



Newly collected objects and first-hand testimony put human stories at the heart of IWM's first exhibition about the Northern Ireland Troubles



Northern Ireland: Living with the Troubles 26 May 2023 – 7 January 2024

The Troubles engulfed Northern Ireland in conflict for nearly 30 years. It was – and remains – a contentious period, with roots going back centuries. A cease fire was signed in 1998, yet many aspects of the conflict remain unresolved to this day and are highly contested by those who experienced and participated in it.

Opening at IWM London, *Northern Ireland: Living with the Troubles* (26 May 2023 – 7 January 2024) will unpack this complex chapter of our shared history through the multiple perspectives of individuals affected by the conflict in Northern Ireland. Showcasing recently collected objects and new first-hand testimony, this free exhibition is Imperial War Museums (IWM)'s first on the subject and will shine a light on the different narratives that have allowed people who lived through the conflict to share their version of events.

While there are key events and defining moments that make up the history of the Troubles, there is often no single story that everyone involved can agree on. People have different perspectives on what took place. Rather than offer a narrative history of the conflict, this exhibition will introduce four themes – the night of 27-28 June 1970; the heightened violence of the 1970s and 1980s; the everyday experience for those affected by the Troubles; and the legacy of the conflict within Northern Ireland today – to explore the events, communities and paramilitary factions that underpin this difficult and complex 30-year period.

Visitors will hear from individuals on all sides of the conflict, from republican and loyalist paramilitaries to British soldiers, local police and ordinary civilians. These first-hand testimonies – recorded in 2022 for IWM's oral history collection – highlight what it was like to live through the Troubles. Recounting everyday scenes of violence and the reality of living among deeply divided communities, these different perspectives help us understand the nuances and challenges of this conflict and the motivations, attitudes, anxieties, hopes and fears felt by those closest to it.

The exhibition will also present new objects, never-before-displayed in the museum. Acquired as part of an initiative to grow IWM's Northern Ireland collection, they cover the familiar – rubber bullets, propaganda posters and a Good Friday Agreement booklet – as well as rarer items, for instance, a screen-printed handkerchief made by UVF paramilitaries in the Long Kesh internment camp.

Alongside these, archival photography depicting hunger strike riots, streets lined with Army

checkpoints and wreckages of bombings paint a vivid picture of a country shaped by restrictions and torn apart by violence.

Northern Ireland: Living with the Troubles is curated by **Craig Murray** (Senior Curator, Cold War and Late 20th Century) and has been developed in close collaboration with a broad range of individuals with lived experience of the conflict as well as an advisory panel of experts and historians.

Craig Murray, Curator of Northern Ireland: Living with the Troubles, says: “So much of what took place during the Troubles is contested. This complex conflict, which happened on our very own doorstep, is remembered differently by those who lived through it and little understood by many of those who didn’t. In this exhibition, we hear from individuals who experienced the conflict first-hand. Sharing their stories is crucial to deepening understanding of this difficult period which is still felt in life and UK politics today.”

Northern Ireland: Living with the Troubles opens at IWM London on 26 May 2023.

ENDS

For further press information and interview requests please contact:

Hannah Boulton, Communications Manager (Exhibitions and Programming), HBoulton@iwm.org.uk, 07966 626 241

Notes to editors

Northern Ireland: Living with the Troubles

26 May 2023 – 7 January 2024

Press View: Thursday 25 May 2023

Free exhibition

Image captions

L to R:

1. © IWM (CT 502) A mural on Rockland Street – Donegall Street in Belfast affiliated with the loyalist group the Red Hand Commando.
2. Photo by Rolls Press/Popperfoto via Getty Images. View of a hastily constructed barbed wire fence that runs across a terrace street to mark a dividing line between republican and neighboring loyalist areas of Belfast.
3. © IWM (CT 622) A soldier on patrol walks past IRA graffiti sprayed onto a wall in Newry, County Down.

IWM

www.iwm.org.uk

IWM (Imperial War Museums) tells the story of people who have lived, fought and died in conflicts involving Britain and the Commonwealth since the First World War.

Our unique collections, made up of the everyday and the exceptional, reveal stories of people, places, ideas and events. Using these, we tell vivid personal stories and create powerful physical experiences across our five museums that reflect the realities of war as both a destructive and creative force. We challenge people to look at conflict from different perspectives, enriching their understanding of the causes, course and consequences of war and its impact on people’s lives.

IWM’s five branches which attract over 2.5 million visitors each year are IWM London, IWM’s flagship branch that has recently transformed with new, permanent and free Second World War and The Holocaust Galleries; **IWM North**, housed in an iconic award-winning building designed by Daniel Libeskind; **IWM Duxford**, a world renowned aviation museum and Britain’s best preserved wartime airfield; **Churchill War Rooms**, housed in Churchill’s secret headquarters below Whitehall; and the Second World War cruiser **HMS Belfast**.

IWM London

IWM London tells the stories of those whose lives have been shaped by war through the depth, breadth and impact of our Galleries, displays and events. Explore the [First World War Galleries](#) and iconic Atrium; extensive new [Second World War](#) and [The Holocaust Galleries](#); discover stories of bravery in [The Lord Ashcroft Gallery: Extraordinary Heroes](#) or take in our latest major temporary exhibitions.

Open Monday to Sunday: 10am – 6pm. Also open bank holidays. Closed 24 - 26 December.
Free admission. IWM London, Lambeth Road, London, SE1 6HZ T: 020 7416 5000 iwm.org.uk /
[@I_W_M](#) / www.facebook.com/iwm.london