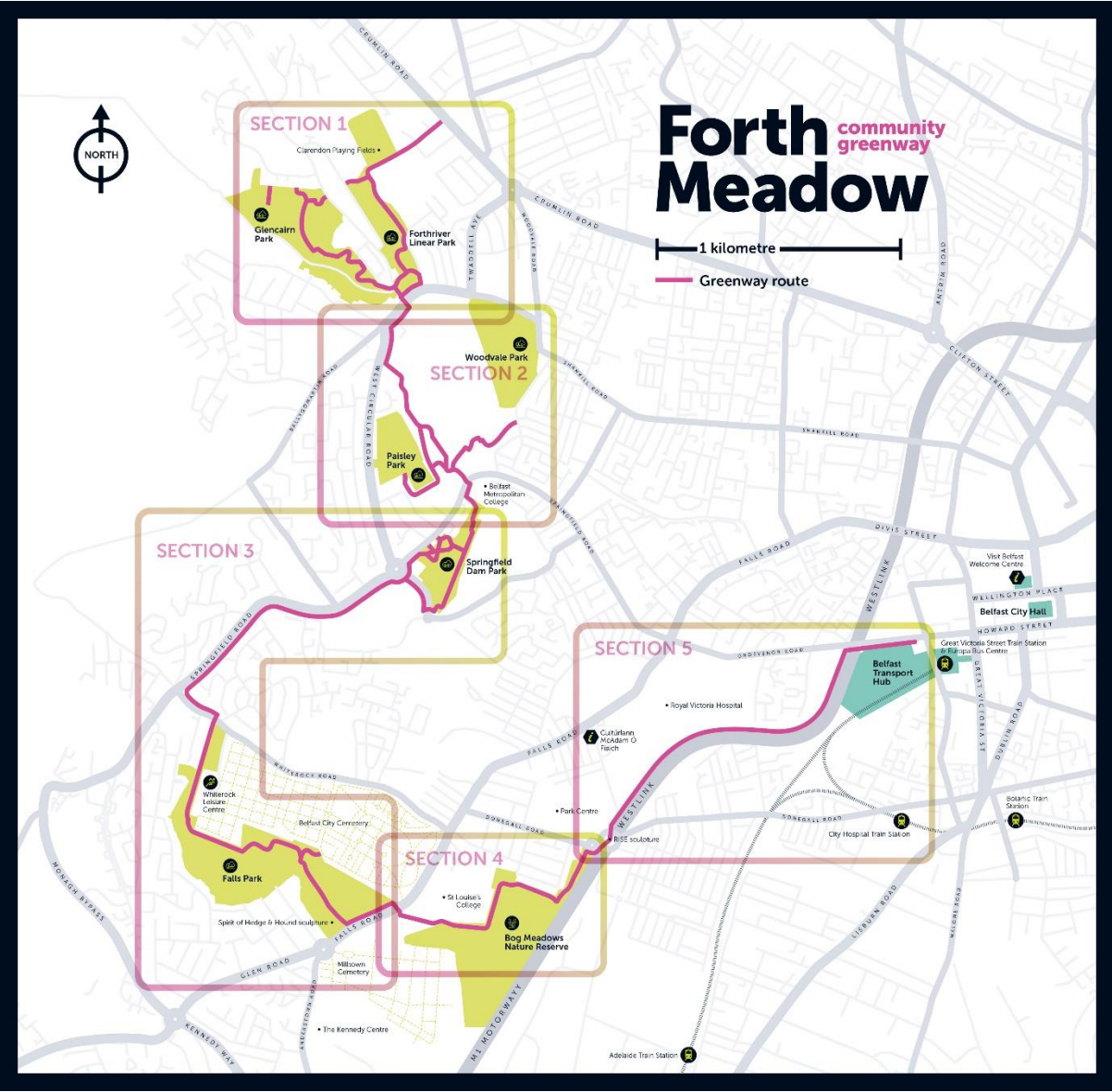


# DRAFT NARRATIVES



## **Section Two (inc. Springfield Dam)**

Springvale / Springfield Dam / Springfield  
Road

## # 1

### **GUNNING FOR VICTORY**

#### **Location: Paisley Park**

Paisley Park was opened as a sport ground in 1947 and very quickly became associated with sporting achievement and hosting social events every weekend for local people.

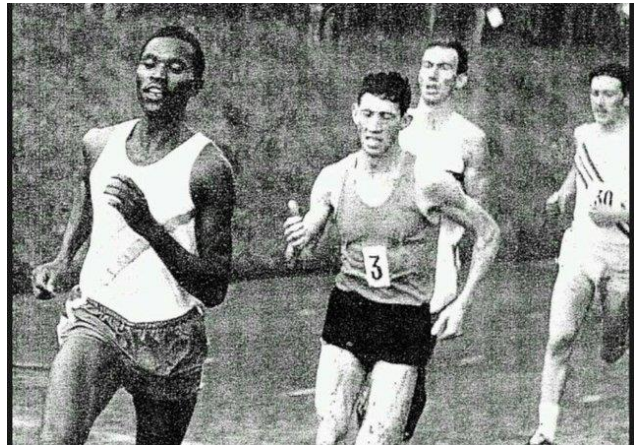
Teams from football, boxing, bowling and athletics competed all over the world. Boxer Wayne McCollough started at the Albert Foundry Boxing Club and soon won world titles.

Albert Foundry was the name most associated with the Park, originating from an old Mackie's foundry site. Albert Foundry Football Club is still based in the Park with a fine refurbished football ground as its base.

## # 2

### **Did You Know – Sub 4-minute mile**

The Kenyan Commonwealth and future Olympic champion, Kip Keino, made history in 1967 by being the first person to run a sub-four minute mile in Northern Ireland. He was followed home in second place by local runner, Derek Graham, who also managed to get inside the magic mark.



## # 3

### **BULLETS AND BULLETINS**

#### **Location: near Ballygomartin Presbyterian Church**

Before this building was a place of worship, anti-aircraft guns were located here, to defend against ~~the~~ German Air-raids.

Whilst church attendance has dramatically reduced, for many in the area this was historically their social, sporting and 'courting' club, as well as a spiritual home. *If you wanted to know what was happening in the area, you went to church....* Said one local.

*I remember the milk floats with snow chains on the wheels in the winter on the West Circular,* said another.

Later during the Troubles the army was billeted close by in Blackmountain Primary School. *They used to show us films on a Friday afternoon,* said one local, *and we would use the army doctor instead of our own GP.*

## **# 4**

### **SMALL MARGINS**

Two of Northern Ireland world renown athletes trained at Paisley Park.

Dame Mary Peters won gold at the 1972 Munich Olympics – the only gold medal won by Britain in the whole Olympics that year. Later in 1972 she won the BBC Sports Personality of the Year award. The BBC award said "The pentathlon competition was decided on the final event, the 200m, and Peters claimed the title by one-tenth of a second."

She represented Northern Ireland at every Commonwealth Games between 1958 and 1974. In these games she won two gold medals for the pentathlon, plus a gold and silver medal for the shot put.

In 1975 she established the Mary Peters trust to help young athletes from Northern Ireland. She was awarded a CBE and in 2017 made a Dame.

Mike Bull won silver (1966) and gold (1970) medals at the Commonwealth Games and went on to set up his own gym in Belfast that trained many more athletes

### **Did You Know**

Paisley Park was the place to be on a Saturday night for locals in the 1970s. the night club was buzzin with queues sometimes stretching on to the West Circular Road.

## **# 5**

### **SMELLS of SUCCESS**

#### **Location**

Monarch Laundry

The smell of the washing and soap powder

The Brickworks – and the bricks that were used to build the dry-dock for the Titanic came from this Brickworks

## # 6

### COUNTING SHEEP

Whiterock Orange Hall was built in 1957 and opened in 1958. The local Orange Lodge chose that site over another that was available to them – the Henry Taggart Memorial Church Hall.

The Orange Hall was built on a former site of the Belfast Corporation Department for Markets. The original building included a toll and weighing operation for farmers bringing their animals to a Market in Belfast. Some of the original walls are visible and an old weigh bridge is encased in the wall of the Orange Hall.

## # 7

### TURNING MIRRORS TO WINDOWS

#### Springfield Primary School

How does a Protestant Primary School on the predominantly Catholic Springfield Road go from 65 pupils in 2005 (and at risk of closure) to 180 pupils (and maximum capacity in 2021)? The answer appears to be a combination of inspirational leadership, dedicated staff team, holistic practice (mind, body, spirit) and a rare partnership between pupils, parents and staff. This is a school situated in an area of **separation** peace barriers, historical violence and sectarian division. And yet, because of its vision and heart, the school recently won Best Primary School (Families First NI Awards) & Most Caring Primary School UK (Education Awards).

This is a school of which Belfast can be proud.



#### Did You Know

Educationalist Sydney Harris said schools turn mirrors into windows for young people. Young people stop looking in a mirror back at the past or looking at themselves and what might go wrong. Instead, a good school helps them look through an open window, forward to see opportunity and a bright future with all sorts of possibilities.

**# 8**

## **CANARIES AND CATERPILLARS**

### **Location: Entrance to Dam at Springfield Road**

The Springfield Dam was surrounded by factories and mills in years gone by, most famously by Mackie's which was one of the most famous and largest employers in Belfast. There were other factories too and the area was a hub of activity as people came to and from their places of work.

**# 9**

### **Mackie's**

Mackie's employed thousands of Belfast people over the decades from the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century to the early 20<sup>th</sup> century in its 44-acre Albert Foundry, where Caterpillar is based now.

During the world wars Mackie's made munitions for the war effort. The women workers who handled the sulphur were often called Canary Girls because it turned their skin yellow and their hair green. Because things they touched could turn yellow, they were sometimes separated in the canteen at lunchtime.



You can see the Black Mountain which was where factory workers might go to escape German bombs being dropped on Belfast in 1942. So, bombs were being made to drop in inner city and industrial areas all over Europe; and the those who made them, here or in Germany, had little means to escape other than to take to the hills.

### **Did You Know?**

Isadore Avenue, near the Dam, was built by the owners of Mackie's to house the managers of their factories, virtually on site and on-call at all hours. The street is named after James Mackie's' two daughters, Isa and Dora. Do you think it was a Christmas present?



## # 10

### WHAT COLOUR TODAY?

#### Location: Entrance to the Dam at Springfield Road

The dye put into the Forth River coloured the river as it wound its way through Belfast, in and out of Springfield Dam.

One of the then kids who played in the Dam recalled that "*we didn't know what colour our clothes would be when we went home until we got into the Dam – that was part of the fun.*" Maybe not so much fun for their parents who had to wash them?

#### Did You Know

The Springfield Cotton Mill was the main user of water from the Dam, or Mill Pond as it was often called. The cotton mill was taken over by Scribbens Kemp biscuit factory, then became a storeroom for Mackie's. It was knocked down soon after Mackie's closed in 1999.



## # 11

### CRUMBS OF COMFORT

**Location: Southern end of Dam**

#### The Biscuit Factories

Some of the best-known biscuits made in Belfast came from this site like Custard Creams and Bon-Bon Creams. Factories like Scribber's Kemp and Mackie's employed hundreds of local people.

But it wasn't just the jobs they were famous for – and the owners didn't miss a trick. They sold all the biscuits that had broken in the factory in bags to passing pedestrians, broken up and random.



*Sure, said one Mackie's worker, they were a penny a bag and we didn't know what we'd get in them. I loved getting the broken up bon-bon creams. By the time I got in to work there wasn't much left.*

## # 12

### Did You Know?

Mother Theresa may have eaten some of the broken biscuits. She spent 18 months in Belfast arriving in 1971, based close by in Ballymurphy at Springhill Community Centre, where a shrine exists to her honour.

She won the Nobel Peace Prize a few years later in 1979. Was she thinking of the Dam when she said: " I alone cannot change the world, but I can cast a stone across the water to create many ripples"





## # 13

### ONCE...AND NOW

#### Location: Entrance to the Dam

#### Springfield Dam

There once was a time when children ice-skated here.

There was once a time when the water went on fire.

There was once a time the water froze, tragically.

There once was a time when a boy rowed from one side to the other in a tin bath.

There once was a time when feet paddled in the water changed colour as a result of dyes that flowed from a neighbouring factory.

There once was a time when fishing rods waited taut to be tugged on by fish.

There once was a time when people from different communities were drawn here, finding respite from the built-up urban space – that time is here again.



#### We walk #OnCommonGround



## # 14

### **HATCHET FIELD and HEROS or HEROINES**

The Troubles were a stressful time for people from all communities living in the area. The Dam became an interface with rival gangs contesting the space. Parents did what they could to keep their children safe and to make life as normal as possible.

Said one *"The heroes were the women – all the women who kept things going when the men were 'away'."*

Another local woman remembers trying to make life as normal for her children as possible: *"I remember wearing plastic sandals in the summer and having sore feet by the end of the day. We played in the Hatchet field, gathering frogspawn and collecting Bumble-bees in milk bottles – the buzz of them all captured. What a sound!"*

You can see Hatchet Field from Springfield Dam, high on the side of the mountain.

### **Did You Know**

Hatchet Field is named that because of its shape. You can make out the hatchet shape from here. But in 1753 a triple murder took place there when a farmer, William Cole, his daughter Elizabeth, and another woman called Mary Maguire were murdered – with a hatchet. The murderer was never caught but the bloody story hasn't been forgotten even today.

But what was the motive? Was it robbery as originally thought or jealousy as it has never been explained why Mary Maguire was in the house.

## # 15

### **CIRCLE OF BIRTH, WORK AND LIFE**

#### **Location: Views at Springfield Dam**

Springfield Dam offers magnificent views of the hills from where the water comes and the city of Belfast where the water is going.

In this picture you can see (need highlighted on a picture):

Castlereagh hills  
City Hospital  
Windsor Park  
Belfast shipyard  
The old Mackie's site



Royal Victoria Hospital  
Stormont  
Significant churches  
City and Milltown Cemeteries

Direction of the rest of the Greenway.

The rivers have been the lifeblood of Belfast flowing down from the hills to Belfast Lough, helping to create jobs and make the city what it is.

For many people, this view encapsulates the life story of many – can you see where you were born, worked, played and socialised, married, and the place you might end up in the end?

Opposite is Hatchet Field, high up on the Belfast Hills.

### **Did You Know?**

Springfield Dam was also known as the Mill Pond because it supplied water to Springfield Cotton Mill and other local bleach greens and mills.

### **# 16**

### **SPRINGFIELD WHEN WE WERE BOYS, Poem by local man R Close**

#### **Location: At Springfield Dam**

*I often think when we were boys  
We roamed about the hills  
We all lived in Springfield  
Aye near Springfield's Cotton Mills  
We were never out of mischief  
Since our early days began  
Of course we weren't so awful bad  
Our hearts were full of fun*

*All the lads are parted now  
And some are far away  
I now recall the worst of all  
Some lie neath foreign clay.  
It's hard to part from those we love  
We would rather they remain,  
But like little birds that cloud the sky  
We hope to meet again.*

*This Springfield Village that I mean  
That once so fair a spot,*

*Emptied all the best she had  
That lay on Mother's lap.  
Now there may be nicer scenery  
And I'm sure far higher hills  
Yet love ne'er forget that once fair sport  
Near Springfield Cotton Mills.*

R. Close

### **Did You Know**

In February 1917, during World War 1 Springfield Dam froze over, so harsh had been the winter. Three local boys who had been playing on the ice fell through and drowned. Two of the boys were brothers called Frazer and their father was granted compassionate leave from fighting in France to come back for their funeral.

### **# 17**

### **PEACE by PIECE**

#### **Location: East of Bridge at the Dam**

Mackie's was an important part of the visit to Belfast by President Bill Clinton in December 1995 as a stimulus to the embryonic peace process at the end of The Troubles. During the speech President Clinton said: *Here we lie along the peace line, the wall of steel and stone separating Protestant from Catholic. But today...you are bridging the divide, overcoming a legacy of discrimination where fair employment and integration are the watchwords of the future. On this shop floor men and women of both traditions are working together to achieve common goals. Peace, once a distant dream, is now making a difference in everyday life in this land...But most of all, America salutes all the people of Northern Ireland who have shown the world in concrete ways that here the will for peace is now stronger than the weapons of war.*



### **Did You Know:**

At its peak Mackie's employed over 6,000 people. Just four years after the visit of President Clinton, in 1999, it closed its doors for the last time. By then it employed just a few hundred people.

## # 18

### INTERDEPENDENCE FOR BETTER OR WORSE

The Henry Taggart Memorial Hall in Ballymurphy was part of the Presbyterian Church attended by many of the Protestant families living in Ballymurphy prior to riots and upheaval in 1970. The families and the Presbyterian Minister moved out, and the Memorial Hall, now unused, was taken over by the British Army as a temporary base in the area.



Around that time many families from Protestant and Catholic backgrounds felt the need to move out of other areas like Ballymurphy, Highfield and New Barnsley.

This demographic shift didn't just affect the families at the time and the make-up of the areas further segregating the city; it also affected trust between communities for generations to come. Belfast is still coming to terms with these events, and the violence experienced by communities over the next years.

The "peace wall" here is one of the consequences of that time – one million bricks used to construct a barrier between mainly Catholic and Protestant communities. Efforts continue, with some success, to take down the barriers based on rebuilding relations and rebuilding trust - a bit like when the old raths and ring forts were built then became redundant.

### Did You Know

Do you remember the two public houses near Springfield Dam that were used by people from all sides of the community before the Troubles? They were called the White Horse Pub, bombed in the early 1970s, and Divis Castle, burnt out in 1971.



## **Section 5 (West Link)**

Broadway Roundabout to New Transport Hub

## # 1

### THE CITY RISES

This is one of the lowest points in Belfast. The city rises up all around. The rivers streaming down from the hills created the conditions for the city to grow, prosper and diversify. The rivers finally gather, and often meet, in this low bog land.

It may be the end of the journey for the water that started on Black Mountain or in Glencairn where the Forth Meadow Community Greenway starts, that made the linen mills work, that emptied into Springfield Dam with such energy and at times with different colours from the linen mills, that then flowed on and through parks such as the Falls, before finishing here.

The rivers were also a source of fun. Near Bog Meadow, said one local, there used to be a river called the Blackwater. It got broader as you walked along. We used to play a game "jump the river". You jumped from one side to the other as you went up with the river getting wider every few yards. It was great fun...unless you were the loser and the first to fall in.

The city rose on the wealth of the linen and ship building industries. Around are the 21<sup>st</sup> century buildings that define Belfast –

### Did You Know?

In August 2008, the newly opened £104 million Westlink Broadway bypass flooded badly, submerged in 20 feet of water. One of the rivers, the Clowney, had overflowed despite all of the work that had been done. Many cars were abandoned and the Westlink closed for days. Managing powerful flood plains like this is constant challenge, even today.



## # 2

### **AN UNWANTED REMINDER**

Further along the Forth Meadow Community Greenway is the Royal Victoria Hospital where many people from the city were born and during their life treated for all sorts of ailments since it opened in

However, many babies were not so lucky. An estimated 11,000 new-born or infant babies were buried in land that was not consecrated and transferred to Ulster Wildlife to be part of the nature reserve. After investigations, the land was transferred back to Milltown cemetery in 2010 and was consecrated. A memorial to the babies was erected not long afterwards.

## # 3

### **THE RISE... AND RISE FURTHER**

RISE consists of two steel spheres, one inside the other. Standing at 37.5 metres tall, it is the biggest piece of public art in Belfast. RISE is known locally known as the Balls of the Falls. The design was commissioned to symbolise a new dawn for the city. The sculpture can be seen in the round from any angle, it welcomes views from all vistas and political and religious persuasions. The structural supports refer to the marshlands which previously grew here.

In a city where peace barriers often restrict the movement of people across areas and communities, the location of RISE in the middle of the Westlink is symbolic in many ways, of hope for a future without barriers.

The design shows that everything is connected, and that often the easiest way from one point to another is often the shortest.

In a city where peace barriers often restrict the movement of people across areas and communities, the location of The Rise in the middle of the Westlink is symbolic in many ways, of hope for a future without barriers.

Said one of the residents from the Village "The Westlink has separated us form the other side – all those cars, all that noise – it's the biggest peace barrier in Belfast"

During The Troubles people largely kept to their "own" areas, wary of what would happen if they crossed an interface. Said one local: "Outside our area we expected to be asked Who are you? Or Where are you from? You were always on your guard outside your own area. Always waiting to be asked, with our answers ready like passports!

## # 4

## **Roden Street Bridge and the RVH**

During the height of The Troubles, between 1981 and 1983, the Westlink was opened, a road designed to relieve congestion in the city centre, that had been in the planning since the early 1960s.

Originally planned as complete motorway circle around the city centre, only the western part was build – the Westlink. While it relieved city centre congestion, the Westlink also cut links that had previously existing between communities and with local services, such as the Royal Victoria Hospital.

With the Troubles and the construction of the Westlink, people on the other side of the bridge had fleeting and distant contact. Said one resident from the unionist side:

“I remember, years ago, when I lived in Tate’s Avenue roller-skating up to the bridge. I’ll never forget what I saw. I could see children – Catholic children my age – playing in the distance. They looked just like us. I’ll never forget seeing that.”

“We wouldn’t use the footbridge”, said another resident, “it isn’t safe to go to the other side and people wouldn’t feel safe coming here”.

### **# 5**

#### **DID YOU KNOW?**

The Royal Victoria Hospital started as early as 1797 and moved to the Grosvenor Road site in 1903. It is known for innovation. It was the first air-conditioned building in the world when opened, and while working at The Royal, Frank Pantridge invented the portable defibrillator which has saved thousands of lives worldwide since. During The Troubles the Hospital got a reputation as one of the best in the world.