

TARTAN GANGS, SUBCULTURAL VIOLENCE AND LOYALIST PARAMILITARISM IN WORKING CLASS BELFAST, 1971 – 1974

This article seeks to raise awareness of youth culture and subcultural violence in the early years of Northern Ireland's 'Troubles' with specific emphasis on the Protestant working class in Belfast during the period 1971 – 1974. By appealing for a better understanding of the origins, impetuses and geographies of the historically under-researched 'Tartan' phenomenon in loyalist areas the article sheds light on the manner in which subcultural violence and working class conflict paved the way for young men to join the loyalist paramilitary groupings the Ulster Volunteer Force and the Red Hand Commando which came to prominence during this period.

Keywords: subcultural violence, youth gangs, tartans, protestant working class, ulster volunteer force, red hand commando, vanguard, teddy boys, belfast

1971: Sowing the seeds of a Protestant backlash

1971 was to be a cataclysmic year for Northern Ireland in general and the Protestant working class community in particular. Two months early in 1971, February and March, brought about events that caused an increased bitterness in working class loyalist areas. In February Robert Curtis, a soldier in the 32nd Heavy Regiment of the Royal Artillery was shot dead by an IRA sniper during a gun battle in the New Lodge area of North Belfast.¹ It was another even the kidnap and execution of three young soldiers from the Royal Highland Fusiliers – brothers John and Joseph McCaig and Dougald McCaughey - that caused the first major rupture in the overflowing levee of Protestant feeling. A *Belfast Telegraph* editorial commented: 'After all the horrors of recent weeks and months, Ulster people have almost lost the capacity for feeling shock. But the ruthless murder of three defenceless young soldiers has cut to the quick. These were cold-blooded executions for purely political reasons.'²

The killings led to a march by Belfast's shipyard workers on Friday March 12 that was designed to highlight the desire for the re-introduction of internment for IRA members. Further evidence of the intense feeling within Protestant areas is highlighted by a further quote from the *Belfast Telegraph's* coverage of various rallies that took place in Belfast on the day of the soldiers' funerals in Scotland: 'The Belfast marchers walked in silent lines, many weeping openly. They came from the Shankill, Crumlin Road, Oldpark, Donegall Road and York Street areas...They were joined by hundreds of workers from the city's big industrial firms. They cheered when the Rev. Ian Paisley walked forward through the crowds of weeping men and women to lead the wreath-laying.'³ Leading the workers, according to Boulton was 'King' Billy Hull, described as the 'unofficial mayor of the Shankill' and convenor of engineering union shop stewards in the engine shop at Harland and Wolff. Hull had been a former member of the Northern Ireland Labour Party but by 1969 had formed the Workers Committee for the Defence of the Constitution.⁴ News-sheets which were sympathetic to militant republicanism printed black propaganda in the months following the killings of the three soldiers in an attempt to agitate an already sensitive atmosphere in Belfast. Some went so far as to blame the UVF for the assassinations. Writing for the Dublin publication *Hibernia* Proinsias Mac Aonghusa stated,

Scotland Yard detectives have reported to the British Government that the Ulster Volunteer Force ordered and carried out the killing of the three Scottish soldiers. In fact, the three men who actually did the killing are former members of the Ulster Special Constabulary and their names are known to an increasing number of people. They were helped by two ladies who, apparently, lured the soldiers to their death. The fact that no arrests have taken place is not without interest.⁵

Such misinformation was designed to breed uncertainty within the Protestant community generally and was more specifically aimed at discrediting the UVF which at the time was in a state of flux. Although the years 1969 and 1970 bore witness to loyalist violence there was a feeling within Belfast's Protestant working class that the UVF had all but disappeared with

the arrest of Gusty Spence, Hugh McClean, Robert Williamson, William Millar and George McCullough for their roles in the killing of Catholic barman Peter Ward on Sunday June 26 1966. The shooting, which occurred outside the Malvern Arms in the 'Hammer' district of the Shankill Road, appeared to be part of a mendacious plot to undermine the credibility of Prime Minister Terence O'Neill's Stormont leadership.⁶ O'Neill's ecumenism and modern approach to industry had alienated extreme elements within Northern Ireland's Protestant community and the events of 1966 appeared to be a self-fulfilling prophecy of tragic proportions on the part of those opposed to 'go-ahead' Ulster.⁷ In 1969 a UVF member, Thomas McDowell, died at the hands of a bomb he was attempting to plant in a power station at Ballyshannon, Co. Donegal. At the end of June 1970 armed loyalists returned fire on the Provisional IRA in Belfast's Short Strand area in what became known as the 'Battle of St. Matthews'.⁸ The sense of frustration that was demonstrated in the early months of 1971 increased in working class Protestant areas in the period prior to the summer. Indeed, a month after the Protestant workers march, three hundred Protestant women – with arms linked and Union Jacks flying – marched up the Newtownards Road in East Belfast chanting 'UVF! UVF! UVF!', along streets which were daubed with anti-Catholic slogans, smashed paving stones and shattered glass; the result of two days of fierce rioting which had occurred in the area after IRA gunmen had opened fire on a crowd of people returning from an Orange parade.⁹

Not all frustrations felt among the Protestant working class in 1971 were vented toward the Catholic community and the security forces. Some intracommunal frictions were symbolic of the general sense of decline which was being experienced in communities. The Shankill area, once described by Gusty Spence as the 'heart of the Empire'¹⁰, was at a particularly low ebb due to badly-planned urban redevelopment which had torn apart community and kinship networks in the Lower Shankill.¹¹ At the end of April, the *News*

Letter reported that ‘Shankill gang war is new threat to Belfast peace’, stating that a group of traders in the area had come together to complain to police about the lawlessness which was becoming rife, particularly after dark. The traders had threatened to withhold their rates in protest at police inaction on the matter. While the police admitted that the gangs – the ‘rats’ and the ‘tartan’ – existed, they reiterated that no formal complaint had been made against them nor had they broken any laws. The *News Letter* further reported that the two gangs used derelict houses in Malvern Street in the Lower Shankill as headquarters.¹² An angry resident stated that the gangs were young hooligans who fought pitched battles amongst themselves:

Last week I saw members of the two gangs fighting in a vicious and cruel manner. They used belts and knuckle-dusters and I saw one young boy knocked to the ground and about three other youths started kicking him in the face. Just then a couple of men arrived on the scene and went to the boy’s aid. When they asked him who was responsible he refused to answer. From what I can gather they have a code of silence and you must not squeal.¹³

The gangs did direct their attentions toward the Catholic community during 1971 and during that year newspapers often carried small stories about young Catholics, particularly in North Belfast, who had been apprehended by gangs of young loyalists. Often these altercations had a sinister edge best illustrated by a case in May on the Duncairn Gardens in North Belfast. A gang of loyalist youths apprehended two Catholic schoolboys making their way to St. Patrick’s secondary school and carved the letters ‘UVF’ on their arms.¹⁴ The victims of the attack described being held on a bus by five ‘Blue Boys’ wearing denim as it approached the school. Three stops further along they were forced off and brought to the Cave Hill overlooking the city where they had ‘UVF’ carved into their arms with broken glass and pins.¹⁵ Such ‘low-level’ attacks were becoming commonplace in a city which was being further redrawn along sectarian lines due to intimidation and population movements. The most interesting aspect of this particular episode was the description of denim outfits being worn by the pupils’ assailants, as well as the incising of ‘UVF’ onto the skin by the attackers. The consternation caused by these as yet undefinable ‘Blue Boys’ was such that in

a parliamentary debate in July 1971 the MP for East Tyrone Austin Currie asked the following of the Minister of Home Affairs, John Taylor:

...whether any investigation has been made into the aims and organisation of groups of young men dressed in blue denims who have been observed at Orange demonstrations attempting to behave as if they were members of a quasi-military organisation; and whether any action is contemplated under the Civil Authorities (Special Powers) Acts (No. 2) Regulations 1971.¹⁶

In response Taylor stated:

Within the past few weeks a number of parades have taken place in Belfast. These parades have on occasion attracted onlookers and unofficial participants and amongst these have been a number of youths wearing a variety of blue denim clothing. In many cases these hangers-on are ill-disciplined and their presence has been condemned by responsible Orange leaders. It is not believed, however, that they have been attempting to behave as if they were members of a quasi-military organisation and it is not considered necessary to take any action under the Civil Authorities (Special Powers) Acts (No. 2) Regulations 1971.¹⁷

Currie, evidently vexed by the vagueness of Taylor's response further challenged the Minister, asking him what the difference was between the republican marchers in tunics and black berets and the banks of blue denim-clad young men who had been behaving roughly while marshalling recent Orange marches. Johnny McQuade, MP for Woodvale, somewhat disingenuously stated that the difference was that '...hurley sticks are carried by those in the uniform with the black beret. Scores of people wear blue denims even at work, never mind parades. The question is both stupid and silly.'¹⁸ Unionists in the house were keen to deny that there was anything sinister in the activities of the young men described by Currie, with Rev. Ian Paisley who had won the Bannside by-election the year previously,¹⁹ supporting his future party colleague McQuade by stating:

Would the Minister not agree that this question is simply a red herring drawn in by the hon. Member for East Tyrone (Mr. Currie), that there is no such organisation and that many people wear this type of dress? This is to call the attention of the people away from terrorist Republicans and to try to insinuate that these young men are out for subversive activities.²⁰

Paisley may have been adamant that the 'Blue Boys' were not indulging in subversive activities or seeking out violent confrontations with Catholics, and there is a sense that in light of the St. Matthews confrontations of June 1970 and the attacks on Orange marches in East Belfast in the spring of 1971 the young men involved felt that they were providing protection to marchers passing through interfaces; however the concerns of Currie regarding the perception of a 'quasi-military' organisation would prove to be dismally prescient of more malevolent developments among elements of Belfast's Protestant working class youth in the early 1970s.

The need to investigate the effect of the upheaval of these early years of the conflict on the young people in the city was imperative, and in January 1970 the Orangefield Boys' School head teacher John Malone was seconded from his position to investigate the contribution that schools might make to improve community relations. Much of his research was carried out in the crucial years 1971-72 and the report which followed was entitled 'Schools Project in Community Relations'. Many of the observations made by Malone reflected the gradual decline in morale of Northern Irish society in general and among young people in particular. Malone pointed out that the most general and widespread effect of the Troubles had been the 'growth and strengthening of peer sub-cultures within society and within the schools', further noting that the young people involved '...have gained greatly both from the implicit support or recognition coming from adults in the local community and from the more general erosion of conventions which said that authority is to be respected, physical violence abhorred, and all human life viewed as sacred.'²¹

The UVF was largely inactive during 1971, hamstrung as it was by the incarceration of Gusty Spence. Although Korean War veteran Samuel 'Bo' McClelland was Chief of Staff between Spence's imprisonment and his own eventual internment in 1973 there was little in the way of a proper organisation during this time. The UVF had at this stage infiltrated Tara

which was a shadowy and voraciously anti-Communist ginger group led by William McGrath. McGrath would eventually be charged and imprisoned for sexual offences as part of the Kincora Boys' Home scandal of the early 1980s²² and it is clear that the UVF was using Tara in the early 1970s in order to train members, gather intelligence and gain access to any available weaponry. To young loyalists who were unaware of these secret machinations there was a sense that the UVF had all but disappeared. As the levels of PIRA violence rose in 1970-71 so did the anger and frustration among young working class Protestant males in particular. A young Billy Hutchinson remembers telling men on the Shankill who approached him in 1972 that the UVF to him and other young men was 'just writing on the wall.'²³ The young men in denim would, for the time being, be the most visible and pro-active defenders of the Protestant working class communities of Greater Belfast.

The Tartans: cultural expressions, fashion and fighting

By late 1971 it was becoming increasingly apparent that the gangs of young men who had been debated in the press and the Stormont Parliament in the spring and summer of that year had begun to grow exponentially in many loyalist areas of Belfast. The denim uniform which was so eye-catching to people such as Currie was now widely complimented by tartan scarves, with different Scottish clan patterns denoting the geographical areas from which the gangs emerged.

There has never been universal agreement on how the Tartans adopted the Scottish imagery, but it would be reasonable to assume that there was an amalgamation of reasons. In an article for *The Times* in May 1972 Robert Fisk stated that the gangs had originated on the Shankill ten years previously when a group of youths adopted the tartan motif as a symbol of their Scottish Protestant ancestry.²⁴ Although the 'tartan' gangs did start on the Shankill it is highly unlikely that the gangs would have existed in that form – denims, Tartan scarves – in

the early 1960s. At this stage the Belfast 'hardman' would still have worn a fairly traditional modest suit and for younger men the Teddy Boy heyday was still in full swing, although approaching its decline.

The late 1950s had witnessed a massive clampdown on the 'Teds' by the authorities on Belfast with one example from 1958 proving particularly illuminating of the power of subcultural violence in Belfast's post-war working class. In September 1958 two Catholic youths were approached by a gang of 'Teds' on the Crumlin Road, between the Shankill and Ardoyne districts. The Teds, in this case most of whom were from the Shankill area, gave the two youths a severe beating having inquired whether they were Catholics or Protestants. During the melee that followed a B-Special had to disperse the crowd by firing three shots from his revolver into the air. In the event the nine youths were charged at Belfast Summons Court with disorderly behaviour and assault, while twenty-one other Teds were convicted of various other charges which occurred in the city and fined, bound over or sent to prison or training school.²⁵

Comments made at the trial by the Resident Magistrate J.H. Campbell were to prove prescient of the future Tartan problem when perceptions very quickly changed, and their youthful exuberance began to be viewed as something much more mendacious. Campbell said of the Teddy Boy problem:

A few years ago Teddyboyism was a social joke; they were regarded as stupid and harmless yahoos who could only find self-expression in wearing drainpipe trousers and a bootlace for a tie. This has all changed. I have come to the conclusion that Teddyboyism is a dangerous cult, backed up by studded belts, bicycle chains and the knife. It is time these gregarious cowards learned that they have had their day.²⁶

The Teddy Boy gangs, particularly those from Protestant working class areas, would have been reflective of similar gangs in the UK. Many of the Teds from the Shankill who were involved in the case above were most likely supporters of Rangers as is the norm in loyalist areas of Belfast. At this time Rangers fans would have viewed themselves as the backbone of

support for the Scottish national team, and the Lion Rampant was keenly waved alongside the Union Jack at matches by Rangers fans in the 1950s-60s.²⁷ This undoubtedly trickled down to supporters in Belfast who travelled to matches regularly and would have reinforced the Scottish ancestral links that Fisk mentioned. In this respect the ‘Tartan’ influence would have been strong in youth gangs in the 1950s-60s through football scarves and flags and a proud sense of Ulster-Scottishness would have been embraced before the Ulster flag became the dominant symbol of loyalism in the early 1970s.

Despite the gangs having existed prior to March 1971 in certain pockets of Belfast it was their proliferation that gained momentum over the spring and summer of 1971 after the murder of the three Royal Highland Fusiliers mentioned previously. Along with the Rangers link this was another powerful evocation of the Ulster Protestant link with Scotland. For many in Scotland the murder of the three young soldiers was an early indicator of the brutal reality of the Northern Ireland conflict; the episode highlighting the vastly different nature of the religious divide in the West of Scotland and Northern Ireland.

By the end of 1971 ‘Tartan gangs’ were an important and visually powerful feature of daily life in Belfast. Robert Niblock, a former Red Hand Commando life prisoner and member of the East Belfast Woodstock Tartan, describes how the gangs evolved organically in reaction to the upheaval in society at the time. As a fifteen year old in 1970 Niblock was in a street gang in East Belfast’s Willowfield area. The gang was called ‘Young Hatans’, but their identity would change in tandem with the increasingly violent security situation in Northern Ireland in 1971-72. While the Protestant Teds of late 1950s Belfast had the relative abstract of an IRA Border Campaign to trouble their minds the gangs which became the Tartans in Belfast during the early 1970s often found themselves at the ‘coal-face’ of the emerging conflict. Niblock describes how the changing atmosphere affected the structure and image of the street gang he was in at the time:

I think the Tartan movement as a whole, not just the individual gangs, ended up being political in regard to what was going on around us at that time. I neither formed nor joined a Tartan gang. I merged into one from another gang (Young Hatans). The only difference in both was the wearing of scarves and of course how we were known. The name (Woodstock Tartan) was easily chosen as it identified geographically where we came from - Young Hatans didn't.²⁸

Like various youth gangs in the UK and Ireland such as the aforementioned 'Teds' the Tartans provide an important avenue by which to investigate what young people in working class communities were doing during distinct periods in history. Although Northern Ireland in the early 1970s was considered to a 'place apart' from the rest of the UK much of the rituals and cultural references associated with the Tartans were reminiscent of other gangs in industrial cities such as Glasgow, Dundee, Edinburgh, Liverpool and Manchester. Niblock remembers the importance of fashion to the Tartans:

The uniform for the Tartan gangs all over Northern Ireland was of course Wranglers. Prior to this young people – teenagers - would have worn a cheaper version, Wagoners, or a hideous pair of jeans called Sea Dogs - made by Lybro, complete with bell bottoms of course. But to be in the Tartan you had to have Wrangler jackets and jeans. At one stage some youths took to bleaching them but it looked cool when they were naturally washed out. Many people had a couple of complete sets - one was for special occasions. Shirts tended to be checked Ben Shermans and we all had a variety of colours.²⁹

When in confrontations with Catholics or planning pre-arranged fights with rival Tartans the Woodstock, much like an army, were concerned with what their uniform would be:

On some occasions an instruction was given - say if we were going to a special fight with a rival gang - that everyone should wear a black Ben Sherman check shirt. Boots of course were very important - not just for fighting but for looks. The high legged Doc Martens - oxblood - complimented the washed out jeans but not everyone wore Doc Martens. Some wore steel toe cap boots from their place of work.³⁰ Others preferred Oxford boots - or dealer³¹ boots. Some liked steel tips on them that clicked when you walked - others preferred the spongy soles that made it easier to run.³²

On special occasions, such as weekends the outfit changed again:

On Sundays we sometimes dressed differently. If we didn't wear Wranglers we tended to wear Sta'prest trousers. They were very stylish and went well with a Harrington jacket and Oxford shoes or brogues - and they were made by Levi's which then was a notch up from Wrangler in the designer stakes. Black sleeveless pullovers were permitted if we weren't wearing jackets

and latterly Crombies became part of our more formal attire. Belts varied but were important for looks and defence. Many retained the BB³³ belt from their time in the Brigade but others opted for studded belts that could be bought in the many shops around Smithfield.³⁴

Niblock's observations are important due to the manner in which they demonstrate the different 'uniforms' of the Tartan according to the situation that they found themselves in. The 'Sunday outfit' and the Oxford Shoes in particular demonstrate the importance which was placed in being presentable. This was perhaps an unconscious nod to the Sabbatarian Protestantism³⁵ which many of the young men would have been familiar with having grown up in a Belfast where leisure was frowned upon on a Sunday and swings were even locked up in children's playgrounds.³⁶

The tartan scarf was the coup-de-grace of the young mens' uniform and was the reason why the denim gangs eventually became better known as the 'Tartans'. For Niblock and the Woodstock Tartan the chosen colour and clan was:

White - Stewart Tartan, one yard long...four inches wide and worn like a cravat; unless you tied it from your left wrist...right handers anyway. This was usually the practice when confronting another gang. For the Crombies or suit coats when we sometimes wore them a small cutting of same Tartan was left poking out of the top pocket.³⁷

Despite their violent reputation there were sometimes reminders in the press that the Tartans were very young men with similar traits and teenage difficulties as other boys their age. In May 1972 the *Sunday News* printed a story claiming that army discos at Ladas Drive and Sunnyside Street in South-East Belfast had been admitting girls under the age of seventeen, with some as young as thirteen. Youth leaders, concerned at these developments, claimed that the teenage girls '...often get a lot to drink in the discos, are sent home in taxis, and are too hung over or tired to go to school the next morning.'³⁸ Responding in the letters page of the same newspaper a fortnight later 'R&L' who describe themselves as seventeen year old girls who had attended the discos stated that:

...Irish boys act like children so we will treat them like children. They run about in Tartan gangs. A girl wants, when she goes out with a fellow, to enjoy herself, not to get beaten up. Secondly, they don't know how to treat a girl. All they think about is fighting for their Tartan. That is why we claim Irish boys are children. They can't take a girl out on their own. They have to have their gang behind them.³⁹

Similar to their counterparts in the rest of the UK, the young men who joined the Tartans were obsessive about pop and rock music and T-Rex in particular would become an anthemic force in the Tartan subculture.

By the summer of 1971 Niblock, then a sixteen year old, was working for a coachbuilders company in Belfast. Despite Northern Ireland's growing reputation as being an alien society young people maintained a keen interest in popular culture and Niblock recalls being as eager as anyone in Liverpool, Glasgow or Manchester to get a first listen to the new single by T-Rex. This often meant going to extraordinary lengths while encumbered by the strict routine of the working day:

I remember in early July 1971, I think it was the Johnny Walker show - which I listened to a lot - advertised for a couple of days that they would be playing the new T.Rex single exclusively the next day. Rather than miss it I sat in a cubicle in the toilets with my feet up - tiny transistor held against my ear until it came on. 'Get It On', despite what John Peel said about and his refusal to play it on his show became the seminal song of the Seventies and in my opinion the anthem for the Woodstock Tartan.⁴⁰

During the peace process which led to the Belfast Agreement of 1998 Eddie Kinner was a prominent member of the Progressive Unionist Party⁴¹ negotiating team. In 1975 he was jailed at the Secretary of State's Pleasure for his part in the UVF/YCV bombing of Conway's bar on the outskirts of North Belfast. Two years previously, in 1973, he had been an active member of the Shankill Young Tartan – a large composite of smaller Tartan gangs in the Shankill Road area which came together in order to fight at discos and various venues with other gangs. Across the River Lagan from East Belfast and the Woodstock the Shankill Young Tartan adopted the traditional Stewart Royal clan design and Kinner recalls that, like

the Woodstock Tartan, a T-Rex song was adopted as the gang's anthem. For the Shankill this was 'Children of the Revolution' (1972) and the lyrics were adapted to 'We are the children of the Shankill Tartan'.⁴²

Although T-Rex proved to be extremely popular in terms of providing raucous anthems for the Tartans, the musical tastes of gang members were varied and reflective of most young men of their age during the early 1970s. Often bands were chosen because of their image, with Slade being particular popular owing to their traditional working class skinhead image at the time. Rod Stewart is also often held up as a hero of the Tartans. In the artwork for Stewart's solo album *Gasoline Alley* (1970) he adorned a tartan scarf, while a year later while promoting the Faces' *A Nod Is As Good As a Wink...to a Blind Horse* (1971) the same tartan imagery was ever-present in his stage outfits. Stewart's reputation was further enhanced among the young men of Belfast's Protestant working class due to his love of Rangers FC. In 1978 Stewart was photographed in a Rangers strip posing with the legendary club captain John Grieg⁴³ who had lifted the European Cup Winners Cup for the side in Barcelona in 1972. Although these days Stewart declares himself to be a fan of Rangers' cross-city rivals Glasgow Celtic, in the early 1970s he was known in loyalist areas as 'Rod the Prod'. Niblock explains how music and fashion dovetailed in the bands that gained the admiration of the Woodstock Tartan:

In a large group there were many different tastes in music...The obvious choices were The Stones even if Jagger had taken to wearing a dress!! Free, Deep Purple, Black Sabbath, Chicago etc: Rod Stewart became hugely popular overnight - not only was he a great artist but he had a swagger...bit of a lad - and he wore Tartan. Some artists were liked for their style just as much as their music. Everyone wanted hair like Marc Bolan - or to wear the Levi's, white t-shirts and braces like early Slade. Bowie for the most part was a little too esoteric for a gang who were building a reputation as vicious fighters.⁴⁴

The Tartans and the ‘men behind the ire’*

Although the Tartans were a largely self-governing force in the areas in which they existed there were figures inside both the emerging paramilitaries and forces of loyalist political opposition that took a keen interest in their activities. William Mitchell, a young recruit to the YCV during the era of the Ulster Workers’ Council strike of May 1974, has dismissed the thesis of older paramilitary godfathers preying on the naivety of young, vulnerable teenagers.⁴⁵ Despite this there were men such as William Craig, former Stormont Minister of Home Affairs during the Civil Rights era, who saw the potential of the Tartan gangs in terms of providing a large-scale and threatening visual presence during political rallies. Ulster Vanguard, formed by Craig in February 1972 as a protest against the pro-Faulkner wing of the Unionist Party, staged massive opposition rallies during that year. Vanguard was similar to the right-wing Falangist movements and parties of 1930s Spain with Craig often entering the rallies in an open-top touring car which was flanked by motorcycle outriders.

These events were also reminiscent of the kind of demonstrations organised by Lord Edward Carson and his Unionist followers during the early part of the twentieth-century. In a further nod to Carson Vanguard would stage a large march and rally in England (London – Hyde Park) in April 1972; this being similar in sentiment to the anti-Home Rule protests staged in areas such as Liverpool and Tyneside during 1912-13.⁴⁶ One rally in particular which attracted between 60-80,000 loyalists was held on 18 March 1972 in Belfast’s Ormeau Park and could be considered the visual apex of Protestant discontentment at the political and security situation in Northern Ireland. Vanguard rallies were often malevolent, menacing affairs full of foreboding political rhetoric.

At the Ormeau Park rally Craig stated that ‘There can be no compromise or concession to the enemy that assails our province today. We must build up the dossiers on the men and

* ‘The Men Behind the Ire’ is the title of a poem by Robert Niblock

women who are a menace to this country because one day, ladies and gentlemen, if the politicians fail it may be our job to liquidate the enemy.’⁴⁷ In the crowd, and marshalling the speakers at Ormeau Park, were the Tartans - coming from all across Belfast to hear the latest loyalist messiah. In the *Sunday News* the following day a reporter described the intoxicating atmosphere at the rally as being like ‘...the Twelfth, a family reunion the football match of the year, all rolled into one.’⁴⁸ The report further stated that

Small knots of Tartan gangs clustered here and there, resplendent in their tartan scarves, bleach-faded denims and big boots.

“I came to show I’ll be shoulder to shoulder all the way,” said one lad of 14. “Not another inch.” The boys around him echoed his pledge.

“I came here because my friends came,” said a boy of about 10 with startling candour.⁴⁹

On the Monday following the rally the *Belfast Telegraph* reported that one group of youths lined up carrying a banner which read “Shankill Battalion” and another “Shankill Tartan”.⁵⁰ Niblock’s abiding memories of the ‘Ormeau Rally’ as it has become known is that it occurred on his seventeenth birthday: ‘There was a huge crowd – it was right beside where we lived. The crowds were like a football match.’⁵¹

At the outset Craig’s Vanguard movement was dismissed by the Northern Ireland Prime Minister and former Unionist Party colleague Brian Faulkner as a ‘comic opera’⁵² but by the end of 1972 with his talk of ‘liquidating the enemy’ at Ormeau Park and courtship of the Tartans Craig’s behaviour was beginning to be talked about with grave concern at Cabinet meetings. During a speech to the right-wing Monday Club at the House of Commons in October 1972 in which he boasted of being able to mobilise 80,000 men in opposition to British policy Craig stated that the men under his charge ‘...are prepared to shoot and shoot to kill. Let us put bluff aside. I am prepared to kill and those behind me have my full support.’⁵³ The following week a confidential annex to a Cabinet Office discussion on Northern Ireland stated that there were ‘grounds for considerable concern about the effect on Protestant extremist opinions of recent public statement by Mr Craig, the leader of the

Vanguard Movement including his recent inflammatory speech in London to the Monday Club.’⁵⁴ Indeed the annex further continued by stating that ‘Urgent consideration was being given to further steps to counter the activities of the Tartan gangs and other extremist groups whose violent behaviour received additional encouragement from such utterances.’⁵⁵ The Tartans, who were increasingly viewed as defenders of their communities back in Belfast, were by the end of what was a most tumultuous year beginning to worry some of the most powerful people in the UK.

During the late 1960s John McKeague became an important figure in the emerging culture of militant loyalism. Born in Bushmills, County Antrim, in 1930 he moved to East Belfast in 1968 and became involved with the Willowfield branch of the Ulster Protestant Volunteers.⁵⁶ The UPV was a semi-paramilitary force which alongside Ian Paisley agitated and counter-demonstrated against a number of Civil Rights marches in 1968-9.⁵⁷ In 1969-70 McKeague was chairman of the newly-formed Shankill Defence Association and was named as a key malcontent during the Scarman Tribunal of Inquiry into Violence and Civil Disturbances in Northern Ireland in 1969; particularly in relation to the burning of Bombay Street off the Falls Road.⁵⁸ McKeague’s life has become mythologised due to conflicting interpretations of his social, political, militant and sexual intentions. Rumours abound that he was a British agent from the early 1970s⁵⁹ and that he was involved, with McGrath, in the Kincora affair.

McKeague’s rumoured paedophilic behaviour has made for some sensational accounts – none more so than one written by the journalist Martin Dillon who has stated that ‘By 1971, he [McKeague] was recruiting young thugs to carry out violence and they became known as Tartan gangs. They operated in West Belfast and in the east of the city where McKeague lived off and on with his mother and published a newsletter.’⁶⁰ While the latter observation about the newsletter is true and important, the former – that McKeague actually recruited for and ran Tartan gangs – is a careless generalisation based largely on his peripatetic reputation

within the loyalist subculture at the time. It is obvious that McKeague did largely support the activities of the Tartans and was to find their aggression useful when setting up and recruiting for the paramilitary Red Hand Commando in 1972. Indeed the newsletter that Dillon has mentioned, *Loyalist News*, was to prove important in promoting the Tartans' violent reputation. *Loyalist News* was one of many news-sheets that were being published in Belfast during the early 1970s in an attempt to relay information and propaganda within working class communities. Produced by McKeague at his own printing press in a stationery shop below his flat on the Albertbridge Road in East Belfast, *Loyalist News* was full of bawdy anti-Catholic, anti-Communist and anti-Republican cartoons and rhetoric. Most importantly however it acted as a direct mouthpiece for McKeague and his ambitions. The newsletter was sold in loyalist areas by young working class Protestants – many of them Tartans.

Throughout 1971-2 *Loyalist News* carried constant references to the Tartans and the pages provide a fascinating insight into the manner in which the gangs were perceived and admired by militants such as McKeague. McKeague's public behaviour had become increasingly militaristic as the 1970s dawned and in June of 1971 he became the first man to be charged under the Incitement to Hatred Act after publishing a 'Loyalist Song Book' which included references to murdering Catholics⁶¹. McKeague might have justifiably felt vexed at becoming what he termed a 'guinea pig'⁶² as a year later Craig would escape the clutches of the same law, despite a Cabinet Office meeting declaring on the back of Craig's Monday Club speech that 'It was obviously objectionable that individuals who were clearly guilty of public incitement to violence should escape the legal consequences of their speech...'⁶³

Undeterred by this temporary setback McKeague continued to publish violent rhetoric from his printing press. A *Loyalist News* 'Jokes, Cartoons, Songs' special from 1972 contained the following verses in a poem entitled 'Back-Lash' written by McKeague:

Now all us Prods are getting real sick,

Of all this shooting by I.R.A. mick.
His methods, his funerals, his dealings in arms,
His capers in Stormont, his real Fenian yarns...

...The Short Strand will be so easy to do,
The Woodstock Tartan can take care of you.
The Markets will have no reason to crow,
Cause you will be faced by the Old Sandy Row...

...So take this as a warning your day will come,
We've taken enough from you 'rebel' scum.
For using the gun the bomb and the knife,
One day your payment, shall be with your life.⁶⁴

In late 1971 *Loyalist News* had appealed to the Protestant youth gangs, stating 'It has come to our notice that a number of gangs are roaming certain estates. It is high time that these Protestant youths caught themselves on.....in the not too distant future all your energy will be needed to fight for your country. We ask you all.....to stop these activities.'⁶⁵ Over the final weekend of April 1972 the Tartans in East Belfast were involved in serious street disorder, looting and confrontations with the police and army. It was alleged that the trouble started on the Thursday evening – 27 April - when Catholic youths from the Short Strand entered the Woodstock Road and began throwing stones, leading to a vicious clash with local Tartans.⁶⁶ The *News Letter* reported that the violence which then occurred over the weekend was the worst witnessed since the introduction of Direct Rule the previous month. Sporadic shots were said to have been fired in several parts of the city on the evening of 30 April, but the paper stated that the worst violence was between the rioting Tartan gangs and the police.

The following Saturday the latest edition of *Loyalist News* ran a front page article on the previous weekend's events with the headline 'Tartan' accompanied by a crude pencil drawing of a young man giving a 'Red Hand' salute wearing rolled up denim trousers, denim jacket, 'bovver' boots and a Tartan scarf. The article provided McKeague's own evaluation of the disturbances and what they meant for loyalists. Criticising the perceived heavy-handedness of the security forces the article stated that 'On Saturday night last, East Belfast once again

exposed the police and military for what they really are: The hired thugs of Westminster.⁶⁷ Reserving particular ire for the Conservative Secretary of State, the first since Stormont's proroguing, the article continued: 'I was a witness...to the callous, deliberate attempt of [William] Whitelaw's Jackboot administration to suppress the Loyalists of East Belfast, an attempt spearheaded by baton swinging Police backed by a heavy force of Military in case East Belfast's young Tartan stalwarts exchanged their bottles and stones for guns and bullets.'⁶⁸ The rabble-rousing in *Loyalist News* spoke to tangible fears among working class loyalists. By May 1972 there was a sense that Northern Ireland was on the brink of all-out civil war.⁶⁹ McKeague's apparent rhetoric about killing Catholics, previously couched in rhymes and limericks, would from 1972 onwards become a grim reality. Having parted ways with the Shankill Defence Association McKeague was hatching plans for another enterprise – one which would be much more violent and to which many of the Tartans would eventually gravitate – the Red Hand Commando.

Teachers in Belfast during this period faced an uphill struggle to quell the influence of figures such as McKeague and Craig as well as the associated 'peer subcultures' and 'political rallies' observed by John Malone in his report mentioned previously.⁷⁰ Schools which were in working class loyalist areas were particularly badly affected by the turmoil which was beginning to envelop young men. David Smyth, a former UVF prisoner who was a young pupil in Park Parade Secondary School on the Ravenhill Road in East Belfast in the early 1970s remembers during mathematics class one day witnessing the UDA parading along the road outside the school. While the teacher was out of the class the majority of the boys climbed out the window and crossed the playground to join the parade.⁷¹

Henry Sinnerton a teacher and first year counsellor under John Malone at Orangefield - also in East Belfast - recalls the manner in which pupils' behaviours were changing in 1971-3: 'I noticed that there were youngsters who were coming in [to school] late. Youngsters

who you could perfectly rely on – who were going to be prefects when they were older weren't handing in home-works...you'd see them walking about maybe with [their arm in] a sling or hobbling.'⁷² Sinnerton states that these occurrences which 'raised his antenna' were, to him, akin to a 'rash coming out' in the school.⁷³ Noticing that pupils were less and less inclined to move round the school in currents, Sinnerton observed 'little knots of people standing about...they'd be people from the same year who maybe weren't talking to one another, which I found strange. Then I noticed that that group might have their cuff bent up the sleeve of their jacket, or their tie would be away off to one side or something'⁷⁴...these guys were subdividing themselves into little groups within their Tartan gang.'⁷⁵

If the teachers in schools where Tartans attended found discipline and order increasingly difficult to maintain, many of the civic institutions in Protestant working class areas of Belfast found themselves on the brink of collapse. In April 1972 Robert Fisk suggested to readers of *The Times* that Willowfield Youth Club, near the Ravenhill and Woodstock Roads, had about a hundred Tartans in its membership with the chairman of the club - Norman Black – declaring that the police had not taken enough interest in the local youths.⁷⁶ Willowfield and any other youth clubs in areas where Tartans were popular would have struggled to operate in the same manner of such enterprises before the early 1970s. Black stated that the Tartans associated with Willowfield 'help to paint the club and keep it in order [and] help any Protestants who have been intimidated out of their homes.'⁷⁷ By the end of 1972 those in charge of Willowfield Youth Club had given up any pretence of having a grip on the activities of young men in the area. The club leader's end of year report in November 1972 which was carried in *Willowfield Community News* demonstrated a growing cognisance of the situation which seemed to be underlined by a tragic hope that the conflict would soon be over:

The growing situation at the moment has kept most of our boy members away from the club, and I only hope that they will return to us shortly, as we have various activities organised – boxing, Judo, keep fit, to mention a few. Our snack bar is progressing rapidly and by the time of this printing, we should be in full operation.

We have purchased a 22” colour TV and at present the attending members are really enjoying it!⁷⁸

Many of the young men who had become involved in the Tartans would in all likelihood never have stepped inside Willowfield Youth Club again – a trend that was emerging all over Belfast. Despite the best efforts of the teachers to contain these subcultures in schools the viciousness of many of the Tartans, aligned with the ongoing deterioration of the security situation in 1972, meant that many of the young men involved in gang warfare were on a path which would in many cases lead to loyalist paramilitarism and ultimately imprisonment or death.

Getting real: the Tartans turn into the loyalist paramilitaries – individual biographical experiences

There was a certain inevitability that owing to the prevailing circumstances in Northern Ireland many of the young men involved in the Tartans were bound to ‘graduate’ from casual or recreational violence to far more serious activities; specifically in the form of loyalist paramilitarism. The factors behind this process depended on a range of variables including the geographical location of the Tartan gang, the prevalence of loyalist paramilitaries (or emerging forces) in neighbourhoods, the degree of an individual’s involvement in a gang and individual/group reactions to certain events. This section highlights a sample of biographical narratives in which respondents who joined the UVF or RHC in the early 1970s explain the circumstances which saw them move from the Tartan into loyalist paramilitarism.

David Smyth who came from the Donegall Pass area and was a member of the Pass Tartan has described Park Parade Secondary School which he attended after primary school as ‘working-class...loyalist...poor’.⁷⁹ While many of Smyth’s friends who would have been in the Pass Tartan along with him left school at sixteen, he achieved a scholarship and went on

to Annadale Grammar School. Despite attending a more middle-class school from the age of sixteen the die had already been cast for Smyth. Having been involved in the Pass Tartan from a young age, many of the prevalent militant attitudes of the time were reinforced in the classrooms of Park Parade and by the friends he had made there. The riots which were occurring regularly on the streets of Belfast in the early 1970s were regarded by young Tartans as opportunities to lock horns with the army and police, but also on a more basic level to expend energy brought about by boredom. It was this type of activity through the Tartan that provided Smyth with the opportunity to join the loyalist paramilitaries. Recalling a friend at school approaching him, he states that he was asked whether he wanted to ‘do something a bit more?’⁸⁰ Although membership of the Tartan and a junior paramilitary grouping such as the YCV were not officially incompatible, Smyth’s own experience is one of a very subtle shift in emphasis to secrecy once a young man was sworn in: ‘As soon as you went into the organisation...all sort of explicit activities would have been dropped. You dropped the badges, you dropped the tartan dress, you dropped going out and being the yahoo...you certainly didn’t go up entries drinking.’⁸¹

In an interview with the journalist Peter Taylor for the book and documentary television series *Loyalists* (1999) Eddie Kinner recalled travelling to school with a haversack inscribed with the acronyms ‘SYT, YCV, UVF’. When asked by Taylor what these initials stood for Kinner stated, ‘Shankill Young Tartan, Young Citizen Volunteers and Ulster Volunteer Force. I think that was the route I travelled.’⁸² Kinner had been a ‘string-carrier’ for the Old Boyne Island Heroes Orange Lodge on the Shankill in the 1960s. Living on the interface between the Shankill and Falls Road he remembers as an eleven year old watching the violence which erupted in the area in 1969. He vividly recalls standing at the corner of Dover Street in October of that tumultuous year, watching tracer bullets fly past the spot where he

stood as loyalists traded shots with the police and army after the introduction of the Hunt Report.⁸³

By 1973 the intracommunal conflicts that some members found themselves engaged in took on an even harder edge. Fights with the Ulster Bootboys – a junior wing of the recently formed Ulster Defence Association – meant that street conflicts between Protestant youth gangs were by this stage in danger of becoming mini paramilitary feuds. For Kinner it was one of these altercations, resulting in him receiving a severe beating which led to hospitalisation, which led him to join the YCV. During a disco in the Alliance Avenue area in late 1973 there was a fight between two Tartans from Agnes Street in the Shankill and some of the Ulster Bootboys in which the latter came off the worse. The Agnes Street Tartans were also YCV members while the two Bootboys were in the UDA. The next week UDA members from the Highfield and Glencairn estates at the top of the Shankill laid an ambush for the Shankill Tartans on their return from the Alliance. Although Kinner was unharmed during the revenge attack he was later apprehended while by himself on his walk home:

At that stage I lived in Highfield...as I crossed the Ballygo⁸⁴ fifty of these fuckers jumped out of the corner of Lower Glencairn and I heard one of them shout, "There's one of them!"...they were bating each other to bate me. I crawled through a hedge of a garden and [one of them] told me to 'either stay out of Highfield or stay off the Shankill'...I crawled up and made my way home with a broken nose, black eyes – face unrecognisable.⁸⁵

Even at this early stage of the Troubles there was little love lost between the UVF and the UDA. Kinner had strong family connections with the UVF and the day after he received the beating, while in hospital, there was a heated summit meeting between the organisation and the UDA in the Greater Shankill area:

The UVF and the UDA had a big 'pow-wow' in the Highfield Rangers⁸⁶ over what had taken place, and it got hot and heavy...it could have potentially led to a feud...Andy Tyrie was involved and the UVF from the Shankill were involved. Two of my uncles were there [Norman and Raymond Kinner] as were the Military Commander and a Provost Marshal. It wasn't long after that I was invited into the YCV. At that kind of time that's the way you got into the UVF – you were approached and asked to join it so I had interpreted it as I had been selected...but

looking back it's the result of my uncles' involvement...that they better get me in and under the protection of the UVF properly. They couldn't come down hard on the UDA but once I was a member [of the YCV] they could have responded a wee bit more vicious.⁸⁷

Early in 1974 Kinner was approached a leading figure in the YCV, at one of the discos in Alliance Avenue and asked to join 'an organisation'. The YCV leader told Kinner that the organisation was illegal and that if he was keen to join he had to attend a meeting at a house on a certain date. The secrecy surrounding the encounter led Kinner to believe that it wasn't the UDA, which as an organisation was much more public and lackadaisical about security; and in the event Kinner joined the YCV.⁸⁸ Just over a year later he would be arrested and jailed for murder.⁸⁹ Kinner qualified his part in the UVF bombing of Conway's bar by stating 'I didn't particularly care [if it was just a Catholic bar]...My attitude was that they are inflicting that on my community. They [Catholics] harbour IRA men that were carrying that out in my community. They didn't expel IRA men from their community that attacked my community. I think, in terms of how I felt then, it didn't matter [that the vast majority of Catholics didn't support the IRA.]⁹⁰

After a republican bomb attack on the Raven Bar in the Lower Woodstock Road area in May 1971 the attentions of the local community in that part of East Belfast turned to the Tartans. Despite defence very much being the imperative in Protestant communities, this violent encroachment by republicans from the nearby Short Strand area bore witness to much anger among locals, particularly those from the older generation. The attack occurred on the weekend of the Scottish Cup Final in which Celtic beat Rangers, meaning that many of the Tartans from the Woodstock area and beyond were in Glasgow. Niblock was in Belfast and remembers that after the attack in which a few older people were injured:

A meeting was called for during the week, and the older ones who would have been the defenders of the area⁹¹ lambasted the Tartan by saying 'You's let us down...Where were you's when we needed you's...You're mean to be protectin' this area... You should bow your head in shame'. That was the first night most of the Tartan had seen a gun because one of the older

guys – a very old guy – pulled a gun out and said ‘You’s need these...stones are no good for you’s!’ That was, to me, the turning point – May 1971.⁹²

In traditional working class communities where respect and deference was shown to adults this was a shift in emphasis and previously understood social roles. Young men who were still expected to call neighbours ‘Mister’ or ‘Missus’ were now being told by some of these adults that they should be using guns to defend their areas. Niblock is adamant that without the Tartans a paramilitary organisation such as the Red Hand Commando could not have been formed and existed in the manner in which it would: ‘I believe though that an organisation like the Red Hand Commando wouldn’t have been born if there had been no Tartan gangs at the same time. Many Tartan members also became Young Militants within the UDA but this was two years later. Some Tartan merged into the UVF but the Red Hand [Commando] was—in 1972—virtually formed from the ranks of the Tartan.’⁹³

Conclusions

The emergence of the ‘second wave’ of loyalist paramilitarism in 1971-74 was deeply reflective of the social and political mood of Belfast’s Protestant working class at the time. Hennessey has correctly stated that the ‘Protestant backlash’ actually emerged before 1972⁹⁴ and it was in the violent reputations and actions of the young Tartans that this backlash found a fresh nest bed. By 1972-73 many of the young men involved in the gangs had either drifted off into domestic life or, as in the case of the Woodstock Tartan, merged into a paramilitary grouping such as the RHC.

While there has been no absolute consensus on how the Tartans adopted the term for their gangs it has been the aim of this article to outline the various social and cultural factors which were important in forming and propagating a subcultural identity among young men in Belfast’s Protestant working class communities which often found an expression in casual

violence. What emerges is a hidden history of the violent 1970s in Northern Ireland. Much has been written about loyalist paramilitaries with very few accounts penetrating combatants' biographical narratives. The Tartan phenomenon is crucial in providing a better understanding of the normal working class adolescent experiences which many Protestant youths in Belfast shared with their counterparts in other UK cities with similar socio-economic compositions.

The increase in republican violence and the threat of the proroguing of the Stormont Government in 1971-72 created a menacing atmosphere in which the aggression of frustrated young men found an outlet in serious street disorder, intracommunal policing and eventually paramilitarism. Historical accounts of the Troubles have failed to highlight the strong power and influence of subcultural groupings and violence in Northern Ireland – a negligence which this article has attempted to rectify by raising awareness of the Tartans and also the earlier Teddy Boys whose existence in Belfast has been largely ignored as well. The Teds as forebears of the Tartans were, like the young men of the early 1970s, very much products of the industrial societies from which they emerged; both in Belfast and the rest of the UK. Richard Hoggart disdainfully wrote about a group of northern English Teds in 1957, stating 'these are...the directionless and tamed helots of a machine-minding class.'⁹⁵

The Tartan phenomenon with the recurring references to T-Rex and the Faces, football and early 1970s youth fashion is at once vastly similar but wildly different to the gangs that existed – and continue to exist in new post-modern forms – in London, Glasgow, Dundee, Manchester to name but a few UK cities. An article in *Time* magazine which was published in May 1972 demonstrates that there were those who appreciated the lineage and importance of deviant gang culture in Belfast's working class and the manner in which the then prevailing mood in Northern Ireland contributed to the psyche of the Tartans: 'In another era, the Tartan gangs would be written off as adolescents bored with the drabness of back-

street Belfast, much like Teddy Boys of London in the mid-Fifties. But Ulster's political chaos has turned them into defenders of the faith who have the tacit approval of many adult Protestants.'⁹⁶ The story of the Tartans is demonstrative of the decline in society in Northern Ireland during the early 1970s. Whereas similar youth gangs in the rest of the UK would have been dismissed or discouraged by parents, the Tartans found themselves promoted to positions of authority at a very young age. Despite the severe violence in Northern Ireland from 1971-74 the Tartans provoked a similar reaction in the local - and often national - press as the Mods & Rockers in England during the 1960s.⁹⁷

By properly understanding the Tartans' role in the street disorder of the early 1970s and, in many cases, the loyalist paramilitarism which emerged at this time a better comprehension of the nature of much loyalist violence in the brutal context of the 1970s can be drawn. While Gusty Spence has become the historical face of the UVF it is worth remembering that when he was convicted of murder in 1966 he was already thirty-three years old.

In the 1970s a new younger generation of loyalist paramilitary appeared, many of whom had been toughened by their experiences in the Tartans.⁹⁸

Notes

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- ¹ D. McKittrick et al, *Lost Lives*, 64.
- ² Boulton, *The UVF*, 70.
- ³ Ibid. 71.
- ⁴ Ibid.137.
- ⁵ *Hibernia*, April 16 1971.
- ⁶ J. Greer, 'The Paisleyites: from protest movement to electoral breakthrough'
- ⁷ J. Hill, *Cinema and Northern Ireland – Film, Culture and Politics*. 149.
- ⁸ P. Taylor, *Loyalists*
- ⁹ P. Bew and G. Gillespie, *Northern Ireland: A Chronology of the Troubles*, 34.
- ¹⁰ Spence
- ¹¹ See Wiener, *The Rape and Plunder of the Shankill Road*
- ¹² *News Letter* April 27 1971.
- ¹³ Ibid.
- ¹⁴ *The Irish News* May 14 1971.
- ¹⁵ Ibid.
- ¹⁶ Stormont Official Report c.453-454, July 6 1971.
- ¹⁷ Ibid. c.454.
- ¹⁸ Ibid. c.454.
- ¹⁹ G. Walker, 'The Ulster Unionist Party and the Bannside by-election 1970'
- ²⁰ Ibid. c.456
- ²¹ J. Malone, 'Schools project in community relations', 3.
- ²² See C. Moore, *Kincora*.
- ²³ Author interview with Billy Hutchinson, June 2013.
- ²⁴ *The Times*, May 1 1972.
- ²⁵ *Northern Whig*, October 28 1958.
- ²⁶ Ibid.
- ²⁷ G. Walker, 'There's not a team like the Glasgow Rangers ': football and religious identity in Scotland, 146.
- ²⁸ Author interview with Robert Niblock, July 9 2013.
- ²⁹ Ibid.
- ³⁰ These boots would have been worn by workers in the Belfast shipyard.
- ³¹ Chelsea-style slip-on boots.
- ³² Author interview with Robert Niblock, July 9 2013.
- ³³ Boys' Brigade
- ³⁴ Author interview with Robert Niblock, July 9 2013.
- ³⁵ Orr, *New Loyalties*
- ³⁶ See Edwards, *A history of the Northern Ireland Labour Party*, 93-97.
- ³⁷ Ibid.
- ³⁸ *Sunday News*, May 7 1972.
- ³⁹ *Sunday News*, May 21 1972.
- ⁴⁰ Author interview with Robert Niblock, July 9 2013.
- ⁴¹ A small but significant socially left-wing loyalist political party with close links to the UVF and RHC.
- ⁴² Author interview with Eddie Kinner, August 20 2013.
- ⁴³ Stewart sat on Grieg's Testimonial Committee in 1978 but did not turn up to play in the testimonial match.
- ⁴⁴ Author interview with Robert Niblock, July 9 2013.
- ⁴⁵ Author interview with William Mitchell, July 5 2013.
- ⁴⁶ Jackson and MacRaill, 'The Conserving Crowd: Mass Unionist Demonstrations in Liverpool and Tyneside, 1912-13'
- ⁴⁷ Speech by William Craig, Ulster Vanguard leader at rally in Ormeau Park, March 18 1972.
- ⁴⁸ *Sunday News*, March 19 1972.
- ⁴⁹ Ibid.
- ⁵⁰ *Belfast Telegraph*, March 20 1972.
- ⁵¹ Author interview with Robert Niblock, November 6 2013
- ⁵² G. Walker, *A history of the Ulster Unionist Party*, 195.
- ⁵³ *Fortnight*, 20 October 1972
- ⁵⁴ NA, CAB/128/48
- ⁵⁵ NA, CAB/128/48
- ⁵⁶ E. Moloney and Pollak, A. *Paisley*, 159.

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- ⁵⁷ S. Elliott and Flackes, W.D, *Northern Ireland: A Political Directory*, 485-6.
- ⁵⁸ Boulton, *The UVF*, 121-2.
- ⁵⁹ H. McDonald and Holland, J. *INLA: Deadly Divisions*, 242.
- ⁶⁰ M. Dillon, *The Trigger Men*, 109.
- ⁶¹ *Orange-Loyalist Songs*, 1971
- ⁶² *Loyalist News*, June 1971
- ⁶³ NA, CAB/128/48
- ⁶⁴ *Loyalist News – Jokes, Cartoons, Songs*, 1972
- ⁶⁵ *Loyalist News*, 18 September 1971.
- ⁶⁶ *News Letter*, 26 April 1972
- ⁶⁷ *Loyalist News*, 6 May 1972
- ⁶⁸ *Ibid.*
- ⁶⁹ Interview with unidentified Woodstock Tartan member, '24 Hours' – BBC Television, May 1972
- ⁷⁰ J. Malone, 'Schools Project in Community Relations'
- ⁷¹ Author interview with David Smyth, September 26 2013.
- ⁷² Author interview with Henry Sinnerton, September 19 2013.
- ⁷³ *Ibid.*
- ⁷⁴ See D. Morris, *The Soccer Tribe* – in reference to the culture of football supporters in the 1970s, Morris includes paintings by psychologist Peter Marsh denoting the costume language of the soccer fan representing the 'subtle differences in clothing [that] altered the 'personality' of the wearer – making him appear harder or softer and more loyal or less loyal.', 250.
- ⁷⁵ *Ibid.*
- ⁷⁶ *The Times*, May 1 1972
- ⁷⁷ *Ibid.*
- ⁷⁸ PRONI, CREL/5/3/39
- ⁷⁹ Author interview with David Smyth, September 26 2013
- ⁸⁰ Author interview with David Smyth, September 26 2013
- ⁸¹ Author interview with David Smyth, September 26 2013
- ⁸² Taylor, *Loyalists*, 81.
- ⁸³ Author interview with Eddie Kinner, August 20 2013.
- ⁸⁴ Ballygomartin Road – road connecting the Upper Shankill/Woodvale area with Highfield and Glencairn estates.
- ⁸⁵ Author interview with Eddie Kinner, August 20 2013.
- ⁸⁶ Famous loyalist social club in the Highfield estate which is named in homage to Rangers F.C.
- ⁸⁷ Author interview with Eddie Kinner, August 20 2013.
- ⁸⁸ Author interview with Eddie Kinner, August 20 2013.
- ⁸⁹ Taylor, *Loyalists*, 144-45.
- ⁹⁰ *Ibid.* 144.
- ⁹¹ The older men from the Woodstock Defence Association which emerged during the trouble in August 1969.
- ⁹² Author interview with Robert Niblock, November 6 2013.
- ⁹³ Author interview with Robert Niblock, July 9 2013.
- ⁹⁴ Hennessy, *The Evolution of the Troubles*
- ⁹⁵ R. Hoggart, *The Uses of Literacy*
- ⁹⁶ 'Teddy Boys with Tartan', *Time*, May 29 1972.
- ⁹⁷ S. Cohen , *Folk Devils and Moral Panics*
- ⁹⁸ William Mitchell, a former YCV/UVF prisoner, completed a Ph.D. at the University of Ulster in 2012. The thesis sought to determine the factors which contributed to young men from law-abiding families proceeding to commit murder as members of the YCV/UVF/RHC. In his thesis he states 'Of the 14 participants, all were from Belfast and were arrested for political murders in 1974 and 1975. The youngest was 17 and the oldest was 21 with an average age of 18 ½ years old. Both parents of all 14 were alive with all of their fathers in full-time employment and 11 of their mothers being employed full or part-time. Two were married and living at home with their wives, 10 lived at home with both parents and 2 lived at home with their mothers. All had at least one sibling with the exception of 1 who was an only child. Twelve of the 14 were employed, 1 was unemployed and 1 was a student. With the exception of 1, none had been previously arrested for a non-scheduled offence.'