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Visit to Northern Ireland by
Princess Alexandra.

ROYAL FAMILY



May 1979

Referred to	Date	Referred to	Date	Referred to	Date	Referred to	Date
17-5-79							
15-6-79							
29-5-81							
PREM 19/581							



The National Archives

LETTERCODE/SERIES <i>PREM 19</i>	Date and sign
PIECE/ITEM <i>581</i> (one piece/item number)	
Extract/Item details: <i>Letter from Hopkins dated 29 May 1981</i>	
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From: THE PRIVATE SECRETARY

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NORTHERN IRELAND OFFICE

GREAT GEORGE STREET,

LONDON SW1P 3AJ



Mr Alexander

I passed this comment to Mike Hopkins today.

*WH
28/5*

We must look very carefully at this - the last moment.

on my wife's doct announcement it's not.

27 May 1981

Michael Alexander Esq
10 Downing Street
London SW1

See further later

Prime Minister

Dear Michael

Print - 29/5

You are already aware of this - general limits.

Print - 29/5

ROYAL VISIT

The Prime Minister will wish to know that it is proposed that Her Royal Highness Princess Alexandra will visit Northern Ireland on Tuesday 2 June, circumstances permitting.

The main object of the visit is for HRH to attend the consecration of St Anne's Cathedral in Belfast on Tuesday evening, an event which will also be attended by the Archbishop of Canterbury and which will be covered by television.

HRH will arrive in the early afternoon, visit a factory in Bangor, and open new District Council Offices and a new Recreation Centre in Banbridge before dining at Hillsborough Castle prior to the Consecration Ceremony. She will then return to Great Britain.

Security considerations are, of course, paramount in view of the present tense situation in the Province. On Thursday 28 May we shall review the security situation in the light of advice from the GOC and Chief Constable, and on 29 May my Secretary of State will advise the Royal Household whether the visit should take place. If that advice is favourable, the security situation will be kept under constant review and if the Palace agree, an announcement will be made late on Sunday (in time for Monday's newspapers) that HRH will be coming to attend the Consecration Service and to fulfil other engagements. The Press announcement will give no other details of the programme.

Knowledge of the proposed visit has been kept to the minimum number of people necessary to make the essential administrative arrangements. * ~ ~ ~

* ~ ~ ~ we shall continue to keep the Prime Minister informed of developments.

* ~ ~ * Passage deleted and closed, 40 years,
under FOI Exemption
@Wayland, 13/9/11

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I am sending a copy of this letter to Sir Philip Moore and to Miss M Mitchell at St. James's Palace.

Yours sincerely
Julie Hopkins

M W HOPKINS

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Royal Family



10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

15 June 1979

Princess Alexandra's Visit
to Northern Ireland

Thank you for your letter of 13 June about the announcement of Princess Alexandra's visit to Northern Ireland. The Prime Minister has seen your letter and is content that the announcement should be made today.

B. G. CARTLEDGE

J.G. Pilling, Esq.,
Northern Ireland Office.

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S. Khan

From: THE PRIVATE SECRETARY

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NORTHERN IRELAND OFFICE
GREAT GEORGE STREET,
LONDON SW1P 3AJ

B G Cartledge Esq
No 10 Downing Street
London SW1

Prime Minister

Confidential?

Yes

13 June 1979

*6/21
14/6*

Dear Bryan,

VISIT TO NORTHERN IRELAND BY PRINCESS ALEXANDRA

In my letter of 14 May I told you about the proposed visit to Northern Ireland by Princess Alexandra on 29 June.

2. The visit has been kept confidential but as it will become necessary very shortly to inform more people about the visit the risk of a 'leak' will grow. My Secretary of State believes that a public announcement about the visit should now be made - on Friday 15 June, two weeks before the visit takes place.

Yours ever,

Joe

J G PILLING

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10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

16 May 1979

VISIT TO NORTHERN IRELAND BY PRINCESS ALEXANDRA

Thank you for your letter of 14 May about Princess Alexandra's proposed visit to Northern Ireland on 29 June.

The Prime Minister has seen your letter and is content that arrangements for this visit should go ahead as planned.

I am sending a copy of this letter to John Chilcot in the Home Office.

B. G. CARTLEDGE

J.G. Pilling, Esq.,
Northern Ireland Office.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to be 'Pilling'.

Royal Family

JS
cc HO

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From: THE PRIVATE SECRETARY

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NORTHERN IRELAND OFFICE
GREAT GEORGE STREET,
LONDON SW1P 3AJ

Prime Minister

B G Cartledge Esq
10 Downing Street
London
SW1

Agree that arrangements for his visit should go ahead as planned?

Yes Mr.

14 May 1979

Dear Bryan

BGM
17/5

VISIT TO NORTHERN IRELAND BY PRINCESS ALEXANDRA

The Prime Minister would wish to be aware that preliminary planning is under way for a visit by Princess Alexandra to Northern Ireland on 29 June.

The purpose of the visit would be for Princess Alexandra to present the Queen's Badge (a new Red Cross award) to the Duchess of Abercorn, the President of the Northern Ireland Branch of the Red Cross; and to unveil the Royal Ulster Constabulary Book of Remembrance at the RUC Headquarters at Knock. The Red Cross presentation would take place at Hillsborough Castle in the morning and would provide the Princess with an opportunity to meet and talk informally with members of the Red Cross and representatives of the Service units and other charitable organisations with which she has connections. In the afternoon there would be a short ceremony followed by an informal garden party at which Princess Alexandra would be able to meet members of the RUC and their families.*

The proposed visit would be limited to Hillsborough Castle and Knock. All travel within Northern Ireland would be by helicopter of the Queen's Flight except for the visit to Knock for which road travel would be necessary to and from the nearest helicopter landing site at Stormont Castle.

If the Prime Minister agrees that the visit should take place it would be accepted, as in the case of all Royal Visits in the last two years, that it might be necessary, for security reasons, to cancel the visit at any time up to the last minute.

We need to keep the visit confidential until as short a time in advance as is feasible. We would aim to announce it two weeks in advance since it would be difficult to plan in secret without a risk of leakage after that. A review of the security situation would be made before any announcement was made.

My Secretary of State believes that this proposed short visit is desirable. It should present no great security or administrative

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difficulties. He would be grateful for the Prime Minister's approval to his proceeding with plans for the visit in consultation with St James's Palace on the basis of detailed arrangements to be made under his responsibility.

I am copying this to the Private Secretary to the Home Secretary*

~~~~~\*

*Yours sincerely*

*J G Pilling*

A J G PILLING

\*~\* Passages deleted and closed, 40 years,  
under FOI Exemption.

*Wayland*

*13 September 2011*

DT

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