



MICHAEL (MICKEY) MARLEY (d 2008)
Street Entertainer

Michael (Mickey) Marley was born in the Markets area of Belfast but spent most of his life on the Grosvenor Road in the Falls area of West Belfast. Mickey and his Roundabout was a common sight in Belfast City Centre for nearly forty years.

Drawn by his horse, Joey, and accompanied by his two Jack Russel dogs, Mickey toured the streets of Belfast with his roundabout from the 1950s until the late 1980s.

Undeterred by the troubles that began after 1968, he continued with his journeys to all parts of the city, and you would always find the roundabout in the city center in Cornmarket every Saturday.

Mickey stabled the horse behind his house and the roundabout was stored at the Peter Pan Complex on the Springfield Road.

Unfortunately, the roundabout was not immune to the community conflict raging all over Belfast from the late 1960's which was particularly intense in the early 1970s when barricades were being erected to obstruct the movements of the Army and Police. It was commandeered and used in a barricade where it was set on fire and destroyed. Mickey was disconsolate and the children of Belfast lost a unique source of fun and joy.

However, the good people of Belfast weren't taking it lying down so a motley group from all over the city got together and built Mickey a new Roundabout. It wasn't an exact replica but none the worse for that and Mickey was mobile again.

I was living in Belfast at the time and had seen Mickey and his roundabout in Cornmarket before the troubles started. We left the City in 1972. Many years later I was in Cornmarket again and there was the Roundabout, but not as I remembered it – it looked smaller and less elaborate, but still packed with little ones. I had never until recently known about its destruction.

HIDDEN GEMS AND FORGOTTEN PEOPLE

His local fame was enhanced by a recording of the song "Mickey Marley's Roundabout" (written by Seamus Robinson), which was a popular children's request on BBC Radio Ulster.

Visit <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0XN7KSVpVxU> for a short video of the song and footage of Mickey and the Roundabout.

Paul Valliday, at a young age struck up a friendship with Mickey and helped him out for many years, travelling all over the City, collecting the money, looking after the horse, cleaning the roundabout etc. In a short film by Northern Visions Television (NVTV) at <https://vimeo.com/159232295>, Paul, Paula McArdle, and Seamus Robinson from *Barnbrack* tell their stories, their memories, and involvement with Mickey. The film followed Marley's everyday life, against the backdrop of the heavy British Army presence on the streets of Belfast during the early years of the Troubles.

Mickey retired in the 1980s. In 1996 he donated the roundabout to the Ulster Folk and Transport Museum where it is on display.

Mickey died on 28 April 2005.

PATRICK DEVLIN