LLOYD GEORGE AND EDWARD

The Library’s extensive Lloyd George archives have been further enriched by the recent acquisition from the third Viscount Tenby of a group of papers relating to his father Gwilym Lloyd-George (1894-1967) and his grandfather David Lloyd George (1863-1945). These papers will be designated NLW MSS 23657-71.

The most significant item amongst this group is a lengthy letter, 11 December 1936, from Lloyd George at Kingston, Jamaica, to his son Gwilym in which he expresses his heartfelt contempt for the enforced abdication of Edward VIII.

Lloyd George had enjoyed a warm rapport with Prince Edward ever since his investiture as Prince of Wales at Caernarvon Castle in 1911. He welcomed his accession in 1936, viewing him as a champion of the underdog, capable of introducing a touch of democracy to the throne.

In this letter he describes Edward as ‘a great little man [...] hounded from the throne by that arch-humbug Baldwin’.

The Abdication crisis rapidly accelerated during the opening days of December 1936 while Lloyd George, spending the winter in Jamaica, was forced to rely on censored news. He longed to return to London to the hub of political life, convinced that he might yet wield influence on Edward and the course of events.

In this letter to his son, Lloyd George regretted that Winston Churchill had been forced to stand up alone and unsupported in ‘the synagogue of the Pharisees’ [the House of Commons], and goes on to say, ‘A really democratic King has been driven from his Throne by the Tories with the help of the Labour Party [...] Attlee and his soft-headed junta have been flattered into playing the Tory game [...] The real tragedy of democracy is that its cause has somehow or other been entrusted to a gang of fools. The Tories now have just the sort of King [George VI] which suits them. He will not pounce into inconvenient questions; he will always sign on the dotted line without asking any questions.’

Also of particular interest among the papers is a letter from Churchill to Lloyd George extending sympathy on the death of Dame Margaret in January 1941, and two letters from Churchill to Gwilym Lloyd-George, one offering him (as Minister of Food) a seat in the Cabinet in 1953, and the second promoting him to the position of Home Secretary and Minister for Welsh Affairs in 1954.

The papers also include letters from A J Balfour, Megan Lloyd George, Harold Macmillan, Sir John Simon, Lord Swinton and Lord Teviot. There is, too, a group of speech notes and correspondence of Sir Goronwy Owen, Liberal MP for Caernarvonshire, 1923-45, who married a sister-in-law of Gwilym Lloyd-George, and who became one of the Lloyd George family group of MPs in the 1930s.

ELECTION ‘97

We are grateful to all those who sent election literature to the Welsh Political Archive during the recent general election campaign. Your cooperation is much appreciated.

It is pleasing to report that the Archive has succeeded in acquiring all the election addresses issued by the major political parties in Wales in the forty new Welsh constituencies as well as a mass of literature - leaflets, posters, stickers and other ephemera - produced by them.

END THE PUNCH AND JUDY SHOW

The Archive undertook a similar successful exercise during the three previous general elections, and has almost complete sets of campaign literature from 1983 onwards. Our holdings from earlier elections, however, are patchy, and we would much appreciate any literature from election campaigns before 1983.
GLADSTONE AND ATTLEE

The WPA is always anxious to acquire microfilm copies of important political archives held elsewhere. Recently microfilms of two acquisitions of major significance have come to hand.

Gladstone Papers

The first is a series of microfilms of the most extensive archives of William Ewart Gladstone, Liberal Prime Minister on four occasions between 1868 and 1894, in the custody of St Deiniol's Library, Hawarden in Flintshire (founded in 1902 as a memorial to Gladstone) and the British Library.

The St Deiniol's group comprises the most complete collection of Gladstone's speech notes, 1825 to 1896, newspaper cuttings of his speeches and reviews. Many speeches were published verbatim in the newspapers, while his brief speech notes enable fascinating comparison with the two-hour speeches derived from them. The ‘Special Correspondence’ and ‘General Correspondence’ in the British Library comprise letters from figures prominent in political and religious life - among them Lord Aberdeen, Joseph Chamberlain, Disraeli, Sir Robert Peel, Palmerston, Parnell and Tennyson - complemented by memoranda from some correspondents, memoranda and annotations by Gladstone, and printed items.

W. E. Gladstone

The BL group also includes letter books with copies of some 15,000 letters from Gladstone and ‘registers’ of letters received, 1841-55. The correspondence covers an array of subjects from Italian unity to conditions in the colonies to Irish affairs.

The Gladstone Papers have been published in the microfilm collection The Papers of the Prime Ministers of Great Britain, and have been edited by Professor Colin Matthew of St Hugh’s College, Oxford.

Attlee Cabinets

The Library has also acquired microfilm copies of complete sequences of the Cabinet Conclusions and Memoranda for the Attlee governments of 1945-51 deposited at the Public Record Office, Kew, as Classes CAB 128/1-23 and CAB 129/1-47.

Cabinet papers record the discussion of government policies on the key issues of the day in the domestic and international arenas at the highest level.

The Cabinet Memoranda (CAB 129) comprise texts of all the documents brought forward for discussion at Cabinet meetings, while the Cabinet Conclusions (CAB 128, formerly known as Cabinet Minutes) record the agenda of Cabinet meetings and the actions agreed upon.

Clement Attlee’s Labour administration of 1945 faced formidable difficulties: the devastation of the British economy during the Second World War; the wrecking of British cities by German bombings; and severe food shortages. Moreover, it was pledged to create a National Health Service and universal welfare provision and to take substantial sections of British industry into public ownership.

On a broader canvas Britain was involved in the post-war reconstruction of Germany and Japan, and the establishment of NATO and the United Nations, while crises loomed in Egypt, India, Kenya, Malaysia and other former colonies.

Amongst the topics discussed by Attlee’s Cabinets were the Schuman Plan and the emergence of the EEC, the formation of NATO, decolonization and the end of Empire, the hydrogen bomb and atomic energy, the rebuilding of Germany and Japan with American aid, the spread of Communism and the Soviet Empire, and the creation of the National Health Service.
Gregynog Conference

Through the kindness of Mr Guto Thomas, tutor in the Department of International Politics at the University of Wales, Aberystwyth, the Archive was pleased to receive five tapes of an international conference held at Gregynog, 13-17 December 1969, to celebrate the Department’s fiftieth anniversary.

The tapes came to light as Prof Michael Cox and Mr Thomas prepared an exhibition on the history of the Department which may now be viewed in the Edward Llywyd building on Penglais campus.

The Department was founded in 1919 following a gift by David Davies MP (later Baron Davies of Llandinam) and his sisters to establish a special chair to commemorate the lives sacrificed during the Great War and to explore the deeper causes of war and peace.

The Wilson Chair, named after President Woodrow Wilson, was the first of its kind in the world, and made Aberystwyth a spiritual home for academics specialising in International Relations.

The 1969 Conference featured a ‘Forum on Force’ panel and lectures given by such distinguished figures as Sir Herbert Butterfield, Sir F Harry Hinsley, Prof Hans Morgenthau and Prof Hugh Seton-Watson.

The tapes are in the care of the Library’s Sound and Moving Image Collection.

1859 Election

The Library has purchased a bound volume of papers relating mainly to the general election of 1859 in Merionethshire when David Williams of Castell Deudraeth stood as a Liberal against the Conservative Member, W. E. Wynne of Peniarth.

The papers include letters, an election handbook and press cuttings.

Photographs of David Williams MP and Sir Arthur Osmond Williams MP have been transferred to the Department of Pictures and Maps.

The Library has also acquired electoral registers and jury lists, 1860-6, relating to the commotes of Arudwy Uch Mynydd, Arudwy Is Arto, Mawddwy, Tal-y-bont and Ystumanner in Merionethshire.

ADDITIONS

Mr Clive Betts: papers, 1976-96, many of political interest, including files on broadcasting, education, the Eisteddfod, health, housing, industry, local government, tourism and transport.

Council of Welsh Districts: correspondence, papers and financial reports, 1983-96.

Mr Wayne David MEP: correspondence and papers, 1987-96, relating mainly to the Labour Party in south Wales, the environment, Europe and regional policy.

Mr Stanley Clement-Davies: papers relating to his parents, Rt Hon E. Clement Davies MP and Mrs Jano Clement-Davies, together with those of Dr Morgan Davies, adoptive father of Mrs Jano Clement-Davies.

Lord Hooson: papers, 1980-96, deriving from the donor’s involvement in Laura Ashley holdings Plc, Severn River Crossing Plc, the London Welsh School, Severn/Hafren Television Company and the Campaign for Montgomeryshire.

Mr Gwilym Jones: material, 1987-92, accumulated as Conservative MP for Cardiff North, including files of papers on animal welfare and vivisection, Cardiff Bay, constituency matters, defence, education, fishing and health.

Miss Rosemary Rendle: papers relating to her grandparents George Wightwick and Lina Rendel, and to her father Sir George William Rendel.

Lord Topham: correspondence and papers, 1995-7, including letters from Lord Denning, Sir James Goldsmith, Rt Hon Enoch Powell, Baroness Thatcher and Lady Wilson of Rievaulx. Some of the papers concern Europe and the issue of a single currency.
ACCESSIONS

Letter from Lady Megan A letter penned by Lady Megan Lloyd George in February 1949 has been acquired by the Library, one of the few such letters in the custody of the Archive.

Lady Megan Lloyd George MP

In the letter, after declining an invitation to attend a garden fete at Staines, Lady Megan refers to her appointment as Deputy Leader of the Liberal Party in January, and to her pre-election campaign in highly marginal Anglesey where she was defeated by Cledwyn Hughes for Labour in October 1951.

LG’s Funeral

Mrs Margaret Jones of Tremadog has kindly allowed the Library to copy an unusual photograph of Lloyd George’s coffin being carried by the Ty Newydd, Llanystumdwy, estate workers in March 1945.

She has also permitted us to photocopy the acknowledgement card, in Welsh, sent to her and her husband by Lloyd George following his eightieth birthday in January 1943.

The items have been designated NLW Facs 374/29.

South Glamorgan Labour Party

Dr Andrew Bold, a member of the Archive’s Consultative Committee, has secured a group of records, 1988-95, of the South Glamorgan Labour Party.

They comprise not only material relating to the affairs of the local party, but also items concerning the Cardiff constituencies, Labour Party Wales and local government reorganisation.

Senghennydd Disaster

Mr Neil Evans of Coleg Harlech has donated photocopies of papers assembled by him while researching the Senghennydd colliery disaster of 1913 when 439 miners died.

They include copies of letters from Will Fisher, one of the rescue team, to his cousin, and a diary of the rescue work (‘the little black book’) which inspired Luther Thomas to write his novel The Deep of the Earth (1956).

The papers have been designated NLW Facs 860.

Nick Ainger Papers

Mr Nick Ainger, Labour MP for Pembroke (now Carmarthen West and Pembroke South) since 1992 has donated papers of local, Welsh and British interest, including a number of constituency files.

The papers complement a number of political archives deriving from Pembrokeshire already in the custody of the WPA, including those of Gwilym Lloyd-George MP, Desmond Donnelly MP, Nicholas Bennett MP, and the Pembrokeshire Conservative Association.

Neil Kinnock Papers

Through the courtesy of Mr Don Touhig, MP, the Archive has received a group of papers, 1988-95, accumulated by his predecessor as Labour Member for Islwyn, Mr Neil Kinnock, leader of the Labour Party, 1983-92.

This group comprises constituency correspondence and papers relating to local affairs, and material on a range of subjects, such as health and welfare, industry, local government and the closure of sub-post offices in south Wales. In many cases copies of Mr Kinnock’s replies accompany the correspondence.

Most of Mr Kinnock’s papers have been deposited at Churchill College, Cambridge.

Plaid Cymru Archives

The latest addition to the extensive Plaid Cymru archives is a group of papers deriving from the campaign in 1990 to oppose the joint initiative of the Ministry of Defence and the US Defence Faculty to locate a radar station at St Davids. They comprise correspondence, press releases and press cuttings.

Rachel Mary Davies Papers

Through the kindness of Ann and Michael Gibbs of Swansea, the archive has received the papers of Miss Rachel Mary Davies (1911-96), a member of Plaid Cymru and friend to Waldo Williams.

The papers span the years 1923-92 and include correspondence, newsletters, pamphlets, membership forms, printed material, and letters and cards, 1958-67, from Waldo Williams.

A number of photographs and transparencies have been transferred to the Department of Pictures and Maps, and records and audio-cassettes to the Sound and Moving Image Collection.

Railway Unions

Mr John Alfred Davies of Aberystwyth has kindly donated the records, 1936-83, of local railway trade union branches including registration cards, minutes of meetings and correspondence. They have been designated NLW ex 1791.

DBRW Records

The Library has received the first deposit of the records, c.1970-90, of the Development Board for Rural Wales comprising Board and Committee minutes, construction files and maps, press releases and files relating to development policy.

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