

The Birmingham Pub Bombings

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- In the early 1970s the troubles in Northern Ireland were brought to the mainland
- On 29th August 1973 the PIRA bombing campaign began in Birmingham with a high explosive device at Lloyds Bank, Solihull
- Between this date and 17th August 1974, a further 13 high explosive devices and 38 incendiary devices were targeted at commercial premises



- During the course of this series of attacks, Captain Wilkinson, an army bomb disposal officer, lost his life whilst attempting to make safe a device in Edgbaston, Birmingham
- At various times, 14 people were convicted of offences connected with this period of the campaign
- From 17th August 1974 there followed a two month break in the campaign



- The campaign recommenced on 24th October 1974 with a significantly more aggressive series of devices
- These targeted not only commercial premises but also individuals, with 10 high explosive and 4 incendiary devices being planted
- Of these, 3 high explosive devices were attached to vehicles belonging to two magistrates and a Member of Parliament



- On 14th November 1974, James Patrick McDade was killed whilst planting a high explosive device at the GPO telephone exchange in Coventry
- McDade's body was released on 21st November 1974 for burial in Northern Ireland
- At various times, 5 people were convicted of offences in connection with this period of the campaign

21st November 1974

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- On 21st November 1974 bombs detonated at the Mulberry Bush Public House and the Tavern in The Town Public House
- 21 people lost their lives and 222 people suffered injuries, many life changing
- On the same night a further device was recovered near to Barclays Bank, Hagley Road, Birmingham

The Original Investigation

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- Six men namely William Power, Hugh Callaghan, Patrick Hill, John Walker, Noel McIlkenny and Robert Hunter who were to become known as the 'Birmingham Six', were arrested and charged with 21 offences of murder
- On 9th June 1975, the six men stood trial at Lancaster Crown Court with Michael Murray, James Kelly and Michael Sheehan. All nine were jointly charged with conspiracy to cause explosions between 3rd August and 30th November 1974

The Original Investigation

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- Prior to the jury being asked to consider their verdicts, the trial Judge directed that if they found the six men guilty of murder, they did not have to return a verdict for the conspiracy
- On 15th August 1975, the jury returned unanimous guilty verdicts in relation to the murder charges against the Birmingham Six. All six were sentenced to life imprisonment

The Original Investigation

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- Michael Murray and Michael Sheehan were convicted of conspiracy to cause explosions and sentenced to 9 years imprisonment
- James Kelly was found not guilty of conspiracy but was convicted of possessing explosives and sentenced to 5 years imprisonment

The Appeals and Release of the 'Birmingham Six'

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- Over the following years the Birmingham Six were the subject of numerous unsuccessful appeals and of a number of books and television programmes protesting their innocence. These included a book by Christopher Mullin and World in Action television programmes indicating five others were responsible
- The Birmingham Six were released on 14th March 1991 by the Appeal Court after the court ruled that their convictions were unsatisfactory and unsafe

The 1991-1994 Re-investigation

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- Following the release of the Birmingham Six, the then Chief Constable Ron Hadfield ordered a re-investigation, the objective being ‘an open minded search for the truth behind the Birmingham pub bombings’
- The re-investigation comprised a team of 40 officers generating over 5000 documents, statements and reports
- All those named as potentially being responsible or involved in the Birmingham pub bombings were investigated

The 1991-1994 Re-investigation

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- Of the original 168 exhibits listed for trial in 1975 there were 35 which the re-investigation team were unable to locate. Any results from the examination of remaining exhibits were considered unreliable by forensic experts

The 1991-1994 Re-investigation

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- At the conclusion of the re-investigation, in April 1994 Chief Constable Ron Hadfield and the Director of the Public Prosecutions, Barbara Mills issued a joint statement announcing that:
- There was insufficient evidence for proceedings against any person
- The enquiries carried out were to the satisfaction of the DPP
- The DPP were unable to suggest any further reasonable lines of enquiry that could have been usefully pursued at that time

The 2012-2014 Assessment

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- In June 2012 West Midlands Police commenced an assessment which was to be carried out by the West Midlands Counter Terrorism Unit
- During the course of the assessment ,a dedicated team of officers have collated, preserved and assessed in excess of 18,500 items, including statements, documents, reports and exhibits

The 2012-2014 Assessment

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- Independent forensic advice has been engaged from the Netherlands Forensic Institute in relation to exhibits held
- Whilst acknowledging improvements in forensic science, it is assessed that any results from further forensic testing would be unlikely to yield any information of value due to potential contamination, the effects of previous examination and degradation over time

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- From the material assessed, 3 items have been submitted for further forensic examination which, if successful, may identify potential witnesses

The 2012-2014 Assessment

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- Those individuals that have potentially provided new information have been contacted
- At this time the assessment team have found no new evidence that would conflict with the findings of the 1991-1994 re-investigation