

THE  
CORRYMEELA  
COMMUNITY





What is Corrymeela?

Some Corrymeela Dates

September, 1961	First Meeting
October, 1962	Community inaugurated
February, 1965	Transfer to enter a full time ministry to look after the spiritual needs of the community
June, 1965	First Annual Meeting
June, 1965	First Annual Meeting
November, 1965	Official Opening
Easter, 1966	First Holy Communion
August, 1966	First Economic Work Camp
Christmas, 1966	First Christmas Eve Service
Summer, 1967	Ordnal Village Opened
September, 1968	Extension to Main House
October, 1968	Butterfly extension
Autumn, 1969	Community Group started
April, 1970	Ordnal Village Opened
Autumn, 1970	Community Group started
January, 1971	Community Group started
March, 1971	Community Group started
September, 1971	Unit at Dallycastle
September, 1971	Unit at Dallycastle

# THE CORMEELA COMMUNITY

*Director:*

Rev. R. R. DAVEY,  
49 Osborne Drive, Belfast BT9 6LH

*Secretary:*

S. NOEL REA, Esq.,  
15 Coolpark Avenue, Belfast BT8 4NF

*Treasurer:*

J. A. KENNETH IRVINE, Esq.,  
172 Groomsport Road, Bangor, Co. Down

Price 5p.

## Some Corrymeela Dates

First Meeting .....	September, 1964
First "Bulletin" published .....	October, 1965
Community inaugurated .....	February, 1965
House at Ballycastle purchased .....	June, 1965
First work camps .....	June, 1965
Official Opening .....	November, 1965
First Major Conference .....	Easter, 1966
First Ecumenical Work Camp .....	August, 1966
First Corrymeet .....	Christmas, 1966
Chalet Village Opened .....	Summer, 1967
Extension to Main House .....	Summer, 1968
"Bulletin" re-named "Causeway" .....	October, 1968
Coleraine Group Started .....	Autumn, 1969
Gift of Minibus from Rotary .....	April, 1970
London Group Started .....	Autumn, 1970
Belfast Centre Opened .....	January, 1971
Dublin Group Started .....	March, 1971
Opening of Tara Unit at Ballycastle .....	September, 1971
Presentation of Cross of Nails by Coventry Cathedral .....	September, 1971

Director:  
 Rev. R. DAVEY,  
 58 Osborne Drive, Belfast BT9 8LJ  
 Secretary:  
 S. NOEL BRYAN, Esq.,  
 15 Clonpark Avenue, Belfast BT8 8NF  
 Treasurer:  
 J. A. KENNETH IRVINE, Esq.,  
 113 Groomsport Road, Bangor, Co. Down

location

## What is Corrymeela?

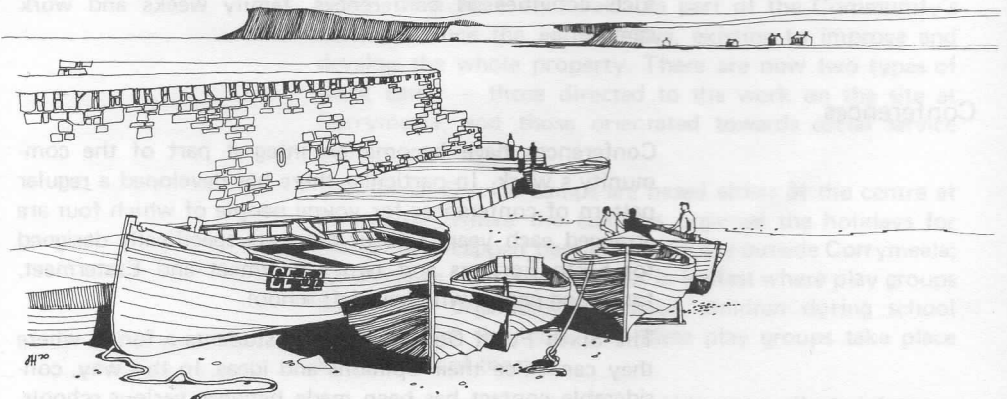
Corrymeela is a Christian Community seeking to reconcile man to God and man to man. It believes that Christ is the ultimate means of reconciliation, and encourages people, in His name, to reach a fuller understanding of their fellow men.

The idea of Corrymeela grew out of a series of informal meetings in the winter of 1964-65, at which a group of people, many of whom had seen the work done by centres such as Agape, Taizé and Iona, expressed their concern that Northern Ireland should have a similar centre for discussion, retreat, reconciliation, etc. As a result the property at Ballycastle was purchased in 1965 and after some renovation was officially opened by Paster Tullio Vinay, the founder of the Agape community in North Italy, and the Servizio Cristiano experiment in Riesi, in Sicily.

## Where is Corrymeela?

The Community Centre stands on a nine acre site overlooking Ballycastle bay. The building, designed for the Holiday Fellowship, is a large timber clad structure of Dutch Barn style architecture. It is centrally heated and comfortably furnished. In addition to the house which holds about sixty people, extra accommodation is provided in the adjoining Chalets. Separate from the house, but part of the Community's activities, is the Work Camp Chalet Village, a self contained unit for twenty people.

The Centre at Ballycastle is administered by the Resident Director, assisted by five resident Community members.



## **Membership and Structure of the Community**

Membership of the Community is open to all Christians who are committed to healing the many breaches, social, political and religious, which exist in Northern Ireland and throughout the world. While the number of members may vary from time to time, there are at present about sixty. They have a financial commitment to the Community, and are ultimately responsible for the property at Ballycastle.

Ray Davey is the full-time Director, and there is an elected Executive Council of fourteen members. In addition, the Community's affairs are handled by committees responsible to the Council.

Members of the Community come from all walks of life and so contribute varying opinions, ideas, and talents. Those who live in or near Belfast meet twice monthly, and all members are expected to attend Community weekends at Ballycastle twice a year. Members also meet monthly in district groups where projects embodying the ideal of reconciliation are put into practice.

## **Friends of Corrymeela**

The Friends of Corrymeela are people who, while not wishing to become full members are interested in the work being done. They contribute at least £1 annually and receive the Community's publications. Twice a year there is a conference for them at Ballycastle.

## **The Work of the Corrymeela Community**

The work of the Corrymeela Community is carried on both at Ballycastle and throughout Northern Ireland.

Since its foundation, the Ballycastle Centre has been a place where all kinds of people have met to work and take part in such activities as conferences, family weeks and work camps.

## **Conferences**

Conferences have become an integral part of the community's work. In particular there has developed a regular pattern of conferences for young people of which four are arranged each year. Two of these are specifically designed for Sixth Formers and two, Corrymeet and Eastermeet, for young people who have left school.

The Sixth Form Conferences give students a forum where they can voice their opinions and ideas. In this way, considerable contact has been made between various schools, and between schools and Corrymeela. Perhaps most valuable

of all is the contact made between people who, in normal circumstances, would never meet.

Corrymeet, the conference at Christmas, and Eastermeet, cater for up to seventy people, and each conference has guest speakers to talk on topics relevant to community problems, both in Northern Ireland and throughout the world. Past topics have been on such subjects as Politics, Communication, and Conflict. The young people have time in their three day stay to express their views and meet people of opposing views in formal and informal settings.

## Holiday Weeks, and Family Weeks

The Centre at Corrymeela is also used from time to time to give holidays to people who are deprived – whether physically, mentally or financially. Among those who have benefitted from these weeks are Old Age Pensioners, Mentally Handicapped children, families from riot areas, and unemployed boys.

Family weeks are designed to provide a holiday for families from all social, political and religious backgrounds – including those who are unable to have any conventional sort of holiday – and to enable these families to share in what is going on in Corrymeela. Arrangements are made by workcampers to look after the children each morning, and outings and entertainments are arranged, for those interested. Many people who know Corrymeela through these weeks find their attitudes to society and to individuals in society being transformed. Almost all find Corrymeela a refreshing experience.

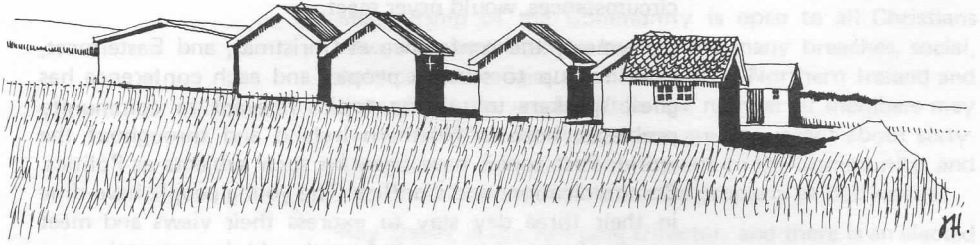
## Work Camps

Young people of many nationalities come to work camps which have been an invaluable part of the Community's activities since the earliest days, existing to improve and develop the whole property. There are now two types of work camp – those directed to the work on the site at Corrymeela, and those orientated towards social service work.

The Social Service camps are based either at the centre at Ballycastle, where the campers organise the holidays for old or handicapped people, or at a site outside Corrymeela; for instance, in housing estates in Belfast where play groups have been organised to occupy children during school holidays. For the most part these play groups take place in riot areas of the city.

The work camps in the Chalet Village usually last for one week, over a period of three months in the summer. The





maximum number in each camp is twenty, including two leaders, and camp life is designed to be a combination of work, worship and relaxation. The work is mainly concerned with building, painting and the landscaping of the nine acre site. The worship and relaxation, the latter including much valuable discussion, tends to make Christian young people more aware of the implications of their faith, and non-Christians much more open minded about the claims of Christianity.

In the International workcamps organised by the World Council of Churches, a high proportion of camp leaders are previous Corrymeela work campers.

## Local Groups

As the Membership of Corrymeela grew, it was decided that members should be divided into district groups where they could carry the ideals and the work of the Community into the places where they lived. At first these groups only existed in the Belfast-Lisburn area, but have extended to areas in the country generally, e.g., Coleraine. These groups have been responsible for action among alcoholics, investigation into segregated education, participation in a credit union branch, youth work, and other topics of local concern.

Another development in the structure of the groups has meant that they are no longer made up only of members, but include people interested in and concerned with Corrymeela's aims. In this way membership of a group has become an intermediate step on the way towards membership of the Community.

## Work in Belfast

Ever increasingly, members of the Community are being involved in the Belfast situation. The work camp at Andersonstown opened new possibilities and regular contact is kept with various groups from the areas of tension.



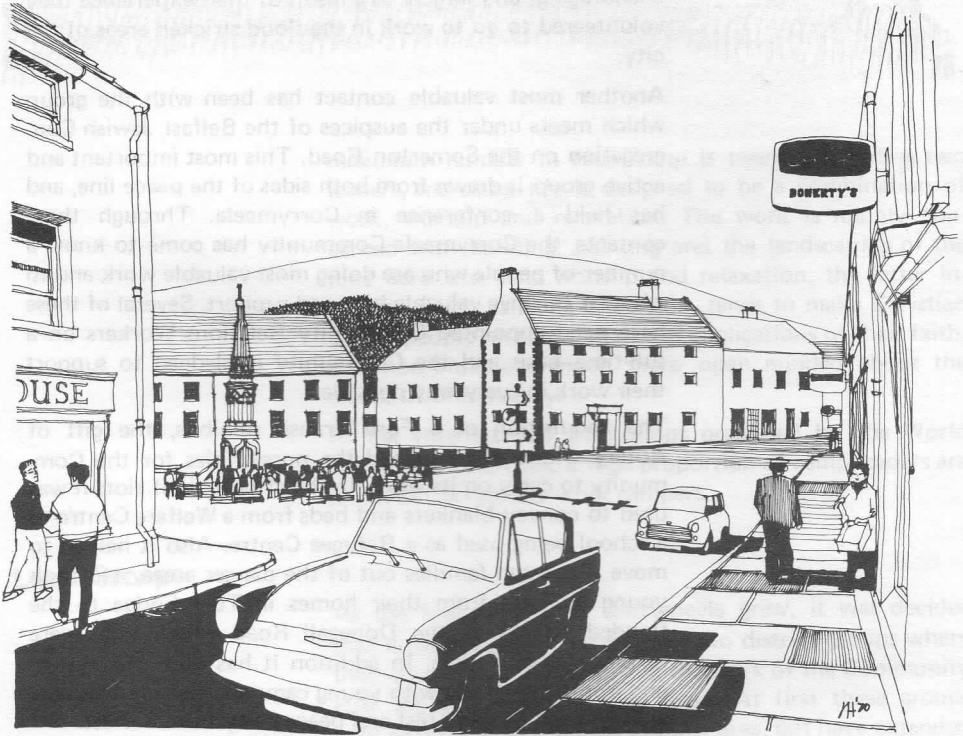
Through the Springfield Joint Tenant's Committee a holiday week at Corrymeela was organised for sixty young people between 11 and 15 years old. This included large groups from Ballymurphy, Turf Lodge and Kashmir Street. It proved worthwhile and is likely to be the prototype of many to come. The response of the young people was most encouraging, and largely as a result of their experience they volunteered to go to work in the flood stricken areas of the city.

Another most valuable contact has been with the group which meets under the auspices of the Belfast Jewish Congregation on the Somerton Road. This most important and active group is drawn from both sides of the peace line, and has held a conference in Corrymeela. Through these contacts, the Corrymeela Community has come to know a number of people who are doing most valuable work and to whom it can give valuable help and support. Several of these have been appointed Community Relations Workers on a full-time basis and the Community is pledged to support their work in every way possible.

The acquisition of a Ford Transit minibus, the gift of Rotary Clubs, has widened the possibilities for the Community to carry on its work. In the aftermath of riots it was used to convey blankets and beds from a Welfare Centre to a school being used as a Refugee Centre. Also it helped to move distressed families out of the danger areas, and took young workers from their homes in Turf Lodge to the flooded streets of the Donegall Road where they were helping flood victims. In addition it has plied its way to and from Corrymeela with young campers, and families who were in need of some rest and peace away from Belfast.

## The Ballycastle District

The Corrymeela Community Centre occupies a magnificent site on the majestic coast of North Antrim just outside Ballycastle, which is a famous geological centre of much beauty and interest.



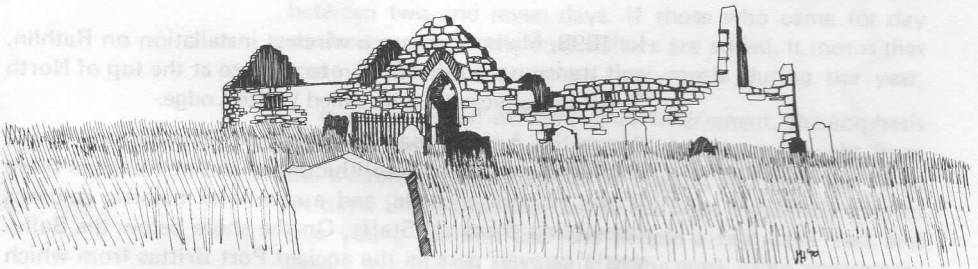
For the Geologist or Geographer, the district is in many ways unique in the British Isles. It is particularly noted for its tertiary igneous rocks. The basalts, which cover the Cretaceous rocks in the Antrim Plateau, can be seen in Rathlin Island and in Knocklayd, where they overlie chalk and Dalriadian schist. The great Headland of Fair Head consists of a massive dolerite sill, intruded into carboniferous rocks, while smaller intrusions from the North Star Dyke and many other dykes can be seen along the coast. Explosive activities resulted in volcanic bombs and ash beds. Numerous examples of faulting occur, and in the coastal cliffs, evidence of the formerly worked coalfields can be seen. Glacial activity was responsible for such phenomena as rock basin lakes, erratics and moraines; marine erosion is much in evidence, and a 25 foot raised beach platform has been utilised for a coastal road.

The soils, vegetation and land use of the area are also subjects of great interest, while detailed urban studies can be made of Ballycastle itself.

The Corrymeela Centre is an ideal place from which to make studies of the area and schools and colleges may use the house for this purpose during term time. Indeed many have already done so and have found their stay most valuable and informative.

The district around Ballycastle is famous in Irish legend and history, and many interesting places can be reached easily from Corrymeela. Right outside the main gates is a raised mound covering an ancient grave. Inland a little is the site of a summer palace of Conor Macnessa, King of Ulster.

Ballycastle was originally two towns. Around today's harbour was the town known as Quay, and the upper town was situated round the castle built in 1609 by Randolph, Earl of Antrim. Tuesday is market day in the town, and most famous of all the markets is the Lammass Fair which gets its name from the Old English "Hlaf - masse", or loaf mass, the old Harvest Thanksgiving Mass.

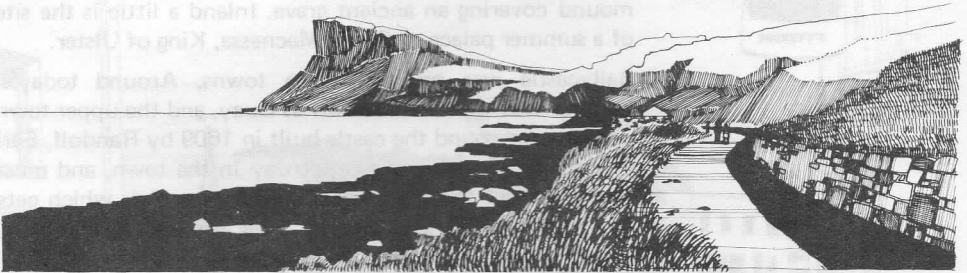


On the outskirts of the town is the ruin of a Franciscan Friary which was burnt in 1584 in an attack by MacDonnells and Highland Scots on English troops quartered in the district. The ruin is reputed to have a ghost — one, Julia McQuillan, the 'Black Nun', who is buried in the cemetery.

Glass was made at Ballycastle in the 18th century, and there are old open shaft coal mines on the road from town to Corrymeela.

Around Ballycastle are many places worth visiting. Rathlin Island, associated in history with the story of Robert Bruce, boasts a cave where that king's famous encounter with the spider is said to have taken place. The island was a convenient stepping stone between Scotland and Ireland and was frequently ravaged by the Scots and English. Excavat-

Excavations have revealed a late Stone Age workshop there containing over a hundred tools of every description. Cliffs at the west end of the island are the home of innumerable seabirds — guillemots, razorbills, puffins, shags, kittiwakes and gulls.



In 1898, Marconi set up a wireless installation on Rathlin, and transmitted information to a house at the top of North Street in Ballycastle, now called White Lodge.

Along the Antrim coast at Whitepark Bay was one of the chief settlements of Neolithic man, and at Kenbane there is the ruin of a castle, and a cave with basaltic columns resembling those on Staffa. On the shore below the Ballycastle caravan park is the ancient Port Brittas from which the Dalriadians sailed to colonise Scotland. Fergus the Great left from there in 502 A.D. taking with him the celebrated Stone of Destiny which Edward 1 subsequently removed from there to Westminster in 1296. The sea across which they sailed was in ancient days called the Straits of Moyle, and was the home of the legendary Children of Lir for three hundred years, where, transformed into swans by a cruel curse, they battled against storms and bitter cold, often taking shelter at the mouth of the Margy river.

The whole area surrounding Ballycastle was in more recent times the scene of bloody battles between the native Irish with their Highland allies, and the English and lowland Scots settlers. It is fitting that Corrymeela, the Centre for reconciliation, should be sited in such a place, where history and legend crowd the air, reminding one all too frequently of the pain and tragedy in men's lives and the need for them to be reconciled with one another and with God.

## Financial

The Corrymeela Community is registered as a Charity, and in the main is dependent upon its members and friends to finance the work either by subscriptions, which may be covenanted, or by interest free loans. The Centre at Ballycastle is in continual need of money for maintenance and development, and the work done in the community at large makes heavy demands on funds.

Anyone who wishes to use the Corrymeela Centre for a conference, field trip, group holiday, or any other activity, should write to the Director, who will be glad to furnish information about rates, availability etc.

## Postscript to the Second Edition

Since this booklet was published 18 months ago, much has happened and the work of the Community has intensified as the situation has changed.

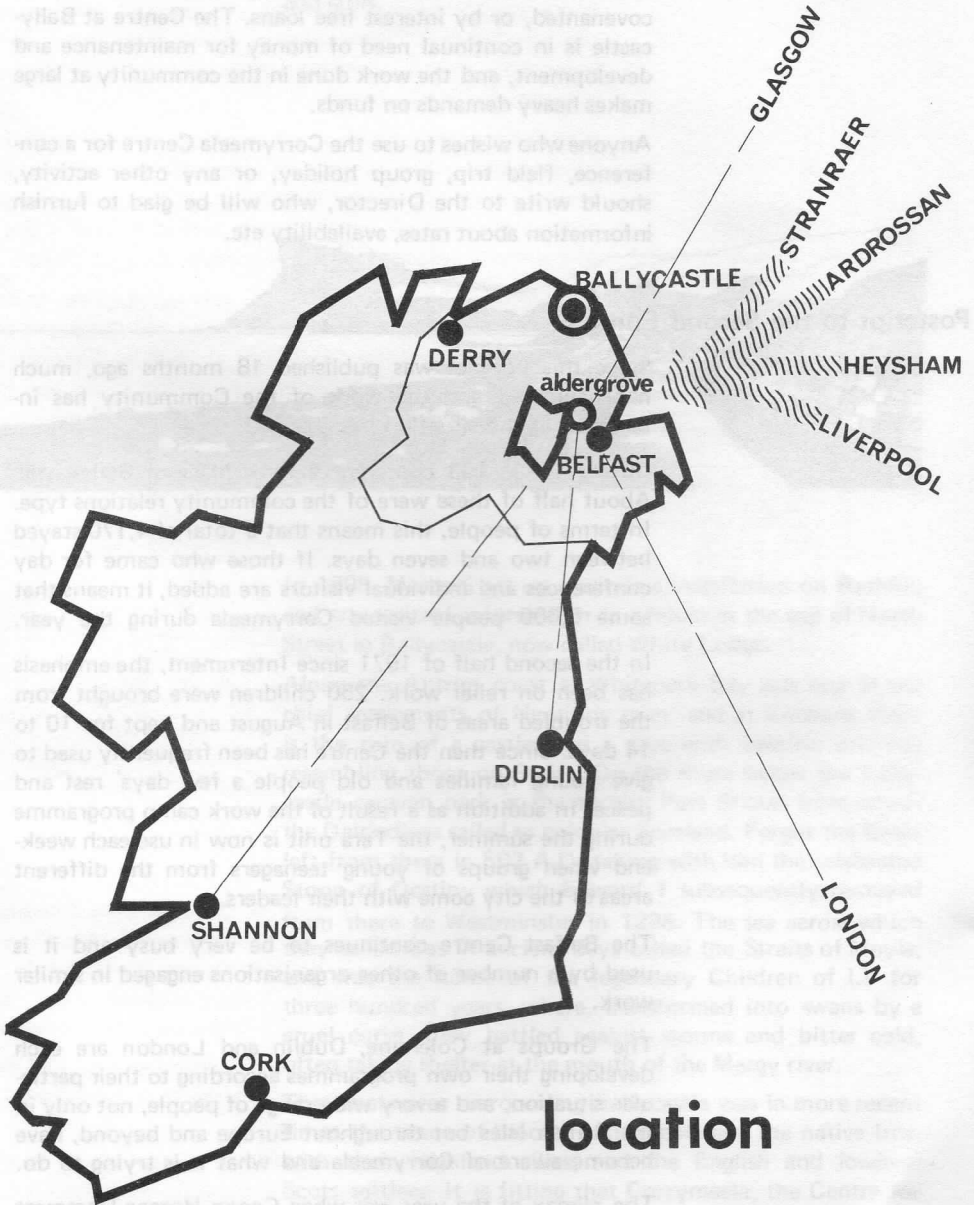
During 1971, 103 conferences took place at Ballycastle. About half of these were of the community relations type. In terms of people, this means that a total of 4,170 stayed between two and seven days. If those who came for day conferences and individual visitors are added, it means that some 5,000 people visited Corrymeela during the year.

In the second half of 1971 since Internment, the emphasis has been on relief work. 250 children were brought from the troubled areas of Belfast in August and kept for 10 to 14 days. Since then the Centre has been frequently used to give young families and old people a few days' rest and peace. In addition as a result of the work camp programme during the summer, the Tara unit is now in use each weekend when groups of young teenagers from the different areas of the city come with their leaders.

The Belfast Centre continues to be very busy and it is used by a number of other organisations engaged in similar work.

The Groups at Coleraine, Dublin and London are each developing their own programmes according to their particular situation, and a very wide range of people, not only in the British Isles but throughout Europe and beyond, have become aware of Corrymeela and what it is trying to do.

The climax of the year was when Canon Horace Dammers of Coventry Cathedral came to Corrymeela and presented the Community with the Cross of Nails as a symbol of the Ministry of Reconciliation.



## location







