The National Library of Wales

Annual Review
2015–2016
It is a great honour to serve as President of the National Library, and to collaborate with the staff, Trustees and volunteers, who are dedicated to ensuring a thriving future for this national institution. Even though I am new to the post and very aware of the substantial challenges facing us, the enthusiasm and persistence they show has convinced me that we can survive and develop as a central force in the nation’s future.

The First Minister, Carwyn Jones AM announced recently that there is a need to redefine the United Kingdom in federal terms by acknowledging the diversity that exists and devolving powers to national parliaments, as appropriate. However, if we are to see the realisation of the First Minister’s hopes for Wales’s political future within the United Kingdom, nation-building is required. National institutions are absolutely fundamental to this process. It must be acknowledged that Wales is lacking in such institutions, but the National Library is among the finest of these and is a completely unique institution.

The National Library can make an extensive contribution to building the nation in various ways. It fulfils its traditional role of acting as the nation’s memory and as a home to the richest and most diverse collection of historical materials and works of art. This institution can fulfil so much more. This is a bilingual institution, administered chiefly through the Welsh language, employing around two hundred Welsh speakers. The National Library can play a central role in the government’s intention to achieve a million Welsh speakers and bilingual public services.

The Library’s educational contribution is potentially enormous. It already contributes to lifelong learning with learners of all ages taking advantage of the services it offers. The innovative work done in digitising our materials means that access to the collections will increase substantially. Digitisation has given us a foothold in Higher Education and the intention is to build on this via partnerships with universities. Certainly, the National Library of Wales is a higher education institution and should be acknowledged as such.

I would welcome the development of a robust strategy for dealing with national institutions. By receiving the appropriate acknowledgement and support, we have the ambition and enthusiasm to make a key contribution to the process of reinforcing Wales’ identity in a changing world.

Rhodri Glyn Thomas, President
2015-2016 has been a very productive year which was marked by significant achievements in improving the Library’s information systems and the holding of successful exhibitions and events. These include a major exhibition on the life and work of the world famous Welsh photographer of Vietnam and other conflicts, Philip Jones Griffiths, a conference to commemorate the centenary of the death of the distinguished Welsh scholar Sir John Rhys and several successful activities to highlight the ‘Year of Adventure’ in Wales.

I began as interim Librarian in November 2015 and we welcomed a new President, Rhodri Glyn Thomas, who began his new role in April 2016 on retiring as an Assembly Member of the National Assembly for Wales. Several members of staff left the Library, many with long and distinguished careers, including Avril Jones, Director of Collections and Public Programmes. The year also marked the passing of a former National Librarian and one of the most distinguished scholars of Welsh language and literature of our time, Professor Emeritus R. Geraint Gruffydd MA DPhil DLitt FLSW FBA. We extend our deepest sympathies to his family and mourn this great loss to Wales.

During the year, the Board of Trustees moved swiftly to implement the recommendations of a report they commissioned from PricewaterhouseCoopers to improve governance and management procedures at the Library and considered the impact of the staffing re-structuring programme designed to enable the Library to secure a more sustainable future. The Friends of the National Library of Wales had a very busy year and we are very grateful to members and everyone who has supported the Library’s work throughout the year. We are also grateful to Ken Skates, Deputy Minister for Culture, Sport and Tourism and his civil servants for continued financial support from the Welsh Government and for engaging in a positive discussion on the Library’s key objectives and its important contribution to Welsh life.

Sustaining the Library’s core responsibilities as Wales’ national library remain challenging in the context of a continuing decrease in core funding which has resulted in the loss of around 22% of staff in 3 years. The Library is at risk of not being able to maintain specialist skills and capacity to function effectively. The generous donation from the Friends which will enable 2 trainee conservators to begin work is therefore warmly welcomed as are all donations to enable the Library to continue its work for the people of Wales. The dedication and commitment of the Library’s staff and volunteers is a continuing inspiration to me and I greatly appreciate the individual contribution which everyone makes regardless of their role.

Raising awareness of the Library’s work and increasing access to its collections continued to be a priority during the year and the contribution made by the Library to the Welsh Government’s Fusion: Culture and Poverty Programme, the Hwb Platform for schools and the Cymru’n Cofo Wales Remembers 1914-1918 programme highlight the range of activities which were supported. At the end of the year, we welcomed the arrival of the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Wales to the Library to occupy new offices. This augurs well for new opportunities for collaboration.

Linda Tomos, National Librarian
In July 2016, the Library was awarded Archive Service Accreditation, a UK-wide quality standard scheme. The Archive Service Accreditation Panel found that:

“This award is a tangible recognition of the National Library’s success in preserving and making accessible Wales’ incredibly rich archive heritage and reflects both the skill and care of its dedicated workforce.”

The Library very much welcomes its leadership role in developing the National Digital Library for Wales in partnership with other Welsh libraries. The National Digital Library for Wales was launched in March 2016 and there are exciting plans to develop digital services and content for Welsh library members including family history resources, e-books and e-magazines, newspapers and general reference material. The ‘Find a Book’ service searches all library catalogues in Wales with a single search.

A conference on Digital Preservation was held at the Library on 25 February 2016 to discuss the strategic aspects of digital preservation, including policies and integration with other systems. This is an important priority for the Library’s strategic work. A national digital preservation policy is being developed which will provide a framework for organisations across Wales.

The Welsh Government has provided additional funding to progress this work during 2016-2017.

Major system improvements were successfully implemented during the year including an all Wales library management system for higher education libraries developed with the Wales Higher Education Libraries forum (WHELF) and NHS libraries which also included a customised system for the Library’s archives collections. This system will help the ongoing process to simplify the management of the complex series of information systems which have been developed over many years at the Library and to exchange information with other libraries. The project was named ‘Outstanding Library Team’ at the annual Times Higher Education Leadership and Management Awards (THELMA) which are a highlight of the academic calendar and celebrate the best of the Higher Education sector.

An important strategic development was the agreement in March 2016 by the Joint Committee for Legal Deposit (JCLD) of the UK’s copyright libraries and publishers that the Library could provide access to its digital collections at a second site for the first time in its history in premises rented from Cardiff University.
Transforming access

15 million articles from 120 newspapers available online!

The Oxyrhynchus Papyri – fragments of papyrus containing details of everyday life in Egypt dating from 113 AD to the 4th century – is the earliest item held by the National Library, which is home to 2,500 archival collections and 40,000 manuscripts.

Lloyd George’s papers are among the records held in the political archive, while the Library is also home to the personal archives of some of Wales’ greatest literary figures, including Dylan Thomas and the Welsh-language playwright Saunders Lewis.

The Peniarth Collection includes an early and important manuscript of Chaucer’s The Canterbury Tales, as well as the Black Book of Carmarthen, the earliest manuscript in the Welsh language, and the Chronicle of the Princes, the earliest account of Welsh history. It was added to the UNESCO Memory of the World Register in 2010.

The important work of digitising items from among the 6.5 million looked after by the Library on behalf of the people of Wales continued with an improved viewer to be able to see more detailed information on digital copies of the Library’s historic manuscripts. Cultural treasures such as the Laws of Hywel Dda, the codification of traditional Welsh law undertaken by Hywel Dda (c.880 – 950), are among the items in the Library’s parchment collection.

An additional 400,000 pages, including new titles, have been added to the 15 million articles from more than 120 newspaper titles published in Wales between 1804 and 1919 which are available to read free on the National Library of Wales’ new-look Welsh Newspapers Online website. Users can browse by image such as cartoons, graphs, maps or photographs and can link articles to the online encyclopedia Wikipedia.

Key events in Welsh history, from the Chartist uprising of 1839 to the 1904-1905 Revival, are among the stories covered during this period; the progress of the First World War (1914-1918) is also reported in depth. Details of everyday life are documented, from church services and Whitsun teas to sporting fixtures, while cultural events such as the Eisteddfod are covered in detail.

On St David’s Day, 300 historical maps were made available on the Library’s website. A brand new section is now dedicated to digitised historical maps, showcasing maps such as Ptolemy’s ‘Prima Europe Tabula’ - the oldest map in our collection, the earliest surviving map of Wales, Humphrey Llwyd’s ‘Cambriae Typus’ (1573), Christopher Saxton’s proof map of Wales (1580), a whole series of of 16th and 17th century county maps of Wales and nautical maps. The section also provides online access for the first time to over 200 estate maps across Wales. The Library has 1.5 million maps, plans and charts, one of the largest collections in the world.

In January 2016, the Library was very privileged to display the national Book of Remembrance for the first time outside Cardiff. The handwritten book contains the names of over 35,000 people killed in the First World War, including Private Trevor Lewis who was a trainee librarian at the Library. The Library is digitising the Book as part of the HLF-funded Wales for Peace project to enable people to find their own relatives and discover their stories.
In September 2015, Ken Skates AM, Deputy Minister for Culture, Sport and Tourism joined Library staff and Trustees to officially re-open part of the third library building following the fire in April 2013 which severely damaged 6 floors of this part of the Library site. With support of £2.5m from the Welsh Government, the Library completed a programme of extensive repair works. The fire reminded everyone of the importance of preserving the memory of Wales through the Library’s rich collections of books, manuscripts, maps, photographs and visual art.

The end of the year also marked an important new development with the completion of new offices and specialist storage facilities which will be occupied by the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Wales. This was a £3.5m major capital project which was completed to time and budget by Library managers.
The Library has continued to focus on extending its services to new audiences during the year, including a major contribution to activities in the 7 Pioneer Areas under the Fusion Programme: using culture to address poverty. This included the highly successful Class Art programme where one of the Library’s treasures is taken to a school in a targeted area to stimulate engagement by pupils.

The Cynefin Project which is digitising all of Wales’ tithe maps of 1837 is a major collaboration with Wales’ local authority archives services. The associated text of 27,000 pages which includes field names, owners and tenants is an important source of historical information for the period. Cynefin has recruited over 700 volunteers, many of whom are digital volunteers, to document the maps. Being able to join the virtual community has helped many individuals who are often confined to their homes to contribute and join in a very worthwhile activity. The project has won a digital marketing award and we intend to use this pioneering approach for future digital projects.

During the year the Library’s Education Service worked with 1,092 learners. 847 of these came to the Library building as part of 26 visits, while 245 users worked with us during 10 external visits. This work varied from curriculum-based themed workshops, working with original items, university students visiting as groups to work with the collections and Welsh Baccalaureate students.
The Education Service has been involved in the development of the Creative Portal on the Hwb digital platform which was one of the recommendations of Professor Dai Smith’s report ‘Arts in Education in the Schools of Wales’. The service has assisted the Welsh Government in developing content for the portal prior to its launch in March 2016 and has supported the educational activities of the Fusion Programme Learning Group.

In November 2015, the Minister for Education and Skills launched an innovation digital learning resource, the Wales at War app for schools, produced by the Library in partnership. By March 2016, the First World War Education Project, delivered in partnership with Amgueddfa Cymru-

National Museum Wales and funded by Welsh Government Department for Education and Skills, successfully completed commissioned digital learning resources for the Hwb platform which are amongst the most popular on the learning platform.
The Library’s links with Wikimedia continued to develop very positively during the year. Digital items from the Library’s collections are routinely viewed over 12 million times a month. There are many synergies, including links with the online Dictionary of Welsh Biography jointly maintained with the Centre for Advanced Welsh and Celtic Studies, University of Wales Trinity St Davids. Several editathon events including the first UK Art and Feminism editathon, were held. The Art and Feminism editathon was part of a global event to close the gender gap on Wikipedia and create or improve articles on subjects related to art and feminism.

The Library delivers the People’s Collection Wales programme (PCW) to support digital skills through engaging with culture and history as a federated partnership with Amgueddfa Cymru- National Museum Wales and Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historic Monuments of Wales. PCW delivered training sessions during the year to a total of 383 individuals. 100 also registered to complete the Agored Cymru accredited unit (Level 2), on digitising cultural material. The People’s Collection Wales provided significant input into activities in the 7 Pioneer Areas for the Fusion Programme including establishing Digital Heritage Stations and delivering training. PCW also made a major contribution to several strategic digital projects including the Cymru’n Cofio Wales Remembers 1914-1918 Programme, the Wales for Peace Project, the Fron-goch Project with the Irish government and Lle Hanes at the National Eisteddfod.
Exhibitions

SHANI RHYS JAMES
Distillation: 40 years of painting
The largest and most comprehensive exhibition covering the full range of Shani Rhys James’ work, who has lived and worked in Wales for 30 years.

PHILIP JONES GRIFFITHS
A Welsh Focus on War and Peace
An exhibition which celebrated the life and work of one of the great documentary photographers of recent times, Philip Jones Griffiths. Through the medium of original works and personal archive material we managed to create a biographical tribute to a Welshman, genius and photographer who used his camera to champion the underdog.

PUBLISHER AND PLUNDERER
Sir John Prise and the first Welsh books
Sir John Prise was one of Wales’ foremost Renaissance figures. He amassed a superb personal library of printed books and manuscripts, including the earliest manuscript in Welsh, the Black Book of Carmarthen. This exhibition looked at the life and work of a remarkable “Tudor Man”, and attempted to reconcile his cultural interests with his turbulent role of persecuting heretics, dissolving monasteries and pleasing his ruthless taskmasters, Thomas Cromwell and Henry VIII.

THE STORYTELLER’S SPELL
T. Llew Jones’ Centenary
A celebration of the life and work of one of Wales’ best-known and most loved writers, T. Llew Jones. Through his children’s novels as well as his poetry, generations of children and adults alike have been enchanted by this wizard.

GWLADFA
An exhibition which celebrated 150 years since the first Welshmen travelled on the Mimosa to their new life in Patagonia. The exhibition followed the first migrants’ journey from the initial preparations to the landing at Puerto Madryn in 1865, looked at their early life in Patagonia, and celebrated the continuing relationship between Wales and the Wladfa.
‘THE SECRET WORKINGS OF NATURE’
Robert Hooke and early science
This exhibition marked the 350th anniversary of the publication of the first scientific bestseller, *Micrographia* by Robert Hooke, one of the leading figures of the Scientific Revolution.

EFFORTS AND IDEALS
Prints of the First World War
A touring exhibition from Amgueddfa Genedlaethol Cymru – National Museum Wales of all 66 works from the 1917 print portfolio, *The Great War: Britain’s Efforts and ideals*, which included contributions from some of the best known British artists of the period, such as Augustus John, Frank Brangwyn, William Rothenstein and C. R. W. Nevinson. Designed to encourage a war-weary public and raise support for the war effort, they showed modern political propaganda in its early stages.

REMEMBERING FOR PEACE
A rare opportunity to see the Welsh Book of Remembrance alongside the digital copy. This exhibition explored the impact of the First World War on Wales and presented the history of some of those soldiers who lost their lives in the War including two members of the Library’s own staff.

FROM PITHEAD TO SICKBED AND BEYOND
A partnership exhibition with the National Waterfront Museum Swansea, which looked at the buried history of disability in the British coal industry between 1780 and 1948 and before the NHS. Drawing on new historical research the exhibition attempted to tackle questions such as: How were disabled people in coal mining communities treated and viewed, what were their lives like and what does the history of disability in the South Wales Coalfield teach us?

ADVENTURE IS JUST A PAGE AWAY
An exhibition which took children on an adventure to the World of the Book in the company of some of literature’s most adventurous characters.

WORDS OF WAR
Conflict in Welsh literature
For centuries, Welsh poets and prose writers have depicted the experience of war, either by celebrating victories or mourning defeat. This exhibition focused on four historic conflicts from the sixth to the seventeenth centuries – both battles and skirmishes. Poignant eyewitness accounts and later reactions by artists such as Aneirin and David Jones, Bleddyn Fardd and Geralit Lloyd Owen were shown alongside the narrative testimonies of contemporary and later chroniclers.
Sessions in Y Drwm

Dinefwr – A Phoenix in Wales
Gerald Morgan
(delivered by Enid and Gerald Morgan)

Snowdonia Houses in context
Richard Suggett

Friends – From Abertawe to Philadelphia: The Journey of a Medieval Welsh manuscript
Ben Guy

The Black Book of Carmarthen: minding the gaps
Professor Paul Russell and Ms Myriah Williams, Cambridge University

Life and the cosmos: four centuries of the expanding horizons
Lord Rees of Ludlow

Thomas Pennant: the leading British zoologist after Ray and before Darwin
Dr Paul Evans

‘Y danbaid fendigaid Ann’
Sian Meinir interprets the hymns of Ann Griffiths

Letters between Merthyr Tydfil and the World: The Thomas Stephens Correspondence at the Library
Dr Adam Coward

Welsh Political Archive Annual Lecture
Jeremy Bowen (the BBC’s Middle East Editor)

LENS: Photography Festival 2015
Philip Jones Griffiths

Friends – A constant succession of workers: the early readers of the NLW and their reading habits
Calista Williams, Rosemary Thomas, Nan Williams and Daniel Morgan
Thank you to the Welsh Government and everyone who supported us financially and volunteered time and skills in 2015-16. Your generosity has helped us work towards our vision of knowledge for all, through collecting, preserving and engaging the public with the nation’s collections. Together we can ensure that our heritage is secured for future generations.

Our special thanks to:

**Chapters Members**

**Single Patrons**
- Dan Clayton-Jones Esq., Pontyclun
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- Mrs Dianne Bishton, Tywyn
- Mr Chris Yewlett, Cardiff
- Mr Peter Walters Davies, Aberystwyth
- Sir Deian Hopkin, London
- and others who wish to remain anonymous.

**Joint Patrons**
- Dr David and Mrs Pamela Selwyn, Llanelli
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- and others who wish to remain anonymous.

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**Association of Friends**
- John Dilwyn Williams Chair, Association of Friends and his fellow members

**Legacies**
- Mr Lindsay Mobley
- Mr G. W. Powell
- Miss Eunice J. Banks
Ensuring that the nation’s culture and heritage is preserved for present and future generations to enjoy is at the heart of what we stand for. We continue to work towards delivering our Charitable Objects to collect, preserve and give access to all kinds and forms of recorded knowledge, especially relating to Wales and the Welsh and other Celtic peoples, for the benefit of the public including those engaged in research and learning.

We look for innovative ways to reach out and engage new audiences, providing opportunities for individuals in communities across Wales to gain access to our services and collections. Our Education Team continues to extend the reach of the Library, working closely with schools, colleges and universities to provide learning opportunities for children and young people, Tackling Poverty through Culture.

We are developing skills, expertise and infrastructure within the cultural heritage sector in Wales and developing skills for employment, personal and career development through volunteering.

We will continue to provide access to the Library’s collections for free to help those most in need.

The National Library of Wales was built on the generosity of individuals’ donations and with your generous support we can provide lasting care for the nation’s collections and give access to current and future generations.

Visit www.llgc.org.uk to make a donation. Here are some of the other ways you can help:

**Gifts in Wills:**
Leave a gift to The National Library of Wales in your will and leave a lasting legacy for the nation. Even the most modest of gifts can make a real difference, so if The National Library of Wales has been important to you and if you share our values, please consider remembering us. To discuss leaving a legacy call Rhian on 01970 632938.

**Spread the Word:**
Follow us on Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, Youtube and Flickr, subscribe to our blog and share our stories to raise awareness of our collections.

**Volunteering:**
We are very keen to open our doors and welcome volunteers to the Library. For more information on volunteering opportunities at the Library go to www.llgc.org.uk

For more information on supporting The National Library of Wales and our work, call 01970 632933 or visit www.llgc.org.uk
NATIONAL LIBRARY OF WALES

1.1 million visits to Library websites

44 image views on Wikipedia

5 million objects digitised

6 million books

4000 new items every week

1.5 million maps

950,000 photographs

16,000 visitors to the Philip Jones Griffiths exhibition in 2015

21,000 volunteer hours by 137 individuals

35,000 have used our educational resources on Hwb

40,000 manuscripts

80,000 visits to the Library building

5.5 million feet of film

250,000 hours of video

200,000 hours of sound

60,000 works of art

1,900 cubic meters of archives