

FROM WARFARE TO WELFARE 1939 - 1959

1

LEISURE, NEW TECHNOLOGY, CONFLICT IN EUROPE



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THEIR PAST
YOUR FUTURE

Content

This pack is produced for pupils in years 10-13 that are interested in the history of Wales, Britain and Europe between 1939 and 1959. It uses photographs and cartoons to explore **Leisure, New Technology and Conflict in Europe** during these years.

The pack was written for a conference on the same subject at The National Library of Wales, and is the first in a series of three.

It introduces material from two of the Library's collections, namely the Illingworth Cartoon Collection and the Geoff Charles Photograph Collection. Further details of these can be found on page 16.

The pack was written by The National Library of Wales Education Service.

ISBN: 978-1-86225-066-6

Research: National Library of Wales Education Service

Text: © National Library of Wales

Images: National Library of Wales Collection

Design and Print: Gomer Press

Published by: The National Library of Wales

First Published: March 2008

Acknowledgement: Thank you to Solo Syndication for permission to reproduce images from the Illingworth Collection.

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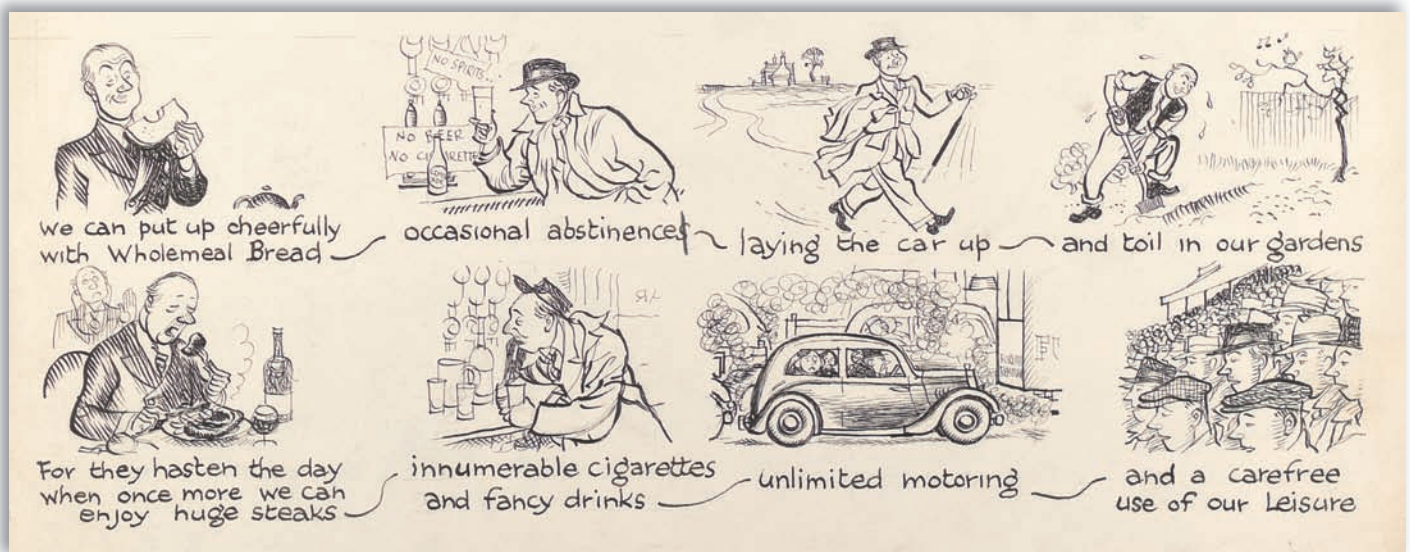
16 Geoff Charles Photos and Leslie Illingworth Cartoons

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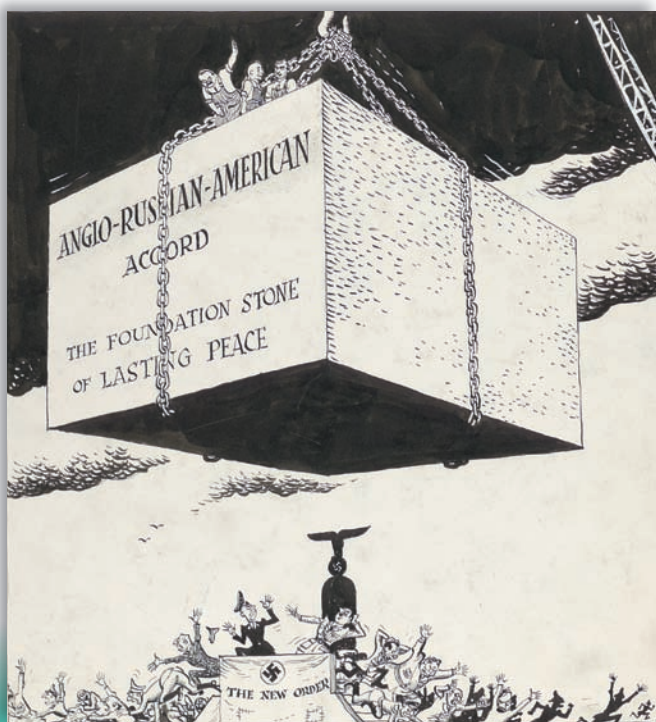
The Second World War

The people of Wales and Europe experienced great changes as a result of the Second World War. In Wales and Britain the status and role of women changed substantially as some women went out to work for the first time, over a million children were moved to safety from the cities of Britain, new security and defence measures were introduced, and tighter controls were placed on the content of the press and media.

Rationing was introduced in Britain in 1940, and with time more and more goods were placed on the list of items to be rationed. The Ministry of Food introduced a system where people could register with their local shop and receive a ration book. As they purchased items they would have to produce a coupon from this book with the money for the goods.



We Can Put Up Cheerfully With Wholemeal Bread, March 1942. In March 1942 the Government announced that fuel was to be rationed and introduced a ban on baking white bread.
Illingworth Collection, The National Library of Wales.



In the war Britain fought as one of the Allies against the Axis Powers. From 1941 Britain was therefore fighting as part of an alliance with the Soviet Union and the United States of America.

The Foundation Stone of Lasting Peace, November 1943. In 1943 the Allied leaders met in Tehran to discuss tactics for defeating Germany. The cartoon shows Hitler, Goebbels and Göring under a large block of stone. **Illingworth Collection, The National Library of Wales.**

Rationing

Although the war ended in Europe in May 1945 and in Asia in August 1945, the rationing of goods continued.



A Family Walks Naked Down Peace Street, August 1945. This cartoon refers to the fact that all kinds of goods were still scarce, the nationalisation of industries and the atomic bomb.
Illingworth Collection, The National Library of Wales.

The large and unexpected victory of the Labour Party in the 1945 General Election led to a period described as the "Age of Austerity". As Chairman of The Board of Trade, and later as Chancellor of the Exchequer, Sir Stafford Cripps introduced policies designed to prevent an economic crisis in Britain. These included an increase in taxes, a continuation of rationing, a reduction in imports, an increase in exports, and attempts to stabilize the pound.

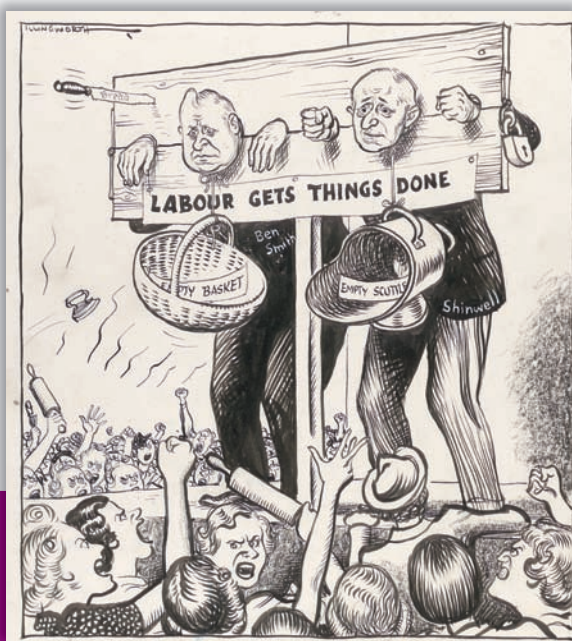


All Sorts of Goods For Everywhere Else, September 1945.
Illingworth Collection, The National Library of Wales.

Even though it was not rationed during the war bread was rationed from 1946 to 1948. People were unhappy with the fact that goods were still scarce despite the fact that the war had ended, and the Labour Government was severely criticised for its policies.

The introduction of an Austerity Budget by the Chancellor, Hugh Gaitskell, led to divisions within the Labour Party. One of the reasons why Labour lost the 1951 Election to the Conservatives was that it persisted with a policy of strict rationing to try to improve Britain's economy.

Labour Gets Things Done, February 1946. Emanuel Shinwell, Minister of Fuel and Power, and Ben Smith, Minister of Food in the Labour Government. **Illingworth Collection, The National Library of Wales.**



Rationing was phased out gradually, and did not finally come to an end until June 1954 when the Conservatives were governing Britain.



The Bonfire of Ration Books, November 1953. Churchill, Macmillan, Anthony Eden and Richard Butler push the Guy Fawkes of rationing onto a bonfire of ration books. On November 5, 1953 the Government announced that all rationing would end within a year. **Illingworth Collection, The National Library of Wales.**

Celebrating the end of meat rationing in Harry Morris' Butcher Shop, Oswestry, July 1954. **Geoff Charles Collection, The National Library of Wales.**



Television and Cinema

During the 1950s there was a large increase in the number of people in Britain who watched television and owned their own television set. At first only BBC programmes were broadcast, and the television licence was introduced for the first time in 1946. The Coronation of Queen Elizabeth was broadcast in June 1953, and it is believed that some 27 million people watched this event on television.

The elderly at Llanidloes congregate to watch television during the coronation, June 1953. **Geoff Charles Collection, The National Library of Wales.**



Commercial television started with the launch of ITV in 1955, and in September of that year the first advertisement was shown on British television, one for Gibbs SR toothpaste.

Statistics for television licences show that millions of people bought a television set for the first time during the 1950s, and by 1960 there was one in over 10 million homes in Britain.



*Two People Watching Television, November 1954. An elderly couple watch the television with wonder. **Illingworth Collection, The National Library of Wales.***

Cinema also became popular during the 1950s. By the end of the 1940s the Rank Organisation had become the main film production company in Britain, owning a number of studios and providing finance for films. It financed some of the famous films from Ealing Studios who produced a series of popular British films including *The Ladykillers* and *Kind Hearts and Coronets*.

During the same period Hollywood films and American mass culture became popular in Britain. Some of these films produced in Hollywood depicted the exciting and wealthy lives of Americans, and were seen as a means of escape for British people in the Age of Austerity.



Bardot Goes Shopping, circa 1957. Shoppers at the 'Co-op' who are clones of Brigitte Bardot shopping for products branded with the name Bardot. **Illingworth Collection, The National Library of Wales.**

Davy Crockett visits a cinema in Caernarfon, June 1956.

Geoff Charles Collection, The National Library of Wales.



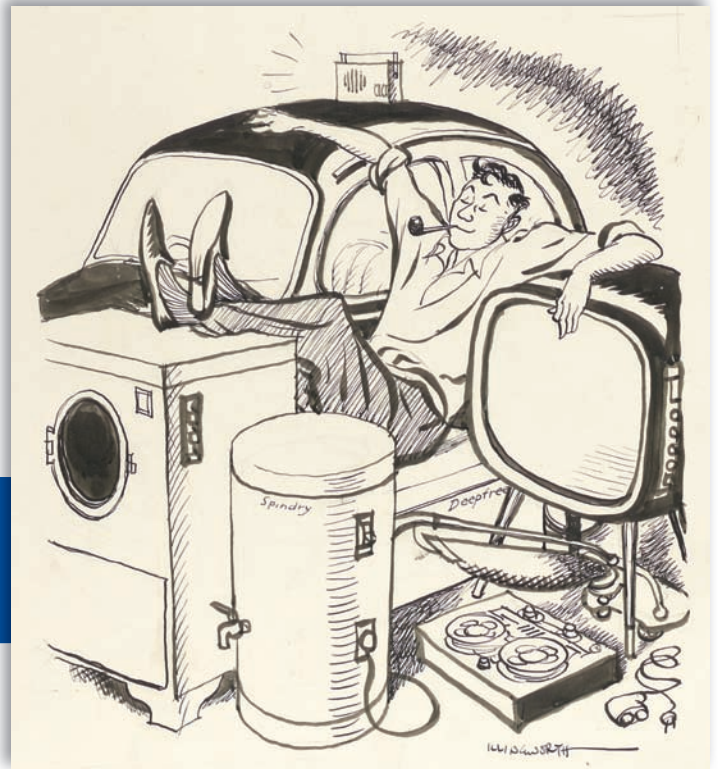
Consumer Goods

Life improved during the 1950s following the austere period after the war, and for many people it was a comparatively comfortable period that saw an increase in their standard of living. With the new emphasis on consumer goods and an increase in wealth, especially for the middle classes, there was a sharp increase in the sale of certain types of goods. During a famous speech in 1957 the Conservative Prime Minister, Harold Macmillan, told his party "most of our people have never had it so good".

During the 1950s more and more consumer goods and plastic goods from America were sold in Britain. New department stores opened, and there was a growth in the use of hire purchase to buy consumer goods. During this period the middle classes became owners of items like vacuum cleaners, televisions, radios and washing machines for the first time.

Consumer Life, September 1961.

Illingworth Collection, The National Library of Wales.



Women Buying Consumer Goods, November 1954.
Illingworth Collection, The National Library of Wales.



Opening a new Littlewood's store in Oswestry, November 1950.
Geoff Charles Collection, The National Library of Wales.

Baby Boomers

The term Baby Boomers describes people born at the end of the 1940s or during the 1950s. During this period the birth rate rose sharply and remained high throughout the 1950s despite having reached its peak in Britain in 1947.



The boxer Eddie Thomas with a baby, September 1951. **Geoff Charles Collection, The National Library of Wales.**

The Baby Boomers were the first generation to be brought up with televisions, consumer goods in their homes, relative wealth and disposable income. The 1940s and 1950s saw a period of economic growth and stability compared with the Second World War years.

The lifestyles of children brought up during this period was very different from those of children who grew up during the Great Depression of the 1930s, The Second World War, and the Age of Austerity after the war.

The Baby Boomers generation is seen as one that influenced the peace movement and protests against the Vietnam War during the 1960s, the Civil Rights Movement in the USA, and the language movement in Wales. It is also considered to have a more liberal attitude on issues like drugs and sex.

Baby Boom Generation, January 1943. **Illingworth Collection, The National Library of Wales.**



Cold War: The Berlin Blockade

At the end of the Second World War the Allies divided Germany into zones and gave Britain, America, France and the Soviet Union a zone each to control. Even though Berlin, the capital of Germany, was in the Soviet controlled zone, it was also divided into four. The governments who controlled Germany could not decide on its future. While America wanted to see an economically strong unified country, the Soviet Union wanted a divided Germany that would not be able to start a war ever again.



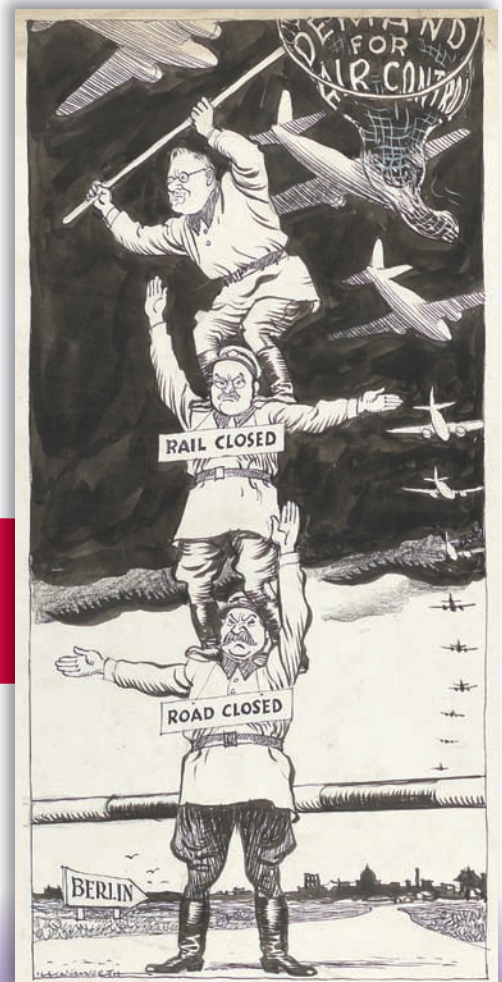
By 1947 Britain and America had decided to unify the zones under their control, and France joined them in June 1948. The capitalist powers therefore laid the grounds for creating a capitalist country with its own money, and introduced the *Deutsche Mark* as currency in the west of Germany.

Stalin Trying to Separate The Western Powers From Berlin, June 1948. Illingworth Collection, The National Library of Wales.

Stalin was not happy to see West Germany united as a country under the leadership of the USA and the capitalist countries, and by June 24 1948 the Soviet Union had stopped all traffic from the west to Berlin by imposing a blockade on the city. The Soviets declared that their sector of the city would not provide food for the western zone.

Stopping The Berlin Traffic, September 1948. Vyshinsky and Molotov stand on Stalin's shoulders to prevent traffic from reaching West Berlin. Illingworth Collection, The National Library of Wales.

Britain and America responded with the Berlin Airlift, flying food and other goods into the west of the city. The airlift lasted until September 1949 and during this period over two million tons of food was transported into the city, with aeroplanes flying twenty-four hours a day.





Berlin Air Corridors, November 1948. Map of Germany showing aeroplanes flying from the British and American sectors to West Berlin. Illingworth Collection, The National Library of Wales.

In the end the Soviets yielded and the blockade was lifted from Berlin. The Berlin Blockade was the first major conflict in the Cold War, and the battle for the city became a powerful symbol of that war. The Berlin Airlift was a clear signal to the Soviet Union that the United States of America and Britain were willing to stand up to Soviet attempts to spread Communism.

Stalin and Truman Play Chess, February 1949. The pieces include The Eastern Bloc, Berlin Airlift, Berlin Blockade and Atlantic Treaty (NATO). Illingworth Collection, The National Library of Wales.



Cold War:

Revolution in Hungary, 1956

Hungary was another country to attract the attention of the Superpowers during the Cold War. At the end of the Second World War Hungary was occupied by the Soviet Red Army. Despite the fact that democratic elections were held there in 1945 the Communist Party increased its control of the country during the next years. By 1949 Hungary was Communist, and thousands of people were arrested and executed by the Hungarian secret police during the years that followed.

With the death of Stalin in 1953 many Communist countries in Eastern Europe adopted more open and liberal policies, with the reformer Imre Nagy becoming the Prime Minister of Hungary and introducing a policy of New Socialism. After arguing with the authorities in Russia Nagy lost his job as the country's leader in 1955.

By October 1956 the resentment felt in Hungary towards Soviet influence on government policy led to a protest by thousands of students, and this escalated into open revolt against the Soviet Union.

Nagy became Prime Minister again during the revolution, and on November 1 declared his intention to withdraw Hungary from the Warsaw Pact, appealing to the United Nations, the USA and Britain to acknowledge Hungary as a neutral country. On November 4 the Soviet Union sent troops into Budapest to crush the revolution.

Soviet Tanks Cause Destruction, October 1956. Illingworth Collection, The National Library of Wales.



Freedom For Hungary, December 1956. Protestors carrying freedom banners face the tanks as martial law is imposed on Hungary. Illingworth Collection, The National Library of Wales.

3,000 people were killed during the Hungarian Revolution and more than 200,000 fled the country. The new government increased its control with arrests, imprisonment, exile and the execution of thousands of its opponents, and by 1957 a Soviet Union controlled puppet regime was ruling Hungary once more.



Blood On His Hands, circa 1956. After crushing the Hungarian Revolution and getting rid of Nagy and the other leaders, it seems that another leader who had argued with Moscow, Josip Tito of Yugoslavia, was the next target for Nikita Khrushchev. **Illingworth Collection, The National Library of Wales.**

With the revolution defeated Nagy and other leaders fled to the Yugoslavian Embassy in Hungary. Despite written assurance from the government that he would receive safe passage from Hungary to the west, Nagy was arrested and executed.

Expecting Someone, Tovarich?, November 1956. There is a torn piece of paper on the ground promising safe conduct for Nagy. Tovarich is the Russian word for "friend". **Illingworth Collection, The National Library of Wales.**

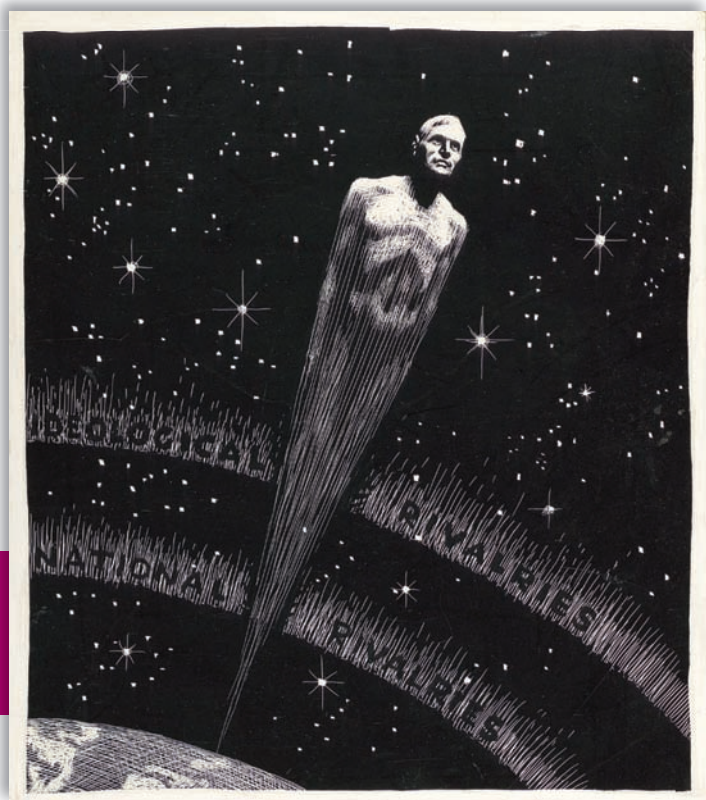


Cold War: The Space Race

The Cold War between the Soviet Union and the United States of America was fought in different ways on many fronts. These varied from providing support for countries or groups fighting within countries, to challenging each other across the chessboard.

Military alliances were formed, countries spied on each other, a psychological and ideological war was waged, there was a Space Race, and wars where the Soviet Union supported one side and America supported the other.

Ideological and National Rivalries, February 1961. Illingworth Collection, The National Library of Wales.



One area where there was intense rivalry between the Soviet Union and America was technology. The leaders of these countries believed that being able to show supremacy in the world of technology was proof that their system of government was superior. By dropping the atomic bomb on Hiroshima in August 1945 America not only wanted to force Japan to surrender, but also wanted to demonstrate its military and technological might to Stalin and the Communists.

By 1949 the Soviet Union had the technology to detonate the atomic bomb, and America suffered a further blow in 1957 when the Soviet Union managed to beat them in the race to send a satellite into space.

Khrushchev's Tours, February 1959. Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev advertises the technological, military, industrial and scientific wonders of the Soviet Union. Illingworth Collection, The National Library of Wales.

The American President Dwight D Eisenhower had announced in 1955 that the USA intended to send a satellite into space. It therefore came as a shock to the American public when the Soviet Union beat them in the race by launching Sputnik I on October 4, 1957. Although Sputnik was a small satellite, with a diameter of just 60 centimetres, its launch was an ideological victory for the Soviet Union in the Cold War.



Khrushchev Supreme, October 1957. Khrushchev celebrates on Red Square, Moscow after the Soviet Union launch Sputnik I. Illingworth Collection, The National Library of Wales.

Sputnik 2 was launched a month later on November 3, 1957 and this time the satellite carried a dog named Laika into space. Once again the Soviet Union could use the Space Race as propaganda to demonstrate its supremacy.

America finally managed to launch Explorer I from Cape Canaveral on February 1, 1958 following several unsuccessful attempts to launch a satellite into space. As a result of the Soviet Union's success and the Sputnik programme NASA was created in July 1958 to coordinate the American space programme.



Soviet Ascension In The Space Race, September 1960. Khrushchev reads the headline 'IKE's rocket a fizzle' in the Pravda newspaper as Eisenhower falls to earth. (Ike was the nickname for President Eisenhower). Illingworth Collection, The National Library of Wales.

Reaching Into Space, January 1958. A man is reaching out from Earth into space, as two men, one holding a flag marked "West" and the other with a hammer and sickle, sit on the Earth refusing to face each other. Illingworth Collection, The National Library of Wales.



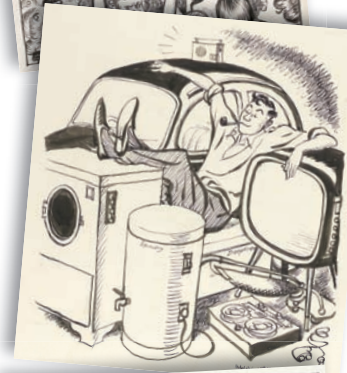
Illingworth Cartoons

Leslie Gilbert Illingworth was born in Barry in 1902. He attended Cardiff Art School and then took a job with the *Western Mail*. He was awarded a scholarship to Slade School of Art, and after completing his studies, returned to Cardiff to work for the *Western Mail* as a cartoonist. Illingworth joined the *Daily Mail* in 1939, and drew cartoons that were to lift Britain's morale during the Second World War.

After the war ended, Illingworth was able to concentrate more on domestic issues in his cartoons, but kept a keen eye on foreign affairs, especially when they related to Britain. He became Chief Cartoonist for the satirical magazine *Punch* in 1945, but remained with the *Daily Mail* until his retirement in 1969. He died in 1979.

The Illingworth cartoon collection at the National Library, which contains 4,563 images, explores a wide variety of topics through the eyes of one of Britain's best known cartoonists of the twentieth century.

www.llgc.org.uk/illingworth



Geoff Charles Photographs

Geoff Charles was born in Brymbo in 1909. He studied for a Diploma in Journalism at the University of London, from where he graduated with first class honours in 1928. He worked as a reporter for the *Western Mail* and the *Mountain Ash and Aberdare Express* before moving to Guildford to work on the *Surrey Advertiser*.

Following a serious bout of illness he returned to Wales to work on the *Wrexham Star*, and shortly after joining the paper he reported on the Gresford Colliery Disaster. He moved to Newtown to run the *Montgomeryshire Express* where he met a reporter called John Roberts Williams for whom he was to illustrate articles for *Y Cymro*.

He dedicated 50 years of his life to portraying Wales through the lens of his camera. His contribution to Wales is unique and today his archive of 120,000 photographs is one of the treasures of the National Library of Wales. Geoff Charles died in 2002.

www.geoffcharles.llgc.org.uk

