

the IRISH NEWS

and Belfast Morning News

Saturday January 1 1994
28p in Northern Ireland (32p elsewhere) ***
Edition: No. 37, 433

Features

Year of the Family

1994 has been designated the Year of the Family by the United Nations, but the family is no longer a typical unit in today's modern society P17



News

Tammy 'critical'

Country and western singer Tammy Wynette lies critically ill in hospital with a blood infection P5



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- Lotto winners become losers P3
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- The Pope speaks on families P5
- A year of world travel P5
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UFF death campaign to continue

By Phelim McAleer

REPORTS that the UFF is to resume its killing campaign after a three-week lull have been described as "chilling" by the SDLP spokesman for security Seamus Mallon.

Linking the UFF threat with the resumption of IRA violence Mr Mallon said that it showed the absolute need for the community to make it clear to all organisations "not just that they wanted peace but that they demanded it."

The last Catholic to be shot dead by the UFF was East Belfast man Robert McKay who was killed on December 7.

The UFF also killed Noel Cardwell six days later claiming he was an informer but have not claimed responsibility for any incidents since the Downing Street declaration.

Expressing no surprise at the UFF threat, Presbyterian minister Rev Dr Roy Magee who has had frequent talks with Loyalist paramilitaries said it was "on the cards" once the

Grim warning was on the cards claims sources close to loyalists

IRA resumed violence.

"The UFF were sitting back waiting to see the IRA's response to the joint declaration and this announcement was likely to happen if the IRA resumed their campaign," he said.

He added that his contacts with the UFF leadership led him to believe that if the IRA said they saw something in the Downing Street document which will allow them to stop the violence then the UFF would respond favourably.

He warned it was not enough for the IRA to say that they would not kill innocent Protestants.

"It is sometimes hard for the IRA to understand that an attack on the security forces is viewed by the UFF as a personal attack on their ethos and they feel they have to respond," he said.

The deputy leader of the Ulster Unionists on Belfast City Council, Jim Rogers, said the threat was "most unfortunate but understandable."

"It is understandable because the British government have shown over past 24 years that the more you shoot and the more you bomb they will eventually give into your demands," he said.

He appealed to the UFF to reconsider their plan resume the killing and for the government to end their campaign of "appeasement of terrorism."

Condemning the renewed threat Sinn Féin spokesman Richard McCauley denied suggestions that the loyalist campaign is reactive to IRA killings.

"Loyalist violence is a response to any perceived threat to the unionist position," he said.

He added that the UFF had previously admitted that if the IRA had ended their campaign they would still kill to stop nationalists achieving their political objectives.

In brief

Firebomb found in clothes shop

Police have warned traders to be on the lookout for firebombs after an incendiary was found in a Belfast city centre clothes store yesterday. The cassette-type device was found in a stall in the Dorothy Perkins store at Donegal Place at 5pm as they prepared to close. Set to explode around 2am today, it was defused by army bomb experts.

The RUC has said it feared the IRA would use the new year sales rush as a cover for a firebomb campaign.

Police thwart mortar attack bid

Police have thwarted what they believe was a planned mortar attack on the security forces. During an operation which lasted several hours, they found a timer power unit, two lengths of detonator cord and a wheeled bin with holes cut into it, at Ancoo Street in Beechmount, west Belfast. There were no arrests. A mortar which had been hidden in a wheeled bin and left on the Falls Road, was defused on Wednesday night.

Weather

Frosty start with icy patches on roads and some lying snow in places. Sunny spells Max 5C but feeling colder Details: P4

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Spectacular launch to town's times of celebration

By Shane Glynn

A spectacular fireworks display lit up the Co Down skies last night to mark the start of the Newry 850th birthday celebrations.

Earlier, some of the area's best known stars were on hand to release details of the 1994 festival extravaganza in the border town.

Topping the bill were singing star Rose Marie, country and western's Susan McCann, up and coming opera starlet Carla Maney, Luv Bug, Leon and Springwater, and The Hiltown Showband.

The four-day festival gets underway on June 1 with a Stars of Newry variety concert. It will come to a close with a hugely popular medieval night at Narrow Water Castle.

Rose Marie, who flew home from London for yesterday's launch, said she was looking forward to at last sharing the bill with her long-time friend Susan McCann.

"It was important for us all to come back to Newry and lend our support to the festival and the 850th celebrations. We're all very proud of where we come from," she said.

Other dates in the festival calendar will follow a family theme in keeping with 1994 as Year of the Family.



● Homecoming - Rose-Marie back in her native Newry to join the celebrations

Picture: Ann McManus

Protestant gran lifts morale at Catholic school

By Conor Macauley

A PROTESTANT grandmother sent a morale-boosting Christmas card to Catholic pupils who led a school-friend in a UFF attack last month.

The anonymous card, signed simply "A Shankill Road grandmother", arrived at St Gabriel's Boys Secondary School on Belfast's Crumlin Road just before Christmas.

A fortnight earlier, pupil Brian Duffy (15), was murdered by loyalist gunmen who attacked a taxi rank in Ligoniel, north Belfast.

He had just come from helping his grandmother put up Christmas decorations and was on his way home when he was killed as he sat in the cab.

The driver, 31-year-old John Todd, also died in the attack.

"The youth was an exemplary pupil who was involved in charity work with the elderly in his community."

"The Protestant woman was prompted to write to his school - which has lost up to a dozen pupils and past pupils in the violence -

when she heard Brian's school-friends singing carols in the city centre.

In a card to principal John McArtland, she wrote: "I happened to be passing through Corn Market one morning last week when I heard beautiful singing."

"When I came upon your boys singing, it thrilled my heart and I thought it was just lovely to see them."

"I prayed for each and everyone of them. That God would keep them singing and not let them get involved in the troubles we are having."

"May the Lord bless you and your staff as you work with the boys and keep them singing."

Mr McArtland said her message of hope had helped "raise morale within the school and offers encouragement to the school and the local community."

He said the choir had attracted many "appreciative comments" for its carol singing.

SF councillor's son remanded on bomb charge

A Sinn Féin councillor's son was charged yesterday with bombing a police station just 16 minutes after the end of the IRA's Christmas ceasefire.

Darcey Geroid McMenamin (18) whose father, Mr Gerry McMenamin, is a member of Omagh district council, appeared at Belfast magistrates court along with Dennis Pearce Darcy (21), of Ballymore Road, Omagh, Co Tyrone.

They were charged with causing an explosion at Fintona RUC station just after midnight last Monday and possessing a Mark 15 mortar bomb containing 65 kilos of home-made explosives with intent to endanger life or damage property.

McMenamin, of Lifford House, Seelmore, Omagh, was also charged with being a member of the IRA since last September.

Questioned by Mr Patrick Mallon, defending, an RUC inspector said the evidence against them was principally their admissions.

There was also other evidence corroborated by police inquiries, he said.

Both men were remanded in custody to appear at Belfast's Crumlin Road court on January 28.

Secret files reveal dispute surrounding pope's death

By Dr Eamon Phoenix

THE question of whether or not to mark the death of Pope John XXIII in May 1963 presented a major problem for the new Northern Ireland government of Captain Terence O'Neill, Cabinet files which have remained secret until now reveal.

In the event, the new prime minister used the occasion to make an unprecedented gesture to the Catholic community.

But the Stormont government felt unable to observe the protocol adopted in Britain despite a royal command.

Documents show that on the previous occasion of a pontiff's death - that of Pius XII in 1958 - senior officials had considered it inadvisable to issue any message of sympathy from "official circles" in Northern Ireland.

Two reasons were given: that any message from the British government "must be regarded as covering

ing Northern Ireland as part of the UK" and that "in his capacity as spiritual leader" of the Roman Catholic church, any message of sympathy should properly come from the churches in the north.

The issue was rekindled in 1963 with the death of Pope John XXIII. On May 20, S H Burley of the Home Office sent an official letter to the Cabinet office at Stormont Castle: "I am directed by the secretary of state to inform you that by the Queen's command, in the event of the death of His Holiness, the Pope, flags are to be flown at half-mast on all government buildings."

However, in an accompanying private note, the Whitehall official made it clear that "governors of territories outside the UK" were being given the directive "to adopt to local conditions."

"We have agreed," concluded the official, "that, as in 1958, this discretion applies in Northern Ireland."

However, as the file reveals, prime minister O'Neill went a step further than his predecessors when he sent a telegram of condolence to the

Vicar Capitular of the Archbishop of Armagh, the Most Rev Dr William Conway, DD. This conveyed the sympathy of "the government of Northern Ireland... on the great loss which your Church sustained" and paid tribute to Pope John's "qualities of kindness and humanity."

A memo in the file throws new light on the prime minister's gesture. An official wrote: "This was a departure from previous practice but it was felt desirable to take this step in view of the great loss to opinion and also as a gesture to show that the change was recognised, even though at this juncture it was not possible to go as far as half-masting flags."

However, the decision of the lord mayor to half-mast the union flag on Belfast City Hall on June 4 prompted a protest march led by the Rev Ian Paisley.

He said the march was a protest against the government's gesture of sympathy.

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Big Bertha is the stuff of record breakers

From Mary Carolan in Dublin

A WEST of Ireland county was in mourning yesterday... for the world's oldest cow.

Big Bertha passed on at 1pm on Thursday, but she is set to make a comeback with the help of a Co Kerry tannery.

Bertha, who had an entry in the Guinness Book of Records, died on the farm of owner Jerome O'Leary just months from her 50th birthday on March 17.

begin to weaken on Christmas Day.

"She lay down and she never got up again. We had been looking after her round the clock."

Big Bertha went into the record books as the world's oldest cow and the most prolific breeder with 39 calves.

Mr Riney said: "She has two daughters still in the herd and they are the spitting image of her."

"One is about 35 and the other 30. She also has several grand children."

Bachelor farmer Mr O'Leary, of

a fair in 1946 as a two-year-old

He said: "Nearly all the people who were present then are now dead."

"She was a Dromedary, one of the oldest breeds of cattle in Ireland. Her likes will not be seen again."

Farmers in the area say the normal life expectancy of a herd cow is no more than 20 years.

Mr O'Leary, who is in his 70s and farms 40 acres, said: "She just faded away."

"I called in three vets and we tried

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