

# SECRET

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ROYAL VISITS

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GENERAL POLICY

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INDEX HEADINGS

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FILE No.

PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE  
OF NORTHERN IRELAND  
2011  
OPEN  
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Public Record Office of Northern Ireland

CENT/3/131A

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CENT/3/131A

MISC / 1

295/10

Copy No 3 of 9

PUS/B/5338/MLR

Secretary of State (L&B)

WJ  
23/10

cc / Sir Ewart Bell ✓  
Mr Blackwell  
Miss Owens  
PS/PUS(L)

2 RISC / 1

ROYAL VISITS TO NORTHERN IRELAND

1. We shall be meeting early in November to discuss Royal Visits to Northern Ireland. This note sets out our general policy in this field and lists those Royal Visits that are currently planned.
  
2. Members of the Royal Family do not accept invitations to visit Northern Ireland unless they have consulted the Secretary of State and satisfied themselves that he is content from the point of view of security, political sensitivity and timing. In practice we have a close relationship with the Royal Private Secretaries and proposed visits are co-ordinated at an early stage, whether the initiative comes from the Royal Household, the NIO, the Armed Forces or civilian bodies in Northern Ireland.
  
3. Royal Visits fall into two main categories; "civil" visits and "military" visits. "Civil" visits involve the Royal Visitor in the same sort of functions as are performed in the remainder of the United Kingdom; garden parties at Hillsborough Castle; opening new schools, hospital wings, factories, etc; visiting factories, colleges and the like. They differ from similar occasions in Great Britain in that, because of security considerations, there is rarely a prior announcement of the Royal Visit and usually the Secretary of State or his wife is said to be the VIP due to carry out the engagement. This is often a transparent deception, but the policy is to refuse to comment on speculation that the VIP is in fact to be a member of the Royal Family. Selected members of the media are given a privileged, confidential briefing a few days before



the event so that good media coverage is provided despite the general secrecy. There is a particular problem about the City Hall, Belfast, where many civic functions are traditionally held. This could only be made accessible to a Royal Visitor at the cost of a vast security operation and we have, therefore, been obliged on a number of occasions to advise against acceptance of an invitation to functions there. You are required to receive Royal Visitors and there may be functions, such as a dinner at Hillsborough, which will involve both you and Mrs Hurd.

4. "Military" visits involve units of the Armed Forces, though these may sometimes be mixed with other functions. Members of the Royal Family are very keen to visit those units of the Armed Forces serving in Northern Ireland of which they are Colonel-in-Chief or with which they have some special link. Every Commanding Officer wants a Royal Visit to his unit while it is serving in Northern Ireland. The policy is that all bids for Royal Visits should be addressed in the first instance to the GOC who seeks approval from the Secretary of State for those which he wishes to go ahead. Occasionally in the past strings have been pulled and short cuts taken; but generally we now have things under control between HQ Northern Ireland, the Royal Private Secretaries and the NIO. There are special sensitivities concerning "military" visits; some barracks and some units are anathema to many nationalists and a Royal Visit to one of them can risk involving the Royal Family in political controversy. (Early this year a visit by the Duke of Edinburgh to the Grenadier Guards at Drummadd Barracks, which also houses a UDR battalion several members of which were charged with murdering Catholics, caused much criticism from nationalists and Dublin). We monitor proposals for visits very carefully to avoid controversy if possible. "Military" visits are usually secret and private with little or no publicity. There is usually no need for you to be involved.

5. Too many Royal Visits can cause unease in the nationalist side of the community because of the boost they give to Unionist

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5. Too many Royal Visits can cause unease in the nationalist side of the community because of the boost they give to Unionist

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morale and the opportunity they provide for demonstrating allegiance to the Crown. They also place a considerable burden on the security forces.

As a rule of thumb we aim to arrange one major Royal Visit (spread over at least two days and usually consisting of "civil" and "military" engagements, with the Royal Visitor staying overnight in the Royal Apartments at Hillsborough Castle) in the spring or early summer and another in the early autumn. In addition we normally approve three or four private "military" visits in a year and perhaps one one-day "civil" visit.

**SECRET**  
and  
**PERSONAL**

y 1 of 7 copies 504/2  
cc PS/PUS (B&L)  
Mr Blackwell  
Miss Owens



*I am content  
done not any more to comment.  
Have you checked with 18/11/84 for.  
All you content?  
28/2  
@CEN/21*

① SIR EWART BELL

Thank you for your note of 24 February, and Miss Owens'. Bessbrook certainly presents no problem. It is chiefly the home of parts of the roulement unit which has its headquarters at Drumadd (1 Staffords now). But the reason for the visit is that the resident unit at Ballykinler (1 D&D) has a detachment on operational duty at Bessbrook. The UDR is not concerned with Bessbrook at all. The Duke of Edinburgh's visit there did not attract comment.

2. The reason for visiting Aughnacloy is that the only troops deployed operationally from the resident unit at Ballykelly (1 RRF) are deployed there: a Company of them. The Aughnacloy base is also the home of a part-time Company of 8 UDR, whose headquarters are at Dungannon. (Incidentally the CO of 8 UDR has operational control of the 1 RRF Company deployed to Aughnacloy, since Aughnacloy is within his tactical area of responsibility.) Thus elements of 8 UDR and of 1 RRF both operate out of the Aughnacloy base, which is probably thought of loosely in the neighbourhood as a UDR base.

3. 8 UDR have not attracted any unusual hostile comment in recent months, even though their headquarters town is also the home of Father Faul. Operationally they have done some good work; they have not suffered casualties of late, and altogether they are a quite uncontentious unit.

4. It would be quite unreasonable in my view to ask that Aughnacloy should not be visited (I understand that the visitor asked specifically to see soldiers on operations), though I realise that the scandal of 2 UDR will easily be rubbed off onto other battalions for an occasion like this. I believe that we could withstand the possible flak from Seamus Mallon; we might consider tipping the wink to the Irish through Mr Goodison on the day (but not before).

*R. W. Buxton*

**SECRET** and **PERSONAL**

P W J BUXTON

28 February 1984

GE

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4/19/12

CC PS (PUS) (B+L)  
Mr Boulton  
Mr Blackwell  
Miss Owens



Copy # Original of 2.

Your Ref: HCS/12/18

Our Ref: SEC 68

PSE 83/529

WJ 3/1

(i) Sir Ewart Bell

(2) GEN/1

PROGRAMMES FOR ROYAL VISITS

1. With reference to your minute of 6 December and to the interim reply sent to your Office on 12 December, I set out below information on events which are expected to take place during the next 18 months and which might be considered worthy of inclusion in a distinguished visitor's programme (the order of listing is chronological rather than priority):-

(i) Foyle Bridge, Londonderry

A new bridge over the River Foyle in Londonderry is expected to be ready for use in April-June 1984. The bridge whose final cost will be in the region of £23.9 million (£26.9 million if the cost of approach roads is included) will link the East and West Banks of the Foyle, will provide a direct access from the West Bank to the industrial estate of Maydown and Campsie and will create an important strategic link between both parts of the Londonderry Enterprise Zone.

This is included for consideration, but because of local political sensitivities it may not be advisable for members of the Royal Family to be associated with the opening ceremony. Indeed it has been agreed that the Secretary of State should be invited to perform the opening ceremony.

(ii) Association of Water Engineers - Annual Conference and Exhibition

The annual conference and exhibition of this UK organisation whose membership comprises staff employed in the water industry will be held in Bangor next year. The conference was last held in Northern Ireland in 1968. In 1984 the national president will be Mr S T Bratty, Chief Engineer in the Department's Water Service.

The conference and exhibition will extend over a period of 4 days from Monday 30 April to Thursday 3 May. On Tuesday 1 May formal openings of both the conference and the exhibition will take place and on the evenings of Wednesday 2 May and Thursday 3 May there will be official receptions in Parliament Buildings, Stormont, and in the City Hall, Belfast, respectively.

(iii) Festival of Architecture

It is planned to hold a Festival of Architecture during 1984 to mark the 150th anniversary of the granting of a charter to the Royal Institute of British Architects. Northern Ireland's contribution to the Festival will consist of a number of events to

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be held throughout 1984 although May will be regarded as Festival Month. A detailed programme is not yet available but two events with which a distinguished visitor might possibly be associated are an exhibition to be staged probably in April and a reception to be held in the City Hall, Belfast, during May.

(iv) Extension of Marks & Spencers' store in Belfast

In September/October 1984 the firm of Marks & Spencers plans to open a major new extension to its Belfast store costing in the region of £17 million. The extension will embrace the former Belfast Water Office which was purchased from this Department.

Marks & Spencers is the leading Belfast city centre store and the opening of this extension will be the single most important event in the commercial life of Belfast during 1984.

(v) Ordnance Survey

To mark the 200th birthday of the founders of the Ordnance Survey of Ireland it is planned to mount a special exhibition in Londonderry during September 1984.

(vi) Richmond Development, Londonderry

This is a major new development being funded by the Department in the Londonderry area. The project estimated to cost in the region of £9 million represents a significant injection to the commercial life of central Londonderry. It is aimed to have the new centre ready for opening in October/November 1984.

(vii) New FANI HQ, Lisburn

Work is expected to commence during 1984 - the precise start date is as yet unknown - on the first phase of a multi-million pounds project for the Fire Authority of Northern Ireland. The project will embrace:-

- (i) a new updated communications centre (ie, for dealing with "999" calls);
- (ii) a new administrative block; and
- (iii) a stores and maintenance centre.

The total scheme is estimated to cost approximately £6 million of which £2-3 million will be spent on the first phase. One of the direct benefits to the community as a whole will be a more efficient "999" system.

2. Other establishments or bodies which might be considered for inclusion in a distinguished visitor's programme are:-

- (i) As an expression of the community's gratitude for the extra-ordinary efforts which the staff of the Fire Authority have been called upon to make during the last 15 years a visit to meet management and staff of the Fire Authority might be arranged.



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- (ii) For similar reasons a visit might also be arranged to meet management and staff of the three transport undertakings (Northern Ireland Railways, Ulsterbus/Citybus and Northern Ireland Airports Ltd).
- (iii) Subject to a proposed new building being available (estimated to be ready for occupation in Spring 1984) a visit to the Ordnance Survey of Northern Ireland might be of interest to a (male) distinguished visitor.
- (iv) A visit to the Public Records Office at Balmoral Road, Belfast, might be of interest in view of the historical records held there and the highly skilled work undertaken to repair and maintain valuable historical documents.

3. The foregoing is rather a "hotch-potch" of various suggestions of varying degrees of importance, but I felt it better to parade it in full to allow you a greater selection. For some of the items if they warrant selection, additional information can be supplied as it becomes available.

D BARRY  
Department of the Environment  
Stormont

3 December 1983

CONFIDENTIAL

Reference .....

PS/SOS (B&L)  
cc PS/PUS (B)  
PS/Sir Ewart Bell  
Mr Blackwell - M

① Sir Ewart Bell 2/6  
② G.E.W./1



PS/PUS (L) - M

254/6

VISIT OF HER MAJESTY, QUEEN ELIZABETH, THE QUEEN MOTHER  
GUESTS INVITED TO BALLYMENA

1. You asked for a note of the VIP guests invited to Ballymena.
2. Because of the limited space available at St Patrick's Barracks, Ballymena MPs and Assembly Members were not included in the guest list as a category of VIPs to be invited because on double invitations these would have taken up at least 120 places.
3. Dr Paisley, as the MP for the area was invited by the central organisation (TAVR). The Lord Mayor of Belfast, the Mayors of towns and the Chairmen of District Councils with TA Units in their areas were invited thus the Lord Mayor of Belfast, the Mayors of Londonderry, Ballymena, Lisburn, Newtownabbey, Craigavon, Carrickfergus, Antrim, North Down and Ards and the Chairman of Armagh District Council were invited.
4. The leaders of the four main churches, the Chief Constable, the Lord Chief Justice and all the Lord Lieutenants (8) were also invited.
5. Each TA Unit was given an allocation of seats. 102 Squadron of Newtownards nominated Mr Kilfedder, the MP for their area, as one of their guests. Mr Kilfedder's invitation was sent to his home address and not to Parliament Buildings, Stormont.
6. Apparently difficulties arose with Mr Kilfedder on his arrival at Ballymena as he did not have a 'sticker' on his car for admission to the Barracks. However his car was admitted and he took his allotted place in the stand but when the VIPs moved to lunch Mr Kilfedder found that his ticket did not admit him to the Officers Mess where the Queen Mother was dining. He refused to join other VIPs (Lord Lieutenants etc) and left Ballymena stating that "the TA would never again be allowed to fire a 21 gun salute from Stormont grounds".

~~6/1~~ 6/1

GFR/2

Miss Owens - By Mufax

c c:-PS/PUS(L&B) - M  
PS/Sir Ewart Bell - M  
Mr Merifield - M  
Mr Blackwell

The Secretary of State has noted that there have been complaints in the Assembly that the Speaker was not given his "proper place" when HM Queen Elizabeth, The Queen Mother visited Northern Ireland and that no members of the Assembly were invited in the capacity as Assembly members to receptions which took place. He would be grateful for a brief on the criteria which were applied to invitations to Assembly members and their Speaker and whether the Speaker has any grounds for complaint about his treatment.



*D A Hill*  
D A HILL  
A/PS

27 June 1983

**CONFIDENTIAL**

Reference ..... 303/6



① Sir Ewart WJL  
② GEN/214 29/6

Mr Hill - By Mufax  
A/PS SOS

VISIT OF HM QUEEN ELIZABETH THE QUEEN MOTHER

1. You asked for a note on the criteria which were applied to Assembly Members and their Speaker in relation to invitations to events during the above visit.
2. The main point about this visit is that it was in essence a private one by a Member of the Royal Family for a purely military occasion. There were no public engagements to which Assembly Members might have been invited. The Army, in this case the TAVR, regard the guest list as their prerogative and they decided that the limited number of places available at the ceremony at Ballymena should be used primarily for members of the TA and their families and not reduced significantly by the inclusion of a large number of VIPs. You will recall that it was agreed that the Secretary of State and Mrs Prior should not be invited for this reason. Had there been any public events in the programme for which this office would have been responsible then the appropriate MPs and other elected local representatives (Mayor, councillors etc and now Assembly Members) would have been included as was always done in the past.
3. Those at HQNI issuing the invitations did not realise the significance of the nomination by a TA unit in Newtownards of the Speaker of the Assembly, Mr Kilfedder, but only in his capacity as MP for that Unit's area.
4. Dr Paisley as MP for the area in which the event was taking place was also present and invited to lunch in the Officers Mess (seating limited to 78) with the Queen Mother whereas Mr Kilfedder as MP for another area was allocated a place with other VIPs, including 5 Lord Lieutenants, in an adjoining marquee. The Army insist that they were correct in this. Mr Kilfedder's invitation was addressed to him as MP and to his home address and not to Parliament Buildings. However the distinction is unlikely to have been taken cognisance of by Mr Kilfedder.

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5. In the circumstances, with Dr Paisley and Mr Kilfedder as the only two MPs present, it is for consideration that there may be some justification for the complaint from the Assembly's point of view that Mr Kilfedder as Speaker of the Assembly should have been accorded a place at least equal to that of the local MP.
6. There is nothing laid down in the local scale of precedence whether the Speaker of the Assembly or the Westminster MP for the area in which an event is taking place would have the higher standing but the point has been noted for future Royal Visits with a civil content.
7. It is not recommended that the Secretary of State should write to Mr Kilfedder. Although the criticism in the Assembly was levelled at the Secretary of State's advisers in NIO the TAVR took full responsibility for their guest list and were reluctant to contemplate any suggestions which were made.

*Jean Owens*

J OWENS (MISS)  
Central Secretariat  
Stormont Castle

29 June 1983

cc PS/SOS (B)  
PS/PUS (B&L) -M  
Sir Ewart Bell ✓  
Mr Merifield  
Mr Blackwell - M

E.R. / SECRET AND PERSONAL

PERSONAL

MUFAX TO BELFAST

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① Sir Ewart Bell 3/2. Copy No 2 of 4

Mr Blackwell

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Royal Visits  
File  
GEN/21

cc PS/PUS(B) M  
PS/Sir E Bell M  
Mr Gilliland M

ROYAL VISIT

1. Mr Oliver Everett, Private Secretary to HRH The Princess of Wales, came to see PUS on the afternoon of 31 January. He was able to draw upon the advice given in your minute to him of 31 January for which he was grateful and on the views which Sir Ewart Bell had expressed to him over the telephone. The following points were made in discussion:

- (1) The Princess is very much in favour of making a visit to Northern Ireland and of taking up the BBC invitation. By way of background, Mr Everett explained that the Princess had expressed an interest in the past in visiting Northern Ireland in the context of a letter that she had received a year or so ago from Lady Patsie Fisher who had asked her to patronise the Women's Caring Trust. Sir Kenneth Stowe had been asked to advise on Lady Patsie's request and had advised the Palace that she should decline it and instead opt for an organisation based in GB but with Northern Ireland connections. Within the last few days, Lady Patsie had written again and Mr Everett knew that this would rekindle the Princess's interest in Northern Ireland. Sure enough, when she saw Mr Morgan's letter, she expressed a very keen interest in visiting the Province. Apparently, she is so enthusiastic about the prospect of a visit, that Mr Everett thought there was a danger of her noising the possibility abroad and thus felt constrained to warn her to be very discreet in mentioning it to anyone.

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- (2) PUS was pleased that she was very keen to make a visit and confirmed that the BBC invitation would form a suitable basis for a visit. It would inevitably cause security problems for the centre of Belfast but there was no reason to believe that these could not be managed. It was of course impossible to say this far in advance what the security situation would be like in a year or so's time. Mr Everett confirmed that the Prince of Wales would not be with her.
- (3) Mr Everett went on to say that if he carried this news back to the Princess he would not be the least surprised if she asked whether it would be possible to make a visit between now and the time of the BBC occasion. Would there be any possibility of such a visit? PUS explained that there could be difficulties about this if a programme of civilian visits were envisaged, and a suitable peg would be required upon which to hang the visit. Purely military visits were fairly straightforward from the security point of view though there was a danger of allowing too many of these when there was a dearth of visits to civilian areas.

This is a matter entirely within the Queen's gift and apparently she is not disposed to give the Princess a regiment in the near future. As PUS pointed out, this did not of course necessarily rule out the possibility of the Princess making a military visit, although it did emphasise the need for a suitable alternative reason for the visit to be found. He explained that the

Queen Mother is to visit the Province later this year in connection with the 75th Anniversary of the Territorial Army and, on the civilian side, he said that Princess Anne had visited the Province a year or so ago in connection with the Save the Children Fund. Mr Everett noted that the Queen Mother would be visiting the Province later this year, a point which he thought it might be useful for him to deploy if he needed to dissuade the Princess from rushing in to an early visit.

- (4) PUS summed up this part of the discussion by saying that, if the Princess did decide to take up the BBC invitation, he would have to consult the Secretary of State nearer the time. He would obviously be highly delighted that the Princess wanted to come and he felt sure that he would agree. Mr Everett was grateful for PUS's advice that this was a suitable occasion for a visit and said he felt sure that Mr Cliff Morgan, who has a very close working relationship with the Palace, would accept that this is all a long way off and would need to be looked at nearer the time.
- (5) PUS undertook to have consultations within the Department about the possibility of an earlier visit by the Princess. Mr Everett disclosed that the Princess did not have any particular personal interest which might form the basis for a visit. She has thus far accepted patronages for five organisations involving work for the Disabled, Children, Playgroups, Cancer Research and Community Work. No doubt something along these lines would be acceptable. However, he emphasised that the main thing to bear in mind, is that we have a Princess who is very keen to go and is therefore likely to be very flexible as regards the appointments she might undertake.
- (6) In closing the conversation, PUS said that Mr Everett had been absolutely right to caution the Princess against



E.R. SECRET AND PERSONAL

SECRET PERSONAL

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telling people indiscriminantly about the possibility of her visiting the Province. There would be no difficulty at laying on a visit at fairly short notice and it was accepted practice that they were always subject to cancellation at the last minute if news got out.

- (7) Without making anything of it, PUS said that whilst the BBC invitation was an entirely suitable occasion for a Royal Visit, it was fair to point out that the BBC was not universally smiled upon in Northern Ireland. On the Nationalist side there were those who saw it as being very much the "British" Broadcasting Corporation whilst on the Unionist side there were those who thought it was not British enough.

2. I would be grateful if you would follow/<sup>up</sup>PUS's undertaking given above and provide him with advice on the possibility of the Princess making a visit to the Province before the BBC event next year. Could you also provide a draft reply for him to send to Mr Everett covering that possibility, confirming that we are content, in principle, for her to accept the BBC invitation subject to review nearer to the time

and for his information

setting out the dates on which the Queen Mother is likely to visit the Province. I have not brought in the Secretary of State's office at this stage, because PUS has said that he will do this himself in a minute when the picture becomes clearer.

DAVID BROOKER

PS/PUS

3 February 1983

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① Sir/E... 7 of 2

② GEN/21

- 1. MR FLATT .
- 2. PS/SECRETARY OF STATE (L&B)

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1140  
29 SEP 1982  
MUFAX ROOM  
STORMONT HOUSE ANNEX

CC PS/PUS (L&B) - M  
PS/Sir Ewart Bell-M

MINISTER'S CASE 7875: INVITATION TO BUCKINGHAM PALACE

2. The first letter dated 24 July was sent to the Palace by Alderman John White who was Mayor of Coleraine during the Queen's Jubilee visit to the New University of Ulster. Alderman White is president of the Board of Governors of the school and his letter invites the Prince and Princess to be guests of honour at the school Speech Day in October 1983. The second letter dated 31 August is from the headmaster of the school and it appears from the contents that Mr Cornish had sent a holding reply to Alderman White saying that consideration of the invitation would be brought forward when the Royal programme for the latter half of 1983 was planned in July 1983. Alderman White had obviously informed the headmaster at this stage, and the headmaster's letter endorsed Alderman White's invitation and added that the Speech Day could be arranged at any time to suit the Royal Visitors if they could accept the invitation.

3.

4. The annual Speech Day of a school even with such a distinguished history as Coleraine Academical Institution is hardly in itself a

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sufficiently important event to justify a visit by the Prince and Princess of Wales. Besides, we understand that the Academical Institution received a Royal Visit in the 1960s and there are clearly equally distinguished schools which deserve a visit - such as Belfast Royal Academy which has asked for a Royal Visitor to participate in their bi-centenary celebrations in 1982.

5. A further factor for consideration is that the Chairman of the Board of Governors is a local politician who is at present Chairman of the Association of Local Authorities and who is known to hold strong Unionist views. However, it could no doubt be argued that he was acceptable in his former mayoral capacity to perform a prominent role on a major Royal occasion and that the manifestation of his Unionism would ensure a warm welcome to the Royal Visitors.

6. There can be little doubt that outside of Stormont and Hillsborough, Coleraine is potentially as straightforward a location as one can find for a Royal Visit to Northern Ireland, taking security, political and other considerations into account. This was proved during the Queen's Jubilee Visit in 1977 but there was still a period of extreme apprehension and stringent security precautions were still required. On the other hand, other parts of Northern Ireland are known to be eager to receive a Royal Visit and express their loyalty to the Crown and they may consider it unreasonable that Coleraine should receive undue preference. Undoubtedly security problems in Coleraine would not be so great as in other parts of the Province, nevertheless the arrangements for such an important Royal Visit would be out of all proportion to the nature of the event which, as so often happens in Northern Ireland, would prove impossible to keep secret.

7. It is the considered view of officials after consulting PUS and Sir Ewart Bell that Mr Cornish should not be advised to make any commitment implied or otherwise for the Prince and Princess of Wales to attend a Speech Day at Coleraine but perhaps to indicate that in the event of an appropriate Royal Visit taking place next year the possibility of including the Academical Institution in the programme will be considered. I attach a draft reply which seeks to make that point.

*B A Blackwell*

B A BLACKWELL

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① Sir Ewart

② GAW/27

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DUS(B)/91/1

SECRET

Copy to:  
PS/PUS (L & B)  
Sir Ewart Bell  
Mr Marshall  
Mr Platt

MR BUXTON

ROYAL VISITS

Many thanks for your minute PB/82/1/651 of 26 January which I have discussed briefly with the PUS and Sir Ewart Bell.

We should tell HQNI, as you propose, that the visits by the Queen Mother and Princess Alice are O.K. to go ahead as purely military occasions. We should also tell them, however, that further consideration does need to be given to any proposed visit by Prince Charles, since in that case a "civil" element for such a visit would be very likely to be appropriate should it be decided that the visit were to go ahead but that the timing and content of any such visit needs further thought.

On a separate point could we have a word about the visit next month: some of the security aspects of this bother me a bit.

*it is beginning of March.*  
*J N Blelloch*  
J N BLELLOCH

DUS (B)

29 January 1982

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MR BLELLOCH

cc PS/PUS (L&B)  
Mr Marshall  
Sir E Bell  
Mr Platt

*Please show to Mrs*

*Obeyes. I intend to tell Mr Belloch that we*

*should consult among ourselves before going HQNI*

ROYAL VISITS

*the protocols for any of these visits. WES 27/1*

HQNI have let me know informally of several "bids" which have been made by units in Northern Ireland to be visited by members of the Royal Family during 1982 (apart from Princess Anne's impending visit). They are:

The Queen Mother to visit the Queen's Dragoon Guards at Omagh on 27 April.

Princess Alice to visit 2 R Anglians in Londonderry on 18. June (or 22, 24 or 28).


Prince Charles to visit the Royal Navy at their HQ, HMS Caroline, and possibly elsewhere in the Province between 8 and 13 November, preferably 11th.

The first two have signified their acceptance in principle, Prince Charles has not replied. The GOC is happy that all three should go ahead.

2. The question posed by HQNI is whether planning for these visits may proceed. (In asking this, they make the incidental point that they hope that if it is decided to append any additional civilian functions to these purely military engagements, it will not be at the expense of the latter. This seems a fair point to bear in mind). I can see no reason why planning for the first two visits should not go ahead. Others may wish to take advantage of the presence of the two Royal ladies, for other official purposes; if so we can deal with such proposals as they come.

3. The invitation to Prince Charles however raises wider

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issues, and I suggest that we may wish to take a view from the beginning on the desirability of his being here next autumn, and discuss the matter with his staff before it is carried any further.

4. I conclude therefore that I should give HQNI the go ahead on the Queen Mother and Princess Alice, but ask them not to proceed further over Prince Charles for the moment. We ought then to consult amongst ourselves and thereafter with his Private Secretary about the proposal. Do you agree?

*P W J Buxton*

P W J BUXTON

26 January 1982