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# Belfast Telegraph

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**WHAT YOU THINK**  
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**INSIDE - DEREK BLACK ON MOTORING**

# ULSTER PARADES

**'Fair trial was impossible in bandhall case'**  
By Chris Thornton

A FAIR trial was impossible for a man convicted of the bandhall murder of Margaret Wright because he has a death threat hanging over his head, his lawyer claimed today.

Stephen John Rules (31) is appealing — along with 30-year-old Christopher Sheals — against his conviction for the murder in April 1994 of Miss Wright.

Tony Cinnamond QC, appearing for Rules, said that because of the threat his client had "one hand tied behind his back if not two".

He added that "Rules was not legally represented, could not give evidence and could not offer any explanation for the allegations made against him".

Mr Cinnamond also told the court that apart from bloodstains on his jeans there was no evidence against Rules.

He said Rules contends that Miss Wright was already dead when he came across her and her blood got on to his clothes when he helped to move her body.

Two women were in the Appeal Court today to see justice done — but only one will be satisfied with the result.

Miss Wright's mother, Evelyn, says she is convinced both men are guilty.

But Sandra Sheals, wife of Christopher Sheals, maintains he is innocent.

Mrs Sheals sat alongside MP Clifford Forsythe and behind them were representatives from Amnesty International and the Committee for the Administration of Justice.

Ian Paisley, junior, the DUP justice spokesman who has been closely involved with the Sheals campaign, and Labour MP Chris Mullin were also in court.

Sheals, from Dorchester Crescent, Glemgormley, and Rules, of Donegal Avenue, Belfast, expect their appeal to last a fortnight — exactly three years and a day after Miss Wright's body was found.

Her naked body had been dumped at the rear of a derelict house in the Donegal Road area of Belfast, a short distance from the Bad Bet bandhall where she had been beaten with pool cues and shot in the head during a drink and drugs party.

Sheals, a key holder of the club, and Rules, a DJ, were jailed for life for the murder in 1995. Three other men were convicted of lesser offences.

They were ordered by loyalist terrorists to let their defence drop or die — but are defying the threat by continuing with the appeal.

Two other men — Red Hand Commando leader Billy Elliott and UVF man Ian Hamilton — were shot dead by their respective gangs for their roles in the murders.



**Sandra Sheals: Arrives in court maintaining husband's innocence.**

**COURTS MUST DECIDE, SAYS POLL**  
**NORTH REPORT LACKS SUPPORT**

THE North Report's proposals to resolve parades problems have little public support, according to a Belfast Telegraph/Queen's survey published today.

Only one in ten Protestants accept the North recommendations in full.

Catholics are more enthusiastic — but only a quarter of them are prepared to accept the proposals without modification.

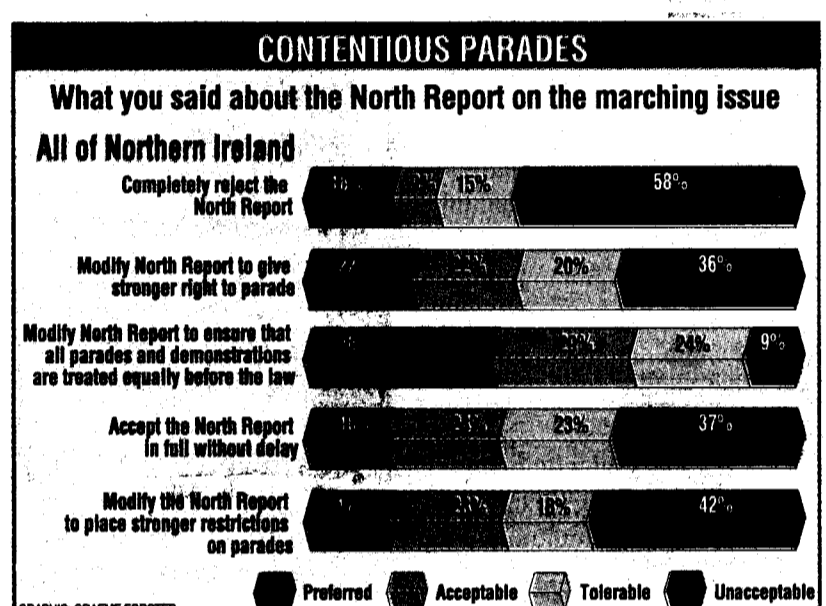
The North Report proposed a powerful new independent parades commission, but today's poll discovered a groundswell of support for parades controversies being settled by the courts.

Significantly, this was the most popular option in both the Protestant and Catholic communities.

The survey found that 36% of Protestants and 37% of Catholics want the North Report modified to accommodate this change.

In practice it would mean assurances that the legal control of all marches, parades and public demonstrations would be the same for everyone — and disputes would be settled as a matter of law by tribunals and courts.

When this proposal was tested on a party basis, DUP supporters were the least keen on the idea while Alliance



team of experts from Queen's University.

The questions were drawn up with the co-operation of members of the 10 leading parties in Northern Ireland and asked at the end of March to almost 1,000 people, forming a representative sample of the province's population.

Opinion was also gauged on a Bill of Rights.

People were given four options:

- a Bill of Rights for Northern Ireland provided by the Government;
- a Bill negotiated by parties at the talks;
- a Bill for the UK as a whole;
- or a Bill for the island of Ireland with special protection for unionists and nationalists.

The most popular option among Protestants is a Government-provided Bill, while Catholics are strongly in favour of the 'island' option.

Meanwhile, in Dublin today, the Women's Coalition was due to meet Taoiseach John Bruton to discuss the parades issue.

● See page 11

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**£50m waste plant rapped**  
By Noel McAdam

after the proposal was first suggested.

The green activists group said a decision on an incineration plant needing an annual 220,000 tonnes of waste and a 25-year contract had enormous implications for alternative waste management options.

"Not only has the need for this development not been demonstrated, but this 'long term' commitment must be clearly understood as the environmental and economic liability which it will most certainly become," they said.

But a spokesman for NIGEN said: "This plant would not only comply with all existing legislation but would be able to follow the legislation even if it is made more stringent in future, as it probably will be."

● See story Page 6

**Province's £3m church arson bill**  
Mayhew visits blaze ruin

Secretary of State Sir Patrick Mayhew today visited the scorched ruin of St MacNisss Catholic church in Randalstown to sympathise with clergy and parishioners.

His visit came as church authorities counted the cost of destruction at chapels in Randalstown, Laurelvale and Antrim, and a Church of Ireland at Dungiven.

If it is found that the damage was malicious and caused by three or more people, replacement costs will be met by the Northern Ireland Office under the Compensation Agency.

And that means everyone in the province paying for the damage — and repercussions for other budgets, including health, education and security.

Fr McKeever said the attack was best described in the words of a three-year-old child who had told him: that "bad men burned God's house".

The Secretary of State added: "I can't put it more succinctly than that. Arson is always a crime but the burning of churches seems to me to be more than a crime."

At Mullavilly, close to Tandragee, the cost of replacing the Church of the Immaculate Conception is expected to total at least £1.5m.

But a church spokesman said the 226-year-old building which had served generations of worshippers was "irreplaceable".

Repair bills for St Comgall's in Antrim are also expected to be costly.

Work is also required at a Dungiven church of Ireland hall scorch-damaged by arsonists at the weekend in the second attack on the Chapel Road hall in a year.

The RUC is currently investigating the attacks.

**IRA claims Aintree**  
THE IRA has claimed responsibility for the bomb alerts which forced the postponement of the Aintree Grand National from Saturday until yesterday.

A spokesman for the IRA using a recognised codeword admitted it carried out the hoax in a telephone call to the RTE newsroom in Dublin.

**BELFAST TELEGRAPH/QUEEN'S SURVEY**  
**THE WAY AHEAD FOR ULSTER**  
**DON'T MISS PART THREE OF OUR OPINION POLL TOMORROW**

**WEATHER OUTLOOK**  
Greater Belfast Area: This evening should start dry with a few bright spells, but it will cloud over from the north by midnight. Some sprinkles of rain are expected over the Antrim hills. Elsewhere it should stay dry with a few clear periods by dawn. Temperatures around 5C or 6C. SEE BACK PAGE

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