



- CfR Programme
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- CfR Romania
- CfR Footprints (*in former Yugoslavia*)
- CfR East Africa

**Newslink  
October  
2018**

## From The Community Coordinator:

We are in the season of party conferences and one thing has struck me. It is not any policy, vision and hope. Rather it is the way politicians have taken to using their keynote speeches to make personal attacks on other politicians, both of their own and of other parties. This sets a very bad example to us all.



## News from CfR

The last few months have been an interesting time, albeit quieter at Barnes Close than we are used to. We said goodbye to Lisa, Sarah and Mike with grateful and heartfelt thanks for their extraordinary contribution to making Barnes Close a homely, welcoming place. Although things have been going on behind the scenes we have nothing yet to share with you about the future of Barnes Close. Meanwhile it is business as usual and we are still welcoming guests.

Like Iona and Corrymeela CfR has sought to be a community that has worked for reconciliation and peace through its membership, programme of events and its residential centre, in our case Barnes Close. This will never be commercially viable so we have sought to fill the gaps at Barnes Close with external bookings. The result of doing that may have been to lose our focus a little.

CfR's mission statement calls us to reconciliation between individuals, communities, nations and with God. We cannot be reconciled to God without engaging with him. Our Reflection Days and Retreats at Barnes Close enable us to do that as we open the Bible and study it, both alone in silence and together corporately. It is a truly wonderful and humbling experience when a participant discovers a new insight about God and has their own faith deepened. This is part of what CfR is about.

In August we hosted a day at Barnes Close for Asylum Seekers and Refugees from Birmingham. It was a family day and to see children playing and adults chatting in the space and tranquillity of Barnes Close was moving. The craft activities were a great way of engaging together but perhaps the most moving experience was the walk Owain took them on through the country park and their wonder when they stood on the top with the fantastic views and peace, freedom and safety.

In September our CfR Footprints - Touch of Hope project brought a group of Bosnians and Croats to the UK as part of the current course we are running. The highlight was an evening in Nuneaton when Jo Berry and Patrick McGee spoke. It was an amazing, thought provoking evening and Clive reflects more on this over the page.

These are just the highlights of what CfR is doing and they are all at the heart of what CfR is all about. Thank you for your prayers and financial support and for the work you are doing locally.

## CfR Programme at Barnes Close

**Reflection Days 10am to 4pm** Cost: £15 per day

Thursday 11<sup>th</sup> October – One World

Thursday 8<sup>th</sup> November – Peace, not absence of War

Thursday 13<sup>th</sup> December – The Advent Hope



**Tuesday 27<sup>th</sup> to Thursday 29<sup>th</sup> November Advent Retreat**

*An opportunity to explore the nature of the healing ministry in the local church.*

Cost £160 (waged) £130 (unwaged)

**Tuesday 18<sup>th</sup> December 7pm to 9pm Open Christmas**

The traditional evening of carols, music, stories humour and refreshments beside the fire.

## **Making Peace With The Enemy. Report from Clive Fowle**

'A man of exceptional cruelty and inhumanity' were the words used by the judge to describe Pat Magee at his trial in September 1986 for his part in planting the bomb at the Grand Hotel Brighton in 1984 which killed 5 people and injured 54 people. One of the people killed was the MP Sir Anthony Berry. On September 25<sup>th</sup> at Nuneaton Methodist Church, the so called 'cruel' man appeared with Jo Berry, the daughter of Sir Anthony Berry. The title of the talk was 'MAKING PEACE WITH THE ENEMY, Exploring Forgiveness and Reconciliation'.

The meeting was part of the Touch of Hope programme for the visiting group from Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina and we were very fortunate to have Jo and Pat join us for the morning after for a workshop. I have heard Jo and Pat speak together several times and I have always been inspired when I heard them. When we have the Touch of Hope Workshop on Forgiveness, my colleague and I 'role play' Jo and Pat's story. What normally happens on workshops is that people get angry with Jo for daring to even want to forgive Pat. People ask, 'how can somebody forgive after so heinous a crime and how can a person even contemplate placing a bomb with the intent of killing people? What made Pat join the IRA?' These were some of the underlying questions on people's minds at the meeting.

Listening to Jo and Pat invited us to move beyond the stereotypes and demonisation to see the man himself and to hear about their journey of reconciliation, sometimes turbulent and painful and rich with honest and sincere encounter. Jo did not want revenge and wanted to give up blaming. She wanted to meet the man behind the bomb.

Pat received eight life sentences but was released from prison in 1999, having served fourteen years, under the terms of the Good Friday Agreement. He had joined the IRA at the age of twenty. Pat spoke about the impact of receiving Jo's letter requesting a meeting with him. He felt both a political and moral obligation to contribute to the Peace Process and decided to accede to Jo's request and so began this journey of reconciliation for them both. They first sat together for three hours during which time Pat shared why he Joined the IRA. He was impressed with how much Jo knew about the conflict and said it was rare to meet someone from England who 'understood the situation in Northern Ireland' I was very challenged by this myself. Pat shared how hard it must have been for Jo. By her listening and empathy, Pat said, 'Jo got under my defences'.

This last statement from Pat gave me hope that it is possible to break through the walls of loyalty to a cause which does not care about killing individuals to such an extent that a terrorist can stop and start to think about the consequences of his or her violent actions upon an individual.

Jo Berry's journey of self-discovery and Pat Magee's soul searching was challenging to all present, not least to our visitors who themselves struggle to live in a reconciling way in their own communities of Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Revd Clive R Fowle  
Coordinator Touch of Hope

## **News from Other Organisations**

Every year millions of people observe the Two Minute Silence. This beautifully illustrated booklet to give away at Remembrance events invites readers to look back with gratitude for the sacrifice made by so many in war, and to reflect on eternal themes of faith, hope and love. Single Copies £2.00. Pack of 10, £10.00 (£1.00 per copy). Also available in boxes of 200, £50.00 (25p per copy). You can preview the booklet at [www.remembrance100.co.uk/silence](http://www.remembrance100.co.uk/silence)

### **Contacting the Community for Reconciliation:**

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**Barnes Close Office hours: Monday - Friday 9.30am – 5.00pm**