And 'Mixed Emotions' stories make university's digital archive

Stories from NIMMA's 'Mixed Emotions' will be preserved for posterity in a digital archive held by the University of Ulster.

The International Conflict Research Institute (INCORE), based at the Jordanstown campus, will store this material in a vast computerised record - Accounts of the Conflict - that can be accessed easily by researchers, students and all those interested in personal stories relating to the past forty years in Northern Ireland.

Policy Co-ordinator Grainne Kelly told NIMMA News that the 'Mixed Emotions' material, while not directly concerned with the conflict here, was an important piece of social history.

She said: "Many groups, like NIMMA, have collected stories about this period and our digital archive will guarantee the long-term preservation of this rich vein of experience, while making it available to all on the Accounts of the Conflict website".

Transcripts, audio and audio visual recordings are also included.

Chris has it Covered



“Mixed Marriage man’s picture could have been taken just for this book”

...Ken Dunn



A little detective work turned a chance encounter on the internet into a cracking front cover for NIMMA’s new book - with the help of the BBC’s political chief.

Development Officer Paul McLaughlin was trawling the world wide web for inspiration for a ‘Both Sides Now’ illustration when he came across the picture above on the BBC Northern Ireland blog of politico Mark Devenport.

It has been taken at the London Olympics, but was uncredited.

A quick e-mail to Mark and the busy bureau chief took time out to suss out the name and contact details of the photographer.

Picture taker Chris Madden, ironically the child of a mixed marriage himself, immediately gave his permission for NIMMA to use his pic free of charge.

Cover photographer Chris works as a ‘very busy’ recruitment consultant in the City of London. He was born in Belfast in 1993 to a Catholic father and a Protestant mother, baptised a Catholic, but attended both the RC Church and Baptist church in Carrickfergus for many years.

He said: “It is pure coincidence that my pic has been picked up to front the new book, but I’m delighted to be taking part and to play a small rolet in getting across NIMMA’s message of tolerance”.

He went to an integrated nursery, playgroup and primary school, Acorn Integrated Primary School, before going on to Ulidia Integrated College.

In 2008, he was awarded a full three year scholarship to the prestigious St Albans School in Washington DC - a scholarship funded by an Irish-American, Jack McDonnell, who is a strong supporter of integrated education.

Chris graduated from St Albans in 2011 and went to study War Studies and History at King’s College London. From 2012-2014, he worked as a parliamentary assistant to Alliance Party MP Naomi Long in the House of Commons. He has been a member of the party since he was 14 years of age.

He graduated from King’s with First Class Honours earlier this year, before taking up his job in the City. Chris describes it as ‘frenetic and stimulating and my biggest challenge so far’.

Last Call for Book Volunteers

THERE are just two weeks to the deadline for volunteers wishing to contribute to the Northern Ireland Mixed Marriage Association’s (NIMMA) book about the children of mixed marriages in the province.

The paperback, financed by The Big Lottery Fund, will give individuals the chance to tell of their experiences as the children of people who put love before traditional allegiances.

Under the working title ‘Both Sides Now’, the book is being produced and published by NIMMA and is a sequel to a book about mixed marriage couples, ‘Mixed Emotions’, which was published two years ago.

Anyone interested in taking part in the project (all inquiries will be treated in strictest confidence) should contact NIMMA on 028 9023 5444, or email info@nimma.org.uk.



AGM Comment

From the Chair.....



‘Mixing it’ on the Shankill Road

Mixed couple found common ground on its streets

I have happy memories of trips up and down the Shankill Road in the 1950s and 60s before ‘The Troubles’ that so blighted our land had even begun.

It was a shoppers’ paradise in those days, a bargain land for folk from its terraced side streets and much further afield.

Thousands shopped there every week and it really was a melting pot for people of both persuasions, as we used to say back then.

Practically as many women from the Falls frequented its familiar family stores as from anywhere else and God only knows how many pots of Belfast Saturday night soup sprang from its veg and greengrocers.

Timely then to remember that the name Shankill is made up of two Gaelige words that translate as the ‘old church’. Timely and relevant as Feile is the Irish word for ‘festival’ and if you mixed up all three you’d have a recipe for a truly unique event.

And that’s exactly what we got when we went along to a lecture about the mixed marriage of Belfast legendary socialist Winnie Carney at the Shankill Library as part of the Feile an Phobal. The West Belfast festival that grew out of the ashes - almost literally - of Carney, who carried a typewriter and a Webley revolver into Dublin’s GPO at the time of the 1916 Rising was renowned as a republican and revolutionary and assistant to Irish Citizens’ Army



A shopping Mecca for both sides: Belfast’s Shankill Road in the 1950s.

leader James Connolly, but little has been said – until now - about her links to the Shankill itself or her marriage to an Orangeman.

She married Shankill Road man George McBride, also a trade union activist, in the 1930s and remained happily married until her early death.

Unfortunately, religion did come between them eventually when Carney’s brother refused to allow them to be buried

together, although this ban was removed later.

A packed house from both sides of the nearby peace-line heard how both socialists had found accomodation and common ground in marriage and politics.

A possible recipe for the future no doubt or as they say in the Gaelige, “Guimid – We Pray”.

**NIMMA is here to help. Simply telephone
Belfast 02890 235444 or e-mail info@nimma.org.uk.**