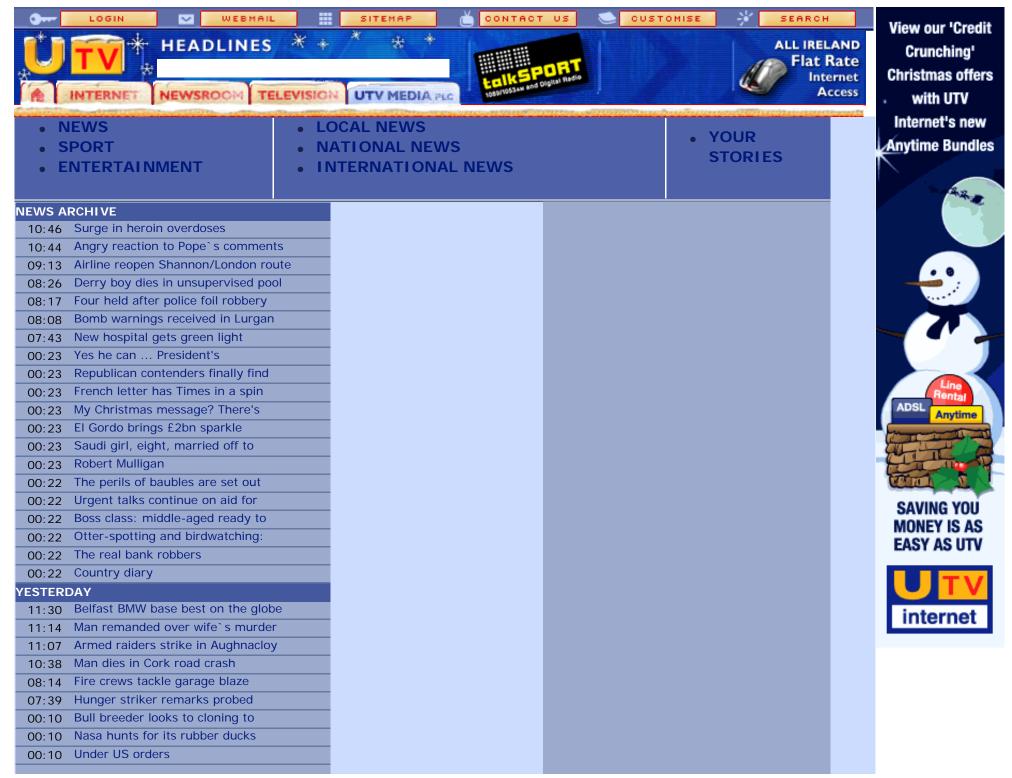
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McI lhone funeral takes place

The family of a teenager murdered and secretly buried by the IRA almost 30 years ago has attended his funeral in Belfast.

Danny McIlhone's daughter, granddaughter and surviving brothers and sisters finally got the chance to lay him to rest after his remains were found on a remote hillside in the Republic of Ireland.

The 19-year-old was one of the so-called Disappeared who were abducted and killed by republican paramilitaries during the Troubles.

At Requiem Mass at St Teresa`s Church only yards from the McIlhone family home Father Darach MacGiolla Cathain said it was a day of mixed emotions.

"There is the obvious sadness each of us experience when we lay our loved ones to rest," he said.

"Yet there is also a very real sense of thankfulness that, after a wait of over 27 years, we can at last give his body the dignity of a Christian burial."

Mr McIlhone vanished in 1981. Almost two decades later the IRA finally admitted they had killed him, but despite several searches in 1999 and 2000 his body was never found.

Last month forensic investigators finally found partial remains in an isolated mountain area of County Wicklow. On Friday a coroner in Dublin confirmed DNA testing proved they belonged to the missing teenager.

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