

Writing on the wall

Yesterday the Government announced that £3.3m would be spent replacing paramilitary murals in Northern Ireland. At the height of the Troubles, there were over 2,000 sectarian murals.

On the edge

With a population of 22,000, Greater Shankill is an overwhelmingly Loyalist area of Belfast. The Shankill Road borders the Falls Road, a mainly Catholic area. It was once a key flashpoint.

In the dock

At its peak, 35,000 people worked at Harland and Wolff Heavy Industries, a shipbuilding firm established here in 1861. Despite its decline, its cranes, Samson and Goliath, dominate the skyline.

Initial reports

Ulster Freedom Fighters is a cover name for the Ulster Defence Association, a loyalist paramilitary organisation founded in 1971 and outlawed in 1991. At its peak, it is thought to have had 40,000 members.

Under cover

During the Troubles, the balaclava became a paramilitary symbol. Its name comes from the town of Balaklava in Crimea – British troops were sent the headgear to protect against cold during the Crimean War.



Flag day

The Union Flag was first flown in 1606, to recognise King James VI of Scotland's ascension to the throne of England, with an amalgamated design combining the crosses of St George and St Andrew.

Soldier on

The two banners link this mural to the 2nd Battalion, C Company, once fronted by the notorious Johnny "Mad Dog" Adair. After two spells in prison, Adair is now living in Scotland in exile from Belfast Loyalists.

Red handed

The Red Hand was adopted as a symbol by the Ulster Freedom Fighters. It was once the emblem of the O'Neills, a 17th-century Northern Irish family. It is sometimes depicted with barbed wire at its base.

Marching song

The phrase "Simply the Best" comes from Tina Turner's 1991 hit. It has become an unlikely favourite at Ibrox among fans of Glasgow Rangers, which is also the team of choice for Loyalist Belfast.

Phrase and fable

"Feriens Tego", which translates from Latin as "Striking, I Defend", is the motto of the Ulster Freedom Fighters. It is also, by coincidence, the motto of the Royal Air Force's 25th Squadron.