

A passion for God, peace and unity among people

SR ANNA HOARE

IN 1972 an invitation from Mother Teresa brought Sister Anna Hoare to Belfast. Her welcome to the city included being showered with milk bottles by a group of Protestant children who mistook this Anglican nun for a Catholic. From this came her resolution to "train" the children of Northern Ireland in reconciliation and she became a pioneer and sower of seeds for peace in the midst of the Troubles.

Sr Anna's limitless faith in providence enabled her to cross many boundaries.

People remember her walking out into the streets with her bucket to collect the nails that had been scattered to puncture army vehicles. No bullet ever touched her.

Her love for her neighbours of both denominations was practical and hands on. She would travel from house to house with her moped and crash helmet, looking after those whose lives had been shattered, helping both Protestant and Catholic young people to find jobs and to do well at school.

She would travel around Europe and America fundraising. She took groups out of the war zone to have different experiences, sometimes without anything but a flask and tea bags.

As she knocked on doors for hot water, she won over people as well



■ PIONEER: Sr Anna Hoare. Right, Elisabeth Ohlbock visits Sr Anna last year

as hot meals and lodging. It was said that it was impossible to say "No" to Sr Anna.

One of the seeds she sowed gave birth to the first Focolare group in Belfast, after she arranged for a group of 12 young people to attend an event in Italy.

They came back utterly changed, convinced that their differences were not an obstacle and if they wanted to make a difference, change had to begin with them. However, one of her biggest contributions to Northern Ireland was her work with All Children

Together which established an integrated secondary school in Belfast in the hope that children could live, learn and make friends with one another. Lagan College today has more than 1,200 students.

In 2008, when Sr Anna was visited in England by some staff from the school, she was asked for a message for the students. Her answer was simple: "I want them to be happy. If they are good they will be happy and if they are happy they will be good."

Sr Anna Hoare, who was attached to



a contemplative Anglican Convent in Oxford – the Sisters of the Love of God – was born in 1917 in Bath to a family of 'landed gentry'.

From very early she had a passion for God, for peace and for unity amongst people.

She studied theology at Oxford University and felt called to be a "monastic pilgrim", which in her words meant "to travel anywhere on the surface of the globe without money, doing whatever providence gives me to do".

Her first adventure was among a German community of refugees in

Leicestershire, who she tried to help recover from their wartime anguish. After that she went to France where she worked in plantation fields alongside Russian Orthodox nuns, and to the Greek islands where she discovered her gift of "getting things done".

She started by "begging for portions of corn" to pay some villagers to re-build a derelict house for a family. This eventually turned into a project which saw the refurbishment of around 30 houses. Sr Anna spent more than three decades working on cross-community initiatives in Northern Ireland, setting up a base in Hope House on Alliance Avenue in north Belfast.

She was once robbed – she awoke to find an armed and masked group of teenagers at her bedside – but later visited one of them in prison, helped him to a new life and attended his wedding.

In 2005 she was nominated as part of a group of 1,000 women for the Nobel Peace Prize and was also honoured with an MBE for her work in Northern Ireland.

Sr Anna led an extraordinary life. She was a person who saw beyond appearances and touched the lives of many people. A woman whose life was impressively fruitful, working incessantly so that people could experience God's healing love.

Sr Anna Hoare died aged 97 on January 18.

Elisabeth Ohlbock

Sun shone for funeral of Barry's Hobby Horse Man

"LOOK after your mummies and daddies, now."

With just those few words whole generations are transported back to childhood and summer days with the 'Hobby Horse Man' at Barry's Amusements in Portrush.

For 50 years Colm Quinn was the man in the middle of the carousel, a constant smiling presence no matter how fast the world was turning.

"Everybody happy?", "Mind the ride" and "Lovely day" he would chirp to the children around him, the last cheerfully delivered no matter how awful the weather and summing up his sunny outlook on life. Hundreds of people have been leaving tributes on the fun park's Facebook page describing how he brightened up their lives. A "gentleman with a heart of gold" was typical of the comments. One person recalled how they thought he was Santa.

Another said: "He was a legend. I'll never forget the

COLM QUINN

Hobby Horse Man and his horses – I met my future husband on them".

Born in Articlave, Co Derry, Barry's Amusements was in Colm Quinn's blood. His father worked on its Peter Pan Railway and all four of his brothers were employed at various times.

Having moved to Portrush as a child, Colm began working there as a teenager during the summer season, travelling to England in winter for jobs as a fishmonger, trolley bus driver and silver service waiter.

He joined Barry's full-time aged around 20 and was recognised by everyone as someone special.

His brother Thomas, who worked beside him for 24 years, said he was "one of those fellas that people took to no matter where he went".

Colm was first put in charge of the carousel's 30 horses in 1964.



He loved the children who came to see him year after year, watching them get older and in time bring their own families to see the Hobby Horse Man. First to arrive each morning

to open up at 6am, and always the last to leave, Colm never took a sick day – he said he wouldn't work anywhere else no matter what the money.

A dog lover, he even looked after the guard dogs at Barry's.

"He is simply irreplaceable," owner Kristina Trufelli said.

"We are all devastated."

"The sun was shining for his funeral on Wednesday and that's just how I think of Colm – he was a sunny, warm, loving and genuine person."

"He had time for everyone and all the children and parents loved him. He had a beautiful personality."

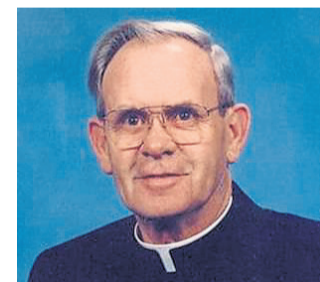
Barry's now hope to add an extra horse to the ride in memory of Colm's 62 years with the company, as well as possibly a bench bearing his name and catchphrase.

Colm Quinn died last Sunday aged 79. He is survived by his wife Mary, daughter Coleen and grandson Adam, to whom he was also devoted.

Popular pastor

FR KEVIN DEVLIN

CO TYRONE-born Fr Kevin Devlin spent all his ministry as a popular pastor in the diocese of Oklahoma City in the US. Born in February 1928 in Ardboe to Patrick and Selina Devlin, he studied at All Hallows Seminary in Dublin and was ordained in 1954. Invited to Oklahoma, he would serve as a popular pastor in parishes there until his retirement in 2002 and celebrated 60 years in the priesthood last year. Former parishioners described him as a "great person, priest and friend" and someone full of humour and laughter.



One recalled the "many conversations we had over the years, many of which afterwards he'd say 'Let's go for some pizza'."

"He was more than a priest he was part of the family." Fr Devlin died aged 86 on January 2 and is survived by one of his eight siblings, who also lives in the US, as well as many nieces and nephews.

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Photographs should be supplied by email where possible or with a stamped addressed envelope for their return if posted. Obituaries should be no more than 400 words long.

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