THE NEED FOR WHAT WE DO IS GREATER THAN EVER.

"The Rory Peck Trust has lasted because, quite simply, it is a very good idea. And because we passionately believe in what we’re doing." Director Tina Carr reflects on twenty years of the Trust.

There’s always an element of wonder at anniversaries. Wonder that something has lasted so long. And perhaps wonder at how it ever began. Celebrations often seem like awards for stamina, courage, overcoming the odds. The kind of things we celebrate, in fact, at the Rory Peck Awards. Well, I don’t wonder at this anniversary. And I understand how it began.

A few months ago, in Derry, Northern Ireland, I found myself alone beside a coffin in a small, bare chapel, lit by firelight. It was a sad occasion, the evening before the funeral of Colin Peck, Rory's brother and a very dear friend to the Trust. On the wall of this chapel was a simple plaque in memory of Rory Peck. I've often thought about the man whose name I’ve uttered many millions of times, and one that’s now known to freelance journalists all over the world. He’s remembered as a great cameraman, an adventurer, something of a legend – in common with many freelancers before and since who’ve died before their time. Here, in this chapel, he is simply remembered as a son, a brother, a father, a friend. And here you have the heart of the Rory Peck Trust.

For the last twenty years, at dangerous times, in life-changing times, heart-breaking times freelance journalists and their families have turned to the Rory Peck Trust for help, many suffering very real and hard long-term consequences as a result of what has happened to them. So at this year’s Rory Peck Awards, how could we not think of the freelancers who cannot be with us?

Kenji Goto, a good and brave journalist who was committed to covering humanitarian issues and the stories of ordinary people caught up in conflict. Photojournalist Shawkan, 27 years old, held without trial in Cairo’s Tora prison for over two and a half years. His trial is finally scheduled to begin on 12 December.

Mohammed Rasool, 24 years old, a talented young journalist at the start of his career. For the last four months he’s been in pre-trial detention in a high-security Turkish prison, after his two British colleagues were released.

And for the third year running we continue to think of photographer John Cantlie, 45 years old this month, and journalist Austin Tice, 34 years old. Both were kidnapped in Syria over three years ago. They are still missing – and are desperately missed by their families, friends and colleagues.

It is freelancers such as these who we support. And there are many more like them all over the world.

The Rory Peck Trust came from a need - to support freelance journalists and their families who had no support. It has lasted because, quite simply, it is a very good idea. And because we passionately believe in what we’re doing. We are very fortunate in having strong commitment from our funders and donors, both organisations and individual givers – we appreciate every single donation you make. Because of you all we have been able to give more grants and bursaries than ever before. And you will see from this year’s Awards Brochure and Annual Review how we have been making your money work.

Twenty years on there is still a need for what we do. And this need is greater than ever. SO – right now its the next 20 years I’m thinking about….

This is an edited version of the speech Tina gave at the Rory Peck Awards on 18th November.