



2012 ANNUAL RELEASES

1982 files – Highlights List

A full list of the files will be available

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Introduction

The annual release of selected official files continues against a background of greater public access through the Freedom of Information Act balanced against the need to protect personal information. The FOI Act (2000) created a new access to information regime and all records were reviewed in accordance with both that Act and the Data Protection Act.

Records continue to be brought forward for release as they approach 30 years of age. This involves the referral of the files to the Responsible Authority for sensitivity review. This entails a page by page examination to ensure that a record contains nothing sensitive as defined by the FOI Act and DP Act.

Records continue to be brought forward for release as they approach 30 years of age. This year's annual release covers the official files with a terminal date of 1982.

Records may be closed either fully or in part only. Partial closure involves the removal of a limited number of papers from the file that have been deemed as exempt from the right to know under FOI. To facilitate the release of as much information as possible, we can also redact (blank out) sensitive data within individual documents which would otherwise prevent release. All information which is withheld in the manner outlined above, however, must be retained in accordance with the exemptions contained within the FOI Act.

Records Recommended for Extended Closure

A total of 16 NI departmental files were recommended for extended full closure. 87 NI departmental files were recommended for extended partial closure or contained information which has been blanked out to allow the release of the remaining contents of the file. In the majority of cases, the reason for extended closure was section 40 Personal Information exemption of the Freedom of Information Act. This means that personal information is exempt from the right to know if it would cause a breach of the Data Protection principles.

A total of 72 NIO files were recommended for extended full closure. 42 NIO files were recommended for extended partial closure or contain information which has been blanked out to allow the release of the remaining contents of the file. In the majority of cases, the reason for extended closure was section 40 Personal Information exemption of the Freedom of Information Act. This means that personal information is exempt from the right to know if it would cause a breach of the Data Protection principles.

This increase in 'Full Closure' recommendations submitted by the Northern Ireland Office for 2012 is largely as a result of the inclusion of a high number of Individual *Firearms Appeals* files, all of which remain exempt from release due to personal data content.

Records Released

A total of 758 files are being released in full (compared with 557 in 2011) and 129 subject to partial closure or blanking out (compared with 120 in 2011).

The main file series being released includes Central Secretariat and Northern Ireland Office files.

Some of the main issues covered:

- a new devolved Assembly
- NI Assembly elections
- De Lorean
- talks with NI political parties
- Anglo-Irish relations
- economic situation
- prison protests
- political negotiations on the constitution of Northern Ireland
- *Kinsale Gas field* debate

The release will include some additional 1981 departmental files, primarily from the Northern Ireland Office

Partial closure involves the removal of a limited number of papers from the file that have been deemed as exempt from the right to know under FOI. To facilitate the release of as much information as possible, redaction can be used to blank out sensitive data within individual documents that would otherwise prevent release. All information withheld under this procedure must conform to the exemptions contained in the FOI Act. In the majority of cases, the reason for extended closure was the application of section 40 – the personal information exemption – of the FOI Act. This means that personal information is exempt from the right to know if it would breach the Data Protection principles.



1982 Highlighted Files

Central Secretariat

CENT/1/10/45A	1981-1981	<i>Constitutional Developments June 1981</i>	<p>File contains papers relating to ongoing political developments in Northern Ireland, and primarily focussing on the developing Special Category Status protests in Northern Ireland prisons. File includes a note of a meeting on 29 May 1981, between John Hume SDLP and UK Government representatives, concerning his party, and the Hunger Strike. Regarding the latter, Mr Hume suggested that the UK Government interests 'would be advanced if the ending of the hunger strike were associated with the moderate, democratically elected leaders of the minority. It would also be in his own political interest – the Catholic 'protest' vote would return to the SDLP and double its strength – but it offered substantial and tangible benefits to HMG (Her Majesty's Government)'.</p>
CENT/1/11/1A	1982-1982	<i>Constitutional Developments January 1982</i>	<p>File contains papers relating to ongoing political developments in Northern Ireland. File includes note of meeting between Ulster Unionist Party Press Officer Frank Millar, and UK Government representatives in January 1982 – 'Commenting on the general state of the UUP, Millar said that morale was low and that the Party's image in the Protestant community (particularly in Belfast) was disastrous. It was widely perceived that Molyneaux was inadequate as a leader (for all his personal qualities) and that the Party was "all over the place"... everyone was terrified at the electoral implications of a public struggle to oust him.'</p>
CENT/1/11/9A	1982	<i>Constitutional Developments – February 1982</i>	<p>The file contains a note of a meeting by the British Ambassador, Sir Leonard Figg, about a visit to Armagh to meet Cardinal O'Fiaich, dated 16 February 1982; and notes of meetings with NI political parties, eg Democratic Unionist Party.</p>

CENT/1/11/18A 1982-1982 *Constitutional developments – March 1982*

File contains papers relating to ongoing political and economic developments in Northern Ireland. Includes a paper compiled following a meeting between DUP and UK Government representatives regarding law and order – ‘Though we should not say so to Mr Paisley, notice of the possibility that we might later be willing to switch any of the excepted powers would be anathema to the SDLP. In particular, “Special Powers Act” equals “Stormont” at its worst in the eyes of the minority. Alarm bells would also ring in the ears of the opposition at Westminster. If we take seriously Mr Paisley’s belief that political initiative is a step towards his being able to exert some direct control over the “security situation,” one must concede some substance to such doubts.’

CENT/1/11/24 1982-1982 *Constitutional Developments – April 1982*

File contains papers relating to ongoing political developments in Northern Ireland, and between UK and Republic of Ireland Governments. File includes, among other events, the 31 March 1982 meeting between James Prior, Northern Ireland Secretary of State and Gerry Collins, Minister for Foreign Affairs (for Republic of Ireland), in which the Secretary of State was ‘delighted at the level of security cooperation’ between the two Governments.

CENT/1/11/29 1982-1982 *Constitutional Developments – May 1982*

File contains papers relating to ongoing political developments in Northern Ireland, including reference to the developing Kincora Children’s Home scandal and the progress of the Northern Ireland Bill. Also discussed, the overall security situation.

CENT/1/11/34A 1982-1982 *Constitutional Developments – June 1982*

File contains papers relating to ongoing political developments in Northern Ireland. File includes a revealing confidential briefing on Anglo-Irish relations, June 1982 – ‘... relations are presently under some considerable strain, partly because of Mr Haughey’s [Irish Taoiseach] attitude to the political initiative and partly because of the Irish Government’s unhelpful actions during the Falklands crisis ... attempts to develop the relationship just now would be heavily criticised.’

CENT/1/11/37	1982	<i>Constitutional Development – July 1982</i>
		The file contains the note of a conversation with Gerry Fitt on the forthcoming Assembly elections, dated 27 July 1982; confidential note of a private dinner between James Prior, Secretary of State, Lord Gowrie, NIO Minister, and John Hume, concerning the NI Assembly elections, relations with the Taoiseach, dated 30 July 1982; note of conversation with new owner and editor in chief of the Irish News, Jim Fitzpatrick, dated 19 July 1982
CENT/1/11/43	1982	<i>Constitutional Developments – August 1982</i>
		The file contains the NIO NI Political Review recording developments in NI, international issues, cross-border incidents, etc; note on SDLP decision to stand for the Assembly elections, dated 26 August 1982.
CENT/1/11/46	1982	<i>Constitutional Developments – September 1982</i>
		The file contains a note for the record on the NI parties and candidates standing for the Assembly elections with NIO analysis.
CENT1/11/51A	1982	<i>Constitutional Developments – October 1982</i>
		The file contains briefings on the Assembly election campaign, the state of the political parties and the various personalities.
CENT/1/11/59	1982	<i>Constitutional Developments – November 1982</i>
		File contains papers relating to ongoing political developments in Northern Ireland, and between UK and Republic of Ireland Governments. In particular, one confidential report assesses in detail the implications of involving Sinn Fein in political negotiations – ‘the arguments for a relaxed approach, at least on constituency matters, are both positive and negative. The positive is that the Government’s long term policy is to wean Sinn Fein and any other men of violence to constitutional politics. Even if there is no short term prospect of success, involvement in politics may occupy people who might otherwise be busy with violence and could lead to divisions in the PIRA/Sinn Fein leadership. But whereas the Government wants to replace violence by politics, it is arguable that the

more successful Sinn Fein are in running both together, the less tempted they will be to abandon violence and the stronger they will become. If Sinn Fein are treated much the same as the SDLP the inducement towards constitutional politics is weakened and the position of the SDLP the more liable to erosion. Any idea that Sinn Fein will be seriously tempted to compromise its long term objective on account of dealing with Ministers on constituency matters is not only unrealistic but will be recognised as such and accordingly viewed with suspicion by Unionists.' There are minutes of the NIO Political Developments Group.

CENT/1/11/63A 1982

Constitutional Developments – December 1982

The file contains minutes of meetings of the NIO Political Developments Group; note of a meeting between Secretary of State, James Prior, and John Hume, SDLP leader, discussing the political and security situation, dated 23 December, 1982.

CENT/1/11/13 1982-1982

Anglo-Irish Economic Council – Gas Pipe Line. Northern Ireland – Republic of Ireland

File contains papers relating to the continuing Kinsale Gas issue (the vexed question of supplying natural gas to Northern Ireland, from fields in the Republic of Ireland, and associated charges). Adam Butler, Minister of State, was clearly frustrated at the impasse in the negotiations: 'Mr Butler has asked me to pass on to you his view that as far as negotiations with the RoI are concerned they seem to be playing hard to get ...'

CENT/1/11/33 1982-1982

Industrial Development in Northern Ireland – General

File contains papers relating to various issues of concern in local industry, such as an upsurge in industrial disputes during May and the poor performance of the economy overall. One confidential paper from Secretary of State for Northern Ireland James Prior to Patrick Jenkin, Secretary of State for Industry discusses several notable companies whose ailing performances were clear signposts to an overall local decline (such as the closure of the Belfast Michelin tyre plant), and the SoS notes: 'I make this point (about the Michelin closure) merely to demonstrate that the horrendous economic prospects

for Northern Ireland, which colleagues acknowledged in E Committee in September, are getting worse, not better. We are at present urgently addressing our minds to the sort of economic initiative which might be launched to arrest the spiralling decline of the Northern Ireland economy.'

CENT/1/11/65	1982	<i>Briefing material prepared for Prime Minister's New Year interview</i>	File contains briefings relating to positive developments in NI during 1982.
CENT/1/11/73	1982	<i>NI Assembly – First Day Briefs</i>	File contains a report on the first day of the NI Assembly, dated 11 November 1982, and briefings prepared for the new Assembly members.
CENT/1/10/107	1980-1982	<i>De Lorean, 1981 papers – January 1982</i>	File contains papers relating to the deteriorating situation in De Lorean Motor Cars Ltd and in particular focussing on UK Government's determination that they were under no legal obligation to continue to financially support the ailing company.
CENT/1/11/11	1982-1982	<i>Harland and Wolff</i>	File contains papers relating to the company's perilous situation in terms of its economic viability. In one note of meeting, dated 4 February 1982, it was stated: 'in purely economic terms, there was no justification for keeping H&W open. As Sir Charles Carter had pointed out, government funds being used to support as company which had no prospect of long-term viability, would be better directed into areas such as housing, new industrial development, reducing energy costs for industry, etc. Furthermore, if H&W were to be kept in business by an exceptional level of government support, it was difficult to argue against similar action being taken in respect of De Lorean. There was a danger that the Secretary of State would use up his goodwill with the Treasury...'

CENT/1/11/23	1982-1982	<i>Secretary of State's Meetings 1982 – Miscellaneous</i>	File contains papers relating to ongoing political and economic negotiations and cooperation between UK and Republic of Ireland Governments, including, among other events, complex negotiations between James Prior, Northern Ireland Secretary of State and the Harland and Wolff Trade Union (and including a 'wide cross-section of Northern Ireland politicians'), in order to assist the company, in particular with regard to ongoing tensions between British Shipbuilders Corporation (researchers note: H&W was the sole shipbuilder remaining separate from the BS 'umbrella', and thus a source of strained relations between the two, which led to what was perceived in some quarters as 'unnecessary competition between the two yards..').
CENT/1/11/26	1982-1982	<i>Argentina</i>	File relates to the aftermath of the Argentinean Invasion of the Falkland Islands, and the military/ diplomatic build up to UK taskforce deployment (including International political reaction).
CENT/1/11/30	1982-1982	<i>Ministers Meetings Miscellaneous. Ministers Speeches / Briefs</i>	File contains papers relating to various issues, including cross border cooperation, the Kinsale Gas supply negotiations, talks with the Progressive Unionist Party, and attempts to attract inward investment to local industry.
CENT/1/11/32	1982-1982	<i>Harland and Wolff</i>	File contains papers relating to Harland and Wolff and the overall difficulties facing shipbuilding in the United Kingdom.
CENT/1/11/40A	1982	<i>The Sloan Affair</i>	File contains papers relating to the Sloan affair, in which Enoch Powell (then Official Unionist MP South Down), provided evidence, which had in turn been provided to him by an academic researcher called Geoffrey Sloan, of 'conspiracy to subvert Conservative Party policy "with the object of

establishing another power sharing government in the province, which could pave the way for a federal constitution linking Ulster to the Irish Republic.” ’

CENT/1/9/67

1980-1982

Japanese Investment in Northern Ireland

File contains papers relating to concerted efforts to attract Japanese investment to Northern Ireland, and the attempts to more fully understand what potential Japanese business investors wanted from Northern Ireland – ‘for example, Northern Ireland could be sold on the basis of its golf courses! There were many aspects of the open-air life that appealed to them; and we should capitalise on these.’



Northern Ireland Office

NIO/12/218A	1981	<i>Prisons – Protest Action. Protest Action arising from Claim to Special Category Status – Ministers Cases on the Hunger Strike</i>
		File contains papers relating to the Special Category Status protests in Northern Ireland prisons, and in particular the individual cases sent to the UK Government. Notable amongst these, a letter sent from the mother of Hunger Striker, Thomas McElwee (and a response to her from Prime Minister, Margaret Thatcher). Also, a petition from ‘a group of ordinary Soviet citizens’ in support of the Hunger Strikers.
NIO/12/249A	1981-1982	<i>Prisons – Protest Action. Protest Action arising from claim to Special Category Status – Ministers cases on the Hunger Strike</i>
		File contains papers relating to the penal system in Northern Ireland, and the effects (both within Prison and in the community) of the Special Category Status protests. This includes correspondence between UK Government and Roman Catholic Priest Father Raymond Murray (acting on behalf of Irish Republican Prisoners, their families and the wider Catholic community). Also included, correspondence from a member of the public who had been incarcerated by the Nazis during Second World War, and her views on the recent changes to the prison system in Northern Ireland.
NIO/12/251A	1981-1982	<i>Prisons – Hunger Strike. Events following the death of Robert Gerard Sands</i>
		File contains papers relating to the death of Bobby Sands MP, during Hunger Strike (as part of the ongoing Special Category Status protests).
NIO/12/300	1982	<i>Prisons – Regimes Segregation. Segregation Policy – Considerations – The Way Forward</i>
		File contains papers relating to the situation regarding protesting prisoners in the Northern Ireland penal system, and UK Government attempts to deal with the crisis. One paper admits – ‘We are, it seems

compelled to undertake such a fundamental appraisal as we are facing the largest, most co-ordinated and most sophisticated attack on our regime and on penal policy yet encountered. It is perhaps possible to become hypnotised by our current difficulties but, even allowing for this, it is clear that we are in a thoroughly messy situation. Both factions, and maybe 80% of our prisoners, are actively or passively opposing us ...'.

NIO/12/199A **1981** ***Prisons – Protest Action. Protest Action Arising from Claim to Special Category Status – Ministers Cases on the Hunger Strike. Copies for Information***

File contains papers relating to the Special Category Status protests in Northern Ireland prisons. Included, individual cases sent to the UK Government. One telegram addressed to UK Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher was sent by the American actress Jane Fonda and American social and political activist Tom Hayden – 'Please save the lives of the Hunger Strikers by granting them political status. The sanctity of human life must override any political considerations.'

NIO/25/1/49 **1979-1982** ***Policing in West Belfast***

The file contains NIO reports on the policing situation in west Belfast.

NIO/25/1/61A **1982** ***Police – Meetings Secretary of State and Officials on Police Matters With Bodies Other Than Police Authority for NI***

File contains minutes of the meeting between the 'Friends of Ireland' (an American group supporting United Ireland but insisting on consent in Northern Ireland) and Lord Gowrie (Minister of State for Northern Ireland), in which various matters relating to Northern Ireland and the United States were discussed, such as the image of Ian Paisley in the US, and the fact that the paramilitary group Ulster Defence Association was not yet proscribed. Also included, papers relating to the issue of protection and personal security for off duty members of the Royal Ulster Constabulary.

NIO/25/1/58A

1980-1982

Police – Security in Border Areas

File contains papers relating to the personal security problems encountered by members of security forces, specifically the Ulster Defence Regiment, living in the Border areas. Also discussed, the issue of cross border jurisdiction and security and the ease with which terrorists (and smugglers) could operate in certain areas.

NIO/25/1/45A

1978-1982

Meetings Conclusion of Stocktaking Meetings (London Meetings)

File contains confidential notes of regular meetings in NIO London covering a range of NI issues such as constitutional developments, economic matters, Anglo-Irish relations, De Lorean and Kincora.



Department of Finance and Personnel

DFP/13/7	1981-1982	<i>Leak of Information to Peter Robinsion MP – Ref: EC. Funds for Housing in Northern Ireland</i>
		File contains papers relating to (then Deputy Leader, DUP) Peter Robinson's allegation of irregularity of treatment of EEC funds. He issued an NIO document revealing this disparity of allocation of funds intended for housing projects in Northern Ireland ('Additionality').
DFP/3/2/4	1982	<i>Anglo-Irish Inter-Governmental Council</i>
		The file contains papers on the proposed Anglo-Irish Inter-Governmental Council that was under discussion, 6 January 1982.
FIN/19/56/3A	1977-1982	<i>Steering Group on the Economic Activities of Paramilitary Organisations</i>
		File contains a number of papers about the need for increased liaison between police and government to help tackle the economic activities of paramilitary organisations.

