THE NATIONAL MOVEMENT

The Welsh Political Archive reached something of a milestone in its history on 1 November 1996 - the date of the tenth Annual Lecture.

The lecturer on this auspicious occasion was a figure very well-known in Aberystwyth - Dr John Davies, a member of the staff of the Department of Welsh History at the University College of Wales, Aberystwyth, from 1973 until 1990, and the genial and popular warden of Pantycelyn Hall, 1974-92.

Dr Davies has also earned widespread recognition for his highly acclaimed volumes Cardiff and the Marquesses of Bute (1981), Hanes Cymru (1990), its English counterpart A History of Wales (1993), and, more recently, Broadcasting and the BBC in Wales (1994) and The Making of Modern Wales (1996).

As anticipated, a large and expectant audience gathered at the University's Old College to hear Dr Davies lecture on a theme very close to his heart - 'The National Movement in Wales since 1960'. Combining the analytical approach of a skilled historian with the experience of a practical politician, Dr Davies examined the impact of the many facets of the national movement upon Welsh life from the general election of October 1959 to the present.

He paid particular attention to the growth, development and impact of the Welsh Language Society and Plaid Cymru, two influential movements to which he has given unstinting service and support, and contrasted the Welsh experience with developments in Scotland.

He concluded his lecture by restating his conviction (first voiced in Hanes Cymru) that the 1990s are, first and foremost, a dynamic and exciting time in the history of the Welsh nation, and attributed this vibrance primarily to the impact of the nationalist movement upon Welsh life.

Those unable to attend the lecture will be pleased to know that it will be published bilingually in 1997.

LANGUAGE SOCIETY ARCHIVES

Over the years the Library has received many groups of the records of the Welsh Language Society illustrating its development from its foundation in 1962.

The most recent deposit, which came to hand in May 1996, includes a large corpus of papers deriving from the Society's cells, 1971-92, regional records, 1979-93, and miscellaneous files including papers relating to the Welsh Language Act 1989-90, the teaching of Welsh in Glamorganshire schools, tourism and the economy of Clwyd.

Dylan Phillips

In August Mr Dylan Phillips donated a varied group of papers which he had used while preparing a PhD thesis on the history of Cymdeithas yr Iaith Gymraeg from 1963 until 1982. The papers were originally owned by Mr Gareth Miles, Mr Dafydd Iwan, Mr Rheinallt Llwyd and Mrs Ann Ffrancon. Each group includes a rich array of correspondence, 1960-76, from a host of figures prominent in Welsh life, illustrating their involvement in the affairs of the society, and an interesting miscellany of printed items. Many of the papers relate to the campaigns for bilingual road signs and enhanced provision for Welsh language broadcasting on television and radio.

John Davies

Dr John Davies, one of the Society's founders and its first joint-secretary, has donated a small group of further papers reflecting the Society's early history, including letters from Robert Griffiths and Meic Stephens, and a copy of the first summons ever issued in the Welsh language.
SY23 3BU.
Tel: 01970 623816
Fax: 01970 615709
For further information please contact
John Watts-Williams, 1 Graham Jones
or Kate Sullivan

The Welsh Political Archive was set up in 1983 to coordinate the collection of documentary evidence of all kinds about politics in Wales. It collects the records and papers of political parties, politicians, quasi-political organisations, campaigns and pressure groups; leaflets, pamphlets, ephemera, posters, photographs, and tapes of radio and television programmes.

ADDITIONS

to existing groups of archives include:

Mr D Elwyn Jones: minute books, 1960-92, of the Criccieth and District Branch of the Caernarvon Division Conservative and Unionist Association.

Mr D Leslie Davies: papers, 1930s-90s, reflecting political life in the Cynon Valley, especially the activities of Plaid Cymru, together with pamphlets on Welsh and Scottish nationalism, 1940s-50s.

Mr Gwilym Jones MP: papers, 1983-91, mainly constituency files concerning the Cardiff North division.

Newport West Labour Party: a group of records, 1987-95, including papers relating to the 1987 general election.


JAMES GRIFFITHS PAPERS

One of the most important figures in twentieth-century Welsh political history is James Griffiths (1890-1975) who served as the Labour MP for Llanelli from 1936 until 1970. A native of Betws in Carmarthenshire, and a student at the Central Labour College in London immediately after the First World War, he became miners’ agent for the ancillary District of the South Wales Miners’ Federation in 1925 and was elected President of the SWMF in 1934 at an especially critical time.

Cabinet

At Westminster he won recognition for his abiding interest in social issues and Welsh affairs. After the landslide Labour victory of 1945, Griffiths served as Minister of National Insurance until 1950, as Secretary of State for the Colonies (a Cabinet post), 1950-1, and as Chairman of the Labour Party, 1949-54. After the Labour Party returned to power in 1964, he was appointed as the first ‘Charter’ Secretary of State for Wales.

NLW Group

An important group of James Griffiths’ papers was donated to the Library by his widow Mrs Winifred Griffiths in 1976 and 1978, an interesting amalgam of manuscript materials and printed items reflecting many aspects of his career. A detailed catalogue was completed in 1979.

Harlech Group

In the early 1970s Mr Griffiths had deposited at the library of Coleg Harlech (in which he took an avid interest) a small group of his papers. Recently, through the good offices of Mr Joe England, warden of Coleg Harlech, these papers have been transferred to the National Library.

Many of the papers reflect Griffiths’s involvement in the activities of the SWMF and the Miners’ Federation of Great Britain, most notably his sterling role in fighting for compensation for coal miners suffering from silicosis and anthracosis.

Others relate to his work as Minister of National Insurance and to the Attlee Government’s bold and imaginative welfare initiatives based on the famous Beveridge Report of 1942, his spirited election campaigns at Llanelli from 1936 until 1966, and to Welsh affairs in the 1950s and 1960s. There is a typescript draft of Griffiths’s volume of reminiscences Pages from Memory published by Dent in 1975, a draft considerably fuller than the published volume, and an array of press cuttings, speeches and broadcast notes, and drafts of articles.

Although there is a heavy preponderance of printed items among the papers, they also include a sprinkling of correspondence including letters from Anthony Wedgwood Benn, Henry Brooke, Sir Stafford Cripps, Lord Heycock, Cledwyn Hughes, Harold Macmillan, John Profumo, Cliff Prentice and Irene White. There is also an interesting memorandum by Hugh Gaitskell, 1959, on the proposed appointment of a Secretary of State for Wales. A list of the papers has already been prepared.

James Griffiths with now T Edwards
and Christmas P Williams (former Liberal MP for Wrexham)
at the Colwyn Bay National Eisteddfod, 1947
The British Liberal Party reached the nadir of its fortunes during the years immediately after the end of the Second World War.

The unenviable task of reviving the party’s standing at this critical juncture was entrusted to E Clement Davies (1884-1962), a native of Llanfyllin in Montgomeryshire who in 1929 abandoned an especially promising legal career to enter Parliament as the Liberal MP for his native county.

He remained in the Commons at the time of his death in March 1962, having served as the Liberal Party leader for eleven appallingly difficult years from 1945 until 1956, keeping his party intact as a credible, viable political force, no mean achievement.

Main collection
A large archive of Clement Davies’s papers was deposited at the Library by his widow Mrs Jano Clement-Davies in 1967. Ten years later their sole surviving son Mr Stanley Clement-Davies added a further group of papers comprising mainly his own papers and those of his mother. A detailed catalogue of the papers was completed in 1981.

They consist of rich runs of correspondence, speech notes, printed items and press cuttings relating to Clement Davies’s background and members of his family, his political career as MP for Montgomeryshire and Liberal Party leader, Welsh affairs, constituency matters, peace movements (most notably the Association for World Government) and foreign affairs.

1996 Deposit
Recently Mr Clement-Davies has added a further substantial group of papers to the archive comprising documents relating to both of his parents, himself, and the other children of the marriage, all three of whom died in tragic circumstances between 1939 and 1943.

They complement admirably the earlier deposits and include a fascinating group of political and family photographs.

Clement Davis and his wife, Jane, at Welshpool after his victory in the general election of 1945

EMLYN HOOSON

Clement Davies’s distinguished successors Liberal MP for Montgomeryshire was Emlyn Hooson who sat in the Commons from 1962 until 1979 and subsequently as a Liberal peer in the Lords. Over the years Lord Hooson has donated several substantial groups of papers to the Archive. Two further groups came to hand recently.

The first comprises further papers of Laura Ashley Plc, 1988-96, and Severn River Crossing Plc, 1990-96. The other has a wealth of documents concerning the Liberal Party, 1948-81, and Montgomeryshire politics, including the 1962 by-election campaign and Emlyn Hooson’s maiden speech in the House of Commons.

There are also files of papers relating to Jeremy Thorpe, 1967-79, the general elections of 1974 and 1979, and Lord Hooson’s legal career, 1949-62. A tape of the donor’s speech to the 1973 Liberal Party Conference at Newtown has been added to the Library’s Sound and Moving Image Collection.
Communist Archives

Rhosdda East Parliamentary Borough Bye-Election
Polling Day March 28th, 1933.

For a New and Fuller Life
For All Rhondda Workers
For a Free Socialist Britain

ARTHUR LEWIS HORNK
COMMUNIST CANDIDATE.

The Archive was delighted to receive, through the kindness of Mr Bert Pearce of Cardiff, a preliminary group of the records of the Welsh Communist Party.

This comprises files of papers deriving from the convention of the party’s annual Welsh Congress, 1960-82, and from its campaigns and by-elections, 1963-83.

The papers are currently unavailable for research.

Female Socialist
Mrs Elinor Rosen has kindly allowed the Library to photocopy papers, c. 1950-77, assembled by her as secretary of the Briton Ferry branch of the Aberavon Divisional Labour Party. Their reference is NLW Facs 859. In addition twenty-four black and white photographs (PC 6750) and an audio-tape of Mrs Rosen’s reminiscences have been added to the collections of the Department of Pictures and Maps.

Welsh Agitation
The Library has been able to acquire an interesting miscellany of items including a volume of cartoons republished from the Western Mail, 1902-5, depicting the Welsh revolt against the provisions of the Balfour Education Act of 1902, and miscellaneous printed items, 1962-65, many commemorating royal and national events. They are now NLW ex 1769.

Mike Steele Papers
Mr Mike Steele has donated a variety of papers, 1976-96, which he gathered as lobby correspondent of the Community News Service at the House of Commons. They include documents relating to many aspects of Welsh politics, such as the Welsh language, broadcasting, the Welsh Office, devolution, transport and communications, local government and the redistribution of parliamentary constituencies. There are also texts of speeches by the Rt Hon James Callaghan and the Rt Hon Peter Walker.

Labour MEP
In 1989 the Archive was pleased to receive an extensive group of the papers of Miss Beata Brookes, Conservative MEP for North Wales, 1979-89. Now the papers, 1987-94, of Mr Wayne David, Labour MEP for the South Wales Central constituency since 1989, have come to hand. Many of these papers relate to the environment and to European issues, and there are files concerning the constituencies of south Wales, 1987, and the reformed Parliament for Wales Campaign of 1993-4. Mr David’s permission is required to consult papers less than ten years old.

SDP Founder
The Archive has received an interesting miscellany of papers accumulated by Mr Peter Sein Ley Berry, a former Liberal who became a founder member of the SDP in 1981 and who stood as the party’s candidate at Swansea West, 1983, Pontypridd, 1987, and Pembroke, 1992.

The papers relate to parliamentary, European and local elections and to the administration of the SDP and the Alliance Committee for Wales. There is also material concerning the Lloyd George Society, 1985-93, and the Welsh Centre for International Affairs, 1986-91.

Plaid Cymru in London
The latest addition to the ever growing Plaid Cymru archives is the records, 1980-96, of the lively London branch. They comprise correspondence files, annual reports, financial accounts and minutes of meetings.

Knowling-Lentier
Mrs A E J Knowling-Lentier of Richmond has donated a small group of the papers of Lloyd Georgian interest, including one photograph of David Lloyd George and two of his eldest daughter, Lady Olwen Carey-Evans.

Nationalist pamphlets
A substantial group of publications, c.1926-49, mainly produced by the Welsh Nationalist Party, has come to hand, together with several pacifist pamphlets published during the Second World War. They are now designated NLW ex 1760.

Printed at
The National Library
of Wales

Election leaflet of Arthur Horner, Communist Party candidate for East Rhondda, 1929, 1931, and 1933