

# ***Bridget's Daughters***

*Roseleen Walsh*

*£5.00*

*All proceeds of this book are going to "Relatives for Justice"*

## **Bridget's Daughters**

### **Foreword**

How can I begin to tell, in part, the story of 'Bridget's Daughters' without first talking about Bridget herself; for she was a remarkable woman who lived her life bravely, with

determination and a patriotism that could not be closeted by the thuggery of 'a mighty empire'.

Patriotism exists in every country in the world where people love and are proud of the land where they are born. It is not only a sad reflection on Ireland as a whole, but also an epitome that patriotism is seen by the status quo as an offence if you live in the occupied six counties of Ireland and where the sentence is second-class citizenship. The following is merely a summary of how an ordinary woman in the 20th century became an icon of resistance to British and Orange rule in her own beloved 'Whiterock' which sits proudly in the greater Ballymurphy area of West Belfast. Had she never met and fallen in love with Ned Maguire, her life may have been so very different.

Politically, they were from different worlds but in 1929 these two worlds collided and, like galaxies in outer space, their light shone so brightly it remains still in the hearts of those who became part of that light. Strength and graciousness in the face of hardship and sorrow - these were tools that Bridget Maguire acquired and became mistress of.

### **This is Bridget's story.**

Bridget had three daughters; Madge was 16 years old when she died of knee Sicoma (Housemaids knee). Bridget nursed Madge at home for a year until her death. Her other two daughters, Maura and Dorothy, were to die shoulder to shoulder in the back seat of a car, in tragic circumstances, in their own country. Life was shot out of them by foreign soldiers who were brought to our country supposedly as the 'keepers of peace'.

Their lives ended on October 23rd 1971 at approximately 4.30am in Cape Street, just off the Falls Road here in Belfast. Cape Street was a short distance from where their lives began; though that night it must have seemed like a million miles from anywhere they knew!

The road that led them to Cape Street that night, started back in August '69; but I shall go further back and try to retrace the imprints of their earlier foot steps to enable those of us who never met Maura or Dorothy, to metaphorically walk some distance with them. We may then understand better the bravery and determination that fired their dream to live in a society that was free from the oppression they both endured, not only because they were Catholics but also because they were nationalists and women. Driven by a determination to break free from life that, without change, could only ever offer them a place in society as second class citizens; they made many sacrifices and these ultimately led to their deaths.

The casual and blatant lies that were to over-ride the truth about the killings should have signaled to us what was to follow: the intensification of the same ruthless strategy by British intelligence and military, which was sanctioned by the British government and aided by the British media, and which would attempt to 'murder and bury the truth' not just for the following 29 years but forever, if they were to succeed. However, there was no way that their brutality, imprisonment, shot-to-kill strategy could make us as a 'united people' throw our hands in the air and say 'enough is enough' and thus return to our previously held place in society as second class citizens in this Orange state. Murder, torture, imprisonment and censorship only served to re-enforce our belief that freedom, equality and true peace for all could only be gained in a United Ireland.

If society believes that the truth is not worth being told or listened to, then it follows that we can expect nothing worthwhile from such a society. However, a society that fights to redeem the truth and uphold it, is a society that embraces and cherishes its' citizens for what they are and for what they can become. A society that teaches its' children the

importance of truth will become a strong society, a caring society and a society which all its' citizens are proud to be part of because it's foundation stone is 'truth'.

This book is being written because Maura's daughter, Margaret, came to 'Relatives for Justice' and asked Mark Thompson for the truth to be told about the deaths of her Mother and Aunt Dorothy. It was a simple request, some might think!

But here in the North of Ireland to ask for the truth can be quite a complicated thing to do. For example, one might think that the truth should have come out at the trial of Billy Davidson and Flo O'Riordan who were in the car that night with Maura and Dorothy - unfortunately that is not the case. One might also think that the soldiers who shot both Maura and Dorothy dead would have told the truth at the trial - again one would be wrong to think that. Perhaps if one were so naïve as to assume that if the soldiers responsible had told lies under oath in court, that they would have been charged with perjury and dismissed from the British army, then again one would be wrong.

Margaret Meehan-Kennedy wants only one thing 30 years after the deaths of her mother and Aunt Dorothy, and that is the truth. This is where the road to that truth begins.



## **Bridget**

Bridget O'Kane was born to Mary Ellen and Owen O'Kane on March 7th 1911. There were five sons and three daughters in the O'Kane household. Bridget was the third youngest. They lived in Lyness Place in Lisburn County Antrim until 1921 when they and other catholic families were burned out by Orange mobs. The family then moved to Belfast. No one could have ever imagined back then that this incident was to set precedence for events that were to engulf the next 60 years of Bridget's life.



Owen & Mary Ellen O'Kane (Bridget's Parents)

Bridget was to have many joys in her life but so many more sorrows were always there around the corner 'waiting'. People who knew Bridget would often wonder how she coped and remained strong. Her strength, some have said, was in a kind of 'inner peace' that she had and which she kept private.

She seldom spoke about the broken heart that she carried throughout her life.

Her niece and close friend **Mary Herald**, told me the following things about Bridget's life:



Mary and then boyfriend, who she was later to marry, Joe Herald

"My mother, Annie Meenan and Bridget were sisters and also best friends. They had a beautiful and loving friendship throughout their lives and a closeness that I've never seen either before or since. It was something really special that bordered on a kind of sacredness that was unique to them. My mother died at the age of forty-two and our youngest sister Anne Marie was only eight years old at the time. Aunt Bridget looked after us like a mother; even though she had a large family of her own. She had a big heart and enough love for us all. I think Aunt Bridget was about seventeen when she met and fell head over heels in love with Uncle Ned. They had eight children - five boys and three girls. Thomas was the eldest, born around 1930, next was Madge who died when she was sixteen years old; she took Sicoma and was nursed by Bridget, my mother and Aunt Mary at home for a year. She had a peaceful and happy death with them all by her side. Owen was next to Madge - he died at eight and a half months of a cot death. Then Ned Jnr. was born the following year - he only died recently at the age of 61. Ned was interned in Long Kesh and history was to repeat itself, when, in 1974, Ned Jnr., like his father before him, escaped from captivity. Unfortunately, though, his freedom was short-lived as he made his

way into the Twinbrook estate on the outskirts of Lisburn. Ned decided to stay on the main road as he mistakenly thought that Twinbrook was a Loyalist estate. On the same escape, the British Army shot dead a fellow internee, Hugh Coney, just 20 yards from the perimeter wire. Some years later, at the end of Internment, after finally being released, Ned was rearrested at the prison gates and spent the following 19 years, I think, in both the cages of Long Kesh and also the H Blocks. After Ned, Maura was born in 1939. Maura worked as a weaver in Linfield industrial estate in Sandy Row. She met Jim Meehan at a nightclub where he was making a cabaret appearance (he was a well-known singer in his youth).

They both fell in love and were married in 1960 - Maura was shot dead along with her sister Dorothy on October 23rd '71 when they were back-seat passengers in a car in Cape Street off the Falls road. They had been warning people that the British Army were raiding houses in the area. Maura had four young children when she was killed.





Bridget with Michael in arms, Madge and Ned

Bridget and Ned moved to Dublin after Ned escaped from Crumlin road jail in 1943 along with Jimmy Steele, Hugh McAteer and Paddy Donnelly. Ned was a member of the IRA and had been sentenced to 6 years for the possession of a firearm. They had a baby son whom they named Michael and he was the only Maguire to be born in Dublin. Later Michael would marry Anne Vallely and they would have 6 children. One coincidence that occurred before either Michael or Anne were born, happened after Ned escaped from Crumlin Road jail. Ned was in hiding over in the Markets area of South Belfast. When it was time for him to cross the border, a slight problem arose; Ned had no shoes! To complicate matters, it was a size nine he wore, and trying to find someone of the same size, and who would be willing to part with probably the only pair of shoes they possessed, was going to be a difficult task; but as luck would have it, a young nationalist couple living

in Bond Street, called Martha and Barney Vallely came to the rescue. Martha, hearing of Ned's plight, volunteered her husband's shoes while he was out working. Her husband didn't miss his shoes until that Sunday when he was getting ready to go to Mass, but he was very philosophical about it and gave both the shoes and Ned his blessing. The Vallelys later had a daughter whom they named Anne who in time would meet and marry Ned and Bridget's son, Michael!



Martha and Barney Vallely with baby daughter Anne

When Ned and Bridget returned to live in Belfast, another son was born whose name was Martin. He became a stone mason and a boxer and married Marie Roberts from Andersonstown. They had two daughters but tragically Martin took cancer and died at the age of 25 in 1976. Dorothy, who was to remain the 'baby of the family', was born on April 3rd 1953. They also had an adopted son called Edmund. Both Bridget and Ned were hard

workers and in fact Bridget worked until she died at the age of seventy. Bridget's early-married life was eventful and never could be described as 'ordinary' in any sense of the word. Bridget was a woman ahead of her time. She was strong and adventurous. Many women in the 1940's would have been afraid to follow their husband and leave everything behind to set up home in a new part of the country, with little or no money and mouths to feed - especially if their husband was 'on the run' after escaping from jail.

The day after Ned escaped from Crumlin Road jail along with four other IRA men, Bridget boldly walked up to the jail and asked for Ned's only suit so she could pawn it. She was brought into the Governor's office and offered a reward if she would inform on her husband. Ned was in hiding in the Markets district of Belfast and because it was too risky for Bridget to visit him, she sent her other sister Mary instead. Mary knocked on the door and an elderly gentleman with a walking stick opened the door and invited her in. After convincing her that she was at the wrong house he showed her to the door, and as he did so he threw the stick down and laughed saying 'Cush, if you didn't recognize me - then no one will'. After this encouraging sign, Ned made his way to Dublin and later sent for Bridget and the children. He had found some work in Pheonix Park cutting turf and he also had some part time work in a fish market. They lived in Dublin for five years.

In 1946 there was an amnesty for IRA men who were 'on the run', so Bridget and Ned took their family back to Belfast; where once again they had to start over making a home for their family. They moved in with my parents Annie and Hugh Meenan at 27 Whiterock Drive and then eventually they move to 48 Westrock Drive where they were to spend the rest of their lives. Both Bridget and Ned worked most of the time - Bridget was a weaver in Greeves Mill on the Falls road and Ned worked as a Slater and Ash-felter. He even cleaned windows as well as working in scrap for a man called Jimmy Trainor. They were a

family who never went hungry during hungry times here in Belfast. Ned was a good provider and he even owned a motor car when few others could afford such luxury. They were very generous with what they had and they would have gone to the seaside, on a days outing, and would bring other children from the street along with them.

That would have been a really big treat for a child back in the early 60's. My growing up in Belfast in the Whiterock area was definitely enriched for being part of the Meenan - Maguire clan. We were all such a close family.

Even with all the tragedies that were to befall us, we nearly always found time to laugh and joke. Bridget's home was never depressing; despite it all, it was a place of welcome to everyone. I don't think since August '69 until Bridget's death that the Maguire bungalow was empty or without a story or piece of history in the making going on within its' walls!"

Mary paints a very vivid picture of the home that produced Maura and Dorothy. They came from a loving and caring family environment and their sense of community was nourished from childhood right through to the end of their lives. When Bridget died it was a sad reminder of how unfair life had been to her; when out of her eight children only one son, Thomas, and her adopted son Edmund were there to bury her. Owen, Madge, Maura, Martin and Dorothy had all gone before her; while her other two sons, Ned and Michael, were both political prisoners in H Block and were both refused compassionate parole to help bury their beloved Bridget. The rain fell heavy that 18th day of December 1981 as Bridget's body was being lead to rest in Milltown cemetery beside her husband Ned; and oh, what joy must have lay in store as she gave to God Almighty the account of her life!



Martin Maguire holding Maura's son Gerard

**Michael Maguire** has never spoken before about his mother Bridget, his sisters and their untimely deaths. Here Michael speaks about the happy 'early years' in their Westrock bungalow home.

“Looking back now, it all seems just like yesterday when Bridget would be standing at the door calling us all in for our dinner; or waiting up for each of us in turn when we became teenagers and started to go out to dances or the picture houses. Bridget would never sleep until all her children were in safe and sound! She loved the Whiterock and in particular where we lived.

So much did she love the bungalows and the people who lived there that, when she won £7760 on St Anthony's pool way back in either '48 or '49, she never even considered moving. In those days that amount of money could have bought you a mansion! Within 3 months her winnings were all gone; given away or spent. Our mother was kind and considerate to all. She was never materialistically minded. In fact, when I hear that peace prayer by St Francis, it always reminds me of Bridget. She was never bitter. Loosing 3

daughters is a terrible experience for any mother to go through, but Bridget kept her feelings and her thoughts about all that to herself.

Our Madge was only 16 when she died. She'd been out roller-skating and fell and cut her knee; it later developed into something called 'sicoma' and she was dead within a year. Bridget and our two aunts, Mary and Anne, nursed Madge at home. That was a sad time for all the family but we got through as only a close family can! There were many happy times as well. Our 'Da', Ned, was a man of few words, but when he had an audience he loved to tell 'yarns'. He was a very interesting man and the younger generation of up and coming republicans in our area loved to listen to his stories about the 'old' IRA. He'd some fascinating tales about his time on the run after his escape from the 'The Crum'. There was a softer, romantic side to our father also. For instance, he still held our mother's hand and would have put his arm around her fondly if they were going out somewhere together. For all the years they were together it was obvious that they were still 'sweet-hearts'.



I remember our Maura and big brother Ned both loved dancing. Maura was a terrific 'jiver' then, so every Saturday night they both would move all the living-room furniture out of the way and invite their friends in and have a dance! Yes, I mean a real live dance in our living room. We had all the latest records of the day; Brenda Lee, Elvis, Cliff Richards, the Shadows and our Maura would dance the night away. She loved music. She was a happy-go-lucky girl.

When Maura brought Mr. and Mrs. Meehan to the house for the first time, Bridget and our father Ned were very impressed. The Meehans were a lovely family who were very polite and well spoken. At the time of Maura and Jim getting married, Ned was working as a ragman, which meant there was never much money about. Even so, Bridget brought me to McMurrays in North Street and got me a suit for the wedding, which she paid for later through 'Standard Cheques'. As the reception was to be held at home, my father went and dug up part of the field where Corpus Christi School is now built and transplanted all the sods to our front garden. He planted carnations and primroses and had it looking lovely for Maura's big day. He was a kind and thoughtful man and all his children had a lot of respect for him.

Maura was kind and generous and well liked in our district. A testament to her popularity was the day of her wedding, when people flooded to our house, invited or not, to wish her well. Maura and Jim lived with us for a while before getting a wee house in Bantry Street. To Maura it was like getting a million pounds. She loved that house and it was always filled with people. Maura kept up her Saturday night parties and Bantry Street would be filled with Jim Meehan's singing. Maura settled into married life and lived for her children. Her children were everything to her.

Then came 1969. The Belfast we grew up in changed and so did Maura. Maura was there when Bombay Street was burned to the ground by Orange mobs led by the 'B' Specials. This affected Maura profoundly. She became very militant. By that, I mean she became involved in the Clonard Women's Action Group which was set up to alert the community if the Brits were raiding homes in the area.

This was really militant for our Maura and for Belfast women in general, because pre '69, their activities would have been family-orientated or would have involved their extended families and most importantly would have been of a passive nature! Maura also quickly became somewhat of a 'community leader' in a very basic sense. Maura was instrumental in setting up other women's support groups in the Lower Falls.

Extraordinary circumstances made my two sisters, Maura and Dorothy, two very extraordinary people, but their lives ended tragically and needlessly.

It is my hope that the truth will be told about their deaths and the cover-up by those who killed them will be exposed. I don't just mean the ones who fired the fatal shots but the ones who had knowledge of the truth and allowed it to be distorted for political reasons. The soldiers who fired the shots knew my sisters were unarmed! It is my belief that they already knew that they would be immune to prosecution and there are so many cases where the 'security forces' killed people and were able to lie in court and get off scot-free. One case that always springs to my mind was the killing of 12 year old Majella O'Hare in Armagh in 1976, 4 years after Maura and Dorothy. Thirty years on, I'm not looking for revenge or retribution. All my brother Thomas, myself and Maura's children want is '**The Truth**'. We need to hear it being acknowledged, in order that we can forgive and let our lives move on without further bitterness. It wasn't just a sister, daughter, mother or wife who died that night 30 years ago; it was our whole family!"





Bridget in happier times, with eldest son Thomas, his wife Jeanie (R.I.P.)  
and friend Kitty Copeland



## **Maura**

Maura Meehan loved her husband Jim and their four young children. Maura didn't want to die. She wanted to enjoy many happy days at home with the man she loved and her children, Gerard (11) Margaret (9) Jim (8) and Eddie (3).

Maura wouldn't have done anything to jeopardize her life or her freedom, so, in the early hours of October 23rd, what Maura, Dorothy, and their friend and neighbour Flo O' Riordan were doing in Billy Davidson's car, was protesting and also warning the community around Cape street that the British Army were once again raiding homes. This, being directly after

the introduction of internment on August 9th weeks earlier, meant that they would be wrecking homes, bullying families and arresting young men, knowing full well that they would be subject to inhumane treatment, and in all probability, torture, at the hands of special branch RUC. So Maura's motive in the early hours of that Saturday morning was to alert the people of the lower Falls to what was happening in the surrounding streets. Maura kissed her four children as she tucked them up in their cosy beds hours earlier; oblivious of what the coming dawn would bring!

### **Jim's memories**

Jim was 8 years old when Maura was murdered. In recent years he would talk over the phone for hours about his mother to his sister Margaret and on one recent call he asked Margaret to write down what he was saying. This was Jim's way of remembering his mother.

### **Life without mum.**

Life at the start was great. My father was a top entertainer and my mother worked at home making dolls and cushions. She had also taken a course on the use of a knitting machine and she wanted to make all our jumpers herself. On 'pay day', we all got twelve and six while other kids in the neighborhood were getting one shilling. Christmas at home was paradise for us. Our mother would start buying toys at the January sales. She would hide them in the loft and then would forget what exactly she had up there and end up buying us more. When Christmas day came, our living room would be like Aladdin's cave with a pathway just wide enough for us to make our way through to the kitchen. My mother really loved us.

Life felt safe and we had everything any child could wish for, until one night as we lay sleeping in our beds a British soldier put an end to our child-hood by shooting dead our mother and Aunt Dorothy. I still remember as if it was yesterday morning. I woke up very early and went half-way down the stairs and looked over the banister and asked my father "Where's Mummy"?

There were a lot of people in the house but suddenly the living room seemed so small to me and my father answered, saying she was away a message and would be back shortly and that I should go back to bed. Then Mrs. Hall, a neighbour, woke us all up and told us to go to Granny Meehan's a few doors away. Two priests were already there and we were told to sit down because our father had something to tell us. Granny stood behind our father and I think she was stroking his hair. He was kneeling down in front of the four of us. He took Margaret by the hand and said, "Margaret you've got to be the woman of the house now". I don't think then that we understood what he meant but he went on "because your Mummy's gone and she won't be coming back". We cried and asked if she didn't love us any more, and our father told us as best he could that she had gone to heaven and would be fixing up somewhere for us to go and join her. We were very young children so it must have been very hard for our father to explain what had happened. He was devastated and in complete shock himself. Looking back now, I ask myself, how did our father cope? How did he cope?

My mother had won £100 on the pools and it was just enough to pay for her coffin. I remember standing looking at my mother in the coffin with her head bandaged. I really wanted my mummy to hold me in her arms and tell me that everything was O.K. and that it was all a bad dream. Eddie looked up and said "Mummy's gone to heaven and forgotten to bring her purse.'

The day we were saying our final goodbye he also said "I can't wait until my mummy wakes up so I can show her my new shoes". I felt so lost. I started blaming myself and thought that I must have done something really bad and this was God's way of punishing me. I even left the monastery where I used to be an altar boy.

We also had to leave our home because of the hate mail our father got from the U.V.F. In the end he was afraid that something would happen to us. He also had to give up his job in the entertainment business because of death threats from the same organization. From 8 years until my teens I don't remember much. We were all too busy learning to do what our mother had always done for us. We went from having a happy family life to living on £17 a week; which caused so many problems for our father, trying to pay all the bills and look after us at the same time. It must have been so hard for him. I tried to join the IRA but my father found out and stopped me.

The soldiers who murdered my mother and Aunt Dorothy could not have consciences, otherwise they would have told the truth at the trial. I still grieve for the mother I love and miss with all my heart. The following is a song that I wrote and dedicated to my mother.



## **No Mother To Love**

Throw away the silver cross

Throw away the P.H.D.

And just give me a mother to love me.

You can keep all those nice things,

like your turtledoves

and just give me a mother to love.

### **Chorus**

No mother to love me.

No mother to hold me.

No mother to tell all my troubles to.

Daddy said she's gone to heaven,

to fix up our new house,

and she will watch over me.

## Chorus

Now she used to preach to me,  
and she used to cook for me,  
and she used to teach me  
the right from wrong.  
How I wish I could say 'sorry'  
for all of my bad things.  
But I can't because she has gone.

## Chorus

So I asked daddy to bring me.  
So I could see mammy.  
But he just cried and said  
"There's no way.  
But when mammy fixes our new house,  
she will come for us,  
and then we can go and stay".

*Chorus.*

Jim's broken heart may never mend; but the truth may at least ease some of the pain!



Margaret

### **Margaret's feelings on paper.**

"I longed for mammy to be there, to hold me and my first born as I held her moments after the birth. I remember sobbing into myself 'Mammy, please help me', over and over again. I needed to share that moment with my mother, just as I had needed her so many times to hold me when things had gone wrong".

Maura's daughter, Margaret Meehan-Kennedy talks about how her life has been over the last 30 years since her mother was murdered by the British Army and how she still hasn't fully come to terms with it. When the cease-fire was announced in August '94 instead of feeling relief that the British Army would be going home and a sense of hope that no one else would be killed, Margaret felt trapped in a time warp. She realizes that 'only the truth can set her free'.



She needs to hear the truth acknowledged about the deaths of her mother and Aunt Dorothy. Before she can be healed, before she can move on with her life, she needs for 'the truth' to be told. After the cease-fire was announced and when people started to tell their stories and ask for the truth to be told about what had happened to their loved ones who had been killed during the troubles, Margaret realised that she had never told her story to anyone nor had her father (R.I.P.) or any of her brothers. They have never been told the truth about the killings of their mother and Aunt Dorothy. Maura and Dorothy were both members of Cuman Na mban (female wing of IRA), so to the British authorities they would have been seen, not as 'victims' but as 'fair game' and after the murders their families were treated with contempt as the lie machines of the British government in Lisburn and Fleet street went into over-drive in an attempt to justify their actions on that night. Margaret speaks for her family in their quest for the truth to be told about 'the night their mother didn't come home'.

Here Margaret, who was 9 years old when her mother was shot dead, recalls some of her childhood memories. "We were a happy family. Myself and my brothers, Gerard, Jim and Eddie, hadn't a care in the world. I'm sure that by October we'd probably have be thinking about what Santa would bring us for that Christmas. We had always started writing our letters to Santa early. Our mother loved Christmas and all our birthdays and they were real special occasions in our house.



In fact, my first memory of living at No.5 Bantry Street was of my seventh birthday. Mammy had got me a pair of roller skates and she'd hid them behind the settee so I wouldn't see them before my birthday. I remember kissing and hugging her as she tied the laces up for me and then she held my hand and walked me out to the street and watched and waited to see if I'd fall - she'd be there to pick me up. Our world was so good then - so innocent. At Christmas our small living room would be like Santa's Grotto. Mammy would start getting the Christmas toys from January sales and she would put them all away in the attic. We always thought that Santa lived in our attic. Though Mammy did all the shopping, our father did all the organising and cooking on Christmas day. He was a hard worker and a good provider and before our mother died we never did without anything. We were truly blessed with good parents. I suppose the happiness and security we had before mammy died gave us the strength we needed after she'd gone to get on with our lives and to help one another.

The nightmare of our family life falling apart still haunts me and at times I can't come to terms with the enormity of what we endured from 1971. It still upsets me to think that we

were ignored as if we didn't matter to the authorities here. We were never offered counseling or any sort of practical help and our father had to give up work (which he did willingly) to take care of us but unfortunately also his career in the cabaret circuit was ruined by threats and intimidation from the U.V.F. and other loyalist groups. My father was an easy target for them because most of his cabaret spots were in the bigger clubs in the city centre. He received a lot of hate mail. In the beginning he kept it from us but in the end we had to be told for our own safety. Eventually we had to move house because we'd received so many threatening letters from the same paramilitaries that had threatened to kill our father.

It is only now I realize that all the trouble I got into at school, which finally led to me being expelled, was part of a kind of mental block I was going through because really I didn't grieve. I kept all my feelings and emotions locked up so no one could see how much I was hurting inside. When my mother was taken from us, I was left bewildered by it all. My mother was a good person, a wonderful mother and my life was empty without her.

I know my Aunt Roisin, our father's sister, did all she could for us especially when daddy had to work, and I love her for that, but I still find it hard to explain that for 25 years I think I was in denial - we went to bed one night, Mammy tucked us in, kissed us goodnight and the next morning she was gone forever - never to return. Nothing in my life made any sense until I met my husband Terry. He helped me to understand that some of the things which happened to me since my mother died and that I just couldn't cope with, were a symptom of not being able to face up to my mother's murder. Terry is my rock and I thank God for him but I need the truth now more than ever. My children also need to know the truth. They feel a sense of loss also, and now they're beginning to grieve with me. My eldest daughter, Maura Rose, is very articulate and wants to know why she was deprived of a grandmother. It really frustrates her to think that the soldiers responsible got away with

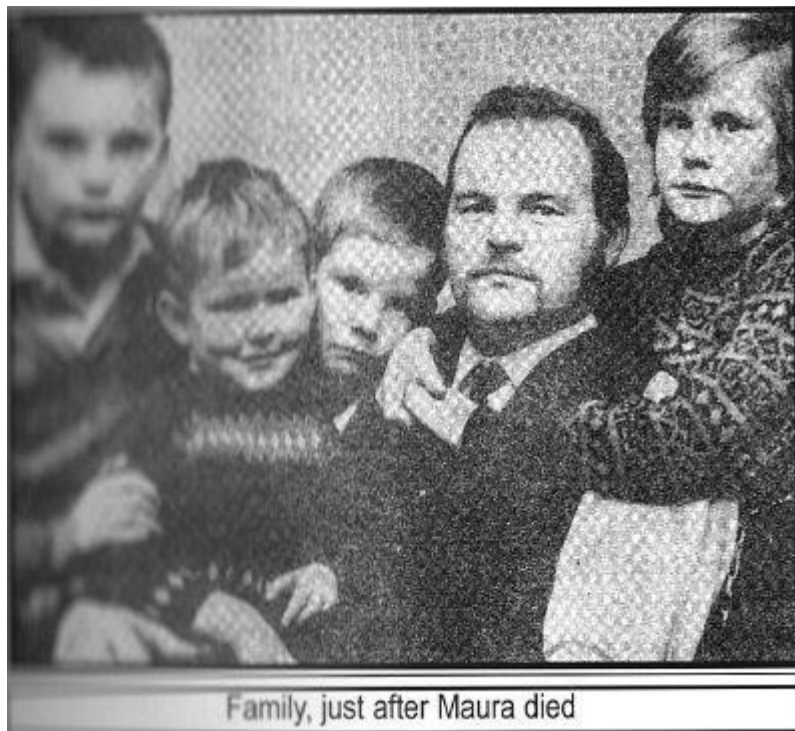
murdering her grandmother and aunt. When I think of how knowing and loving someone as beautiful as her would have enriched the lives of my Mother's grandchildren, my heart breaks. Time hasn't changed a thing - my mother and Aunt Dorothy were both murdered, we were deprived of a wonderful and loving mother and our father lost not only his wife but his best friend and only love. And 30 years on, justice has still not been done!

**Jim Meehan** to all the world, was a man who, because he was an entertainer, was able to put on 'a face to meet the faces'; even with those who knew him well, Jim would still disguise the hurt he was feeling inside, in reality that was the only way he could cope with the loss of Maura, especially because of the suddenness and savagery of it. Over night his life was in pieces; pieces that were never put together again; only his family knew of the real devastation he went through and it was after his death that his sister Roísín found the following letter he wrote to God in desperation and pleading for help some time after Maura's death. These are the sentiments of a heart-broken husband and father.

'Oh God; please pull me back from the brink of this despair. I am so alone and broken-hearted with out my Maura. I know I have to stay strong for the kids' sake. Margaret is only nine years old and has taken on the responsibility of mothering her three brothers. Gerard is trying to be a man but the tears I feel each morning on his pillow tell the true story that he is only a child who needs and misses his mammy so much. Jim is too young to hide his feelings, everyone he meets he tells them about Maura and that she is in heaven. Our poor, poor Eddie doesn't know yet that his mammy won't be coming back; at 3 years old a child has no understanding about British soldiers or murder or the mutilated body of the beautiful mother who bore him – that same body that nourished and gave him life and hope – hope of a decent future. Oh God – I have no more tears left in me. My eyes and mind can't see a future – any future. God forgive me for thinking like this. I can't talk to anyone but you. I pretend I'm not hurting but there is nothing left inside my being to feel

hurt any more. Maura has gone, I can't see her in this life again. I look forward to being united with her in the next – for I believe God, that she is resting with you. Dorothy and Maura are together. All the threats and beatings from the RUC and the Brits – I must be going insane – I don't even feel a thing – what keeps me going God are the children and a promise I made to Maura as I buried her that I'd fight for the rest of my life to get justice for her and Dorothy. Maura and Dorothy were murdered in cold blood God, they were shot in the back, their bodies blown away; those Brits thought nothing about killing them, it was a miracle that the four of them in the car weren't all killed; the Brits just went on shooting, they knew they'd get away with it from before they fired the first round! Irish people don't matter to them – all the hate mail – I don't take any heed of it anymore. The things they say about Maura – I couldn't gloat like that – even if I knew the soldiers who shot Maura were killed themselves. Their lives don't matter to me. Their deaths won't make any difference to me either!

Please God help me! Help me to help myself. Help my poor children to survive all this – they have been robbed of a wonderful mother who can never be replaced. Help me God to be a good father to my children. God – please hear my prayer'.



Jim used his gift of singing from the age of seven. He was a 'boy soprano' in the Clonard choir and was also an alter boy there. His favorite song which he would sing to Maura was 'Hear my song'.

### **Aunt Roisin**

The children's Aunt Roisin recalls with so much sadness the day Maura's body was carried in to her former home. "My husband and I have worried over the children all their lives, especially young Gerard who sat outside the door when his mother's remains were brought home and couldn't even cry. He just sat there playing his little guitar and quietly singing to himself. That was how the child grieved! They carried their grief through their lives and it affected them all in different ways. Everyone tried to get on with living, but we will all take to our graves the sorrow and heartbreak over the murders of Maura and Dorothy.



Maura's granddaughter, **Maura-Rose Kennedy**, now 17 years old, feels that she and her brothers and sister were robbed of a grandparent and feels that the media at the time did not do enough to expose the lies told by the British Army about her grandmother and aunt's deaths. This is what Maura-Rose says:

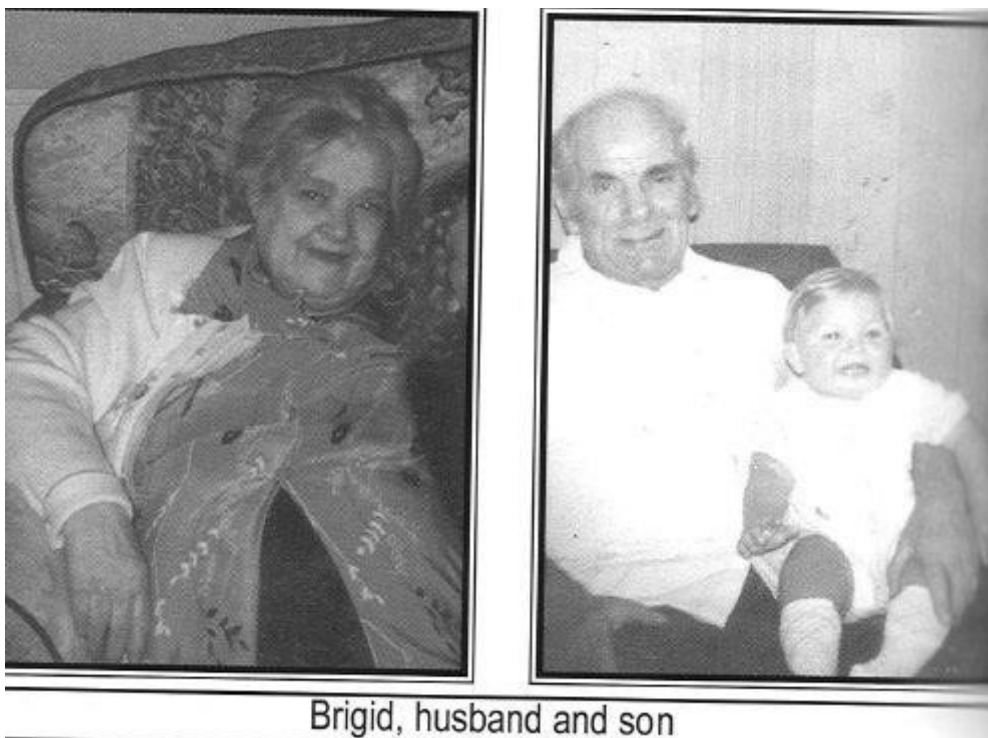
"Everything only began to come clear when I was about six years old. All the kids looked through the soldiers' guns and I wasn't allowed near them. I saw it really angered my mummy. This is when my mummy began to explain. The whole terrible impact of my granny being shot through the back of her head was so much to take in at the time. I became withdrawn for a while and clung to my mummy constantly. I was afraid to let her out of my sight, especially if the Brits were about our street or anywhere that we'd happen to be. It wasn't until I was much older and read about the lies the British Army told about that awful night that I became interested in politics. I mean the politics of oppression. It's

frightening to believe that our lives really aren't in our own control. To think of what happened to my Granny and Aunt Dorothy really hurts and angers me. I see what the soldiers have done to my family. They deprived my mummy of a mother when she was only nine years old. They deprived us of a grandmother and all because she was out protesting. There were no guns or bombs in the car - only foghorns and whistles. The car was traveling up Cape Street with its headlights on full and those soldiers knew it was a protest. There were people on street corners banging bin lids and blowing whistles nearby, so why did they shoot into the car? I wonder if the three soldiers who shot them ever think about them?

I only know my Granny by the pictures my Mummy and her aunts have shown me. They've told me lots of stories about her, and she was a very interesting and lovable woman. By shooting my Granny dead, those soldiers also killed a piece of me before I was born - a piece of my world that I can never fully know or enjoy except through photographs and stories. Just like my Mummy, to put all this pain behind me, I also need the truth to not only be told but to be acknowledged".

**Brigid Cairns** a neighbour and close friend of Maura:





Brigid, husband and son

Brigid, now 82 years old, fondly looks back on happier times in the Clonard neighbourhood.

“It’s hard to think of Maura being ‘old’, she would have been 61 this year, but she was always young and full of life and fun. We lived in Tralee Street and Maura moved into Bantry Street. We just seemed to ‘click’, both having the same happy go lucky nature, I suppose that’s what it was. We were two gigglers and sometimes in the Clonard novena on a Thursday we’d take a giggling fit and one of us would have to go outside or stand at the back until it was over. We both loved the sales and we’d travel anywhere for a bargain. Maura loved everyone to be happy. In the long hot summer evenings, neighbours would take tables out onto the street and have parties. The children would all be running about playing and skipping with the bigger ones looking after the younger ones and all us women would sit around eating and gossiping. Many a sore heart was cheered or a problem halved around those tables. Neighbours were neighbours then. I lost a true friend when Maura died. I heard the shooting that Saturday morning and someone ran up the street

some time later shouting 'Maura Meehan and her wee sister's dead'. I ran out and the rest is a blur! Life was never the same after that.

Tralee and Bantry Street are gone now. They hold such sweet and yet bitter memories for me. My youngest child Sean was murdered by loyalist gunmen eight years after the British army murdered Maura. Maura's crime was sounding a fog-horn in protest at the army raiding homes in Cape Street. Cape Street's gone now too. My Sean was sitting with his father watching TV when a gunman walked in and shot him through the head. He was just 19 years old. His father was also shot in the head but thank God he survived. We lived yards from the peace line and I sometimes wonder why it's called 'the peace line'? God made us all equal, they say, but I think the unionist government made their own more equal than the rest of us!"

Nothing can ever bring Maura back to her children or undo the past, but as a united community we seek only to know the truth, the real truth of that fateful night, not only out of respect for Maura and Dorothy's families but because we are entitled to know the truth. The lies told by the 'security forces' has affected us all here in the six counties, the extent to which as individuals we may never know. Perhaps all these years later the truth will matter enough to someone in the British army who was in Cape street that night, that they may want to break the silence of deceit. There must be some one!

## Dorothy



Dorothy

Dorothy Maguire was born at Number 48 West Rock Drive on April 3rd 1953. Nurse Mary Owens who delivered her had her hands blessed by Pope Pius V11. This fact must have pleased Bridget for she was a very religious woman and would have seen this as a blessing for her baby daughter. Dorothy grew up a young girl full of dreams and an energy that generated an eagerness to experience every thing that life could offer. Like any young girl of her age she must have thought that she'd have time to fall in love, to get married, to have children and time to enjoy that special happiness that love brings to the young. Dorothy would skip across fields singing as she'd take the short cut down the Whiterock to Jim's café, the meeting place for all her friends. Maybe she'd even try to 'catch the wind', as she would feel its soothing touch sweeping back the long brown hair from around her young face.

Jim's café was situated at the foot of the Whiterock road and was a favourite haunt for many of the teenagers from around Ballymurphy/Whiterock area. They would all congregate there to eat chips and listen to the latest 'pop' music on the jukebox. If a boy really liked a girl, he would show it by buying her a chip and then usually she would let him walk her home, if she liked him; but even if she didn't like him she would still eat the chip!

When I spoke to Dorothy's friends about their relationships with her they all agreed that in remembering Dorothy they felt happy.

They laughed and cried, but what struck me was that none of them had even hinted that she had any faults. She was loved by them all! They all agreed that Dorothy had a positive effect on their lives, even after her death. She had introduced them to republicanism and had led them by example.



Front row: Teresa Ward, Geraldine O'Hagan, Bernie Reid (Captain), Bridie Boyle, Geraldine Lynas, Geraldine Mc Laughlin. Holding cup, Anne Herald.  
Back row: Stella Henry, Dorothy Maguire (R.I.P.) Elena Cahill, Stella Garland, Jeannie Browne, Lily Hall (R.I.P.) Geraldine Smyth, Rose Nesbitt.

Dorothy was a keen sports woman in G.A.A. circles. She was a member of 'Sean Tracey' camogie team. They won the Antrim County Minor Championship in 1963. Dorothy played right full forward. Their team was known as a hard team to play and they played with a united front on and off the field. Here are some of the tributes and memories her friends and comrades recall.



Anne Maguire

**Anne Maguire** was Maura and Dorothy's sister in law. She was married to their brother Michael. Anne's last memory of Dorothy was the day before she was shot dead. In fact Dorothy had brought Anne to the hospital after a rubber bullet fired by a paratrooper had rebounded, hitting Anne on the stomach. She was 3 months pregnant at the time and subsequently miscarried. Anne, along with many other women from the area, had been protesting in Ballymurphy Road because the Paras had been raiding houses, arresting and beating men on the street. The women had gathered and were banging bin lids. This was the course of passive action that had been decided on at public meetings in all nationalist districts, to be taken in order to alert people to what was happening in their own areas.

If the British Army were invading homes then everyone should know, and the bin lid was found to be the best form of communicating that information. The response from local women was always instantaneous.

Anne's memories of Maura and Dorothy are mostly happy memories. "Dorothy was the youngest of the family and Bridget spoiled her. She knew how to get round Bridget but it was hard for anyone to resist Dorothy's happy go lucky way. Though she was very impulsive, she was seldom wrong in her judgment about certain situations and she always seemed to make the right decisions. I think also that she was a natural leader and, had

she lived longer, I have no doubt that her leadership skills would have been a great asset in the present political climate. Losing Maura and Dorothy the way we did was so unfair; all those broken hearts cannot be mended, but perhaps the truth about their deaths may be a start".



Dorothy's Best Friend

**Anne's sister, Marie** was one of Dorothy's close friends and they had known one another since childhood. Indeed this was the case with all the circle of friends Dorothy had. They have all remained friends throughout their lives. They came from a tightly knit community, and with an inbred sense of pride in all the achievements the people of their community made over the years, despite their continued vilification by the then Status Quo. Protecting their community was like second nature to them all, and it seemed the most natural thing in the world for that group of young girls, who watched in horror as the British army, RUC and loyalist gun-men brought murder and mayhem to their streets, to become part of the defense of their beloved Ballymurphy. They had for years played

together as a team on the sports field; now they were to play on a more serious playing field, in a different sort of 'ball game'.

"Dorothy was a girl full of life and fun; eager to experience all that life had to offer. Maura was a caring, sensible woman determined to do the best she could for her family. Their brutal murder left a feeling of deep sadness in me; and a determination not to let this happen to any more of my friends". (Quote from Marie Valley-Gavaghan)

Dorothy met Marie early on the evening of 22<sup>nd</sup>. They had arranged to go over to Ardoyne to meet someone, but their plans changed and Marie was going over alone. They walked some distance together and as they parted, Dorothy told Marie to 'take care'. Dorothy decided to go with Maura to Kathleen Morelli's going-away party that night and also to sleep over in Maura's. Marie never saw Dorothy alive again; nor did she see her dead; because her injuries were so horrific that the coffin could not be opened. Two years later, Marie was given a 22-year prison sentence on a bombing charge. She spent 6 years in Armagh jail. After her release she moved to Dublin where she married and had 3 sons. Marie was politically aware at a very young age; she was always articulating the Sinn Fein point of view with her peers and it was a natural progression in her political development to stand as the Sinn Fein candidate in the Bray Urban District and Wicklow Co Council election of June 1999. Although Marie didn't win the seat, she was able to double the Sinn Fein vote.

**Bridie McMahon** first met Dorothy at school. Bridie only found out after Dorothy's death that she had been a member of Cuman na mban. Bridie talks with pride about Dorothy. "Dorothy was my inspiration. We were so close from 8 years old. I felt it was so brave of her - she didn't tell me - I was not from a republican background so I didn't read the signs. My life was shattered - I lost my best friend - I was stunned - I couldn't believe what had

happened her - she was gone. Mary Herald and Collette McArdle broke the news to me. The place was in bedlam; people were in the street – stunned - word passed from one to the other. There were emotional scenes everywhere as people, young and old embracing and crying, some screaming. I'll never forget it to the day I die.

I have so many good memories of Dorothy and all our friends. We played camogie for 'Sean Traceys'. Mary and Joe Herald ran the club. They were wonderful people and brought us everywhere in Ireland to play camogie. If it hadn't been for them I probably would never have seen outside of Belfast in my childhood. Mary and Joe would have taught us a lot about all the historical sites in Ireland and they even brought us to kiss the Blarney stone.

The only fella I can ever remember Dorothy going out with was Martin Walsh. Dorothy and myself went over to the Saunders' club every Tuesday night in Ardoyne to hear Kathleen Largey sing. Dorothy loved to hear Kathleen sing 'Four Green Fields'. Before our weekly pilgrimage to Ardoyne we always stopped off at 'Georges' the wee shop there at the bottom of the Giants Foot and we would borrow 10 No.6's and some cheese to eat on the way. We always paid it back the following day when we'd get our dole. Dorothy would wait for Martin to come in and she would always keep a seat for him next to her. He didn't drink so he'd have his car with him and would leave us home. I don't know which she fancied first, Martin or the car! He was interned when she died, so that must have been hard for him.

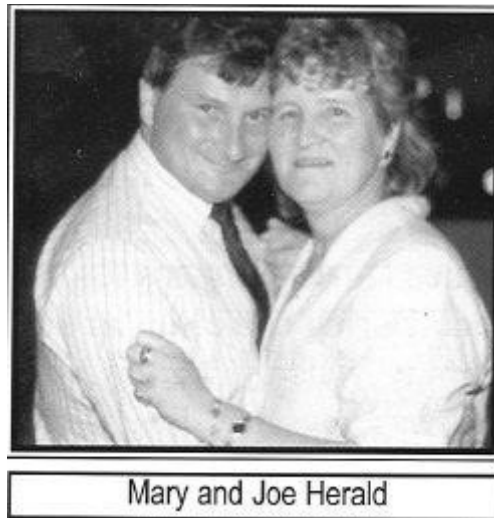
After Dorothy and Maura were buried, Maura Drumm gave a speech at the electricity post at the bottom of Westrock bungalows telling people 'not to shout 'up the IRA' but to join them'; I took her advice, for which I have no regrets, and got to spend 'time' with Maura in



Armagh jail a few months later. Maura got a 3-month sentence for inciting people to join the IRA and I got 5 years for the possession of a weapon!

I think if Dorothy was alive today, she would be up in Stormont fighting our patch. She loved people. My own personal tribute to my friend Dorothy has been to live life as best I can and to the full. She is my inspiration, I'll always love her".

**Mary Herald**, Dorothy and Maura's cousin was with Bridget when Dorothy told her that she had joined Cumann na mban; Mary tells here of Dorothy's sincerity and determination to fight for the cause of Irish freedom. "I was really taken aback by the maturity with which Dorothy was able to articulate her feelings about what exactly was going on in the country, and in particular here in the 6 counties. She was also very critical of the Fianna Fáil government in the 26 counties and Jack Lynch in particular for his negative response to the cries for help from people here in the north. I suddenly realized that Dorothy had a side to her that I'd never seen before! Being the youngest, Bridget had her spoiled, and I suppose really because I was so much older than Dorothy was, we'd never had that kind of serious conversation before. She seemed to be over-joyed at being in the Cumann na mban and her talk was that of someone who was fearless. I knew in my heart that Dorothy's destiny was, from that moment on, mapped out, and that she would continue to follow that road until she either reached a prison cell or her death! Sadly, it was the latter. I remember Dorothy and all the 'Sean Tracys' on the field playing. My husband Joe was their trainer and I was captain. They were 'a force to be dealt with' and their aim was always to win – no matter what the opposition - all these fun-loving, gentle girls, on the pitch suddenly turned into 'the most gifted and talented team I ever experienced – and that is not just my opinion – I loved and respected the team – as much as I know they loved and respected myself and Joe".



Mary and Joe Herald

**Mary Moore** still has the claddagh ring she bought for Dorothy a few months before her death. “I was away for a week’s holiday. Dorothy couldn’t come; and because she loved jewellery, especially rings, I brought her back a claddagh ring with a Connemara marble stone set in it. She was wearing it the night she died. Her mother Bridget gave it to me after the funeral – the stone was missing and in its place was Dorothy’s blood! I cherish that ring. Thirty years later and I still miss her. I loved her!”

**Martin Walsh** and Dorothy were friends since August '69 when Ballymurphy was thrown into turmoil by the influx of refugees taking shelter there in the aftermath of their homes being burned down by loyalist mobs and ‘B’ specials. Like every other person in the community, their lives were never going to be the same again. Their lifestyles would change phenomenally. They were both republican activists and so would have seen a lot of one another prior to internment in '71. Martin remembers fondly about his relationship with Dorothy. “I would have been in and out of Bridget’s a lot from 1969, she was a very kind lady and helped everyone with little thought for her own safety. No one ever left her house with an empty stomach or in bad form either; it was a place where the craic was great and you were treated like one of Bridget’s own family. Dorothy had the same kind

nature as Bridget. Most of our social dating was actually done in Dorothy's brother and sister-in-law's house, Mickey and Anne's - we would baby-sit. Dorothy loved music. I wasn't that keen; but I'd pretend to enjoy listening to 'Patsy Cline' and 'Buddy Holly' just to be with her.

"When I was interned, Dorothy borrowed my mother's wedding ring and came up to visit me, giving her name as Mrs. Dorothy Walsh. Dorothy was a beautiful and wonderful girl. She was my first love and that is always something very special. I was really gutted when I got the news that Dorothy and Maura were dead. I just couldn't believe it and it took a long time for it to sink in. My wife and myself visit her grave from time to time. Thirty years later and I still see her, with that long, light brown hair being blown gently back from her face by the wind!"



Member of 'the guard of honour' at Dorothy's wake.

### **Member of 'the guard of honour' at Dorothy's wake.**

Although I had been a member of Cumann na mban for several years, this was the first time I had the privilege of being part of 'the guard of honour' at the funeral of a fallen volunteer and really I still at times feel overwhelmed by that privilege. Dorothy was a soldier and she died while protesting at the British presence in the 6 counties and I saluted her courage. We all took turns standing at attention at her tri-coloured draped coffin - my position was at the top end of the coffin where the green of the flag was draped. The coffin was closed and as a soldier I had to suppress my emotions, which given the circumstances was a very hard thing to do! We were dismissed every 20 minutes and

another guard took over for a further 20 minutes, this discipline was carried through until the actual burial. It seemed at one stage that thousands of people came to the Maguire home to pay tribute to Dorothy. It was amazing, as many of these people weren't from the area and from their conversations with the family, I gathered that many of them didn't know Dorothy or Maura; (who was being waked from her home in Bantry Street) but everyone there seemed to empathize with one another in a shared display of transparent pain; I had never witnessed tears flow so abundantly or unashamedly in such a mass of people before. Later on in the struggle if I ever felt that things weren't going well, I got strength and inspiration from remembering that mass of people who came to the Maguire home and who walked behind the two bodies of our fallen comrades. Dorothy may not have lived long, but her example lives forever. (Member of Cumann na mban Belfast Brigade 1971)

## **Brigid Hanna**

"I knew both Maura and Dorothy and I was deeply upset by the manner in which they died. They were protesting at the British Army who were raiding and wrecking homes in the lower Falls and they were shot dead for that. I hope and pray that the day will come when the truth will be known of how two innocent women were brutally murdered on that terrible night".

**Gerry Adams**, President of Sinn Féin and M.P. for West Belfast.

(With kind permission from Gerry Adams to use the following abstract from 'Remembering a Hedgehog' taken from his book 'Selected Writings')

"In 1971, while thinking all these thoughts, I walked through the Whiterock towards Ballymurphy. It was about one o'clock in the morning. The Paras were garrisoned in the

area but we usually got plenty of warning from the local people as to their whereabouts, so I strolled along letting my thoughts wander with me. Coming along Westrock Drive I noticed a small bundle huddled close to the kerb on the road beside me. You probably won't believe this, but there I was a few seconds later, kneeling on the road face to face with ... a hedgehog. I got pretty excited, never having met a real live hedgehog before, so I pulled off my anorak and with much caution least I was bitten or, even worse, speared by one of its spines, I edged it into my clothy container and headed for some safe refuge. Bridget's was the nearest and most obvious place, so I cut across the gardens, close to where the cheeser trees had once stood and Huskey's – for all they had done to it – didn't seem so far away.

To my dismay, however, no one in Bridget's shared my excitement. They had tolerated me long enough so they weren't surprised to see me arriving as I did, in the middle of their session, shirt-sleeved and with a destitute hedgehog wrapped up in my jacket. But they were not amused, and Bridget gave off about fleas as I deposited my prickly friend on her sofa; only Dorothy, the daughter of the house, was at all interested in my story. Bridget's was one of those houses – an aluminium bungalow, in fact – in which neighbours gathered for a late-night bingo session and a bit of *craic*. I had disrupted all this and I suffered as a result.

“What are you going to do with that?” asked a girl, who, incidentally, I later married.

“I'm going to set it free,” I declared.

“If the Paras catch you it'll look good in the papers,” Bridget threw in: “‘Charged with possession of a hedgehog’.” The neighbours laughed, I took a reddener and the hedgehog rolled itself up even tighter.

“Well, I’m going to have to do something with it,” I said lamely.

“You’re not leaving it here,” Bridget warned, “a dirty oul’ thing like that. Throw it over Corrigan Park wall. That’s probably where it came from.” “The Brits use Corrigan at night,” Dorothy said. “Look, it’s stretching itself out!” she exclaimed. And so it was. A small, wet, pig-like snout and two bright, intelligent eyes had emerged from the bundle of prickles on the sofa as the hedgehog adjusted to the heat in Bridget’s front room. “He’s making himself comfortable,” someone declared. “Are we going to get on with our game?” another more crabbit neighbour moaned. “Take him out of that and let’s get on with our bingo.” “C’mon into the back,” Dorothy suggested to me. “Here, you carry it.” So into the back we went. “Flip me,” I complained, “I’m always in trouble. What am I going to do?” “Take it to Riddel’s Field. I’ll watch out for the Brits for you and it will only take us a minute anyway. We could skate up and down before me Ma knows we’re away,” Dorothy whispered excitedly. “C’mon, if we don’t leave it somewhere safe the dogs’ll ate lumps out of it. No use sitting there with a big long face on you. I’ll switch off the lights and we can sneak out.” And so we sneaked out. Back we went along the way I had walked earlier, across the bungalows and into the ‘Rock, where we visited Mrs. Crowe’s for a few minutes, and then off again with Dorothy willing the Brits away from us and me nervous in the now deserted streets with their dark, sleeping houses. On till we got to the Giant’s Foot. A minute later I was up and over the gap in the wall and the hedgehog was dumped amid the undergrowth along the outskirts of the field. I returned a little breathless to Dorothy and together we hurried back towards her mother’s. The excitement was over and our journey home seemed longer and sillier with every shadow we passed. “If I get caught I’ll kill you, wee girl,” I hissed. “You’ll be all right,” she laughed. “You’re always gurning about something.

You wouldn't have wanted your stupid hedgehog killed, would you? Sure, here we are, home again. I told you it would be easy. They probably didn't even miss us."

And they didn't. We told them but they thought we were stupid, and they were right of course. Getting caught for the sake of a hedgehog would have been as thick as champ. At least I thought so. Dorothy didn't. She reckoned it was sound. "After all," she exclaimed, "you couldn't let the poor wee thing die, now could you?"

A few short months later Dorothy herself was dead. She and Maura, her older sister, heard of a Brit raid in the Falls while they were at a party. They rushed off in a friend's car to warn the people there. A Brit patrol opened fire on the car and killed the two sisters. It was early in the morning, a morning just like the one we spent bringing the hedgehog to safety. And Dorothy, who had grown up near Huskey's Field, became the first volunteer soldier of Cumann na mban to be killed by British troops. Bridget Maguire lost her two daughters, and myself and the girl I later married lost a friend.

Anytime I think of Huskey's Field, of Westrock, the Murph, Springhill, The Giant's Foot, or of hedgehogs, I think of Dorothy. She was nineteen. She will be five years dead next month. You wouldn't think it was as long ago as that. Isn't it strange how Long Kesh sharpens memories like these?

(1990) Cage Eleven

**Kate Mc Guinness** was Dorothy's next door neighbour and one of her close friends.

Kate says that to say that she still misses Dorothy is an understatement. "We were so close, we were like sisters. In the long summer nights we'd sneak out through the windows and have parties in Ned's van at the corner of the lane. The 'parties' would have consisted of a feast of lemonade and crisps. We would sing all our favorite songs. We had so many great times, all happy. Dorothy and I did everything together – we even talked about doing



bridesmaid for one another – even though we weren't going steady with anyone at the time.

We used to talk about how many children we'd have, what names we liked and we took it for granted that we'd always be neighbours. Part of me died with Dorothy. I'll never get over her death"

Kate was arrested on a bombing charge in 1973 and sentenced to 12 years in Armagh jail.

Kate married in 1986 and has 2 children. Her bridesmaids were her sister Maureen and sister-in-law Edel.

**Neighbour of Maguire Family** "I knew both Maura and Dorothy since they were children. I was very upset at the manner in which they died. They were protesting at the British army raiding and wrecking homes in the lower Falls and they were shot dead for that. Those who murdered them got away with it; maybe they even got medals as a reward; who knows; but thirty years later perhaps one of them will come forward and admit the truth of what really happened that night. It would matter to a great many people, if the British Army would acknowledge our need for the truth. The Maguire and Meehan families were treated very badly afterwards by the British army, the RUC and the British media as well. I think at that time in our troubled history, the lack of acknowledging the truth about the wrong-doing by state forces in the 6 counties, was probably the deciding factor for many young people who were contemplating joining the IRA. They believed that really was the only way to make things right for catholic people.

Nowadays we say nationalist people but in '71 we were called catholic. Maura was a lovely woman who did her best for her children. She wanted them to live in a secure world, free from discrimination and oppression. Dorothy, I think, would have made a considerable

contribution to the whole struggle. She was a smart girl and she had a mind of her own. People liked her and she had plenty of friends. It was my pleasure to have known them. I salute them both!”.

**Collette Mc Ardle** “I knew Dorothy for all of her life. My parents and her parents were close friends and for a time neighbours in Whiterock Drive before the Maguires moved into Westrock bungalows. I was a few years older than Dorothy. I remember when her father Ned Maguire died. That was the first time I saw anyone getting a republican funeral. Ned was very famous in the Whiterock. He had escaped from Crumlin Road Jail with Hugh McAteer and Jimmy Steele and a few others and there were many stories told about his exploits.

Brigid Maguire, Dorothy’s mother, was a very kind woman who had a very hard life. I loved her. She reared a large family and before she herself died she lost her husband, three daughters, Dorothy, Maura and Madge her oldest girl who died of a sickness and Martin, a well-known boxer who died of cancer. Dorothy was the youngest of the family. She and I played camogie with the Sean Traceys. She was a very good hurler. I wasn’t surprised when she joined Cumann na mban. She was always very alert and knowledgeable about what was going on politically, though if you didn’t know her she would not have given you that impression. When the British Army killed Dorothy and Maura, I remember Paddy Root coming to where Gerry, my husband, and I were staying. I heard Paddy saying that Dorothy was dead. It was in the early morning. I was in bed and I kept my eyes shut tight trying to block out what I heard. I just couldn’t believe it. I cried and cried and cried.

When Dorothy’s remains were brought home with Maura’s, we had to keep Dorothy’s coffin closed. I remember Bridget asking me why she couldn’t see Dorothy. It was because

Dorothy had no face left. She was shot in the back of the head. Thirty years on I still see her face and I can hear her funny wee laugh. The Maguires were my other family. Dorothy was my wee sister.



Sean Tracey reunion around 1965: back row: Liam Magee Anne Nugent Bernie Smith Mary and Joe Herald  
front row: Colette Mc Ardle Anne-Marie Meenan and Mary Linsay)

**Republican activist from Broadway:** “I recall the atmosphere following the deaths, neither time nor anything else that happened since has ever softened the way I felt about the Brits shooting dead two women from this road in the back and getting away with it.

By that I mean they went to Court to testify against Billy Davidson and Flo O’ Riordan and they told lies about what happened that night. How a court of law believed them, in retrospect, isn’t surprising, given that the system of law here was corrupt in favour of anyone opposed to nationalism. Things are changing, but we still have a long way to go before Northern Ireland can claim to be a society that embraces all it’s children - equally. But to return to that awful Saturday, I remember the feeling of despair; it hung like a low cloud over Belfast, so strong was that feeling of despair, it was almost tangible. And still to

this day when I think about the deaths of Maura Meehan and Dorothy, I find myself trapped almost in that same outrage that engulfed our whole community when the news broke of what had happened. Their killings were not an isolated incident; it was only about 10 weeks after the internment killings by the Brits up in Ballymurphy and Moyard when 7 civilians were killed including Mrs. Connolly and Fr. Mullan and it was about 13 weeks before Bloody Sunday. Their slaying caused me to double my efforts and commitment to rid (maybe the proper word is free) our country from British oppression. They shot us in the back and then told the world that we deserved it!

I was lucky in that I had a good job at the start of the troubles and had somehow avoided internment. Although I didn't know Maura I remember the first time I met Dorothy, it was on a number 11 bus (the no.11 was the Whiterock Road route). I boarded the bus at Broadway and went upstairs, as did all smokers. The conductor was taking fares and it happened that Dorothy was one penny short of the 7 1/2p fare into town. The conductor was about to put her off the bus; (it wasn't unusual at that time for a conductor to exert his authority in this way – human kindness is seldom associated with those in uniform), anyway I went over and gave him the penny. Dorothy was very embarrassed – we never spoke – though after that incident on the bus we would acknowledge one another with eye contact when our paths would cross through our republican activities!"



Bridget & Ned in Dublin

## **1969 and the Road to Cape Street**

Maura was a housewife and the mother of four young children in 1969. The children were then aged: Gerard 9, Margaret 7, Jim 6 and Eddie 1 year old. In the daytime her husband Jim worked as a lorry driver and at night he worked as a cabaret singer in Belfast city centre. They had a good income and had plans to buy their own home.

The summer of '69 was a dry summer so their children, like all the other children from the Clonard area, would have been allowed out to play about the street despite the growing tensions that existed all over the six counties. This, though, was possibly more apparent in Belfast in areas that bordered on 'boundary areas' separating Catholics from Protestants. Despite the uneasy atmosphere, people still went about their everyday business and children still played, oblivious to the coming onslaught of death and destruction that would be inflicted by 'orange mobs' and 'B specials' against a defenseless catholic community, and watched by the armed and sectarian forces of the 6 county unionist government, the RUC. Every house in Bombay Street was burned to the ground as families fled their homes in all the surrounding streets from the Clonard area. In fact, hundreds of families from all over Belfast were burned or intimidated out of their homes and ended up taking refuge in school halls or with relatives. The lives of catholic families living in working class estates in the six counties were about to be changed forever and people would be driven down a road from which there could be no return. The only way forward was to unite and create a situation that would bring about permanent change from the hostile form of sectarian government that had misruled the catholic population for 50 years by deception, corruption, exclusion, and maintained by its own armed 'police force', the RUC. No-one within the status quo was willing to do anything that would challenge the Unionist government's treatment of the Catholic population.

Even the Catholic hierarchy of the day would turn the other cheek constantly, rather than attempt to unite its flock in challenging and trying to peacefully change a government that enslaved them as second-class citizens in their own country.

Silence echoed a reluctance from influential bodies, both inside and outside of Ireland, to become involved in helping to dismantle the unfair structures that were the hallmark of the

six county orange state, and help rebuild it with foundation blocks cemented by equality for all. This must have given the Unionist people a signal that their Government's treatment of the catholic population was acceptable to the world outside its secret corridors of power. They were blatantly proud of their sectarianism towards Catholics, and especially in the field of housing and employment where it was almost impossible for a Catholic person or family to be treated in any way other than with contempt or bias by would-be employers and Belfast Corporation (later replaced by the Housing Executive), who were then in charge of the housing.

Both Maura and Dorothy lived through a time when getting a job depended on what school you went to. Experience or qualifications were a secondary consideration to religion. Up until the civil rights campaign for 'one man, one vote' many Catholics accepted the second-class status. They knew it was wrong but lack of leadership from within the Catholic Church and community re-enforced a false belief that 'this is the way things are and there's nothing we can do about it' attitude. Catholics, pre '69, needed strong, confident guidance and a sense that they were not alone. Unfortunately no one was willing to take the lead. If the rest of Ireland had stood up to the forces of the 'one party state' then many of us would not have had to experience the misery of sectarianism which the British Government allowed and indeed encouraged to flourish freely in the 6 counties and which has caused so much loss of life, imprisonment and suffering. That fact has lessened or deprived us all of the joy of living our lives in a society built by ourselves with mutual trust, respect and equality for all the people of this Island. The Catholic acceptance of second-class citizenship is best illustrated by the following.

Until possibly the early 70's in the larger work places, many Protestants, when the 12th fortnight was approaching, (i.e. the 2 week summer holiday break for industry in Northern

Ireland, which facilitated the Orange Order well as this fortnight is the culmination of their marching season) would stop speaking to their Catholic work-mates.

However, as soon as that period had passed, they would behave as though nothing had happened. Trade unions were never able to end this practice of Catholic workers being sent to 'coventry' for this fortnight and, I for one cannot explain it. Maybe no-one ever complained, though that is hardly likely, but, given the lunacy of it, to whom would one have complained?

If we tell the younger generation about this practice they find it hard to believe – and I suppose we can't blame them. However, Dorothy and Maura would most certainly have had this experience as they had both worked in mixed work forces.

### **Their Last Day**

October 22nd 1971 was a Friday and for both Maura and Dorothy it was an ordinary day – ordinary in the context of 'the troubles'. Maura got the children ready and off to school. Dorothy helped Bridget at home, cleaning and getting the groceries in. Maura had earlier in the week invited Dorothy to come down and join the farewell party for her friend Kathleen Morelli who was moving to England. Jim would be working downtown that night, so, after putting the children to bed (they always got to stay up that bit later on a Friday night because there was no school the following day) Maura could go to the party and go up and down every so often to check that the children were all right.

Remember that this was a time here in Belfast when people didn't need to lock their front doors. Up until then, we lived in very trusting times in our own areas. People all looked out



for one and other, especially neighbours in small communities like Clonard and the surrounding Falls districts. When Dorothy's original plans to go over to Ardoyne that night fell through, she went on down to Maura's to attend the party and to sleep over.

Neither Maura nor Dorothy was very much into drink, so they would possibly have had one or two vodkas in the whole evening. They both made several trips down to check on the children and eventually Dorothy left the party at around 11.30pm. to go to bed.

What followed and eventually led them both to Cape Street on their final journey together is told by their friends Flo O'Riordon and Billy Davidson who were also in the car that night. But first we must understand more about Maura's role in the over-all situation that existed in the Clonard district. Patricia Davidson, a community activist tells us about 'The Women's Action Committee', of which Maura was a leading member.

**Patricia Davidson.** The events of the 23rd of October 1971 have to be seen against the political environment of 1971 and in particular the events surrounding internment on the 9th of August 1971, when there was a massive round-up of men in West Belfast. A group was formed, originating from the Clonard area, and it was called, 'The Women's Action Committee'. They were ordinary women from ordinary homes with families and children. When the British army patrols came into their districts, the women would get their bin lids and bang them on the ground, creating a lot of noise to alert people to the British Army presence. This would have been subsequent to the actual start of internment because the British didn't just intern for one day; they kept coming back for more men. The bin lid brigade would follow the British soldiers, harassing and annoying them and creating a lot of noise that they didn't like at all. This activity spread to other nationalist areas and in the Lower Falls, the two main leaders were Maura Meehan and Flo O'Riordan, with the back up of more local women. We also issued a local bulletin. So that was the function of

the group and they were able to prevent a lot of fellows from being interned. Just prior to the shooting of Maura and Dorothy, Flo and Maura had got their hands on foghorns. This was another device that was to be used, along with the bin lids, to create even more noise, especially in the early morning or late evening to get people out onto the streets. The women went around all the bars in Clonard to let them see and hear what these things were like. You could not have sat in the same room where these things were going off, as the noise was really terrible.

I was with Maura and Flo up until 8.30pm that night but left because I had to go to Dublin the next day. I told them I would see them on Monday and the plan was to collect some money, buy more of these horns and supply every woman in the group with one.

It meant that if there was a raid in Clonard Gardens the horn would go off and alert people in the other streets and they would follow suit. Internment was very much for men at that stage but there was an element creeping into the whole political situation that internment for women was very much on the cards. I think it was probably due to the activities of the women's groups. Republican News at that time did two big features on women's internment. I don't think this had ever happened in any of the campaigns going back over the years, but it was going to happen this time. The evening before the shooting, the women were in possession of two foghorns. There was a party going on as Kathleen and Tony Morelli were leaving Belfast to go to live in England and a lot of the women were there to give them a send off. I didn't know my husband Billy at that time. I met him through Flo after the event, when he had been charged and released on bail.



Maura's sisters-in-law Roisin Hill and Margaret Murray

**Roisin Hill**, Maura's sister-in-law, details her last meeting with Maura and confirms what Maura was wearing the night she was shot dead. The British Army, after shooting Maura and Dorothy dead, issued a statement saying they thought the women were men because they were dressed in men's clothing. It beggars belief that the logic in this statement initially was; that if the back seat occupants of the car had been men, then the shooting would have been justifiable and possibly more acceptable to the public than the shooting dead of two women who were only protesting noisily with whistles and foghorns.

**Roisin begins:** "My family had been put out of our home in the early troubles and we were living in a school until we got a shell of a house in Farmhill. My husband Charlie knew the builders and they had found 2 boxes of clothing which belonged to a singing group.

The clothing consisted of lurex tops and trousers and as my brother Jim, Maura's husband, was in the entertainment business we told him about the clothes. Later on that night, Maura arrived at our door and Charlie had to help her in and out of the car because she had sprained her ankle in a fall in her back yard. The reason I'm telling this is because of the army's version of events after the shooting. Maura couldn't walk, do much or go anywhere. She looked at the clothing and liked a white top with black and gold moons printed on it and a white pair of trousers. These clothes she wanted for herself. These in

fact were the clothes she was wearing on the night she was murdered and these were the same clothes the army said were a military uniform. In fact it was Billy Davidson who drove Maura up to our house to collect the clothes. The next morning my husband Charlie heard on the news that two terrorists had been shot dead in the lower Falls. He saw my sister Margaret and a friend come towards our house and knew immediately something was wrong. They broke the awful news that the two people shot were Maura and Dorothy. I heard someone screaming and didn't realize it was myself. Later that day I went down to the area and was hysterical because the street was awash with blood and the people had erected a small shrine at the place where Maura and Dorothy had died. This made it all the more real to me. A local man, Hugh McAreevy, owned a tape-recorder and had earlier recorded the women in the car laughing and joking when they had just come into the street. You could hear one of the soldiers shouting 'when that car comes around again, stop it'. (The tape is in the keeping of Relatives for Justice). When the Brits opened up on the car, Hugh ran and got a camera and took photographs of Maura and Dorothy lying dead in the back seat. There were 2 regiments of soldiers in the area at the time. The Green Howards and the Green Jackets. I still maintain that if they had wanted to stop the car they only had to shoot the tyres out. The army stated that the girls were shooting from the back of the car. Half of Dorothy's head was blown off so quickly that one of the eyes didn't get time to close. Maura was riddled down the back and her whole innards were on her knee.

When Jim came on the scene he knelt down beside Maura in the car to say the act of contrition. He was devastated and wouldn't let go of Maura's hand even when ordered by the soldiers to get away from the car. Several people who witnessed all that happened that night in Cape Street were later shot dead by the British forces. Billy Davidson never got his car back and we never got Maura or Dorothy's clothes back. Jim decided it would be too

much for Mrs. Maguire to have both bodies home so Maura was buried from their home in Bantry Street and Dorothy from her home in Whiterock.

During Maura's wake, there was a bomb left behind the house. We believe it was done by the Brits so we refused to leave Maura's remains and stayed in the house.

My sister Margaret decided that she would have to go to America and let the world know what was happening on the streets of Northern Ireland. She was incensed about internment and now the brutal murders of Maura and Dorothy. We managed to scrape together her fare and she flew first to London and went to the House of Commons. I think it was Bernadette Devlin who got her admitted and she met up with Kevin Mc Namara and Paul Rose and also Maudling who was the British Home Secretary.

Afterwards she flew to the States and landed at JFK Airport not knowing anyone and without even knowing where she was going to stay. Eventually she found a number in the phone book for our aunt who'd gone to America 30 years previously. Looking back, Margaret's actions were both spontaneous and courageous. She left her husband and four young children. Although I agreed to take care of the children for her, it still took a lot of courage to just up and go like that, but she knew that she had truth on her side. It was as if this was what Margaret's life was all about. She missed the funerals but at least through TV and radio she was able to get the message across to the Americans about what was happening back home in Ireland. Armed only with the truth, Margaret was, in some small way, part of the spark that aroused international interest in our troubled land. Our family is very proud of the stand she took all those years ago, trying to get justice for Maura and Dorothy. She never ceased telling their story to anyone who would listen until the day she died in August 1997.

Jim also suffered harassment from the Brits and R.U.C. after Maura's death.

The soldiers constantly provoked him but thank God he had enough sense to realize they had guns and he didn't retaliate. I constantly feared for his safety knowing they could shoot him dead and get away with it. We have photographs of his face badly beaten after getting hit with a rifle butt. He was constantly stopped in his car and his whole life went downhill after Maura died. Hate mail started coming to the house from some very sick people and he tried to protect the kids from seeing it. He was a diabetic and his health deteriorated badly. People wanted to take the kids to give him a break but he always refused, saying he would rear them himself. It was a nightmare coping with internment and all that was happening on the streets, but the destruction to the families caused by the deaths of Maura and Dorothy was devastating. The families could never be put back together and we all never really recovered from the trauma of the girls' murders. Finally Jim went to America, taking with him his youngest son Eddie. At last Jim was to get a little bit of happiness but unfortunately it wasn't to last. His health rapidly got worse and he died in New York at the age of 48 years. My husband and I have worried about the children all their lives. They all carried their grief from childhood through to adulthood and it affected them all in different ways. The only thing that can help them now is the truth of what really happened that night and for the British Army to own up to it. We all tried to get on with living all those years ago but the sorrow and heartbreak over the murders of Maura and Dorothy we will all take to our graves".

### **Their final hour:**

#### **Statement from Billy Davidson (driver of the car)**

‘Maura’s husband Jim was doing a lot of singing over in the Trocadero club with a group and I had the job of driving him about.

I drove him over to the club that night and stayed until he finished. Then we drove back to Jim’s house. The party for Kathleen and Tony Morelli was in full swing by the time we reached there. Word came up in the early hours that the Brits were raiding in the lower Falls. The women needed a car to go and test these foghorns out so I said, “lets go”.

Maura, Dorothy, Flo and Kathleen Morelli go into the car, Flo being in the front passenger seat. We went down Clonard Street onto the Falls, down Albert Street along Cullintree Road and zig-zagged up through the lower Falls. We reached Raglan street, turned right, and then left into one of the wee narrow streets and then back onto the Falls. The noise from the foghorns was absolutely horrendous and it had everybody in the district up. One of the girls said that was really brilliant and we should do the same again and I agreed. Unfortunately I took exactly the same route and on the way back at Leeson Street, Kathleen Morelli panicked and I had to stop the car while she got out.

When I turned into Raglan Street, the Brits were all there waiting. They had put a Saracen across the street to stop people going up, as that was the street they were raiding in. There were dozens of jeeps and the Brits were everywhere. All I could do was zigzag through them, heading for the top of the street. The order came then for the Saracen to be moved across the street and made into a barricade. All I could see was the Saracen moving, the corner of the house, the street, the gap and I headed for the gap. As I was driving through, they opened up on us; I lost control of the car and crashed into the wall. I jumped out calling for the girls to get out also. The thing I remember most then was the silence - the awful silence from the back of the car. On reflection, death must have been instantaneous. Flo had got out the front passenger side and when I opened the back door,

I saw Maura and Dorothy lying dead, shot to pieces. The lights were on in the car and I vaguely remember someone came over to us. I remember the car had been punctured and one of the back wheels was riddled. My memory was a bit cloudy after that but I remember getting hold of Flo, realising the girls were dead and we ran. We headed for Clonard to let Jim know what had happened. I don't remember where I stayed that night but it was somewhere in the Clonard area.

The following day I was told there was going to be a press conference in the C.D.C. (Citizen Defense Committee) rooms in the lower Falls. I told my story and contradicted the account the Brits were putting out and I was subsequently proven right.

After the press conference I went with Fr. Reid and solicitor Pascal O'Hare to give myself up. The reason they came with me was to ensure there was no brutality; as at that time reports were coming out about those who were interned and the brutal treatment they had received. I was charged with twelve specific offences.

In brief the charges were: **the attempted murder of 75 British soldiers, causing an explosion in a public place by the use of a fire-arm, fire-arm offences and all that went with that, and the last charge was dangerous driving.**

It took over eight months for the case to come to court but in the meantime I was remanded to Crumlin Road prison for a short period, then released on bail. While out on bail I was lifted and interned on the prison ship Maidstone. I was taken to Crumlin Road Courthouse and my barrister advised me to go back to jail on remand, because once I walked out the door, I would be arrested and re-interned. I remained in jail until the trial on the 25th of September 1972.



The case lasted from Monday till Friday and the Brits story was as follows: "A car had come into the area with this loud noise and with armed men in the back. One of the men had knelt on the back seat and after smashing the back window out, had fired a gun".

After more than four days of their evidence, my barrister brought the whole council, including the judge, into the chambers. He went over all the details of the case and the impossibilities of many of the allegations. The charges were thrown out of court except for the dangerous driving charge. I was sentenced to exactly the same amount of time, to the very day, that I had spent on remand - 8 months, 3 weeks and 2 days. This was done so that I would have no comeback for a claim against the authorities. Flo got a month for aiding and abetting dangerous driving. It was proven beyond all doubt that what I had been saying was true and that what the Brits came out with were lies. The car I had been driving was a big Ford Corsair with a big boot and you would have been seated well away from the back windscreen.

It would be very hard to smash the back window out, and especially hard for women. My car disappeared and I think that it was taken to Hasting Street barracks. Photographs were released to the press but it was obvious, as was pointed out by my barrister, that if the windscreen was supposed to be smashed outwards, why was all the glass inside the car? The car was later seen by a brother of mine in the protestant end of Roden Street. When I went for compensation, it was disallowed because of the whole circumstances of the case, so I just wiped it from my mind. I was not actually shot myself but had seven bullet holes through my coat, my pullover, my T-shirt, my jeans and my underpants, but my skin was not nicked. I know I am a very lucky man to be alive today to tell this story. Every bullet that went through my clothes had already gone through Maura, so she was shot at least

seven times with an S.L.R. The clothes I was wearing that night were taken from me by the Brits and were never returned.

When the shooting started, Flo, who was in the passenger seat beside me, slid down the seat and as she was so small the head-rest was on a par with the top of her head. She actually had crease marks through her hairline where the bullets had passed through. One of the soldiers, a Corporal Raymond Beadon, was the main man, a real nasty piece of work. He seemed to be of mixed race. The regiment he belonged to was the 'Green Jackets'. His attitude in court was that he just opened up 'Audie Murphy' style and shot into the car. The Brits lied through their teeth during the whole court case. For example, the lies told about the clothes the girls were wearing - Maura was wearing white trousers and a bright top and Dorothy, while wearing jeans and a dark coat, also wore a blouse. There's no way they could have been mistaken for men! The judge made no comment on the innocence of the girls and none of the soldiers were ever charged in connection with their deaths. Looking back over the years you can see that the few Brits who were ever charged and found guilty were soon back on the streets again. The first statements put out after such incidents were always theirs (the Brits) and were accepted as the truth. Talking about the incident has brought back many painful memories. If it hadn't been me driving the car it would have been someone else. Maura's husband Jim took the Brits to court for compensation for the loss of his wife. It took 10 years for the matter to be settled. Jim got the maximum compensation allowed by law at that time, £1500, as Maura was not the breadwinner and by that time (10 years later) only one of the children was a dependant. The others at this stage were over sixteen years old and were working.

At least it was proved beyond all doubt in court that Maura and Dorothy were two completely innocent people. I don't think there was ever an inquest, at least if there was I

was not asked to speak at it. While I was in jail I had a brother assassinated and my mother had to frequently pass the army barracks at the top of Cuper Street where she was subjected to constant abuse by the Brits stationed there. They would ask her if she had any more sons they could 'get'.

In 1975 there was an attempt to murder Billy Davidson by loyalist assassins as he worked in his grocery shop at the bottom of Clonard Street. If it hadn't been for the prompt medical aid from local GP Damian Beirne, Billy Davidson would almost certainly have died.

**Flo O' Riordan** who was a close friend of Maura's, now gives her recollection of the tragic ending to a night when earlier, along with Maura, Dorothy and neighbours she bade farewell to her friend Kathleen Morelli who was emigrating to England that coming week.

'I was in a car with Billy Davidson on 23rd October 1971 along with Maura Meehan, Dorothy and another girl, Kathleen Morelli, who got out of the car before the shooting started. We were at the lower Falls, Omar Street and Cape Street. I was a member of the local Women's Action Committee. We had bought a klaxon horn to warn locals when the British Army was in the area. We drove around the area, down Leeson Street and started the klaxon horn. I noticed the soldiers and saw an army Saracen. I knew they were going to open fire on the car and remember yelling for the others to duck! They riddled the car with bullets. It was like a pepper duster. The car hit the wall and I remember Billy getting out and getting away. Locals pulled me out and I was taken to hospital.

I will always remember seeing Dorothy and Maura in the back of the car. Maura was sitting up straight. We learned later that her spinal cord had been severed and she had bullet wounds to the back and ankle. Dorothy had no face left. She had all head injuries.

They also fired one rubber bullet into the back of the car. Billy had run to get help. He was lucky not to have been killed, for he had graze marks on his back, in fact one of the bullets cut the elastic of his underpants. I will never forget the sight of Maura and Dorothy in the back of the car to my dying day. I am convinced the soldiers were out to kill the lot of us. I will never forget the face of the soldier who I saw taking part in the shooting. My injuries were all shrapnel wounds to my lungs, legs, side of face and head.

Maura was 30 years old with four children aged, 11,9, 8, and 3 years. Dorothy was aged 19 and single. The British Army stated that they thought the people in the back of the car were men. Maura was wearing a brown flowery blouse and white trousers. There was no way they could have thought they were men.

I was taken from the hospital and brought to Townhall Street to be charged. In Townhall Street they threw newspapers down in front of me which showed the bodies of Maura and Dorothy. I was released on bail two days later. At the inquest the soldiers were asked why they did not fire at the wheels of the car instead of shooting the occupants. Billy and I were charged with attempted murder of unknown soldiers. The case ran for seven days and I remember the judge saying that I would have to live with the deaths of Maura and Dorothy for the rest of my life.

The soldiers were cleared of any involvement in the deaths even though they were the ones who shot and riddled the car. I still find it difficult to talk about the case. I get very emotional. It is like it happened yesterday. I will never forget it to my dying day. My whole life was turned upside down because of this incident and my health has suffered badly.

Six months later Flo's thirteen-year-old son Séan was shot in the back of the head by the British Army. He died shortly afterwards in hospital.

### **The Charges:**

Both Billy and Flo had ten charges brought against them by the then Chief Superintendent of the RUC, J.V. Stinson. When charged they each replied, ' Not guilty '.

The charges were as follows:

1. Each of them at Belfast in the County of the City of Belfast, on the 23rd day of October 1971, did attempt to murder members of H.M. Security Forces Contrary to Common Law.
2. And each of them at Belfast in the County of the City of Belfast, on the 23rd day of October 1971, did conspire with Mary Ellen Meehan and Dorothy Maguire (both deceased) to cause by an explosive substance, to wit, a firearm, an explosion of a nature likely to endanger life or to cause serious injury to property. Contrary to Section 3(a) of the Explosive Substances Act 1883.
3. And each of them at Belfast, in the County of the City of Belfast, on the 23rd day of October 1971, had in their possession a firearm without holding a firearms certificate in force at the time. Contrary to Section 1(1) (a) of the Firearms Act (N.I.) 1969.

4. And each of them at Belfast, in the County of the City of Belfast, on the 23rd day of October 1971, had in their possession a quantity of ammunition without holding a firearms certificate in force at the time. Contrary to Section 1(1) (2) of the Firearms Act (N.I.) 1969.
5. And each of them, at Belfast in the County of the City of Belfast, on the 23rd day of October 1971, had in their possession a firearm and ammunition with intent by means thereof to endanger life or cause serious injury to property or to enable any other person by means thereof to endanger life or cause serious injury to property, whether any injury to person or property had been cause or not. Contrary to Section 14 of the Firearms Act (N.I.) 1969.
6. And each of them, at Belfast in the County of the City of Belfast on the 23rd day of October 1971, had with them a firearm with intent to commit an indictable offence, or to resist arrest or to prevent the arrest of another. Contrary to Section 16 of the Firearms Act (N.I.) 1969.
7. And each of them at Belfast in the County of the City of Belfast, on the 23rd day of October 1971, without lawful authority or reasonable excuse, the proof whereof shall lie on them, had with them in a public place a firearm together with ammunition suitable for use in that firearm. Contrary to Section 17 of the Firearms Act (N.I.) 1969.
8. And each of them, at Belfast in the County of the City of Belfast, on the 23rd day of October 1971, had in their possession a firearm and a quantity of ammunition in such circumstances as to give rise to a reasonable suspicion that they did not have them in their possession for a lawful object. Contrary to Section 19A of the Firearms Act (N.I.) 1969.

**The defendant William Patrick Davidson stands charged that**

9. He at Cape Street, Belfast, in the County of the City of Belfast on the 23<sup>rd</sup> day of October 1971, did drive a motor vehicle dangerously on a road. Contrary to Sections 118 and 166 of the Road Traffic Act (N.I.) 1970.

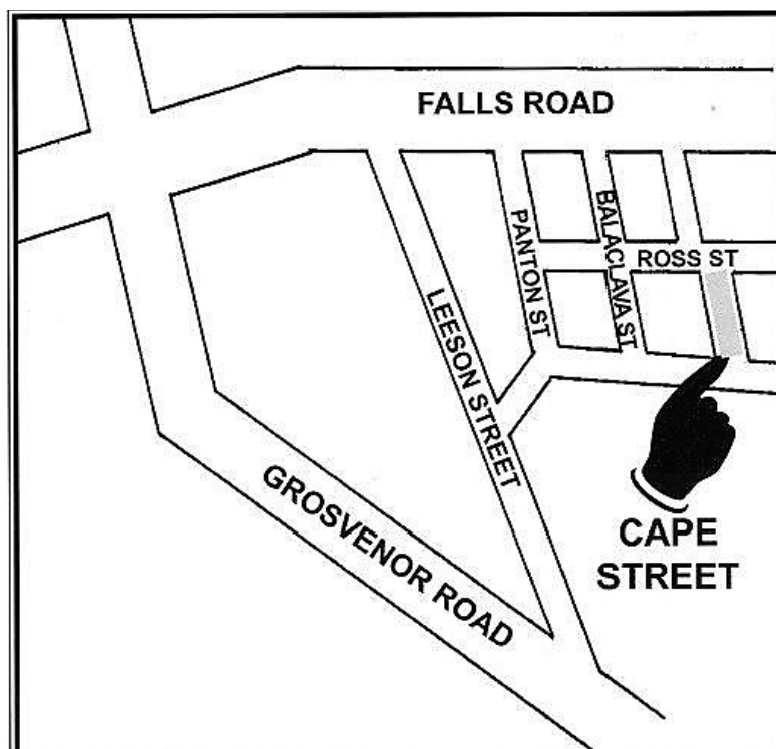
**The defendant Florence O’Riordan stands charged that**

10. One William Patrick Davidson did on the 23<sup>rd</sup> day of October 1971 at Cape Street, in the County of the City of Belfast, drive a motor vehicle on a road dangerously.

Contrary to Sections 118 and 166 of the Road Traffic Act (N.I.) 1970 and the defendant at the same time and place did aid, abet, counsel and procure William Patrick Davidson to commit the said offence. Contrary to Section 68 of the Magistrates’ Courts Act (N.I.) 1964.

Despite the fact that each of the soldiers who were there that night later perjured themselves in court, Billy Davidson and Flo O’Riordan were found guilty only of the charges of dangerous driving. Flo was sentenced to one month’s imprisonment and Billy, as he has stated, was sentenced to the exact time he had spent in prison on remand - eight months, three weeks and two days. The Green Jackets who murdered Maura and Dorothy weren’t even charged with perjury. Perhaps they were rewarded for what their Masters would term ‘acts of bravery in the line of duty’ as were their fellow soldiers from the Paratroop regiment after their ‘kills’ on Bloody Sunday. Was the ‘Cape Street murders’ a prelude to Bloody Sunday - both sets of murders being only 3 months apart? Who knows? The warlords of the British Forces do! After 30 years some of those soldiers who were in the ‘Green Jackets’ in Belfast at that time, may want to tell the truth about the events of that terrible night. The Truth Still Matters.

Before we go any further, we must try to visualize what Cape Street was actually like on that night. Below is a small map which will show what a condensed area the Lower Falls was in 1971.







Margaret Meehan Kennedy

Your Ref:

Our Ref: ACC/3/6

7 December 1999

Dear Mrs Kennedy

I refer to Miss McDermott's letter of 7 July 1999 in which she informs you that she is passing the inquest papers relating to your mother and aunt's deaths to the Court Service.

I can now confirm that they have passed the papers back to me and have granted access.

The cost of having these papers copied and posted amounts to a total of £12.06 (ie. 38 x A4 copies @ £0.30 & £0.66 postage).

Please make your cheque/postal order payable to Public Record Office (NI). On receipt of this I will dispatch your copying immediately.

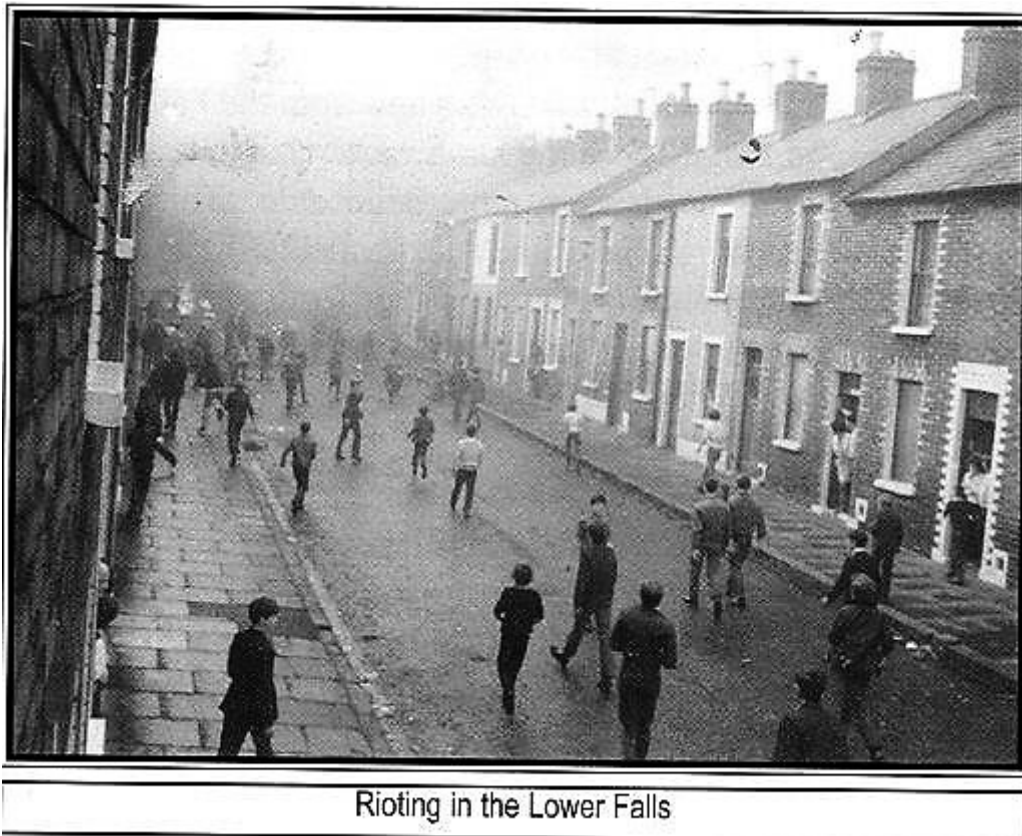
Yours sincerely

Copy of letter from Public Records Office, confirming that all inquest statements are for public view

## Brit Lies

Cape Street was approximately 90 yards long. At 4.30am there were at least 75 British personnel in the street; 16 at the junction with Ross Street and 16 at the junction with

Raglan Street; 32 in the middle of the street with the raiding party, four military armoured vehicles and 4 civilian cars parked along the street. As I can only account for 64 soldiers actually in the street I have to presume that the other 10 were in the armoured vehicles, plus of course, the company commander himself, Christopher Campbell–Dumphy who was giving the orders as the houses were being raided. So the street was very crowded and what light there was came mainly from the small homes that were being raided. Billy Davidson's car couldn't have been travelling fast, given the amount of vehicles and British personnel blotted across this very narrow street. As the car moved up the street, it had its full headlights on and according to the Brits, the occupants were making a lot of noise blowing a whistle and sounding the foghorn. So the Brits were aware of the nature of protest that the occupants of the car were demonstrating, as the car progressed along the crowded street. If the IRA intended to shoot British soldiers from this car, they would most certainly not have had full beam lights on; nor would they have been making so much noise for the second time in the same street that would have alerted their enemy to their imminent operation. In the surrounding streets, people were out in large numbers, banging bin-lids and blowing whistles. The atmosphere at the time, according to witnesses, was very tense.



The trial began on Monday 25th September 1972 and lasted until Friday 29th September with the charges all being dropped except for the dangerous driving charge for which the judge sentenced both Billy and Flo to the exact amount of time they both had already served. There was no investigation into the events of that night, no British soldier was ever charged with the murder of Maura or Dorothy and no British soldier was ever charged with perjury, which was obviously committed. Maura Meehan did not shoot from the rear window of the car. There was no gun in the car.

The British soldiers who, under oath, stated that there were shots fired from the car are liars. The British Government at the time knew this but it didn't matter to them because the people who were murdered were Irish and from the Falls Road. This may sound simplistic but even a more elaborate analysis would not make the truth seem more believable. Thirty years of experience has taught us all how expendable the truth is to the British

Government in relation to the North of Ireland and in particular to the nationalist population.

Here are the sworn statements from the soldiers in Cape Street that night; beginning with

**Company Commander Christopher Campbell Dumphie:**



“ I am a Company Commander of the 3rd Btn of the Royal Green Jackets. My company area of responsibility was the lower Falls area of Belfast. At about 4.00am on the 23rd day of October 1971, I set out for an operation in the Cape Street area of Belfast. I took with me two platoons of approximately 32 men each, together with a Company Headquarters of 10 men. We were about 75 men in all. At approximately 4.05am, the company dismounted in Cape Street. I deployed one platoon to secure each end of the street whilst the other carried out searches in a series of houses in Cape Street. At approximately 0425 hours, a car drove along Raglan Street from the west. It was a green Ford car. It was travelling at approximately 30 miles per hour and was being driven recklessly. I had three vehicles in Raglan Street at the time; the car weaved in and out of these at a considerable speed despite the fact my vehicles were parked in order to slow or stop traffic. I heard a klaxon,

the car horn and whistles coming from the car in addition to whistles and dustbin lids being sounded elsewhere in the area. The noise came from the car as it passed on its first run. This would have lasted about 5 to 10 seconds. I made arrangements that the car should be stopped if it passed in a similar manner on another occasion. An armoured vehicle was to pull out in front of the car and the commander of that platoon would call on the car to stop. A few minutes later I saw the same car again on exactly the same course. The same sounds were coming from the car.

I saw a vehicle pull across the path of the car to stop it and I saw the platoon commander move out into the road to stop the car. The vehicle, which pulled out to stop the car, was an armoured vehicle generally known as a Pig. The armoured vehicle pulled out into the middle of the road. There was plenty of room left for a vehicle to pass on either side of the armoured vehicle, bearing in mind that this was at a crossroads. The car did not stop. It turned left and went up Cape Street northwards, narrowly missing the platoon commander, who had to jump out of the way in order to avoid being run over. I heard the platoon commander shout, 'stop that car'. The car continued northwards up Cape Street at approximately 30 M.P.H. I had about 4 vehicles in Cape Street and there were about 4 civilian cars parked in the street. The street is no longer than about 80 to 100 yards. By being parked in a relatively narrow street they hindered the passage of the Ford car. The Ford car was being driven up Cape Street in an exceedingly dangerous manner and I had to jump out of the way of it to avoid being struck by it as did a number of my riflemen. These riflemen were standing on the pavement and some of them had moved to the edge of the pavement to attempt to stop the car. The car came onto the pavement in places. I cannot recall exactly the number of times the car mounted the pavement but I should say about two or three times. There was another armoured personnel carrier parked across the north end of Cape Street at the junction of Ross Street. When the Ford reached this

vehicle it passed out of the street on the east side of the vehicle, squeezing between the vehicle and the corner of the street. There was about a few feet clearance on either side of the car. At that end of the street one of my soldiers had to dive out of the way in order to avoid being struck by the car. The car pulled out of Cape Street and was passing Ross Street as if going into Omar Street when shooting started; I heard two low velocity rounds fired from the area of the Cape Street/Ross Street and Omar Street junctions. This was followed by nine rounds fired from a high velocity service rifle. The Ford car had just left Cape Street and was crossing Ross Street when I heard the two low velocity rounds being fired. I personally could not see the car at that minute.

There is a very considerable difference between the noise of a low and a high velocity shot, which any trained soldier would recognize immediately. At the end of the street from which I heard the low velocity shots, there were no military low velocity weapons being carried.

After the shooting I heard the car crash into a wall. At this time I was crossing the road on my way up to Cape Street having previously been half way down Cape Street. I went up to the north-east corner of Cape Street from where I saw the car. It was approximately 20 to 25 metres from me. It was a dark night but there was a certain amount of light in the area. One gas street light was on in the area and there was light coming from a number of windows and doors in the area. It was a dry night. I saw a large crowd collecting around the car. There were about 50 to 60 persons in the crowd, possibly more. These persons were aware of our presence. Many of them had been watching us since we arrived. The crowd was extremely offensive towards the military. There was a lot of shouting and screaming and other verbal insults. At that time I had one platoon which was engaged in securing the end of Cape Street and the other platoon in the process of searching a number of houses in Cape Street. I returned to the middle of Cape Street and found the

platoon commander engaged in searching houses and I gave him instructions. After a 12 minute delay I saw the platoon commander mount an assault to secure the area of the car and clear the crowd from around it. The delay occurred because at the time the platoon was engaged in searches and it took me some 12 minutes to complete the searches and get the platoon to the right position to mount the assault and for me to give orders to them. During that 12 minutes the nearest soldier to the car was about 20 to 25 metres away. The platoon commander took his complete complement of about 32 men with him. First of all three baton rounds were fired at the crowd. This was followed by a charge. When the charge took place I was about 5 to 10 metres behind the men. As the charge took place the crowd dispersed very quickly and I saw a taxi there at the time. The taxi was to the best of my knowledge parked alongside the car. About half a minute later I saw that the taxi had gone but I did not see it leave. I looked very quickly into the car and I saw two bodies in the back seat.

They were wearing coats and trousers and they looked very dead. I had already ordered an ambulance but in the meantime two medical assistants from the Knights of Malta arrived and I allowed them to look at the bodies in the car. The ambulance, which I ordered, arrived shortly and I saw the ambulance men move the bodies from the vehicle. I particularly noticed that both deceased were wearing trousers although at that stage I could not determine their sex. My impression was that they were men. The ambulance then left and I arranged for one of my vehicles to tow the Ford back to Albert Street Mill. At approximately 5.30 a.m. I ordered the company to em-bus and we moved out of the area. Later that day I received from Colour Sergeant George Evans a whistle which I see produced in court marked "Exhibit 71". I also received from Corporal Thompson an aerosol klaxon which I see produced in court marked "Exhibit 70". Later that day I gave both these exhibits to Staff Sergeant Lodge".

**Colour Sergeant Trevor Francis Anderson** Platoon Commander with R Company 3rd Battalion Royal Green Jackets tells what led him to shout '**stop that car**':

About five minutes after the searches commenced I heard an aerosol operated foghorn in the immediate surrounding area. I heard this sound for several minutes and then about 4.15 a.m. when I was standing at the Cape Street/Raglan Street junction I saw a green Ford Corsair pass my position. It was traveling at a speed in the region of 45 to 50 MPH. It was zig-zagging between the armoured vehicles. As the car passed I could hear the foghorn being sounded continually. I reported what I had seen and as a result of instructions I received made arrangements that the driver of an armoured personnel carrier who was parked on the Cape Street/Raglan Street junction and who was facing towards Plevna Street would drive out across Raglan Street to obstruct it. A few minutes later I heard the car approaching with foghorn sounding. It was approaching from the same direction in the first instance, that is, from west to east. As the car approached traveling at the same speed as previously the driver of the armoured personnel carrier pulled forward and blocked the road.

As he did so the driver of the Ford car swung sharply left off Raglan Street into Cape Street. I thought the Ford would stop and I moved forward to speak to the occupants. The car swerved round me and I dived out of its path otherwise it would have struck me. It then headed up Cape Street towards Ross Street, swerving in and out of army and civilian vehicles parked in Cape Street. It was traveling at about 30 MPH. I jumped up and shouted, "**Stop that car**".

*We need to know what Colour Sergeant Trevor Francis Anderson meant when he shouted, "Stop that car" and also what way his order was interpreted by those under his Command. Did they understand it to be a direct order to shoot? Were they given to*



*understand that by following such an order from a superior that they would not have to face the penalty if their actions were to cause death or maiming to the occupants of the car? Was this the first official 'shoot to kill' policy put into practice here in the six counties and was its outcome in court to set a precedence for future 'security force' killings?*

This is the deposition of **Corporal Raymond Beadon** who fired the first shot into the back of Billy Davidson's car:

At 4.00 a.m. on the 23rd day of October 1971 I was deployed with my section at the junction of Cape Street/Ross Street, Belfast. My one-ton armoured personnel carrier was parked on Ross Street but was part way across the junction of Cape Street. There was a space large enough for a car to pass through between the rear of the armoured personnel carrier and the east side of Cape Street. My section was deployed in the following manner: Two men were facing along Ross Street towards Balaclava Street, two were looking in the opposite direction towards Peel Street, one man was outside No 4 Cape Street looking out over Ross Street and I was outside No 3 Cape Street. My section 2 IC was opposite to me outside No 6 Cape Street. We had been in position some 25 minutes when I heard the sound of a car being driven towards me along Cape Street in a northerly direction.

I also heard the sound of a horn and shouts of "stop that car". The car was been driven at about 30 MPH and it was swerving from left to right in a dangerous manner. There were a couple of soldiers trying to stop the car. They stepped out from the side of the road waving the car down. The car then swerved into them and they had to jump out of the way to avoid being hit. As a result of orders I gave, one of my soldiers stepped out in front of the car to stop it. The car then swerved into him and he moved into the side of the street. The car then turned right and through the gap between my Pig and the wall. The gap was wide enough for a car of that size to get through. There was about a foot of a gap on either side of the car.

As the car drove through the gap I could not be sure if it mounted the pavement or not. When it had cleared the barricade the back window of the car was broken from inside the car. I saw two flashes and heard two low velocity rounds being fired. The flashes came from the back window of the car. I was about 10 to 15 feet from the car at this stage. I could see the rear window of the car. There was nothing in the way. It was a dark night and it was dry. The lighting was limited but sufficient enough to see. There was a gas street lamp lit. It was on the other side of Ross Street directly opposite Cape Street. The vehicle was about 15 feet from this lamp when I saw the flashes. My impression was that the shots were being fired directly at me. I then fired one round rough alignment at the left-hand rear wheelbase of the vehicle with the intention of stopping the vehicle. **I then pumped five rounds rapid through the back window of the car. While firing myself I gave an order to fire and I saw a rifleman on my left hand side fire one round and a rifleman on my right fire a further two rounds.** I then heard the car crash into the wall. I did not see the car crash as the Pig was blocking my view. I could not see who was in the car but it appeared to be full. Approximately some five minutes later a man appeared from the main body of a crowd that had gathered round the crashed car. He was shouting and screaming at the troops who were moving towards the car. He approached to within one yard of me and I noticed that he did not bear any marks or injuries. That was the first occasion on which I saw that man.

Later on the 23rd October 1971 I saw a man being interviewed on the television and he gave his name as William Davidson and who stated that he was the driver of the car which was involved in the incident. This was the man whom I have referred to as appearing from the body of the crowd and coming up close to me. I see that man in court today. He is the accused Davidson.

**Rifleman Colin Rudkin** gives this account of what happened in Cape Street that night. "I was positioned in Cape Street beside the left hand front wheel of APC (armoured personnel carrier) which was parked across Cape Street. I was observing towards Balaclava Street along Ross Street. I had been in position about twenty minutes or so when I saw a Ford car pull up by the corner of Ross Street and Balaclava Street. After it had stopped it sounded a klaxon. Women who were standing about in groups cheered. The car then drove off along Balaclava Street and out of my sight. Some minutes later I heard the sound of a car coming up Cape Street from behind me. I looked round and saw that its lights were on and that it was being driven at high speed in my direction. My position was more or less opposite No. 1 Cape Street. The car was sounding a klaxon and swerving in and out of vehicles parked in Cape Street. It headed for the rear of the APC apparently with the intention of turning into Ross Street. I then ran about ten yards down Cape Street in the direction of Raglan Street. Whilst I was doing so the car passed me. Just about then and at a time when I was not looking at the vehicle but was preoccupied taking up a better position, I heard a low velocity shot which was slightly behind me and to my left. I immediately turned and looked towards the vehicle. When I first saw the rear window of the vehicle it was broken. I did not hear the sound of broken glass. As I turned and looked at the rear window I saw a flash come from the middle of the window. I heard another low velocity shot and a 7.62 high velocity shot at about the same time. I was 15 metres or so from the car when I saw the flash at the rear window. My section Commander was firing, and I saw another rifleman firing to my right. **I fired a single shot into the rear window of the car.**

The car got between the gap of the APC and the wall. It turned right into Ross Street, swerved left and crashed into the wall in Omar Street. I stayed where I was and kept observation on the roofs of Cape Street".

**Rifleman Robert Taylor** who was positioned outside No.2 Cape Street gave the following deposition under oath. "APC was parked close by me laterally across Cape Street. I was to the rear of this vehicle, and slightly to the Cape Street side of it. I was actually standing close to the gap created at the rear of the vehicle, and the walls of the houses. I was observing across Ross Street towards Balaclava Street, whilst in that position I heard the noise of a klaxon but did not see what was causing this noise or where it came from. I had been in position about 15 minutes when I again heard the sound of the klaxon together with shouts of '**stop that car**'. The sound came from behind me. I turned round to face down Cape Street in the direction of Raglan Street and I saw a car coming towards me very fast. It was swerving from side to side in and out of vehicles parked in the street. I stepped from my position and waved for the car to stop, it headed straight for another soldier who was some three yards or four yards away from me, towards the car. He jumped back out of the way. The car did not stop, but mounted the pavement and headed straight for me. I jumped back into the doorway of No.2 Cape Street and the car passed missing my legs by about three feet. As I fell backwards, and the car passed by I heard the sound of breaking glass. The car was just passing through the gap and was about 5 or 6 yards away from me. I firstly heard one low velocity round fired; the sound emanated from my immediate area. A second only elapsed from the sound of the breaking glass and the sound of the shot. I was still in the doorway when I heard the breaking of glass to which I have referred and the firing of the shot that I have mentioned. I was still in the doorway when I heard another low velocity shot followed immediately by a high velocity shot. I could not see the car when I heard the 2nd low velocity shot as I was still in the doorway. To my right on the corner of Ross Street/Cape Street, was my 2nd IC (in command). At this time I came out of the doorway I looked to my right and my 2nd IC was on the pavement. I heard the command '**Fire**'. At the same time as I heard the command '**Fire**' I looked at the

car which had just missed me. The rear window of the car was smashed before I came out of the doorway. When I heard the command fire, **I fired two 7.62 rounds at the car, at the rear window.** Apart from myself I also heard the Section Commander firing as well as a soldier on my left. I saw the car carry on across Ross Street and turn left into Omar Street. It then swerved left into a wall behind No.65 Ross Street. It stopped and I saw a man dressed in civilian clothes with dark hair pushed back wearing a dark suit get out of the right hand side of the car. He was shocked and leaned with his hands on the roof of the car. I called to him to stay where he was and I aimed my rifle at him. The man took his hands off the top of the car and lent into the car. He was looking around for something. He looked around for about one minute or so. He came out of the car and had in his right hand a pistol. I took aim at him again, and called for him to put the pistol down. I don't think he even heard me. He turned round towards houses on the far side of Cape Street. I shouted at him again, and this time he turned round. I was about to open fire because he had a pistol in his hand. The door opened and all the people came out. The local residents went straight to the car. I lost sight of the man in the crowd. I never fired any shots at him. When I observed the man getting out of the car I was about 20 yards from him. The lighting wasn't too good, and there was a certain amount of light from one streetlight. I cannot recall the exact position of the light. The lighting was mainly from the bedroom windows. I had a very good view of the car and man that got out of it. It was dry. After approximately fifteen minutes one of the Platoons moved across to the car after firing several baton rounds and the crowd dispersed".

*It is interesting to note that no one else other than Rifleman Taylor saw this man dressed in a dark suit search the back of the car for a minute or so and come up with a pistol in his right hand.*

**Charles Puxley**, 2nd Lieutenant. "At 04.00 hours on Saturday the 23rd October 1971, I moved my platoon into Cape Street, Belfast to conduct a search of various houses. At about 04.15 hours whilst in the course of this search, I crossed Cape Street, and whilst doing so I saw a Green Ford Cortina going from west to east along Raglan Street, sounding a klaxon siren and travelling at a considerable speed. I resumed the search, and at approximately 04.30 hours, whilst in the upper storey of 19 Cape Street, I heard a number of shots, that seemed to come from the Ross Street end of Cape Street end. I have no recollection of the nature of the reports or of the pattern of firing. I carried on with the search, for a further ten or fifteen minutes, when as result of instructions received, I moved my platoon to the Cape Street/Ross Street junction. I took about thirty men, and my objective was to disperse a large hostile crowd that had assembled in the vicinity of the car in Omar Street. I caused three baton rounds to be fired in the direction of the crowd. I ordered my men to charge the crowd. Just after the baton rounds were fired, a black London-type taxi was driven from the crowd, away from the Inkerman Street/ Omar Street junction, down Ross Street. It passed about two yards away from me and as it did so I saw that the only occupant visible to me was the driver. In the rear seat however, was a large object that was covered by a blanket. The crowd dispersed and I then secured the Inkerman Street/Omar Street junction and Omar Street/Ross Street junction and the Falls Road/Omar Street junction. I was the first soldier to arrive at the car.

When I went up to it I saw that there was two bodies in the back seat. I made arrangements for an ambulance to come. The ambulance arrived on the scene shortly afterwards, and the attendants pronounced the occupants of the car dead. Both bodies were removed from the scene in the ambulance. My initial impression was that both occupants were male, although I later ascertained that this was incorrect. I made a cursory

examination of the car and found that the inside of it was splattered with blood and human remains.

The front and rear windows were shattered. I saw no weapon in the car. At approximately 5.30.a.m. we left the area towing the vehicle with us in convoy. We deposited it at Albert Street Mil”.

### **The Deposition of Corporal Thomas Thompson:**

“At about 04.00 hours on the 23rd October 1971, I was a member of a search team under the command of Lt. Puxley, and was engaged in the searching houses in Cape Street.

Whilst in the course of searching one of the houses I heard the sound of two shots being fired. They were two low velocity shots. I then heard a further two high velocity shots. The first of the high velocity shots followed quickly on the last of the low velocity shots. I think there would have only been half a second between the low and high velocity shots.

Approximately two seconds after there appeared to be six or seven high velocity rounds in rapid succession.

My orders were to continue with my search, which I did. Sometime later I went into the street and joined Lt. Puxley and the two other Section Commanders. I was deployed at the North end of Cape Street and was ordered to charge the crowd that was gathered in Omar Street in the South end. Baton rounds were fired as I charged towards the crowd with other members of my unit. The crowd dispersed and I secured the junction of Omar Street and Inkerman Street. As I was moving up Omar Street and past the green Cortina which stood stationery where it had apparently crashed into a wall. I saw a black taxi along side the car. The taxi remained stationery but the driver was revving his engine. It started forward and was driven at me. I was forced to jump onto the bonnet of the taxi to avoid being run over. The taxi swerved and I fell off the bonnet, and slid along the right hand side of the cab. My foot hit the road and the driver swerved the other way. At the time the taxi

was driving along Omar Street as though to turn left into Ross Street. I saw a colleague try to break his windscreen or light with a baton. I thought the driver was trying to run me down, and holding my rifle by the butt, swung my rifle at the cab which at this time had almost stopped.

The rifle barrel went through the right rear window of the cab, and at this time I saw a figure slumped in the rear seat of the cab. It was covered with a tartan blanket and the head and body were in the left rear corner of the cab. The head and body were covered with the blanket. One of the figure's legs was on the seat and the other was swinging loose. The feet were wearing shoes and there were trousers on the legs. I assumed at the time that the figure was that of a man. The taxi was then driven along Ross Street towards Albert Street. Whilst on the scene I went over to the Ford car and found the aerosol canister foghorn which I see prefaced in court to-day marked Exhibit "70". The aerosol canister foghorn was lying on the front passenger side of the vehicle on the floor. I took possession of the horn and later that day I delivered it to Major Dumphie's office".

**The Deposition of George Evans, Colour Sergeant, HQ Light Division, Winchester, Hants.**

"At 4.00 a.m. on Saturday the 23rd October 1971 I was the Platoon Sergeant of 2 Platoon, 3 Royal Green Jackets which was deployed in Cape Street in the Lower Falls Area of Belfast to carry out a search of several houses in that street. We were accompanied by No 1 Platoon. I was standing on the pavement outside number 16 Cape Street when I saw a car entering Cape Street from Raglan Street having turned left into that street. The vehicle had its headlights on full beam and it appeared to me to contain two persons, one driving and one in the rear. As it entered Cape Street the driver drove along the left-hand pavement around an armoured vehicle which was parked across the mouth of the street. The car then accelerated along the street at a very fast speed, which I estimate to have



been in the region of 30 to 40, MPH. Owing to the number of vehicles parked on both sides of the street the driver started to swerve in and out of the vehicles. I heard a soldier shouting for the driver to stop and a number of soldiers stood in front of the car at various intervals in order to make the driver stop. When people jumped in front of the vehicle to make it stop the driver of the vehicle drove straight at them forcing them to jump out of the way.

If they had not jumped out of the way the car would have struck them. I heard the blowing of whistles and a klaxon horn being sounded. The noises were emitted from the car all the way up Cape Street. When the car reached the mouth of Cape Street and Ross Street it drove between a gap between an armoured vehicle and a wall. A rifleman was standing in this gap and he had to jump out of the way of the car to avoid being struck by it. The rifleman was standing at the corner of the armoured vehicle on the road. The vehicle had to mount the pavement to get through the gap. As the rear end of the vehicle passed between the Pig and the wall the back window of the car was broken and I saw two flashes and heard two bangs. I was approximately 25 yards from the vehicle when I heard the bangs and saw the flashes. I had a complete clear view of the rear window of the car. I think that the bangs and flashes were a result of some low velocity weapon, possibly a pistol being fired. The car continued on up Omar Street. Fire was returned by a number of riflemen. I heard high velocity rifle fire and I looked round and saw a number of my colleagues in a "Fire" position. When the car went into Ross Street and then into Omar Street it was out of my view. I heard a crash of a vehicle. Some 10 minutes later I learned that the car had crashed into a wall in Omar Street and that a hostile crowd had gathered around it. I was detailed to move forward along Cape Street to go to Omar Street to secure the scene and the car. I moved forward with my platoon totaling about 32 men. I saw that the now very hostile crowd had moved to the junction of Ross and Omar Streets and were

throwing bottles and stones and shouting abuse. We moved forward to Ross Street where I saw the crowd gathered around a green Cortina which had crashed into a wall on the left-hand side of Omar Street. This was the vehicle that I had earlier seen in Cape Street. We fired three baton rounds and then moved forward into Omar Street. As we reached the car the crowd withdrew along Omar Street still shouting abuse at us. As I approached the car I saw that a London-type taxicab was parked at the side of it. Its headlights were on full beam illuminating my men. I shouted to the taxi driver to turn off his lights and remain where he was but he started moving forward towards us. Again he was told to stop but he still came forward towards me.

The cab was driven by a man and as I looked into the rear I saw a blanket covering something on the rear seat. I saw that it was a body as the shoes and ankles were visible below the edge of the blanket. The taxi driver suddenly accelerated away despite the fact that another soldier smashed the driving side window with the butt of his rifle. The taxi accelerated and turned left into Raglan Street when it disappeared from my view. I then moved across to the Cortina and on looking inside I saw a man kneeling over a body shouting 'my wife, my wife'.

This man told me that he was the driver of the Ford Corsair in which the two dead women were traveling. At about 5.50 p.m. on Saturday 23rd October 1971 on the BBC Television News I saw a male person who gave his name as Davidson and who claimed that he was in fact the driver of the Ford Corsair. I see that person in court today. He is the accused Davidson in the dock. He is definitely not the man whom I saw at the scene who told me that he was the driver of the car. The body over which that man was weeping I took to be that of a man. It was sitting in the rear right passenger seat with its head leaning to the left. I did not shine my torch into the car and at that time a civilian ambulance arrived on the scene and I went and spoke to the driver. The attendants then went across to the car and

removed the body carrying it into the ambulance where they placed it. I saw that the body was dressed in what looked like a dark coloured blazer and light coloured trousers. Once the body was in the ambulance the attendants returned to the car and I saw them lift another body from the rear of the car. When I saw this second body which was dressed in a pair of denim jeans, black patent leather footwear and a shirt I thought that the body was in fact that of a young boy aged about 17 or 18 years. This body was also put in the ambulance. I then discovered that the young boy was in fact a young girl. The two bodies were then taken away to hospital and I commenced to search the car with a torch but I found no weapons or ammunition. I did however find a whistle on the floor in the rear of the car. I took possession of that whistle which I now see produced in court marked "Exhibit 71" and later that day I delivered it to Major Dumphie's office".

**Statement from John Millar one of the ambulance men.** "I am an ambulance driver attendant employed by the Northern Ireland Hospital Authority. I was on night duty covering the period 22nd/23rd October 1971. At about 4.45a.m.on the 23rd October a call was received to go to the junction of Ross Street and Cape Street. We were informed that there had been an incident and that the military were present. Accompanied by my driver, Jimmy Tyrie, we left for the scene. On our arrival I got out and went over to a crashed car. I looked into the rear and by the light of a torch held by a civilian I saw what I thought was a heavily built man lying on the rear offside seat. This person was lying towards the rear offside door. There was also another person in the back. She was leaning the same way with the face down and I could see that the back of the head was blown away. Jimmy Tyrie and I then removed the person I thought was a man to our ambulance. The body had light coloured trousers and a dark car jacket type coat and heavy flat heeled type shoes. The hair was medium length and dirty fair. After securing the stretcher we went back for the other body. This one was wearing long leg boots, dark jeans and a dark navy blue jacket.

The hair was missing as the back of the head had been completely removed. A civilian and a priest got into the ambulance with us. I was led to believe that the civilian was the husband of the person I had thought was a man. This was the first indication I had that the two casualties were women.

We went directly to the City Hospital where the doctor on duty pronounced both persons dead. We then conveyed the bodies to the City Mortuary, Laganbank Road. The husband informed me that his wife was called Meehan and that the other dead person was called Maguire. I noted this and recorded it when I got back to Ambulance Control.”

**The ambulance driver was James Patrick Tyrie.** This is his statement. “I am an ambulance driver employed by the Northern Ireland Hospitals authority. I was on night duty on the night of the 22nd day of October 1971. My duty started at 10.30 p.m. and terminated at 9.00 a.m. on the 23rd day of October 1971.

While in Ambulance Control a call came in at approximately 4.45 a.m. on 23rd October and as a result I immediately left in the ambulance with my attendant Mr. Jack Millar and proceeded to Cape Street, Belfast in the Falls Road area. We arrived at the junction of Ross Street and Cape Street at approximately 4.51 a.m. On our arrival I noticed that the area was very dark and I do not recall seeing any street lights on although I cannot definitely say that there were none. I saw a torch waved and then the military directed us to the scene.

At the scene I saw a number of people standing silently in the street and a large car sitting on the footpath with its bonnet against the wall. The car seemed to have struck the wall on the front near side. My attendant got out and went over to this car whilst I stayed in the ambulance and radioed our arrival to Ambulance Control. I then got out and opened the rear doors of the ambulance. At this stage I saw a number of military personnel. I then joined my attendant at the car and saw him lift out the body of a woman. This woman was

wearing light coloured trousers, a coloured blouse and a dark jacket. This jacket had rather square shoulders. I cannot remember what sort of footwear she had on. This woman's hair was medium length and appeared to be dirty fair in colour. I could not see what her injuries were but there was a lot of blood on her blouse and jacket. I assisted my attendant to put this woman into the ambulance. My attendant then went back to the crashed car and I attended to the stretcher that the woman was on in the ambulance. As soon as I was finished securing the stretcher I again joined the attendant at the crashed car. I looked into the car and I saw what I thought was the body of a man lying in the rear near side seat. This body was lying towards the right in the rear of the crashed car. The main things that made me think initially that it was a man was that I could see jeans, boots and a dark jacket and the general appearance was of that of someone slightly built. This person had very serious injuries particularly to the head and I realized immediately that that person was dead. My attendant and I then put this person into the ambulance and a priest got into the vehicle together with another civilian. It was at this stage that I ascertained that the second person was a woman.

We went immediately to the City Hospital, Belfast, where the duty casualty officer pronounced the two persons dead. I then conveyed the bodies to the Mortuary at Lagan Bank Road, Belfast".

**Roderick Lodge, Staff Sergeant Royal Military Police, Lisburn, Co. Antrim:** "On the 23rd Day of October 1971 at approximately 8.30 a.m. I went to the junction of Cape Street and Ross Street, Belfast where I made a cursory examination of the scene. I found the outside of houses at No.1 and 3 Cape Street pitted but I am unable to say what caused this. Later that day a Major in the Royal Green Jackets handed to me a whistle and an aerosol claxon horn which I now see produced in court marked "Exhibits 71 and 70" respectively. I also received from Doctor Carson fragments of metal extracted from the

body of Mrs. Moira Meehan which I see produced in court marked "Exhibit 73" and fragments of a bullet from the body of Maura Meehan. I see those fragments produced in court marked "Exhibit 74". I retained all these exhibits in my possession until I handed them to Mr. Beavis at the Forensic Science Laboratory on 24th October 1971".

The following are the statements from the RUC:

**“Constable George Allen Blair of RUC Headquarters:** I am a constable of the RUC. On the 23rd day of October 1971 at 7.30 am I went to Albert Street Mill and took five photographs of a Ford Corsair car registration no. CIA 5670. Later on the same date I attended the Post-Mortem examinations of the bodies of two female persons identified to me by Doctor Carson as those of Dorothy Maguire and Mary Ellen Meehan. On the instructions of Doctor Carson I took several photographs during each Post-Mortem. I later processed the film, made the prints and put them in album form. I now hand copies of these albums into court marked Exhibits "79 and 80". Exhibit 79 contains photographs of Dorothy Maguire and Exhibit 80 contains photographs of Mary Meehan.

***(Moments before the inquest began in November '72, Paisley walked into the court and an RUC officer walked up to him and showed him photographs; Paisley looked at each of the photos without speaking and then left the court room before the inquest began)***

**John Moffett, Constable of the Scenes of Crimes Office, RUC Headquarters:** On Saturday the 23rd day of October 1971, at about 6.a.m. I proceeded to the Military Post in Albert Street, where I examined a motor vehicle, photographs of which I see produced to me in albums marked "Exhibits 79 & 80". I was accompanied by Constable Emerson of the Fingerprint Branch and Constable Blair of the Photography Branch. After inspecting the

scene I sent for Mr. Beavis, who arrived in company with Sergeant Young. Later that morning accompanied by Mr. Beavis and Sergeant Young I went to the Mortuary in Laganbank Road, and there took swabs from the hands of the deceased female who was identified to me as Mary Maura Meehan.

I now produce those swabs labeled "Exhibits 32 to 37 inclusive". I also took swabs from the hands of the deceased female and identified to me as Dorothy Maguire. I now produce those swabs marked "Exhibits 1 to 6 inclusive". I then went to Castlereagh RUC station, at the request of D/Inspector Drew, where I took swabs from the hands of the defendant Margaret O'Riordan, who is the female accused whom I now see in court. I now produce those swabs marked "Exhibits 26 to 31 inclusive". I also took swabs from the hands of one Elizabeth Donaghy of 8 Garnet Street; I now produce those swabs marked "Exhibits 51 to 56 inclusive". Whilst I was there I received from D/Sergeant Caskey certain articles of clothing which I see produced marked "Exhibits 23 to 25 inclusive". D/Sergeant Caskey also handed to me several items, which I understand in turn he had received from Mr. Paschal O'Hare. I see these articles produced marked "Exhibits 57 to 60 inclusive" and Exhibit 65".

At 4.p.m. on Saturday the 23rd October 1971, in company with Constable Blair I attended the Post-Mortem examination of the two deceased women.

The examinations were carried out by Dr. Carson, and in his presence I took possession of clothing and items removed from the body of Mary Maura Meehan. I now produce those items marked "Exhibit 38 to 50 inclusive". All of the items and Exhibits to which I have referred to above were taken by me to the Forensic Science Laboratory, clothes and items belonging to William Patrick Davidson, which I produce marked Exhibits 61, 62, 63, 64, 66, 67 and 69, I had received this Exhibit from Constable Murphy on the 23rd October 1971. I see all these articles produced to the court to-day they are numbered and labeled

in the manner that I have described, and each Exhibit is described on the relative label attached to it.

**John Jerome Murphy, Constable, RUC, Headquarters:** I am a scenes of crime officer attached to RUC Headquarters Belfast. On the 23rd day of October 1971 I saw the accused William Patrick Davidson at the Police Office, Belfast, where at the request of D/Inspector Drew I took swabs from his hands which I later handed to Constable Moffett. I now see produced in court and marked "Exhibit 68" the swabs in question. I now hand "Exhibit 68" into the court.

**Victor Beavis, Department of Industrial and Forensic Science Newtownbreda Road Belfast:** "I am a Bachelor of Science and a member of the Department of Industrial and Forensic Science of the Ministry of Commerce. On the 23rd day of October 1971 I visited Albert Street Military Post where I examined a car. I see photographs of that vehicle produced in court in album form and marked Exhibits 79 and 80. I made observations on the scene and took possession of a sample produced in court marked "Exhibit 72". On the 24th October 1971 I received from Sergeant Ronald Lodge four articles which I now see produced in court marked "Exhibits 70,71, 73,and 74". In a report of my findings which I subsequently prepared and which I am about to tender in evidence marked "Exhibit 84" I incorrectly stated that these four exhibits were received from Constable Moffett. On the 25th day of October 1971 I received from Constable Moffett a series of articles which I see produced in court marked 'Exhibits 1 to 60 inclusive'. On the 28th day of October 1971 I received from Constable Moffett yet a further series of articles which I see produced in court marked 'Exhibits 61 to 69 inclusive'. I have examined all of the foregoing articles and have prepared a report of my findings in which the nature of each item is described and my findings are stated. I now read out, the report and tender it in evidence



to the court marked 'Exhibit 84'. Each of the exhibits which I see produced today is numbered and labeled in the same way as that which I have referred to them in my report".

***Victor Beavis's deposition is interrupted at this point by Mr. McLaughlin B.L., (Counsel for both the accused) to cross-examine a particular point in his evidence; it is obvious from his reply that the cross-examination relates to the swabs taken from Maura Meehan's hands; in all, there were 74 exhibits in court and these were taken from Maura, Dorothy, Flo, Billy, Elizabeth Donaghy. These exhibits ranged from clothing to fragments of glass, lead and rubber bullets, blood samples and hair samples but what we have to concentrate on are the swabs taken of Maura's hands.***

Victor Beavis was handed exhibits 1 to 60 on Monday the 25th October two days after Maura's hands were swabbed. Exhibits relating to the swabs from the Maura's hands are numbers 32-37. This is Victor Beavis's findings: ***"The swabs (items 32-37 from Mary Maura Meehan) were examined for the presence of lead. Lead was detected on both the hands and the distribution and nature of the staining is consistent with discharge residues due to firing a weapon."***

We must keep in mind that Maura Meehan did not have in her possession a firearm of any description. ***There was no gun in that car.*** So we ***must*** ask the question, how did Victor Beavis come to the conclusion from the test results, that Maura had been firing a gun? Besides the fact that both Maura and Dorothy were shot through the back of the head, all the glass fragments from the rear window were embedded in the backs of their bodies (heads and necks); it seems strange therefore that none of the 50 or so civilians who were standing around the other small streets at the time heard the two low velocity shots that were supposed to have been fired from the rear window of the car. Only the British army say they heard those shots. And as we've read in their statements, return fire was

*automatic, so it would have been impossible for Maura to turn around completely in order to have the head, neck, and spinal injuries, which caused her death. After reading Victor Beavis's response to the cross-examination we shall go into more detail about the actual swabbing of Maura's hands. The solution used by Victor Beavis to determine if anyone in the car had been firing a gun is called Sodium-Rhodizomate.*

**Victor Beavis's response:** "I know what part of the hands the swabs were taken from. In all cases there were six swabs taken from the hands. Three from each hand. One was taken from the back, one from the web between the thumb and forefinger and the third from the palm. It is possible to distinguish between the deposits left due to the discharging of a weapon and those left from handling an object containing lead. I used a chemical test that is based on the reaction between lead and a coloured dye that produces a characteristic colour. The re-agent is called Sodium-Rhodizomate".

*For those of us who know little about the field of forensic science, here is a summary on how testing is carried out using Sodium Rhodizonate. These instructions show how important it is for the cloths used in the tests to be correctly treated. 'A number of methods for the removal of discharge residues from the hand have been tried out. The method found to be most satisfactory consisted of the use of a swab made up from a piece of cotton cloth (approx. 1' square) with a pea-size piece of absorbent cotton wool twisted into the center to form a pad. The pad moistened with 1% hydrochloric acid is then used to swab the web and back of the thumb and forefinger. The cotton wool is removed and the cloth is warm-air dried.*

*The centre of the cloth is then treated with a drop of Sodium Rhodizonate solution (freshly prepared). A red colour which turns blue on the addition of 5% hydrochloric acid indicates the presence of lead'. \* The swabbing of the hands was a straight-forward task for Moffett,*

however, the preparation and the immediate after-care of the swabs could directly effect the results. Not following the procedure correctly may have caused a wrong positive result. Moffett made no mention of preparing the swabs or their after-care from the 23rd until the 25th when he handed them over to Beavis.

**\*The colour change in the Sodium Rhodizonate tests determine the results. If the colour changes from red to blue then that is positive and means that lead residue taken from hands by swabbing was consistent with a gun being fired.**

**The results are determined by the colour; so it is very interesting that when Victor Beavis submitted his findings to the RUC and also to the Coroners Court that he stated in both submissions that Billy Davidson's car which he examined thoroughly in day light was a pale blue Corsair Reg No: CIA 5670. Billy Davidson's car was in fact a pale green Corsair Reg No: CIA5670.**

When the swabs from Maura's hands were taken, her body was still fully dressed. This is significant to the test findings as her clothing was in direct contact with firearm residue caused by bullet fragmentation exiting from her body. The car, inside and out, was another minefield of fire-arm residue which would have caused contamination along with direct airborne transfer of the produced particles to both Maura and Dorothy. Another source of contamination would have been contact with residue-contaminated surfaces or people at the scene and also the handling of the bodies in the mortuary. In fact we don't know what precautions were taken to prevent cross-contamination i.e. was Moffitt wearing any sort of protective clothing, had he changed since examining the car; did he touch any contaminated surface where the deceased's bodies had lay? Did he wear new gloves; how did he dispose of the gloves he wore swabbing Dorothy's hands; did he wear the same pair of gloves swabbing both sets of hands, and if he did change gloves, how did he remove the first pair? Was it with someone else's help in order not to

contaminate his own hands? These questions are important to determine if Moffett took adequate precautions to safe-guard against cross-contamination. Maura did not fire a gun so we have to explore the possibility that the swabs became contaminated either **deliberately or accidentally**. The facts are that, as both Maura and Dorothy died side by side and were exposed to the exact same sources of contamination, then, it would follow that if Maura's hands tested positive then so too should have Dorothy's. The hand swabbing of both bodies was done in an identical procedure by Constable Moffett. It would therefore have been his responsibility to ensure the safe delivery of the swabs to Victor Beavis on the Monday, (even though Beavis was present when the swabbing was being done); the delay of two days is not explained.

The British army had already put out its version of events; so it would have been imperative from their perspective that the hand swabbing and test results were done and their findings made public without delay. As it was, there seemed to be no urgency by the British army to vindicate itself quickly by producing the evidence that a gun had been fired at them from the back of Billy Davidson's car. We have to remember the outrage felt by the nationalist people at the killings of Maura and Dorothy, so it was in the interests of the British army to quickly justify their actions.

The question remains; as there was no gun and no shooting from the car, how then did Maura's hands read positive? The logical explanation is that the swabs were **deliberately** contaminated with residue from the hands of someone who had fired a gun. We weren't told in Constable Moffett's statement where the swabs had been kept or who exactly would have had access to the swabs before they were handed over to Victor Beavis from the forensic science department on Monday the 25th October; and we certainly don't know if in fact, if they were even the same swabs!

The Autopsy report proves beyond any doubt that Maura could not have been firing a gun through the rear window of the car as the British army witnesses have stated. Here are the findings on that report:

The Post-Mortems were carried out by **John Lochard Carson MD, Deputy State Pathologist for Northern Ireland on 23rd October 1971.**

**Opinion**  
**on**  
**the Autopsy Findings of –**  
**Mary Maura Meehan**

The woman was healthy. There was no natural disease to cause or accelerate death or to cause collapse.

Autopsy revealed a gaping hole on the right side of the back of the neck, associated internally with fractures of the upper cervical vertebrae and division of the spinal cord. This injury would have caused very rapid death. There were also fractures of the adjacent base of the skull and laceration of the under part of the brain. A fragmented bullet, apparently of 7.62 caliber, was found in the brain and other metallic fragments, probably part of the bullet, were found in the depths of the neck wound. It seems clear; therefore, that a single bullet caused this wound which had fragmented before or after entering the neck from behind.

Many other small wounds, mostly quite superficial, were found on the back of the neck and upper chest below the main wound. These were probably caused by bullet fragments or pieces of broken glass.

The report of the Forensic Science Laboratory shows that at the time of her death there was a small amount of alcohol in the body.

**Opinion**

**on**  
**the Autopsy Findings of**  
**Dorothy Maguire**

The young woman was healthy. There was no natural disease to cause or accelerate death or to cause collapse.

Death was the result of a gunshot wound of the head. The missile, probably from a high-velocity weapon, appeared to have entered the back of the head just to the left of the midline. It had then passed forwards through the skull and brain, causing extensive disruption of the tissues. The effect of the brain injury would have caused rapid death.

There was also a wound across the front of the right shoulder in line with one on the right side of the neck, whilst another large wound and two small ones lay slightly higher on the neck. There were also many small wounds on the back of the upper chest. All these wounds, and two others on the right foot, appeared to have been caused by fragments of a bullet or bullets, pieces of glass, or metal fragments from the car body. Metallic fragments were recovered from some of the wounds and all those on the neck and chest had a direction horizontally from right to left. It would thus seem that at least one bullet came from the deceased's right side. If all the bullet damage was at the rear of the car this would indicate that she was side-on to the rear window when struck by this bullet.

The report of the Forensic Science Laboratory shows that at the time of her death there was a very small amount of alcohol in the blood but none in the urine.

The inquest was held on the 30th November 1972, at the County Courthouse, Crumlin Road. The presiding coroner was J.H.S. Elliott ESQ. An 'Open' verdict was reached by the jury of eight.

Coroners Act (Northern Ireland) 1959

ROYAL ULSTER CONSTABULARY

## POLICE REPORT CONCERNING DEATH

From: R.U.C.

To: H.M. Coroner

Belfast.

Division

Date 29th December, 1971.

## REPORT OF ENQUIRIES INTO DEATH OF

NAME Mrs. Mary Ellen MEEHAN AGE LAST BIRTHDAY 30 years.

ADDRESS (INCLUDING PARISH) 5, Bantry Street,  
Belfast.

OCCUPATION Housewife.

MARRIED, WIDOW, WIDOWER, BACHELOR, SPINSTER Married.  
(Delete whichever is not applicable)If a married woman, widow or child, state husband's or father's full name, address and occupation. If an illegitimate child, mother's full name, address and occupation  
James MEEHAN (Husband)  
5, Bantry Street, Belfast.  
(Entertainer.)

TIME AND DATE OF DEATH 23rd October, 1971 at 4.45a.m.

PLACE OF DEATH (INCLUDING PARISH) Cape Street, Belfast.

PERSONS WITNESSING THE DEATH (1) Mrs. Margaret P. O'Riordan.  
(2) William P. Davidson.  
(3) Soldiers 'A' to 'M'.MEDICAL PRACTITIONER PRONOUNCING LIFE EXTINCT Dr. S. Kyle Graham (Casualty Officer)  
Belfast City Hospital.MEDICAL PRACTITIONER WHO ATTENDED DECEASED BEFORE DEATH Dr. J. McCormack,  
233, Falls Road, Belfast.

MEDICAL HISTORY No previous medical history. There was no natural disease to cause or accelerate death or collapse.

CIRCUMSTANCES RELATING TO DEATH The deceased was a back seat passenger in a car from which two shots were alleged to have been fired at a military patrol. The military returned the fire in consequence of which she received fatal head injuries.

NAME AND ADDRESS OF NEAREST RELATIVE James Meehan (Husband),  
5 Bantry Street, Belfast.

SIGNED

RANK Det/Inspector.

STATION Springfield Road, Belfast.

Coroners Act (Northern Ireland) 1959

ROYAL ULSTER CONSTABULARY

## POLICE REPORT CONCERNING DEATH

From: R.U.C.

To: H.M. Coroner

B. Division

Belfast

Date 29th December, 1971

## REPORT OF ENQUIRIES INTO DEATH OF

NAME Miss Dorothy MAQUIRE. AGE LAST BIRTHDAY 19 years.

ADDRESS (INCLUDING PARISH) 45, Westrock Drive,  
Belfast.

OCCUPATION Factory Worker

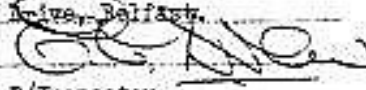
MARRIED, WIDOW, WIDOWER, BACHELOR, SPINSTER Spinster  
(Delete whichever is not applicable)If a married woman, widow or child, state husband's or father's full name, address and occupation. If an illegitimate child, mother's full name, address and occupation  
Not applicable.

TIME AND DATE OF DEATH 23rd October, 1971 at 4.45 a.m.

PLACE OF DEATH (INCLUDING PARISH) Oape Street, Belfast.

PERSONS WITNESSING THE DEATH (1) Mrs. Margaret F. O'Riordan,  
(2) William P. Davidson,  
(3) Soldiers "A" - "M"MEDICAL PRACTITIONER PRONOUNCING LIFE EXTINCT Dr. S. Kyle Graham (Casualty Officer)  
Belfast City Hospital.MEDICAL PRACTITIONER WHO ATTENDED DECEASED BEFORE DEATH Dr. J. McCormack,  
233 Falls Rd., Belfast.MEDICAL HISTORY No previous medical history  
There was no natural disease to cause or accelerate death or to cause collapse.

CIRCUMSTANCES RELATING TO DEATH The deceased was a back seat passenger in a car from which two shots were alleged to have been fired at a Military patrol. The Military returned the fire in consequence of which the deceased received fatal head injuries.

NAME AND ADDRESS OF NEAREST RELATIVE Mrs. Brigid Maquire (Mother)  
45 Westrock Drive, Belfast.SIGNED   
RANK D/Inspector.  
STATION Springfield Road, Belfast.



## CORONERS ACT (NORTHERN IRELAND), 1959

## VERDICT ON INQUEST

On an inquest taken for our Sovereign Lady the Queen, at County Courthouse, Crumlin Road  
 in the County [Borough] of Belfast on Thursday the 30th  
 day of November 1972, [and by adjournment on the \_\_\_\_\_ day of  
 19 \_\_\_\_] before me J. H. S. ELLIOTT ESQ., Coroner  
 for the district of City of Belfast [and the undermentioned  
 jurors] touching the death of Mary Maura MEEHAN, to inquire  
 how, when and where the said Mary Maura MEEHAN came  
 to her death, the following matters were found:

1. Name of deceased MARY MAURA MEEHAN
2. Cause of death TRANSECTION OF SPINAL CORD due to GUNSHOT (high velocity weapon)  
Wound of Neck
3. Date, time and place of death 23rd October, 1971, 4.15 a.m., Cape Street, Belfast
4. Verdict of the jury/conclusion of the Coroner as to the death  
Open

In witness whereof, the Coroner [and the Jurors] has/have hereunto set and subscribed his/their hands this  
 30th day of November 1972.

Coroner

Jurors:

1. W. P. Kelly
2. David Kelly
3. John Kelly
4. John Kelly
5. John Kelly
6. John Kelly

7. John Kelly
8. David Kelly
9. \_\_\_\_\_
10. \_\_\_\_\_
11. \_\_\_\_\_

## CORONERS ACT (NORTHERN IRELAND), 1959

## VERDICT ON INQUEST

On an inquest taken for our Sovereign Lady the Queen, at County Courthouse, Crumlin Road  
 in the County (Borough) of Belfast on Thursday the 30th  
 day of November 1972 (and by adjournment on the  
 19 ] before me J. H. S. ELLIOTT ESQ., Coroner  
 for the district of City of Belfast [and the undermentioned  
 jurors] touching the death of Dorothy MAGUIRE, to inquire  
 how, when and where the said Dorothy MAGUIRE came  
 to her death, the following matters were found:

1. Name of deceased Dorothy MAGUIRE
2. Cause of death LACERATION OF BRAIN associated with FRACTURES OF SKULL due to GUNSHOT  
 (high velocity weapon) WOUND OF HEAD
3. Date, time and place of death 23rd October, 1971, 4.45 a.m. Cope Street, Belfast
4. Verdict of the jury/consensus of the Coroner as to the death

*Open*

In witness whereof, the Coroner [and the Jurors] has/have hereunto set and subscribed his/their hands this  
 30th day of November 1972

Coroner

Jurors:

1. *G. P. M. Maguire*
2. *David Gallagher*
3. *Mr. Johnston*
4. *Mr. Cheenan*
5. *Mr. O'Connell*
6. *Joseph Kennedy*

7. *15th*
8. *David Kennedy*
9. \_\_\_\_\_
10. \_\_\_\_\_
11. \_\_\_\_\_

## Conclusion

After studying all the statements, can anyone conclude that the killing of Maura Meehan and Dorothy Maguire was justified? Is it any wonder that we nationalists/republicans in the six counties don't trust the British government? How can we? To turn the other cheek, not seven times but seventy-seventy times, won't make the slightest difference to the status Quo in this island or in England; because, they don't accept that they have wronged us as a people, in any way. Revenge is not so sweet. It is bitter and its taste distorts all the good things that can nourish a people's spirit. Truth on the other hand can set us free, provided that is, that we know exactly what the 'truth' is. The truth is not only beautiful; it can also be terrifying and ugly; but, in accepting the importance of 'truth' we accept a positive way of living our lives that can only make this world a better place.

Reading over some of the news papers of this period in particular, and journalistic trends in reporting 'the troubles' up to the present time causes me to ask **obvious** questions like: why did the British Media at that time deliberately mislead the British public about events here? Was it perhaps out of a sense of patriotism that blinded them from the truth; or was it solely to demonize the republican/nationalist population and so suppress any avenues of support which the cause of Irish unity would have had in England?

It was an easy task for the British media to manipulate public opinion in 1971 because at that time in our history the British public really didn't have any sense of who we were or what we, as a people, were about. Most press then coming out of the six counties was 'bad press' and most, if not all, was anti republican/nationalist.

Finally, where, career-wise, are all the RUC personnel involved in this investigation? It would be no surprise to find that they were placed in higher positions within the RUC working to 'protect the nationalist/republican communities' in the same manner that most certainly contributed to their promotions! Such was the case of the Chief Superintendent,

who was proved beyond any doubt to be a liar during the inquest into the death of Nora McCabe in 1981 after she was shot in the head by a plastic bullet fired by the RUC, and who, shortly after the inquest, was promoted to the position of Assistant Chief Constable. He is now a member of the **New** PSNI/RUC still servicing our community.

## Tribute

It has been my very great honour to help bring this murderous event to the public mind now, 30 years almost to the day, after it occurred, in the hope that both justice and truth will triumph. In so doing, revealing to many the beauty and love of a pilgrim people, who, up off their knees, see their journey's end now in sight!

I have many people to thank for their help in writing this book. I hope I leave no one out; but if I do, I promise that it is unintentional. First of all, I thank 'Relatives for Justice' for asking me to write the book. I thank Maureen McGuinness, Kate, Mary, Bridie, Anne, Marie, Brigid, Martin, Collette, Gerry, Mickey, Roisin, Chris Huddleson (for her proof reading in this sad time in her life) and those also who don't want to be named. I have to thank, in particular, Mary Herald, for her kindness, consideration, and time. My special thanks goes to Margaret Kennedy-Meehan, for her endurance and pain; but especially for her determination to find a way for the truth to be told about the murders of her mother and Aunt Dorothy.

The truth found in these pages is, in a way, '**a candle of hope**' inspired by a little girl who became 'mother' to her three brothers when she was nine years old.

May her light spread and reveal to others, that the truth locked away in a darkened corner is useless. It is only when it is uncovered and brought out into the open that it can

illuminate and transform forever the way we view our world. A world where 'truth' is still important, a world where through 'truth' no one will ever die hungry; let this be our legacy to the world we inhabit.

***Mark Thompson*** (Relatives for Justice)

After reading this book people will understand better why Margaret came to Relatives for Justice and asked for help to tell the story of her mother and aunt Dorothy. She and the rest of her family felt compelled to do all they could to have the truth exposed; 'exposed' to some may seem an inappropriate word to use, but I can assure you that indeed it is quite appropriate; because, here in the north of Ireland 'truth' is very often guarded and hidden so well from the public by the very authorities whose responsibility it is to bring to public attention and to the courts where necessary. And in this instance both these requirements were absolutely necessary. As victims their grief was compounded.

Such is the indictment of this society that ordinary relatives such as the Meehan's and Maguire's, in the absence of impartial investigation and appliance of the rule of law, done so very deliberately it must be stressed, had to assume the responsibility for establishing the facts about the brutal murders of Dorothy and Maura themselves. It is a crime against all our human rights when we are denied access to 'the truth' and the administration of justice by the 'authorities'.

There exists a collective experience within Relatives for Justice of exactly what faced these two families, and what they still face. Relatives who lost their loved ones at the hands of state forces saw the state protect the perpetrators and treat the victim's families with complete indifference and contempt dare they speak out. In this context there existed an appearance outside of our immediate community, and sometimes beyond, that because of the absence of prosecutions that culpability rested with the victim.

Such a view could not have been further from the truth. This also attempted to reinforce the perception that the State played a neutral role in the conflict. And where appropriate the fabrication of evidence and planting of incriminating evidence such as weapons, residue from firearms and explosives, to the self inflicting of injuries to those members of the British army and the RUC to substantiate their false stories and lies in order to justify killings, have all occurred over this past 32 years.

Usually accompanying such propaganda was the character assassination of the deceased. This too often extended to family, wider family circles, and immediate community. Such policy served to 'publicly' distract from the awfulness that took place – the crime of violating rights. In this context there also exists a hierarchy of 'victimhood'; those who are 'deserving' and those 'undeserving' both playing their role in reflecting an inaccurate view of the conflict overall.

Inconsistencies in the forensic evidence, and that of those responsible for the killings, casts serious doubt on the version of events that evening presented by the RUC and British army. It is our view that these matters relating to this case must now be independently and publicly examined.

Recently the European Court ruled that the mechanisms used to investigate state killings, and killings where there were allegations of state collusion, were ineffective and that they did not comply with the international legal obligations under the European Convention on Human Rights of which Britain is a key signatory. These ranged from the RUC investigations, the role of the DPP, the Inquest Court and Civil Court. All were found to have been breached of Article 2 of the convention and the rights of the bereaved and the

public to have these types of killings and incidents properly and thoroughly investigated were violated. Essentially this translates into the British deliberating operation an administrative malpractice which allowed for covering up its actions through its 'police', DPP, and Courts. The ruling now has implications for hundreds of families bereaved by the state, and where families believe there exists evidence of collusion with pro-state death squads, and not least in the killing of Maura and Dorothy. This also applies to all those injured in similar incidents by the state and loyalists.

The attempted perpetuation of the lie that the state has not committed murder or violated rights simply because they were not held accountable no longer holds and this publication in its own way has contributed to the exposure of that lie, these families have dared to speak out and in doing so inspired and given courage to others to also tell their story.

People now see the impunity that was provided to members of the British army and the RUC and culpability must rest with those in power who allowed and facilitated such practice – namely the British Government.

If the British claim that the actions of their forces are unquestionable and that they have not contravened human rights then they should simply let these matters be independently and publicly examined in compliance with the Article 2 ruling. Surely if there are allegations then it is in their interests also to have incidents examined thoroughly and independently. In the 363 state killings, which also include the killing of 75 children, and of the thousands wounded, not once has there been an independent investigation. What do they have to hide or fear? Anyone reading this book will not need an answer to the question.

The sense of pain and injustice that the people in this book have been through leaps out and doesn't leave – if anything it underlines the cause for justice. Flo O' Rairdon and Billy Davidson who were in the front of the car both shortly afterwards lost loved ones in tragic circumstances. Flo's 13 year old son Sean was shot dead exactly 6 months later on 23rd March '72; he was shot through the back of the head by the British army. Billy Davidson's brother Anthony was shot dead in his home 9 months later 21st July '72 by the UDA/UFF. A few years later Billy was himself shot by loyalists as he worked in his grocery shop; and then also Brigid Cairns who was a close friend of Maura's, her son Sean and husband were both shot by loyalists on new year's eve '79 as they watched T.V. in their Tralee St. home. Sean died instantly and although seriously wounded, her husband survived. The sense of injustice is raw.

Probably the most unique aspect of the killing of Maura and Dorothy, if such a phrase can be allowed, is that we know the names of those who shot and murdered them; unlike for example Bloody Sunday, where the Brits have refused to give their statements/evidence in Derry, the place where the atrocity happened; in almost all cases of 'state killings' they don't even appear at inquest courts, they just submit prepared written statements.

I suppose it is only natural then, that up until this present time the Brits who did the killings on Bloody Sunday, have felt secure in remaining anonymous within their wider community. It is highly likely that most of them, living in communities not dissimilar from our own, will have already retired from the British army and be at the stage in life where they can enjoy any grandchildren they may have. It is understandable that they would not now want to be openly associated with this particular 'atrocity'; as it is known world-wide as 'the slaughter of the innocent'. An aspect of natural justice would be to publicly expose these people – the justice being the public identification of being responsible and the incurring shame. But



Maura and Dorothy's killings, like many others, weren't captured on camera yet it was no less a crime.

I often wonder if 30 years on do those brits who were involved in Maura and Dorothy's murder, and that of Bloody Sunday and many other killings, do they ever look into their own consciences and if so what, if any, feelings or thoughts arise. They too are prisoners of the past still trapped in the lie. There is an urgent need for the public disclosure of the truth to allow the bereaved and injured to move on and possible, also allow those responsible to also move on.

The Maguire/Meehan families have remained consistent in their struggle to have the truth acknowledged, they can't move forward with out the truth. It has been my privilege to work with such good and sincere people as the Meehan/Maguire families. They have been consistent in their quest to have the truth told about the murders of their mother, sister's, and aunts and are an inspiration to the rest of us.

At the opening of this short piece I said that they were victims. It is a term that often I have difficulty with, yes like many of us they are indeed victims, but the connotations of that word can often invoke hopelessness and defeat and yet I have very rarely seen this in people. In this instance, as in many others, I see instead determination, hope and inspiration. People in the face of great loss using their energies and skills to ensure that we all listen and learn. Most importantly that learning from their experiences will assist in the process of transition where by the institutions of society are underpinned by human rights, where violation is replaced with safeguard. Instead of playing the victims these families, like the majority of families affected by state and state sponsored violence within the nationalist and republican community, have turned victimhood to victor.

