

## "You see violence on TV and ask 'Why?'"

Media & arts, Values & religion, Law & crime, Social affairs

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The Belfast  
**Telegraph**

*As attacks on the elderly continues to rise, Children's Express reporters talked to three elderly women about what it is like to live in an increasingly violent and uncaring society.*

The only real way to find out what it was like to be a young person years ago is to rely on the memories and stories of older people. People being lovely and friendly with each other, that's what I'd wish for – everybody living in peace.

It seems that elderly people are under attack at the moment. If they aren't being taken for a ride by conmen on their doorstep, their vulnerability is being exploited by young thieves.

Ninety-five-year-old Bessie Hodgins says she's disgusted by the level of violence her age group has to face in modern Belfast:

"It's disgraceful. I think that old people should be better looked after because they're vulnerable," she said. "Old people only go out for a purpose, like shopping, and we can't even do that."

Bessie says the recent attacks on elderly people didn't happen with the same frequency when she was in her youth.

"There was no hatred, there wasn't that element in people. Everybody was friends. There was nobody better off than anybody else," she said.

Bessie blames the self-centredness of modern society for giving people the attitude that more is better.

"Nobody had money in those days. If you didn't need things you didn't buy them. You didn't go out and buy clothes just because you liked them, as they do now. They always get tired of them very quickly."

"My father was a lamplighter - I think at the time he had 18 shillings a week. There was five of us in the family but we got through. We just played together and there wasn't any viciousness."

Agnes Gordon, (75), lives in Glenmachan nursing home and finds herself becoming sad as she watches the changing times on television.

"Now you have to be so careful. I sit here and watch it and just get fed up with it. You just sit looking at all the violence and wondering why. They're young men; what sort of life will they ever have?"

Both women lived in Belfast before the Troubles and say that people got on with each other irrespective of religion:

"The Troubles have always been here from when I was a wee girl. But they were always in the background - never what it's been like in the last thirty years," said Bessie.

"We were good neighbours no matter what. We knew who was Catholic and Protestant, but it made no difference to us when we were young."

With Belfast crime rates on the rise, what do these older people imagine Belfast's future holds?

"People being lovely and friendly with each other, that's what I'd wish for - everybody living in peace. But there's a lot of things that could be better," said Bessie

Anna Finlay, who, celebrated her 86th birthday on Burns Day, thinks that a return of the same family values she was brought up with would make Belfast a better place:

"Families were stricter. You knew you couldn't do things, you couldn't come in too late. I wish we could bring back these things, that self-respect," she said.

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About the team

This story was produced by Lisa Skinner, 17, and Sarah Montague, 14. It was published in the [Belfast Telegraph](#).

1 comment

06  
it was exciting to see this report as my mother 'scomments are so true she died when she was 98.  
janeturley from belfast., 30 December 1899 00:00

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