

MS 94 Airlie House Collection

About the collection:

The Airlie House Collection is a set of papers pertaining to the Airlie House Conference on Northern Ireland. This event took place in Airlie House, Warrenton, Virginia from 6th January to 9th January 1985. The conference brought together parties from the Republic of Ireland, the United Kingdom, and key representatives from Northern Ireland, for peace discussions in relation to the Northern Ireland Conflict, also known as the Troubles.

The Airlie House conference was one of a series of events aimed at discussions around peace. It was sponsored by the Committee for an Irish Forum, an organisation dedicated to seeking a constitutional and peaceful resolution to the conflict. Padraig O'Malley, chief organiser of the 1975 Amherst Conference and Catherine Shannon, who co-ordinated a 1982 symposium at the John F. Kennedy Library, were the co-chairs of the operating and planning committee for the Airlie House Conference on Northern Ireland.

The collection includes an information booklet about Airlie House; the second report of the Minority Rights Group, 'The Two Irelands'; and the binder of papers distributed to participants, observers, and guests of the Airlie House Conference on Northern Ireland. This binder includes a list of attendees, biographies, nine discussion papers, and background materials for participants.

This collection is an early example of peace discussions centred around the Northern Ireland Conflict, as the Airlie House Conference took place more than a decade before the multi-party talks which ultimately led to the Good Friday Agreement. The collection includes discussion papers on economic cooperation, identity and aspirations (unionist, nationalist, and southern perspectives), Anglo-Irish and North-South considerations, the question of consent, and British Government policy in Northern Ireland.

The collection was donated to Special Collections & Archives, Queen's University Belfast in December 2023. It was donated by Sarah Flynn, an independent editor, who attended the Airlie House Conference as a guest.

MS 94 Outline

[MS 94/1](#) Airlie House Conference on Northern Ireland, January 6-9, 1985 Warrenton, Virginia

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MS 94/1 Airlie House Conference on Northern Ireland, January 6-9, 1985 Warrenton, Virginia

Contents of the binder of papers distributed to participants, observers, and guests of the Airlie House Conference on Northern Ireland. 06/01/1985 - 09/01/1985.

MS 94/1/1 Information for Attendees and Organisation

This section of the binder of papers for conference attendees includes a contents page, information on the conference sponsors and staff, a map of Airlie House, and the conference menu.

MS 94/1/1/1 Title page. 1 p.

MS 94/1/1/2 Table of Contents. 1 p.

MS 94/1/1/3 Sponsors. Description of the sponsor and co-sponsors of the Airlie House Conference; the Committee for an Irish Forum, the Appeal of Conscience Foundation, and the John W. McCormack Institute of Public Affairs. Also includes a list of individuals and organisations acknowledged for providing financial or in-kind support for the Airlie House Conference. 2 pp.

MS 94/1/1/4 The Committee for an Irish Forum: History. 1 p.

MS 94/1/1/5 Description of the Operating and Planning Committee and list of Airlie House Conference Staff. 2 pp.

MS 94/1/1/6 Map of Airlie House and menu for conference attendees. 2 pp.

MS 94/1/2 Overview

This section of the collection outlines the schedule of events, conference format, and provides information on the participants, observers, and guests of the conference.

MS 94/1/2/1 Schedule of Events. Annotated. 4 pp.

MS 94/1/2/2 General Format. Document outlining the format of the conference, centred around panels engaging with nine discussion papers commissioned by the Committee for an Irish Forum 1 p.

MS 94/1/2/3 Political Parties. Summary document describing the parties from Northern Ireland, Ireland, and Great Britain attending the Airlie House Conference. 3 pp.

MS 94/1/2/4 Participants. Document listing the European participants of the Airlie House Conference. 3 pp.

- MS 94/1/2/5** Biographies of Participants. Document outlining the Airlie House Conference participants, broken down into the governmental participants, political party affiliated attendees, and discussion paper authors. 12 pp.
- MS 94/1/2/6** Observers. Document detailing Airlie House Conference observers and their official positions. 1 p.
- MS 94/1/2/7** Guests. List of guests of the Airlie House Conference and their official positions. 6 pp.

MS 94/1/3 Discussion Papers

This section is made up of the nine discussion papers around which the Airlie House Conference format was focussed. These include papers on the topics of British Government policy in Northern Ireland, security considerations, and a range of perspectives on the Northern Ireland conflict. A second, shorter version of Kevin Boyle and Tom Hadden's paper from the November 1984 issue of *Fortnight* is also included.

- MS 94/1/3/1** Gibson, Norman, 'Observations on Economic Realities and Prospects for Cooperation'. Includes title page and page continuing a footnote. 8 pp.
- MS 94/1/3/2** Stewart, A. T. Q., 'Identity and Aspirations: Unionist Perspectives'. Includes title page. 8 pp. 2 copies.
- MS 94/1/3/3** Deane, Seamus, 'Identity and Aspirations: Nationalist Perspectives'. Includes title page. 8 pp.
- MS 94/1/3/4** Arthur, Paul, 'Recently Published Papers'. Includes title page. 11 pp.
- MS 94/1/3/5** Arnold, Bruce, 'British Government Policy in Northern Ireland'. Includes title page. 13 pp.
- MS 94/1/3/6** Crick, Bernard, 'The Question of Consent'. Includes title page. 16 pp.
- MS 94/1/3/7** Boyle, Kevin and Hadden, Tom, 'Cross-Border and other Security Considerations'. Includes title page. 20 pp.
- MS 94/1/3/8** 11/1984 Boyle, Kevin and Hadden, Tom, 'Towards a System of Cross-Border Security for Northern Ireland'. *Fortnight*, November 1984. 4 pp.
- MS 94/1/3/9** Bowman, John, 'Anglo-Irish and North-South Relations: The Dublin View'. Includes title page. 11 pp.
- MS 94/1/3/10** de Paor, Liam, 'Further Observations on Identity and Aspirations: A Southern Perspective'. Includes title page. 10 pp.

MS 94/1/4 Background Materials

This section includes five documents from a range of sources including the Democratic Unionist Party, Alliance Party, and an abridged version of an inquiry committee report.

MS 94/1/4/1 Ulster Unionist Council, 'Devolution and the Northern Ireland Assembly: The Way Forward'. A discussion paper presented by the Ulster Unionist Assembly Party's Report Committee. Includes title page. 8 pp.

MS 94/1/4/2 02/05/1984 New Ireland Forum, 'Report'. 16 pp.

MS 94/1/4/3 The Alliance Party, 'Alliance Proposals for Political Progress'. 5 pp.

MS 94/1/4/4 09/1984 Democratic Unionist Party, 'Ulster the Future Assured'. Proposals by the Ulster Democratic Unionist Party, Northern Ireland Assembly Group, for Progress Toward Full Devolution in Northern Ireland. Includes title page. 19 pp.

MS 94/1/4/5 11/1984 Chairman: Lord Kilbrandon, 'Northern Ireland: Report of an Independent Inquiry'. Abridged version. Includes title page, a list of the members of the inquiry and their official positions, a note acknowledging the sensitivity around word usage in Northern Ireland, and chapters 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 (with omissions), 10, 11, 12, and 13 of the inquiry report. 42 pp.

MS 94/2 Airlie House Booklet

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Airlie House informational booklet included with the binder of papers for conference attendees. Includes a description of Airlie House, photographs of the location, details of the available facilities, and a map of the local area. 20 pp.

MS 94/3 The Two Irelands

11/1984

Jackson, Harold and McHardy, Anne, 'The Two Irelands - the problem of the double minority'. The Minority Rights Group, Report No 2. 16 pp.