
Regional Press Cuttings (TEO)

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Regional Press Cuttings (TEO)

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BLOODY SUNDAY DEAD REMEMBERED



Taoiseach Micheal Martin laying a wreath during a memorial service held yesterday to mark the 50th anniversary of Bloody Sunday. The event was one of a number held over the weekend to remember those murdered in the 1972 massacre. See inside for full coverage. PHOTO: TOM HEANEY (NWPRESSPICS)

'Nothing will stop me from going about my work on behalf of the people of Derry'

Bomb threat against SDLP Foyle MLA Sinead McLaughlin condemned

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"Nothing will stop me from going about my work on behalf of the people of Derry" is the defiant message from SDLP Foyle MLA, Sinéad McLaughlin, following a bomb threat.

Ms McLaughlin and her staff were forced to evacuate their office on Spencer Road in the Waterside on Thursday afternoon after being informed by police of reports that a bomb had been left at the premises.

Despite the threat, Ms

McLaughlin insisted that nothing would intimidate her from her duties as an MLA and stated "It will take more than the efforts of a few idiotic thugs" to stop her from doing so.

She said: "This incident has been very upsetting for my staff who come to work every day to help the people of this community with everything from passport applications to PIP appeals.

"Nobody should have to face this kind of threat when simply going about their job.

"While it's deeply unpleasant to be subjected to this, nothing will stop me



Defiant... SDLP Foyle MLA Sinead McLaughlin.

from going about my work on behalf of the people of Derry.

"Whether in my career as a councillor or an MLA, I have often faced barriers, but I have always overcome them and it will take more than the efforts of a few idiotic thugs to

stop me from working to represent and improve the lives of people here."

The leader of the SDLP, and Foyle MP, Colum Eastwood condemned the threat as 'despicable.'

He said: "This threat

against SDLP Foyle MLA Sinéad McLaughlin is a despicable attempt to intimidate and stop a tireless public representative from doing their job.

"I know Sinéad will not be deterred and my thoughts are with her and her constituency team after what must have been a frightening experience.

"The entire SDLP stands fully behind them in solidarity.

"Elected representatives should be able to go about their duties without having to worry about threats being issued against them.

"We've seen recently in England how the targeting of politicians can end up with tragic consequences.

"Sinéad McLaughlin serves the people of Derry and neither she nor her staff should have been subjected to this ordeal."

BLOODY SUNDAY

50TH ANNIVERSARY 1972-2022



Taoiseach Micheál Martin laying a wreath at the Bloody Sunday monument in memory of those killed in the 1972 massacre.

'We shall overcome'

Taoiseach lays wreath in memory of Bloody Sunday victims on 50th anniversary of 1972 massacre

The families of those killed on Bloody Sunday have vowed to continue their fight to get the British soldiers responsible for the 1972 massacre prosecuted.

Speaking during a memorial service at the Bloody Sunday monument on Rossville Street yesterday morning, marking the 50th anniversary of the killings, Michael McKinney, whose brother, William, was one of those shot dead, said the families were determined to get murder charges brought against the soldiers responsible.

Only one soldier, known as Soldier F, faced two murder and five attempted murder charges in connection with the massacre. The Public Prosecution Service

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PHOTOS: TOM HEANEY, NWPRESSPICS

announced last year that the charges were to be withdrawn.

Speaking at the memorial service, Mr McKinney said: "We have three clear demands, the repudiation of the Widgery whitewash, the declaration of innocence of all the victims of Bloody Sunday and the prosecution of those responsible. The Saville Report recognised the complete innocence of our loved ones and ended the lies of Widgery but we will always reject the stain that was left of Gerard Donaghey's name by the finding that he was probably carrying nail

bombs. He was not carrying nail bombs. All the evidence shows that they were planted on his body to provide a justification for his murder.

"Now, we still have our third demand – the prosecution of the uniformed criminals who murdered our people on our streets.

"In March 2019, the Public Prosecution Service announced the prosecution of only one Paratrooper, known as Soldier F. F was charged with the murder of my brother, Willie, and Jim Wray, five cases of attempted murder, even though the Saville Report had found that he was also responsible for deaths of Michael Kelly, Patrick Doherty and Barney McGuigan.

"Forensic evidence and his own admissions prove this.



The 'Families Walk of Remembrance' paused at the Bogside mural dedicated to those murdered on Bloody Sunday.

BLOODY SUNDAY

50TH ANNIVERSARY 1972-2022



Children carrying white roses at the head of yesterday's 'Families Walk of Remembrance.'



Alana Burke, who was injured on Bloody Sunday, was among those who laid wreaths during yesterday's memorial service.

"The court allowed Soldier F and his representatives to dictate the proceedings. It permitted Soldier F's enduring anonymity despite F requiring to make a proper application."

Stating the families would continue their fight to get those responsible prosecuted, Mr McKinney concluded by saying 'we shall overcome.'

Taoiseach Micheal Martin and the Republic's Minister for Foreign Affairs, Simon Coveney, were among those who laid wreaths during the service. Relatives of those killed also laid floral tributes.

The ceremony followed a

Families Walk of Remembrance in which several thousand retraced the route of the ill-fated 1972 march.

As it was taking place, Derry-born Eamon Martin, Archbishop and Primate of All Ireland, paid tribute to the Bloody Sunday families.

Speaking during an anniversary Mass in St Eugene's Cathedral, Archbishop Martin said: "The horror inflicted on Derry on that day has thankfully been challenged and exposed. We are grateful for the dignity, determination and example of the families, friends and

neighbours of those whose lives were so cruelly taken on 30 January 1972, just a short walk from this Cathedral."

"The shocked silence which fell on Derry when the shooting stopped that afternoon was compounded by the deliberate silence of governments and politicians who wilfully ignored the truth."

"Immediately, the priests who had been present, tending to the wounded and dying, and many other eye witnesses, called it as it was: wilful murder; shooting indiscriminately; no provocation."



From right, Taoiseach Micheál Martin, Simon Coveney, Minister for Foreign Affairs, Deputy First Minister Michelle O'Neill, Sinn Féin president Mary Lou McDonald, Deputy First Minister Michelle O'Neill and the Deputy Mayor of Derry and Strabane District Council Christopher Jackson pictured at yesterday's memorial service.



Relatives carrying photographs of their loved ones who were murdered by British Paras on Bloody Sunday during yesterday's 'Families Walk of Remembrance.'



The scene during yesterday's wreath-laying ceremony at the Bloody Sunday monument.

BLOODY SUNDAY

50TH ANNIVERSARY 1972 -2022

'One thing that is certain, Bloody Sunday will never be forgotten'



The Bloody Sunday March for Justice making its way down Brandywell Avenue on its way to Free Derry Corner.

Thousands take part in March for Justice in memory of victims of 1972 massacre

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PHOTOS: TOM HEANEY
(NWPRESSPICS)

The weather did not stop the people of Derry yesterday as thousands took part in the March for Justice on the



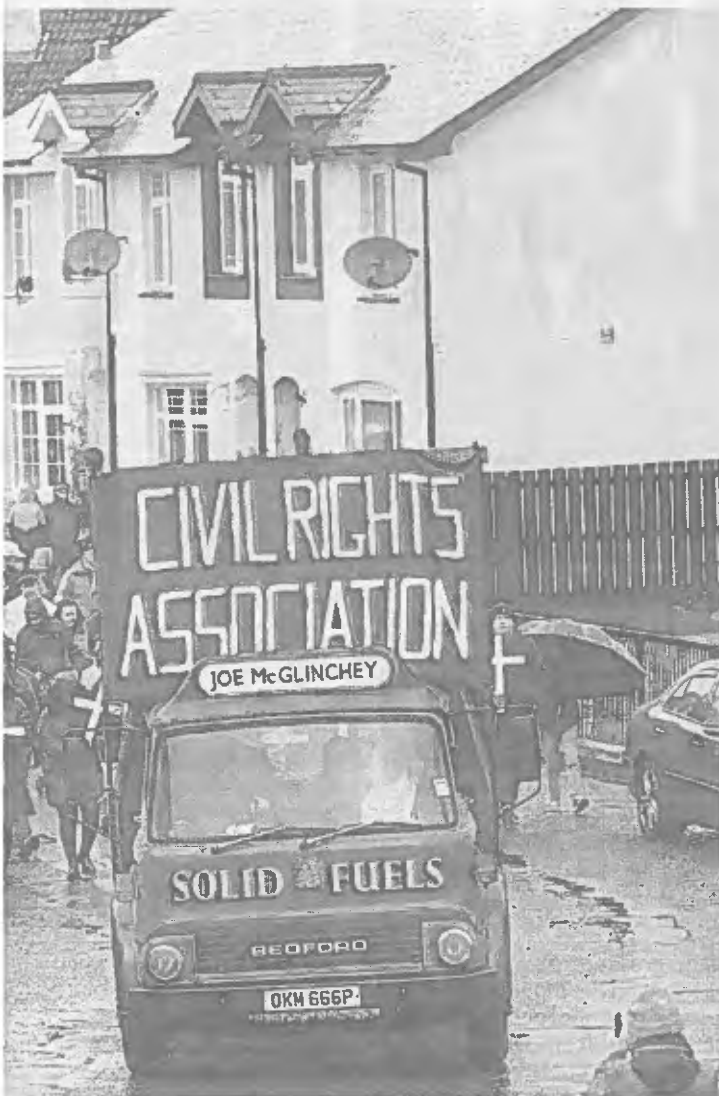
Marchers braving the adverse weather conditions.



The Ballymurphy families walking in solidarity with the Bloody Sunday families.

BLOODY SUNDAY

50TH ANNIVERSARY 1972-2022



Marchers carrying a banner depicting the victims of Bloody Sunday.

50th anniversary of Bloody Sunday.

British Army Paratroopers shot dead 13 and wounded 14 civilians during a civil rights march on Sunday, January 30, 1972.

A 14th person died later from his injuries.

People from all over the island and beyond took to the streets of Derry yesterday, leaving Creggan at 2:15pm to march peacefully along the

original route through Creggan, Brandywell and Bogside to Free Derry Corner.

Speakers at a rally included Bernadette McAliskey, née Devlin, and well-known civil rights campaigner Eamonn McCann.

In a powerful address to the crowd, Mrs McAliskey said: "People walk this road every year, there has to be

another generation of people, like the young people here.

"I'm so glad to see so many young faces here. One thing that is certain, Bloody Sunday will never be forgotten.

"Again, as we have done every year, reminding people that Bloody Sunday was not just about the people who were killed, not just about the city and it was not just the first of many killings that broke our hearts over 30

years, this was different.

"This was a day when the British Government policy which had started weeks and months before, came to fruition on the streets.

INTERMENT

"Internment was introduced to try and break the people. They responded with more marches and

strikes. People tend to forget history, but nowhere in the Six Counties has forgotten.

"It was that kind of mass action that the British Government was afraid of. They were afraid of the marches as a result."

Mrs McAliskey continued: "It is the same today, what they are afraid of is this here. They are not afraid of the lone gunman, they are not afraid of the sniper, they are not

afraid of the secret army. They can infiltrate, they recruit agents out of them.

"What they are afraid of is this here - masses of people who won't quit. People who will tell their children and their grandchildren.

"If I don't see the British Government in the hate, my children, my grandchildren, my great-grandchildren will see them in it some day."



Marchers making their way from the Creggan.



Damien Donaghy (centre) who was wounded on Bloody Sunday.

BLOODY SUNDAY

50TH ANNIVERSARY 1972-2022



President Michael D Higgins addressing yesterday's 'Beyond the Silence' event in the Millennium



Line of Duty star Adiran Dunbar speaking at yesterday's 'Beyond the Silence' event. Photos: Tom Heaney (nwpresspics)

President leads tributes to Bloody Sunday campaign for justice

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President Michael D Higgins has paid tribute to those involved in the fight for justice for the victims of Bloody Sunday.

He was speaking via videolink at the 'Beyond the Silence' event in the Millennium Forum yesterday afternoon, hosted by leading actor Adrian Dunbar.

In an emotional address, the star of the hit TV police series, 'Line of Duty,' also paid tribute to the Bloody Sunday families describing their campaign as 'one of the most daring and successful human rights campaign ever fought.'

In his address, President Higgins said: "Let me pay tribute to those who have made, and continue to make it possible, for us to stand in this ceremony of memory and

solidarity with you today, the families and neighbours of those who lost their lives in Derry all those years ago, those who, in a relentless pursuit of truth, stood in solidarity with you during your long campaign to vindicate the memories of your loved ones.

"Your campaign required overturning those forces who sought to avoid the necessary truth of what took place, and evade accountability. Forces that stood between you and your efforts to overturn, for example, the historic, grievous wrong of the Widgery Tribunal."

Mr Dunbar said Bloody Sunday was 'one of the darkest days' since the formation of the Northern Ireland state.

Describing it as 'Derry's Sharpville,' he added: "It was a hammer blow from a callous and cruel government designed to

squeeze the sense of freedom and choke the struggle for civil rights for all, regardless of political view or persuasion.

"Thirteen innocent men and boys of this great city lay dead - the city and its people were stunned into silence. Lies and propaganda spread throughout the world that the dead were not innocent and what the people said was a figment of their imagination.

"The Bloody Sunday massacre was a tragedy made worse by travesty and the so-called rule of law.

"Lord Chief Justice Widgery, the highest judicial figure in England, confirmed the lies and closed the book - or so he thought. And so they all thought.

"But the cause for truth and justice for our innocent shone brightly in the hearts and minds of those left behind. The perpetrators

and excusers of this gross act of state violence didn't reckon on the Bloody Sunday families who rose above the silence 20 years later to form the Bloody Sunday Justice Campaign - one of the most daring and successful human rights campaign ever fought."

Fighting back tears, he added: "We, as a society are deeply indebted to these families, for they have shown that from truth comes justice and the possibility of some kind of closure and reconciliation - possibilities that are still denied to many families across the North."

The event featured performances from Phil Coulter, who sang 'The Town I Love So Well,' Derry Girl Jamie-Lee O'Donnell, singer/actress Bronagh Gallagher, Colmcille Ladies Choir and an extract from the Bloody Sunday play 'White Handkerchief.'

SDLP leader and Foyle MP Colum

Eastwood also paid tribute to the strength and resilience of the Bloody Sunday families.

Mr Eastwood, who took part in the 'Families Walk of Remembrance' and attended the memorial service and wreath-laying ceremony at the Bloody Sunday monument, said: "The world knows what happened here because the families of those murdered refused to be cowed by the institutions of the state." Without their integrity, determination and resolve, the British Government would have covered up what happened here 50 years ago. And without resolve from political leaders today - the British Government will shut down truth and justice for more victims."

As the 'Beyond the Silence' event was taking place, the bells at St Eugene's Cathedral chimed 14 times in memory of those killed on Bloody Sunday.



Relatives laying wreaths at the republican monument on the Lecky Road in memory of Gerald Donaghey, one of those shot dead on Bloody Sunday, who was a member of Na Fianna Éireann (the IRA youth wing) at the time.



A section of the attendance at the 50th anniversary wreath-laying ceremony for Fiann Gerald Donaghey, one of the 14 victims of Bloody Sunday. PHOTOS: TOM HEANEY (NWPRESSPICS)

BLOODY SUNDAY

50TH ANNIVERSARY 1972-2022



Soldier F named publicly on walls and signs across Derry

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Soldier F, the only British soldier charged in connection with the Bloody Sunday killings and who was granted anonymity had his name posted on several locations in Derry over the weekend.

As a member of the Parachute Regiment that carried out the massacre of 14 innocent people in the city's Bogside on January 30, 1972, he was facing charges of murdering two of the victims, William McKinney and James Wray, and with the attempted murder of five of the wounded.

However, the Public

Prosecution Service announced last year that the charges were to be withdrawn.

A sign naming him was erected overnight on Friday on the Derry to Buncrana road at Bridgend, one of the busiest thoroughfares in the North West while graffiti, naming him, was painted on the wall of the Old Library Trust in Creggan.

Last year, Soldier F was named during a debate in the British House of Commons on the controversial Armed Forces Bill, by SDLP leader and Foyle MP Colm Eastwood, under parliamentary privilege.

His move followed the announcement by the British

Government that it intended to introduce legislation stopping all investigations and inquests into 'Troubles'-related killings prior to 1998.

At that time, the soldier's name appeared on the Bogside's iconic Free Derry Corner and was widely known in Derry.

Soldier F was facing two murder charges over the killings of William McKinney and James Wray and five attempted murder charges for his actions on Bloody Sunday.

Meanwhile, Mr Eastwood is standing by his decision to name Soldier F under parliamentary privilege.

"I am a political leader, elected by the people of Derry to stand up for them in the House of Commons and I answer only to them," Mr Eastwood said.

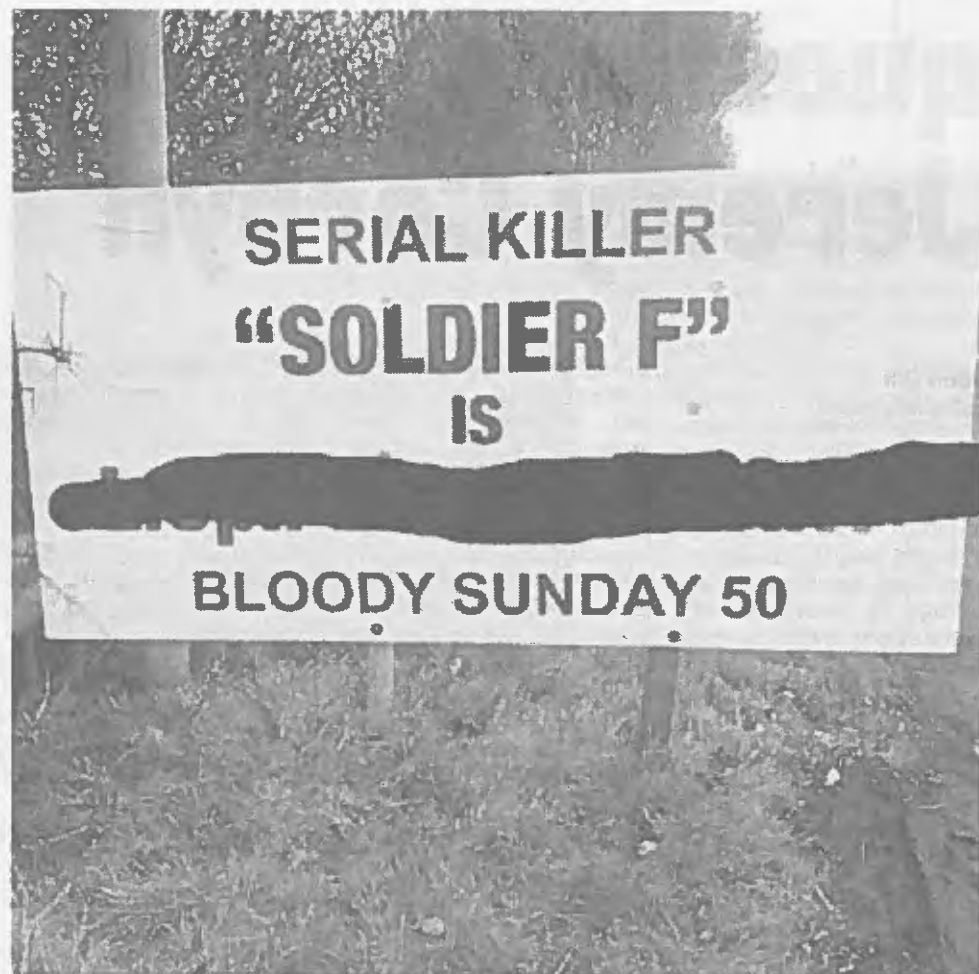
"I will not apologise, nor will I give any undertaking to stay silent when the people of my city need a strong voice."

I will not apologise, nor will I give any undertaking to stay silent when the people of my city need a strong voice
Colm Eastwood

The case is the subject on ongoing legal proceedings, which means the Derry News is prevented from naming Soldier F at this time.

Meanwhile, Mr Eastwood has called on the Parachute Regiment to apologise for its actions on Bloody Sunday and condemned the flying of the regiment's flag in unionist areas of Derry.

Speaking in the British House of Commons, he said: "Fifty years ago this week, the Parachute Regiment were sent to my city to murder 14 people - people who were



The sign erected at Bridgend at the weekend naming Soldier F.

unarmed, marching for civil rights." Asking British Secretary of State, Brandon Lewis, if he believed they should apologise, Mr Eastwood added: "Last

weekend, Parachute Regiment flags were flown on the outskirts of Derry.

"The Parachute Regiment rightly condemned the flying of those flags as a grossly

offensive act against the victims of Bloody Sunday, but they have yet to apologise for and condemn the actions of their soldiers on Bloody Sunday in Derry in 1972."



Soldier F was charged with the murders of James Wray, left, and William McKinney.



The Parachute Regiment murdered 14 people and wounded a further 14 on Bloody Sunday.

BLOODY SUNDAY

50TH ANNIVERSARY 1972-2022

Saville Inquiry left 'unanswered questions' - Jeremy Corbyn

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Plans by the British Government to introduce an amnesty for all legacy killings during the 'Troubles' have been described as 'an outrage' by former British Labour Party leader, Jeremy Corbyn.

Mr Corbyn was in the city over the weekend to attend a number of events held to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the Bloody Sunday killings.

Delivering the annual Bloody Sunday Memorial Lecture in the Guildhall on Saturday afternoon, Mr Corbyn criticised the British Government plans to introduce an amnesty to bring an end to all prosecutions and inquests connected

'Troubles'-related cases.

He said: "It is an outrage that nobody has been prosecuted for the deaths of 14 innocent civilian protestors. It is a double outrage that the British Government is now planning legislation to make it even harder for such an effort to succeed at anytime in the future."

"That would be the effect of the forthcoming Amnesty Bill which will stop any prosecutions, investigations, judicial reviews, inquests or civil cases connected to killings which occurred before 1998."

During his visit, Mr Corbyn also attended a number of events to mark the 30th anniversary of the Creggan Enterprises, based at the Rath Mor Centre.

Speaking at a press conference, Mr Corbyn said

he believed issues still remained with the Saville Report into the Bloody Sunday killings.

In his report published in 2010, Lord Saville overturned the findings of the discredited 1972 Widgery Report, declaring all those killed on January 30, 1972 were innocent.

His findings led to the then British Prime Minister, David Cameron, issuing an apology, stating the killings were 'unjustified' and 'unjustifiable.'

Mr Corbyn said: "There are obviously still issues about the army's role and, above all, the command structure."

He said while the setting up of the Saville Inquiry was a 'huge step forward,' Mr Corbyn said that was not the end of the Bloody Sunday story.



Jeremy Corbyn delivering the Bloody Sunday Memorial Lecture in the Guildhall on Saturday.

He added: "Any inquiries have got to work out where the orders came from and where the atmosphere for those orders came from, that means you've got to go all the way through."

"Where did the authority come from? Why were those soldiers stationed where they were? Why were they so heavily armed for what was, after all, a peaceful demonstration going through the streets of Derry on that day."

"I think those are questions that still need to be answered."

He was also critical of the granting of honours by Queen Elizabeth to some of the soldiers present on the day, Lieutenant Colonel Derek Wilford who received an OBE in the New Year's Honours in 1973.

Mr Corbyn said: "People should not be honoured for what happened on Bloody Sunday."

Meanwhile, former British Prime Minister David Cameron, who issued an apology via a video link to the families of those killed and those injured on the day and to thousands in Guildhall Square in 2010, has said he would like to attend a Bloody Sunday commemoration in Derry, if he was invited.

In a BBC interview, he

said: "I haven't been back in Derry. I would be very happy to."

"You know, I am very proud of what we did that day and the part that it played in trying to bring people together and recognise wrongs of the past."

Mr Cameron also said he did not believe a 'Troubles'

amnesty was the appropriate way to deal with legacy, adding he believed very strongly in the British legal system in which prosecution authorities made independent decisions.

He added: "Politicians have to be very careful not to tell them what they should and should not do."



A section of the attendance at the annual Bloody Sunday Memorial Lecture delivered by Jeremy Corbyn in the Guildhall on Saturday afternoon.



Jeremy Corbyn pictured at the 50th anniversary Mass for the victims of Bloody Sunday in St Mary's Church, Creggan, on Friday night.

BLOODY SUNDAY

50TH ANNIVERSARY 1972-2022



'Blatant lies' were told to 'protect the system'- Bishop McKeown

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'Blatant lies' were told about Bloody to 'protect the system,' the Bishop of Derry has said.

Most Rev Dr Donal McKeown was speaking during a 50th anniversary Mass in St Mary's Church in Creggan on Friday night, attended by family members and friends.

Also in attendance were Right Reverend Andrew Forster, Church of Ireland Bishop of Derry and Raphoe, and Jeremy Corbyn, former leader of the British Labour Party.

Speaking during the service, during which 14 candles were lit in memory of those killed, Bishop McKeown said if the truth had been spoken about Bloody Sunday 'so many lives and so much pain could have been spared.'

Bishop McKeown told the congregation: "Those of us gathered here this evening have known for a long time that this anniversary was approaching.

"What happened 50 years ago on the streets of this city was such a shocking event that has reverberated down through the years and around the world.

"Unarmed civilians were gunned down by the state when all they were doing was protesting against decades of injustice.

"There is no doubt now as to what we remember. The Saville Tribunal overturned the Widgery whitewash, though it took 38 years for an acknowledgement of what the families always knew to be true.

"But, though there are no doubts as to what happened, we can reflect on how we chose to remember what we recall with love.

"What might Jesus have to say to us to help us remember the loss of life and the loss of innocence that happened that Sunday afternoon?

"Firstly, Jesus said that the truth will set you free. Had truth been spoken that day and over the next weeks, so many lives and so much pain could have been spared.

"But when truth is killed to protect the system, the initial pain is multiplied. As with many other tragedies in our history, the system frustrated the desire of families to get at the truth. Blatant lies were told. Campaigners were sometimes seen as obsessive.

"That put huge pressure on mental health and on relationships. Institutions - whether in state, Church or non-state actors - tell stories of their own heroism. And that makes it very hard for them to



The opening procession of the 50th anniversary Mass celebrated on Friday night in St Mary's Church, Creggan.

admit the presence of sin in their ranks.

"People are crushed when institutions or organisations lie to preserve their reputation. We still have much truth to discover about many other deaths. Many people still know truths that they are reluctant to share.

"We deserve an agreed system that creates space for the truth to be told about the thousands of unsolved murders. Drawing a line under the past always suits those who have much to hide. Today, we remember those whose lives were lost by brutal violence - and all those who suffered terribly because of the lies that were told."

Bishop McKeown went on to speak on how the difficulty on finding peace with the past can be overcome with compassion and forgiveness as using the past as a heap of angry stones to throw at other people hinders the rebuilding process.

He added: "We all know that finding peace with the past is very difficult. Many of our societies struggle to know how they remember unsavoury chapters in their history.

"How do we deal with slavery and colonialism, the treatment of those who offended against society's morals and the banishment of the poor to Australia for stealing food or a handkerchief?

"There are various attitudes that can be employed. There are those

prefer to stoke the flames of rage, believing that the fire of anger will cleanse the wound promote a modern agenda.

"There are others who want to let sleeping dogs lie and prefer not to grapple with uncomfortable truths that might disturb our comfort in the present.

"But there is another way. It seeks to acknowledge the past but to have compassion and forgiveness for those who were caught up in systems and situations that they can

now look at with other eyes.

"There is a grace-filled art in forgiving and remembering. It takes a wise heart to look at the rubble of what has been shattered in the past and to make it into a foundation for the future.

"If all we do with the past is to use it as a heap of angry stones to throw at other people, then we cannot build. Either we process the rubbish of the past and make it into life-giving compost - or it lies in the corner and benefits no one.



Charlie McGuigan, son of Barney McGuigan who was shot dead on Bloody Sunday, and Jacqueline O'Reilly, step-daughter of Michael Bradley, who was wounded, lighting 14 candles at Friday night's 50 anniversary Mass.

"I hope that our celebrations this weekend will help us all to build a future full of hope for our young people and not nourish them on bitter anger that can only kill and destroy. A new society on the island needs big hearts. It will not be created by small minds."

Despite being from another denomination, Bishop Forster's attendance was warmly welcomed by Bishop McKeown.

He continued: "I was delighted when Bishop Andrew Forster said that he would join us this evening. His presence builds on the courageous work begun by Bishops Daly and Mehaffey some 40 years ago.

"They showed a way forward long before warring politicians would sit in the same room. That good work was built on when, at the publication of the Saville Report,

"Bishop Ken Good, Rev Norman Hamilton and Rev Paul Kingston received a warm welcome when they came to meet victims' families at the monument. The people of this city have shown great dignity and courage, often leading the way for the rest of Northern Ireland to follow.

"The suffering endured has borne the seed of solidarity and not merely of anger. The dignity of the people means that we do not look like a post-conflict society. Music and community have enabled the population to be known for its welcome and great stories.

"This is a city that can look back with compassion on the past. For it is a town that we all love so well. Phil Coulter's song doesn't forget the barbed wire and guns and the gas that hung on every breeze. But he knew the burning local pride and remembered his first pay and what he learned about life.

"Love changes everything and gives us eyes to see little beauties that brighten the dark. Bishop Andrew, your presence here invites us to pray together and work for a bright brand-new day.

"Tonight, we remember those who died and those who were scarred by their deaths.

"But we also remember those who risked everything as they went to help the injured.

"Some are here tonight, and others died on that January afternoon.

"We remember heroism and strength of character in those who sought and fought for the truth. And, as people of faith, we remember that there is more grace and goodness in the world than sin and evil."

Derry hotelier criticises Stormont over lack of investment in all-Ireland tourism body

A Derry hotelier has criticised Stormont for what he claimed is an 'embarrassing' lack of funding of cross-border body Tourism Ireland.

Howard Hastings, managing director of the Hastings Hotels Group, blamed "institutional resistance" for the failure to connect the North's Causeway Coastal Route with the Republic's Wild Atlantic Way.

Mr Hastings, whose group runs Northern Ireland hotels including Derry's Everglades Hotel, said tourism had been 'pigeon holed' as one part of the island's economic mix.

He singled out the Stormont Assembly for not 'putting its shoulder to the wheel' to endorse a cohesive, all-island strategy.



Howard Hastings.

He said: "Not only does tourism create employment in every nook and cranny of the island, parts where no other industry can reach, it does so year in, year out.

"In our fairs and our festivals, in its observed seasonal rituals, it is a source of social cohesion, it is a generator of mental health, it is a source of civic pride.

"My greatest regret is that as yet, our Northern Ireland (tourist) industry is so far ahead of the Northern Ireland government in embracing Tourism Ireland and what it does.

"It is a source of embarrassment to me that in a funding model where Northern Ireland is pledged to commit one third of the resources, at present, their contribution is barely 15%."

Tourism Ireland, established following the 1998 Good Friday Agreement, is the body responsible for marketing the island of Ireland overseas.

Mr Hastings said Covid restrictions sparked an influx of tourists from the Republic to the North, 55% of them overnighting for the first time.



The Everglades Hotel in Derry is owned by the Hastings Group.

COUNCILLOR SORRY FOR OFFENSIVE SLUR

Sinn Féin woman accepts her social media post 'was in bad taste'

BY THOMAS MAHER

A TYRONE councillor has become the latest politician forced to apologise for an offensive social media post from the past.

Mid Tyrone Councillor Catherine

Kelly, used a notorious phrase which is a derogatory term for a person with a learning disability in a comment she made on the social media platform Twitter in 2018.

The tweet is from before the Sinn Féin representative became a coun-

cillor. Ms Kelly was elected to the council in 2019.

Last week the Fermanagh and Omagh Councillor apologised for her use of the word and has said she is reviewing how she uses social media platforms.

In a statement to the Tyrone Herald she said, "I would apologise for the comment I made, it was in bad taste and is not the type of language I should use."

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TUV candidate announced for Fermanagh South Tyrone

A COUSIN of former UUP leader, Tom Elliott, has been selected once again to run for the TUV in the Fermanagh South Tyrone constituency in the upcoming elections for the NI

Assembly.

Alex Elliott (pictured) lives in Ballinamallard with his wife Olive and they have three grown-up children. He served for a total of 32 years in the UDR and RUC and

currently works at South West College.

His cousin Tom, who also lives in Ballinamallard, led the UUP between 2010 and 2012.

He was subsequently elected as MP for Fermanagh South Tyrone in 2015, before losing the seat two years later

to Sinn Fein's Michelle Gildernew.

Commenting on his decision to stand, Alex said, "The imposition of a border in the Irish Sea and the appalling lack of opposition to the same is shameful. Now, just a few months out from polling day there is speculation that Edwin Poots will belatedly do what TUV urged him to do for more than a year and act on the Protocol.

"The general public, however, will treat any action now which does not square with the actions they took over the previous 12 months with the cynicism it deserves."

TUV leader, Jim Allister, said, "I am delighted to be able to offer the people of Fermanagh and South Tyrone a candidate of Alex's ability. Having served his country with distinction during the years of the terrorist campaign he is to be commended for now stepping up to the plate politically and putting himself forward to take the battle to Republicans in Stormont."





Some of those who turned out for the vigil in Omagh on Sunday to mark the 50th anniversary of Bloody Sunday.

Tyrone pays respects with vigils for 50th anniversary of Bloody Sunday



Dungannon Cllr Barry Monteith speaking about Billy Doherty who died during a Civil Rights march in Coalisland, and also remembering the victims of Bloody Sunday on the 50th anniversary.



Cllr Catherine Kelly.

‘We all must do better when posting online’

CONTINUED FROM FRONT PAGE

“I should not have said that word and it was wrong. I am very sorry and we all must do better when posting comments online. I have reviewed my social media and I will make sure nothing like this will happen again.”

This is not the first time Councillor Kelly has caused controversy with her use of social media.

In 2015, Ms Kelly posted tweets about IRA victim Ann Travers, whose

sister Mary was shot dead and father Tom seriously injured in an IRA gun attack as they left Mass at a south Belfast church in April 1984.

Past social media posts dominated the headlines last week, when a series of offensive tweets by UUP leader Doug Beattie were highlighted.

Three Sinn Féin MLA's were also found to have posted offensive historic tweets. All have since apologised and removed the tweets.

Covid support scheme extended to include hotel and sports clubs

THE Omicron Hospitality Payment scheme will be extended to include hotels and certain sports clubs, it was announced last week.

Under the scheme, following Executive agreement, hotels will be eligible for a one-off grant between £10,000 and £20,000 depending on their rateable value.

Making the announcement,

Finance Minister Murphy said, "Hotels are a vital part of our hospitality industry and have undoubtedly been impacted by Omicron facing cancellations over the festive period.

"I was determined to ensure hotels were not left without support and in the absence of a bid for funding for a scheme to help this sector being

brought forward, my Department has again taken the lead and obtained Executive approval to include hotels in the Omicron Hospitality Payment scheme. My Department will move at pace to get financial assistance out to hotels."

The Executive has also agreed to extend the Omicron Hospitality Payment to include certain sports clubs with

a licensed bar or restaurant facility. A maximum one-off £10,000 payment will be available to sports clubs that operate a bar or restaurant, have a liquor license and received less than £50,000 in total from the Department for Communities Sport Sustainability Fund last year. Further information will be available on the nibusinessinfo website next week.

Widow makes emotional appeal for closure on anniversary of RUC constable's brutal murder

DETECTIVES investigating the murder of an RUC constable in Sion Mills over 30 years ago are appealing for information on the anniversary of the bomb attack.

Stephen Montgomery was killed when a drogue bomb was thrown at his patrol vehicle in Sion Mills in January 1989. A colleague was seriously injured and a third officer escaped serious injury.

In the aftermath of the attack, officers and soldiers tending to Stephen and his injured colleague were attacked by a number of persons who had been in the bar.

Stephen was a 26-year-old married man living in Omagh. He had a 15-month-old daughter and his wife was pregnant with their son when Stephen was murdered. His children grew up never knowing their father and Stephen never had the opportunity to see them grow up.

Speaking about Stephen's murder, his widow Valerie said, "If anyone has any information, no matter how small, then please, please, for the sake of my family and I, contact the police, Crimestoppers or An Garda Síochána and give me and my family the chance for some kind of closure."

Senior investigating officer, Detective Chief Inspector Mark Byrne, from the PSNI's Legacy Investigation Branch, said, "Stephen, along with two colleagues, were on mobile patrol in Sion Mills during the early hours of Saturday, January 28, 1989.



RUC Constable Stephen Montgomery, who was murdered in Sion Mills 33 years ago.

"Shortly before 1am his police vehicle stopped outside Marshall's bar after being flagged down by a member of the bar staff. It is suspected that two terrorists, who had been hiding on the roof of the bar, threw the drogue bomb at the police vehicle. It detonated on the roof of the vehicle killing Stephen instantly and seriously injuring his colleague. The terrorists then made off on foot into Primrose Park.

"Stephen was a young man murdered while serving the community of Sion Mills and the wider Tyrone area. This is in stark contrast to the terrorists responsible for this brutal murder.

"My appeal is aimed at those people who were socialising in the bar on the night Stephen was murdered. Were you at the bar on that night and did you



The murder scene in Sion Mills in January 1989.

witness the attack on Stephen and his colleagues?

"The terrorists had made their way onto the roof of the bar and lay in wait for a period of time before Stephen and his colleagues arrived. I believe that someone must have seen them before or after the attack or will know who these individuals were. Did you see them make their way into Primrose Park after the attack?"

Detective Chief Inspector Byrne continued, "In the years since Stephen's murder people's circumstances and allegiances may have changed. I am appealing to anyone with any knowledge of what happened

that night, whether as a witness or from personal involvement, who have not spoken to police previously to do so now. It is not too late, if anyone now feels they are able to talk to us, we are ready to listen.

"To those involved I would appeal to them to do the right thing and help to bring some closure to Stephen's family. They will no longer have to live with the worry that police are going to knock on their door."

● Anyone with information can contact detectives in Legacy Investigation Branch on 101 or LIBEnquiries@psni.pnn.police.uk.

Should politicians be judged on historic tweets?

Historic social media comments have been dominating the North's news cycles recently, with some local politicians' past posts coming back to haunt them.

UUP leader, Doug Beattie, hit headlines when he tweeted an offensive joke concerning DUP Agriculture Minister Edwin Poots and his family. After it soon emerged that Mr Beattie had made multiple offensive social media remarks in the past his leadership of the UUP was questioned.

It soon followed, that a number of other politicians have also been found to have previously written offensive comments online, including three Sinn Féin MLAs and one of the party's Mid Tyrone councillors.

However, they are far from the first people to get into trouble for

Thomas
Maher



expressing such views or using derogatory language on social media, and no doubt there will be many more who will come to regret their social media mutterings, which are published for all the world to see.

The Tyrone Herald went out and about on the streets of the county and asked the public for their thoughts on historic social media posts and whether public figures should be a bit more careful with what they share and say on their social media platforms.



Historic tweets have landed some politicians in hot water over the past week.



"When I post anything I always think of how will this affect me in the future. People should get punished for social media comments depending on their circumstances at the time of the post. What age were they? What was their status at the time?"

- Jack McGuire



"I always think before I post. I do not believe in cancel culture at all. It is unfair for people to be judged on a flippant comment they make on social media especially one a long time ago."

- Jessica Wright



"When I post on social media I always think about what I am going to say. I think people should really keep their opinions to themselves."

- Aaron Baduns



"I don't post at all on social media, I just go on to look at what other people are saying. I think when people get in trouble on social media it has to be put in context. People change and they don't think the same things they do now."

- Aaron Wallace



"I always think about any post I make. People should be held to account for what they say, but there are always exceptional circumstances."

-Alistair McKelvey