

# THE IRISH NEWS

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## Feeney v Kane

Does the protocol undermine the union?

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## Walking the line

The evolution of Belfast's peace lines across a quarter-century of significant change for the city is explored in a new book featuring the work of celebrated photographer Frankie Quinn. The striking images in Belfast Cordon Sanitaire detail the walls dividing the city's nationalist and unionist areas since 1969, such as the above image of St Gall's Primary School, west Belfast, in 1994

Report P3

# Intervene, murdered GAA official's family urge Boutcher



Sean Brown was shot dead in 1997

**M**URDER victim Sean Brown's family have urged Jon Boutcher to "intervene immediately" after new information raised concerns about previous police investigations.

The 61-year-old GAA official was abducted and shot dead by an LVF gang as he locked the gates at Belaghy Wolfe Tones GAC in Co Derry in May 1997. Collusion is suspected and no-one has been charged in connection with the killing.

Since his death, the Brown fam-

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ily have been present at almost 40 inquest-related hearings. Earlier this month it emerged 18 new files of sensitive information were recently made available for review. Yesterday the inquest heard that the new information "raises issues in relation to the previous investigations".

Mr Brown's murder was investi-

gated by police in 1997 and reviewed in 2004.

The Police Ombudsman also produced a report, while a separate probe was also carried out by the Historical Enquiries Team. It is not known whether any of these investigations had access to the newly disclosed information.

The inquest heard that the "sensitive material"... "raises important issues of national security".

In a statement, the family made a direct appeal to interim chief constable Mr Boutcher to "personally in-

tervene and to review the two newly identified folders of recently discovered sensitive documentation and to confirm that all of this sensitive information was available to the original murder investigations, both in 1997 and also the review in 2004".

A barrister for the family raised the possibility that a public inquiry may be required.

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Sport

The last time a Tyrone team went back-to-back

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# 25 years of division captured in new book on peace walls



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**T**HE evolution of Belfast's peace lines across a quarter-century of significant change for the city is explored in a new book featuring the work of celebrated photographer Frankie Quinn.

Belfast Cordon Sanitaire features striking images taken by the Short Strand snapper between 1994 and 2019 and detailing the infamous dividing walls that have separated the city's nationalist and unionist areas since 1969.

The book is released in a year that was once considered a target date for the removal of the barriers, but a decade on from the launch of that strategy, around 60 of the walls remain standing – blunt, towering metaphors for the divisions that still keep communities divided 30 years on from the signing of the Good Friday Agreement.

Accompanying Frankie Quinn's catalogue of photos in the new book – released by Swiss publisher Georg – is text from Geneva-based writer and philosophy professor Christophe Solioz, English author Vicky Cosstick, and Belfast urban designer Ciaran Mackel.

The photos detail the harsh reality of life in the shadow of the almost 20-miles of peace walls that still scar the city, across a time period that saw hopes rise and fall for their demolition.

Much of Quinn's work on the peace lines has previously been exhibited in Belfast, but the new book – which features the accompanying text in both English and French – collects the images together for the first time in a published tome.

"I had always wanted to see the photos collected in this way, and



Contributors to Belfast Cordon Sanitaire, from left, Christophe Solioz, Ciaran Mackel, Frankie Quinn and Vicky Cosstick  
PICTURE: MAL MCCANN

there are 170 images taken during periods between 1994 and 2019," the celebrated photographer told the Irish News.

"I go back every six or seven years to capture how the walls have changed.

"There have been some positive changes, such as the removal of the barriers at Serpentine Road in the north of the city as one notable example, but we are a long way off the goal set by Martin McGuinness and Peter Robinson back in 2013."

Ten years ago, the then-first and deputy first ministers unveiled ambitious shared future plans that, among other goals, aimed to see all peace walls dismantled by 2023.

The Together: Building a United Community strategy failed to meet its target, and despite small steps



Belfast photographer Frankie Quinn

such as the opening of gates and the visual softening of some of the harsher-looking barriers, hopes have long faded for their removal.



Clockwise from top, the cover of new book Belfast Cordon Sanitaire; Townsend Street peaceline; houses in the shadow of a peace wall in the Glenbryn area of north Belfast; messages from tourists scrawled on a Belfast peace wall

In fact, Stormont's Department of Justice last year issued a tender worth around £450,000 for the upkeep of peace lines for the next few years.

Despite their dismal function, the walls are a tourist attraction for visitors to Belfast keen to see a legacy of the Troubles.

"In some cases, the peace lines provide a canvas for people to express themselves," Quinn said. "The wall at Cupar Way has countless signatures from visitors from all over the world who come to see it. They are a big draw for tourism. Perhaps in a future where they are no longer necessary, parts could remain for visitors, similar to the Berlin Wall."

"The late, great Belfast writer Ciaran Carson once wrote that the main interface between the Falls and

the Shankill was where the areas 'joined together as unhappy Siamese twins, one sporadically and mechanically beating the other around the head'.

"I feel we are a long way off having them taken down. In many cases it just isn't practical, such as where I'm from in the Short Strand. But there are others where I feel it is long past time for their removal, such as the absurd barrier still dividing Alexandra Park in north Belfast.

"The symbolism of removing a peace line in a public park would be a significant step forward, I feel."

Belfast Cordon Sanitaire was launched this week at the Artcetera Studio in Belfast's Rosemary Street, and Frankie Quinn will be signing copies of the book at an event in the venue tomorrow from 1pm.