

Banquet—a new mural by Rita Duffy



Commissioned by the Shankill Women's Centre to celebrate 100 years of International Women's Day, this modern work of art by one of Northern Ireland's leading artists Rita Duffy depicts a fellowship of women, many of them local to the Shankill Road or with family connections to the area. It portrays the various changing and fixed roles of women here over the last century and WSN's Outreach Officer Caroline McCord was one of 15 women posing for the mural; she can be seen brandishing an iron!

The image is mounted on the side of Harry Corry's Shop on the Shankill Road. It was formally unveiled on Friday March 11th by Marie Jones & Betty Carlisle MBE, Manager of Shankill Women's Centre.

What's in a name?

Belfast is known for its strong women but not many have received recognition over the years for their contribution to the life of the city. In seeking to redress the balance five street names throughout Belfast were changed to the names of five of the most iconic females to have carved their names in the city's history. The name change, which lasted for a week, was one of a series of initiatives to commemorate the 100th anniversary of International Women's Day.

Royal Avenue became Mary Anne McCracken Avenue to commemorate her work on women's equality and the education of the poor. The Lisburn Road was named after Belfast songbird Ruby Murray. For one week the Falls Road became Nora Connolly Road in recognition of the work in radical politics of the second daughter of James and Lillie Connolly. Meanwhile, the Newtownards Road was renamed The Sadie Menzies Road to commemorate a woman who became prominent in the Trade Union movement and a founding member of the Communist Party of Ireland. Duncairn Gardens in North Belfast recognised the work of prominent civil rights activist and feminist Madge Davison, whose sons were present when the sign was erected. The street names are now displayed in the women's centres in the relevant areas.

Bus Tour and Walking Tour: Women's Heritage in Belfast

On 9th March there was a Bus and Walking Tour to inform and celebrate women's heritage and contribution to the city. Participants had the opportunity to find out more about the activism women in Northern Ireland have been involved with in the last 100 years – organising working women's unions in the linen mills through to campaigning on the street for female suffrage. WSN Offices was the meeting point for the beginning of on the tour and the participants enjoyed a warming cuppa before moving onto the next stop!

