Indispensable Companion

The range and complexity of the rich manuscript and archival holdings of the National Library of Wales have often seemed perplexing even to the experienced researcher.

The first comprehensive survey of these resources was recently published as a Guide to the Department of Manuscripts and Records.

The Guide gives concise introductions to the great collections, family and estate archives, records of Great Sessions, probate records, ecclesiastical and political archives; full bibliographical details of published and unpublished catalogues; and information on indexes and databases.

It will become an indispensable companion to all who undertake original research on Wales's culture and history.

The following few extracts will serve as an appetizer:

CHARTISM IN MONTGOMERYSHIRE
Correspondence of the earl of Powis and other papers relating to Chartism in Llanidloes, Newtown and elsewhere in Montgomeryshire, 1831-42 [...]

COALOWNERS' ASSOC.
Records of the Monmouthshire and South Wales Coalowners' Association from 1864 until its dissolution in 1955 [...]

D R DANIEL
Papers of David Robert Daniel (1859-1931), political commentator, including diaries and correspondence of Thomas Edward Ellis, material relating to Lloyd George, and papers, 1878-1914, relating to the North Wales Quarrymen's Union and the Penrhyn Quarry strikes [...]

GEORGE M LI DAVIES
Papers of George Maitland Lloyd Davies (1880-1949), pacifist [...]

GWILYM DAVIES
Papers of Gwilym Davies (1879-1955), minister and worker for peace, relating to broadcasting, and to religious, cultural, Welsh and international affairs [...]

DESMOND DONELLY
Papers of Desmond Louis Donnelly (1920-74), MP for Pembroke, 1950-70; conditional access [...]

T F ELLIS
Papers of Thomas Edward Ellis (1859-99), MP for Merioneth, 1886-99, and chief Liberal whip, 1894-5 [...]

Reflections of Sir Wyn

Sir Wyn Roberts will reflect on his time at the Welsh Office when he visits Aberystwyth next November to deliver the ninth Welsh Political Archive Annual Lecture. Sir Wyn, who began his career in journalism and television, was elected Conservative MP for Conway in 1970. After five years as Opposition Spokesman on Welsh Affairs, he served successively from 1979 to 1994 as Under Secretary of State for Wales and Minister of State for Wales.

Undoubtedly Dr Harvie's challenging ideas deserve circulation and discussion throughout Wales.

THE WELSH POLITICAL ARCHIVE
THE ANNUAL LECTURE: 1995

The Rt Hon SIR WYN ROBERTS, PC, AS 'Fifteen Years at the Welsh Office, 1979-94'

The Old Hall, The Old College, King Street, Aberystwyth

5.30 p.m., Friday, 3 November 1995
ISLWYN BY-ELECTS

The Labour Party easily held on to Islwyn in the 16 February by-election caused by the departure of Neil Kinnoch for Europe.

The WPA has received some welcome additions to its burgeoning CND Cymru archive.

The papers donated by James Stewart, campaigner worker for CND Cymru, 1968-90, include correspondence, reports, pamphlets, press briefings and cuttings covering many issues, including military research on University campuses, low flying, elections, and nuclear submarines.

Through the good offices of Professor Deirdre Beddow, the WPA has received a typescript copy of a diary, which was written by members of the peace campaign group Women for Life on Earth during a week-long vigil outside the Royal Ordnance Factory at Llanishen near Cardiff in early February 1983. The following extracts are taken from the diary:

[...]

Don Touhig, Islwyn’s new MP, had a majority of more than 13,000 over his nearest rival.

Don Touhig (Lab) 16013
Jocelyn Davies (PC) 2523
John Bushell (LibDem) 2448
Robert Buckland (Con) 913
Lord Sutch (Loony) 506
Hugh Hughes (UKInd) 289
Timothy Rees (NatLaw) 47
Maj: 13080 Turn-out: 45%

The seven candidates produced an abundance of literature between them, touching on local, national, and European issues. Devolution, declared dead in 1979, was mentioned by most of the candidates. The prize for the most utopian message goes to the Natural Law Party, which exhorted the electors to vote for conflict-free politics and problem-free government; while the most imaginative programme was arguably that of Lord Sutch, who fought on a platform of cutting pensions bills, creating sporting academies, and giving all youngsters the chance to play in a band.

We would like to thank everyone who sent ephemera to the WPA, further enriching our collection.

INVIGILATING PEACE WORK

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ROF DEMONSTRATION

12noon 5 March 12th

THE CARDIFF BOMB FACTORY

The Cardiff Royal Ordnance Factory, Cyncoed Road, is one of the establishments engaged in manufacturing components for British nuclear weapons. The factory site adjoins Ty Glas Road at Cyncoed Cross Roads.

The factory is ringed by residential areas, with some large office blocks and other factories and workshops. Within the one-mile radius from it lies the whole of Llanishen, Llanishen Fach and Brickhill, the northern parts of Gabalfa and Heath, and most of the new Llanishen Village development. The Ty Glas Rd. Road offices are within a quarter of a mile and the City Board Offices about half a mile away. The extensive new industrial development is now taking place within the half-mile zone.

WHAT goes on in the factory? Its activities are, of course, covered by the Official Secrets Act; the Ministry of Defence, in answer to queries, is less than forthcoming but has released some information - enough to cause concern in spite of bland assurances of safety. Following an accident a year ago, in which the county Fire Brigade was called to deal with a fire within the factory, it was reported that the firemen involved had to undergo decontamination treatment. A letter from the MOD stated that the consequences in the factory itself were not serious. The remaining of 'depleted uranium' they claimed was a component of an weapon made there, but that no above from dangerous processes they said, were wiped from the site (the office blocks downwind are much higher).

Reprints are in the press during the release of an active effluent into drains or wastewater is not being deactivated, the Clyde Environmental Health department has carried out tests with negative results. Only a system of continuous monitoring, however, could be relied on to show the absence of such a hazard. So far as the present writer knows, no checks have been carried out on any other environmental hazards such as non-radioactive toxicites.
With Lloyd George in Mind

Earl Lloyd-George of Dwyfor, or David Lloyd George died on 26 March 1945. To commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of his death the Library mounted an exhibition surveying his life and career.

In addition to the important manuscript and printed material the exhibition showed how extensive are the Library's holdings in visual materials relating to the former Prime Minister.

Relatively recently these collections grew substantially with the acquisition of the visual items from the Lady Olwen Carey Evans Collection and the A J Sylvester Collection.

It is natural that Lady Olwen's Collection contains many family and personal photographs, some taken by Olwen herself and her sister Lady Megan, as well as the more usual formal studies.

The Sylvester Collection is more varied in its content; it has not only photographs, including several shots of David Lloyd George's "other family": Frances Stevenson and her daughter, Jennifer, but also films shot by Sylvester on his many trips with Lloyd George in the 1930s, especially the famous German visit of 1936.

In addition to the German film and other films from the Library's collection relating to Lloyd George, the exhibition offered the opportunity to hear some of his sound recordings, including that of a "speech" he made in 1909 to promote his 'People's Budget'.

RECENT ADDITIONS

CLIVE BETTS
Mr Clive Betts, indefatigable Welsh affairs correspondent of the Western Mail, has donated yet another substantial group of papers, to be added to several previous deposits (see Newsletter no. 12). The political interest of the papers is strong: many files relate to the activities and development of the Labour Party, the Liberal Democrats and Plaid Cymru during recent years. Others concern specific subjects such as health, housing, industry, tourism and transport.

JOHN DAVIES
WPA was very pleased to receive a further group of papers from Dr John Davies, relating to the early history of Cymdeithas yr Iaith Gymraeg and comprising mainly correspondence from the period 1962-5. We should also like to make it known that the two scrapbooks mentioned in the last Newsletter as the compilations of John Davies of the WEA belonged to Dr Davies. We thank him not only for continuing them as a gift to the Archive but also for adding to them another bundle of papers concerning John and Ruby Davies, who were his uncle and aunt.

GWYNFORD EVANS
Dr Gwyndaf Evans, President of Plaid Cymru, 1945-81, and MP for Carmarthenshire for two periods, has over the years donated several large groups of correspondence and papers to the National Library, reflecting his most distinguished contribution to Welsh public life (see Newsletter no. 7). The most recent deposit, which came to hand in November 1994, comprises several hundred letters, many from persons prominent in Welsh political and cultural affairs.

HARRI WEBB
The Library has recently purchased papers belonging to the late Harri Webb, poet and nationalist. A mixture of literary and political papers, they include correspondence relating to the Tiberion, newsletters, memoranda, and reports relating to Plaid Cymru in the sixties, and letters from, among others, Ray Smith, Elwyn Roberts, Gwilym Frys Davies, Pedr Lewis, and Ivor Wills.

GODFREY LEE
The extensive Plaid Cymru archives held at the Library have recently been much enriched by the donation of papers, 1969-88, accumulated by Mr Godfrey Lee of Welshpool, the party's candidate at Newport in the October 1974 general election. Most of the papers relate to Plaid Cymru's activities in Newport and Montgomeryshire, the candidature of Enfys Roberts in the Merthyr Tydfil by-election of April 1972 (field on the death of S.0. Davies), and the work of the Gwent Regional Council, 1969-77.

Gwilym Frys Davies, Pedr Lewis, and Ivor Wills.
Conservatives and Liberals in the south-west

Welsh Conservatives have traditionally been regarded by historians and political analysts as a singularly impenetrable group. Over the years, however, the WPA has received the records of a number of local Conservative Associations, most notably those of the City of Cardiff, Monmouth, the Rhondda, and several north Wales groups, including Caernarfon, Conway, and Nefyn.

Never before, however, has the Archive received such an extensive, complete, and wide-ranging group of records as those of the Pembrokeshire Conservative Association which, with far-reaching constituency boundary changes on the horizon, came to hand in October 1994.

The records, which date from 1930 to the present, reflect a vigorous and efficient local party machine in a marginal constituency which returned a Liberal MP, Gwilym Lloyd George, until 1950, and an individualistic Labour Member, Desmond Donnelly, until 1970, when Nicholas Edwards (who was to become Secretary of State for Wales) captured the seat for the Conservatives. He, in turn, was succeeded in 1987 by another Conservative, Nicholas Bennett, whose papers are also held by the WPA.

The Pembrokeshire Conservative Association’s archive is notable for the rich array of records reflecting the multifarious social and political activities of local branches, regional committees, and women’s groups.

Records less than twenty years old are subject to an embargo.

Few periods in recent Welsh political history have displayed a dynamism and vigour comparable with the 1920s in Cardiganshire when the schism in the ranks of local Liberals, sharply divided into Asquithian and Lloyd George groups, created a deep-rooted bitterness which persisted for a generation and longer.

Several of the holdings of the Welsh Political Archive reflect this conflict, notably the records of the Cardiganshire Liberal Association deposited in 1986 (see Newsletter no. 3), and an interesting group of correspondence and papers, 1917-22 (now NLW MS 22016E) donated by Dr E Roderic Bowen in 1984.

Recently Dr Bowen, himself the distinguished Liberal Member for the county from 1945 to 1966, has added a further group of papers, 1900-59, which were assembled by Harry Rees of Argoed, Lampeter, the secretary and registration agent of the Cardiganshire Liberals in the 1920s.

The papers comprise correspondence, financial records, election addresses and leaflets, and press cuttings of political interest.

Among the distinguished correspondents are J H Davies, Cwrtmawr, M L Vaughan Davies, Captain Ernest Evans, J M Howell, Aberaeron, and W Llewelyn Williams.

The papers have been added to the records of the Cardiganshire Liberal Association.

Rhys Hopkin Morris's election address 1922