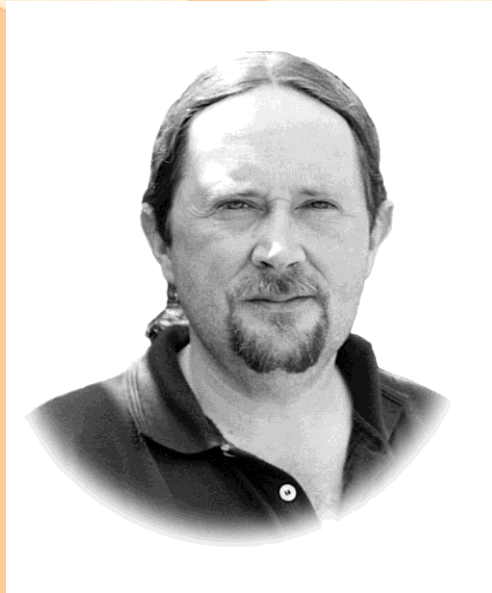


# THE BOGSIDE ARTISTS

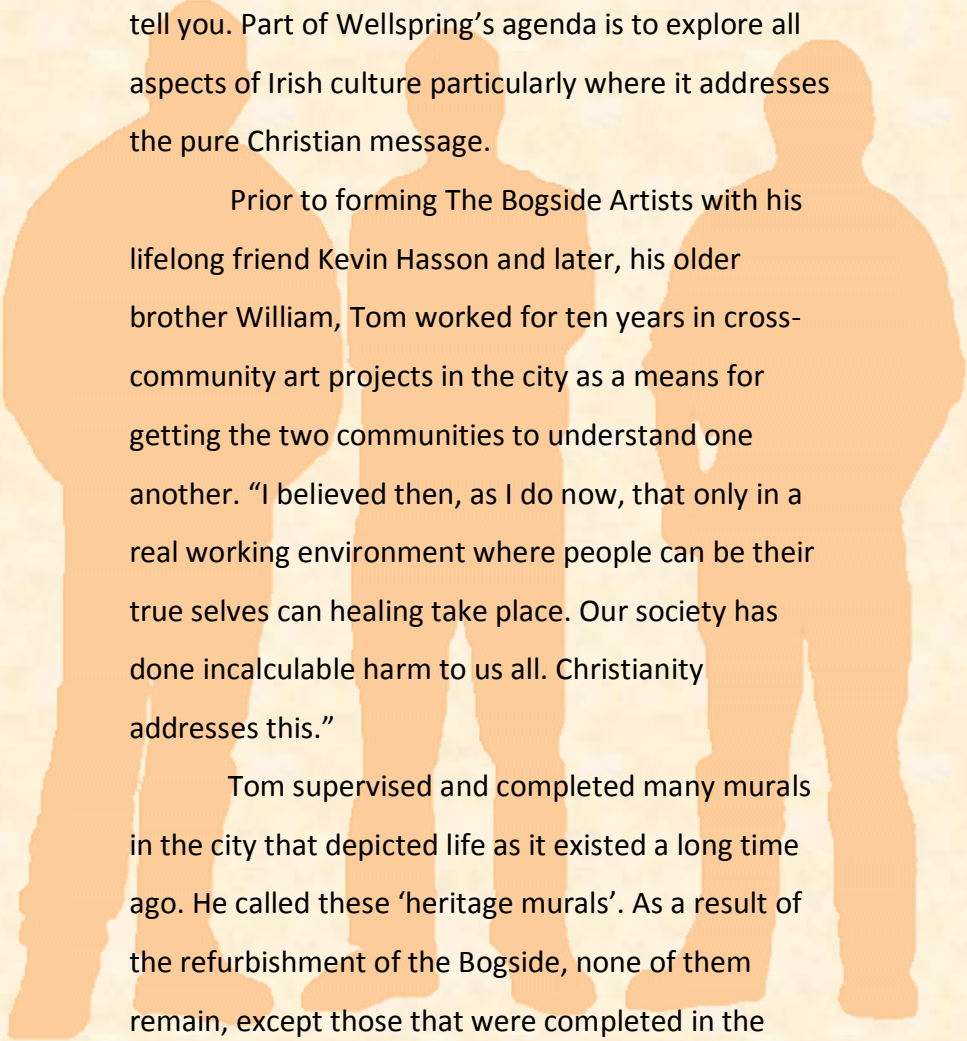


[www.bogsideartists.com](http://www.bogsideartists.com)



## **TOM KELLY**

Tom was first to get into the mural business, if we can call it that. He saw it as a means of reconciliation that sprang naturally from his religious views. Outside of his role as a muralist, Tom leads a small non-denominational Christian church called Wellspring in



the heart of The Bogside. “It’s about getting back to what it was all really about in the beginning,” he will tell you. Part of Wellspring’s agenda is to explore all aspects of Irish culture particularly where it addresses the pure Christian message.

Prior to forming The Bogside Artists with his lifelong friend Kevin Hasson and later, his older brother William, Tom worked for ten years in cross-community art projects in the city as a means for getting the two communities to understand one another. “I believed then, as I do now, that only in a real working environment where people can be their true selves can healing take place. Our society has done incalculable harm to us all. Christianity addresses this.”

Tom supervised and completed many murals in the city that depicted life as it existed a long time ago. He called these ‘heritage murals’. As a result of the refurbishment of the Bogside, none of them remain, except those that were completed in the interiors of schools, hospitals and community centres.

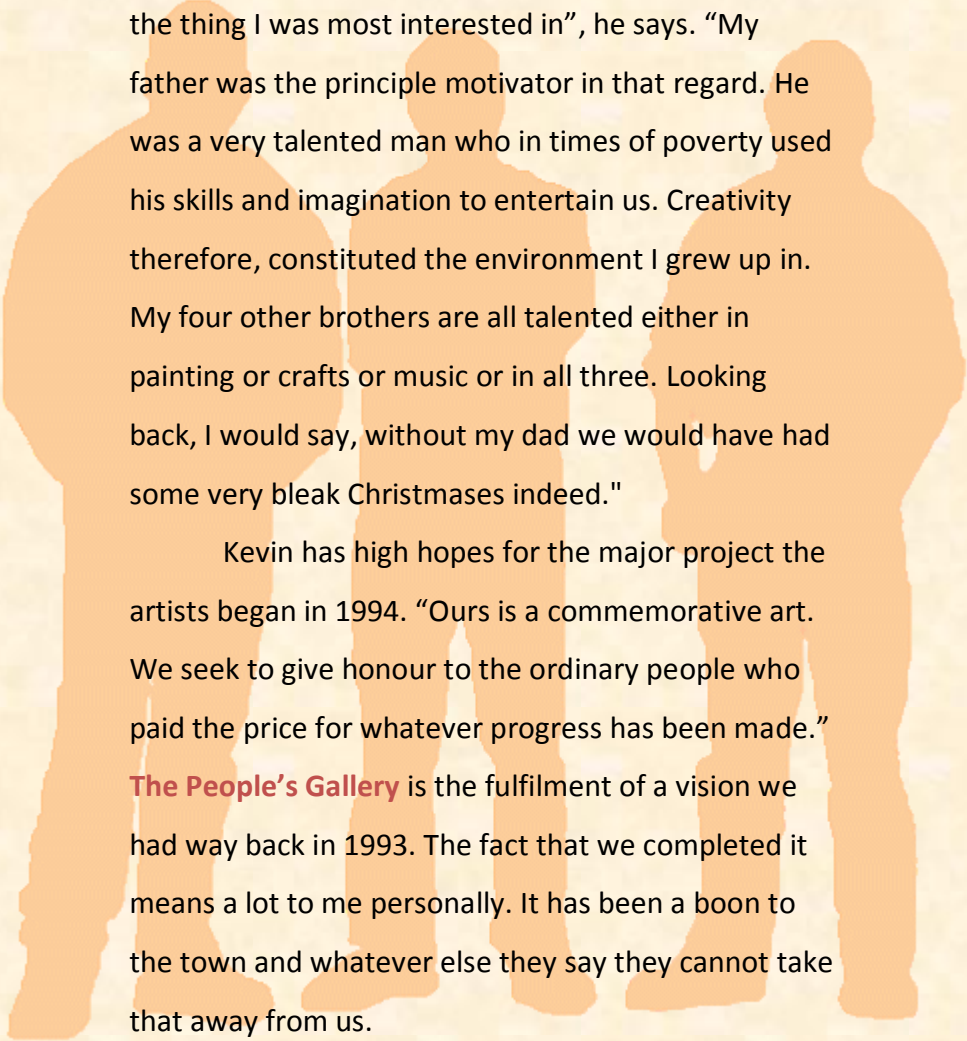
He lives with his wife Michelle just over the border to the South and has a young son Aaron now three years old. For a holiday he often visits Scotland.

Presentations at the studio are usually conducted by Tom with Kevin taking over whenever necessary.



**KEVIN HASSON**

Kevin's formal education began with The Christian Brothers School in the Brandywell area of the city. It



later moved to the Creggan and renamed itself St. Peters. That was in the early '70's. "Art even then, was the thing I was most interested in", he says. "My father was the principle motivator in that regard. He was a very talented man who in times of poverty used his skills and imagination to entertain us. Creativity therefore, constituted the environment I grew up in. My four other brothers are all talented either in painting or crafts or music or in all three. Looking back, I would say, without my dad we would have had some very bleak Christmases indeed."

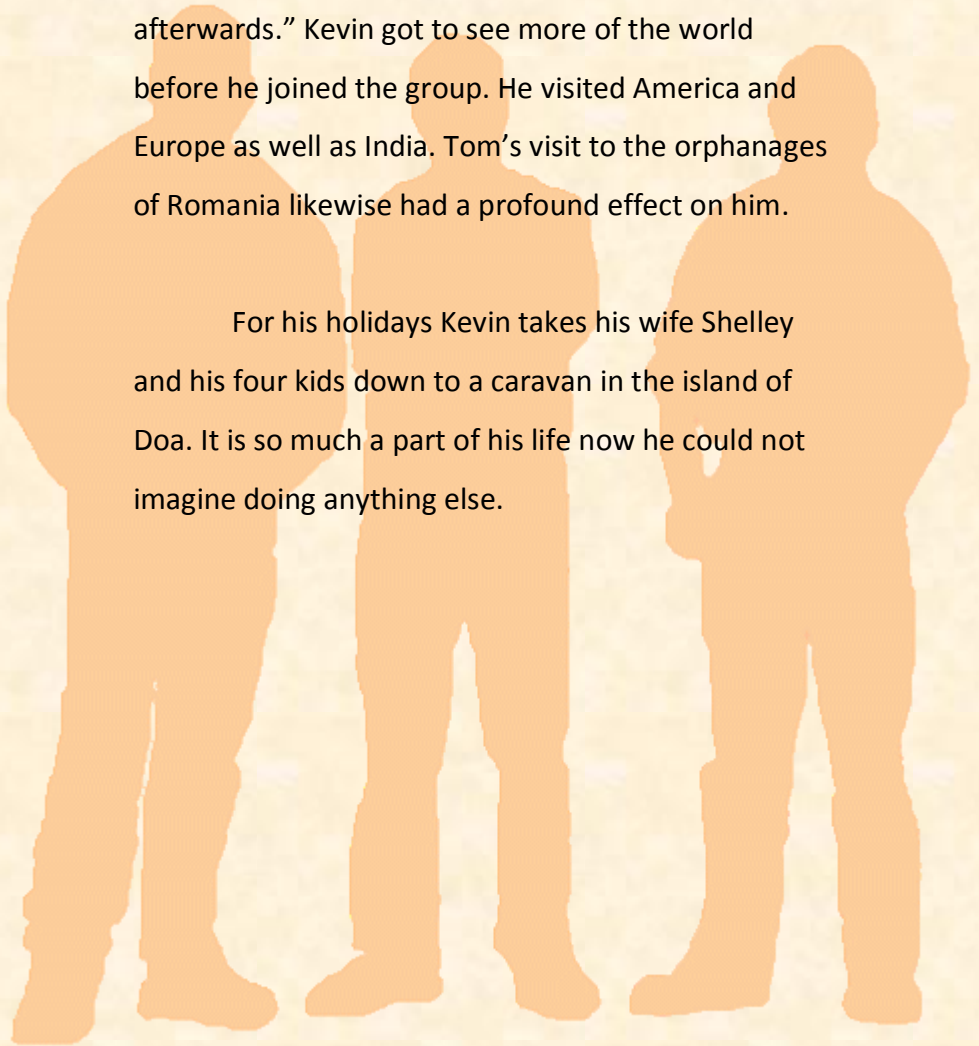
Kevin has high hopes for the major project the artists began in 1994. "Ours is a commemorative art. We seek to give honour to the ordinary people who paid the price for whatever progress has been made."

**The People's Gallery** is the fulfilment of a vision we had way back in 1993. The fact that we completed it means a lot to me personally. It has been a boon to the town and whatever else they say they cannot take that away from us.

The major event in Kevin's life was his first visit

to India. “The poverty overwhelmed me,” he says, “and left me severely depressed for a long time afterwards.” Kevin got to see more of the world before he joined the group. He visited America and Europe as well as India. Tom’s visit to the orphanages of Romania likewise had a profound effect on him.

For his holidays Kevin takes his wife Shelley and his four kids down to a caravan in the island of Doa. It is so much a part of his life now he could not imagine doing anything else.





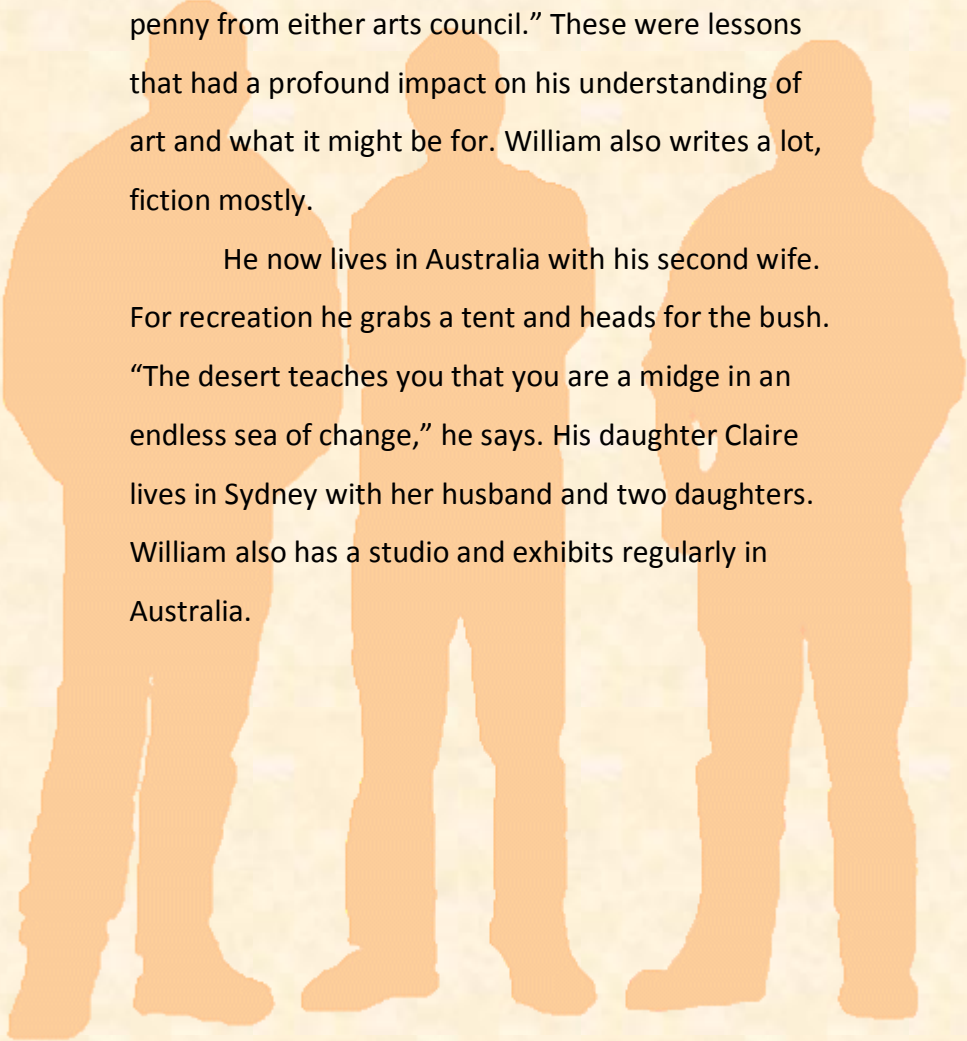
### **WILLIAM KELLY**

Tom's older brother William likewise worked in England. First he went to Queens University after a formal education at St.Columb's College. Although John Hume was teaching there then William only ever sat in on a few of his classes but he does remember Hume as "concerned about something else that had nothing to do with teaching history." Brian Friel was also educated at St.Columb's as was Seamus Heaney. As academic reputations go, Derry's St.Columb's is in a league by itself. "I ended up studying French because I

liked the language, and Philosophy because the world made no sense to me whatsoever.”

William decided to leave after the first Christmas break. He went to Carlisle England to work as a Post Office counter clerk, which lasted a year. He returned to study art at the Belfast Art College and later to take up a job back in Derry as an assistant librarian. "Around that time I met my future wife and moved to Dublin to resume my modest ambition to make my bread as an artist." Three years later, he had his degree and a place in the dole queue.

That's when William decided to resume his own work and try to make a living as a painter. "After fourteen one-man shows all over Ireland I realised at last, that class delusions and bigotry were as rife in the art world, more so in fact, than anywhere else. Not even critics could be trusted to give an unbiased assessment of your work once they duped you were from the Catholic working class of The Bogside. It was a depressing fact but one that I had discovered long before in the South with its pietistic hypocrisies and



general antipathy towards the North. In all those years of work incidentally, I never received a single penny from either arts council.” These were lessons that had a profound impact on his understanding of art and what it might be for. William also writes a lot, fiction mostly.

He now lives in Australia with his second wife. For recreation he grabs a tent and heads for the bush. “The desert teaches you that you are a midge in an endless sea of change,” he says. His daughter Claire lives in Sydney with her husband and two daughters. William also has a studio and exhibits regularly in Australia.

## OUR EXHIBITIONS



What follows is purely factual and is included for the curious. To list magazines, books and newspapers where our work has figured would be impossible as we are not aware of all of them and, even if we were, see no point whatever in listing them. We mention only a few of those to which we have ourselves contributed, as such texts may be of interest to those willing to take the trouble to track them down. We have also figured in over ten documentaries notably the one made by the BBC way back in '98 and broadcast on April weeks before the historic Good Friday Agreement that is still in place. This year 2008, we got a prominent mention in The Lonely Planet Ireland book. This we mention for the benefit of those of you who will be visiting Ireland.

DERRY - The Calgach Centre (the artist's studio)	Jan '98
MILDURA, Aus - The Mildura Arts Centre,Victoria	Feb'98
SYDNEY, Aus - ACU (Aus. Catholic Uni), St Marys Campus	May'98
SYDNEY - THE UNI. SYDNEY, College of The Arts	May'98

(These two exhibitions running concurrently marked the first ever collaboration on an art exhibition by these two institutions).

BOSTON, USA - Bapst Library, Boston College July'98

This show hosted by Professors Raymond Helmick and John Michalczyk marked the first time ever the magnificent Bapst Library was given over to an art exhibition. ORANGE COUNTY, USA - Rocklands Community College Sept'98

NEW YORK - The Irish Centre, Manhattan Dec'98

BOSTON - The Boston State House May'99

(The show here at the venerated ADAMS BUILDING was extended from an initial two weeks to over four).

BOSTON - Boston College, The Rolesham Arts Centre Oct'99

MILDURA - Mildura Arts Centre, Victoria, Australia . Jan'00

PERTH - The Perth International Fringe Festival Feb'00

This exhibition at the PICA gallery was put together by the artists especially for the festival used text, slides, film and cibachromes of work already on tour in Australia. They also painted in public a large-scale mural at the gallery during the show. ADELAIDE - The Red House Community Gallery March'00

PORT MACARTHUR - The Fountain Gallery April'00

ADELAIDE - The Onkaparinga Arts Centre May/June'00

BALLARAT - ACU,	July/Aug'00
MELBOURNE - ACU, St. Patricks Campus	Sept/Oct'00
NEWCASTLE- Newcastle Regional University	Nov/Dec'00
SYDNEY - ACU, St. Marys Campus	Dec/Jan'00
BRISBANE - ACU, McAuley Campus	Jan/Feb'01
BRISBANE - The Q'LD Irish Association	Feb'01
PHILADELPHIA, USA - The John Moore Col. Gallery	Sept'01
PHILADELPHIA - Villanova University Gallery	Sept'01
LONDON, The Horse Hospital Gallery	Oct'03
FRANKFURT, GERMANY - The Kunstmuseum	Nov'03
BELGIUM - 'Périple En La Demeure', COUVY.	Oct/'04
BERLIN - THE HOUSE OF PARLIAMENT	Nov/'04

Note – we are in the process of updating this CV which should be completed shortly. A lot has happened since 2005.

A controversy is still raging as a result of Herr Momper's cancellation of this show. Entreaties from The Derry City Council, the Irish Ambassador in Berlin and Nobel Laureate John Hume to furnish a reasonable explanation for his action have, at the time of writing, been ignored by Momper.

Our touring show in the USA has finally found a permanent home in Miramichi New Brunswick Canada. It is the most comprehensive explication in art form on the subject of the Troubles to have come out of Ireland. It comprises paintings, texts and photographs. Another permanent exhibition of our work is in Savannah, Georgia. In the meantime we hope to exhibit elsewhere in Europe.

From Limerick to Philadelphia and New York to Sydney and Perth, The Bogside Artists have given numerous talks on their work. They have opened a wide-ranging debate on the role of the artist in society, focusing specifically on politics and cultural expression. They have written many articles for newspapers and magazines including, Hot Press, Fortnight, The Irish Times and Exhibita. They have so far featured in over ten documentaries, in particular "What You See Is What You Get" a BBC forty-five minute film devoted to the artists and their work. They have featured in a documentary called "Walls For Change" by Cindy Leaney that was broadcast nationally in Canada and North America. Another French video was broadcast in Arts Europe. The artists' making and completing their Peace Mural for the Bogside was broadcast by BBC home services and World News throughout Europe and Asia. The artists will continue with their work.

