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- **Published Date:** 25 May 2007
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Museum marks Free Derry victims - 'They were all human, they all had families'



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AN INNOVATIVE, groundbreaking display has just been added to The Museum of Free Derry's archive, gathering details of victims of the Free Derry years, both civilians and soldiers, together in one unique collection.

The fascinating display is unique in its equal treatment of the 53 victims of the conflict, all of whom are given a simple, poignant tribute. It begins with the death of Derry man Sammy Devenney in 1969.

Where possible, a photograph of each victim is used in the display.

Adrian Kerr, curator of The Museum of Free Derry, told the 'Journal': "Every single person who was killed in this area were all human. They all had families and they were all missed by their families.

"So whatever your views on the conflict itself, everyone who was killed here deserves equal recognition.

At the time they deserved equal investigation, but many didn't get that, so the very least we can do is make sure that everybody who lost their lives in this area during the conflict is recognised equally here in the museum," he said.

Among those included in the collection are 18-years-old William Jolliffe, the first soldier to die in Derry, and two young local children killed by British Army armoured vehicles who have never been officially recorded as victims of the Troubles.

It also includes 14-years-old Annette McGavigan, the 100th civilian victim to die in the Troubles, two soldiers whose wives were pregnant at the time of their deaths and the first two RUC officers killed in the Troubles.

Mr. Kerr went on: "These aren't just statistics. We tried to keep as much personal information about each of these people as possible, to illustrate the human costs of the conflict.

We've tried to get as many pictures as possible but unfortunately, as was the case with many of the soldiers involved, we just don't have access to their photographs and we don't have contact with any of their families."

However, Mr. Kerr revealed that the display is easily adaptable should new photographs be found and that new images can be uploaded within a few minutes.

The display is also expected to expand as the museum expands past 1972, and the collection could also be moved to a more prominent location in the museum and played continuously on a loop.

Mr. Kerr believes this new display will be of as much interest to local people as it would be to visitors to the city.

"People around here are fully aware of how local victims have been treated and the differences created in subsequent investigations of killings during the conflict.

"In fact, it's people from this very area who have suffered worst from it, so I think they'd appreciate the fact that all victims are treated equally in this new display.

"Local people never created these differences. The inequality came from outside, from the media and the British establishment.

"For that reason alone, I think local people would expect us to tell the story properly rather than try and

gloss over certain aspects of it," he added.

The Museum of Free Derry in the Bogside's Glenfada Park is open daily, Monday to Friday, 9.30am until 4.30pm (all year), and 1pm - 4pm on Saturday's and Sunday's.

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