

# BIRMINGHAM SIX

## COMMITTEE NEWSLETTER

Hugh Callaghan  
Paddy Joe Hill  
Gerry Hunter

Richard McIlkenny  
Billy Power  
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Newsletter No. 22 Feb. 1991

## Forensic evidence ruled out in full Appeal

February 7th's preliminary hearing in the Birmingham Six case was an untidy affair, but the apparent chaos in the Crown ranks can only help the six prisoners.

The hearing ended in a further adjournment (February 15th), to permit both sides to complete their preparations for the full Appeal. The latter is still scheduled for February 25th.

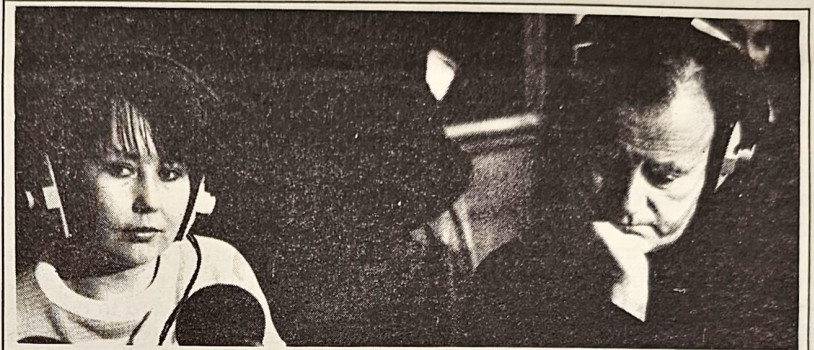
The forensic evidence, which helped convict the men at their original trial and wrecked their first Full Appeal, has now been officially discarded by the DPP's office. This was confirmed by DPP's Counsel, Graham Boal, who is still keeping an "open mind" on the role to be played by confession and circumstantial evidence - the two other planks in the 1975 Crown case.

Boal said that while the Devon & Cornwall report into the case had been delivered to the DPP's office on February 4, it was not yet complete. This report is of key significance, not least because its initial findings have already resulted in the Birmingham Six case being sent back to the Appeal court. The full report may well be political dynamite.

"I think it is clear the Crown is in serious trouble," veteran campaigner and Labour MP Chris Mullin said after the preliminary Appeal ended. "They've got three weeks to go and they can't even say on what basis they're going to contest the Appeal."

The Birmingham Six lawyers are also pressuring the Crown to provide statement evidence from key police officers - including George Reade - which led the Baxendale report to suggest that Crown witnesses had collaborated in forgeries of notes and committed perjury at the trial.

Meanwhile, the Archbishop of Westminster and Primate of All-England Cardinal Basil Hume has said that he has felt "for a long time that the (Birmingham Six) convictions were unsafe". Speaking on the eve of the preliminary hearing he expressed "enormous relief that the issue is coming up and there is great hope that it will be settled for ever."



Maggie McIlkenny and Christy Moore at a live link-up to the Gay Byrne Show, from the 'Celebrity' breakfast in aid of the Birmingham Six. Photo: Máire Ní Eafa

## Food for Thought

BREAKFAST of cornflakes, tea and one slice of toast was served to customers in Gallaghers Boxy House, Temple Bar on February 7th at a price of £25 per head. A large gathering of musicians, actors, politicians and other public figures were in attendance, as unfriendly waiters served up the meagre fare on plastic table ware.

There were no complaints to manager Ronan Gallagher, however, as this was a 'Celebrity' prison breakfast, organised to raise funds for the Birmingham Six Trust Fund.

To mark the occasion, which took place as the men's preliminary appeal was underway in London, there was a live broadcast by Joe Duffy for the Gay Byrne Show. TV crews from RTE, BBC and Channel 4 also recorded the unique event. Waiters were dressed in authentic prison uniforms and large portraits of the six men were draped on the walls, a reminder that the Birmingham Six have endured 6,000 prison breakfasts while fighting to prove their innocence.

The large attendance included Bishop Kavanagh, Bishop O'Mahony, Tony Gregory TD, Michael D Higgins TD, Senator David Norris, musicians Christy and Barry Moore, Brush Shiels and Donal Lunny, as well as

three of the Guildford Four; Paul Hill, Paddy Armstrong and Gerry Conlon.

The event, which was organised by Nicky Kelly, Ronan Gallagher and Pdraig O'Gallagher, raised over £2,600 for the Trust Fund. A further £1,400 was presented by Joe Colgan, former chairman of the Birmingham Six Committee, arising from sponsorship he raised by running in the Dublin City Marathon. An additional £100 was pledged from the proceeds of a book of poetry and illustrations to be published shortly.

The Birmingham Six Trust Account is at the Stillorgan Branch of Allied Irish Bank, Account No. 01813023.

ST. Patrick's Day cards  
will shortly be on sale  
at the Birmingham Six  
offices and other  
outlets. Price £1.34 for  
four, including p&p.

# Community groups voice their support

TWO COMMUNITY groups, one in the North and the second in the Republic, have voiced their strong support for the Birmingham Six Campaign.

Belfast-based 'Community of the Peace People' wrote to the Dublin campaign office in early January, stating that its annual assembly had passed a resolution on the Birmingham Six case.

"This Assembly," the resolution read, "calls for the immediate release of 'The Birmingham Six' as the evidence against them has been proved fraudulent and unsafe." Copies of the resolution have since been sent to the British DPP, Allan Green, and elected MPs in the Six Counties, according to Mary O'Rawe, chairperson of the Community of the Peace People.

"Keep up the good work and hopefully February will see release for the six men," Mary added in a hand-written postscript.

The association traces its roots to the 'Peace People' group, set up in 1976 by Mairead Corrigan, Betty Williams and Ciaran McKeown. It describes itself as a non-denominational, non-sectarian organisation which is working for peace

and reconciliation in Northern Ireland.

Meanwhile, the Shannon branch of the National Association of Tenants Organisations (NATO) reports that a similar gesture was made at NATO's 24th annual national convention in late 1990. "The following resolution was carried unanimously and has been acted upon since," writes Peter Flannigan, secretary of the Shannon branch.

*"That the National Association of Tenants Organisations calls on the British Government to release as innocent, the Birmingham Six. That this be conveyed to the Minister for Foreign Affairs and that the incoming National Executive lobby European Residents' and Tenants' Groups for support."*

Mr Flannigan said it was a cause of "great sadness that a new year has begun with the men still incarcerated in prison, however, we look forward to their release this year and to this end we wish you every success."

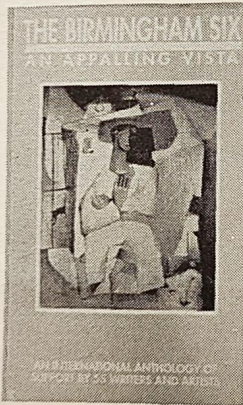
## Help Wanted!

CAN YOU organise a table quiz, benefit gig or some other local fund raising event for the Birmingham Six campaign? If so, the Dublin campaign office would like to hear from you. Funds are urgently needed for the special Trust Fund, which will be divided among the six men on their release from prison.

For further information, please contact the office at:

Usher House,  
40/41 Usher Quay,  
Dublin 8.

Tel: (01) 6791644/  
Fax: (01) 6793639



## A real gift

Hard-back copies of 'Appalling Vista', the anthology of poetry and prose compiled for the Birmingham Six, are on sale at £50 apiece. Published by literÉire, each volume is gold blocked and hand-bound in cloth. Each is numbered, and signed by seven leading contributors.

## Two Angry churchmen

"They are victims of a disgraceful and horrendous injustice, which raises the most serious questions about the conduct of the police and the judiciary and the entire system of justice."

So spake the Bishop of Derry, Edward Daly, in an article published recently in *Flourish*, the Glasgow archdiocesan newspaper. His strong words were echoed by the Most Rev Thomas Winning, Roman Catholic Archbishop of Glasgow.

"One of the most disturbing features of this tragic saga has been the prosecution's apparent tendency to ignore truth rather than admit the shallowness of its case...the prosecution seems to have withheld vital evidence from the defence - evidence which might well have secured an acquittal in 1975. A speedy resolution to this massive injustice should now be seen as a priority."

He said he was shocked by Lord Justice Lloyd's remark, at the preliminary hearing, that the judges would not let preparatory work for the appeal "spoil their Christmasses."

## Flowers for Freedom

Relatives of the Birmingham Six will be greeted at the Old Bailey on February 25th with a massive bouquet of daffodils, courtesy of campaign supporters and other well-wishers. The gesture is being organised by the Co-ordinating Group on Miscarriage of Justice Cases (Dublin).

The Group is asking for a stg £1 donation for each flower. If you would like further information please contact Tricia Perrott at; Phone: (01) 844068 Fax: (01) 844069

Alternatively, you can send an order through your local Interflora office. Mark the destination as;

Birmingham Six Campaign Office,  
c/o 1 Orlestone Road,  
Islington, London N1, England

Flowers will be given to the relatives at the courthouse at the start of each day of the Appeal; any that are not brought into court will be displayed at the London Campaign office.

Thank you for your support.

# The last, and final hurdle?

RELATIVES and supporters of the Birmingham Six have been steeling themselves for a full Appeal since the British DPP, Allan Green broke his silence in mid-December. The third that the Birmingham Six have faced, it will be equally as challenging as the first two. Allan Green QC, the British DPP, has already acknowledged that the forensic evidence that underpinned the men's original convictions has been discredited. Instead, the Crown will contest its case on the men's confessions - despite the discrediting of the Richard McKenny statement - and circumstantial evidence.

Thus have the goalposts shifted.

Gareth Peirce, solicitor for five of the six men, may have to contend with 'evidence' not previously submitted at the first two Appeals. Some believe that this may include a bid to "condemn the men by association".

The euphoria that surrounded news of the Appeal in late 1990, is slowly dissipating, and many fear that the Crown will put up a spirited fight. "It (victory) is by no means a foregone conclusion," one observer commented.

The London Campaign is urging political, church, trade union and human

rights groups, to send representatives as observers to the forthcoming hearing. It has asked all groups to notify both the London campaign offices and the Criminal Appeals Office, Royal Courts of Justice, Strand, London WC1, which is responsible for access to the courts.

"The prospects for an end to the long injustice suffered by these innocent men will be considerably improved if there is maximum public attention both on the conduct of the hearing and on the evidence presented to the court. Please help to ensure that at long last the cause of justice prevails."

Among those who have promised to attend or send observers include:

Amnesty International  
The National Council for Civil Liberties  
National Union of Mineworkers (NUM)  
The National Association of Probation Officers (NAPO)  
Birmingham City Council (Labour)  
Pax Cristi  
John Hume (MP), Tony Benn (MP), Dick Roche (TD/FF), and historian/campaigner, Robert Kee

Interested parties requiring further information should contact **Sally Mulready** at the London Campaign, Tel. 071-3547035.

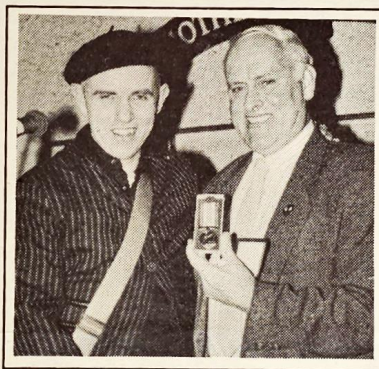
## UN peace-keeper donates his medal

**GERRY FLAHERTY**, who served two tours of duty in the Lebanon with the UN Peacekeeping Forces in the early 1980s, has given his Peace Medal to the Birmingham Six.

This is no small gesture, as Gerry's medal is one of a batch specially commissioned by the Irish Government after the UN Peacekeeping Forces were awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1988. Gerry, who served in the Southern Lebanon in 1982 and 1984, received the medal along with other serving and former serving soldiers. He has since left the army.

"It's my small way of showing some sort of support. I am very much aware about keeping up morale and continued hope among the six men," says Gerry. "One more gesture of support must surely go some way in helping that."

The musician Brush Shiels presented the medal to Paddy McKenny, brother of Richard McKenny, during a benefit gig



Paddy McKenny receives a medal

held in Mother Redcaps on February 1st.

"This is obviously a prized possession and will be very much appreciated by the men and their families as a boost to their spirits as they face the preliminary appeal next week,"

Describing Gerry's gesture as "generous and moving," Paddy said it was an example of how individuals could help. He urged everyone in the audience to write letters to the British DPP, Mr Allan Green, and to the six men to give them moral support in the weeks leading up to their Appeal. He said that in 17 years, the British authorities had not robbed the Birmingham Six of their dignity and pride, only their freedom. And that, the most treasured possession of all, would soon be returned to them.

## Gig Guide

FANCY good *craic* on a Friday night? Check out the weekly benefit gigs at Mother Redcaps, featuring Brush Shiels and 'special guests'. They cost just £3 at the door, for a range of bands/musicians playing from 8.30 onwards.

Also, would any musicians/performers who'd like to do a benefit gig for the campaign, please contact the office at 6791644.

### February 8th

Brush Shiels *with*  
Chris Meehan  
Paul O'Shaughnessy  
Dermie Diamond  
Tommy Feeney

### February 15th

Brush Shiels *with*  
Macalla

### February 22nd

Brush Shiels *with*  
Al O'Donnell  
Declan Masterson & friends

# The Watershed

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Tel: 779268

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*Best Drinks, Teas, Coffees,  
Sandwiches and Lunches.*

Supervised Car Parking

## Committee Accounts

COPIES OF the Birmingham Six Committee's audited accounts will soon be available. If you would like a copy, please send a stamped addressed envelope to the Dublin office.

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## Table Quiz

OUR thanks to Bernard Kelly, who compered at the recent table quiz in the Teachers' Club, Parnell Square. Bernard, along with Shay Stone, helped organise the highly successful 1989 Birmingham Six benefit concert. A man of many talents!

## Stop press... Stop press... Stop press...

### Collector's items

DON'T delay if you want one of the special 300-edition Robert Ballagh posters. There are some posters left, price £30, unframed, £60 framed. They will be a collector's item when the Birmingham Six are released. Contact the office, without delay.

Hardback copies of 'Appalling Vista', the anthology of prose and poetry dedicated to the Birmingham Six, are also on sale at £50. Each special volume is signed by seven famous Irish contributors. Only 100 signed hard-back copies were printed. Alternatively, you can buy an unsigned, paperback edition, price £5.95.

### Cork Campaign

Ger would like to hear from people interested in helping the Cork campaign. Call her at (021) 821615 for details about collections, newsletter distribution, tee-shirt/sweat-shirt sales, etc.

### Pickets

The London Campaign Group for the Birmingham Six is planning prison pickets for the duration of the full appeal, which is expected to start in late February. Details about times, locations etc will be available from the special Campaign Hotline, tel. 03-071-405766686.

Meanwhile, the Booterstown Support Group is still holding its weekly Saturday picket at the British Embassy, 33 Merrion Road, Dublin 4 (12.00 to 2.00). Please contact Eileen McGoldrick for details Tel: (01) 883798.

### Reading materials

The office still has a stock of reading material on the Birmingham Six. This includes Derek Dunne's book on the Birmingham Six, also translated in French, German, Spanish and Irish. We also have 'Error of Judgement' by Chris Mullin, and Richard McLkenny's first collection of poems, 'Behind the Bars I Have Learned Again to Pray.'

## The Birmingham Six Committee

Usher House  
40/41 Usher Quay  
Dublin 8  
Ireland.

Tel. (01) 6791644 Fax. (01) 6793639

**The Birmingham Six Committee sponsors are: Gareth Peirce, solicitor; Tony Gregory, Independent TD; Chris Mullin, Labour MP; Paul O'Dwyer, attorney; Niall Andrews, MEP**

The Birmingham Six Committee is one of several groups working in Ireland, Britain and the US for the release and exoneration of the six men who were wrongly convicted in August 1975 of the Birmingham pub bombings. The group has no aims or agenda beyond securing justice for the six men.

**Write to the six men in jail, and express your support.**

## Attention readers

We publish this newsletter on a monthly basis. Due to postage costs we can no longer afford to mail it free of charge to our readers. If you would like to continue to receive your copy each month please send an annual subscription fee of £5. Please fill in the form below. Thank you for your support.

Name .....

Address .....

Tel. no .....

### Bank Account

You can also send donations directly into our bank account at:

Allied Irish Banks,  
52 Upper Baggot Street  
Dublin 2.  
A/C number 36220028

**Paddy Joe Hill**, 509496, HM Prison Gartree, Market Harborough, Leicester, England.

**Richard McLkenny**, 509498, HM Prison Gartree, Market Harborough, Leicester, England.

**Billy Power**, 509497, HM Prison Wormwood Scrubs, Ducan Road, London WC12,, England.

**Gerry Hunter**, 509495, HM Prison Long Lartin, Evesham, Worcs, England.

**John Walker**, 509494, HM Prison Long Lartin, Evesham, Worcs, England.

**Hugh Callaghan**, 509499, HM Prison Long Lartin, Evesham, Worcs, England.

