

Public Record Office of Northern Ireland Annual Report 2004-05



Information in the Digital Age



Public Record Office of Northern Ireland

Annual Report and Accounts for the year ended 31 March 2005

Laid before the Houses of Parliament
by the Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure
in accordance with Paragraph 12(2) and (4) of the Schedule to the
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PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE
OF NORTHERN IRELAND



Foreword

The Public Record Office of Northern Ireland (PRONI) has the oldest legislation of any of the national archive institutions in the United Kingdom - The National Archives operates under a 1958 Act and the National Archives of Scotland has an Act dating back to 1937. In the case of PRONI the legislation is more than 80 years old. The Archives Policy for Northern Ireland (APNI) consultation exercise rightly identified the review of the Public Records Act (NI) 1923 as important.





PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE
OF NORTHERN IRELAND

Of course, there was an underlying and reasonable assumption, namely that a piece of legislation born of thinking in the early 1920s could not adequately meet the needs of modern archival practice, whether in terms of underpinning effective records management or of ensuring that PRONI could continue to acquire the full range of archives - government and private - that has so enriched its holdings over the decades.

PRONI set about the task of researching the archive legislation in other jurisdictions and teased out points regarded as of actual or potential consequence. However, the immediate work ground to a halt. This happened for the simplest of reasons - the 1923 Act was given what might be termed 'a legal health check', and it was not found wanting. Between them the Northern Ireland government's first Legal Adviser, Sir Arthur Quekett, and the first Deputy Keeper of the Records, Dr David Chart, produced a piece of legislation that has stood the test of time in every important respect. It is true that some of the terminology - e.g., the use of the term 'Imperial records' - sounds alien to the modern ear, but the fact of the matter is that what was a piece of robust and practical archive legislation in 1923 has been judged to be just as robust and practical 80 years later. The exact way in which the Act is used and some of the everyday terminology may change, but all the essential ingredients remain in place to support the integrated

archive service conceived by Quekett and Chart. It is their lasting memorial.

The public records legislation is the necessary legal framework within which PRONI operates. It is not, and never was, a dusty collection of clauses. Rather it is a springboard for the delivery of services. Today that means action across an ever-increasing range of archive-related and records management work. This *Annual Report* gives an in-depth picture of the operations of PRONI and of its commitments during the last year. It reflects the realities of running a small agency that has no single product - operations would be a great deal less complicated in that situation - but rather has a wide, indeed growing, range of responsibilities and stakeholders who properly expect to get expert advice and support.

The *Report* reflects something of the pressures that arise when the whole employment environment has changed in relation to curatorial staff. Until recently, the skills of the archivist and the records manager might have been regarded as worthy, perhaps even mildly interesting, but most people would not have seen them as having a central importance in the running of a business area, whether in the Public Sector or the Private Sector. The situation was beginning to change slowly prior to Freedom of Information but there can be no doubt that FOI has led to an explosion in demand for the skills of the trained archivist and the experienced records management



practitioner. This has impacted significantly on PRONI in terms of increased demand for the expertise found within the organisation and, rather negatively, in showing that the existing pay and grading structures for curatorial staff have become impediments to the successful recruitment and retention of such staff. Put simply, the pay and the opportunities elsewhere are greater. It is a situation that PRONI recognises must be remedied, but progress has been relatively slow.

The APNI exercise progressed significantly during the year: the consultation document and the associated Equality Impact Assessment attracted 28 responses, which proved that there is a significant level of interest in the archival heritage of Northern Ireland. Having listened to the different views expressed, the Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure will produce its response and the action plan that will deliver on its conclusions.

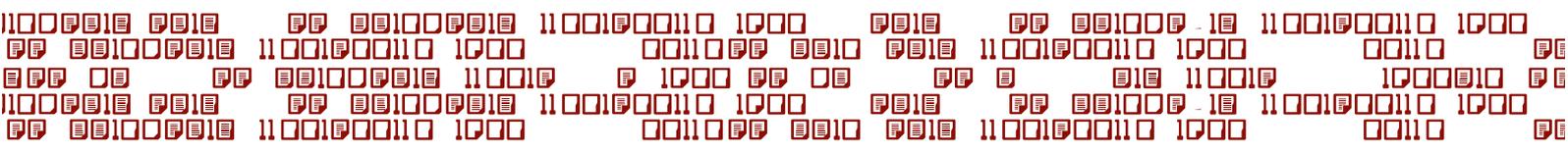
It is said that jackdaws are attracted to sparkling objects and will away with them if given the opportunity. There is sometimes a misconception about archives that almost puts it in the jackdaw category - wholly focused on, and exhilarated only by, the acquiring of material and with little interest in any one else who might stake a claim to this-or-that item or items. That is very far indeed from the everyday reality of the work in PRONI. Much of the effort during the year fits neatly into the category of behind-the-scenes grind.

The appraisal of records - the application of the trained eye to the assessment of the research value of an item - may produce the odd gem but it is largely a time-consuming and mentally challenging operation. There is no room for error or for distraction. The appraisal of 75,000 files during the year was a massive challenge that fully engaged the professionalism and expertise of PRONI staff.

The staff undertaking appraisal work was also committed to building up the foundations of records management by producing disposal schedules in partnership with Public Sector bodies, notably the Departments. It is work that requires an understanding of functions right down to branch and division level, how those functions are reflected in the records and how those records will be of interest (or otherwise) to future researchers. In partnership with the client bodies, PRONI had a significant input into and quality assured in detail 57 schedules.

Closer and more effective working arrangements with Departments is essential if the sound records management practices are to be put in place that will underpin Access to Information legislation, including Freedom of Information. Hence the importance attached by PRONI to the annual Records Management Conference, to the meetings of the Information Managers' Forum and the daily one-to-one contacts with records management practitioners in the

FORWARD



PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE
OF NORTHERN IRELAND

Departments. This reflects a strong partnership approach that aims to improve records management effectiveness in support of the business of an organisation, while maintaining a clear focus on supporting Access to Information by the public (present or future).

The most pressing single challenge facing both Departments and PRONI in the whole area of records/information management is Electronic Document and Records Management (EDRM). It was appropriate that PRONI was chosen to be one of the three lead implementers of EDRM in the Northern Ireland Civil Service. The agency could scarcely talk with authority or conviction about what is in reality nothing short of a cultural change if it had not undergone the experience itself. EDRM has relatively little to do with Information Technology (a common enough misconception). It is much more about the putting in place and the testing of good records management practices - in that respect it is the same as paper-based records management but with the powerful new ingredient of speedy access to information.

It has long been said in relation to computers, 'Rubbish in, rubbish out', and that is as true about EDRM as about any other IT-supported solution. PRONI had to cope with its internal systems moving away from paper to the wholly electronic. It was (to say the least) challenging, sometimes frustrating but, in the end, enormously rewarding. The practical experience gained during

the exercise fed into the PRONI work with Departments: in highlighting the importance of EDRM; and in the 'nitty-gritty' and time-consuming work of creating corporate file plans that allow the structured storage of, and ready access to, information.

PRONI has a strong openness culture based on the simple proposition that archives are not simply about acquisition or correct storage (important though these are) but about the use of the material acquired over the years. If PRONI holds 'the documented community memory', it would be strange indeed to place in the way of accessing that memory any unreasonable or bureaucratic impediment.

Of course, in relation to access there is a need for safeguards, especially for personal data (where we all like to think everyone will respect privacy). Achieving the correct balance between the proper push to open information and respect for the individual or for other sensitive information involves sound judgement and commonsense. Above all, it involves a great deal of work. The Departments put a tremendous effort into the Annual Sensitivity Review exercise and PRONI matches that effort in terms of overseeing the whole operation: from the identification and dispatch of relevant files, through the giving of advice in order to ensure consistency, to its role of providing a redaction service that by blanking out bits of sensitive information allows the release of the great bulk of information.



The access rights flowing from the full implementation of Freedom of Information required an examination of the current ways PRONI dealt with requests from the public for information. It was decided to establish a dedicated Access to Information Unit so as to ensure a speedy response to requests. But the Unit is about more than the speed of a response. It is about having a team that through their experience will broaden their knowledge of the PRONI holdings and thus be in a better position to advise those making requests for information.

Serving the on-site visitor must be a priority and PRONI has long been regarded as providing a particularly user-friendly service that displays an in-built readiness to help the individual researcher. That work can be time-consuming and there are all too obvious pressures when a bus full of visitors descends on the search room, but it is seldom unrewarding. It is always pleasing to have effort recognised and particularly when the recognition is from one well equipped to make comparisons with the service available in other archive institutions in the UK and elsewhere. The Reader Services staff seemed to have an extra spring in their step after hearing that the famous historian Professor Sir Ian Kershaw had described them as 'splendid'. The praise obviously embraced the largely behind-the-scenes support for the Reading Room given by the Repository staff that, day

in and day out, scan the kilometres of shelving to find the particular record requested by a researcher.

The needs of the researcher, indeed the core activities of PRONI, are supported by Preservation. It is a section that spans a wide range of activities: traditional document conservation; preservation surveys (to detail the condition of specific archives); upgrading records storage; the provision of high resolution copies of original documents using a new digital camera; and the complete revision of the PRONI Disaster Plan. The preservation issue has emerged as a major one in relation to digital records, and it is one where Information Services is taking the lead. There is a whole new set of challenges that must be addressed if the researcher is to have access to digital records not only today but in 50 or 100 years.

PRONI is justifiably proud of the vast range and depth of the archival assets it holds. They represent a major and unique contribution to the whole concept of Cultural Capital, which brings together the complementary strands of people, infrastructure and products and services. If PRONI holds treasures, they certainly are not to be locked away from the public gaze or from public use. The focus must be on the public (present or future).

Over 80 years and more PRONI has invested significant resources in every

FORWARD



PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE
OF NORTHERN IRELAND

stage of the processing of archives: from initial appraisal to sorting (sometimes a physically mammoth task) and cataloguing. Paper catalogues may contain first-rate historical information but their physical format limits their use almost completely to those visiting the Balmoral Avenue premises. The Electronic Catalogue for Northern Ireland (eCATNI) will end that physical restriction and open up some 170,000 pages of text to access from anywhere in the world. It will thus enormously facilitate remote research, though it must be said that there can never be a full alternative to consulting original documents or high quality images of them. During the year PRONI staff have kept that core objective firmly in mind while undertaking the challenging task of quality assuring and marking up every single catalogue page prior to data capture. It is akin to putting together a massive puzzle that will eventually produce the comprehensive and easily recognised picture of the totality of PRONI's holdings.

If PRONI is harnessing technology to open up its catalogues to the world, it is also seeking to use technology in other ways and in support of both the DCAL Learning Strategy and the National Curriculum. By way of testing the feasibility of transforming a paper-based education facsimile into an e-learning resource PRONI brought into play the expertise of the Centre for Migration Studies. It establishes a pattern for the future updating and reworking of educational assets created by traditional means in the past.

The Archives Policy consultation showed that there was an expectation among users that more and more documents would be made available in digitised formats (which can be anything from CD-ROM to on-line access). Meeting that expectation to any significant degree will be an enormous challenge. Digitisation is somewhat akin to an archival iceberg - the final accessible product is merely the tip of something much bigger. Underneath is an unbelievable amount of work in terms of detailed preparation of the manuscript sources, in setting up digital systems and procedures, in ensuring user-friendly access and in maintaining and refreshing the data so that access can continue. PRONI concentrated its efforts on two digitisation projects - wills and calendars; and the joint project with the Ordnance Survey of Northern Ireland to digitise the historical OS maps. These will offer users speedy access to significant resources for family and local history.

Though PRONI is harnessing technology to good effect, one area of identified weakness is the web site. PRONI was among the first parts of government to seize the opportunity presented by the Internet for publicising its work and holdings. However, what was leading edge has become stale and out-of-date and requires a complete overhaul. It was disappointing that staff resources could not be stretched sufficiently to cover the task of delivering that overhaul. The task remains, and the priorities for the coming year will be such as to allow its achievement.



The use of technology has done much to invigorate archives, not least in providing access to information by means hitherto unavailable. Amid what are exciting and positive changes, care must be taken not to fall unwittingly into the trap of focussing so completely on them that the human aspects of archives become marginalized. Each person who comes into contact with archives is an individual with his or her particular interests and his or her particular way of pursuing those interests. Access to archives cannot be mass-produced.

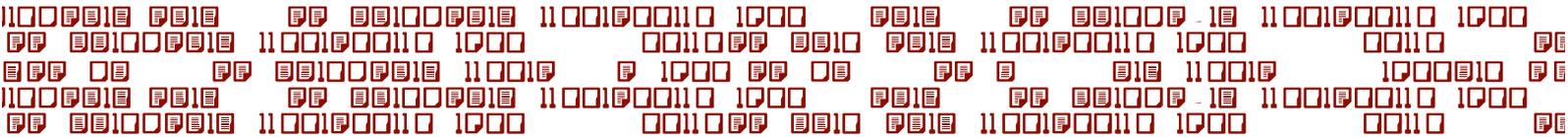
PRONI has continued its commitment to what may be regarded as traditional means of 'selling its wares' - the talk, the lecture, the planned event, the exhibition. This is in recognition of an essential ingredient in outreach work, namely relating to individuals and their needs and interests. The giving of talks and lectures provides the opportunity to blow the dust off the archives - dust and archives are usually thought of together - and to give at least a glimpse of the range and vastness of the archival heritage available through PRONI. There is an opportunity to convey enthusiasm and commitment and, even in the answering of questions, to highlight the strong customer service focus that permeates PRONI.

It would be the height of arrogance for PRONI to see itself as solely equipped to talk about its holdings. The reality is that the staff has relatively little time to research into those holdings. It is often

the case that the users of the archives are in a better position to explain in-depth the value of a particular archive or how sources relevant to a research topic can be pulled together. PRONI has therefore sought to work with interested groups in, for example, family history and local history. During the year the emphasis moved more clearly towards partnership events and the use of speakers from outside PRONI. That is a sensible development as it harnesses expertise and enthusiasm and offers the opportunity to throw a light on sources that might be neglected by (or even largely unknown to) PRONI staff.

The greatest problem for archives has long been one of perception - archives are thought of as stuffy, boring and irrelevant. That perception must be challenged head on if more people are to be drawn towards an interest in archives. Of course, documents are rarely visually attractive and, in an era where visual impact is disproportionately important, that is a major hurdle to overcome. Pointing to the content of a document is often not enough. New methods must be found to give the content an immediate impact. Therefore, PRONI has moved into historical re-enactments: the use of period costume and short pieces - almost mini-plays - showing what happened in the past. This method was successfully used during the year to bring to life the poor law records and the diary of a minister who assisted the poor of Belfast in the 1850s. It is a method that removes the

FORWARD



PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE
OF NORTHERN IRELAND

constraints of the written word as set down in a document and, instead, seeks to convey in an engaging way the essence of what the document records. PRONI is committed to the whole concept of bringing documents to life and will be exploring the further use of drama to achieve that purpose.

It is to be hoped that this *Annual Report* conveys the essence of what has happened in PRONI over the last year. There have been achievements and there have been instances where we have simply failed to deliver. There is an issue about matching stretched staff resources - particularly curatorial staff - to the commitments but there is a danger that caution will replace the willingness to take a risk. There are issues that await resolution - the putting in place of a new Fees Order (which gives an opportunity to streamline procedures, where practicable); assessing the opportunities for raising additional income; and ensuring that the monitoring of spending is made more effective right down to sectional level.

PRONI is undergoing change and it is proper that it should. There is a confident air as all are buoyed by the real prospect of securing new accommodation. That will do something more than provide adequate space for records storage or a better environment for users. It must be accompanied by a transformation of PRONI into a wholly user-focused organisation capable of attracting a

much wider customer base by delivering an informative and enjoyable archival experience.

To achieve that worthy transformation will not be easy. It is already clear that it will require new ways of thinking, a readiness to learn from others, a willingness to listen to user and non-user alike and an enthusiasm for experiment. The 'new PRONI' - for such it would be - will require a highly trained and skilled staff, and the agency is seeking to address that particular need.

PRONI holds resources of enormous potential value to our post-conflict society that can inform, enthuse and even inspire. The historical evidence held in the strong-rooms is more than a collection of dry facts, rather it can be the source for creativity and a self-confident understanding of has been achieved and can still be achieved by a vibrant society.

Gerry Slater
Deputy Keeper of the Records and
Chief Executive
1 July 2005



Introduction

What is the Public Record Office of Northern Ireland?

PRONI - the Public Record Office of Northern Ireland - is an Executive Agency within the Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure. It was created by statute: the Public Records Act (NI) 1923. Its main aims are to identify and preserve Northern Ireland's archival heritage, and to ensure public access to that heritage which fully meets Freedom of Information and other Access to Information standards.





In terms of archival institutions PRONI is unique in the UK in that it holds not only public records but also records from private sources - notably from commerce, industry, churches and landed estates. To identify and preserve the most valuable of these records and to ensure public access to them PRONI adopts records management standards and procedures. It also works closely with public and private depositors to:

- promote best practice records management
- determine what records are important
- ensure that they are created, retained and preserved
- make it easy for users to access the records
- encourage wider use of the archives as a national and educational resource



PRONI appraises, indexes, lists, preserves and makes available to the public the records entrusted to it. It is also responsible for co-ordinating arrangements for the annual release of public records on the first working day of each new year. This is achieved by working in partnership with Northern Ireland Departments, the Northern Ireland Office and the Northern Ireland Court Service to ensure the proper application of Access to Information standards.

PRONI serves a broad spectrum of society: genealogists and family historians; local historians, academics, scholars, business and occupational researchers; the media and journalists; the Northern Ireland Executive, Government Departments and their Executive Agencies, Non-Departmental Public Bodies, the Northern Ireland Court Service and local authorities; students and teachers; and the general public. All seek access to the information contained in the records for individual and unique reasons.

Increasingly, PRONI must find technologies, techniques, and partners that can help improve service and control costs. It must also help staff to expand continuously their capability to make the changes necessary to realise PRONI's vision.

To help it maintain focus and channel its efforts to best effect the Agency uses the following statements of strategic direction:

Mission

'The Public Record Office of Northern Ireland exists to identify, preserve and make available Northern Ireland's archival heritage as a unique information resource for present and future generations'.

Vision

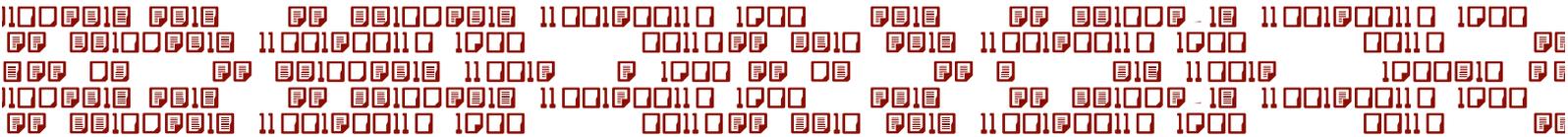
'Leading best practice in archives'.

Strategic Goals

In its 2003 - 2006 Corporate Plan - Information in the *Digital Age* - PRONI identified 11 Strategic Goals and 30 related Strategic Objectives that it would strive to achieve in order to meet the changes and challenges it is facing. These include addressing the need to improve and extend the range and quality of services provided for internal and external customers - by harnessing and using new technology effectively. The Strategic Goals are:

1. Determining the future strategic direction of PRONI and archival services provision in Northern Ireland by completing the APNI (Archives Policy Northern Ireland) process.
2. Overseeing the management of records in government and the wider public sector to support its business.

INTRODUCTION



PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE
OF NORTHERN IRELAND

3. Seeking to contribute to information policy by providing support to public authorities on the public records aspects of the Data Protection Act 1998, Environmental Information Regulations and the Freedom of Information Act (FOI) 2000 through guidance on access and sensitivity reviewing.
4. Selecting, acquiring, listing and indexing public and private records of enduring historical or other research value for public access.
5. Meeting FOI requirements in the internal operation of the Agency.
6. Promoting the value and use of PRONI's archives as a unique information and educational resource.
7. Introducing value added products which improve on and off-site access to the records.
8. The permanent preservation of an authentic record which future generations can have access to and can consult.
9. Expanding continuously PRONI's capabilities for making the changes necessary to achieve its overall strategic goals.
10. To put in place firm plans and proposals for new accommodation for PRONI.

11. Maximise the use of resources in order to achieve Reform Plan and other operational imperatives by managing them effectively, demonstrating value for money and improving efficiency where possible.

This annual report details PRONI's 2004/05 performance on all key strategic goals and their related objectives. Where performance against the objectives was not fully achieved explanations are included.

Organisation

A Chief Executive, Gerry Slater, who is directly accountable to the Minister for the management of the Agency, heads PRONI. The Chief Executive also holds the statutory post of Deputy Keeper of the Records (the Minister for Culture, Arts and Leisure being the Keeper).

The Agency Management Team, made up as follows, supports the Chief Executive:

Valerie Adams

Head of Education, Learning and Outreach (ELO)

Patricia Kernaghan

Head of Records Management and Administration (RMA) and Acting Head of Public Services (Preservation)



Tom Robinson

Head of Corporate Services (CS)

Marie Garvey

New Accommodation Project

Aileen McClintock

Head of Access Standards and Project Manager of the Electronic Catalogue for Northern Ireland (eCATNI) Project

Roger Strong

Head of Public Services (Readers) to September 2004 and New Legislation Project from October 2004

Hugh Campbell

Head of Information Systems (IS)

Cecelia McCormick

Head of Public Services (Readers) from October 2004

There were two changes to the management structure during 2004/05. Two additional posts were created to take forward two specific projects - new accommodation and new archive legislation.

Performance Measurement

To measure actual performance PRONI uses a range of mechanisms. At Corporate level a balanced scorecard approach is used to track strategic performance; periodic reviews are commissioned to examine processes,

structural soundness, manpower levels and grades; performance measurement systems are subjected to review and refinement; self-assessment evaluations using the EFQM methodology and customer and staff surveys are also employed.

Corporate Governance and internal control is also enhanced through the regular monitoring and evaluation of risks and a programme of audits agreed with and carried out by the Department of Education Internal Audit Branch and overseen by the PRONI Audit and Risk Committee. PRONI will continue to evaluate, improve and make necessary adjustments to performance measurement systems in the course of its routine work.

PRONI must strive to reach its goals aware that is not an ordinary Executive Agency. The records it preserves document the history of Northern Ireland, the actions of Government officials and the development and implementation of policies - together they represent the documented community memory. PRONI serves not just today's generation, but also generations yet to come. PRONI must not only preserve documents already in its care, but also prepare to manage tomorrow's records in new and challenging ways. These challenges and changes are set out in its 2003 to 2006 Corporate Plan - *Information in the Digital Age* - and this report reflects the efforts of PRONI during 2004/05 to make that a reality.

INTRODUCTION

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PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE
OF NORTHERN IRELAND



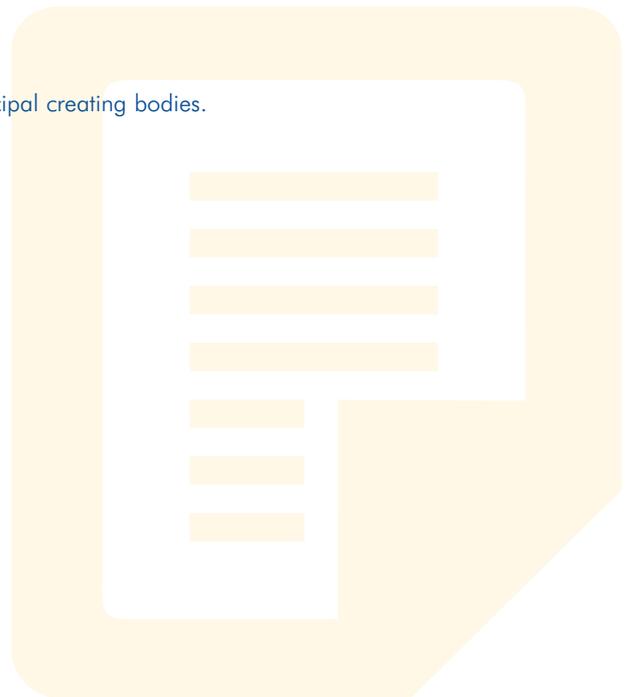
Archives Policy for Northern Ireland

Strategic Goal 1

Determining the future strategic direction of PRONI and archival services provision in Northern Ireland by completing the Archives Policy for Northern Ireland process.

Strategic Objectives

- 1.1 To determine the relationships between PRONI and principal creating bodies.
- 1.2 To define PRONI's future role.
- 1.3 To determine the need for new legislation.



Key Performance Targets and Outcomes

Key Performance Target	Outcome
To publish final APNI report by December 2004	Partially achieved
To proof PRONI policies and procedures against customer delivery requirements by March 2005	Achieved
To prepare instructions for Office of the Legislative Counsel by April 2005	Target postponed

Review of Year

Archives Policy for Northern Ireland

The consultation document on the Archives Policy for Northern Ireland (APNI) was finalised. The finalising took into account a significant development for archives across the United Kingdom, namely the recommendations of the Archives Task Force Report, *Listening to the Past, Speaking to the Future*. The report was the outcome of an in-depth analysis and review of the state of the unique and diverse archives in the UK. The Museums, Libraries and Archives Council undertook the task on behalf of the Department of Culture, Media and Sport and with the assistance of a range of stakeholders and archival experts representative of the whole country.

Having carried out an Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) on the Archives Policy for Northern Ireland, the consultation document together with the EQIA went out to consultation in November 2004. The PRONI Marketing Strategy - also subject to an EQIA - accompanied the draft Archives Policy Document as part of the consultation. The period for consultation ended on 31 January 2005. Twenty-eight responses were received, and these have now been analysed by the Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure. Most responses were positive, particularly in regard to proposals that would help to raise public awareness of archives, make use easier, widen access and realise their potential to contribute to education and learning.

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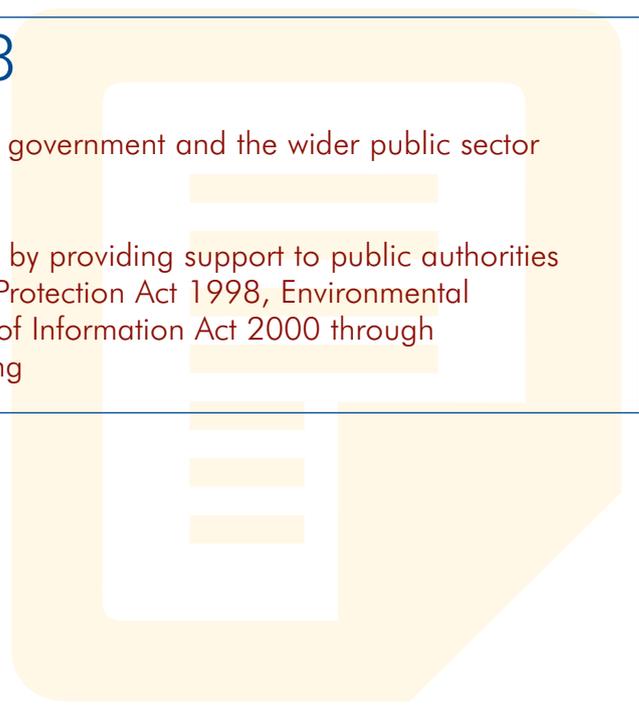
PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE
OF NORTHERN IRELAND



Freedom of Information, Records Management and Electronic Records Management - 1

Strategic Goals 2 and 3

- 2 Overseeing the management of records in government and the wider public sector to support its business
- 3 Seeking to contribute to information policy by providing support to public authorities on the public records aspects of the Data Protection Act 1998, Environmental Information Regulations and the Freedom of Information Act 2000 through guidance on access and sensitivity reviewing





Strategic Objectives

- 2.1 To provide effective leadership to the public sector in the development and adoption of best practice Records Management (including EDM) standards in order to support Government business, to ensure that records of enduring value are selected and acquired, and to support wider public access under Data Protection, Environmental Information Regulations and Freedom of Information.

Key Performance Targets and Outcomes

Key Performance Target	Outcome
Hold Records Management Conference by June 2004	Achieved
Release of open official records on first working day of New Year	Achieved



Review of Year

STRATEGIC GOALS 2 AND 3

The FOI Watershed

The full implementation of Freedom of Information (FOI) involved a tremendous effort in terms of preparation across the whole of the Northern Ireland Civil Service, and PRONI fully recognised that it would have a significant role in the changes that would ensure the success of FOI. PRONI supported the work within Departments to raise the profile of records management as essential in the delivery of FOI and to put in place the necessary resources, policies and practices.

The Records Management and Administration (RMA) Section was committed to the flagship Annual Records Management Conference as a means of bringing together information practitioners from across the Public Sector and to servicing and otherwise supporting the Information Managers' Forum. Those tried and tested means of raising the profile of records management and of exchanging 'hands on' experience remained important, but the actual preparations for FOI would inevitably take centre stage. PRONI saw the implementation of FOI as a watershed.

It was clear that the months immediately before full FOI implementation would be a transition period during which Departments, in consultation with RMA, would undertake records inventories and identify their particular records management priorities. That meant that everyone would be calling on RMA support at more or less the same time and that the resources of the section would be even more stretched than usual. If the timing of the demand was known, the exact extent of it could not be known as it was almost wholly dependent on the progress within the individual Departments. In order to meet what was an extraordinary situation, it was decided that the section must avoid the lower priorities and, instead, focus its resources on working with individual Departments in key areas of records management activity. Hence, the emphasis on the essentials of records management - structured information management systems, preparation of disposal schedules and appraisal. These are the sound foundations necessary to support records management, Freedom of Information and the effective operation of business areas.

At the heart of FOI sits the concept of public access rights, but the practical implementation of those rights is a challenge for all concerned. PRONI starts with an advantage inasmuch as it has been co-ordinating and supervising the Annual Sensitivity Review for almost 25 years. That has given PRONI both an understanding of the mechanisms that are most effective in dealing with potentially sensitive information and a firm grasp of many of the individual issues that have



required particular consideration over the years. Whatever the mechanisms or the individual issues, the starting-point has been the same over the years, namely an assumption that this-or-that piece of information should be opened to the public and that declining access should be the result of careful and consistent judgement. That approach has been reinforced by FOI.

Records Management and Electronic Document and Records Management (EDRM) Casework

The demand for advice on practical, day-to-day records management issues intensified in the run-up to full FOI implementation. The areas covered included the creation of file plans - essentially the devising of structured and business-related means of accessing records and information - and of the disposal schedules that determine when records are to be appraised and their fate (i.e., ultimately transfer to PRONI or destruction). Past deficiencies in records appraisal were tackled in Departments and this inevitably meant a great increase in the demand for PRONI staff to appraise records. The emphasises was properly on the elimination of low-grade material, which meant that PRONI assessed 75,000 files but identified just 130 as worthy of long-term historical or other research value.

In the course of reviewing the 75,000 files, many oral queries inevitably had to be dealt with, a process that ensured that both PRONI and the Public Bodies learned from the whole exercise. 120 reviews were carried out in different bodies, including:

- DARD - Forestry Service, Rivers Agency, Farm Policy, Media Services, Corporate Policy, Fisheries, Estates Management and Animal Welfare
- DCAL - Sports Division
- DEL - the Departmental Registry
- DETI - Information Management, Insolvency and Personnel
- DFP - Valuation and Lands, Office of Law Reform and Departmental Solicitor's Office and General Register Office (part of NISRA)
- DHSSPS - the Departmental Registry
- DOE - Environment and Heritage, Road Safety and Vehicle Standards and DVTA



- DSD - Housing Policy
- OFMDFM - Departmental Registry
- NIO - NI Prison Service and Hydebank Young Offenders' Centre
- SEELB
- NI Policing Board
- Belfast Coroner's Office

STRATEGIC GOALS 2 AND 3

Disposal Scheduling

Disposal Schedules are an essential tool in establishing control over corporate information. Indeed, they are the cornerstone of effective records management. They should prevent ad hoc destruction of files while, at the same time, helping to ensure that the build-up of file 'mountains' is avoided through the elimination of routine ephemera and other records of no importance at the earliest possible opportunity.

Fully signed operational disposal schedules were completed by the following Departments in consultation with PRONI, which then quality assured them:

DHSSPS - 21 schedules

- Children's Fund Unit
- Elderly and Community Care Unit
- Evaluation and Equality Unit
- Family Policy Unit
- Financial Accounting Unit
- General Dental Ophthalmic Services
- General Medical Service
- Health Promotion Team
- Information Office
- Internal Audit Unit
- Investing for Health Branch

PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE
OF NORTHERN IRELAND

Permanent Secretary's Office
Pharmacy and Prescribing Branch
Pharmaceutical Advice and Services Branch
Primary Care Unit
Public Appointments Unit
Secondary Care Unit
Strategic Financial Accounting Unit
Strategic Planning Branch
Support Services Unit
Surveys and Research Management Branch

DRD - 28 schedules

Central Statistics and Research Branch
Financial Planning Branch
Ports and Public Transport Division
Regional Planning and Transportation Division
Resource Planning and Deployment Unit
Roads Service - Agency Personnel Unit
Roads Service - Best Value Team
Roads Service - Blue Badge Section
Roads Service - Business Support Units
Roads Service - Development Control Branch
Roads Service - Divisional Road Managers
Roads Service - Engineering Policy Unit
Roads Service - Information Systems Support Unit
Roads Service - Network Development Branch (excluding Forward Planning)
Roads Service - Network Maintenance
Roads Service - Network Planning
Roads Service - Network Transport Telematics



Roads Service - Subordinate Legislation

STRATEGIC GOALS 2 AND 3

Roads Service - Traffic Section

Roads Service Direct

Roads Service Secretariat

Strategic Planning Branch

Water Service - Development Directorate Information office

Water Service - Financial Accounting Branch

Water Service - Revenue Branch

Water Service - Standards and Technology Unit

Water Service - Strategic Policy Branch

Water Service - Waste Water Services

DOE - 6 schedules

Corporate Services

Driver Vehicle Licensing Agency

Environment and Heritage Service

Local Government Division

Planning Service

Road Safety and Vehicle Standards Division

DEL - 1 schedule

Private Office

DFP - 1 schedule

Business Development Service



PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE OF NORTHERN IRELAND



Zoë Smyth (sitting front left) with some of her international colleagues at the recent ISO Records Management Committee Meeting

Training and Outreach

PRONI Records Management and Administration (RMA) staff represented PRONI at meetings of the Northern Ireland Local Government Freedom of Information Practitioners' Group, the Northern Ireland Practitioners' Group on Freedom of Information (co-ordinated by the Freedom of Information Unit in the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister) and the sub-committee working to this Group; the NICS Corporate File Plan sub-committee; the Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure (DCAL) Information Access Project Board; and the Senior Interdepartmental Group on Information Management.

RMA staff addressed meetings of the following:

The National Archives (TNA) annual conference (held in Brighton and aimed at information practitioners in Departments)

DE Information Managers

Holywell Hospital Trust Information Managers

'Information Management in Northern Ireland' Conference (held at the Hilton Hotel, Belfast).

The PRONI Annual Records

Management Conference continues to be a crowd puller and not least because it focuses on the practical

needs of Departments and of Non-Departmental Public Bodies. The event held at the Stormont Hotel, Belfast, on 16 June 2004 attracted some 150 people. The theme of 'Paving the Way' was intended to reflect preparations across the Public Sector for the coming into effect of the Freedom of Information Act as of 1 January 2005.

The morning sessions comprised presentations from Mike Beare and Liam Breslin of OFMDFM on Electronic Document and Records Management and the Public Sector; Cecelia McCormick of PRONI on the PRONI Lead Implementation Project for EDRM; Jim Dunbar of the South Eastern Education and Library Board on Records Management in the SEELB; and Jayne Pucknell of the Environment Agency on Procuring and Implementing an EDRM Product.

The afternoon 'breakout sessions' concentrated on the practical issues: 'Designing a Functional File Plan', 'Preparation of Disposal Schedules in DHSSPS' and 'File Management - Training your Staff'.

The feedback forms indicated that attendees found the conference informative and useful. Among the comments were the following:

'As a newcomer to this area I found the whole day very good'

'Most helpful seminars, which cleared up a lot of issues currently being dealt with in major organisations'



'Good to get feedback at the level we need'

'Discussion on EDRM very useful, clarifies some issues'

'Good to see that there is a light at the end of the tunnel! (somewhere beyond the boxes of old files)'

'Speakers covered practical issues in a realistic honest way; more useful than the usual PR style of conference talks!'

'Good to hear the difficulties that other managers are/have been experiencing - similar to my own - and their solutions'

Annual Release of Selected Official Records

This year's Annual Sensitivity Review exercise covered the departmental records with a terminal date of 1974. Of the 562 files examined, only 7 were subject to full closure, with an additional 19 subject to partial closure or 'blinking out' (i.e., redaction). Partial closure and blinking out are methods employed to allow the release of the bulk of a file and they facilitate research by temporarily removing a limited amount of information, the inclusion of which would have resulted in the entire file being closed to the public for an extended period. In the majority of cases, the reasons for extended closure

were breach of the Data Protection Act and the protection of individuals.

The '30 year rule' governs access to official records in Northern Ireland. This means that a record is eligible for release 30 years from the date of the last paper. However, the Freedom of Information Act - fully effective from 1 January 2005 - has created a new access to information regime that will directly impact on the release of records in the future. Nevertheless, during the current year when a record approached 30 years, it was referred to the functionally responsible Department for sensitivity review. This entailed a page-by-page examination of each record so as to identify whether it contained sensitive information as defined by the 1993 Open Government White Paper. The exercise also took account this year of the FOI Act with its greater emphasis on the disclosure of information. The Act allows many exemptions to fall away at 30 years and focuses more on allowing the release of information rather than holding it back. Of course, there remains the continuing duty to protect personal details and there are some other categories of information that merit extended closure (i.e., beyond 30 years).

One of the main series of files released related to the 1974 'Sunningdale' power-sharing Executive. The subjects covered by the files included: the Ulster Workers' Council strike, meetings between the Executive and the Secretary of State, the Civil Emergency Committee,

STRATEGIC GOALS 2 AND 3



PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE
OF NORTHERN IRELAND

meetings with Irish Ministers and with the Taoiseach, Liam Cosgrave.

The Cabinet Secretariat was succeeded by the Central Secretariat, which provided administrative support to the Northern Ireland Executive and, subsequently, to the Secretary of State and to the Head of the Northern Ireland Civil Service. The contents of the Secretariat included the minutes of the Northern Ireland Economic Council, chaired first by Brian Faulkner as Chief Minister of the Executive and then by the Secretary of State. The files also contain details of the Secretary of State's Morning Meetings in Belfast and London - mainly reviews of the security situation with input from the RUC and Army - and of meetings between the Chief Minister, Brian Faulkner, and the British Prime Minister, Harold Wilson.

Another important file series was created within the Department of Community Relations and relates to the work of the Civil Representatives, who were appointed to liaise between the Army, government and local communities. The files include reports on Belfast and Londonderry and contain details of meetings with local community groups and of the role of the Army. The reports also record specific incidents, intimidation, violence, etc., in areas such as Suffolk, Twinbrook, Tiger's Bay and New Lodge.

On a more localised level, several of the files released were from the Department of Housing, Local Government and Planning. They deal in detail with the bitter realities of

intimidation in the early 1970s as individual families and, indeed, whole streets and communities were subjected to a form of ethnic cleansing. The dire situation is reflected in the emergency lists of the Belfast Housing Aid Society.

Files from several other Departments were also released: Education, Health and Social Services, Agriculture, Commerce, Development, Environment and Finance. The content ranges from the proposed development of West Belfast, financial assistance to Harland & Wolff and the 'Spruce Up Campaign.'

The annual releases received considerable media coverage with articles in the *Irish Times*, *Sunday Times*, *Newsletter*, *Belfast Telegraph*, and *Irish News*. However, the absence of the 1974 power-sharing Executive minutes from the releases resulted in adverse criticism being aimed at PRONI by some journalists.

Sensitivity Review Training

PRONI supported Departments by training their staff on the then current requirements of Open Government and the new requirements for the full implementation of the FOI Act. In March 2005, Sensitivity Review training was delivered to decision-makers from the Departments of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, Environment and Regional Development.

The training included an overview of the Annual Sensitivity Review exercise, the respective roles and responsibilities of the Departments and PRONI and



the identification of potentially sensitive information requiring extended closure under FOI exemptions or Data Protection. It also provided an opportunity to introduce new documentation that takes full account of the changes flowing from FOI and that will ensure an audit trail of the decision-making process in relation to individual records.

Freedom of Information Practitioners' Group (GB)

PRONI has been represented during the past year at the Freedom of Information Practitioners' Group meetings hosted by the Department of Constitutional Affairs. The membership of the group includes representatives from UK Departments, Non-Departmental Public Bodies, Regulatory Authorities and the Devolved Administrations. The Group ensures that members are kept informed of the plans for full implementation of FOI and, therefore, PRONI is kept abreast of the latest developments. For example, news was given of an extension to the time limit for responding to requests when it is necessary to consult with the 'responsible authority' (e.g., PRONI consulting with a functionally responsible Department).

PRONI was also represented on the sub-group specialising in archives. This proved especially useful as it prepared Memoranda of Understanding with various 'responsible authorities' in relation to the duty to consult over records not designated as open when transferred to the archives.

Information Managers' Forum

The Information Managers' Forum is chaired and serviced by PRONI. Its great strength is that it brings together Information Managers from across the Public Sector, who in the last year met twice to discuss the major records management issues of common concern and interest. The attendance at meetings was generally around 30 to 40. One of the meetings was held in The Long Gallery at Parliament Buildings and participants heard two presentations. Fionnuala O'Gorman of the Northern Ireland Assembly Information Management Unit talked about the structure of the Assembly, the preparations for FOI, development of a file plan allowing readier access to structured information and the compilation of a disaster reaction plan. Mike Beare (OFMDFM) covered the EDRM System Framework Agreement for the Northern Ireland Public Sector, which is a foundation for that most significant of records management changes. The second meeting of the year, held in December 2004, was the final one before FOI Implementation. It took place in the premises of InvestNI in central Belfast. The principal item of business was the introduction of new arrangements for the transfer of files into PRONI custody that, mindful of FOI, place particular emphasis on transferring bodies making public access decisions prior to the transfer.

STRATEGIC GOALS 2 AND 3

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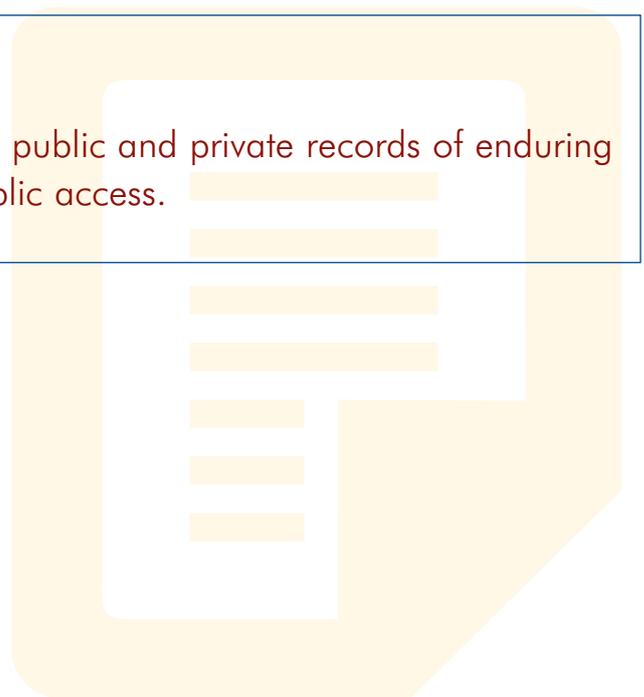
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OF NORTHERN IRELAND



Freedom of Information, Records Management and Electronic Records Management - 2

Strategic Goal 4

Selecting, acquiring, listing and indexing public and private records of enduring historical or other research value for public access.



Strategic Objective

- 4.1 To identify listing priorities in the light of Freedom of Information and access needs, and list in accordance with those priorities.

Key Performance Targets and Outcomes

Key Performance Target	Outcome
To list at least 250 units	Not achieved



Review of the Year

Although the emphasis during the year was on government records, a variety of records also came from private depositors. The following is intended to express the gratitude of PRONI to public-spirited depositors as well as to stimulate the interest of researchers.

Private Records

Deposits of business records included: minute books of the Falls Flax Spinning Co., 1865-1981, and Linen Mills Ltd, 1926-78, as well as a volume of newspaper cuttings and printed annual reports relating to various Ulster linen concerns, 1861-1950 (**D/4363**); a copy out-letter book of Philip F. Richardson, a Belfast merchant specialising in the importation of flax, coal, timber and oil, 1872 (**D/2966/125**); records relating to the North of Ireland Paper Mill, Ballyclare, John Kane & Sons, Braidwater Foundry, Ballymena, and John Chisholm, Solicitor, Belfast, 1895-1929 (**D/4355**); a minute book and other material relating to Erskine Mayne & Co., Belfast, 1943-1975 (**D/3494**); invoice books of Samuel Stewart, Grocery and Provision Stores, Lurgan, 1956-60 (**D/4351**); additional Harland & Wolff records, including minutes of meetings of the Board of Directors, 1971-1981 (**D/2805**). The records of the Ulster Bank, 1836-1945, are now available on microfilm (**MIC/705**).

Deposits of estate papers were principally additions to existing archives. These included additional Earl of Antrim Estate and Schomberg MacDonnell Papers, as follows: a small bundle of papers relating to Laura, Countess of Antrim, including correspondence and some recipes, c.1850s; letters to the Countess from an unidentified commissariat officer attached to the Royal Horse Artillery during the Crimean War, 1854-55; personal letters from George Nathaniel Curzon (later the Marquess Curzon of Kedleston) to Schomberg MacDonnell, private secretary to the Marquess of Salisbury, 1894-1917, including letters during Curzon's period as Viceroy of India; papers of Louisa, Countess of Antrim, mainly concerning her service as a Lady-in-Waiting, first to Queen Victoria and then Queen Alexandria, c.1920s-30s (**D/2977** and **D/4091**).

Additional papers were received from the Tyrone Guthrie Centre, Annaghmakerrig, Co. Monaghan, including: c.200 photographs and postcards of the Guthrie family circle, the house and environs at Annaghmakerrig, holiday photographs and others relating to the production of plays, 1860-1960; letters from Guthrie to immediate family members and friends from Wellington College and St John's College, Oxford, 1918-23 and a letter from the poet Christopher Scaife to Lady Guthrie, 1971 (**D/3585**).

STRATEGIC GOAL 4

PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE
OF NORTHERN IRELAND

Other estate material included: additional papers pertaining to the Burges Estate, Co. Tyrone, 1903-1965 (**D1594**); cash books, rent books and ledgers relating to the Ker Estate, Co. Down, 1834-1945 (**D/2566**); and mortgages, leases and deeds relating to Mill Street (now Castle Street) and Crumlin Road, Belfast, 1831-1926 (**D/4346**).

Records relating to a number of prominent figures in public life included: additional constituency papers of Seamus Mallon, MP for Newry and Armagh, 1986 - 2005 and Member of the Northern Ireland Assembly, 1998 - 2003 (**D/4219**); a typescript copy of a manuscript entitled *Recollections of Sir Roger Casement*, written by Ada McNeill of Cushendun, 1929 (**T/3892**); a small collection of personal papers of Patrick McAlister (1909-97), who served with the International Brigade during the Spanish Civil War (**D/4349**); a letter from the poet John Hewitt to his former teacher Anne Earls, 1975 (**D/4352**); an incomplete and unpublished memoir by Norman Dugdale, Permanent Secretary at the Ministry (later Department) of Health and Social Services, 1970-84, and a published poet (**D/4350**).

The papers of the Rev. Eric Gallagher (1913-2000), Methodist minister, peace campaigner and writer, including: correspondence with other church leaders, various public figures and politicians; newspaper cuttings; teaching material; sermons; and

papers relating to his books and articles. They reflect his interest in the Ecumenical Movement (including the Irish School of Ecumenics) and include material about his involvement with the Feakle Talks with IRA leaders in 1974 (**D/4360**).

PRONI obtained a small collection of documents relating to Sir William Ewart and the well-known linen house of William Ewart & Sons, including: business ledgers of William Ewart & Sons, 1968-75; accounts of William Ewart (New York) Ltd, 1927-73; petty cash books and private ledgers of Sir William Ewart, 1903-40; wages books for Glenmachan House, Belfast, 1901-33; and Sunday School registers for various Belfast churches, including Drew Memorial, Reid Memorial and Christ Church, 1869-84 (**D/4362**).

Additional Ulster Arts Club papers, included: photographs of Club members and social events, c.1910-90; a typescript biography of the engraver John Vinycomb, 1996; administrative correspondence, c.1950s-90s; illustrated menu cards for Club dinners, 1908-99; exhibition catalogues, 1940s and 1990s; and sketches and drawings by members, c.1910-60 (**D/4300**).

Among miscellaneous items received were: a bundle of 10 letters to William Cinnamond of Bessbrook that include references to the establishment of Richardson's linen mill in the village, 1846-52 (**D/4353**); papers of the



STRATEGIC GOAL 4

Sinclair and Kingan (also spelt Kinghan) families including wills and marriage settlements, 1865-1909 (**D/4356**); minute books, roll books and other records of Freedom Royal Arch Chapter 169 Masonic Lodge, Belfast, 1913-82 (**D/4354**); photographs taken in and around Belfast by Sam Ruscica, 2000-2004 (**D/4359**); and the working papers of the historian Fred Rankin, 1982-85, including material on the history of the Batt family of Purdysburn and the life of the politician Michael Thomas Sadler, 1780-1835 (**D/4364**).

Copies of the following documents were received: correspondence between the Belfast Harbour Commissioners and Harland & Wolff concerning alleged damage to the Titanic while in Belfast Harbour, 1911 (**T/3893**); additional Capper family papers, 1821-60, including letters to John Capper of Portadown, 1830-60, from friends and relations (some correspondents appear to have been Methodist preachers and a number comment on religious and social conditions in Ireland) (**T/3658**).

Church Records

One of the most interesting items received was an account and memorandum book of Francis Hutchinson, Bishop of Down and Connor, 1729-39. It includes rentals and accounts for diocesan lands as

well as Hutchinson's own estate at Portglenone and Staffordstown, a catalogue of his library, memoranda on his expenditure and copies of various legal documents (**DIO/1/22**).

Other Church records included: the records of the Congregational Aid and Rea Ministerial Funds of the Reformed Presbyterian Church, 1878 - 2000 (**CR/5/5A**); transcripts of the registers of Ballynahinch Presbyterian Church (now First Ballynahinch), 1696-1734, along with indexes and notes on the history of Ballynahinch, Dromara, Kilmore and Drumcaw Presbyterian congregations, c.1832 (**CR/3/64**); registers of York Street and Kilmainham Congregational Churches, Dublin, including baptisms, 1819-1945, for York Street and marriages, 1863-1978, for Kilmainham (**CR/7/3**).

Official Records

The Public Records Act (NI) 1923 assumed that public records deemed worthy of preservation would generally be transferred to PRONI when those records were aged 20 years (i.e., 20 years from the date of the last paper). However, the Freedom of Information Act introduced a new and useful concept, that of the 'historical record' defined as one aged 30 years or more. The difference in the periods specified in the respective pieces of legislation led to a reconsideration of the circumstances in which public

records should be transferred. The issue was seen as less about transfer itself than about the procedures associated with transfer. It was decided that in future the NICS practice should come into line with that generally followed by UK Departments - transfer to PRONI would be effected only after the transferring Department had made an access decision and the general expectation would be that the individual records would be open to the public.

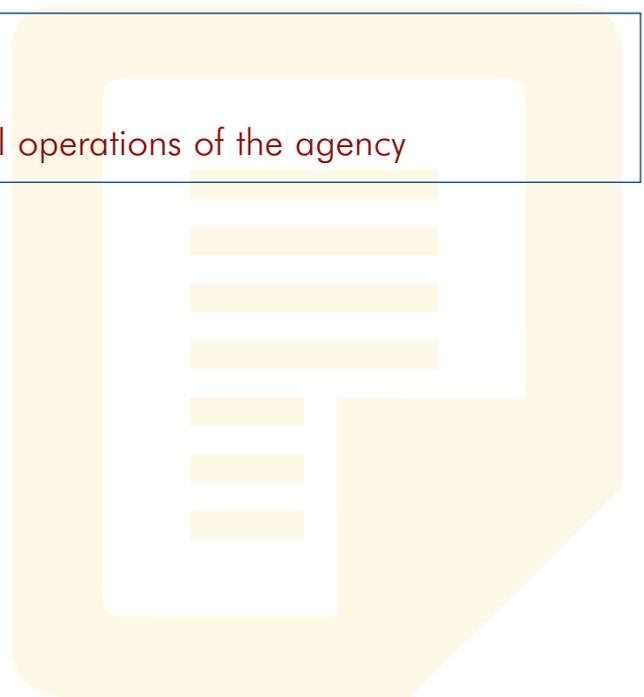
The change in procedure means a delay in the transfer of public records until such time as they are sensitivity reviewed by Departments in line with FOI criteria. Obviously, that removed a pressure from PRONI in respect of sorting and listing, but the reality was that PRONI had little in the way of resource to deal with the listing of archives - private or public - owing to the loss of curatorial staff during the course of the year and the need to allocate available staff to dealing with other commitments deemed to have an even greater priority.



Freedom of Information, Records Management and Electronic Records Management - 3

Strategic Goal 5

Meeting FOI requirements in the internal operations of the agency



Strategic Objectives

- 5.1 To implement the electronic catalogue for Northern Ireland (eCATNI) project and so facilitate access to records in accordance with Freedom of Information standards.
- 5.2 To develop and implement an electronic records management system throughout PRONI.

Key Performance Targets and Outcomes

Key Performance Target	Outcome
To adhere to the 2004/05 eCATNI project plan stages	Not validated
EDRM introduced throughout PRONI by October 2004	Partially achieved



Review of Year

Electronic Catalogue for Northern Ireland (eCATNI)

PRONI remains on course to complete the Electronic Catalogue for Northern Ireland (eCATNI) project, which will provide a worldwide audience with access to the catalogues of PRONI's archival holdings. Over the past 12 months, PRONI has committed substantial staff resources to implementing the project within a £1.3m budget. The project started in November 2003 with formal Business Case approval by the Department of Finance and Personnel and it has been supported by Executive Programme Fund Service Modernisation budget. The projected completion date is April 2007, when the eCATNI catalogue will contribute fully to meeting the PRONI commitment to increase access to archives. ECATNI will also facilitate the ability of PRONI to meet the obligations flowing from Freedom of Information, Environmental Information Regulations and Data Protection.

Project Management

The project is managed by a Project Manager, who reports to a Project Board comprising representatives from different parts of PRONI and from the Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure (which has a significant interest in the successful roll-out of eCATNI).

The staff complement for the project comprises three curatorial team managers and eight members of administrative staff. The project is also particularly dependant on the dedicated in-house resource provided by the Information Services Section.

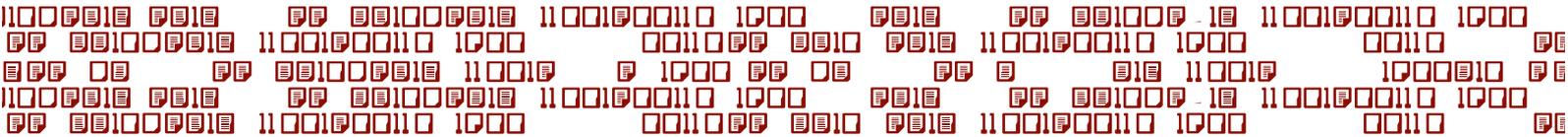
The project is subject to the Gateway Review Process, which considers the project at critical stages in its life cycle and thus provides independent assurance that the project remains viable and can successfully progress to the next stage. During the period of the report, eCATNI successfully completed Gateway 3, the Review of Software Procurement.

Throughout the project, an up-to-date Risk Log has been maintained, identifying potential problems and methods to minimise disruption (such as funding, staffing, etc).

Procurement

There were a number of procurement exercises completed for the eCATNI project in 2004/05: data capture (to select a supplier to transcribe PRONI catalogues into electronic form); software (to select archival management software for use by PRONI staff and the public to access the catalogues); and hardware (to select equipment on which to run the software).

STRATEGIC GOAL 5



PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE OF NORTHERN IRELAND



Data Capture

Data Capture

Over the past 80 years, PRONI has received 53 kilometres of public and private records. The catalogues for those records vary in both format and style. In total, about 170,000 pages containing a massive 247 million characters have to be converted. The data conversion contract was awarded to an external contractor in August 2004 and catalogues have been forwarded since then for keying.

In the last financial year, 28 of a projected 80 batches - each batch consisting of 2,000 pages - were sent to the contractor. This represents a figure of about 56,000 pages. The contractor is committed to ensuring an accuracy rate for the data of at least 99.95 per cent.

Batch creation is a time-consuming exercise that involves the complete restructuring of existing catalogues and assignment of data to specific fields in accordance with the General International Standard Archival Description, ISAD(G). These fields apply to Reference Number, Date, Title, Scope and Content and Description. PRONI is ensuring ISAD(G) compliance right down to item level. An item can be anything from a one-line entry for a school register of just 27 characters to a two-page diary extract of 4,666 characters. The effort invested in the ISAD(G) standard will ensure that the eCATNI data can be pooled with similar data in other

archive institutions conforming to the standard. This keeps open the possibility of a National Archive Network allowing searching across all partner institutions.

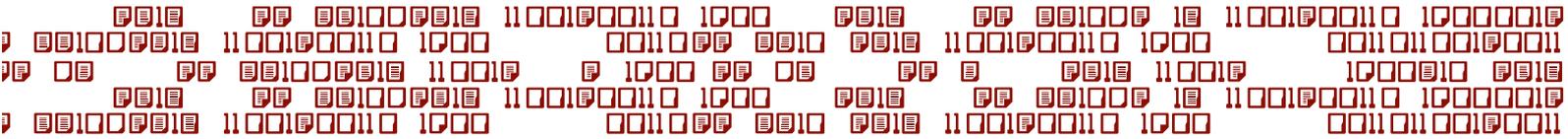
Catalogues that have already been captured electronically include descriptions for: all school records; the 1901 population census; the entire microfilmed church records series; most of the 'T' records class (transcripts and photocopies of original records); and for a substantial part of the 'D' record class (privately deposited records). A lot of data preparation work still remains in regard to official records and the finishing of the 'D', 'T' and 'MIC' classes.

IS Section developed software to assist the eCATNI team to process batches by recording information at the various stages of the process: identification of catalogues to be copied, photocopying of the catalogues, compilation into sets, combination of sets into batches, dispatch to supplier, receipt from supplier, electronic quality assurance and assistance with manual quality assurance.

Returned data were subject to close scrutiny so as to ensure that the 99.95% quality level was maintained.

Additional Data Migration

In addition to the catalogues that have been outsourced to the external contractor for keying, a number of other data capture exercises will feed



into the new electronic catalogue. One of these is the validation of the 'T' catalogues - transcripts or photocopies of original documents deposited by private individuals and institutions. As reported last year, the team started the exercise for these catalogues. The 'T' catalogues had been outsourced for keying during a previous exercise, but the data were not structured in accordance with ISAD(G). During 2004-05, the team completed the creation of c.5,800 top level descriptions and completed verification of 53,112 item level descriptions.

As reported last year, the IS Section in conjunction with the eCATNI team developed a PRONI Cataloguing Database as an interim system that facilitates on-going cataloguing. The database is ISAD(G) compliant and its hierarchical structure allows navigation of the catalogues through the cascading levels of a 'tree' structure. The tree is used to navigate to the point of data entry for either inserting a new piece description or for modifying an existing piece description. The curatorial eCATNI staff has created top level descriptions for all classes of public records. This involved transposing (where they existed) and modifying existing classification lists for Departmental Records (DR) and Non-Departmental Records (NDR). Concise introductions have also been compiled for a substantial number of these record classes and they give the administrative history behind the creation of the particular records. Both

the PRONI Cataloguing Database and the validated 'T' archive piece level descriptions will be migrated into the new cataloguing system.

Indexes

Over the years PRONI has built up a substantial body of indexes to the content of the catalogues - c.34,000 index levels and half-a-million index references are held electronically in a variety of systems. These are organised by subject, geographic location and prominent person. In conjunction with other sections in PRONI, IS Section has invested considerable time and resources in adapting these indexes so that they can be made available in an electronic form (either as part of the new software or in a stand-alone system).

Access Decisions

Prior to going live, there will be a major exercise in applying access conditions to the data held in the electronic catalogue. This will involve an exhaustive check in order to verify that the correct access decisions have been applied, especially in relation to public records. This will impact on the work of Access Section.

STRATEGIC GOAL 5



PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE OF NORTHERN IRELAND



Delegates participating in practical work attending 'EDRMS Lessons Learned Workshop' at PRONI

Business Continuity

In order to ensure that disruption to the electronic catalogue can be kept to the bare minimum, PRONI has invested in two servers for eCATNI. The decision was also taken to retain a version of the paper-based catalogues as a contingency against a critical failure of the electronic system that renders it inoperable.

Change Management

eCATNI will impact dramatically on the way PRONI conducts business with all its customers - Departments, Non-Departmental Public Bodies, business partners, the general public, historians, genealogists, etc. Consequently, the need for 'Change Management' has been built into the project so as to ensure that the staff is not only trained but also encouraged to embrace the opportunities provided by eCATNI.

Representation at Conferences

Two members of PRONI staff represented PRONI at an international conference entitled 'Electronic Search Tools: European Conference on DTSs (Document Type Definitions) EAD (Encoded Archival Description) and EAC (Encoded Archival Context)'. The Archives de France hosted the event in Paris on 7-8 October 2004. It was a bi-lingual event, attended by representatives from Europe, America, Australia, and the Spanish-speaking world.

PRONI Electronic Document and Records Management

The Freedom of Information Act 2000 brings with it an expectation that Northern Ireland Departments will be able to identify quickly and efficiently and to retrieve information in their records on any subject matter. That will require the managing of the information within an accessible structure that relates directly to the day-to-day activities of the different business areas. And PRONI is no different in this respect from any other part of the Civil Service.

PRONI has been at the forefront in promoting good records management practices and in contributing to the development of policies and standards across the Public Sector. This pivotal role was recognised when PRONI was selected as one of three lead organisations within the Northern Ireland Civil Service charged with introducing Electronic Document and Records Management (EDRM), the tool that offers the opportunity to create, to hold and to access information in a structured manner and at the press of a button.

The selection of PRONI gave the agency the opportunity to:

- put its internal administrative records in order
- develop a policy for handling electronic records



- focus on changes in practice required to accommodate the initiative
- share the learning experience with others in the Public Sector

Throughout this year PRONI continued work on the development of its file plan and on the final ‘housekeeping’ preparations for data migration to the EDRM system. Interim measures were put in place to familiarise staff with the new file plan and to accommodate the transition from a paper-based to an electronic filing system. Of course, it was about more than putting new procedures in place. It was at least as much about understanding the difficulties - real or perceived - in the transition and addressing them, where necessary on a one-to-one basis.

In addition the team shared ideas and lessons by:

- delivering presentations at conferences - the annual PRONI conference; Info Ireland; and the Government Computing-sponsored ‘Information Management in Northern Ireland’
- running workshops on file plans for the other lead implementers and representatives from the Information Practitioners’ Group
- talking to groups such as the Society of Archivists, further education and local government authorities and the DCAL local information managers

The project team worked closely with the other lead implementers on the development of policies, on a training strategy and on various IT-related issues. It also shared the responsibility for acceptance testing of the chosen product and will produce a lessons learned report.

Difficulties with the NICS managed competition to appoint licensed software providers impacted on PRONI timescales and resulted in delay and a rescheduling of the PRONI timeframe from October 2004 to January 2005. The Tower Software TRIM product was selected in September. At the same time an additional server was purchased to meet contingency requirements.

Training of selected staff started in November with the majority trained in January, i.e., just in time for the ‘go live’ on 17 January 2005. It is too early to assess the impact this new way of working has had on staff and on the business.

STRATEGIC GOAL 5



RM Seminar Speakers at DCAL. Front sitting: Cecelia McCormick (PRONI EDRM Project Manager); Diane Carlisle (ARMA International, USA); Anki Steen (Aviation Authority, Sweden); Fiona McCausland (DETI EDRM Project Manager). Back standing: Zoë Smyth (PRONI Records Manager) and Harry McCabe (OFMDFM EDRM Project Manager)

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Wider Use and Easier Access - 1

Strategic Goal 6

Promoting the value and use of PRONI's archives as a unique information and education resource



Strategic Objectives

- 6.1 To improve, extend and market PRONI's products and services to off-site customers in ways which address social inclusion and cultural diversity, contribute to the Lifelong Learning and DCAL's Unlocking Creativity and Learning Strategy, and maximise the use of e-learning by, for example, contributing to the National Grid for Learning and C2K.

Key Performance Targets and Outcomes

Key Performance Target	Outcome
By March 2005 to further develop PRONI's e-learning resource on 'Victorian Times' for schools	Partially achieved
By March 2005, under the theme of 'Movement' to develop, in partnership with the Centre for Migration Studies, an e-learning resource on 18th century emigration to North America.	Achieved



Review of Year

e-Learning Resources

Archive institutions are eager to meet the challenge of showing that archives are relevant to education and learning. The challenge is particularly important for PRONI in that it offers the opportunity to contribute to a broader initiative - the DCAL Learning Strategy.

PRONI has been developing its web-enabled e-learning resource on 'Victorian Times', which initially covered the themes of industry, life in the town and country, crime and punishment and leisure and sport. Two new themes - education and emigration - were added. Contextual background pieces were written, supporting documents and photographs identified and scanned and a variety of activities and exercises designed. Educational input was seen as essential to success, and that meant working in partnership. The SEELB Curriculum Advisor quality assured what PRONI produced: the expert educational input endorsed the high standard of the resource and also ensured significant improvement. In the key area of linking suitable questions to selected documents, the teachers of Moyle Primary School, Larne, helped PRONI immensely.

The Second World War is a topic on the Northern Ireland schools curriculum and 2005 is the 60th anniversary of the end of the conflict.

Those two factors made it appropriate that the next PRONI e-learning resource should deal with the war. The challenge for PRONI was not finding relevant material - it holds a vast quantity of it - but selecting relatively few items from among thousands of documents. The approach used was to settle on important themes, select the documents that best supported each one and then provide for each an introductory explanatory piece. Everything was brought together by means of a general introduction to Northern Ireland and the Second World War.

In the 1970s PRONI started an education facsimile series on a broad range of themes. They were aimed largely at 'A' level and university students, but also interested what today is called the lifelong learner. Each facsimile had an introduction to the topic, copies and transcripts of selected documents and comments on each document. In their day, they were innovative, but - while the content stands the test of time - they appear dull and unexciting in the IT era. Transformation is essential.

This year PRONI set itself the task of turning an out-of-print facsimile into a web-based resource. It was thought best to pick a topic where scholarly research over recent years has resulted in a significant revision of previously held views - 'Eighteenth Century Ulster Emigration to North America'. The 'old' introduction had to be tested against the outcomes of the new research and appropriately updated.

STRATEGIC GOAL 6



In a practical example of partnership working, the staff of the Centre for Migration Studies brought to bear their enormous expertise and greatly assisted in the re-writing of the text.

Liverpool Institute of Irish Studies. PRONI fitted into a programme of visits that would help students to become familiar with research sources in Northern Ireland and with the on-the-ground realities in which those sources were created.

Talks, Lectures and Events

Student Groups

One of PRONI's key marketing objectives is to make students in colleges and universities more aware of the range and richness of the archives and to encourage their use in research. Groups coming to PRONI for a talk are always given an explanation of the finding-aids and of the procedures that facilitate the best possible use of those aids and of the original documents. During the year PRONI had the opportunity to speak to 3rd year history students from Stranmillis University College, who were seeking ideas for their dissertation topic; to a large group of lifelong learning students from Queen's History Department, who were studying for a degree or a certificate in Local Studies; to MA History students from the University of Ulster at Jordanstown and from Queen's University; and to students from Queen's University Sociology Department undertaking the biography and society module. For the first time there was a visit from a group of students - 16, both undergraduate and postgraduate - from the University of

PRONI benefits directly from the Queen's University MA student visits - almost always some of them opt to use archives in their calendaring module. This part of their course requires that they produce a calendar of documents and write an associated introduction. A number of them are now calendaring PRONI archives, including the diaries of Ruby Carson, wife of Sir Edward Carson, and the papers of the Conservative Conference of 1939, found in the Londonderry Papers.

PRONI is committed to supporting lifelong learning. Last year it made contact with the tutors for the non-fiction creative writing course at the Belfast Institute for Further and Higher Education. The students found a PRONI family history talk very helpful and relevant to them, and so this year the tutors brought the new intake of students to Balmoral Avenue for a presentation and tour of the research facilities. Lifelong learning was also supported by means of a talk and tour to a group enrolled for a local studies course at Limavady College.



Other Groups

A range of different groups visit PRONI, and those visits often combine a talk, a tour of the research facilities and then tackling some hands-on research. There were visits from North Down and Ards Family History Society, a group from Dunmurry Presbyterian Church, the Northern Ireland Fire Service Historical Society and a group of local historians from Co. Monaghan. The Ulster People's College brought a group of about 20 men from East Belfast to view a range of archives relevant to their area, including some relating to the Rope Works, The Sirocco Engineering Works and Harland & Wolff. The documents fuelled reminiscence and sparked off lively conversations.

One of the most rewarding proofs of the relevance of archives is the research into their own geographical areas undertaken by enthusiastic local history groups. One such group was Blessington History Group, Co. Wicklow, who spent a highly profitable day researching among the papers of the Marquesses of Downshire (owners of property at Blessington). The Glens of Antrim Historical Society - supported by Heritage Lottery funding - is researching the history of clachans in the Glens. PRONI staff spent a morning with the group helping them to come to grips with the sources and how to access them. They have since visited regularly to do their own research.

Lunch-time Talks

This year it was decided that the new series of lunchtime talks and workshops should not only be taken by PRONI staff but should also include outside speakers who had a particular expertise to share with others. Noel Redmond of the Belfast branch of the North of Ireland Family History Society worked through a practical example drawn from his own family history to show how web sites and discussion lists can be used to further research. The next in the series was a talk on 'Valuing our Townlands' by Kay Muhr of the Northern Ireland Place Names Project. She explained the origin and importance of townlands and the work of the Place Names Project. The final talk in the series proved the most popular. The Registrar General, Dr Norman Caven, spoke to a packed audience on how to use the civil registers of births, marriages and deaths and on the services to be offered by his office in the future. The series also included workshops taken by PRONI staff on using the 1901 census and on studying the history of a townland. These practical hands-on sessions proved to be popular and therefore worth repeating.

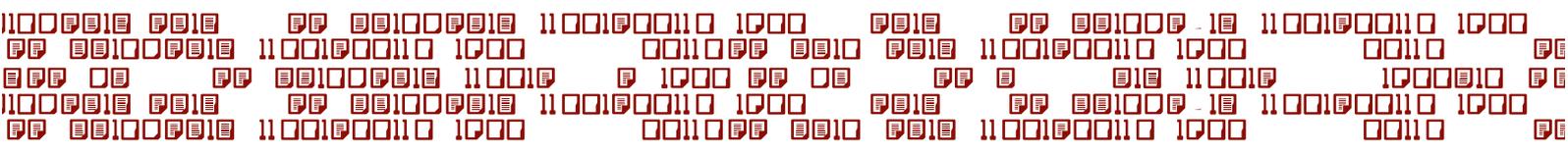
Partnership Events

For the last couple of years PRONI has worked in partnership with the Federation for Local Studies (FULS) by facilitating its programme of daylong seminars and workshops and by supporting its

STRATEGIC GOAL 6



Photo of lunchtime lecture given by Noel Redmond on using the Internet for family history.



work with local groups. The Federation rightly sees it as important for participants to find out first-hand how to use PRONI and to see and use the archives. To this end PRONI hosted visits from the Co. Cavan Local History group as well as hosting and speaking at two FULS workshops - one on education records and the other on family history, both of which consisted of a series of talks with practical case studies.

Organised Talks and Events

The evening talks series in PRONI included: 'Remembering our War Heroes', a talk aimed at the family historian on Armed Services records held by PRONI and other institutions; 'Researching Local History in PRONI' (local history is always a popular topic); a fascinating talk by Dr Myrtle Hill, Director of the Centre for Womens' Studies at Queen's University, on the evidence she uncovered in PRONI on the role of women in society; and a joint talk by Dr Brian Lambkin and Dr Paddy Fitzgerald from the Centre for Migration Studies, who demonstrated the use of the Centre's Irish emigration database, which can now be accessed by the public in the PRONI Search Room (it usefully includes the emigrant material held by PRONI). The organised evening events included a 'Come behind the Scenes' evening to give the public a better understanding of the work that goes on 'behind the shop front'.

External Lectures

Student Groups

Occasionally PRONI is invited to speak to academic groups on campus. This year there was a presentation on the major research strengths of PRONI to Queen's University final year Sociology students doing the Research Methods course. The objective was simple: to whet their appetite by showing the range of potential research subjects that could be supported by research in the archives. The National University of Ireland at Galway requested a presentation on 'Sources and Resources for Humanities and Social Sciences Research in Ireland' as part of an induction programme for research students in the Faculty of Arts. Both local and visiting professors at the NUI found that PRONI had resources of particular interest to them: e.g., a visiting professor from Baltimore was surprised to learn that PRONI had material on the slave trade. There was a presentation to Queen's University students at the Gibson Institute for Land, Food and Environment, who are studying for an MSc in Rural Development and Project Management in the Faculty of Science and Agriculture.

Other Groups

As part of the PRONI outreach programme talks and lectures were given to a wide range of different groups, largely on the primary sources



for family and local history: Crossmaglen University of the Third Age; Sperrin University of the Third Age; Age Concern group in Coleraie; Hilltown Local History Society; the Bramley Apple Club; Newcastle Probus; Westbourne Presbyterian Church Women’s Group; the Presbyterian Women’s Association of Saintfield Road Presbyterian Church; two advertised talks at Chichester Library, Belfast, one of them delivered in conjunction with the Educational Guidance Service for Adults; Armagh Ancestry family history course; Portadown Family History Society; the North West Archaeological and Historical Society; Newcastle Women’s Institute; Newcastle Field Club; representatives from community groups involved with the Regeneration of South Armagh (ROSA) project; ‘South Armagh Heritage Audit’ involving eight community groups and 10 schools in collecting heritage information through the production of local heritage maps using the Geographical Information System (GIS) created by the Ordnance Survey of Northern Ireland; and Belfast branch of the North of Ireland Family History.

Summer Programme

PRONI targeted the north and east coasts over the summer period. For the first time PRONI participated in the ‘Talks and Tours’ Summer Programme of the University of Ulster at Coleraie. The family history talk - freely advertised in the University’s ‘Talks and Tours’

brochure - was given at the recently refurbished Flowerfield Arts Centre in Portstewart and attracted almost 40 people. The other summer outreach event was at Bangor Library where the turnout was altogether less encouraging.

Special Lecture Events

PRONI was represented at the 25th anniversary event of the North of Ireland Family History Society (NIFHS), which was attended by those actively involved with the Society over the past 25 years. It was a privilege to be asked to address the Society on this special occasion and to provide some insights into archives and their importance to the family historian. The PRONI involvement with the NIFHS over the years was warmly commended.

The American Conference on Irish Studies (ACIS) at Liverpool, held in July 2004, brought together over 200 academic historians. PRONI participated in one of the many sessions with an illustrated talk on the historical significance of the Ulster Covenant and on the development of the digitised version of the Covenant signatures for the PRONI website. This was an excellent opportunity to sell not only the on-line Covenant website but something of the richness of PRONI’s holdings.

PRONI holds the documented community memory. Not all the events and experiences that make up that memory

STRATEGIC GOAL 6



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Photo of audience attending exhibition and talk on Rathlin Island.

are positive or uplifting. Some are dark, and not least those surrounding 'The Troubles' that lasted three decades. During the year PRONI delivered three special lectures focussed on archives as the key to a better understanding of what happened during those turbulent years. 'Healing Communities: Truth and Historical Interpretation' was given at The National Archives to the annual conference of the Public Services Quality Group of the National Council on Archives. It provided an opportunity to see the Northern Ireland experience within a broader context (e.g., of urban deprivation). An amended version of the lecture was then delivered to students at the University of Glasgow Humanities Advanced Technology and Information Institute (HATII). There followed an invitation from the Liverpool University Centre for Archive Studies (LUCAS) - the speaker in the previous year was Dame Stella Remington, the former Director-General of MI5. Entitled 'Archives amid Division: the Northern Ireland experience', the lecture provided the essential historical background to 'The Troubles' while largely setting aside the politics in order to concentrate on the cold reality of the suffering endured by both communities.

Exhibitions

As part of its contribution to the Archive Awareness Campaign - a series of events in the UK and Ireland - PRONI launched the 'Raghlín Past' exhibition on Rathlin Island. The venue was the island's community hall, where almost half the population saw the exhibition

and heard a talk on the history of the island and on the interesting connections between Rathlin and Bishop Francis Hutchinson. The exhibition featured aspects of local history and the life of Hutchinson, the Church of Ireland Bishop of Down and Connor from 1721 to 1739. Hutchinson developed a unique phonetic form of the Irish language for use in a religious book, known as the 'Rathlin Catechism'. The Catechism (on deposit in PRONI) is one of the oldest and rarest of Irish language manuscripts. The linguistic innovation was intended to help in the conversion of the native Irish to Protestantism. Bishop Hutchinson piloted his conversion project on Rathlin Island, but it was never extended to mainland Ireland. Hutchinson was also central in establishing the Parish of Rathlin in 1722, the building of St Thomas's Church (recently refurbished) and the opening of the first free school on the island. The exhibition was on view in the Rathlin Boathouse Visitors' Centre for the whole summer of 2004. It then moved to different public libraries in the north Antrim area right through to March 2005.

For a number of years PRONI has participated in some of the 'Young at Heart' exhibitions held to inform the retired community about the services available to them. PRONI advertised itself with a stand at the October event in the King's Hall, Belfast, and gave a talk to attendees.

In association with the Prison Service Museum, a small exhibition was prepared for the visit of the Prince of



Wales to the Crumlin Road Goal in his capacity as President of the Phoenix Trust. On display was material from the Crown and Peace archive relating to the building of a goal that, according to the record, was to be 'the most perfect prison' in Ireland.

Special Events

PRONI participated in the first Family History Fair in Northern Ireland organised by the Ulster Historical Foundation and held in the Central Hall of the Belfast Institute of Further and Higher Education. Along with 20 other organisations, the PRONI staff was on hand with advice, literature and publications and took part in the associated talks programme. There was a steady stream of visitors over the two days.

A series of external events and talks took place in the autumn as part of the PRONI contribution to the Archive Awareness Campaign 2004, which tied in with the BBC Family History series 'Who Do You Think You Are'. An evening lecture in the Linen Hall Library featured two talks for the family historian, one on workhouse records in PRONI and the other on poor relief applications held in the Mitchell Library in Glasgow (given by the Library's Dr Irene O'Brien). The applications from over a million people from Glasgow and surrounding area run from the mid-19th century to 1948 and include many first and second generation Irish, mainly from Ulster. The Library has a

database of the names. As part of the Mitchell Library's Archive Awareness Campaign a member of PRONI staff gave two talks on the sources in PRONI for family history. Almost 100 people attended the talks, most having Irish roots and some intending to visit PRONI.

The final event for the Archive Awareness Campaign - it coincided with the BBC Family History weekend - was a Family History Clinic run on a Saturday in partnership with the North of Ireland Family History Society. Radio coverage ensured an excellent response but the event would have been impossible without the support of the Society.

One of the big challenges facing archives is bringing documents to life for those who see them as simply dusty and deadly dull. One method is drama or story form. Historical re-enactment has already proved a winner with both children and adults. PRONI holds the fascinating diary of the Rev. Anthony McIntyre, which describes heart-rending visits to the desperately poor of mid-19th century Belfast. The 'Mean Streets of Belfast' came to life in a re-enactment in 1st Presbyterian Church, Rosemary Street, Belfast, an appropriate venue as the Belfast Domestic Mission - employer of McIntyre - was set up at a meeting in the church. The success of the event was due in no small part to the Rev. Mr Playfair, who allowed the use of his splendid church.

DCAL held a very successful one-day seminar in the autumn to share examples

STRATEGIC GOAL 6



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Re-enactment of life in the workhouse given to a number of Derry schools.

of what has been achieved in support of its Learning Strategy, to enable the different functions coming under the Department's umbrella to consider the relevance and benefits of contributing to the implementation of the Strategy and to chart the way forward. The context for the seminar was a keynote address by Jonathan Douglas, Museums, Libraries and Archives Council, who outlined the Council's 'Inspiring Learning for All Framework'. PRONI, along with the libraries, gave presentations on their respective projects as evaluated as part of the Learning Strategy.

PRONI was the venue for the launch of *Georgian Belfast, 1750-1850* by CEB Brett, published jointly by the Royal Irish Academy and the Belfast Natural History and Philosophical Society. Sir Charles based his work on a set of Incumbered Estates Court maps for Belfast. Held in PRONI, these were annotated by him with details from leases of the Donegall family and provide a remarkable record of the buildings and trades of Belfast in the Georgian period. It was an honour for PRONI to host the event, and not least because Sir Charles has been a major depositor over the years.

Open Days

For the second year running PRONI took part in European Heritage Open Day. The Saturday morning opening attracted 51 people who were given a tour of the archive storage area and the Conservation Section and a running

commentary on research facilities and resources for family and local history. The feedback was extremely positive.

Schools

PRONI has not the resources to provide a comprehensive education service to schools, but it aims at a high quality for what it does. Within the context of New Targeting Social Need, presentations to schools continued both at their premises and in PRONI. Over 100 children from three Londonderry schools came together for an historic re-enactment of life in the workhouse (they were later to visit Derry Workhouse Museum). This highlighted the value of archives in understanding the past and it was followed by a quiz based on what they saw and read. A similar event attracted good press coverage in the local newspapers when staged for eight schools in the Castlederg area. Over 200 children converged on Bridgehill Primary School. The portrayal of workhouse life was so realistic that some children were reduced to tears. The same event was staged in PRONI for three schools from the Belcoo area.

Lifelong Learning and Community Outreach Work

UK archives are supportive of Community Access to Archives, an initiative that supports communities in creating their own archives (including a



web site presence). Commanet, a small voluntary body, has piloted this support for community groups, including several in Northern Ireland. It is particularly exciting in that it forges links between individuals who would never think of visiting a record office.

PRONI worked with a group of women in Poleglass recording their memories of the Belfast Blitz - rationing, shortages, evacuation, the terror of the night-time raids were all recalled - some of which will be incorporated into the Second World War e-learning resource. PRONI contact with the Northern Ireland Film and Television Commission (NIFTVC) resulted in capturing on film the memories of a group of men from East Belfast about the Blitz, school life and work in the shipyard as they walked around their local community.

In partnership with Age Concern, PRONI gave a series of presentations on Victorian and Edwardian times to its groups in the Greater Belfast area. It was a trigger for memories of 'olden times'. Those memories are part of the archival record and should be captured. Individuals may be physically frail but they still have lively minds and important information to impart.

STRATEGIC GOAL 6



Photo of reminiscence session with a group of ladies from Sally Gardens community group

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Wider Use and Easier Access - 2

Strategic Goal 7

Introducing value added products which improve on and off-site access to the records



Strategic Objectives

- 7.1 To implement the electronic catalogue for Northern Ireland (eCATNI) project.
- 7.2 To support cultural tourism and the development of an innovative approach to the provision of genealogical services and information which meets the needs of both customers and providers.
- 7.3 To meet the Government's 2005 electronic service delivery targets especially by offering customers access to digital images and indexed databases of selected records.
- 7.4 To identify partners and maximise external and other funding opportunities so that strategically important projects can be undertaken.
- 7.5 To achieve and maintain Charter Mark accreditation and high standards of service delivery to customers.



Key Performance Targets and Outcomes

STRATEGIC GOAL 7

Key Performance Target	Outcome
To adhere to the 2004/05 eCATNI project plan stages	Not validated
To develop an Action Plan for PRONI's genealogical service by March 2005	Achieved
To have the first phase of the digitisation of wills project on the web (ie the will calendar entries for Northern Ireland District Registries) by December 2004	Partially achieved
To complete the re-design of PRONI's website by January 2005	Not achieved
Following consultation with users to have an agreed prioritised digitisation programme by October 2004	Achieved
To achieve Charter Mark accreditation by March 2005	Not Achieved
To maintain an extra 4 hours opening per week beyond the statutory 37.5 hours	Not Achieved
To deliver 93% of records requested by users for consultation in the Reading Room within 30 minutes	Achieved
To achieve 98% customer satisfaction from on-site customers	Not achieved
To answer 90% of correspondence within 10 working days of receipt and 94% within 14 working days between 1 April 2004 and 31 December (ie prior to FOI implementation) 2004	Achieved
To answer 100% of correspondence substantively within 20 working days of receipt between 1 January and 31 March 2005 (ie after FOI implementation)	Not achieved



Review of Year

Quality Genealogy Service

A FutureSearch conference in March 2004 kicked off an examination of innovative approaches to the provision of genealogical services that would meet the needs of both customers and providers. Working groups were set up to look at, and produce recommendations for, specific areas - Raising the Profile and Resourcing, Quality Products and Services, and Access. PRONI has been actively involved in all of the working groups. Meanwhile PRONI needs to consider short-term measures to improve its genealogy service, while mindful of other pressures such as Freedom of Information and the Electronic Catalogue for Northern Ireland (eCATNI) and of the cramping (literally) effects of limitations of space on the present site. To this end an Action Plan has been developed that will provide an improved microfilming service, give access to a wider range of genealogy products on CD-ROM, improve access for those with a disability and ensure that the family historian visiting PRONI receives the advice and help required. In addition, Public Services (Readers) is now represented on the eCATNI Project Team to ensure that the needs of family historians - the highest proportion of PRONI customer - are fully considered.

Digitisation Projects

Digitisation can aid long-term preservation of vulnerable archives, improve access and make otherwise inaccessible material readily available when coupled with the indexing of content. However, everything cannot be digitised, and so clear priorities must be set. The decisions are difficult because of the range of factors to be considered: e.g., user needs, national or local importance of the archive, the visual appeal of the material. PRONI has sought to find out from existing and potential users what they want digitised and, using a set of criteria and weightings, has devised a digitisation priorities programme for the next five years - wills and Ordnance Survey maps are the immediate priority. Funding for the programme will be a key issue, and other considerations will include the extent of preparatory work and conservation work required. Any programme therefore has an impact on other areas of the office.

Wills

Wills are a primary source for the family historian. Indexing and digitising them is a PRONI key priority. Last year the first phase of the wills project was completed - the indexing will calendar entries for the District Probate Registries of Armagh, Belfast and Londonderry from 1858 to 1919; scanning the wills for Londonderry District Probate Registry; and matching the calendar entries to the wills. The next stage of phase one was to develop a web-



based search facility for the calendar database. The second phase is to scan the remaining wills, i.e., those for Belfast and Armagh Registries.

Joint PRONI/OSNI Ordnance Survey Historical Mapping Project

Among the many items of community memory held in PRONI's archives The Ordnance Survey (OS) maps represent a unique history of the changes in the landscape of Northern Ireland since Ordnance Survey mapping began in the late 1820s. The unique value of the OS maps is that they tie in so strongly with local identity and the sense of place that is so strong in Northern Ireland. However, access to these maps is limited, the paper archives are at risk through constant handling and it is impossible to make the connections between the OS maps and other archives in PRONI. Moreover, an independent survey listed OS maps as the most important series of archives within PRONI that should be digitised. For these reasons PRONI has joined up with the Ordnance Survey of Northern Ireland to scan the historical OS maps (from the late 1820s to the early 1980s). The aim is to create a digital geo-referenced historical mapping archive that will permit PRONI's archival resources to be spatially referenced. Every sheet of every edition will be available in digital format and on-line. PRONI plans to develop 'archival hooks', i.e., to link to individual places a selection of digital

images of photographs and other documents as well as the relevant eCATNI entries. It is an approach that will significantly facilitate users and root the PRONI holdings firmly in the all-important sense of place. With the business case and feasibility study completed and the tender for the project awarded, work has already started on this high profile project.

1901 and 1911 Census Returns

In partnership with Libraries and Archives Canada, the National Archives of Ireland (NAI) will be indexing and digitising the 1901 and 1911 census returns for the island of Ireland. PRONI met with the NAI and Irish Department of Arts, Sport and Tourism representatives to explore how PRONI might contribute to the project, particularly on the Canada-Northern Ireland links. The PRONI publication, *A Guide to Northern Ireland Sources for the Study of Canadian History*, will be a useful starting point.

Customer Services

Opening Hours

Owing to continued Northern Ireland Civil Service industrial action PRONI was unable to reinstate the late night opening service until October 2004. PRONI appreciated the forbearance displayed by users during the suspension of the additional hours of opening.

STRATEGIC GOAL 7



Joint PRONI/OSNI Project

Document Production

From April 2004 to March 2005, the Document Production team handled 36,938 document requests from members of the public, 96.7% of which were produced within 30 minutes. This is an increase in orders of 3,349 documents (9.97%) over last year. As well as handling public orders, the Document Production team also extracted some 500 files for the PRONI-led Annual Sensivity Review exercise. The Antrim, Belfast and Londonderry Will Books were all produced in support of the Will Digitisation Programme, while various items for the PRONI outreach events, talks and exhibitions - notably the Rathlin exhibition - added substantially to the overall production figures.

The efforts of the Document Production team were hampered this year by some of the old shelving for records coming off the rails and trapping other bays behind them. Certain documents - including all microfilms not already in the Self-Service Room - could not be produced. The staff coped commendably in difficult circumstances.

Customer Satisfaction

PRONI Public Search Room staff dealt with 14,450 individual visits by members of the public, an increase of 791 over the previous year. If late night opening had been in operation for longer there is no doubt that the increase would have been much greater. Despite a

high turnover in staff and the time necessarily invested in training new staff, the high standard of customer service was maintained. This was reflected in the very favourable comments received from the public. In relation specifically to customer surveys 93% of on-site visitors expressed satisfaction (target 98%).

The comments of all users are valued - from the regular visitor to the first-time user - as they provide views from different perspectives and based on different degrees of experience on both the actual service and the expectation of service (the latter ties in with the often all-important first impressions). PRONI was particularly interested in the comments made by a historian of international standing, Professor Sir Ian Kershaw, in the acknowledgements in his latest work, *Making Friends with Hitler* (London, 2004). In expressing thanks to those who had assisted his research in a long list of institutions, Sir Ian declared that 'Pride of place goes here to the Public Record Office of Northern Ireland.' Having named two staff in particular, he then referred to 'the splendid staff of the Reading Room, whose kind and good humoured assistance I enjoyed during a number of fruitful visits to Belfast.' To be singled out from UK and international archive institutions is praise indeed.

PRONI remains committed to the improvement and further development of customer-centred service. The improvements this year included the



purchase of a new self-service microfilm reader-printer that will speed up the supply of copies to the public. Work too has been carried out to improve access for the disabled.

Correspondence

From 1 April to 31 December 2004 (ie prior to FOI implementation) PRONI dealt with 1,975 items of correspondence. Of these 91.1% were responded to within 10 working days (target 90%) and 96.9% within 14 working days (target 94%)

From 1 April until 31 December 2004, the Public Services (Reader Services) Section handled all general and legal queries and requests for orders. With the full introduction of Freedom of Information in January 2005 the legal queries and those relating to information within the archives were transferred to the Access to Information Unit. Reader Services continues to deal with general queries and requests for orders and its target remains 90% of requests answered within 10 working days and 96% within 14 working days. Reader Services narrowly missed achieving the target: of 1,378 requests received in the period from 1 April to 31 December 2004, 89.13% were replied to within 10 working days and 96.05% within 14 working days.

The Access Section continued to deal with enquiries about records not yet open to the public - the unlisted

material or that subject to extended closure in line with the Open Government White Paper criteria (now, of course, replaced by FOI) or at the behest of a private depositor.

Enquiries came from a wide range of sources, both members of the public and official bodies. Among the public authorities seeking information the bulk of requests arose from various branches of the Northern Ireland Court Service (Crown Court Office, local Court Offices, Probate and Matrimonial Office, Appeals Office). Requests for access to official material accounted for some 50% of requests received. Within that official category, there were 67 requests for access to inquest papers, the majority from individuals seeking closure on the death of a relative.

The remaining Access enquiries were predominantly from members of the public engaged in academic research or in family or local history research. These requests fell into a number of distinct categories, including Boards of Guardians records (**BG**) for which the functionally responsible Department - Health, Social Services and Public Safety - conducts a search on the enquirer's behalf. However, since the full introduction of Freedom of Information, the PRONI staff carries out the search of the records and consult with the individual Department as the responsible authority on the release of information. The requests are usually from individuals seeking details of relatives born in the workhouse

STRATEGIC GOAL 7

or boarded-out or adopted through the auspices of the Boards of Guardians. The information released often helps to fill in personally important gaps in the lives of individuals who spent their childhoods in care.

Private archives such as those of Harland & Wolff (**D/2805**), the Ulster Unionist Council (**D/1327**) and the Social Democratic and Labour Party (**D/3072**) also attract significant numbers of access requests.

In total, the **Access Section** responded to 703 enquiries, which is significantly up from the previous year but largely accounted for by the inclusion of legal enquiries that moved from Public Services and of non-FOI enquiries answered by the Access to Information (ATI) Unit. In the period from 1 April to 31 December 2004 (ie prior to the introduction of FOI) the Section replied to 98.14% within 10 working days and 100% within 14 working days, thus exceeding the Agency key performance target. In addition, Access replied to a number of FOI requests, which are included in the outturn figures for the Access to Information Unit. This was achieved against a background of staff vacancies and staff particularly appreciated the thank-you letters from the public. Comments included:

'You're a modern day Sherlock Holmes ... many thanks for all your efforts to date.'



'Thank you very much for your assistance and your fantastic response in assisting me'

'Huge thank you for such a fast reply - the archives in Germany are not so fast and kind.'

An Access to Information (ATI) Unit was set up formally in November 2004 to make preparations for the full implementation of FOI on 1 January 2005 in relation to the handling of enquiries from the public. From the latter date responsibility for handling public correspondence about open historical archives moved from Public Services to the Unit. Responsibility for providing copies of wills and testamentary papers also moved across.

From the creation of the Unit until 'go live' in January, staff worked hard to provide background information on the correspondence types, estimating time-spend and devising standard responses to meet the tight deadline of 20 working days for replies. The whole approach was governed by the requirement to assist enquirers, including securing from them the basic information required to ensure a successful search. Early in the New Year existing staff were joined by two new recruits, thus bringing the ATI complement up to six (of whom three work part-time).

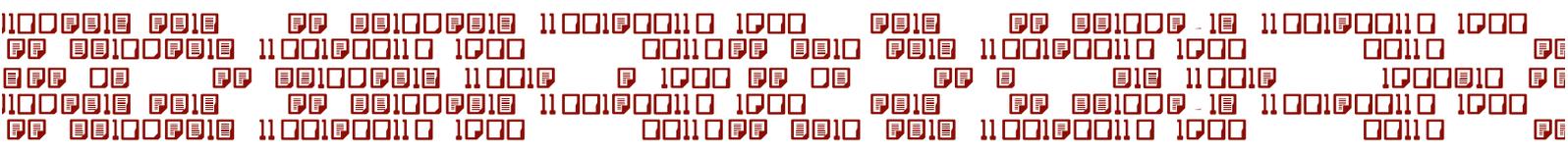
Requests for information require 'substantive replies' under FOI. It means searching for relevant records and, once those are identified, finding the specific information requested. This

STRATEGIC GOAL 7

initiated a major change in processes and application of charges. Both the Department of Constitutional Affairs and the Office of the Information Commissioner are monitoring the operation of the legislation, and so an audit of response times and of types of correspondence is crucial. In the first three months of operation ATI and the Access Section together dealt with 400 queries falling within the definition of an FOI request. As of 31 March 2005 a total of 393 requests had been completed - 94% were answered within the 20 working day target. This was an impressive performance given the change in processes and structures

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PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE
OF NORTHERN IRELAND



Strategic Objectives

- 8.1 To maintain optimum storage conditions within the constraints of the present accommodation.
- 8.2 To contribute to the establishment of best practice processes which ensure that records held in museums, libraries and PRONI are preserved.
- 8.3 To provide a Preservation Service which facilitates optimum access.
- 8.4 To participate at local and national levels in the development of a standard and means of preserving and storing electronic records.

Key Performance Targets and Outcomes

Key Performance Target	Outcome
Upgrading at least 500 linear metres of records	Achieved: 727.83 lm upgraded
To contribute to a joint working group created to establish best practice disaster planning processes by	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • delivering PRONI input 	Achieved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • providing assistance in the preparation of disaster plans for manuscript and printed materials 	Achieved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • reviewing PRONI's Disaster Plan by September 2004 	Achieved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • using training and practice outcomes to produce final version of PRONI Plan by February 2005 	Not achieved
In the light of the Preservation Assessment Survey to put a viable action plan for the Preservation Survey in place by December 2004	Achieved
Preparation of at least 3 archives for digitisation projects	Partially achieved
To	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • develop a Digital Preservation policy and procedures 	Achieved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • implement these in respect of archives, e.g. Ulster Covenant, Freeholders' Records, Wills 	Achieved



Review of Year

Preservation

As must be the case in any large archive institution, preservation is a core function of PRONI. It is central to the PRONI role as guardians of the community's archival heritage and is the means by which records are maintained in a sufficiently good condition to ensure that they can be accessed not only today but for many decades, indeed centuries, to come. Preservation methods are intended to minimise the risk of loss of records and also to slow down, as far as practicable, the natural processes of physical deterioration inherent in most archive materials.

Under the Public Records (NI) Act 1923, PRONI has responsibility for the 'preservation of certain public records appertaining to Northern Ireland', and for the 'preservation of any deeds or documents ... deposited in the Public Record Office of Northern Ireland'. In fulfilment of the Act, the relevant PRONI strategic goal is the 'permanent preservation of an authentic record which future generations can have access to and can consult'.

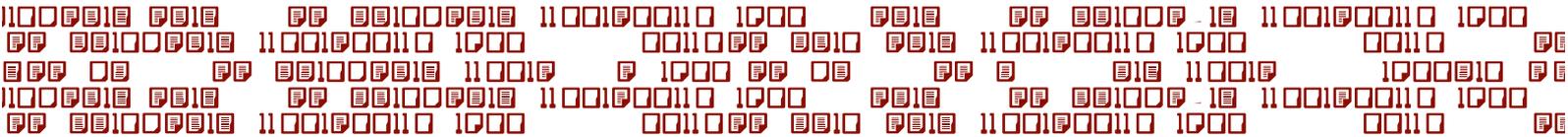
The Preservation Section is organised into three units: Conservation, the Preservation Team and Reprographics. The only one of these whose name may not be self-explanatory is the Preservation Team, the members of

which carry out the backroom work that is seldom seen by the public users of PRONI but is of immense long-term value. The tasks allocated to the team include retrieving records from the PRONI out-store, the processing and safe storage of new accessions of records, the monitoring of environmental conditions in the stores and much related troubleshooting.

The complement of staff within the Preservation Section was an issue of some significance. The recommendation for the creation of two new posts in Preservation - a Conservation Grade D as Head of Preservation and a substantive Grade E - remained unimplemented owing to financial constraints. Instead, a Curatorial Grade C was made Head of Preservation (shared with other responsibilities) and the E post was filled on a temporary deputising basis by rotating the responsibilities among Grade Fs. This arrangement had the benefit of broadening the experience of the Grade Fs who volunteered for the temporary promotion.

In the course of the year an Action Plan was drawn up to address the shortcomings in PRONI records preservation standards as highlighted in the British Library-based National Preservation Office's Preservation Assessment Survey (PAS). The methodology of the PAS provided a vital ingredient for progress, namely a statistically reliable assessment of preservation needs.

STRATEGIC GOAL 8



Conservation

Conservation staff were involved in a wide range of cross-domain functions during the year, including completing two major preservation surveys of collections designated for digitisation and microfilming, conservation presentations to visitors, rewriting the PRONI Disaster Plan, carrying out Preservation Awareness instruction in November 2004 (during the annual two-week closure) and assisting with the new accommodation project.

Digitisation surveys: A preservation survey was carried out on c.15,000 documents from the Tenison Groves genealogical notes and abstracts (T/808). The survey noted the physical condition of the documents, the suitability of the image/format for data capture and a calculation of the total number of projected images requiring capture. A further preservation survey was carried out on the Dufferin Papers (D/1071/H/B). Conservators noted micrographic issues in relation to the paper, inks and embossed text that are known to cause legibility problems when microfilmed. The contents of 30 PRONI boxes were surveyed, a total of c.12,000 documents.

PRONI Disaster Plan: Work commenced in 2004 on rewriting the PRONI Disaster Plan. The original Plan was based on the findings, in 1989, of the PRONI Disaster Plan Committee. It focused on two disaster elements - Prevention and Recovery. The new plan is a radical departure from its

predecessor in that it takes full account of the most up-to-date thinking on the key elements of 21st century Disaster Planning. Now the Plan consists of five key elements, which encompass Prevention, Preparedness, Reaction, Recovery and Salvage. These elements, particularly Preparedness, afford clear roles and lines of authority for all staff involved in delivering the different parts of the Plan.

New Accommodation project: A conservator formed part of the cross-domain fact-finding delegation that visited three recently built record offices in Great Britain. This initiative was conducted as part of the New Accommodation Project. The visits took place in Autumn 2004 and included tours of the facilities at The National Archives, London; the Denbighshire Record Office, Ruthin, and the Norfolk Record Office, Norwich. The conservation representative noted and reported back on significant innovations in the storage, retrieval, reproduction and conservation of the archives identified within these institutions. Conservation was also involved in the process of verifying PRONI's total 'in use' record storage space.

Remedial treatment: Conservation carried out remedial treatment on 1,269 documents assessed by the Unit as being of medium technical difficulty. Most of the documents treated were drawn from the Grade 1 key archives.

Among the collections treated was the National Education grant aid applications (ED/1/33) and letters



from the Castlereagh Papers (D/3030). It proved a massive task that spanned many years but all 33 volumes of the ED/1 series - containing thousands of unique and historically important documents - were finally conserved.

Presentations: The Unit gave conservation presentations to the PRONI Advisory Board, Heritage Malta and members of the public who attended 'behind the scenes' tours of the Agency. Conservation continued to organise and participate in events aimed at improving knowledge among staff new to PRONI on essential preservation issues such as handling of records, identification of media types, suitability of records for reproduction and Disaster Planning.

Career development: Staff attended three major conferences: the Society of Archivists' Conference in Glasgow; the Document SOS Conference on Disaster Planning in London; and a Disaster Plan Conference in Chester organised by the Chester Fire Service. The last of these events was particularly useful in that it helped to inform the rewriting of the PRONI Disaster Plan.

Reprographics

As with last year, most of the Reprographic Unit work centred on providing photocopies and microfilm printouts for the public. The newly acquired digital camera was used increasingly to

provide copies of outsize and damaged documents. Photocopying of these documents could result in significant 'mechanical damage' because of the unavoidable handling involved and is simply too great a preservation risk to be permissible. The use of the digital camera provides a solution that avoids the risk of damage and, at the same time, allows the member of the public to obtain high quality copies of items of interest. However, that positive element was offset in part by a drop in the Unit output suffering owing to the retirement of a highly experienced camera operator.

Reader Services acquired a microfilm reader-printer and now handles all public orders, leaving the Reprographic Unit free to concentrate on the preservation side of reprographics, including digital preservation. To this end PRONI purchased a book cradle, an important accessory for the digital camera that will allow working safely with large volumes where damage to the spines would previously have ruled out such an action.

As part of the continuing research into digital preservation (in liaison with the IS Section) the Head of Preservation attended a five-day workshop organised by King's College, London. It dealt with all aspects of digitisation, from the selection of material, through funding, to the technical aspects of preservation of images and the metadata that must be associated with any digital images database. The workshop brought

STRATEGIC GOAL 8



home the vital message that digitisation is not simply about clicking a camera but consists of a package of complicated and related elements in a programme that can fail if one of those elements is not in place. That insight will be of value as PRONI (subject to resources) pursues its prioritised programme of digitisation.

Preservation Team

As well as the routine work of processing new accessions and of moving records between Balmoral Avenue and a PRONI out-store, the team completed the upgrading of plan cases containing maps, plans and outsize documents. This involved reducing the number of documents in each plan case drawer so as to afford extra protection to the documents and to allow for easier retrieval of the items without damaging them. Loose material was also identified and moved to improved storage in line with the Preservation Assessment Survey Action Plan.

Maintaining storage standards for 54 linear kilometres of records represents an unending challenge. A great deal of work was undertaken in the out-store, a task that involved the identification of unboxed material and the updating the location index. Towards the end of the year problems were encountered at Balmoral Avenue when a section of shelving collapsed without warning in one of the strong-rooms. It is a location for the storage of non-standard material (i.e., outsize

and often heavy items) and occurred because the weight of the records simply proved to be too great for the shelves to bear. Fortunately, no member of staff was injured. However, the contractors' inability to respond quickly to requests to resolve the problem meant that the strong-room had to be closed. Documents could not be produced from that location for some months. A related problem, stemming from the fact that the shelving is at the end of its useful life, was that encountered in the microfilm store where the bays simply jammed fast. Again, this took some months to resolve and unavoidably led to some disquiet on the part of members of the public. PRONI is currently considering other storage options.

Digital Preservation Strategy

The need for a Digital Preservation Strategy has been increasingly obvious in recent times. Firstly, in response to the impending introduction of Electronic Document and Records Management systems that will generate electronic records to be preserved. Secondly, in the light of the investment - in terms of both time and money - that PRONI has made in creating its digital archive (Ulster Covenant, Freeholders' Records and Wills). In order to support the creation and maintenance of these images so as to ensure continued access to the digital



asset, PRONI developed Digital Preservation policy and procedures, including archive selection, image format, metadata, storage medium and storage conditions. In line with the policy, high quality TIFF master images were created along with the associated metadata, while lower quality images were created for presentation via the Internet. The master images are currently stored on a Dell 2650 server with direct attached storage and a tape library with the associated metadata stored in a SQL Server database on a separate Compaq Proliant server. IS Section expects to continue to refine both the policy and the associated procedures as experience in this area increases.

IS Section increased its storage capacity for digital images to 1.7 terabytes (TB) during 2004/05 in order to accommodate the data generated by the PRONI Wills project. This was a substantial operation requiring the procurement and installation of additional disk storage. The need to expand disk storage space for the PRONI digital images has reinforced another and related need - keeping policy and procedures under review, particularly in areas such as image format and storage medium.

In support of the PRONI wider digital preservation remit, IS Section has represented PRONI on the National Council on Archives Digital Preservation Working Group. This working group aims to provide:

- a clear guide to digital preservation
- a clear and simple description of the issues surrounding digital preservation
- a demystification of the idea that the challenges and solutions are purely technological rather than being about strategies and processes developed by people
- recommendations for action by the intended audiences
- sources of further advice.

STRATEGIC GOAL 8

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Leadership and Staff Management

Strategic Goal 9

Expanding continuously PRONI's capabilities for making the changes necessary to achieve its overall strategic goals



Strategic Objectives

- 9.1 Establish training and career development programmes to meet changing business needs.
- 9.2 Implement the IS/IT strategy as a key enabler of the Corporate, Business and Reform Plans

Key Performance Targets and Outcomes

Key Performance Target	Outcome
Average of 5 training days provided per person during 2004/05	Partially achieved
95%+ satisfaction rating to be achieved in maintaining the corporate IT system (Local Area Network (LAN), servers, PCs, printers, software, systems	Not achieved



Review of Year

Training and Development

PRONI remains committed to ensuring that the staff has the skills and knowledge required to carry out effectively individual roles and responsibilities. This is achieved through the agreement of Personal Development Plans at individual level that relate directly to sectional and agency training plans. Training courses are organised largely through the DRD Training and Development Branch and the DFP Training and Development Centre.

The average number of training days provided for each individual member of staff has increased steadily over the past three years rising from 2.3 days in 2002/03 to 4.2 in 2003/04 and to almost 5 days in 2004/05. As in previous years, and as is appropriate to an organisation that is part of the Civil Service but also discharges a specialist function, staff attended a wide and diverse range of formal and informal courses, including PRINCE 2 project management, process mapping, Display Screen and Equipment Awareness, Absence Management, Electronic Document and Records Management, general management development courses and various IT-related personal development courses. Specifically archive-related opportunities were also exploited.

A Business Development Service report on Pay, Progression and Career Development

for Curatorial staff was received in July 2004. Included in the recommendations were suggestions for establishing a comprehensive career development programme to help address recruitment and retention problems and encourage continuous professional development for all curatorial staff regardless of grade or length of service. The Management Team has considered the report and decided on the recommendations to be implemented. These will be discussed with Local Trade Union Side early in 2005/06.

Other Personnel Management Issues

The following points give a flavour of the main personnel issues that had to be managed throughout the year -

- The Minister approved PRONI's Business Plan for 2004/05 in July 2004. This provided the framework within which personnel policies and practices were developed, individual performance objectives were set and training and development needs agreed.
- In conjunction with the Department, PRONI continued to implement action points agreed in the Department's Human Resource Strategy. These included the introduction of a total ban on smoking within the PRONI premises with effect from January 2005.
- Internal consultants (the Business Development Service) completed

STRATEGIC GOAL 9

the fundamental review of Pay, Progression and Career Development for Curatorial staff and issued its report in July 2004. The report contained recommendations and options to address pay issues, to change existing progression arrangements and to provide an improved career development programme for all curatorial staff. The recommendations were largely accepted by the PRONI Management Team, which also accepts the importance of securing a positive response from Trade Union Side. Implementation, however, will require changes to centrally negotiated agreements and that means approval by DFP and NIPSA.

- Over the past two years vacancy levels have fallen significantly: from 25% in 2002/03, to 14% in 2003/04, to 7.8% in 2004/05. However, the reality is that the vacancies across grades and disciplines continued to affect productivity and output - in particular in relation to retaining curatorial staff. Filling eight vacant posts was embargoed in July pending the outcome of the 2004 Spending Review. The Review resulted in the PRONI administrative expenditure budget being capped for the next three years, and the Management Team decided that none of the eight vacant posts should be filled. Further staff cuts are scheduled over the next three

years in order to live within budget. Staff complements will be closely monitored.

- New and more stringent rules for managing attendance were introduced across the NICS on 31 March 2003 and were implemented progressively by Corporate Services in liaison with line managers. The new rules were explained to staff at awareness seminars and line managers received additional training. Despite the initiative, sick absence levels were higher than the NICS average - 7.4% against 6.4% - an outcome resulting largely from a high incidence of long-term absences (those of more than 20 working days).
- A staff attitudes survey was carried out in January 2005. Fifty-three per cent of staff took the opportunity to respond to a range of questions about training and development, IT services, working environment, management, etc. Of those who responded, 77% indicated that they were satisfied to work in PRONI - an increase of 2% on the 2001 survey figure (the year of the last survey). When the results are analysed an improvement plan will be drawn up and implemented.

Concerted industrial action throughout the NICS in support of a pay claim was a feature of the industrial relations scene from the beginning of the financial year until September 2004. Despite this backdrop, good industrial relations



were maintained at local level through scheduled and *ad hoc* meetings and informal discussions. No formal disagreements were recorded. Indeed, effective use of the industrial relations channels contributed significantly to the achievement of many of the PRONI operational objectives.

Information Systems/Information Technology (IS/IT)

As part of the 2005 PRONI Staff Survey IS Section sought staff opinion on the services which it provides. This was the first survey conducted by IS and it set a very high satisfaction target of 95%. While this was not met satisfaction levels of between 75% and 80% were achieved and a number of areas for improvement identified.

IS Section continued the implementation of the IS/IT Strategy in 2004/05. This strategy highlighted a number of key IS/IT projects, e.g., eCATNI and EDRM (these are discussed elsewhere), a review of the PRONI Local Area Network and the ongoing support services provided by the section to the agency.

The Section continued to provide IS/IT procurement, installation and support services to the staff. In order to assess the level of satisfaction with the service provided, a number of relevant questions were included in the 2004/05 Staff Survey. Early feedback shows a high level of satisfaction with the service provided. The Section is

committed to trying to improve on this in the incoming year.

IS Section has continued its planned programme of server rationalisation and replacement during 2004/05. This involved the retirement of two existing servers, the procurement of five new servers and the rationalisation of services across existing and new servers.

PRONI has become more and more reliant on the use of Information Technology on a day-to-day basis. Recognising this, the IS Section implemented a number of measures to improve the resilience of the PRONI Local Area Network (LAN) infrastructure and to provide a degree of business continuity in the event of IT failure. The Section started to implement a Gigabyte backbone architecture for the PRONI LAN, which is planned for completion in summer 2005. The ongoing network infrastructure maintenance and upgrade now has to take account of the need to provide contingency and resilience for the new systems. This will continue to be addressed during the next year.

IS Section implemented a new tape library solution for centralised backup of all PRONI servers, including Digital Preservation data. All dynamic data are now backed up using the Full Backup method on a nightly basis, with hourly incremental backups during the course of each day. Static data - e.g., images created through digitisation projects - are backed up as needed (when new data are added or for planned refresh purposes).

STRATEGIC GOAL 9

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OF NORTHERN IRELAND



Accommodation

Strategic Goal 10

To put in place firm plans and proposals for new accommodation for PRONI



Strategic Objectives

10.1 Plan for long-term accommodation needs.

Key Performance Targets and Outcomes

Key Performance Target	Outcome
Long-term accommodation needs identified and agreed by PRONI management team by July 2004	Achieved
Options to meet needs identified agreed by management team by September 2004	Achieved
Business case submitted for relevant approvals - draft business case completed within 8 weeks of having received the information from all relevant studies on the options identified.	Not achieved



Review of Year

New Accommodation

In the *Annual Report* for last year it was pointed out that, as it is difficult to meet all the needs of records preservation and of public access to records, the search for new accommodation would be a prolonged process. While this continues to be the case, significant progress has been made in moving forward the new accommodation project.

In April 2004, a dedicated staff resource, at a senior level in PRONI, was appointed to take forward the project and to start the work of developing the business case required to secure the financial resources for the accommodation.

As part of the process of developing the business case the space requirements for PRONI were reassessed, further refined and agreed by the Section Heads (all members of the PRONI Management Team). The Management Team agreed the input to the business case in relation to the need for the expenditure, the objectives for the new accommodation, and a first set of options that should be considered to meet the accommodation needs.

An inter-departmental group with representation from the DFP Construction and Advisory Division and the Office Estates and Buildings Branch and from

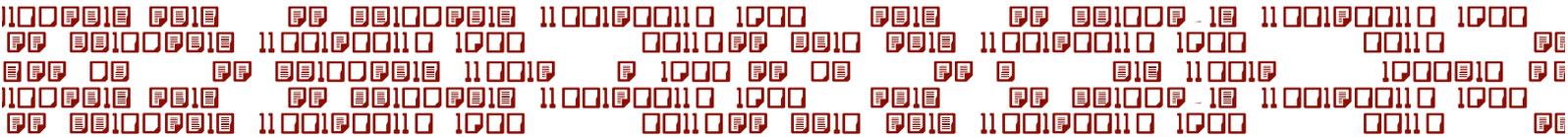
the Valuation and Lands Agency drew up costings for the first set of options. The work from this group will be further developed as part of the business case for the project.

As one of the options under consideration is a move to the site of the Crumlin Road Gaol (CRG) a formal expression of interest in the site was lodged with the site owners, the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister (OFMDFM) during the year. Following on from this PRONI was involved in consultations with OFMDFM during the drawing up of the Technical Feasibility and Development Potential Study for the CRG. While this study was underway no additional studies were commissioned by PRONI. A copy of the study was received by PRONI in late March and it is considering the outcomes.

The management structure for the accommodation project was established during the year in the form of a Project Board - chaired by the DCAL Deputy Secretary - and a Project Steering Group. The involvement of the Department at such a senior level demonstrates the priority that it attaches to delivering on a project that aims to develop the Cultural Capital infrastructure for the Northern Ireland archival heritage so that this massive and unique information resource is made more readily accessible to the present and future generations.

In delivering such a major project PRONI has recognised the importance

STRATEGIC GOAL 10



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Example of tri-lingual signs erected in PRONI

of learning lessons from other archival institutions that moved in recent years to new accommodation. During the course of the year a small team of staff comprising the project manager, curatorial, conservation and staff representatives visited Norfolk Record Office, Norwich; the National Archives, Kew; and Denbighshire Record Office, Ruthin, to hear at first hand from their experiences of moving to new premises or of acquiring additional space.

The visit to Denbighshire Record Office was of particular interest as it is situated in Ruthin Gaol, a Grade II listed building and a former County Gaol. Besides being a former prison now housing an archive institution, Ruthin Gaol was modelled on London's Pentonville Prison as was the Crumlin Road Gaol (CRG) - one of the options identified as a possible location for the new PRONI.

Existing Accommodation

While the search for new accommodation continues the PRONI objective in relation to its present accommodation is to maintain a safe and secure environment for the records, staff and visitors in compliance with statutory requirements.

A number of practical actions were taken to ensure all-round safety:

- Health and Safety risk assessments were carried out quarterly using

trained assessors. The findings were reported to the Management Team and remedial action taken

- Remedial work was undertaken to implement the recommendations contained in a Fire Officer's report and to comply with Disability Discrimination Act regulations (following a DDA Audit). It included the installation of new ramps, steps and automatic doors
- A new traffic management system was implemented in April 2004 to improve traffic flow and to ensure the safety of pedestrians
- The programme to replace defective map plan cases was progressed

Other improvements included:

- The extension of the public and staff restaurant which was officially opened in May 2004 by the DCAL Permanent Secretary, Dr Aideen McGinley
- The erection of trilingual signs throughout the premises in compliance with the Department's policy
- The completion of painting and decorating in the corridors and in other areas



One serious accident involving a member of staff occurred on the premises in April 2004. Following surgery and a period of recuperation the member of staff was able to return to work. The accident was reported to the Health and Safety Executive and remedial action taken to replace a defective door mechanism. A claim for compensation is pending.

There is increasing concern at the frequency with which problems are occurring in the strong-rooms. Some stores had to be closed for staff health and safety reasons because the moveable bays had jammed owing to more than 30 years of wear and tear on the sliding mechanisms and also because some of the shelving collapsed. Orders for new racking have been placed, and a review of the condition of the shelving in all the Balmoral Avenue stores has been commissioned.

STRATEGIC GOAL 10

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PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE
OF NORTHERN IRELAND



The Financial Environment

Strategic Goal 11

Maximise the use of resources in order to achieve Reform Plan and other operational imperatives by managing them efficiently, demonstrating value for money and improving efficiency where possible.



Strategic Objectives

11.1 Effective management of financial resources demonstrating value for money.

11.2 Fully explore the opportunities to reduce dependence on public funds by increasing income for value added services and products and attracting additional (external) funding for specific projects.

Key Performance Targets and Outcomes

Key Performance Target	Outcome
To make and lay a new Fees Order before January 2005	Not achieved
To live within annual budget with no more that 5% under-spend	Not achieved
To explore the opportunities to raise additional revenue by	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> assessing potential and feasibility (by October 2004) investigating legal and accounting implications (by December 2004) developing a charging policy by March 2005 	Not achieved



Review of Year

Fees Order

Work to make and lay a new Fees Order by January 2005 was seriously hampered by pressure of other work and by staff illness. Nevertheless, some progress was made. The Management Team reviewed and amended its existing charging policy, agreed a new charging framework and decided to introduce a number of new services. Work will continue to cost both existing and new services, calculate new charges and examine the extent to which the Order will have to be subjected to impact assessments before liaison with the Departmental Solicitor's Office on the drafting of the Order.

Financial Management

PRONI's initial budget of £3,175,000 was increased to £3,729,000 as a result of successful bids for additional funding to cover:

- the continuation of the eCATNI project
- compliance with recommendations contained in a Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) audit

PRONI under-spent its budget by £254,000 (c.5.9%). The main underspend relates to capital projects and occurred for a number of reasons - initial delays in progressing the eCATNI and Mapping Projects, lower

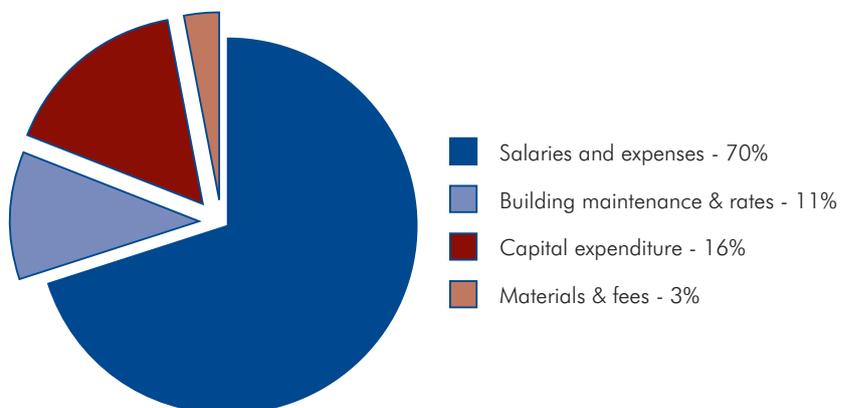
than expected expenditure on the introduction of an Electronic Document and Records Management system (a matter outside PRONI control) and delays in the completion of some of the DDA compliance work.

Within the budget there was an overspend of £22,000 on professional fees, which were charges by Central Procurement Directorate (CPD). CPD provides PRONI with a full range of professional building services, including contract management, advice and guidance on building maintenance matters.

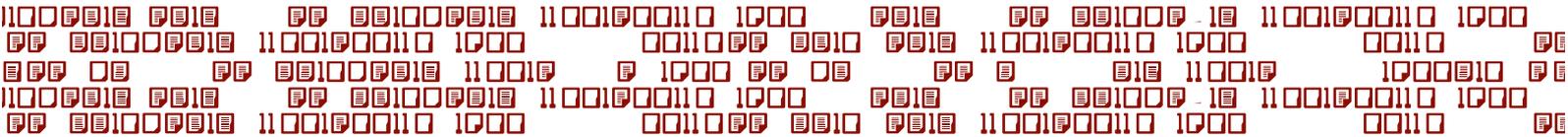
The use of CPD increased significantly as the year progressed because of unforeseen work in relation to compliance with Fire Safety regulations and the DDA audit recommendations and the Directorate's significant and growing involvement in the new accommodation project.

The chart below shows the main areas in which expenditure was incurred:

How PRONI spent its budget



STRATEGIC GOAL 11



Investigating the Potential to Increase Income

As the digitisation programme rolls out and more information becomes available on-line, PRONI must investigate the potential for increasing income by charging for value-added services and products and by attracting external funding for specific projects.

In 2003/04 Information Systems Section conducted a review to determine the feasibility and technical issues of charging for on-line payments. The review concluded that this was feasible and that a solution should be based on the Government Gateway Payment Engine. Other work to examine the legal, accounting and practical implications had to be reprioritised owing to other pressures.

Other Financial Issues

In line with the rest of the Northern Ireland Civil Service, PRONI contributed to the Spending Review 2004 (SR 2004) by carrying out a fundamental review of its likely budget requirements for the three years commencing 2005/06. The outcome of SR2004 - announced in December - was mixed. Administrative expenditure on salaries and general expenses will be capped at current levels for the period and a bid for funds to complete the eCATNI project was rejected. On the other hand, there was good news in relation to new accommodation. The draft Investment Strategy for Northern Ireland 2005 to 2015 - published for consultation in December 2004 - highlighted £33m for that specific purpose. The figure was programmed for years 4 to 10 of the programme with limited capital funding (£540,000) allocated for years 1 to 3.

In August the Management Team adopted the DCAL Anti-Fraud Policy and Procedures. All staff were made aware of the policy and advised by the Chief Executive that a 'no tolerance' approach to fraud would be adopted.



Summary of Performance Against Key Targets

STRATEGIC GOAL 11

Challenging key performance targets determine the priorities governing Agency activities over the financial year and for these the Chief Executive is answerable. The PRONI performance against target for 2004-2005 has been validated by Internal Audit and is summarised below.

Key Performance Targets	Outcome
To publish final APNI report by December 2004	Partially achieved
To proof PRONI policies and procedures against customer delivery requirements by March 2005	Achieved
To prepare instructions for Office of the Legislative Council by April 2005	Target postponed
Hold Records Management Conference by June 2004	Achieved
Release of open official records on first working day of New Year	Achieved
To list at least 250 units	Not achieved: c. 230 units listed 2000-01 517 units listed 2000-01 652 units listed 2000-01 392 units listed 2000-01 737 lin m listed
To adhere to the 2004/05 eCATNI project plan stages	Not validated (applies to both goals 5 and 7)
EDRM introduced throughout PRONI by October 2004	Partially achieved
By March 2005 to further develop PRONI's e-learning resource on 'Victorian Times' for schools	Partially achieved

PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE
OF NORTHERN IRELAND

Key Performance Targets	Outcome
By March 2005, under the theme of 'Movement' to develop, in partnership with the Centre for Migration Studies, an e-learning resource on 18th century emigration to North America.	Achieved
To develop an Action Plan for PRONI's genealogical service by March 2005	Achieved
To have the first phase of the digitisation of wills project on the web (ie the will calendar entries for Northern Ireland District Registries) by December 2004	Partially achieved
To complete the re-design of PRONI's website by January 2005	Not achieved
Following consultation with users to have an agreed prioritised digitisation programme by October 2004	Achieved
To achieve Charter Mark accreditation by March 2005	Not Achieved
To maintain an extra 4 hours opening per week beyond the statutory 37.5 hours	Not Achieved 2003-04 Not achieved 2002-03 Achieved 2001-02 Achieved 2000-01 Achieved
To deliver 93% of records requested by users for consultation in the Reading Room within 30 minutes	Achieved 96.39% 2003-04 95.68% 2002-03 97.34% 2001-02 97% 2000-01 93.36%

The following table shows the performance of the PRONI in meeting its key performance targets for the period 2000-01 to 2003-04. The table shows that the PRONI has made significant progress in meeting its key performance targets, particularly in the area of customer satisfaction and the upgrade of records. However, there has been a decline in the percentage of correspondence answered within the required timeframes since 2000-01.

Key Performance Targets	Outcome																		
To achieve 98% customer satisfaction from on-site customers	Not achieved 93% 2003-04 98% 2002-03 99.3% 2001-02 98.1% 2000-01 98.2%																		
To answer 90% of correspondence within 10 working days of receipt and 94% within 14 working days between 1 April 2004 and 31 December (ie prior to FOI implementation) 2004	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th>10 days</th> <th>14 days</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Achieved</td> <td>91.1%</td> <td>96.9%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2003-04</td> <td colspan="2">Not Achieved</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2002-03</td> <td>96.4%</td> <td>98.8%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2001-02</td> <td>94%</td> <td>98.6%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2000-01</td> <td>95%</td> <td>98%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		10 days	14 days	Achieved	91.1%	96.9%	2003-04	Not Achieved		2002-03	96.4%	98.8%	2001-02	94%	98.6%	2000-01	95%	98%
	10 days	14 days																	
Achieved	91.1%	96.9%																	
2003-04	Not Achieved																		
2002-03	96.4%	98.8%																	
2001-02	94%	98.6%																	
2000-01	95%	98%																	
To answer 100% of correspondence substantively within 20 working days of receipt between 1 January and 31 March 2005 (ie after FOI implementation)	Not achieved 93.75%* * excludes 3 cases where deadline was extended to 30 days to allow consideration of public interest																		
To upgrade at least 500 linear metres of records	Achieved: 727.83 lm upgraded 2003-04: 720 lm upgraded																		
To contribute to a joint working group created to establish best practice disaster planning processes by																			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> delivering PRONI input 	Achieved																		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> providing assistance in the preparation of disaster plans for manuscript and printed materials 	Achieved																		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> reviewing PRONI's Disaster Plan by September 2004 	Achieved																		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> using training and practice outcomes to produce final version of PRONI Plan by February 2005 	Not achieved																		

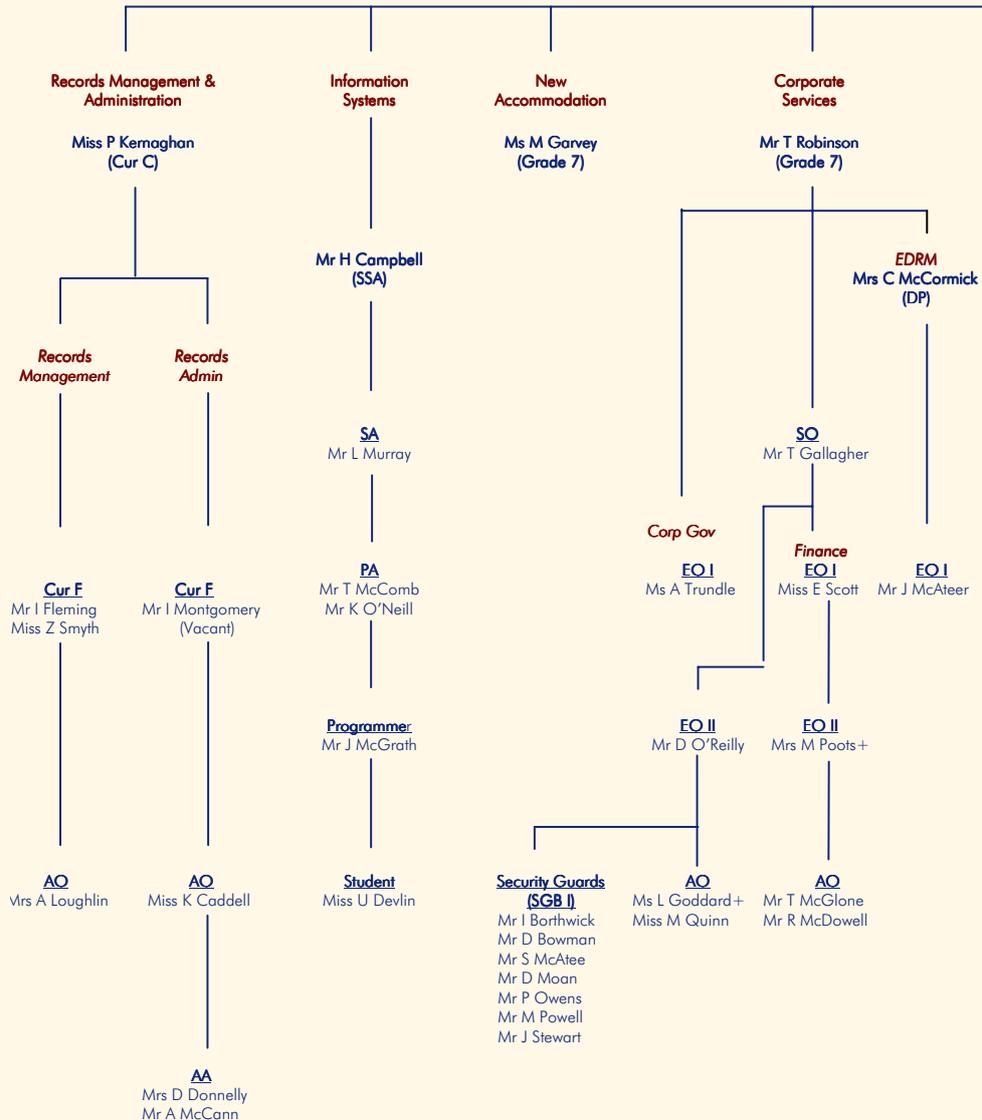
STRATEGIC GOAL 11

PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE
OF NORTHERN IRELAND

Key Performance Targets	Outcome
In the light of the Preservation Assessment Survey to put a viable action plan for the Preservation Survey in place by December 2004	Achieved
Preparation of at least 3 archives for digitisation projects	Partially achieved
To	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> develop a Digital Preservation policy and procedures 	Achieved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> implement these in respect of archives, e.g. Ulster Covenant, Freeholders' Records, Wills 	Achieved
Average of 5 training days provided per person during 2004/05	Partially achieved
95%+ satisfaction rating to be achieved in maintaining the corporate IT system (Local Area Network (LAN), servers, PCs, printers, software, systems)	Not achieved
Long-term accommodation needs identified and agreed by PRONI management team by July 2004	Achieved
Options to meet needs identified agreed by management team by September 2004	Achieved

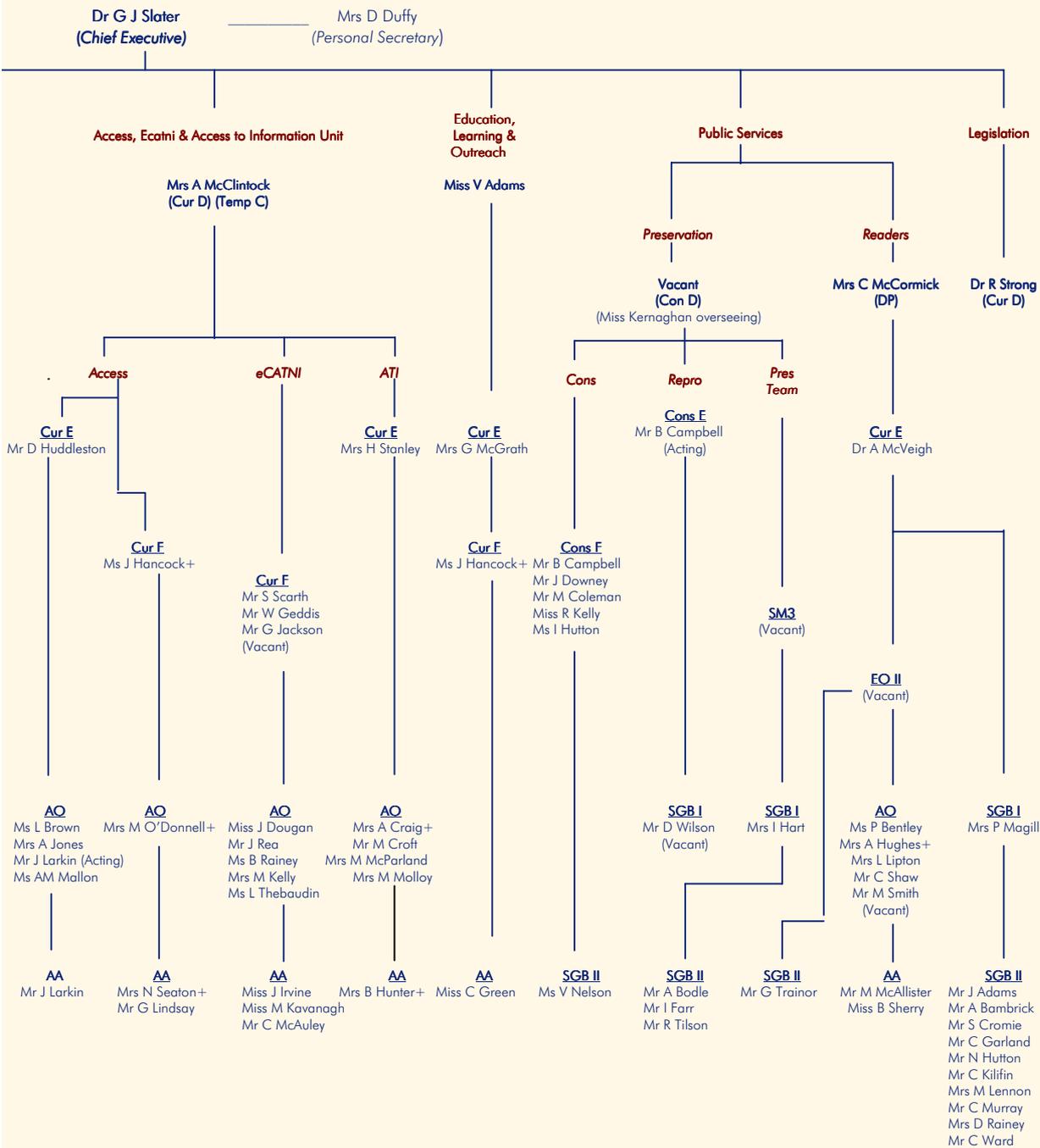
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Public Record Office of Northern Ireland



+ Part time

Ireland: Organisational Structure Grades and Staff



MARCH 2005

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PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE
OF NORTHERN IRELAND

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Annual Accounts

2004-2005



Foreword to the Accounts

History and Statutory Background

The Public Record Office of Northern Ireland (PRONI) became an Executive Agency on 1 April 1995 under the Government's Next Steps Initiative. Under the Devolution arrangements it became an Agency of the Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure (DCAL) on 1 December 1999.

PRONI was created by the Public Records Act (Northern Ireland) 1923, with a Deputy Keeper answerable to the Minister of Finance as 'Keeper of the Records', a role now discharged by DCAL. In practice, PRONI has a virtual monopoly responsibility for that part of Northern Ireland's cultural heritage which relates to archives. It receives records ranging from those of Government Departments, Courts, Local Authorities and Non-Departmental Public Bodies to those of landed estates, businesses, churches, societies, community groups and private families and individuals. As it draws its records from the whole of the Northern Ireland community, PRONI is committed to reflecting every aspect of the archival heritage.

These accounts have been prepared in accordance with a direction given by the Department of Finance and Personnel in accordance with Section 11(2) of the Government Resources and Accounts Act (Northern Ireland) 2001 (see DAO(DFP) 13/03).

The financial statements are audited by the Comptroller and Auditor General (C&AG) in accordance with the Government Resources and Accounts Act (NI) 2001. He is head of the Northern Ireland Audit Office and he and his staff are wholly independent of PRONI. He reports his findings to the Northern Ireland Assembly/Parliament.

The audit of the financial statements for 2004/05 resulted in an audit fee of £8,000.

Principal Aims

The fundamental aim of the Agency, as set out in its Framework Document, is to identify and preserve Northern Ireland's archival heritage and to ensure public access to that heritage which fully meets Open Government standards.



Principal Activities

ANNUAL ACCOUNTS
2004-2005

PRONI's activities are reflected in its organisational structure. There were seven sections at the beginning of the year but in April 2004 and September 2004 two additional 'sections' were established to take forward the New Accommodation and New Legislation projects.

The principal activities of PRONI:

- *Records Management and Administration Section* - responsible for the professional archival function of PRONI in the appraisal, selection and acquisition of all records deemed worthy of permanent preservation and for the provision of records management advice (including guidance on electronic document records management) to government and the wider public sector.
- *Public Services (Preservation) Section* - responsible for ensuring that the proper conditions exist within PRONI for preserving records. There are three main areas of preservation - Conservation, Reprographics and a Preservation Team responsible for preparing records for storage and upgrading storage conditions.
- *Public Services (Readers) Section* - provides a service for on-site visitors wanting to undertake research in the archives. It provides advice and guidance to on-site visitors, manages the public search room and reading rooms as well as the copying and document retrieval services and responds to all written and e-mail requests for copies of documents and for permission to publish from the archives.
- *Access Section* - co-ordinates the annual sensitivity review by which all non-sensitive records are released to the public on 2 January every year as well as the archival response to the White Paper on Open Government; responds to all Freedom of Information enquiries through its Access to Information Unit and to queries regarding access to records held in PRONI that are normally closed to the public; is responsible for cataloguing (the production of descriptive lists) and indexing new and existing unlisted archives deemed worthy of permanent preservation; and manages the eCATNI Project (Electronic Catalogue for Northern Ireland) which is supported by in-house IS staff and involves quality assuring 80 years of descriptive lists of the archives, converting the paper lists into electronic form and making them available on-line by early 2007.

PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE OF NORTHERN IRELAND

- *Education, Learning and Outreach Section* - is responsible for developing and promoting the value and use of PRONI's archives and reaching out to new audiences. It develops educational resources for schools, universities and the life-long learner, delivers an outreach programme by means of talks, lectures, workshops, historical re-enactments and exhibitions, produces publications, leaflets and guides to records, manages digitisation projects to provide on-line access to the content of archives and is responsible for publicity and marketing of PRONI, for example, through the PRONI website. In addition, the Section is leading on the Archives Policy for Northern Ireland (APNI) review and DCAL's review of Genealogy Services in Northern Ireland.
- *Corporate Services* - is responsible for the provision of a range of support services, including financial, personnel and premises management and corporate governance, which help the Agency to perform as efficiently as possible;
- *Information Systems* - is responsible for the provision of IT services, including hardware and software support, procurement and installation of equipment and provision of systems to support the Agency's business needs.
- *New Accommodation* - project to co-ordinate and lead PRONI's search for new accommodation in liaison with OFMDFM and DFP's Central Procurement Directorate.
- *New Legislation* - project to review the Public Records Act (Northern Ireland) 1923 and, if required, to carry out the process of making new primary legislation.

Business Review

The net cost of operations for the year was £3,982k. In arriving at this result the Agency has included notional costs of £543k and a charge for interest on capital employed of £145k.

Important Events Occurring After the Year-End

There have been no significant events since the year-end which would affect these Accounts.

Future Developments

ANNUAL ACCOUNTS
2004-2005

PRONI's Corporate Plan (Information in the Digital Age) and its Reform Plan detail the strategic goals and objectives for the period 2003/04 to 2005/06. PRONI's strategic goals for this 3-year period are -

1. determining the future strategic direction of PRONI and archival services provision in Northern Ireland by completing the APNI process;
2. overseeing the management of records in government and the wider public sector to support its business;
3. seeking to contribute to information policy by providing support to public authorities on the public records aspects of the Data Protection Act 1998, Environment Information Regulations and the Freedom of Information Act 2000 through guidance on access and sensitivity reviewing;
4. selecting, acquiring, listing and indexing public and private records of enduring historical or other research value for public access;
5. meeting FOI requirements in the internal operations of the agency;
6. promoting the value and use of PRONI's archives as a unique information and educational resource;
7. introducing value added products which improve on and offsite access to the records;
8. permanently preserving an authentic record which future generations can have access to and can consult.
9. expanding continuously PRONI's capabilities for making the changes necessary to achieve its overall strategic goals;
10. putting in place firm plans and proposals for new accommodation for PRONI; and
11. maximising the use of resources in order to achieve Reform Plan and other operational imperatives by managing them effectively, demonstrating value for money and improving efficiency where possible.

Fixed Assets

Details in the movement of fixed assets are set out in Notes 8 and 9 to the Accounts.

The Agency does not believe that there is any material difference between the market and book value of its fixed assets as at 31 March 2005.

Management Team

The Agency's Management Team during the year comprised:

Gerry Slater	Deputy Keeper of the Records and Chief Executive
Valerie Adams	Principal Record Officer, Head of Education, Learning and Outreach (ELO)
Patricia Kernaghan	Principal Record Officer, Head of Records Management and Administration (RMA) and Acting Head of Public Services (Preservation)
Tom Robinson	Grade 7, Head of Corporate Services (CS)
Marie Garvey	Grade 7, New Accommodation Project Manager from April 2004
Aileen McClintock	Senior Record Officer, Head of Access Standards and Project Manager of the eCATNI project
Roger Strong	Senior Record Officer, Head of Public Services (Readers) to September 2004 and New Archives Legislation Officer from October 2004
Hugh Campbell	Senior Systems Analyst, Head of Information Systems (IS)
Cecelia McCormick	Deputy Principal, Head of Public Services (Readers) (PS (R)) from October 2004
Vacant	Head of Public Services (Preservation)

PRONI Advisory Board

The Advisory Board is appointed to advise the Chief Executive on the operation of the Agency and, specifically, on the Corporate and Business Plans, including proposed performance targets and measures, and the Annual Report and Accounts.

The Advisory Board also advises on strategic issues which have implications for the operation of the Agency, including any implications for the terms of the Framework Document, and the resources required.

ANNUAL ACCOUNTS
2004-2005

The members of the Advisory Board are:

Mrs Carol Moore (Chairperson) to November 2004
Mr Edgar Jardine (Chairperson) from November 2004
Dr Gerry Slater
The Earl of Belmore
Mrs Hilary Gault OBE
Mr John Keanie
Miss Maura McCann (resigned December 2004)
Mr Patsy McShane
Professor Elizabeth Meehan
Mr W Stratton Mills

No members of the Advisory Board received remuneration from PRONI during the year.

PRONI Audit and Risk Committee

The Audit and Risk Committee gives assistance and advice to the Accounting Officer on internal audit matters. It acts in an advisory capacity only and has no executive powers. In accordance with best practice it is chaired by a non-executive director from outside the department. The members of PRONI's Audit and Risk Committee are:

Mr John Keanie	(non-executive Chairperson)
Mrs Carol Moore	Deputy Secretary, DCAL, to November 2004
Mr Edgar Jardine	Deputy Secretary, DCAL, from November 2004
Dr Gerry Slater	Chief Executive, PRONI
Mr Tom Robinson	Head of Corporate Services, PRONI
Mrs Michelle Anderson	Head of Internal Audit, Department of Education
Mr Alistair McElroy	Internal Audit, Department of Education

When appropriate, representatives from the Northern Ireland Audit Office, PRONI's Accountants and others are invited to attend meetings.

Charitable Donations

The Agency made no charitable donations during the year.

Payments to Suppliers

The Agency is committed to the prompt payment of bills for goods and services received, in accordance with the Confederation of British Industry's Prompt Payers Code and British Standard BS 7890 - Achieving Good Payment Performance in Commercial Transactions. Unless otherwise stated in the contract, payment is due within 30 days of the receipt of the goods or services, or presentation of a valid invoice or similar demand, whichever is later.

Regular reviews conducted to measure how promptly the Agency paid its bills found that 99.37% of bills were paid within this standard.

Disabled Persons

PRONI follows the NI Civil Service Code of Practice on the Employment of Disabled People and, as an Agency within DCAL, it shares that Department's commitment to the Northern Ireland Civil Service Equal Opportunities policy. The Agency aims to ensure that disablement is not a bar to recruitment or advancement.

Employee Involvement

PRONI continues to encourage staff involvement and commitment to its business. Formal consultation with local trade union side representatives took place quarterly, and informal consultation was carried out as and when necessary. Additionally employees were regularly provided with information on the vision and goals of the Agency, the financial and economic factors affecting its performance and on other matters of concern to them. Staff were also actively involved in risk assessments and in preparation for PRONI's staff survey. To maintain the provision of

information to staff an information bulletin, *proni.com*, issued frequently via PRONI's intranet site and team briefings were held regularly at section level.

ANNUAL ACCOUNTS
2004-2005

Health and Safety

The Agency is committed to adhering to all existing legislation on health and safety at work to ensure that staff and customers enjoy the benefits of a safe environment.



Gerry Slater
Chief Executive
1 July 2005

Statement of Agency's and Chief Executive's Responsibilities

Under Section 11(2) of the Government Resources and Accounts Act (Northern Ireland) 2001, the Department of Finance and Personnel has directed the Public Record Office of Northern Ireland to prepare a statement of accounts for each financial year in the form and on the basis set out in the perpetual accounts direction contained in DAO(DFP)13/03. The accounts are prepared on an accruals basis and must give a true and fair view of the Agency's state of affairs at the year end and of its income and expenditure, recognised gains and losses and cash flows for the financial year.

In preparing the accounts the Agency is required to:

- observe the perpetual accounts direction issued by the Department of Finance and Personnel, including the relevant accounting and disclosure requirements, and apply suitable accounting policies on a consistent basis;
- make judgements and estimates on a reasonable basis;
- state whether applicable accounting standards have been followed and disclose and explain any material departures in the financial statements;

- prepare financial statements on the going concern basis, unless it is inappropriate to presume that the Agency will continue in operation.

The Accounting Officer for the Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure has appointed the Chief Executive of the Public Record Office of Northern Ireland as the Accounting Officer for the Agency. The Chief Executive's relevant responsibilities as Accounting Officer, including his responsibility for the propriety and regularity of the public finances and for the keeping of proper records, are set out in the Accounting Officers' Memorandum in 'Government Accounting in Northern Ireland' issued by the Department of Finance and Personnel.

Statement on Internal Control

1. Scope of responsibility

As Accounting Officer, I have responsibility for maintaining a sound system of internal control that supports the achievement of PRONI's policies, aims and objectives, whilst safeguarding the public funds and departmental assets for which I am personally responsible, in accordance with the responsibilities assigned to me in Government Accounting Northern Ireland.

To give practical effect to these responsibilities I have put in place the following strategic arrangements -

- As part of the strategic business planning process the DCAL Minister discusses and approves PRONI's Corporate and Business Plans. These include statements on the Agency's approach to risk management and identify the key risks which could affect the achievement of each strategic goal.
- At departmental level, as a member of DCAL's Executive Team, I contribute to the establishment of the Department's Corporate Risk Register which can incorporate key risks identified at agency level, e.g. the urgent need to find new accommodation for PRONI.

- At Agency level the PRONI Corporate Risk Register is established with input from staff at various levels, approved by the Management Team and subsequently submitted to and endorsed by PRONI's Audit and Risk Committee.

2. The purpose of the system of internal control

The system of internal control is designed to manage risk to a reasonable level rather than to eliminate all risk of failure to achieve policies, aims and objectives; it can therefore only provide reasonable and not absolute assurance of effectiveness. The system of internal control is based on an ongoing process designed to identify and prioritise the risks to the achievement of agency policies, aims and objectives, to evaluate the likelihood of those risks being realised and the impact should they be realised, and to manage them efficiently, effectively and economically. The system of internal control has been in place in PRONI for the year ended 31 March 2005 and up to the date of approval of the Annual Report and Accounts, and accords with DFP guidance.

3. Capacity to handle risk

All key risks are directly related to the achievement of PRONI's strategic goals and objectives. These are detailed in the Agency's 3-year Corporate Plan

ANNUAL ACCOUNTS
2004-2005

and in annual Business Plans which also include the actions and initiatives to be taken to achieve the goals and objectives and how progress and performance will be measured. While I retain overall responsibility for the achievement of PRONI's goals and objectives and for managing risks I have delegated to individual Section Heads responsibility for achieving specific goals and objectives and for managing the associated risks.

Over the past 3 years a number of members of PRONI's Management Team including myself and a number of middle managers (in particular those involved in major projects) have attended workshops at which we gained practical experience in identifying and evaluating risk and in the course of these have had the opportunity to use a number of risk management methodologies. We are aware of its importance as an aid to the effective management of the agency's business.

4. The risk and control framework

I commission a formal review of the Corporate Risk Register annually. The 2004/05 review in which all members of the Management Team participated, examined risk in the context of PRONI's strategic goals and objectives set out in its 2003 to 2006 Corporate Plan and its 2004/05 Business Plan. The output from the review was a revised risk register comprising 7 key risks set out in a format consistent with that used by the Department. The 7 key risks, which

were subsequently endorsed by PRONI's Audit and Risk Committee, cover all the main operational and support functions carried out by PRONI and are as follows -

1. Loss of Records - traditional and electronic
2. Inadequate on-site customer service
3. Under-utilisation of PRONI's archival resources
4. Serious injury or death of a member of staff or a visitor
5. Failure to maintain an adequate system of internal control
6. Failure to secure adequate funding and to manage finances effectively
7. Failure to recruit and retain adequate numbers of qualified and skilled staff

In the register each key risk is defined, the lead owner named, the potential root causes identified and current actions to manage risk and future actions to improve management are detailed. Additionally the risk is evaluated in terms of its impact and likelihood, and judgments made on its underlying seriousness and the likely effects of current and proposed actions to manage it better. I am also encouraging the use of risk registers at lower levels within PRONI.

I review the Corporate Risk Register quarterly at Management Team meetings. Additionally there is an



opportunity at monthly Monitoring and Planning Meetings between individual Section Heads and myself to discuss changes to the register for example where business plan objectives or performance targets have changed. Amendments are subsequently approved by the Management Team.

I require all major projects undertaken by PRONI - e.g. the eCATNI and EDRM projects - to be controlled using PRINCE project management methodology. An equivalent methodology, 'Achieving Excellence in Construction', will be used to control the New Accommodation project. These methodologies include the compilation and maintenance of risk registers.

5. Review of effectiveness

As Accounting Officer, I have responsibility for reviewing the effectiveness of the system of internal control. My review of the effectiveness of the system of internal control is informed by the work of the internal auditors and the executive managers within the agency who have responsibility for the development and maintenance of the internal control framework, and comments made by the external auditors in their management letter and other reports. I have been advised on the implications of the result of my review of the effectiveness of the system of internal control by the Management Team, the audit and risk committee and a plan to address weaknesses and ensure continuous improvement of the system is in place.

To ensure that the effectiveness of the system of internal control is maintained I have put in place and maintain the following key corporate processes -

- Strategic Planning (Corporate and Business plans)
- Personnel Management
- Financial Management
- Premises Management
- Internal Audit Programme
- Audit of the Accounts by Northern Ireland Audit Office

Additionally a Risk Management framework and control strategy is in place with risk ownership appropriately allocated.

To support these processes:

My Management Team meets monthly to discuss corporate issues and to take corporate decisions. It has a standing agenda that includes DCAL issues impacting on PRONI, financial, personnel and accommodation reports and performance updates against business plan targets. Other topics of strategic importance such as health and safety risk assessments and the Corporate Risk Register are discussed quarterly. I also meet Section Heads individually prior to the Management Meeting to discuss progress against objectives.

The PRONI Audit and Risk Committee meets 3 times a year to give me assistance and advice on internal audit

matters. In accordance with best practice it is chaired by a non-civil servant. While it acts in an advisory capacity I welcome its views - in particular its endorsement of the agency's Risk Framework, Internal Audit Strategy and Internal Audit Programme and its advice on taking forward recommendations arising from Internal and NIAO audits.

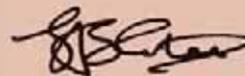
The Public Record Office of Northern Ireland is reviewed by the Department of Education's Internal Audit Unit, which operates to standards defined in the Government Internal Audit Manual. I agree with them a 3-year programme of audits which provides me with a broad level of assurance as to the effectiveness of internal controls across all of PRONI's key functions. Additionally they submit regular reports which include the HIA's independent opinion on the adequacy and effectiveness of the Agency's system of internal control together with recommendations for improvement.

In the annual assurance statement the HIA has given an opinion that she can provide reasonable assurance that PRONI's Corporate Risk Register accurately reflects the level of risk to the achievement of key organisational objectives. In addition to this the HIA has stated that risks to the achievement of the Agency's objectives are controlled to an acceptable level, however, the system of internal control could be enhanced.

6. Significant internal control problems

The Department recognises that PRONI's existing premises are inadequate in terms of space and environmental conditions - in particular for the long-term storage and preservation of important and unique archives. This is reflected in its Corporate Risk Register.

As a consequence PRONI, with Departmental support, is actively examining the options available and seeking the resources necessary to make this a reality.



Gerry Slater
Accounting Officer
1 July 2005

Public Record Office of Northern Ireland

The Certificate and Report of the
Comptroller and Auditor General to
the House of Commons and the
Northern Ireland Assembly

I certify that I have audited the financial statements on pages 107 to 130 under Government Resources and Accounts Act (Northern Ireland) 2001. These financial statements have been prepared under the historical cost convention as modified by the revaluation of certain fixed assets and the accounting policies set out on pages 111-113.

Respective responsibilities of the Agency, the Chief Executive and Auditor

As described on page 100 the Agency and Chief Executive are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements in accordance with the Government Resources and Accounts Act (Northern Ireland) 2001 and Department of Finance and Personnel directions made thereunder and for ensuring the regularity of financial transactions. The Agency and Chief Executive are also responsible for the preparation of the other contents of the Annual Report. My responsibilities, as independent auditor, are established by statute and I have regard to the standards and guidance issued by the Auditing Practices Board and the ethical guidance applicable to the auditing profession.

I report my opinion as to whether the financial statements give a true and fair view and are properly prepared in

accordance with the Government Resources and Accounts Act (Northern Ireland) 2001 and Department of Finance and Personnel directions made thereunder, and whether in all material respects the expenditure and income have been applied to the purposes intended by Parliament and the financial transactions conform to the authorities which govern them. I also report if, in my opinion, the Foreword is not consistent with the financial statements, if the Agency has not kept proper accounting records, or if I have not received all the information and explanations I require for my audit.

I read the other information contained in the Annual Report, and consider whether it is consistent with the audited financial statements. I consider the implications for my certificate if I become aware of any apparent misstatements or material inconsistencies with the financial statements.

I review whether the statement on pages 101 to 104 reflects the Agency's compliance with the Department of Finance and Personnel's guidance on the statement on internal control. I report if it does not meet the requirements specified by the Department of Finance and Personnel, or if the statement is misleading or inconsistent with other information I am aware of from my audit of the financial statements. I am not required to consider, nor have I considered, whether the Accounting Officer's statement on internal control covers all risks and controls. I am also not required to form an opinion on the effectiveness of the Agency's Corporate Governance procedures or its risk and control procedures.

ANNUAL ACCOUNTS
2004-2005

Basis of audit opinion

I conducted my audit in accordance with United Kingdom Auditing Standards issued by the Auditing Practices Board. An audit includes examination, on a test basis, of evidence relevant to the amounts, disclosures and regularity of financial transactions included in the financial statements. It also includes an assessment of the significant estimates and judgements made by the Agency and Chief Executive in the preparation of the financial statements, and of whether the accounting policies are appropriate to the Agency's circumstances, consistently applied and adequately disclosed.

I planned and performed my audit so as to obtain all the information and explanations which I considered necessary in order to provide me with sufficient evidence to give reasonable assurance that the financial statements are free from material misstatement, whether caused by error, or by fraud or other irregularity and that, in all material respects, the expenditure and income have been applied to the purposes intended by Parliament and the financial transactions conform to the authorities which govern them. In forming my opinion I also evaluated the overall adequacy of the presentation of information in the financial statements.

Opinion

In my opinion:

- the financial statements give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the Public Record Office of Northern Ireland at 31 March 2005 and of the net costing of operations, recognised gains and losses and cash flows for the year then ended and have been properly prepared in accordance with the Government Resources and Accounts Act (Northern Ireland) 2001 and directions made thereunder by the Department of Finance and Personnel; and
- in all material respects the expenditure and income have been applied to the purposes intended by Parliament and the financial transactions conform to the authorities which govern them.

I have no observations to make on these financial statements.



J M Dowdall
Comptroller and Auditor General

4 July 2005

Northern Ireland Audit Office
106 University Street
BELFAST
BT7 1EU

Income and Expenditure Account
For the Year Ended 31 March 2005

ANNUAL ACCOUNTS
2004-2005

	Notes	2005 £	2004 £
Income	2	<u>30,567</u>	<u>66,622</u>
Expenditure			
Staff Costs	3	1,996,658	1,845,046
Depreciation	8 & 9	300,032	250,820
Diminution in value of fixed assets		50,033	700
Other operating costs	4	<u>1,521,396</u>	<u>1,807,478</u>
Total Expenditure		<u>3,868,119</u>	<u>3,904,044</u>
Net Cost of Operations Before Interest		3,837,552	3,837,422
Interest on Capital Employed	6	<u>144,805</u>	<u>127,638</u>
Net Cost of Operations		<u><u>3,982,357</u></u>	<u><u>3,965,060</u></u>

The net cost of operations arises wholly from continuing operations.

The Notes on pages 111 to 130 form part of these accounts.

Statement of Recognised Gains and Losses
For the Year Ended 31 March 2005

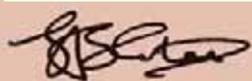
	Notes	2005 £	2004 £
Unrealised surplus/(deficit) on revaluation of fixed assets	13.2	118,514	-
Transfer in respect of re-living	13.1	1,182	219,432
Increase / Decrease in Donated Assets	13.3	<u>(3,617)</u>	<u>10,336</u>
Recognised Gains (Losses) for the Year		<u>116,079</u>	<u>229,768</u>

The Notes on pages 111 to 130 form part of these accounts.

Balance Sheet
As at 31 March 2005

ANNUAL ACCOUNTS
2004-2005

Fixed Assets	Notes	2005 £	2004 £
Tangible Assets	8	4,215,951	3,920,315
Intangible Assets	9	19,676	1,942
		<u>4,235,627</u>	<u>3,922,257</u>
Current Assets			
Stocks	10	62,749	53,711
Debtors	11	195,857	191,085
Bank & Cash		327,303	100
Current Liabilities			
Creditors - amounts falling due within one year	12	(383,589)	(305,289)
Provision	17	(18,206)	-
Net Current Assets/(Liabilities)		<u>184,114</u>	<u>(60,393)</u>
Total Assets Less Liabilities		<u>4,419,741</u>	<u>3,861,864</u>
Financed by:			
Capital and Reserves			
General Fund	13.1	4,301,227	3,854,856
Donated Asset Reserve	13.3	-	7,008
Revaluation Reserve	13.2	118,514	-
		<u>4,419,741</u>	<u>3,861,864</u>



G J Slater
Chief Executive
1 July 2005

The Notes on pages 111 to 130 form part of these accounts.

Cash Flow Statement For the Year Ended 31 March 2005

	Notes	2005 £	2004 £
Net cash outflow from continuing operating activities	14.1	(2,842,107)	(2,792,911)
Capital expenditure and financial investment	14.2	<u>(553,446)</u>	<u>(463,385)</u>
Net cash outflow before financing		(3,395,553)	(3,256,296)
Financing	14.3	<u>3,739,999</u>	<u>3,239,053</u>
Increase / (Decrease) in cash		<u>344,446</u>	<u>(17,243)</u>

The Notes on pages 111 to 130 form part of these accounts.

Notes to the Accounts For the Year Ended 31 March 2005

1. Accounting Policies Accounting Convention

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the Northern Ireland Resource Accounting Manual.

Without limiting the information given, the accounts comply with the accounting and disclosure requirements of the Companies (Northern Ireland) Order 1986, the accounting standards issued or adopted by the Accounting Standards Board and accounting and disclosure requirements issued by the Department of Finance and Personnel insofar as those requirements are appropriate.

1.1 Parliamentary Grant

The Agency's activities are financed by the Northern Ireland Assembly from DCAL Vote A. The grant utilised, less appropriations in aid and applicable receipts payable to the Consolidated Fund, is credited to the General Fund. The net operating expenditure for the year is charged to the General Fund.

1.2 Fixed Assets

Freehold land and buildings have been capitalised and included on the basis

of professional valuations. Land and buildings have been included in the balance sheet at a valuation provided by the Valuation and Lands Agency (VLA). The land and buildings were valued by the VLA at 1 April 2003. Full revaluations will be performed at 5-yearly intervals, with indexation factors provided by the VLA being applied in the interim years.

Antiques were revalued by an independent expert in March 2004. Full revaluations will be performed at 5-yearly intervals.

Existing equipment, fixtures, fittings and vehicles have been capitalised at their market value on 1 April 1997. These assets have been revalued using asset specific indices provided by the Valuation and Lands Agency or the Office for National Statistics.

The threshold for capitalisation as a fixed asset is £1,000 (£500 for personal computers). Depreciation is provided on a straight line basis in order to write-off the valuation, less estimated residual value, of each asset over its expected useful life, or lease period if shorter. Land is not depreciated. The base useful lives of assets, which are reviewed regularly, are as follows:

ANNUAL ACCOUNTS
2004-2005

PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE
OF NORTHERN IRELAND

Donated Asset	5 years
Plant and Equipment	5-20 years
Computer Equipment and Software	3-10 years
Furniture and Fittings	10 years
Vehicles	5 years
Buildings	Estimated remaining life
Assets under construction	Nil

nugatory. They are not, therefore, recorded in the balance sheet. Works of art, such as pictures, prints and frames, while also Heritage assets, have been valued and are recorded in the balance sheet. Purchased Heritage assets are expensed to the income and expenditure account in the year of purchase.

Antique furniture is treated as operational Heritage assets, capitalised at current value and revalued, with works of art, as stated in 1.2 above. No depreciation is charged on antiques or works of art as they are considered to have infinite useful lives.

1.3 Donated Assets

A microfilming camera was donated to the Agency in 1997. Donated tangible fixed assets are capitalised at their valuation on receipt and are revalued as purchased fixed assets. The corresponding entry is to the Donated Asset Reserve which is credited with the value of the original donation and any subsequent revaluation and indexation. Each year an amount equal to the depreciation charge on the asset will be released from the Donated Asset Reserve to the Operating Cost Statement.

1.4 Heritage Assets

The official records stored and maintained by PRONI, and private records donated to PRONI, constitute the archival heritage of Northern Ireland and are treated as pure Heritage assets. Legislatively they cannot be disposed of, so any valuation would be

1.5 Value Added Tax

All income and expenditure is stated exclusive of VAT, which is recoverable on a departmental basis.

1.6 Pension Costs

The Agency's staff are covered by the Principal Civil Service Pension Scheme (NI). The PCSPS (NI) is an unfunded defined benefit scheme which produces its own resource accounts, but PRONI is unable to identify its share of the underlying assets and liabilities. The most up to date actuarial valuation was carried out as at 31 March 2003 and details of this valuation are available in the PCSPS (NI) resource accounts.

For 2004-05, employers' contributions of £214,712 were payable to the PCSPS (NI) (2003-04 (£186,245)) at one of four rates in the range 12 to 18



per cent of pensionable pay, based on salary bands. From 1 April 2005 these rates have increased as a result of the latest actuarial valuation to between 16.5% and 23.5%. The contribution rates reflect benefits as they are accrued, not when the costs are actually incurred, and reflect past experience of the scheme. All contributions to this scheme are charged to the Income and Expenditure Account as incurred.

1.7 Stocks

Stocks held for existing use are valued at current replacement cost, net of a provision for those stocks considered slow moving or obsolete.

1.8 Intangible fixed assets

Intangible fixed assets are in respect of software licences. Such licences are depreciated over 3 years.

1.9 Notional costs

Notional amounts are charged to the income and expenditure account in respect of services provided by government bodies in order to reflect the full cost of these services.

A notional charge for interest on capital is included in the income and expenditure account. This is calculated at 3.5% (2004 - 3.5%) of the average value of total assets less current liabilities.

1.10 Provisions

The Agency provides for legal or constructive obligations which are of uncertain timing or amount at the balance sheet date on the basis of best estimate of the expenditure required to settle the obligation.

ANNUAL ACCOUNTS
2004-2005

2. Income

	2005 £	2004 £
Fees	30,567	21,847
Income from New Opportunities Fund	-	44,775
	<u>30,567</u>	<u>66,622</u>

3. Staff Numbers and Costs

3.1 The average number of full time equivalent persons employed during the year was:

	2005	2004
Senior Management	9	8
Middle Management	28	23
Administrative	57	52
Temporary Staff	2	2
	<u>96</u>	<u>85</u>

3.2 The costs incurred in respect of these employees were:

	2005 £	2004 £
Wages and Salaries	1,802,219	1,572,767
Social Security Costs	128,485	101,956
Other Pension Costs	214,712	186,245
Temporary staff costs	27,737	59,218
	<u>2,173,153</u>	<u>1,920,186</u>

3.4 The salary and pension entitlement of the Agency's Management Team were as follows:

	Salary, including performance pay £k	Benefits in kind (rounded to nearest £100)	Real increase in pension and related lump sum at age 60 (£k)
Gerry Slater Chief Executive	65-70	-	0-2.5
Valerie Adams Head of Education, Learning and Outreach	Consent to disclose withheld		
Patricia Kernaghan Head of Records Management and Administration	45-50	-	0-2.5
Tom Robinson Head of Corporate Services	45-50	-	0-2.5
Roger Strong New Legislation Project	30-35	-	0-2.5
Marie Garvey New Accommodation Project	Consent to disclose withheld		
Aileen McClintock Head of Access and eCATNI Project Manager	Consent to disclose withheld		
Hugh Campbell Head of Information Systems	35-40	-	0-2.5
Cecelia McCormick Head of Public Services (Readers)	25-30	-	0-2.5

ANNUAL ACCOUNTS
2004-2005

Total accrued pension at age 60 at 31/03/2005 and related sum (£k)	CETV at 31/03/2004 (Nearest £k)	CETV at 31/03/2005 (Nearest £k)	Real increase in CETV after adjustment for inflation and changes in market investment factors (nearest £k)	Employer Contribution to partnership pension account including risk benefit cover to nearest £100
25-30	379	414	17	-
10-15	168	217	39	-
20-25	401	421	4	-
5-10	128	139	4	-
10-15	139	156	8	-
10-15	153	180	18	-

Salary

'Salary' includes gross salary; performance pay or bonuses; overtime; reserved rights to London weighting or London allowances; recruitment and retention allowances; private office allowances and any other allowance to the extent that it is subject to UK taxation.

Benefits in kind

The monetary value of benefits in kind covers any benefits provided by the employer and treated by the Inland Revenue as a taxable emolument. None of the Agency's employees received any benefits in kind.

Pension

Pension benefits are provided through the Principal Civil Service pension arrangements. From 1 October 2002, civil servants may be in one of three statutory based "final salary" defined benefit schemes (*classic*, *premium*, and *classic plus*). These schemes are unfunded with the cost of the benefits met by monies voted by Parliament each year. Pensions payable under classic, premium and classic plus are increased annually in line with changes in the Retail Prices Index. New entrants after 1 October 2002 may close between membership of premium or joining a good quality "money purchase" stakeholder based arrangement with a significant employer contribution (*partnership pension account*).

Employee contributions are set at the rate of 1.5% of pensionable earnings for classic and 3.5% for premium and classic plus. Benefits in classic accrue at the rate of 1/80th of pensionable

salary for each year of service. In addition, a lump sum equivalent to three years' pension is payable on retirement. For premium, benefits accrue at the rate 1/60th of final pensionable earnings for each year of service. Unlike classic, there is no automatic lump sum, (but members may commute some of their pension to provide a lump sum). Classic plus is essentially a variation of premium but with benefits in respect of service before 1 October 2002 calculated broadly as per classic.

The partnership pension account is a stakeholder pension arrangement. The employer makes a basic contribution of between 3% and 12.5% (depending on the age of the member) into a stakeholder pension product chosen by the employee. The employee does not have to contribute but where they do make contributions, the employer will match these up to a limit of 3% of pensionable salary (in addition to the employer's basic contribution). Employers also contribute a further 0.8% of pensionable salary to cover the cost of risk benefit cover (death in service and ill health retirement).

Further details about the CSP arrangements can be found at the website www.civilservicepensions-ni.gov.uk.

The table in section 3.4 of the notes to the accounts shows the member's cash equivalent transfer value (CETV) accrued at the beginning and the end of the reporting period. This also reflects the increase in CETV effectively funded by the employer. It takes account of the increase in accrued pension due to inflation, contributions

paid by the employee (including the value of any benefits transferred from another pension scheme or arrangement) and uses common market valuation factors for the start and end date of the period.

A Cash Equivalent Transfer Value (CETV) is the actuarially assessed capitalised value of the pension scheme benefits accrued by a member at a particular point in time. The benefits valued are the member's accrued benefits and any contingent spouse's pension payable from the scheme. A CETV is a payment made by a pension scheme or arrangement to secure pension benefits in another pension scheme or arrangement to secure pension benefits in another pension scheme or arrangement when the member leaves a scheme and chooses to transfer the benefits accrued in their former scheme.

The pension figures shown relate to the benefits that the individual has accrued as a consequence of their total membership of the pension scheme, not just their service in a senior capacity to which disclosure applies. The CETV figures, and from 2003-04 the other pension details, include the value of any pension benefit in another scheme or arrangement which the individual has transferred to the CSP arrangements for which the CS Vote has received a transfer payment commensurate to the additional pension liabilities being assumed. They also include any additional pension benefit accrued to the member as a result of their purchasing additional years of pension service in the scheme at their own cost. CETV's are calculated within the guidelines and framework prescribed by the Institute and Faculty of Actuaries.

ANNUAL ACCOUNTS 2004-2005

4. Other Operating Costs

	2005 £	2004 £
General administration expenses	484,767	450,042
Travel, subsistence and hospitality	24,089	26,860
DFP Construction Service Staff Costs	81,938	49,830
Rates and Water Charges	182,128	175,172
Preservation and Reprographic Purchases	11,800	10,645
Utilities and Maintenance	187,358	198,627
Archival purchases	3,877	54,523
Data capture funded by NOF ¹	-	44,775
Loss on sale of fixed assets	2,697	7,702
Notional Costs (note 5)	542,742	789,302
	1,521,396	1,807,478

¹ New Opportunities Fund

5. Notional Costs

These costs relate to services received for which no actual payment is made. They are included in the accounts so as to reflect the full economic cost of provision.

	2005 £	2004 £
DCAL	17,892	39,063
Accommodation	287,117	372,581
Information Systems Unit	45,462	117,896
Internal Audit	3,306	3,988
Personnel and Management	44,732	35,097
DE Finance	55,236	99,277
Training and Development	20,666	14,207
Business Development Service	39,807	73,767
Northern Ireland Audit Office	8,000	8,000
Solicitor's Department DFP	3,019	-
Northern Ireland Recruitment Service	1,430	6,537
DFP - Procurement Service	10,236	13,900
VLA	2,805	1,269
DRD - Graphic Design	3,034	3,720
OSNI	-	-
	542,742	789,302

6. Interest on Capital Employed

The Income and Expenditure Account bears a non-cash charge for interest relating to the use of capital by the Agency. The basis of the charge is 3.5% of the average capital employed, defined as total assets less current liabilities (excluding donated assets).

7. Administration and Programme Expenditure

ANNUAL ACCOUNTS
2004-2005

Administration expenditure reflects the net costs of resources consumed directly by the Agency in providing government services. Programme costs refer to those elements of expenditure (less income) that do not fall within administration costs. These include the Agency's archival purchases and grant receipts from the National Heritage Memorial Fund (NHMF).

2004/05	Administration £	Programme £	Total £
Income	(30,567)	-	(30,567)
Staff costs	1,996,658	-	1,996,658
Depreciation	300,032	-	300,032
Diminution in value of Fixed Assets	50,033	-	50,033
Other Operating Costs	1,517,519	3,877	1,521,396
Interest on Capital	144,805	-	144,805
Net Expenditure	3,978,480	3,877	3,982,357

8. Fixed Assets

	Land & Buildings £	Equipment £	Computer Hardware and Software £
Cost or Valuation			
At 1 April 2004	3,074,797	626,293	613,386
Additions	53,946	66,030	157,973
Disposal	-	(1,577)	(7,673)
Revaluation/ Diminution in Value	113,869	11,794	(120,679)
At 31 March 2005	3,242,612	702,540	643,007
Depreciation			
At 1 April 2004	110,563	203,975	412,083
Charge for year	132,575	69,944	76,421
Disposals	-	(1,568)	(4,985)
Revaluation/ Diminution in Value	8,759	(1,767)	(70,644)
At 31 March 2005	251,897	270,584	412,875
Net Book Value			
At 31 March 2005	2,990,715	431,956	230,132
At 31 March 2004	2,964,234	422,318	201,303

ANNUAL ACCOUNTS
2004-2005

Furniture & Fittings £	Antique Furniture & Pictures £	Vehicles £	Donated £	Assets in the course of construction £	Total Assets £
150,712	78,160	8,778	26,626	113,101	4,691,853
48,259	-	-	-	208,131	534,339
-	-	-	-	-	(9,250)
2,838	-	222	501	-	8,545
201,809	78,160	9,000	27,127	321,232	5,225,487
18,131	-	7,168	19,618	-	771,538
17,919	-	1,800	3,391	-	302,050
-	-	-	-	-	(6,553)
3,659	-	(1,624)	4,118	-	(57,499)
39,709	-	7,344	27,127	-	1,009,536
162,100	78,160	1,656	-	321,232	4,215,951
132,581	78,160	1,610	7,008	113,101	3,920,315

The net book value of land and buildings comprises:

	2005 £	2004 £
Freehold	1,000,000	1,000,000
Long leasehold	<u>1,990,715</u>	<u>1,964,234</u>
	<u>2,990,715</u>	<u>2,964,234</u>

9. Intangible Fixed Assets

Cost	
At 1 April 2004	2,050
Additions	<u>19,107</u>
At 31 March 2005	<u>21,157</u>
Amortisation	108
At 1 April 2004	
Charge for the year	<u>1,373</u>
At 31 March 2005	<u>1,481</u>
Net Book Value	
At 31 March 2005	<u><u>19,676</u></u>
At 31 March 2004	<u><u>1,942</u></u>

10. Stocks

	2005 £	2004 £
Publications and consumables	<u>62,749</u>	<u>53,711</u>
	<u>62,749</u>	<u>53,711</u>

11. Debtors (amounts due within one year)

ANNUAL ACCOUNTS
2004-2005

	2005 £	2004 £
Debtors	484	10,864
Prepayments	43,729	28,887
VAT	151,644	151,334
	<u>195,857</u>	<u>191,085</u>

12. Creditors (amounts falling due within one year)

	2005 £	2004 £
Trade Creditors	87,563	19,926
Bank Overdraft	-	17,243
Accruals	295,809	266,903
Deferred Income	-	400
Other Creditors	217	817
	<u>383,589</u>	<u>305,289</u>

13. Reconciliation of Movement in Reserves and Government Funds for the Year Ended 31 March 2005

13.1 General Fund

	Note	2005 £	2004 £
Balance as at 1 April 2004		3,854,856	3,441,163
Net Vote Funding in year	14.3	3,739,999	3,239,053
Net cost of operations		(3,982,357)	(3,965,060)
Notional Costs	5	542,742	789,302
Interest on Capital		144,805	127,638
Transfer from Donated Asset	13.3	-	3,328
Adjustment in respect of Asset re-lifing		1,182	219,432
Balance as at 31 March 2005		<u>4,301,227</u>	<u>3,854,856</u>

13.2 Revaluation Reserve

	Note	2005 £	2004 £
Balance as at 1 April 2004		-	-
Surplus/(Deficit) on revaluation		119,696	-
Transfer to General Fund	13.1	<u>(1,182)</u>	-
Balance as at 31 March 2005		<u>118,514</u>	-

The transfer of the Revaluation Reserve to the General Fund relates to the diminution in asset valuations in previous years.

13.3 Donated Asset Reserve

ANNUAL ACCOUNTS
2004-2005

	Note	2005 £	2004 £
Balance as at 1 April 2004		7,008	-
Transfer to OCS		(3,391)	(3,328)
Surplus/(Deficit) on revaluation		<u>(3,617)</u>	<u>10,336</u>
Balance as at 31 March 2005		<u><u>-</u></u>	<u><u>7,008</u></u>

14. Notes to Cash Flow Statement

14.1 Reconciliation of net cost of operations to net cash flow from operating activities

	2005 £	2004 £
Net cost of operations before interest	(3,837,552)	(3,837,422)
Adjustment for non cash transactions		
Depreciation	300,032	250,926
Loss on disposal of assets	2,697	7,702
Diminution in value of fixed assets	50,033	700
Notional costs	542,742	789,302
Adjustments for movements in working capital		
(Increase)/Decrease in stock	(9,038)	(3,102)
(Increase) in debtors	(4,771)	(63,265)
(Decrease)/Increase in creditors	113,750	62,248
Net cash outflow from operating activities	<u><u>2,842,107</u></u>	<u><u>2,792,911</u></u>

14.2 Capital Expenditure and Financial Investment

ANNUAL ACCOUNTS
2004-2005

	2005 £	2004 £
Purchase of fixed assets	534,339	461,335
Purchase of intangible fixed Assets	19,107	2,050
Sale of fixed assets	-	-
	<u>553,446</u>	<u>463,385</u>

14.3 Reconciliation of Financing

	2005 £	2004 £
Northern Ireland Assembly - (DCAL) Vote A	3,770,566	3,260,900
Appropriations in Aid applied	<u>(30,567)</u>	<u>(21,847)</u>
Net Parliamentary Grant	<u>3,739,999</u>	<u>3,239,053</u>

14.4 Reconciliation of Net cash flow to movement in net funds

	2005 £	2004 £
Movement in cash in the period	344,446	(17,243)
Net funds at 1 April 2004	<u>(17,143)</u>	100
Net funds at 31 March 2005	<u>327,303</u>	<u>(17,143)</u>

15. Capital Commitments

The Agency has an outstanding capital commitment of £74k (2004: Nil).

16. Contingent Liabilities

The Agency has no contingent liabilities at 31 March 2005. (2004: Nil)

17. Provisions

	2005 £	2004 £
Balance as at 1 April 2004	-	-
Payments	-	-
Increase in Provision	18,206	-
Balance as at 31 March 2005	<u>18,206</u>	-

The provision relates to an unsettled employers liability claim at the year end as indicated by the Departmental Solicitors Office.

18. Related Party Transactions

The Public Record Office of Northern Ireland (PRONI) became an executive agency of the Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure (DCAL) as a result of the restructuring of Northern Ireland government departments in December 1999. It was formerly an executive agency of the Department of the Environment (NI).

Both Departments are regarded as related parties. During the year, the Agency has had various material transactions with both Departments.

In addition, the Agency has had various material transactions with other Government Departments and other central government bodies. Most of these transactions have been with Recruitment Service, Central Procurement Directorate, the Departmental Solicitor's Office, Business Development Service and the Department for Regional Development.

During the year, none of the Board members, key management staff or other related parties has undertaken any material transactions with the Agency.

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