A Visit from David Melding AC

David Melding AM, the Shadow Minister for Housing, Heritage, Culture and Media visited the Library on St. David’s Day. During his visit, he stopped by the Legal Deposit Unit, Archives and Manuscripts and Conservation Sections and was briefed on the developments with the National Broadcast Archive. David also brought an important addition to the Library’s collection; the Archive of the Welsh Conservative Party’s Assembly Group. This is the first archive of this type to be transferred to the Library and will be an important reference source for those studying the early years of devolution.

Women’s Archive of Wales in the Senedd

On Wednesday 6 March, the Women’s Archive of Wales launched a campaign in the Senedd to ensure that women’s contributions to politics in Wales over the 20 years since the establishment of the National Assembly for Wales is reflected in archival collections. Amongst the speakers, Rob Phillips from the National Library discussed how the Welsh Political Archive would try to ensure that the Library’s collections would meet that challenge. The upcoming celebration of 20 years of devolution, highlighting the women who have held influential positions as Ministers, party leaders and Presiding Officers, provides an important opportunity for the Library to contribute to this campaign.
Dying to Work Charter
In January 2019, The National Library of Wales was proud to sign up to the TUC’s Dying to Work Charter. It shows that we are committed to treating our staff with the dignity and respect they deserve when diagnosed with a terminal illness. NLW has always supported its staff in the best possible way, and by signing this Charter, it strengthens that commitment even more.

New Accession and Acquisition
Our new accessions include eight boxes of BBC Wales corporate records, with programmes including ‘Nodiadau’r Athro’ and sports pamphlets from the BBC Wales Corporate Archive, Welsh Conservative Party’s National Assembly Group Papers, and David Fraser Jenkins Papers, which include additional research papers from David Fraser Jenkins concerning the artist, John Piper.

A copy of A Treatise on Education’ by David Williams published in 1774 was purchased in February. Williams wrote pamphlets supporting the revolutions in America and France. The Library already owns a number of his works, including the most substantial, ‘The History of Monmouthshire.’

Documents from the Welsh Conservative Party’s National Assembly Group Papers

'A Treatise on Education' by David Williams
Unlocking Our Sound Heritage: Higher Education Activity

One of the targets set by the National Heritage Lottery Fund and the British Library for the Unlocking Our Sound Heritage (UOSH) project is the undertaking of a number of activities relating to the sound recordings which will be digitised. The target for Higher Education is;

‘To develop a session that will be made available to students who are studying in museums, libraries and archives courses. The focus will be to deliver a session on using audio archives as part of public programmes and exhibitions.’

As a result of this activity, students will understand the importance of sound archives, sound conservation and the need to use them in public activities. It was arranged that students studying MA Archives Administration would visit the Library between January and May 2019 to undertake part of this work. Their tutor, Sarah Higgins, and the Project Manager, Alison Smith, constructed a brief for the students to follow, with the completed work counting towards their final mark in the module ILM1920 Archives.

The students are working on the story of the forest audio collection; 167 mini discs of oral histories relating to forestry. With advice from the UOSH project team and the tutor, the students will manage the project, prepare the collection, digitise, catalog, edit the tapes, and create an online exhibition on the People’s Collection Wales website. They will consider different metadata standards as well as working out the best method to ingest them to the website. To date we have held 8 learning activities with 72 students having attended. At the end of the project the students will give a 20-minute presentation to a group of students, partners and the project Board to enable evaluation of their work.

Songs of Praise in Aberystwyth

An episode of the programme Songs of Praise was recorded in Aberystwyth on 2 March. The following week, the film crew visited the Library to record interviews for the programme with Timothy Cutts about manuscript and early printed editions of the hymns of William Williams, Pantycelyn, and with Morfudd Bevan about a recently purchased portrait of the hymn writer. The episode will be broadcast on BBC2 on 24 March.
Conservation of the Montgomeryshire Prothonotary Papers

In May 2018, the National Library of Wales received a generous donation from a good friend of the Library, Murray Chapman to conserve some of the Montgomeryshire Court of Great Sessions’ Prothonotary Papers that are housed at the Library. Mr. Chapman, who is working towards publishing a book on the history of the Powis Castle Estate, has a particular interest in three files dating from the 1620s containing information on a raid by supporters of the Herberths of Powis Castle on Llwydiarth, the residency of the Vaughan family. During this raid, at least one person was killed, and these three files contain more information on this incident.

The three documents were in a poor, degraded and soiled condition that made it almost impossible to access their content. They contained a total of 667 pages of crumpled, torn and folded documents with evidence of historical water and rodent damage. In order to access all the contained information, remedial conservation treatment of these documents was deemed essential.

Dilwyn Williams (ARA Cons Cert.), one of the Library’s most experienced senior archive conservators was given the task of conserving these important and fragile documents. Dilwyn used his conservation knowledge and skills to safely remove the destructive free iron (II) ions of the acidic iron-gall ink. Over 500 documents received full conservation treatment that included repairing tears with archival tissue, and infilling missing areas with archival quality repair paper. After a few months of hard work, the documents were in a clean and stable state and were ready for researchers such as Murray Chapman to extract, decipher, and share intriguing historical information that has remained out of sight for many centuries.

Murray Chapman has given a further generous donation to the Library which will enable us to carry out further conservation work on the Great Court Sessions documents.
International Women’s Day

International Women’s Day, which is celebrated annually on 8 March, was an opportunity to get to know some of the Library’s women, learn more about their roles, and what they mean to them. To note the occasion, a series of portrait photographs of female staff members were posted on our social media, with some brief descriptions of their roles. The campaign truly showcased the variety, worth and importance of the work being achieved by the women of the National Library!

Here is a selection of profiles...

Bethan Hopkins-Williams, Senior Access Assistant

“My work is comprised of two parts and involves working on the desk in the North and South Reading Rooms as well as answering enquiries regarding the Library’s Collections. One of my favourite aspects of the work is researching. This enables me to learn more about the Library’s vast collections either by responding to external enquiries or requests from readers visiting the Reading Rooms.”

Branwen Glyn, Library Assistant

“I got this job back in November and I love that I can see different collections and some of the literary treasures of the language. Sourcing different types of items according to customer requirements is my job, every day is so different, and now I’m starting to find my way around the books after a lot of roaming between the corridors.”

Rhian James, Head of Archives and Manuscripts

“It’s a privilege to work with some of Wales’ most important archives and manuscripts. Whether answering enquiries, discussing new acquisitions or giving access to material ranging from medieval charters to electronic documents, no one day is the same!”
Eleri Twynog, Trustee and National Library of Wales Board Member

“As well as a Director of the company ‘Mewn Cymeriad’, I am also the founder and trustee of a Children’s Welsh History Festival. The experience of working with the National Library in relation to the festival, gave me the greatest motivation to apply as a Board Member. Following a performance at the Drwm of a show about Bishop William Morgan, the response of around 60 children when shown his original Bible from the collection was unforgettable. The ‘WOW’s’ and general excitement on the children’s faces spoke volumes, and is a testament to the relevance and importance of the National Library of Wales’s unique collections in our past, present and future as a nation.”

Emma Towner, Film Preservation Assistant

“I inspect and prepare old cine film for safe digitisation. The best part of what I do is knowing that I’m helping to keep family memories and our history safe.”

Mari Elin, Interpretation Officer

“I’m officially an Interpretation Officer, but you could say that I’m more of a curator. I spend my time researching the Library’s collections - everything from medieval manuscripts to modern works of art – interpret them in creative ways, and design exhibitions that bring them to life for the people of Wales and beyond to enjoy.”
Wellcome Project Workshop: A History of Medicine in Wales Before the NHS

On 21 March, the Library held the first of a series of workshops which form part of an exciting project to catalog and digitise the Library’s printed medical collection. It was a great opportunity for researchers to discuss how the project can support their studies.

A New Home for the Agency for the Legal Deposit Libraries

Following the completion of the successful project to relocate the Agency for Legal Deposit Libraries in January, representatives from the Library visited the new site and held a series of meetings with representatives of the other legal deposit libraries. This was a great opportunity to discuss workflows and share experiences, especially in the context of the Alma Library system. Staff have already identified ways of improving efficiency and have advised some of the other Legal Deposit Libraries on good practice at the National Library.

AHRC UK-US Network Project

The Library is now a partner in an AHRC project following a successful bid to the AHRC ‘UK–US Collaborations in Digital Scholarship in Cultural Institutions’ call. The project is led by Glasgow University and the University of Michigan. The British Library and The National Library of Scotland are also partners in the project. The project will consider and test the benefits of sharing data in relation to digitised texts and will leverage the experience of the HathiTrust in the USA. The project started on 1 February 2019 and gives NLW staff the opportunity to exchange information and to attend 4 international workshops during the year.
Exhibitions and Loans

January saw the launch of 'Inventor of Britain: The Life and Legacy of Humphrey Llwyd' in Hengwrt. This exhibition is held in association with an AHRC funded project and celebrates Llwyd’s contribution to Welsh culture, as well as highlighting new research produced as part of the project.

The exhibition ‘Cartographic Imaginaries: Interpreting Literary Atlas’ opened in March. This exhibition includes a collection of artwork in response to twelve English language novels set in Wales. These form part of the wider Literary Atlas of Wales project which explores how English language novels set in Wales contribute to our understanding of the real and imagined nature of the country.

Despite the end of the ‘Wales and the Sea’ exhibition season at the Library, the touring version of the exhibition which was shown in Y Lle Hanes 2018 has been very popular, and has toured to local museums, libraries and tourist attractions. Some of these organisations have displayed their own local information and community artefacts alongside the exhibition.

Our loans programme continues with NLW collections being seen in the Glynn Vivian Art Gallery in Swansea for the Contemporary Art Society for Wales’s 80th anniversary touring exhibition, and Oriel Plas Glyn-y-weddw, Llanbedrog that delivered an exhibition celebrating the centenary of the birth of Jonah Jones in February.

Skills for the Future

The Library is part of a programme led by Creative & Cultural Skills and Welsh Government to support young people to develop workplace skills in the heritage sector, through the HLF Skills For The Future grant. The first trainee has completed 6 months at the Library and has moved to work for 3 months each at Ceredigion Museum and The Royal Commission. We will welcome another trainee during the next quarter.
Education Service

The Education Service delivered a series of workshops to support the ‘Inventor of Britain: The Life and Legacy of Humphrey Llwyd’ exhibition. These highlighted Llwyd’s contribution to Welsh history, and his work as a physician, Member of Parliament and historian. Pupils worked with the ‘Cambriae Typus’ map comparing it to a modern map of Wales, and studied the languages on the map.

The Education Service continues to work in the Fusion areas, and has worked closely during this quarter with 4 primary schools in Gwynedd. The schools visited the Library following outreach sessions when facsimiles of the ode ‘Yr Arwr’ were taken to the schools. Workshops were delivered based on the themes being studied in the schools this year, namely the Tudors and Tryweryn, and the pupils studied maps, manuscripts and printed books from the Tudor period, and used the Library’s collections to learn more about the drowning of Capel Celyn.

During March the Education Service delivered a series of 9 workshops at The Riverside Library in Haverfordwest. These provided primary school pupils in Pembrokeshire with an opportunity to view original works by Kyffin Williams close up and to appreciate his unique style, and to view a video from the Library’s archives that portrays the artist working and discussing his paintings. The second part of the workshop was a practical session where the pupils used techniques used by Kyffin Williams in mixing colours, and learnt about tone.

Volunteering

From January to March 2019, there were 56 weekly volunteers in the Library building working on the 18 tasks that are currently ongoing. We now have 567 people registered as volunteers on the crowdsourcing platform. The Volunteering Unit delivered 11 outreach events to more than 250 people, with 3 of these being delivered in the Carmarthenshire and Gwynedd Fusion areas, while 9 were ‘Living Memory’ project training.

Three new volunteering tasks were introduced, namely supporting the People’s Collection programme by scanning images and recording data, producing a list of Library catalogue pages that have content that is on Aberystwyth University departments reading lists, and recording articles from Welsh media, and Welsh institutions and organisations, on the effects of Brexit on Wales.
The Library has welcomed two new volunteers as part of the ‘Go Wales’ programme, which is part-financed by the European Social Fund (ESF) for students on higher education courses in Wales that face barriers in trying to find work experience.

Following a successful funding bid for funding from Film Hub Wales, staff from The National Screen and Sound Archive of Wales have assisted the Volunteering Unit by preparing packs of more than 50 short films that can be used for stimulating memories. These packs will be shared with groups within the health and social care sector for reminiscence therapy with older people and those living with dementia.

**Promotion and Marketing**

From January to March 2019, the Library delivered 17 events to 850 people as part of the official events programme. These included lectures, conferences, and guided tours, 3 events at The Riverside Library in Haverfordwest, and 4 events for families, children and young people. We intend to pilot the use of live streaming from the Library to our new centre in Haverfordwest during the next quarter.
The Promotion and Marketing Unit has worked with Pembrokeshire County Council on a marketing campaign for The Riverside Library in Haverfordwest. As part of this campaign articles about our Kyffin show have been printed in local Pembrokeshire newspapers, and the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park magazine ‘Coast to Coast’ includes information about our summer exhibitions at The Riverside.

The unit has also worked with staff across the Library on a campaign to attract more users to our reading rooms. As part of this campaign they have worked with imaging staff on the preparation of a series of short videos that promote the Library’s reader services that will be published on our websites and social media accounts.

The Promotion and Marketing Unit has also been working on new content and designs for leaflets that promote the Library’s services, a revamp of our electronic newsletters, and a new set of portable banners for external events.

Event at the House of Lords

On 5 March the Library were guests of Lord Aberdare at a special event held at the House of Lords attended by around 80 members of the House of Lords, House of Commons and friends with Welsh connections. This was an opportunity to highlight the Library’s work, especially the Welsh Political Archive, and to encourage many of the guests to deposit their political papers to the Archive. The new Collections Fund leaflet was also distributed to encourage donations to the fund to enable the Library to purchase items which become available on the market. The Library is indebted to Lord Aberdare for sponsoring this successful and encouraging event.