

Documents on high profile cases added to Troubles archive

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DOCUMENTS detailing high profile cases including the Birmingham Six and Guildford Four are among almost 1,000 records now available to view online as part of a Troubles-related archive.

A batch of 960 documents, covering events related to Northern Ireland from 1986-88, were added to the Conflict Archive on the Internet (Cain) website this week as part of an ongoing partnership involving Ulster University and the National Archives of Ireland (NAI).

The history of the unique archive was thrown into doubt earlier this year when Ulster University said that unless extra funding can be found to curate Cain it would become a "static archive" – not a live project which is constantly updated and expanded.

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Catherine Martin

However, the archive was saved after the Irish government announced funding for a new project which will now be maintained and updated by NAI.

The newly released material covers a wide range of topics from the workings of the Anglo-Irish Agreement in its initial phase to how the governments in Dublin and London sought to manage their relationship in the face of challenging issues.

This included legal debates about the extradition of those suspected of paramilitary offences or the high profile cases such as the miscarriages of justice of the Birmingham Six and Guildford Four.

It also includes documents on the IRA Enniskillen bombing in November



RELEASED: Gerry Conlon emerges from the Old Bailey in London in October 1989 after the Guildford Four's convictions were quashed. That case, as well that of the Birmingham Six and the IRA's Remembrance Sunday bombing in Enniskillen, are among those detailed in documents made available as part of the Cain project

PICTURE: Hugh Russell

1987 and the aftermath of the SAS killings in Gibraltar in March 1988.

Catherine Martin, the Republic's Minister for Media, Tourism, Arts, Culture, Sport and the Gaeltacht, said: "This collaboration between Cain and the National Archives clearly demonstrates the importance and value of providing free access to public records so that they can be used by researchers, academics, teachers, students and the wider public to better understand the social, political and historical contexts that

shape our society.

"These records offer an invaluable insight into the difficult years leading up to the eventual ceasefire and peace process in Northern Ireland."

Dr Brendan Lynn, Ulster University's Cain deputy director, said: "Ulster University and Cain are once again pleased to have been able to work with the National Archives of Ireland to update the existing section which will now provide users with material spanning the years from 1965 to 1988.

"In addition it has allowed Cain to

continue with its long-term objective of working with individuals, groups or organisations with relevant information to produce digital versions of their material and make it much more accessible to a wider audience.

"Finally I would like to place on record our thanks to the Reconciliation Fund of the Department of Foreign Affairs for providing the support to allow CAIN to maintain its partnership with the National Archives, Ireland".

The archive can be viewed at cain.ulster.ac.uk.



'WE NEED TO DELIVER': Roderic O'Gorman

Government start 'not ideal' admits Greens minister

THE new Irish government has not had an ideal start, the Children's minister has said, and that his Green Party colleagues need to work on their communication.

On Thursday, two Green Party TDs, Neasa Hourigan and Joe O'Brien failed to back the Government's position on a bill relating to evictions and rent freezes.

Green Party TD Roderic O'Gorman said he has been assured by them that they will not vote against the Government again.

"We need a united Government to deliver on the programme for government and that programme was ratified by our party members.

"Seventy six per cent in favour of it and there is a lot of really good things in it that our members support and I support, while there is stuff that Fianna Fáil and Fine Gael members would find difficult," he said.

"There is stuff that my party members and I find difficult, but our party members gave us a mandate to enter that coalition government.

"We have to support the programme for Government and that means supporting the legislation that is provided.

"I know in the last number of weeks we have had a government that was formed in the middle of a pandemic.

"I know that the Government has had to have a lot to deal with this week and I know that is part of the reason why we have had these breakdowns in communication internally within the party and we have to do much more to address that," he told Newstalk radio's *On The Record* show.

"Going forward, I think it is absolutely essential that the entire Green Party and indeed all parties are supportive of the Government."

On Saturday, Tanaiste and Fine Gael leader Leo Varadkar said the new Government got off to a "rocky start" and