



the Zacchaeus Outreach Project

Our Bands, Our Families, Our Stories



The trumpeters and musicians joined in unison to give praise and thanks to the **LORD**. Accompanied by trumpets, cymbals and other instruments, the singers raised their voices in praise to the **LORD**.
2nd Chronicles 5:13



The Zacchaeus Outreach Project

The Zacchaeus Outreach Project (ZOP) began in 2012 with the launch of the bus. This is a joint between Church Army/Diocese of Armagh joint project. The project is headed up by Sr. Valerie Thom a Church Army Officer. The ministry is about showing God's love in practical ways with members of the marching band community. There are many different parts to the project.

What does the bus do?

The ZOP bus attends band parades it has been invited to. Serving tea, coffee and offers a listening ear to band members, it also provides a prayer ministry where people can request prayer for themselves or others. The bus also attends the 12th July and Last Saturday/Black Saturday where in partnership with Adventure leadership Training they do children's work in the fields.

What else does the Zacchaeus Outreach Project do?

The project also works alongside the Band Forums, the Confederation of Ulster Band and many other agencies. We have made a CD, history of a band, Praise him on the big bass drum exhibition, praise him on the big bass drum Our Stories booklet, Reason for the season Christmas Tree Festival, and taken band members on a mission trip to Brazil.

How is the Project funded?

The bus was initially paid for by the Imperial Grand Chapter of the Royal Black and the other project costs are met in various ways by the C of I Priority Fund, Armagh Diocese, individual RPB Lodges, churches and individuals through donating to Church Army. The bands also support the ministry in various ways.

Please check out our web site www.zacchaeusoutreachproject.org

Foreword

By Marion Jamison

When Valerie asked me to write a forward for this booklet my immediate response was I've never been in a band. I can't even play a musical instrument. I did grow up around bands though, my dad was in a pipe band and my husband was a member of a flute band.

I worked for over 20 years for React in Armagh and during that time I was involved with all types of bands. I supported local bands to establish the Armagh Bands Forum and also supported the work of the Confederation of Ulster Bands.

I have seen the good work bands do in their local communities mainly by teaching and improving young men and woman musical skills and in return the young people get a sense of belonging, discipline and pride in the band they are part of. Band members support each other at times of personal difficulties, being a member of a band means there is always someone to turn to for help.



There is always plenty of negative press about bands but we rarely hear about the good work they do, the money they raise for charity or the amount of money they put into the local economy every year.

The stories in this booklet are all personal and reflect the diversity of people involved in bands. They are stories that should be heard by the wider community and saved for future generations.

Thanks must go to Valerie Thom without whose vision and drive this project would not have happened. She is one of those people you just can't say no to.

I hope the stories in this booklet give you a wider perspective of those involved in the marching band community. I would encourage you to share it with others.

But be sure to fear the LORD and serve him faithfully with all your heart; consider what great things he has done for you. 1 Samuel 12:24

Zacchaeus Project

By Ruth Forrest

My name is Ruth Forrest and I was born and raised just outside Cookstown by my wonderful parents, Annie and Cyril Harkness and blessed to have 4 elder sisters and a younger brother. My entire life has been connected to band life as Daddy was a lifelong member of Montober Flute Band and Orange Lodge LOL 661 and RPB 598 and indeed was bandmaster of the band for many years. My brother followed in our father's footsteps into band and lodge in Montober Orange and Black and he also joined the Apprentice Boys in Drumnacross Walker Branch. David also helped tutor the band.

It was no surprise then, that I married a bandsman, Adrian, in 1984. He is a founding member of Cookstown Sons of William Flute band and remains a loyal member to this present day. The saying in the Sons of William, is 'when you marry a member, you marry the band', which is true and is like being in an extended family.

We have been blessed with four wonderful sons, Aaron, Clarke, Luke and Stuart, who have all followed in their father's footsteps into the ranks of the band. Adrian is proud and privileged to walk with our four sons in the band. They are all members of Cookstown True Blues LOL 459. Adrian is a past band master of the band and that role has been undertaken by Clarke who is the current band master. All of our sons have various



roles within the band, to try and promote our culture and heritage through music and tradition which is highly important to us as a family.

On 6th June 1978, Daddy, who was a part time Company Sergeant Major in the UDR, was the victim of an IRA booby trap bomb which was planted underneath his work van as it sat outside our home. Thankfully, he survived the bomb blast, however, he sustained 3 fractures to his spine and multiple fractures to his leg. He returned to work and served in the UDR up until the year before its disbandment. Daddy was awarded the British Empire Medal and the Oak Leaves for service to his Queen and Country. He also remained in his lodges until his death in 2006

Just 3 years following Daddy's attempted murder, our darling sister, Doreen, a woman police constable in the RUC, was killed on Duty on 25th July 1981 while manning a vehicle check point on the main Moneymore to Magherafelt road. Two young men had been racing each other and she was accidentally struck at 110 mph, still holding the torch in her hand. She was 22 years old and engaged to be married. Doreen

had been stationed in Belfast but had been transferred to Magherafelt to be nearer to Daddy after the attempt on his life. It is ironic that she was killed in this way.



Unfortunately, tragedy was to strike the family again. On 26th May 1991, the IRA left a huge car bomb, which was intended for Cookstown town centre, in Monrush, which is a large Protestant estate in the north end of Cookstown. The car was, unbelievably, parked outside our house when it detonated. Thankfully, the RUC did a great job of evacuating everyone just before it exploded. No one was killed or seriously injured but over 100 houses were damaged, ours being the worst hit.

With three young boys, at that time, we were left with just the clothes on our back. During this time, we had great support from family, friends, church, and the band community. It is a true saying; you know who your real friends are when trouble comes to your door. After the attack on our home, we were moved into temporary accommodation while the houses were being rebuilt.

Eight months later, 17th January 1992, we lost our youngest and only brother, David, in an IRA bomb which was planted for civilian workers travelling home from their work in Lisanelly Barricks, Omagh. David had celebrated his 24th birthday just 6 days previously.

Devastating is an understatement and is an experience that cannot be put into words. To lose Doreen, our beautiful

sister, was an unbearable grief. It was an unfortunate accident, but someone had planned and executed this murder of eight ordinary men who were innocently carrying out an honest day's work. Our family and friends and indeed the entire community were horrified and disgusted at such an evil atrocity.

David was a beautiful soul, inside and out, and in no way deserved the death he got. The days, months, and years ahead were difficult, but with the grace of Almighty God, family and friends; we managed to get by. Again, our band friends pulled together in great support. There was a plaque erected in Drumnacross Orange Hall and also one in Montober Orange Hall in memory of David.



On a different note, as parents, we have had the unique privilege to spend almost every weekend with our children as they travel to various parades around the country and the camaraderie within the band is second to none. We have made many great friendships with people from all over the country who share the same interests.

It's not just a band, it's a way of life.



My Life in Bands

Bands have played a very important role in my life and I've greatly enjoyed and benefitted from being part of the Marching Band scene in County Armagh.

As a boy growing up in Bessbrook, South Armagh, I was first drawn to the skirl of the pipes, listening to members of Bessbrook Crimson Arrow as they practiced in the Orange Hall close to where we lived. I asked my dad to speak to a member of the Band and soon I was trying to learn the side drum with a couple of other lads who were my age and equally keen.

Our tutor was a family friend, Hugh McConnell who later joined the RUC and was brutally murdered by the IRA with a colleague, William Turbitt at a local beauty spot on a lovely summer's day in June 1978. Hugh was great fun to be around and he instilled in me a love of rhythm and band music, I liked him enormously and think of him often.

I couldn't quite master pipe band side drumming, which is an art form in itself if well performed and soon my attention was drawn to a new first flute band being formed in Bessbrook and attracting lots of young people. This was the mid 1970's and what were termed "Kick the Pope" bands were springing up all over the country as well as tartan trousers, the Bay City Rollers and Punk!



So, (probably against my mother's wishes) I joined Bessbrook True Blues as a side drummer in and around 1975. The term "Kick the Pope" was really a misnomer as we in Bessbrook didn't know very much about the Pope, other than he seemed very old and was carried about in a chair!

Anyway, slowly but surely we gained members, fund raised, purchased instruments and got uniforms – orange and purple knitted jumpers which were hideously bright – but we thought we looked stylish.

I remember our first public parade in Rathfriland County Down. We came playing to the top of the steep hill at the top of the town and there was some confusion as to whether we should turn left or right. In the end, half the band went one way and the rest took the opposite route. The Policeman on duty just stood back and roared with laughter. We re-formed, summoned our dignity and pretended it hadn't happened.

I played with Bessbrook True Blues for a couple of years and was even their leading side drummer for a while, but in 1977 I was on my travels again to a

different band, a bigger drum and different musical instruments – I joined Tullyvallen Silver Band.

I suppose with the benefit of hindsight, I can trace my move to Tullyvallen Silver in the context of “The Troubles”. Both Tullyvallen Lodge and Band had been devastated by the IRA massacre on 1st September 1975 of five Lodge members in the Orange Hall as they met for their monthly meeting. The impact on the local Protestant community was also very profound and it was a time of great fear and uncertainty throughout the South Armagh area. There were countless murders of individual security force personnel as well as dreadful multiple atrocities such as Kingsmills and later, Mountain Lodge Darkley.

My older brother had been a member of Tullyvallen band for some years and he, (along with my mother), persuaded me to join and try the bass drum. For security reasons we couldn't practice at Tullyvallen Orange Hall so we used Mountnorris Orange Hall instead.

There it was, with the encouragement and patience of my new friends and fellow musicians, I learned to beat (not bang) the bass drum in time to military marches and hymn tunes. I suspect I am one of the very few left handed bass drummers - there are not many of us around in any type of band.

I've been with Tullyvallen ever since and enjoyed every single minute. From band parades to the Twelfth of July. From Scarva to the Last Saturday. From concerts to Remembrance Sunday it's been a truly great experience for me.

I've met loads of people and made lots of friends.

My many colleagues in the Band over the many years have been patient and kind even when I've made mistakes or have been unable to attend due to other business. They've also put up with media attention when I was involved in politics and they've treated me as just one of themselves.

I'm proud to be in Tullyvallen over 40 years and I've loved the experience I've had in all of the bands I've been a member of. I can certainly recommend it.

Danny Kennedy



The Blair Memorial Flute Band

By David Swann



My name is David Swann the current band master of the Blair Memorial Flute band, Omagh. I have been a band member for over 30 years and during that time I have got to know a great many people who I would never have known had it not been for the band and the band community.

Blair Memorial band was formed in 1975 after the tragic deaths of brothers John and Drew Blair. On a warm Sunday afternoon in June 1975 Drew (25) and John (23) lost their lives trying to save a young girl, Heather Birney (15), from drowning but unfortunately all 3 lost their lives. Drew and John were the only children of Billy and Sarah Blair, who dedicated the rest of their lives supporting the band.

My earliest memories are going band practice which was in a small prefab opposite the Blair family home in Queens Parade. Billy would come over and listen to us practice, and their home was always open for all the band members, where Sarah supplied crisps and juice and chat as she loved to get to know all the members of the band. They seemed to draw great comfort from the band and every time we would head off to parade they were always there to see us off and always waiting for us to return.

I believe that even in this tragedy God was at work and has been over the life of the band, giving many young people the opportunity to come together and have an immense sense of pride in our band. Out of such a tragic situation something good began.

What greater gift has any man than to give his life to save another. This is what Jesus has done for all those who trust in Him at the cross of Calvary. Over the years the band has been involved in many events to help raise money for charities such as Chest, Heart and Stroke, Belfast City Childrens Hospital, Marie Curie and Cancer Research to name a few.

Nowadays there is a lot more to bands than just marching, they are a vital part of our communities. Our band is no different than any other, we are like part of one big family.

What is the purpose of our band?

To enjoy music

To be a better player

To be a better person

To help other people in the band

To help other bands

To share and gain knowledge with other bands

To help the person beside me to be a better person

To support each other

It's about more than a band!!

There's no ME in OTB!

What is the purpose of our band?



One More Step Along the World I Go...

I remember from a very young age the excitement of going into the Orange Hall with my Dad. He was DM of Tamnamore LOL 513. To this day it holds a special place in my heart. LOL 513 had a vast family connection, included was our Grandfather, Uncles, Great Uncles, Brothers and cousins. Tamnamore Flute Band started my love of the bands, my two brothers were flute players, but one decided to take the beat of the drum. I, myself, walked on the front row proudly carrying the Red Hand of Ulster.

25th March 1977 is a date that devastated myself and our family for the rest of our lives. The IRA murdered my Father, just because he was a Protestant and served his country. No one has ever been

brought to justice for his murder.



Through the band world I had the pleasure of meeting my husband. He was, at the time, a drummer with Syerla Pipe Band, but his heart lay with his childhood band Tullylagan. I was introduced to the Pipe Band World and

I became smitten. In 1996 we were to be the first couple within the ranks of Tullylagan to be married. Tullylagan took on a routine commitment in our everyday lives. Organising is something in which both of us take great pride, and 26 years of our life together has been taken up with this commitment. I love to be able to say that I'm Vice Chair, but there are lots of others behind the scenes playing a greater role than mine.

Our two daughters Danielle and Rebecca became the love of our lives, although Tullylagan has continued to have a role. Danielle at a very young age took up a little bit of Drum Majoring. I was very proud as it was the role I had taken on myself within the ranks of Tullylagan.

Danielle's musical abilities were extremely strong so with the tutoring of the World Champion Base Drummer John McFetridge she became a talented Tenor Drummer, going on to win many a trophy with Tullylagan. As her talent increased, she moved up the ranks to Grade 1 at a very young age. She became a World Champion in 2017 and has held the title of Scottish, British, European Champions with the Scottish Pipe Band Inveraray & District, Grade 1 and again this year 2019 once again becoming World Champions.

Rebecca also took up the talent of Drum

Majoring, her musical ability shining through her performance on the grass and again many a trophy taking pride of place in our house, but her greatest title so far is Junior British Drum Major Champion 2017.

Geoff has played from he was 10 years old. He has become a great advocate for Tullylagan not only in playing but teaching the ranks from a very young age and producing All Ireland, Ulster, Scottish, European & World Champions.

In 2017 he took to the podium to collect the World Champions Drumming Trophy Grade 4a as lead Drummer. After this great success he has now stepped down as lead tip to let the young corps take over, but he remains very much

involved with the teaching side of the band. The band became World Champions 2019 Grade 3b.

Life seems so great going by this story, but we had a huge blow to our family when in 2003 I took heart failure. Having been told you need a heart transplant is a bitter pill to swallow.

I believe Love, Faith and Prayer has given us the strength to continue. A small step back in organising is a must but our heritage will very much remain. I look forward in prayer that we will all be together to celebrate Tullylagan's 100th year in 2023.

Serena Hamilton



Andrew Shilliday

Hello my name is Andrew Shilliday; I am 34 years old, and a piper in Tullylagan pipe band. I also teach the pipes and drums in some local primary schools through Ulster Scots and provide a lot of private tuition, for competitions.



My Uncle Alan Shilliday was my very first teacher and the person who had the biggest influence on my playing growing up; I would go to his house every day after school and rugby training to have lessons on the pipes. I was very successful as a young piper, winning multiple Ulster and All Ireland titles, invited to the piper of the year competition as young as 13.

In my late teens I had the privilege of studying a BA honours degree Scottish Music - Bagpipes at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland, during my 4 years, I had regular tuition with Roddy MacLeod, Gavin Stoddard, Alan Macdonald, Stuart Samson, Chris Armstrong and Finlay Macdonald. I have had the privilege of playing and studying alongside some of the best players in the world and that was always something that gave me a drive to improve myself to be the best I can be musically.

In 2010 I was employed by the highland council in Scotland as an

instrumental bagpipe instructor covering Wester-Ross primary and high schools, this was my dream job, teaching and playing the pipes every day. At this time, I was also a piper for the 16-time world champion pipe band Shotts and Dykehead, competing with them in grade one for 4 years, and also on my own performing and teaching not only in Scotland but across Europe.

However, in early 2012 my health took a turn for the worst and I was diagnosed with systemic sclerosis, myositis and sclerosis in my lungs. After a few months of treatment, things seemed to be getting under control, but in September 2012 I became seriously ill very quickly and was rushed to hospital. I was so ill that circulation stopped flowing to my extremities, - my fingers and feet, and the doctors had to amputate all my fingers, my left leg below my knee and also my right forefoot, I also lost some sight in my left eye.

Before continuing any further there is one massive part of my life that I must mention. As a young child my parents sent me to many children's meetings, Sunday school and church camps. Whilst attending these meetings, I learned all about God, sin, and what Jesus did on the cross for a sinner like me. At a young age I asked Jesus to forgive me, and to take control of my life, so from then on, I trusted in Him. Throughout my teenage years I had a lot of growing up to do, both physically and spiritually. I faced a lot of challenges in my life but through it all, God was my rock and my comforter.

I spent 8 months in hospital, the first 6 being unable to leave my bed. During this very trying time, God gave me a feeling of peace, and He gave me the strength to trust that He was going to take care of everything. Even though it looked like I had lost everything, God was right there with me, He comforted me every day. I had many visitors, family, friends, many people from the pipe band community came to see me and wish me well. My minister from the church I attended in Scotland came to visit me multiple times per week, and from the church I grew up in Dungannon.

But in it all I seen God taking care of me, my wife and my family, many people were praying for me, even churches and people I had never met before. Here is just one example of how God answered prayer: In my

darkest time, in the first few days of my time in hospital, my whole family and my wife came to Inverness to be with me, as at that time the doctors had very little hope for me.

My family had left their home to be with me in Scotland, with nowhere to stay, no idea to know how long I would be in hospital or if I would even recover. A man who we had never met before offered my family a house to stay in for as long as they needed.

After a long road of recovery with some incredible nurses, and physios, I returned to Northern Ireland to live closer to my family. In that time, we spent some time doing short term fostering. But we felt it was a bit too tough for my health. In my spare time I started taking some snare drum lessons from my friend John Johnston, and in 2017 I joined Tullylagaan pipe band, in that first year in Tullylagaan, under the leadership and tuition of Geoff Hamilton Grade 4a we won the All Ireland, Scottish and World Drum Corp titles.

This was a massive achievement for the band, and for me, to return to music, with no fingers and become a world champion snare drummer. Another thing that has happened since joining Tullylagaan, I met a wonderful man Jim Warnock, and on my first visit, he let me have a go on his electronic chanter, and to my surprise I could get a basic tune out, this led to me contacting the electronic

chanters maker Leonard Turkington from Magherafelt.

He made me one with the holes in a certain position that fitted what little was left of my fingers. In August 2018 I met my old band mate from Shotts and Dykehead Pipe Band, John Elliott. He had his own Bagpipe reeds and chanter making company and, after playing him a tune on the electronic chanter, he told me he could make me a pipe chanter to try so I could play the real bagpipes again.

When I was in hospital in 2012 I never thought I would play bagpipes again, but John made it possible. I immediately joined the pipe core of Tullylagan, lead the bagpipe tuition in both the senior and junior pipe band, and just 6 months later I entered my first solo competition since my fingers were amputated, and I came 3rd in Ulster, and later in the year 3rd in Ireland.

Also since I joined Tullylagan there are a group of 8-10 young pipers who I teach privately at their homes, and this year between them they have won 3 All Ireland solo piping titles. The band competitions started in May, and this year in my first year back playing the band became Ulster and World Champions in grade 3b, and the band also won best pipes cup a few times throughout the season.

One thing that has given me strength through everything is my relationship with God. He gave me strength and comfort in my time of need and a hope for the future. This same God loves you too, and if you accept Him, He will not only be with you in times of trouble, but give you a life worth living.

Andrew Shilliday



The Compatibility of Christianity and Culture

Through the decades there have been many critics of the Northern Ireland Band Scene, many have and would believe that Christianity is incompatible with the parading culture; my experience has been quite the opposite.

For the last number of years I have been a member of Moneyslane Flute Band. The decision to join a band was one which I gave a great deal of thought into. It was vital for me, that I joined a band that reflected who I am as a person, and what I believe. It was a priority that the band had the correct principles and objectives, a band that would be God-honouring and determined to display our cultural heritage in the best light possible through high standards of music and discipline.

Moneyslane was the obvious choice. Since then I have had many opportunities with the band to display my faith and also discuss it with others. In the band we are blessed with a strong Christian ethos that lies at the heart of all we do, as has been said many times by those in leadership in the band, 'We are a Protestant Band



first, everything else comes after that'. We have a designated Band Chaplain, who opens our meetings with prayer and the reading of the Scriptures; however the Chaplain is also there to offer Spiritual guidance and support to members of the band in an informal context.

Throughout the parading calendar we also take part in many services of worship, Sunday parades are an important part of the bands' remit. The band also takes great pride in the sacred music which we play on the road, much of which has special significance for our members.

Informally, there are also many opportunities to talk about and discuss matters of faith in the band, whether this is at our weekly band practice or on the bus on the way to a parade or even with passages of Scripture being circulated in the band group chat!

Many of our younger members are engaged with outreach work and evangelism with groups like CEF. The band also provides a fantastic opportunity to meet young Christian men who I otherwise may not have encountered and also the opportunity to learn from those who are more experienced in their faith.

Undoubtedly the band is a place of great encouragement for the Christian and in response to a question some may pose, 'Is Christianity compatible with Culture?', from my experience the answer is a resounding yes.

The band allows people to grow in their faith and also the opportunity to evangelise.

The band scene in Northern Ireland should be viewed by Christians as a mission field, and a great place to spread the Gospel message!

'We will rejoice in thy salvation and in the name of our God we will set up our banners' Psalm 20:5

Calvin Reid



Matthew Gallick



My name is Matthew, I am married to Rebekah and I'm from Magherafelt. I've always been a fan of the band scene but my family were never really involved with bands apart from watching the Twelfth occasionally.

When I was second year at high school I joined Megargy Accordion Band where I was a drummer. After a very short time I became the lead drummer as it was quite a small band. I stayed with Megargy a few years then when I was 16 I joined Gortagilly Coronation Flute Band, this time I joined as a Fluter.

When I first joined it was a small country band full of young Christians, which was actually one of the reasons my mum let me join. Over the years the band grew to become very popular throughout the country.

Unfortunately a few years ago there was a fall out between a few of our members which affected the band, this resulted in quite a few members walking away. During this time, it was very difficult to be a band-member, not to mention being a Christian band-member. However, I have found that through this difficult time for the band, it has given me an opportunity to be a good witness for Jesus Christ. Before the fall out, I really struggled being a band-member because I felt like I didn't fit in anywhere, the Christians that used to be members had left over the years and I

felt like I didn't have very many friends in the band anymore.

When the fall out happened, it forced the members closer together and now thankfully I can say I am good friends with most of the fellas in the band. I feel that I am accepted for who I am, the lads respect that I am a Christian.

So many people in our wee country feel like Christians shouldn't be involved in the band scene, but I tend to disagree with that. I'm aware that there has been a lot of pain and heartache involved in parades and the likes over the years, but I feel like we as Christians have a part to play as peacemakers.

"Make every effort to live in peace with everyone and to be holy, without holiness no one will see the Lord."
Hebrews 12:14



Andrew McClean

Hi, my name is Andrew McClean and I'm a snare drummer in Ballymacall True Blues Flute Band. My journey within bands pretty much began at birth as I was born into a local "Family Band", Tyrooney Accordion Band. Within Tyrooney I played the triangle from the age of three before moving on to lead the band, as drum major.

Moving through secondary school I became more interested in drumming, although my opportunity was limited as Tyrooney only parade two or three times a year. For this reason, I decided to join Ballymacall True Blues Flute Band to learn the snare drum in January 2008, at the age of 14. During my first parading season in Ballymacall I carried the flag as a member of the colour party whilst learning to drum. At the beginning of the 2015 parading season I took on the role of lead drummer which I held for four years.

At our AGM in 2017 I was elected to the role I currently hold today as Secretary. Within Ballymacall I have paraded in all sections of the band; colour party, snare drum, bass drum & flute core, but being honest I'm a drummer at heart. I can't



begin to list the benefits of being in a band but they include social, musical & moral benefits.

Within Ballymacall I have developed lifelong friendships and I will be forever grateful to the members for welcoming me into the band and teaching me how to both drum and flute. If I had to describe being in a band in a few words I'd say it's like being in a second family, albeit a very big one.



Whilst my number one commitment is to Ballymacall, the loyal orders have also been a big part and had a strong influence in my life from an early age. As a young boy I remember wearing my orange collarette marching alongside my Dad at Orange Lodge Sunday Church parades and the annual 12th July.

At the age of 17 I joined my local Orange Lodge Tyrooney LOL 1275, and currently hold the office of Deputy Master. At 24 I joined my local Royal Black Preceptory, Pomeroy Rising Star RBP 259. I believe the loyal orders are great institutions and provide a vital service in preserving promoting our culture and heritage. It is essential that we do this in a respectful manner in order that the wider community can see who we truly are.

I strongly believe all young Protestant people should be encouraged to join their local loyal orders as they provide fantastic direction whilst growing up.

To conclude, I personally believe being a member of a band and the loyal orders have made me the person I am today. For this reason, I strongly encourage everyone reading this to join your local band and loyal orders.

Andrew McClean



Gemma Boyd

My name is Gemma I have been a member of Drumnaglough Flute Band for 25 years. I joined when I was six and haven't found a way out yet! Firstly, I played the cymbals then progressed after a couple of years to the flute. This business of fluting did not come to me easily. Having little (to zero) natural music ability, it was through determination from myself but probably more our band master Keith that I can play a tune at all. At this stage this man needs a medal for putting up with us all!

A band is like no other organisation. Members are young and old, male and female and come from all different backgrounds. We call ourselves the misfits - named one night I looked around at how diverse everyone is but how we get on so well. We don't just learn tunes together and go on parade, we support each other in any way we can because we are more of a family than just a band.

Occasionally the band even turns up at the odd wedding – casually as I was enjoying my dessert on our wedding day I heard a few drums beats and then the entire band descended on the reception. I got handed a bunch of flowers (from the Misfits) and a



flute and we got together to play a few tunes. They band, secretly, learnt 'Feel to Love' for the occasion. It was just a perfect addition to a great day.

I couldn't imagine not being in a band. I wouldn't want to be anywhere else on the 12th evening than spending time with some of my favourite people or enjoying a Derry Day out on parade where the atmosphere is great and everyone is on top form. I am very proud of our wee band. We may not be the best or the biggest but we have the best fun and banter.



Derek William



After hurting my back at the age of 21 I remember the words while getting checked by a specialist “with your back, I would hate to see you in 5 or 10 years time” those words stuck with me ever since. You got used to living with the pain, you’d be fine for a period of time then a simple sneeze could put it out... various private treatment sessions over the years helped but it was never going to be fixed and I had wear and tear in my lumber spine.

As time went on I started having stomach pains resulting in loss of blood from my bowel, I was diagnosed with ulcerative colitis and in 2004 I had to have emergency surgery to remove my large bowel resulting in using a colostomy bag, this was the start of something that would change me to this day.

Not knowing what exactly the surgery was as I was sent to theatre within 45 minutes of the decision. After a 9 hour operation, I came around and the thing I remember was the pain, it was horrendous and then the first sight of the bag attached to my stomach. As the days went by, I couldn’t deal with or handle it, the nurses had to change the bag while I couldn’t even watch. I became very emotional and after 14 days in hospital I just wanted out but knew I had to change the bag myself before I could go,

so I took the plunge and did it. Whilst on my own I cried and just wanted to turn back time and not go through the operation.

After a check-up I was told I could have what is called a reversal, which meant the bag could be removed as I wouldn’t have a stoma. I didn’t care or even think it through, I wanted the bag gone. I knew another operation was going to be horrendous again but I was prepared, or so I thought... same operation, cut from my chest to just below my belly button. Months of bag leaks, emotional break downs then another bit of surgery to finally close the stoma and remove it from the outside wall of my stomach and sew me up, finally the bag was gone after 13 months.

By this stage I was going through mixed emotions along with side effects, joint pains. Stiff joints along with the continuing back problems were causing me to become a broken man but hid my feelings from everyone, friends and more so my family. I had to keep going, I needed back to work as bills needed paid. I knew something wasn’t right but I had no idea what, I just tried to tell myself to sort myself out...

In 2014 I got more bad news, a lump I had on my groin was a form of cancer

and needed treatment in the hope it was got early enough.

I got 22 blasts of radiotherapy, from the top and from the bottom. While fighting the cancer, others I knew lost their battle. This was another blow to me and things took a turn for the worst. I started having suicidal thoughts with detailed visions that scared me to bits. I knew I needed help and after telling my brother how I felt I was given a doctor's appointment where I heard the word depression for the first time. After an appointment with the cancer doctors the words they said to me changed me big time... "Derek what you had could have killed you but we think we got it, live life like every day is your last.."

I had started counselling and it's when I was told I suffered from survivors' guilt, feeling guilty that I lived when others didn't. Counselling was a good addition, but I still had break downs.

After the death of a fella I knew, I decided I had to tell my story and open up on mental health, something I had hidden for years. I was a member of a group called Light of Foot who offer a listening ear to other bands members who suffer from depression. I decided I was going to refurbish a bass drum to bring awareness for Mental Health and suicide, especially within Marching Bands. I never attempted suicide but had the suicidal thoughts.

Standing at a river I could see myself disappearing, it was frightening but opening up and talking helped me. As a member of a band and even though I

can't play as much as I did, being part of the band family is very important.

My job now is working with bands, supplying instruments and doing repairs. I enjoy it but I have to try and live my life on the "pain tool kit" advice, to reduce the pain levels, as doing too much would put me in discomfort for a long period. The concern of getting worse as years went on were accurate and is still a major factor in my well-being, so things had to change. My advice to anyone suffering with depression is to be open, talk to someone, even just a text, because it could be the start of a new road to a better place.

I was married at 21, have 3 grown up kids and I am Granda to wee Jacob who has made me thankful I took the steps I did when in the darkest place anyone could ever be.



Culture, Camaraderie and Friendship

I was delighted when Valerie asked me to contribute to this book. I am going to discuss what underpinned my time within marching bands and my experience of the band scene, as I feel that its importance is often over looked, or attracts negative publicity.

I was always part of the band scene but due to my young age I can't remember my early enthusiasm but thankfully, this was captured in photographs. My first memories of an introduction to the band scene are from around the tender age of 4. My Dad was 'lead tip' in Montober Flute Band, and he brought me along to band practices. I was smitten and had to get my own drum and sticks.

I looked forward to going back each week and was constantly practicing, even at times on the dinner table, which was not always well received! I could also often be found parading alongside my Dad, with my toy drum and plastic sticks. I couldn't wait until I was old enough to be able to move on to the 'real thing'.

My Dad had always a passion for drumming and he encouraged the enthusiasm he recognised in me by



giving me every opportunity to develop my skills.

Initially Dad took me to Tullylagan Pipe Band and alongside this he took me to weekly drumming classes at Gary Smith Drumming School in Culnady. When Tullylagan ceased for a time, I moved to Aughintoiber Pipe Band and later to Cullenfad Pipe Band. I was also a member of Drumnaglough Flute Band throughout my High School years.

The band scene can often attract negative publicity, due to perceived sectarianism. This has not been my experience. I found deep-rooted passion, skill and love of our culture, which unfortunately is often overlooked. The

band scene provided a great focus during my youth, when it would have been easy to get involved in other, often more destructive types of behaviour. I have met some great people and developed lasting friendships. We share a love of our culture, tradition and have a desire to showcase this across the country.

Another example of this was in sixth form at Cookstown High School. A few of my friends and I formed a group called 'Tropic Thunder' and entered 'Your School's got Talent'. Using flutes and drums we played modern musical arrangements, progressing through the quarter and semi finals to gain 2nd place in the Northern Ireland final.

It was great to showcase this talent that existed within our local marching band scene to audiences that included many

people unfamiliar with our culture and tradition. It was a great opportunity to develop friendships with others who were also involved in marching bands. The 'craic' along the way and the camaraderie was also second to none.

Unfortunately I am no longer a member of a marching band due to work and other commitments. However I look back on my time in the band scene with fondness. I cherish the memories I have from this time, the camaraderie I experienced and the friendships I still enjoy today, all of which stemmed from a shared love of our culture and tradition.

Kyle Black



Janet Moffett

When I was maybe 5 or 6 years old there was much talk about setting up an accordion band by my father's Orange Lodge Knockavanon LOL 1157. I can remember the great excitement of going to the Hall on the first night of the organising and getting to play 'the triangle'. It was very exciting when we eventually got our uniforms and started marching with the band, I later then progressed on to play the accordion.

Many family members were in the band with me - my brothers, an Aunt & Uncle and many cousins, it really was great fun. We went to a lot of parades which included Wednesday, Friday and Saturday nights, and sometimes even two on the one night. The marching season was a time when you would meet up with friends from other bands and I always enjoyed the cup of tea that we almost always got after parading or if there was no tea being served it was a treat to get a 'chippy'.

During the winter months we had weekly band practice and I can honestly say that the band always felt like a safe place to be, somewhere that everyone watched out for you and cared for you. I remained a band-member until my mid twenties.

Growing up my parents made sure that we all attended Sunday school and I went to most of the youth clubs that



were running at the time. There was a Good News Club in Newtownhamilton during my younger years which was run by three ladies of the town, these three women made a huge impact on my young life. I just loved the choruses and bible stories and I would often be up at the front holding up the choruses or helping with the quizzes. I can never remember a time when I didn't know about Jesus and a need for salvation and I did profess faith as a young girl.

Later I started to attend Youth Fellowship which was a great time and again there were those who God used to impact greatly on my life. These people I looked up to and could see there was something different about them, something that I wanted.

However, in my early adulthood I turned my back on God for a number of years and was leading my life with no thought of God or the consequences of my choices. I was now married and when my first son Gareth was born he suffered terribly from eczema. As a mother and parent you'd do anything possible to help your child. We had taken him to our Doctor and to the Dermatologists and he had loads of different creams which just maybe kept it at bay but never really got rid of it.

Then in February 2002 I was told about a faith healer, David Robinson on the Battlehill Road outside Richhill, I knew this man was a man of God and would speak to me of my need for salvation (I was sure he would) BUT I loved my son and with trepidation I phoned and made arrangements to go and see him.

As I was travelling along that road I was greatly under conviction as I drove to his home. I could feel the battle going on for my soul and I knew that if he spoke to me about salvation that I would come back to the Lord. God never gives up on His own and He may let you go for a season, but He will always draw you back again. However, I do add that what you do have to live with is the consequences of your choices and actions. David prayed over Gareth and asked God for healing.

I can remember Gareth was just 2 years old at the time and he was sitting on the floor playing with a large red fire engine it was an old style engine made of metal and David then spoke to me and explained that just as I loved my son so much to have him healed God loved me even more.

He read John 3 v 16 "For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life".

I remember thinking about the enormity of that and looking at Gareth and feeling the ache in my heart of love for him and the thought of having to give him up for someone else just seemed incomprehensible. I was crying and knew that God still loved me even

though I had turned my back on him.

There and then I came back to God. It was like a huge weight lifting off my shoulders that day. The Bible tells us in Romans 10 v 9 "That if you confess with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved"

With this verse in mind David advised me to tell someone of my commitment so I drove straight to my husband's parent's house who are both Christian people and told them what had happened, of course they were delighted.

What an encouragement and support they have been to me over the years, I thank God for them.

Two years later my husband, Kenny and I were at a Gospel Service in Keady Orange Hall in March 2004 run by the Apprentice Boys, Rev Roger McElnea was preaching. After the service and parade Kenny came back up to the hall where the tea was being served, he came and told me that he'd got saved during the meeting.

The message was from the book of Daniel and if you remember the story of Belshazzar - the writing on the wall was a message for all those who defy God. Although Belshazzar had great power and wealth, his kingdom was totally corrupt and he could not withstand the judgement of God. God's time of judgement comes for all people.

Kenny grew up in a Christian home and had heard the gospel message many, many, times but he says that he felt this was his last opportunity to accept God's call. For him the writing was on the wall and I praise God that he did accept the invitation that time. If you are reading this and you are hearing God's call please answer because the bible tells us in Genesis 6 v 3 'My Spirit will not contend with man for ever'. You can't see the stopwatch of God's patience, and there is no bargaining for additional time.

The loyal orders and bands have always been a part of both our lives and 8 years ago I was approached by a Christian friend, from Church and asked if I would be interested in joining Enagh Accordion Band... at the time I was a leader in a Good News Club and Sunday School Teacher. I prayed much over the decision about using my time to join a band again. When I considered this I realised that my faith can be shared in

many ways not just within Church circles. At the time Enagh Band was trying to recruit new members and I joined with other young girls from my church, many of whom I had taught at both Sunday School and Good News Club.

I love the fellowship that the band allows, the craic that goes on and for me just to live out my faith with others is important. When I look at the life of Jesus, He not only taught the disciples and people around Him but He lived His life alongside them. He invested His time in them. The band allows me the opportunity to meet new people and it is my desire to bring glory to God and to influence others just by 'living out' my faith with them.



Luke 19:1-10 The Zacchaeus Story

v1-4 Then Jesus entered and walked through Jericho.
There was a man there, his name Zacchaeus,
the head tax man and quite rich. He wanted
desperately to see Jesus, but the crowd was in his
way—he was a short man and couldn't
see over the crowd. So he ran on ahead and climbed
up in a sycamore tree so he could see Jesus when he came by.

v5-7 When Jesus got to the tree, he looked up and said,
“Zacchaeus, hurry down. Today is my day to be a guest in your home.”
Zacchaeus scrambled out of the tree, hardly believing his
good luck, delighted to take Jesus home with him.
Everyone who saw the incident was indignant and grumped,
“What business does he have getting cozy with this crook?”

v8 Zacchaeus just stood there, a little stunned.
He stammered apologetically, “Master, I give away half my
income to the poor—and if I'm caught cheating,
I pay four times the damages.”

v9-10 Jesus said, “Today is salvation day in this home!
Here he is: Zacchaeus, son of Abraham!
For the Son of Man came to find and restore the lost.”



The Zacchaeus Outreach Project thanks everyone who contributed to the production of this booklet.

If you require more copies please contact

The Zacchaeus Outreach Project

Phone 0773664405141

Email zacchaeusproject@btinternet.com

Or

Armagh Bands Forum facebook page

