

So how long will it be before we invite the IS jihadis to a white-tie dinner?

By Peter Hitchens for The Mail



Patrick Magee (pictured in Belfast last year) is free and apparently living a happy and contented life while his victims lie in their graves

While we rage and fret about the terrorist outrages of today, how quickly we forget the horrors of the recent past.

I can't see why. The grief, loss and pain don't diminish as the years go by. For those who survive, they deepen.

And I admire Lord Tebbit for his unfashionable refusal to forgive the IRA murderers who tried to kill him and his wife, and who did them terrible harm (as well as slaying or maiming several others) in Brighton 30 years ago.

One of the grisly monsters responsible for this, Patrick Magee, now walks about in freedom, thanks to our surrender to the IRA, a national shame we bury in denial and pretend never happened, sometimes even kidding ourselves that we were the winners.

Well, if we won, how is it that Magee is free and apparently living a happy and contented life, while his victims lie in their graves or suffer daily pain and disability?

He was supposed to serve a minimum of 35 years and actually served 14. He still, disgustingly, claims that he had 'no choice' but to use the weapon of murder.

He has had the nerve to try to get his victims to 'understand a bit better what motivated me'.

Some of those victims have, in my view quite mistakenly, forgiven him. Lord Tebbit says with simple dignity: 'I am often asked if I can find it in my heart to forgive the creature, Patrick Magee, who planted the bomb. 'That is not possible, for Magee has never repented.'

Quite. I do not think the Christian religion instructs us to forgive the unrepentant. Nobody in any age but this could possibly imagine that we are supposed to forgive those who don't seek our forgiveness.

Forgiveness without repentance is like a door without a doorway, or a key without a lock. The one implies and demands the other.

This is something that also needs to be understood by the Blairite bag-carrier Jonathan Powell, who took an active part in the surrender talks with the IRA, and who has just written a book saying we will always have to talk to terrorists in the end.

Actually, this isn't true. We always have done so, but that is not because we had no choice. We did it because we are weak and have lost our will to survive as a civilisation and a culture. If they knew we would never talk, and that we would crush them utterly, we would have many fewer of them.

As it is, terrorists decide the destiny of much of the world. The more militantly our leaders condemn them now, the more you can be sure that they will be inviting them to a white-tie dinner at Windsor in a year or two.