



Department for

Communities

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Release of 1997 files at the Public Record Office of Northern Ireland



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Using the documents

When using the documents held at the Public Record Office of Northern Ireland (PRONI), please ensure that you acknowledge PRONI's custody of the original files and give the full PRONI document reference number.

Please note that in the 1997 file list; any file reference bearing 'A' at the end denotes the open part of a file which has been partially closed.

For example, the file *CENT/1/24/14A* refers to the open part of a file, whereas *CENT/1/24/14* refers to the part of that file withheld under certain exemptions of the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

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<http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/version/3/>

PRONI ON CAIN

PRONI on CAIN (Conflict Archive on the Internet) is a joint project between the Ulster University and PRONI which has resulted in digitised images of key documents from previous PRONI file releases being made freely available to view online for researchers and students. PRONI on CAIN includes over 2,600 public records comprising 9,700 pages of content on the troubles and political developments from 1968-1992. For further details of the documents available, please visit

<http://cain.ulst.ac.uk/proni/index.html>



Introduction

The files are being released under the 30/20 Year Rule.

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 the Act, and the Data Protection legislation.

Annually since 1976, official records held by PRONI which were 30 years old have been reviewed with a view to making them publicly available (“the 30 year rule”). In September 2011, the Assembly accepted a Legislative Consent Motion to reduce the time limit for release from 30 years to 20 years (“the 20 year Rule”). This is underpinned by the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and the amendments made to it by the Protection of Freedoms Act 2012.

The 20 Year Rule is being phased in over 10 years, with two years’ worth of records being reviewed and released each year. This year due to Covid-19 restrictions, the records of NI Departments and the NIO with terminal dates of 1997 are being brought forward for release during December 2020.

This process 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 Data Protection legislation.

Records Released

450 files being deemed as suitable for release as “fully open”. A further **154** files are open but subject to blanking out of some content. **35** files remain closed in full.

The main file series being released includes Central Secretariat.

Some of the significant issues covered by the 1997 release include:

- Northern Ireland Forum (NIF) Talks
- Talks and political developments between the Northern Ireland parties and the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland
- BSE Crisis and its impact on the beef industry
- Cross border economic cooperation
- Anglo Irish Intergovernmental Conference
- Secretary of State's briefings on various NI issues
- North South issues
- Prison Operations
- Parades
- Boycotting of protestant businesses
- Drumcree
- Harryville protests
- Decommissioning
- Tourism
- Community relations
- Internment during World War 2
- Abortion law and test cases
- Irish Language
- Overseas adoption

Records may be closed either fully or in part only. Blanking out 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 which is withheld in the manner

outlined above, however, must be retained in accordance with the exemptions contained within 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 Data Protection legislation.

The catalogue of files for 1997 is publicly available online on the PRONI website www.nidirect.gov.uk/proni from Tuesday 29th December and the files are available to view at PRONI from Tuesday 29th December.



1997 Highlighted Files

Central Secretariat

**CENT/1/26/15 1993 – 1997 Central Community Relations Unit (CCRU):
Equality – Resourcing Local Community
Development.**

Papers cover community development in Protestant areas. An internal memo date 8 Oct 1997 notes that when interviewed on BBC and UTV, both Dr Ian Paisley and Jim Nicholson “acknowledge that the

under-representation of applications from sections of the protestant community was essentially a matter that had to be addressed by the Protestant community becoming better organised in relation to applying for funds.” The same document also notes “that a number of DUP supporters had telephoned central office to complain at the line taken by Dr Paisley at the press conference – the implication being that it was a touch too soft.” The file also contains a note on the Greater Shankill Strategy Planning Weekend Feedback Session on 6 February 1995. “There was a tremendous atmosphere of buzz and excitement. I was told that the weekend had been a huge success and many seemed quite stunned by the impact of it all. They were especially pleased that so many officials and representatives of different agencies had come which encouraged them to feel that their ideas had been listened to by key people who could make things happen.... Billy Hutchinson (UDP) commented to me that nobody seemed to be in the least interested in talking about the constitution or ‘whether we are going to be out of Britain tomorrow,’ but only in the future of the Greater Shankill. Pastor Jack McKee remarked on how many members of ‘the Organisations’ were present and had remained behind to talk to others present afterwards. He said ‘I hope they are listening’.... We remember the communal shock, horror and misery that the whole Shankill community experienced after the Shankill bomb and Greysteel massacre. Then people seemed to feel that they were locked in a horrific tit for tat blood bath from which there was no means of escape and no end. On February 6 I experienced another kind of communal shock on the Shankill, not perhaps as intense, but still remarkable, the shock of realisation that there was hope, there was a

way out of the stalemate of their lives, that good things would come and they were already part of that exciting reality.”

**CENT/1/26/16A 1993 - 1997 Central Community Relations Unit (CCRU):
Equality – Meetings with Political Community and
Church Representatives.**

Papers cover a wide range of topics including the introduction of Sunday Trading Laws, Drumcree, Irish Language, and the Ulster Scots Language. In a meeting between Sir Patrick Mayhew, Secretary

of State, and the four main Church Leaders on 2 April 1996, the issue of Sunday Trading was discussed. “The Moderator opened the debate on this by saying that it was well known that the Churches had concerns about the prospects for Sunday Trading. He said they represented a large body of public opinion which was both respectable and realistic. He thought that having a day of rest was particularly important now. There was too much stress in Northern Ireland as it was and he was not sure who wanted Sunday to be the same as any other day. He thought that the peace and quiet which characterised Northern Ireland’s rural areas would be eroded and ultimately destroyed. He was nevertheless realistic and recognised that freedom of choice was a crucial aspect...The Cardinal supported the Moderator by saying all four Church Leaders were united on this issue. It was not just question of religious reasons; there were social and human reasons for opposing it as well aimed at maintaining what was an extremely high quality of life in Northern Ireland.” The same document discusses parades on which the Secretary of State noted he was engaged in talks with a number of relevant parties but that “regrettably there had been no softening of attitudes.” “Archbishop Eames reported in discussions he had undertaken recently with the Portadown Orangemen. He had been encouraged that they were making plain that they did not want other groups taking part in their march. But in every other respect their position had hardened. They were determined to go down the Garvaghy Road and to start their march from Drumcree. They had claimed that the problems in Larne associated with last year’s Portadown march would be nothing compared to what they were prepared to contemplate in Portadown itself. They were extremely determined. He agreed with the Secretary of State that the Churches would work most effectively privately rather than issuing public statements.”

A confidential note of a meeting between Sir John Wheeler, NIO Minister, David Trimble MP and Ken Maginnis MP on 27 March 1996 discussed decommissioning. "Mr Trimble said that Unionists would require a clear agreement of what exactly is going to happen at the beginning of talks on 10 June. They believed that HMG had to make it clear that Mitchell had to be crossed at the beginning of the talks. Ken Maginnis intervened to say, not just the six Mitchell principles but the Mitchell report as a package. Mr Trimble agreed and said that the reason for his insistence was that he was sure that the Irish and others would try to sneak Sinn Fein into talks without a proper commitment to Mitchell. In response to a question from Mr Trimble about whether it was our perception that the PIRA/Sinn Fein were 'all over the place at the moment' the Minister said that we know there is debate going on and we had to work on the assumption that the hard men will win. At best Sinn Fein might come back with a weak ceasefire to ensure the Unionist or HMG's rejection of it as a ticket into all-party talks; this could give PIRA the excuse for full scale violence."

**CENT/1/26/18A 1994 - 1997 Central Community Relations Unit (CCRU):
Meetings With Churches and Church Leaders
(Part 2).**

A paper dated 20 February 1997 on a Dinner at Hillsborough Castle between the NIO Minister Michael Ancram and Presbyterian Church leaders on 18 February, discusses the role of the Church

leaders at Drumcree the year before. "The Moderator said that after coming very close to a deal last year, only for it to fall apart at the last minute, discussions must take place early on with the parties involved and a local agreement made. He thought the Garvaghy Road Residents had decide they need not do anything last year, erroneously as it turned out, and hoped they might learn from that lesson." The text is annotated in pen "a very odd reading of Garvaghy."

A note for the record drafted by JR Fisher and dated 18 February 1997 refers to the Irish side meeting Methodist representatives at Maryfield. On the issue of Drumcree "The President [Rev Kenneth Best] regretted that his and other Church leaders efforts last year had not succeeded. What he said was tinged with a sense of having been 'used.' The UUP leader had invited Church Leaders' involvement perhaps only to 'side-step his own

responsibilities.’ Moreover this had been followed up with a letter of appreciation to only one of the group. Any invitation to participate this year would be willingly accepted by all four leaders, but only against a more detailed understanding of what was expected of them. He regretted that ‘concessions’ to the Orange Order in the Lower Ormeau Road (although he saw as ‘questionable’ the RUC having used Land Rovers to bottle up local residents for so long) had not found reciprocation on the Orange side at Drumcree...The President would have preferred that Secretary of State not to have gone on record admitting that it was because of force of numbers and the likely collapse of public order that the Parade had been allowed to proceed.”

CENT/1/26/21A 1997

Central Community Relations Unit (CCRU): The Famine.

File contains papers relating to the commemoration of 150 years since the Irish Famine, and other commemorations. A Foreign and Commonwealth

Office letter dated 15 September 1997, on the issue of commemorating the 1798 rebellion states, “We are not aware of any specifically anti-British campaigns that are being planned, similar to some associated with the Famine commemorations. But we should indeed be prepared for some flak on this issue, as on most Anglo-Irish anniversaries.”

In a confidential letter dated 10 June 1997, PN Bell, writes to Ms Bharucha to support efforts in dissuading Secretary of State Dr Mo Mowlam from writing an historical article on the famine. “As you rightly say, the Prime Minister has already said about as much as can safely be said by a senior British political figure on this ancient, but infinitely sensitive – and complex – subject. Of which not the least important lesson may be in how disasters in public policy can result from the highest minded of intentions....So unless the Secretary of State is to write about the ambiguities of history ‘A Post Modern Perspective’.... I fear that, unless the Secretary of State or her officials [] which I am unaware, we need to produce anything which is not tendentious, political damaging and likely to be shredded by the professional historians.”

A restricted letter from Donald Lamont, Republic of Ireland Department dated 2 June 1997 discusses the Prime Minister’s statement on the famine. “I do not think I could have wished for a better response to the Prime Minister’s statement than that of the Taoiseach reported in your telegram number 178. The Irish Embassy have also been warm in their

reaction. And if John Taylor is no more than 'dismissive' then no harm may have been done in that quarter. The most obvious downside would be attempts by the Irish to exaggerate the potential parallel with Bloody Sunday. The situations seem to me so different that that ought not to be too difficult to handle."

**CENT/1/26/22A 1996 - 1997 Central Community Relations Unit (CCRU):
Boycotting.**

Papers relate to the issue of the boycotting of Protestant owned business following Drumcree, and the Church protests at Harryville. A confidential note dated 3 December 1996 by Tom Clarke to Sir John

Wheeler and Sir Patrick Mayhew, Secretary of State provides an update on ongoing protests in the Ballymena area, and offers advice as to whether either Minister should publically intervene in the matter. "The Minister will be aware, in early September, pickets appeared outside a number of Roman Catholic churches in Unionist parts of the North Antrim area. It was claimed these pickets were in retaliation for the blockading of an Orange Order parade in Dunloy on 8 September although there was speculation it was linked to the boycott of protestant business. On the first weekend of the pickets around 400 Loyalists took part. The action was supported by Ian Paisley Junior and DUP councillor for the Bushmills area David McAllister. Church goers were able to attend services at Bushmills and Dervock but the Mass at Harryville had to be abandoned. Parishioners were subject to verbal abuse and on isolated occurrence there was some jostling and pushing. There was widespread condemnation of the action."

**CENT/1/26/23A 1997 Central Community Relations Unit (CCRU): North
Report (Part 4).**

File mainly relates to the topics of parades and discusses powers to ban parades and marches, and to require the registration of bands. It covers the development of legislation around parading, and the Parading Commission.

A confidential note from SJ Leach dated 7 August 1997 discusses the possible expanded role of the Parades Commission. "This submission deals with the idea of a possible

expanded role for the Parades Commission, to address the Orange Order concern that the new arrangements will unfairly concentrate only on the physical manifestations of Protestant cultural identity (i.e. marches) without addressing aspects of nationalist cultural expression which may be offensive to Unionists. The Order suggested in the run up to the Drumcree parade this year that, to redress the balance, the commission should have its remit extended to cover not just parades but any aspect of cultural expression which might infringe the rights of others or be offensive or antagonistic to a significant section of the community. The example quoted at the time concerned traffic control arrangements around GAA matches, which (according to the Order) are often left in the hands of the GAA themselves, so that Protestants driving by feel intimidated when they are held up for considerable periods, by stewards whom they often regard as active republicans, while the last spectators are admitted to the ground.”

CENT/1/26/34A 1997

**Northern Ireland Forum Secretariat (NIFS): Forum
General Volume 4.**

File contains details of a meeting between Secretary of State, Mo Mowlam and Chairman of the NI Forum, Mr Gorman on 28 July 1997. “The Secretary of State congratulated Mr Gorman on the confirmation of his

appointment as Chairman...and that it wasn't an easy job....Mr Gorman replied that he had no one to ask for advice on how to carry out the job as the speakers from the previous Northern Ireland Assemblies were dead. He had thought of contacting Betty Boothroyd to seek advice although he appreciated that this might lead to speculation that some form of NI devolved assembly was about to be set up.” The file also contains a press release dated 24 June 1997 in which it is announced “Dr Mowlam announces radical shake up in Civil Service appointments procedures.” This related to senior posts in the NI Civil Service and discussed how the head of the NI Civil Service will be appointed now that Sir David Fell announced his intention to retire early. The file also contains a number of confidence building measures for Unionists which were put forward by the UUP. A confidential NIO memo dated 31 July 1997 discusses these proposals and states “the clear implication is that a positive response on all or any of these items by early September would make it easier for the UUP to support the Government's approach to the political negotiations and (conceivably) to enter substantive negotiations with Sinn Fein.”

CENT/1/26/36A 1997

Northern Ireland Forum Secretariat (NIFS): Forum Media Issues Volume 2 (1997).

File primarily consists of weekly information bulletins, and covers issues such as Gerry Adams visit to No 10, "The Government has made it clear, following the entry of Sinn Fein to the talks process that they will be treated the same as other political parties. In the same way that he meets other parties the Prime Minister will therefore meet Sinn Fein on Thursday; the beef industry, decommissioning, parades, security issues, the repeal of the Emergency Provisions Act, setting up of a Bloody Sunday Inquiry, Prisoner transfers and the continuation of all party talks.

CENT/1/26/41 1997

Northern Ireland Forum Secretariat (NIFS): Papers Relating to Forum Meetings 28/11/97 to 12/12/97.

File contains details of the debates held by the Northern Ireland Forum. On 12 December 1997, Rev William McCrea discusses his reaction to Gerry Adams visit to No 10 Downing Street the day before.

"I am sure that all decent, law abiding citizens were outraged and disgusted at the parading of known terrorists into 10 Downing Street yesterday. That Gerry Adams and Martin McGuinness, whose history the people of Ulster know only too well, were taken into the arms of the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom was despicable and disgraceful." Lord Alderdice states "While I understand [Rev McCrea's] sentiments, I think the Unionists' refusal to meet Gerry Adams is perhaps unwise. I would love to be able to say that in the considerable number of meetings that my colleagues and I have had with the Republican leadership during the cease-fires I have found genuine preparedness to compromise, to end violence for good and commit the Republican movement entirely to the Democratic process. I wish I could say with conviction that there was real preparedness to meet the Unionist representatives or at least the Alliance Party, even half way, but I cannot... I have not seen any movement or preparedness to compromise. Sinn Fein's public statement have been entirely reflected in the private meetings.... They relentlessly pursue their own political agenda by whatever means they feel will be most effective... I do not think that there has been any moral change, any change of heart. The decision to put violence to the side was taken not because it is wrong but because it has been unsuccessful and inconvenient. But this is precisely why, though some may think it

is a paradox, it is important to meet with the Republican movement, Mr Trimble says that these people are not living in the real world, they are not prepared to talk about an honourable compromise. Many Nationalists wonder how he can be so sure when he is not prepared to talk to Republicans... I have met them and put them to the test. I am glad that the Prime Minister too has met Sinn Fein... I think that real dialogue is the last thing many Republicans want. When the IRA broke the last ceasefire it was all too easy for Republicans to say 'It is all the British Governments fault. We had a ceasefire but the Prime Minister would not meet us'... In the absence of such contact, there can be no doubt whom the Republicans will blame if they go back to violence. They will not blame the IRA or themselves for their own refusal to move, they will blame those who refused to meet them."

CENT/1/26/43A 1994 - 1997 Meeting with Irish Ministers.

A note for the record drafted by JR Fisher and dated 21 May 1996 discusses Baroness Denton's Dinner with the Joint Secretary. "Fish was on the plate, but beef (and BSE) were on the menu. There was

distinct sympathy on the Irish side for our problems in the North but also a determined defence of their protectionist response, which the Irish felt should be understood and accepted by reason of the particular importance of the beef industry to the South. Economic hardship apart, the Irish side acknowledged that, presentationally their response was seen to have been 'partitionist' and unhelpful to North/South Trade. It had also added to views expressed by David Trimble in his recent speech to the Institute of Directors in Dublin in which he had been critical of the Belfast/Dublin Economic corridor project and said that Ireland was no more an important market for NI than the North of England (or Scotland). Baroness Denton recorded her disappointment over the remarks and their tone, not least the criticism made of the joint approach to tourism was misjudged." An earlier confidential memo from PN Bell on the same dinner, discusses the BSE crises in NI. "What was not, however, in Mr Fisher's note was ground covered over lunch about BSE, Mr Loughran gave Mr Donaghue a deservedly hard time over the attitude taken by the Republic to protect, in the narrowest 26 county, partitionist spirit, their 'national herd' from contamination from that on our side of the Border, The much publicised deployment of the Irish security forces against the menace of Northern cattle

(by implication Catholic as well as Protestant – if that is quite the happiest description) and the rhetoric of the Irish Minister for Agriculture had also been dismal – and from more than one point of view. It had also exposed those leading Protestant members of the NI business community who had argued consistently and, to a degree, courageously in favour of developing further North/South economic links. Although Mr Loughran was far too diplomatic to say so, Dublin's rhetoric and actions had constituted, from a nationalist point of view, something of an own goal."

**CENT/1/26/47A 1996 - 1997 Anglo-Irish Intergovernmental Conference
General Vol. 9.**

File covers a wide range of issues to be discussed at the Anglo Irish Intergovernmental conference including; fisheries and the Hague principle, Celtic Language at St Mary's University Belfast, the Irish

Bid for special Olympics 2003, Action for Community employment (ACE), references to Bloody Sunday and a request for apology by the Irish side, reduction in the number of Education and Library Boards in NI, reorganisation of maternity services, security force activities, Parades, Prison Issues, and policing issues,

In a note for the record drafted by JR Fisher dated 24 January 1997, relating to a delegation meeting on 23 January 1997; "Mr Donoghue said there were growing concerns about the likelihood of the parachute regiment being deployed in East Tyrone. Mr Fisher said that he was aware of these concerns and those of the Irish side and was awaiting advice following earlier Irish side representations but that the regiment was already deployed in Armagh without local difficulty having arisen, or complaints of misconduct. He understood why there should be the depth of feeling in areas such as Coalisland but the regiment (although highly motivated) was trained and briefed on local sensitivities ahead of the (previously successful) tours. Mr Donoghue believed that this was a bad time to be sending the regiment to East Tyrone and that doing so foolishly presented another opportunity to show that Nationalist opinion was being disregarded. It was provocative and insensitive."

A confidential note of a delegation meeting held on 13 December 1996 recognises the efforts of John Hume MP in brokering a satisfactory outcome to the last Apprentice Boys March. Another confidential note of the meeting held on 28 November 1996 refers to a

debate held in the [NI] Forum on 15 November reflecting on those that work in Maryfield. Quoted from the debate “Even the prosperous Burghers of Holywood were so outraged at the Anglo Irish Agreement in 1985 that the Maryfield bunker had to be virtually the most fortified place in Northern Ireland, and that remains the case today. Let us imagine for one moment, if we can the life of a civil servant buried away in that building. If he is from Northern Ireland, he dare not tell his friends and neighbours what he does, because of the shame and opprobrium. If he is from the Irish Republic, he is furtively ferried in. He sits in the Maryfield Bunker, somewhat similar to an astronaut sitting in the space shuttle. He can never venture out and meet the people of Northern Ireland. Occasionally – perhaps at a wine and cheese party on St Patrick’s Day, or at Christmas – an ill-advised Judge or a Police officer seeking to be promoted to Chief Constable may come in and make small talk over the canapes. But these people never – and never will- have any direct contact with the ordinary, decent people of Northern Ireland. So to justify their existence they have to find some exercises, some routines, like Astronauts, and Indeed we see that quite often now.” JR Fisher notes in response “Well at least it was more flattering than Mr Empey’s recent description of us all in Maryfield as ‘Death Watch Beetles’....”

A memo drafted by PN Bell to JR Fisher dated 22 November 1996 entitled “Debunking the Bunker – The Truth about Maryfield” attempts to promote the work of Maryfield. “If we were to be paid by results, I do not believe we would be living in fear of excessively large bonuses this year.”

**CENT/1/26/48 1997 Anglo-Irish Intergovernmental Conference
Minutes / Briefing – Jan 1997 to Election.**

The confidential plenary records of the Intergovernmental conference on 12 March 1997, discusses the issue of parades. “The Secretary of State reported a disturbing hardening of positions.

He had seen the Garvaghy Road Residents with Mr Hume and Mrs Rodgers: And he much welcomes Mr Hume’s engagement; but he had gained no indication of willingness to move from the principle of ‘No Orange feet on the Garvaghy Road.’ The District Lodges who had come to see him recently... were no less adamant that they would be there. Rev Bingham and Mr Watson were trying genuinely and hard, to find a compromise; they

feared a repeat of Drumcree and its implications for the Orange Order.” Within the same document, Michael Ancram expresses concern at the current attitude of the Alliance party. “Lord Alderdice had spoken privately of the talks as a dead end. It would be dangerous, and liable to give succour to the likes of UKUP, if he spoke publicly in that sense. It would be important to try to divert him.”

CENT/1/26/49A 1997

**Anglo-Irish Secretariat – Delegation Meetings /
General Papers – Jan 1997 to Election.**

Confidential note dated 14 March 1996 entitled “Snog of a lifetime”; “Dr Mowlam prefers doing business “dry” to be followed if necessary, by a not

necessarily wholly teetotal entertainment: work first, pleasure later. Which brings me to the osculation. Dr Mowlam opened proceedings, before going on to her mission statement, by presenting both Mr Dowling and myself with a ‘Comic Relief Kissing Kit.’

CENT/1/26/50A 1997

**Anglo-Irish Secretariat – Delegation Meetings /
General Papers – Oct 1997 to Dec 1997.**

File contains Confidential memo dated 15 December 1997 from PN Bell (British Secretary) to Mr Lavery of DANI on a possible deal of the Hague preference, discusses a deal in which both British and Irish side can take political credit for negotiation of fish stocks in Irish sea. Looks at the issue of addressing penalty points in Northern Ireland, for Southern drivers.

Speech by Taoiseach Bertie Ahern to the American Chamber of Commerce 24 Nov 1997, with US Ambassador Jean Kennedy Smith in attendance; notes peace process in NI and booming economy in South and notes who both have benefited substantially from the involvement and support of the United States. On the talks process in NI “The talks threaten no one. Their outcome will be influenced and shaped by all participants. No party can realistically expect to get everything they want. At the same time, everyone will gain.”

Confidential note for the record from John Fisher Anglo-Irish Secretariat dated 26 November 1997 of a dinner at Maryfield with Mr Carville PS of DENI on the issue of politics “The other key element of the evening was the Irish perspective of the talks process. Mr Donoghue felt that the Irish Government/Ulster Unionist axis was the most important at the present time. Sinn Fein had been told repeatedly by the Irish side rather they had to accept the principle of consent (it was not a question of ‘if’ but ‘when’) but felt that although the Sinn Fein leadership might not recommend the eventual package to be put to the electorate, they would eventually sign up to it... The Irish side recognised that the present Sinn Fein leadership had difficulties with militants in their organisation and might not eventually bring all of them with them... As to the Ulster Unionists Mr Donoghue reported that notwithstanding a difficult first meeting David Trimble had with Mr Andrews, their subsequent meeting and that between Mr Trimble and the Taoiseach in London had been good, and established a more ‘settled relationship’.

Confidential memo dated 14 October 1997 from PN Bell to PS/Secretary of State discusses the Anglo Irish Christmas party and the need to now invite representatives of Sinn Fein as they are full members of the talks and a constitutional party, and the potential impact on Unionist attendance. “The Christmas spirit will not come entirely free this year.”



Department of Finance and Personnel

DFP/26/9 1995 - 1997 Internet Security

File includes early drafts of the NICS Internet Security policy and what is and is not permissible to do via the NICS Internet connection. Guidelines for the Acceptable use of the Internet, June 1997, Section 7,

State "Do not expect too much of the internet. The service is far from perfect; it can fluctuate between excellence and standstill. There are many reasons for this situation including the number of users on the system, the location of the information, the size of the file to be downloaded, and the time of day, e.g. it is better to access information in the USA during the UK morning."

DFP/26/10 1996 - 1997 IT Security – The Millennium Software Problem.

Papers discuss the preparations made by departments in NI to prepare for the Y2K millennium bug. Includes papers relating to a conference entitled "The

Millennium Bomb" for the public sector and DED's efforts to "galvanise the private sector into action before it is too late." [letter dated 7 Feb 1997 from Gerry Loughran to JS Semple]



HA/32/1/677 1938 - 1945 Internees – Police Dossiers & General decisions etc.

File contains papers relating to internment during World War 2 under the Civil Authorities Special Powers Act.
Main content relates to lists of men

interned throughout 1940. A notice from the Derry Labour Party to the Minister for Home Affairs dated 22 November 1939 states “The Derry Labour Party protests against the detention without charge or trial of sixty-five men in Derry jail. The reason for the passing of the above resolution by the members of the Derry Labour Party, protesting against the detention of prisoners without charge or trial, is that we feel that the use of the Special Powers Act in such a way is a threat to the democratic liberties of all members of working class organisations.” Includes newspaper cuttings, details of men interned throughout 1940 and correspondence.



Department of Health and Social Services

HSS/13/49/73A 1992 - 1997 Adoption of Romanian Children.

Looks at illegal international adoption, particularly from Romania and China. Includes some references of non-official ways to adopt. The file contains some redactions to protect the identities of children. A

DHSS letter dated 24 September 1994 to the Adoption panel discusses the issue of NI couples circumventing agreed procedures around adoption. "In some parts of Romania itself, particularly rural areas, the adoption agreements drawn up by the central body in Bucharest in conjunction with various countries are not very popular. I gather that the agreements are seen by some officials... as interference in local affairs. As a result, many couples keen to obtain a child are finding that they can go to certain areas in Romania, find a child and get local officials to sanction the Child's removal despite the terms of the agreement..... When the Immigration and Nationality Department of the Home Office does discover a case of a Romanian child being brought to the UK outside the terms of the agreement, it draws the case to the attention of the appropriate Health Department.... Immigration officers in such cases normally issue a twelve month visa in respect of the child. One of these days an officer might refuse to issue a visa and return the child to Romania on the next plane but it would be a brave official who would take that step in the present climate!"

HSS/13/50/49A 1993 - 1996 Abortion Meeting with Nuala Fennell TD.

The file contains various discussions on abortion law in Northern Ireland. It discusses a case of an Eastern Board resident receiving abortion services in Scotland and the Scottish Health board's attempt to recoup this

cost; Notes the current legal position of abortion services in Northern Ireland in the 90s; In a meeting with Nuala Fennell TD, on the subject of abortion in NI, 25 September 1992, it was noted "her interest in abortion counselling arose because of the 'Grogan' case in the Irish Republic. She said that 'a plant' or spy had been placed in an abortion counselling clinic; the plant had obtained evidence that the clinic was providing information on the

location of abortion facilities in Great Britain. The Irish High Court ruled that the actions of the counselling service were illegal.”

HSS/13/50/60 1993 - 1996 Acute Services Unit Abortion Issues.

File contains a number of papers relating to Abortion issues, and particularly around the cases of Miss K (1993) and Miss A (1994). On the issue of the High

Court ruling on Miss K, DR JF McKenna in a letter to Dr Harbison dated 6 December 1993 states “The position is inherently absurd. I cannot imagine how Doctors persuaded themselves that there was uncertainty in the law when a firm judgement has been handed down from the High Court, a judgement which I am bound to say confirms the view that I have expressed hat the law is not all that unclear.... Perhaps those minded to promote reform of the law will find some reassurance in this judgement but reforming zeal is not easily allayed.”



Northern Ireland Office

NIO/10/3/5A 1983 - 1986 Northern Ireland Office – War Plan

File mainly consists of preparations made by Emergency Planning Branch and NI Prison operations branch in the event of the outbreak of war. The preparations are made in the event of a nuclear attack on the UK and NATO countries, and how that would impact the running of the prisons.

