

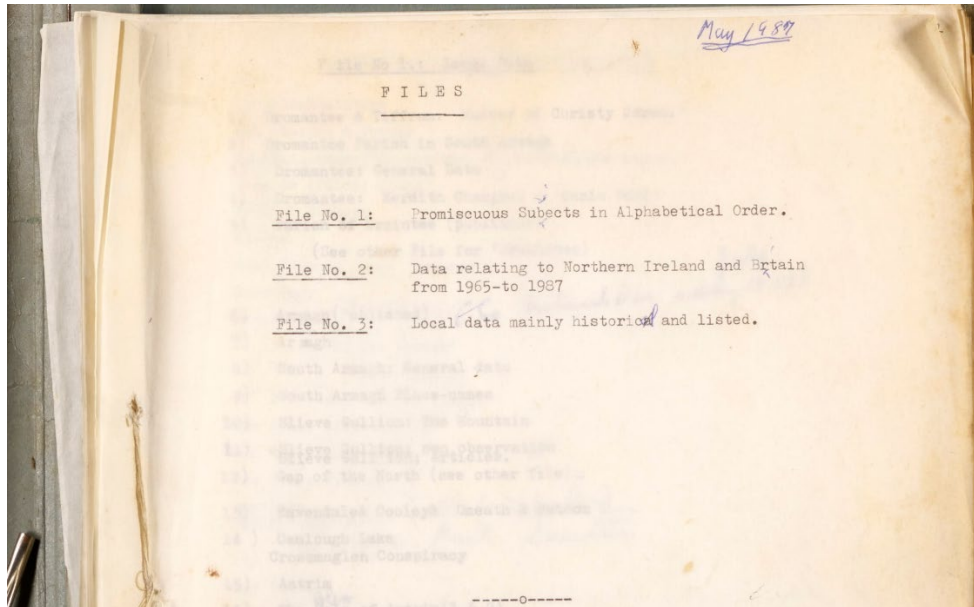
## Research Files Blog

The 'Now We're Talking' Project continues to catalogue the papers of writer, broadcaster and folklorist Michael J. Murphy by moving onto the large collection of 'research files'. This section of the collection consists of 485 brown envelopes each containing typed notes and articles by Michael J as well as a large amount of newspaper clippings. The contents of each envelope relate to the subject label found written on the outside. Murphy arranged these files into 3 distinct groups, 'Local Data', 'Promiscuous Subjects', and 'Data Relating to Northern Ireland and Britain'.



*Boxes of Research Files out for organisation.*

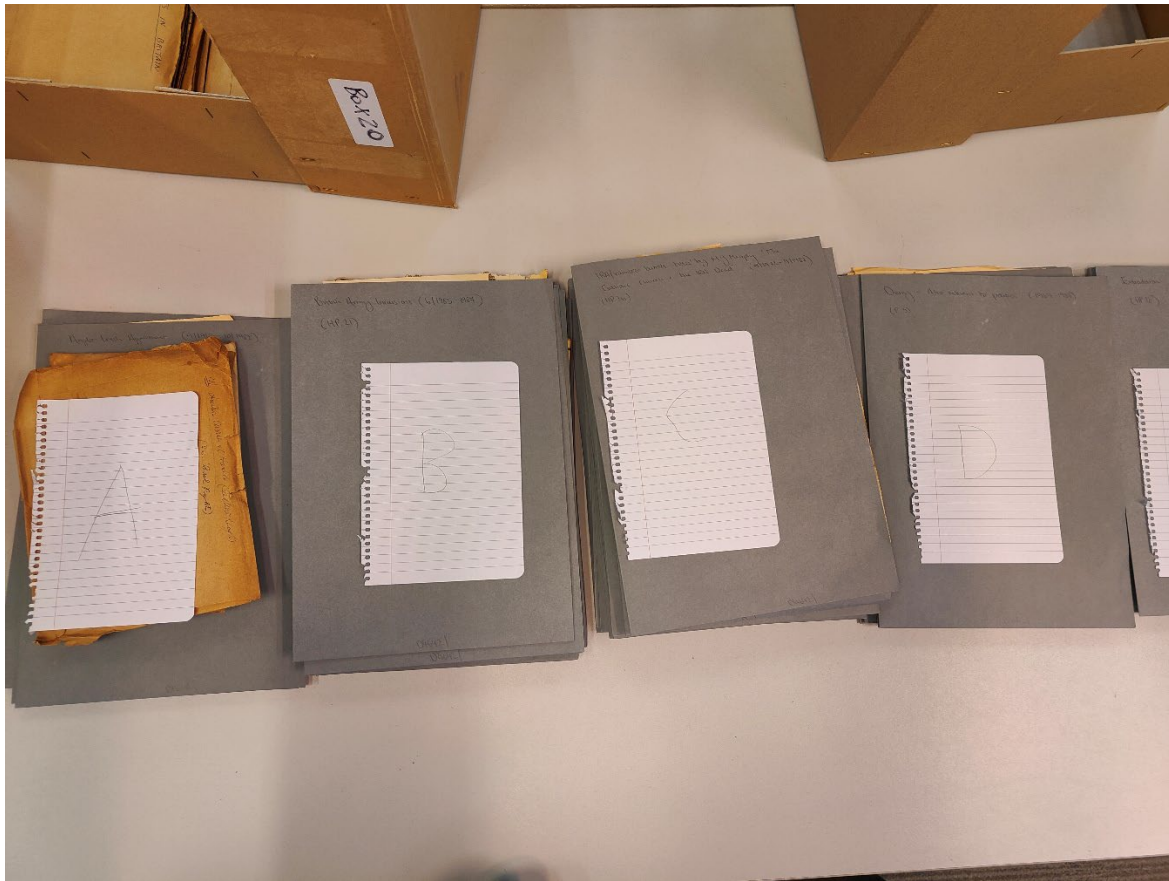
The first task the team had to carry out was to list the titles of each of the 485 research files. By creating our own list, we could be certain about which files were deposited to PRONI and figure out any differences from Murphy's index of the files. Once the files had been listed, we rearranged the files in an order based on Murphy's index [D4642/11/1/1].



*First page of file index showing the structure for arrangement.*

The first section, 'Local Data', Murphy's order was retained. In the second section, 'Promiscuous Subject Arranged Alphabetically', the order has mostly been maintained but we have put a stricter alphabetical order on the arrangement. The third section is 'Data relating to Northern Ireland and Britain' which mainly includes topics relating to the conflict in Northern Ireland called 'The Troubles' as well as earlier history which provides context for the later conflict. The final section contains some files relating to local history and stories mainly from South Armagh.

When this order was settled, we had to physically place all files into this order with the archival boxes we are storing them in. This required us to use rooms in PRONI with large table so that we could spread all the boxes out and begin creating bundles of files according to their corresponding section and letter in alphabetical order. Many days were spent with the research files spread around us consulting Michael J's list and checking our own list against in to find which box the file was stored in. This tedious process was worth it as we became familiar with the subjects Murphy was interested in and we eventually were able to place all files in order.



*Bundles of files being arranged into alphabetical order.*

From here we started to assign each file a PRONI reference number. As we assigned these numbers, we created a new entry on the catalogue for each file and removed the contents of the brown envelopes placing them into acid free enclosures to ensure long term preservation.

With each file given a PRONI reference number, the pagination of the files earmarked for digitization could begin. This involves placing the contents of each file into either date order or the order Murphy detailed on the envelope and numbering each page with a PRONI reference and a consecutive page number. This helps our reprographics team keep the pages in order when they are digitizing them.

1448  
25 Oct 11

From:- MICHAEL J. MURPHY,  
Droghda,  
Newry, CO. DOWN.

FROM THE BACK OF SLIEVE GULLION.

by  
MICHAEL J. MURPHY.

It's a long time now since I first read the phrase:  
"You'd think he came from the back of Slieve Gullion."  
Slieve Gullion, as you know---Ireland's mountain of mystery and  
legend---is in South Armagh. But being very young, the  
reading of that phrase about my home mountain didn't put me in  
a good humour; and when I came across it a few times later,  
indeed, the humour over it hadn't much ~~improved~~ improved!  
However, one could always 'humour the humour' ~~so to speak~~, by  
thinking that our side of the mountain wasn't the back of  
Slieve Gullion, but the other side. Social scales run like  
that anyhow in a mountainy country; the further <sup>up</sup> ~~up~~ the mountain  
you live---well, the more you're from "the back of Slieve  
Gullion" <sup>to</sup> ~~so~~ speak.

The phrase was well known in Ulster not so long ago to  
describe a backward person, shall I say? The essence of  
the gawdiah countryman; a fellow who knew nothing bar heather  
and whins, and the scornful wind scurrying among the rocks.  
Or if a mother, say, wanted to reprimand her young son for

An example of the contents of some of the research files. Here is an article titled 'From The Back of Slieve Gullion' by Michael J Murphy [D4642/11/2/3].

All of this work is essential for the preservation and accessibility of these documents and would not be possible without the help of the Archives Revealed consortium grant. We look forward to making these research files available online through the PRONI eCatalogue and on site in Tí Chulainn in Mullaghbane, Co. Armagh.