ARK, the Northern Ireland Social and Political Archive, is an initiative established in 2000 by staff working in our two universities. ARK builds on two already established resources CAIN (Conflict Archive on the INternet) and the Northern Ireland Life and Times survey. Together with the other resources now to be found under the ARK umbrella, the service has in a short time established itself as the key information resource on social and political issues in the region. ARK has a single goal: to make social science information on Northern Ireland available to the widest possible audience. This can include the media and journalists, voluntary and community organisations, academics, students, school children, policy makers, politicians and civil servants - in fact, any interested members of the public.

ARK’s commitment to building bridges between the academic sector and the voluntary and community sector is a shining example of the resolve to be found within both our institutions to promote interaction across the various sectors in Northern Ireland and to enhance further the contribution we make to the economic and social development of the region. Working in collaboration through ARK, the universities are providing a bridge between academia and the needs of people in Northern Ireland for information about their society.

In this first annual report the high level of activity and the tremendous amount already achieved by the ARK team is noteworthy. We commend their work and reinforce the support of our institutions for their endeavours and look forward to another equally productive year.

Professor George Bain
VICE CHANCELLOR
QUEENS UNIVERSITY BELFAST

Professor Gerry McKenna
VICE CHANCELLOR AND PRESIDENT
UNIVERSITY OF ULSTER
WHAT IS ARK?

Established in 2000 ARK (the Northern Ireland Social and Political Archive) is a joint resource based within the two universities in Northern Ireland. It makes material on social and political life in Northern Ireland accessible to the widest possible audience. The target users of ARK are anyone with an interest in social issues in Northern Ireland, including community and other voluntary groups, policymakers, academics, journalists, schoolchildren and their teachers. With the establishment of a devolved legislative assembly, and even during the periods of its suspension, use of ARK has grown exponentially. Social policy issues have come under fresh scrutiny across all areas, a lobbying culture has emerged and with it the opportunity to stimulate public debate on these issues. The commitment of both universities to community outreach demonstrates the importance of a resource like ARK in promoting networks between the academic, public and voluntary sectors.

After its pilot year and positive external evaluation (April 2001, summary available online at www.ark.ac.uk/news.html) ARK has secured significant core funding and has developed its plans for the period to 2005. ARK’s work is expanding and now contains eight main resources which are grouped into three key areas: Conflict and Politics - The CAIN web-site and the Northern Ireland Elections web-site; Surveys - which comprises the Life and Times survey and the Young Life and Times survey and Research Support - which contains the Online Research Bank, the Northern Ireland Household Panel Survey Analysis Unit, Surveys On-line and the Survey Analysis Unit.

Work is also underway to develop a corporate image and marketing strategy and a formal launch is planned for mid-2003 when the fully integrated web resource will come online. You can currently view the component parts at www.ark.ac.uk.
The ARK team has expanded over this period to thirteen. Paula Devine and Katrina Lloyd were appointed as Senior Social Survey Officers based at the Institute of Governance, Public Policy and Social Research at Queen’s University. Paula Devine has worked on ARK as a consultant for some time and we are delighted that she is now in this permanent position. Dr. Katrina Lloyd joins the team from the Police Ombudsman’s Office. We welcome her to the team and look forward to gaining from her extensive research and analysis skills.

Lizanne Dowds, Deputy Director ARK, took up an Honorary Senior Research Fellow position at the University of Ulster, School of Policy Studies and has since had her position underwritten by the University of Ulster to 2005. Dr. Brendan Lynn has just joined the team (October 2002) as CAIN Research Assistant. He has experience in teaching in both UU and QUB and was previously working on the Dictionary of Irish Biography project. Mrs Debra Hughes has been appointed (October 2002) to a half time secretarial position and we are delighted to have support of this nature. A further post at QUB has recently been filled and Dr. Dirk Schubotz joins the team in January 2003. In the summer of 2001 we said goodbye to Caroline McAuley who was the original research officer on ORB (Online Research Bank). She moved to a new post at NICVA and has since moved back to a research position at Queen’s University.

1. Dr. Gillian Robinson - Director
   Gillian is a Senior Lecturer in the School of Policy Studies at the University of Ulster.

2. Lizanne Dowds - Deputy Director
   Lizanne is a Research Associate based at the University of Ulster.

3. Dr. Robert Miller - Deputy Director
   Robert is a Senior Lecturer in the School of Sociology at Queen’s University.

4. Paula Devine - Research Director
   Paula is a Senior Social Survey Officer based at the Institute of Governance, Public Policy and Social Research at Queen’s University.

5. Dr. Katrina Lloyd - Research Director
   Katrina is a Senior Social Survey Officer based at the Institute of Governance, Public Policy and Social Research at Queen’s University.

6. Dr. Martin Melaugh - CAIN Director
   Martin is a Research Associate based at the University of Ulster.

7. Dr. Brendan Lynn - CAIN Research Assistant
   Brendan is a Research Assistant based at the University of Ulster.

8. Dr. Ann Marie Gray - Policy Director
   Ann Marie is a Lecturer in the School of Policy Studies at the University of Ulster.

9. Patricia McKee - Senior Analyst
   Patricia is a Computing Officer based at the University of Ulster.

10. Mike McCool - Computing and IT Director
    Mike is a Computing Officer based at the University of Ulster.

11. Catherine Sharkey - Financial and Administrative Officer
    Catherine is an Administrative Officer based at the University of Ulster.

12. Debra Hughes - Secretary
    Debra is a secretary based at the University of Ulster.
During this period ARK received 9 direct or indirect new awards. This brings total external ARK income to £1.83 million to date.

### PERIOD OF AWARD | FUNDER | AMOUNT | PURPOSE | PRINCIPLE RESEARCHERS
--- | --- | --- | --- | ---
2002-2006 | Atlantic Philanthropies | £438,000 | Core funding for ARK to develop and expand. | ARK
2002-2005 | NISRA | £150,000 | To develop a joint university Northern Ireland Household Panel Survey Analysis Unit. | Prof. Bernie Hayes, QUB Prof. Sile O’Connor, UU
2002 | ESRC | £37,000 | To include a module on Women and Political Participation in the 2002 Northern Ireland Life and Times Survey (NILT). | Dr. Yvonne Galligan, QUB
2002 | ESRC | £37,681 | To include a module on Attitudes to the European Union in the 2002 NILT. | Prof. Sile O’Connor, UU & Dr. Lee McGowan, QUB
2002 | OFM/DFM | £20,080 | To include the ISSP module on Family and Gender roles in 2002 NILT. | ARK
2002-2004 | CRC Peace II | £48,890 | To run two sweeps of Young Life and Times survey. | ARK
2001 | Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure | £17,764 | To include module on culture in 2001 NILT. | ARK
2001 | ESRC | £15,572 | To include ISSP module on Social Networks in 2001 NILT. | Prof. Mary Daly, QUB
2001 | OFM/DFM | £114,332 | To include Community Relations module in 2001, 2002, 2003 NILT. | Dr. Joanne Hughes and Dr. Caitlin Donnelly, UU

ARK’s finances are included in the audited accounts of both Universities and details on income and expenditure per annum can be made available to interested parties.

ARK is funded primarily from external grants and awards as shown above though income is also generated through the Survey Analysis Unit which runs on a commercial basis. To date over £27,000 has been raised by the unit and clients include DHSSPS, Rural Development Council, the Equality Commission and the Assembly Research and Library Service.

ARK aims to secure further core funding to allow it to develop and expand.
ARK’s single mission is to make material on social and political life in Northern Ireland accessible to and to encourage its use by people from a wide range of sectors. We monitor progress with a variety of indicators and results from this period are extremely encouraging.

1. Web Usage
The new server to host the ARK website and all its component parts has been built and configured to work within the University of Ulster network but will be accessed using the ARK.AC.UK domain name. All ARK services have been transferred to the new server apart from CAIN which continues to run from its old server. A new webstats package has been installed which facilitates accurate collection of data on web usage (prior to this web statistics were difficult to compile due to ARK services being on different servers with varying web usage collection practices). As CAIN is a well established and extremely popular website the tables below provide details broken down into CAIN and the other combined ARK resources.

Summary statistics to 31 December 2002
The table shows how usage is increasing for both CAIN and the Combined other resources on ARK. The chart shows the dramatic eight-fold increase in hits to ARK between 2001 and 2002.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>HITS</th>
<th>VISITS*</th>
<th>UNIQUE SITES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>CAIN</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total to date</td>
<td>16,570,315</td>
<td>3,889,605</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>4,426,738</td>
<td>1,153,915</td>
<td>33,136</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>4,928,016</td>
<td>1,224,061</td>
<td>40,917</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Combined ARK</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total to date</td>
<td>~ 982,457</td>
<td>~ 77,131</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>111,396</td>
<td>7,088</td>
<td>464</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>820,736</td>
<td>70,043</td>
<td>4,384</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

~ These figures will be an underestimate due to the fact that statistics were not accurately available when the various components ran on different servers
* For Combined ARK resources these figures were not recorded prior to January 2001
# Average number of unique sites per month that view CAIN and other combined ARK resources

ARL Web Statistics 2001 - 2002 (excluding CAIN)
MEETING OUR OBJECTIVES

2. Publications using ARK material

Academic and Policy publications


The first Life and Times book was published by Pluto Press in 2002


‘Better, worse or just the same? Public attitudes to devolution’, by Roger Mac Ginty, Northern Ireland Assembly Briefing, 10th April 2002.


For most of these the NILT survey results form the substance of the paper, but for a few, the survey results are referred to only within a wider context/argument.
4. Media attention to ARK based material

Over the period ARK attracted significant media attention. Much of this was centred on stories from Life and Times data and was in response to a press release from ARK or from a principal investigator on an ARK based project. However in several instances journalists themselves used data from ARK to write a piece. It is difficult to monitor all this activity but media reports we are aware of account for 4 TV appearances, 35 radio interviews and 58 newspaper articles over the period. Newspaper coverage include local dailies, local weeklies, Republic of Ireland papers and National broadsheets.
The ARK seminar series is now well established and the following programme ran in the 2001/2002 academic year. Open seminars were held at NICVA, Conference Room B, 61 Duncairn Gardens Belfast BT15 2GB, between 12:00-1:00.) The series was a success with an average of 25 people attending each seminar from a range of sectors and prompting wide ranging and stimulating debates. NICVA proved an excellent venue. Most of the seminars were accompanied by a press release and attracted significant media attention.

### ARK 2001 - 2002 Seminar Series

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Seminar Title</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>A Conservative People? Attitudes towards Social Inequality in Northern Ireland</strong></td>
<td>Thurs 11 Oct 2001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr. Robert Miller, ARK, Queen’s University Belfast</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>On the Move: Attitudes on Transport in Northern Ireland</strong></td>
<td>Weds 21 Nov 2001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr. Liz Fawcet, University of Ulster</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Are there any Christians in Northern Ireland?</strong></td>
<td>Weds 9 Jan 2002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professor John Brewer, Queen’s University Belfast</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Social Surveys and Northern Ireland</strong></td>
<td>Weds 20 Feb 2002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chair: Professor Bernie Hayes, Queen’s University Belfast</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>The European Social Survey</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professor Roger Jowell, International Director, National Centre for Social Research, London</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Comparing Northern Ireland and the Republic</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professor Brendan Whelan, Economic and Social Research Institute, Dublin</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>The Pensions Muddle</strong></td>
<td>Weds 20 Mar 2002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professor Eileen Eavson, University of Ulster</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

### ARK 2002 - 2003 Seminar Series

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Seminar Title</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Attitudes to health information and public involvement in health care</strong></td>
<td>Weds 11 Dec 2002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr. Ann Marie Gray and Professor Dorothy Whittington, University of Ulster</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Attitudes to Education in Northern Ireland</strong></td>
<td>Weds 15 Jan 2003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professor Alan Smith, UNESCO Centre, University of Ulster and Professor Tony Gallagher, School of Education, Queen’s University Belfast</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Along the Learning Divide: attitudes to lifelong learning</strong></td>
<td>Weds 26 Feb 2003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professor John Field, Professor of Lifelong Learning and Deputy Principal, University of Stirling</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Divisions in Northern Ireland society: more of the same?</strong></td>
<td>Weds 12 Mar 2003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr. Jeremy Harbison, Institute of Governance, Public Policy and Social Research and the Northern Ireland Social Care Council</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>What our politicians should know: Political attitudes in Northern Ireland</strong></td>
<td>Weds 9 Apr 2003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr. Roger MacGinty, University of York</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
What is ORB?

ORB is a collection of summaries of social policy research focused on Northern Ireland. It aims to allow the public easy access to academic social policy research and at enhancing research capacity in the voluntary, government and academic sectors. ORB is a key resource in facilitating the policy debates that have sprung up in Northern Ireland since the new assembly and its attendant policymaking machinery moved into action. Average monthly accesses to the ORB website rose by 46% between 2001 and 2002.

The ORB website has been redesigned to facilitate our users.

- The search facility is now located on the first page of the site for easy access by users.
- A new page has been included, explaining ORB and the thinking behind it and providing links with NILT and CAIN. The page also includes an invitation for contributions of research material to the ORB site and provides guidelines for contributors.

The bibliography now contains over 1000 entries with summaries available for over 500 entries.
Information and source material on ‘the Troubles’ in Northern Ireland, as well as information on politics and society in the region, is made freely available at the CAIN web site. The amount of material about these topics continues to increase. There has also been a continued increase in the use made of the information at CAIN. In October 2002 there were 110,000 visits to CAIN from over 50,000 unique sites around the world. The total ‘hits’ have now reached 16.5 million with over 4.9 million in the past year. There is also a steady stream of queries that arrive each day, mainly by email, requesting assistance or further information.

Over the period CAIN has added a range of new information and source material to the web site and updated a number of existing pages.

New material included:
* a section on the issue of commemoration in Northern Ireland;
* draft chronologies for the years 2000 and 2001;
* updates for 1999, 2000, and 2001, to Malcolm Sutton’s Index of Deaths;
* the full text of a selection of reports published by the Centre for the Study of Conflict;
* the full text of papers published by Democratic Dialogue;
* chapters from a number of new books;
* updates to the Mural Directory;
* a section on the exhibition work of the Bogside Artists;
* a selection of ephemeral material;
* and a number of official / government reports.

CAIN has also responded to recent events by adding the texts of key statements and reports related to the peace process.

‘The definitive website from Cain (Conflict Archive on the Internet), part of the University of Ulster. A wealth of information and related links. It is accessible (with guidance) for Key Stage 3 pupils and indispensable for GCSE and A-level. Key events range from the early civil rights movement to the Omagh bombing.’

Guardian,
Tuesday 27 February 2001
The Northern Ireland Life and Times Survey was launched as a resource for everyone interested in the social attitudes of people living in Northern Ireland. Run every year, the survey documents the attitudes, values and beliefs of people in Northern Ireland on a wide range of social policy issues and monitors changes in these attitudes over time. The results are made publicly available on the website annually. One innovative feature of Life and Times is that the views of young people are also sought in the Young Life and Times survey which runs alongside the adult version.

Publications

The first Life and Times book was published in September 2002.
Social Attitudes in Northern Ireland:
The Eighth Report, Pluto Press, London

Six Research Updates have been published over the period:
Better, worse, or just the same?
Public attitudes towards the Northern Ireland Assembly, by Roger Mac Ginty. Research Update 12, May 2002

On the Move: Attitudes to Transport in Northern Ireland, by Liz Fawcett.
Research Update 11, May 2002

Social Activity and Interaction in Northern Ireland, by Brendan Murzagh.
Research Update 10, February 2002

Integrate or Segregate? Ten Years of Social Attitudes to Community Relations in Northern Ireland, by Joanne Hughes and Caitlin Donnelly.
Research Update 9, December 2001


Men in the Mirror, by Steve Biddulph.
Research Update 7, June 2001

Young Life and Times

A review of the Young Life and Times Survey design was conducted in 2001 which provided unanimous support for an independent YLTS. Funding has now been secured from the Peace II initiative through the Community Relations Council for a revised survey which will run in 2003.

The 2001 Life and Times Survey ran successfully with a response rate of 67%. The full datasets went online in June 2002. The final list of modules and funders consisted of:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MODULE</th>
<th>FUNDER</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Political Attitudes/Devolution</td>
<td>ESRC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>Nuffield Foundation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health Issues</td>
<td>BUPA Foundation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Relations</td>
<td>Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Culture and the Arts</td>
<td>Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Networks</td>
<td>ESRC</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Most of the Political Attitudes questions were also included in surveys in England, Scotland and Wales as part of the ESRC’s initiative on ‘Devolution and Constitutional Change’.
RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

Survey Analysis Unit
A recent development within ARK is the Survey Analysis Unit (SAU) located within the Institute of Governance, Public policy and Social Research, which provides survey analysis support for those unable to undertake such analysis themselves, whether this is due to lack of expertise, available personnel or resources. To date the Unit has been involved in analysis for a wide variety of clients, both large and small, including the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland, the Rural Development Council, the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, as well as the two universities. Income generated from these activities totals over £27,000.

Surveys Online
Surveys Online is dedicated to facilitating access to the many large-scale social surveys that have been carried out in Northern Ireland in recent years. Surveys Online makes information from Northern Irish social surveys publicly available on-line, using the tabular presentation of the Life and Times survey as a model. Initially, the project has focused on datasets collected within the academic sector. The service went live in September 2002 with six surveys: 1998 British Social Attitudes International Social Survey Programme (ISSP); 1999 British Social Attitudes ISSP; 1991 Women and Political Participation; 1996 Northern Ireland Social Attitudes; 1998 Northern Ireland Election Referendum study and the 1989-2001 Community Relations time series and this initial offering is being expanded.

The Northern Ireland Household Panel Survey (NIHPS) Analysis Unit
The most recent specialist development within ARK is a small unit dedicated to facilitating user access to the NIHPS - an extension of the long-running British Household Panel Survey (BHPS). The introduction of a panel survey of this nature to the region will mean that researchers in Northern Ireland will be able to carry out the kinds of analyses that have proved so useful in Great Britain - tracking the movement within societies of individuals and families across the years.

The main aims of the NIHPS analysis unit are to:

\* Develop Northern Ireland expertise in handling the survey and handling longitudinal data generally.
\* Ensure that the data is used across the entire Northern Ireland research community.
\* Exploit the data to its maximum benefit for policymaking.

Northern Ireland Elections
ARK is now the new home of ‘Northern Ireland Elections’ - a comprehensive resource relating to elections in Northern Ireland.

It gives details of:
\* Assembly, local government, Westminster and European Parliament election results;
\* Political parties and their web-sites;
\* Voting systems;
\* Geographical boundaries of constituencies;
\* The history of noteworthy elections since 1885;
\* Useful web-sites, books and other resources.

The Elections Site was set up by Nicholas Whyte to help inform ongoing Internet debate. This site is an essential international resource for politicians, researchers, the media, students and anyone interested in Northern Irish elections and their outcomes.
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In collaboration with Queen’s University, Belfast and University of Ulster