A composite, definitive list has recently been completed of the large collection of election addresses and political ephemera – now running to no fewer than 135 boxes – built up by the Welsh Political Archive since its inception in 1983.

Ever since the establishment of the National Library at the beginning of the twentieth century, a small quantity of such material had come to hand, but our holdings were inevitably very inadequate and incomplete. Following the establishment of the WPA, however, a network of contacts was set up in each of the Welsh parliamentary constituencies, and links were formed with the Welsh headquarters of each of the major political parties. Consequently, it has proved possible to acquire a near complete set of election manifestos, addresses and leaflets circulated in the Welsh constituencies for parliamentary general and by-elections, elections to the Welsh Assembly and the European elections held since 1983.

The collection also includes printed materials concerning the political parties in Wales, a large number of Welsh pressure groups and various organisations, and an array of subjects such as the European Referendum of 1975, the Devolution Referenda of 1979 and 1997, the miners’ strike of 1984-85, the campaign against the Community Charge, 1989-90, and the recent Parliament for Wales campaign.

The list will shortly be available for consultation on-line via the Library’s web pages, while a hard copy may also be consulted in the Library’s South Reading Room. It will be amended and updated following each general election and the elections to the National Assembly for Wales.

The Archive would still welcome donations of such materials from Welsh parliamentary general and by-elections before 1983 to enrich our holdings. Addresses and leaflets deriving from local elections should be placed in the care of the appropriate county record offices and local libraries.

**Welsh Political Archive Annual Lecture 2004**

**Professor Deirdre Beddoe**

‘Women and Politics in Twentieth Century Wales’

The Drum, National Library of Wales
5.30pm Friday, 5 November
Welsh Political Archive

The Welsh Political Archive was set up in 1983 to co-ordinate 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.

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Rhys in the Drum

Between 7 and 18 June 2004 an impressive, highly varied series of events was held at the National Library to mark the opening of the new lecture hall, cinema and theatre christened ‘The Drwm’. From 2004 onwards the Welsh Political Archive annual lectures will be held in the Drwm rather than at the Old College. The closing event, and one of the most auspicious, was a lecture by Mr Rhys Evans, formerly political affairs correspondent to S4C and currently editor of Dragon’s Eye. The lecture attracted a large audience.

Rhys took as his theme ‘Gwynfor Evans, Plaid Cymru and the Second World War’, and gave his audience a superb analysis of the formative influences on Gwynfor Evans as a young politician, pacifist and public figure prior to his election as party president in 1945. He made wide use of Dr Evans’s own extensive papers, the Plaid Cymru archive and an array of other manuscript and printed materials as well as a series of personal interviews which he has undertaken during recent years. The text of this incisive lecture (together with the 2003 Welsh Political Archive lecture by Mr Ron Davies) will be published in the next issue of the National Library of Wales Journal due to appear this autumn.

Rhys Evans has spent recent years undertaking the research work for the first ever full-length biography of Dr Gwynfor Evans due to be published by Gwasg y Lolfa, Talybont, during the Caernarfon National Eisteddfod, August 2005, exactly eighty years following the establishment of Plaid Genedlaethol Cymru during the Pwllheli National Eisteddfod, August 1925. The volume will clearly be a major contribution to our understanding of political life in Wales during the twentieth century.

Dr Gwynfor Evans has donated a number of groups of his political papers to the National Library ever since 1973. Recently a start has been made on sorting and arranging this very large archive of papers with a view to preparing a definitive list of the entire archive before the end of 2005.

Keeper of Secrets

At 1.30pm on Wednesday, 6 October 2004, as one of the series of lunchtime lecture slots held in the Library’s Drwm, Dr J. Graham Jones, Head of the Welsh Political Archive, will deliver a short talk on the theme ‘Keeper of Secrets”: Albert James Sylvester CBE (1889-1989)’. A. J. Sylvester held the position of Principal Private Secretary to David Lloyd George from 1923 until his death in 1945 and was, therefore, in a quite unique position to observe and record his life and activities. His substantial archive of diaries, correspondence and papers, seldom used by historians, was purchased by the National Library in 1990 following his death, and have been quarried extensively in the preparation of this lecture.

Rhys Evans lecturing in the Drwm
Available for consultation on the National Library’s web pages are digital images of the 3,292 letters from Lloyd George to his brother William purchased as part of the William George Papers by the Library in 1989. They span the period from 1886 to 1943, but there are very few letters from the years after 1917. Many of the early letters were written in different parts of Wales, while most of the later letters, written when Lloyd George was at the height of his power, were sent from Westminster.

These letters are especially full for the period up until Lloyd George’s appointment to the cabinet as President of the Board of Trade at the end of 1905. Thereafter, many of them are very brief, hastily scribbled notes, but they have the inestimable advantage of giving their author’s immediate, uncensored gut reaction to events as they occur. Occasionally these were national events of momentous significance. Political news and family gossip intermingle freely as the author alternates easily between English and Welsh, perhaps to defeat the prying eyes of the security services.

Many of the early letters to William discuss legal cases in some detail and the affairs of the family legal business Lloyd George and George more generally, the profits from which enabled the ambitious young politician to remain at Westminster prior to the introduction of the payment of MPs in 1911. Many of the key turning points in Lloyd George’s political career are graphically illustrated in the letters, and new light is cast on the internal politics of the Caernarfon Boroughs, Lloyd George’s role at the time of the Boer War and his campaign against the provisions of Balfour’s Education Act of 1902.

Subsequent letters refer to Lloyd George’s appointment as President of the Board of Trade and his promotion by Asquith to be Chancellor of the Exchequer in April 1908. There are also many references to the preparation, presentation and aftermath of the famous ‘People’s Budget’ of 1909, the industrial and Suffragette militancy of the early years of the century, and the events of the First World War. Lloyd George’s work at the Ministry of Munitions and the War Office are referred to in a number of brief notes, as is his appointment as Prime Minister at the height of World War One in December 1916. The letters abound with references to contemporaries, notably fellow Liberal politicians. The letters are also immensely revealing with regard to Lloyd George’s relationship with members of his family.

Also available on the NLW web pages are digitised images of the pages of Lloyd George’s pocket diary for the year 1886 in which he refers in detail to Michael Davitt’s visit to north Wales during February and to his own personal and political aspirations and ambitions. It is by far the fullest and most interesting of the diaries kept by the young Lloyd George.

THE I.L.P. AT SWANSEA

Through the good offices of Mr Dave Fullman of Alveston, Gloucestershire, the Welsh Political Archive has been most fortunate to receive a slim file of correspondence, 1901-08, relating to the development of the Independent Labour Party in south Wales. Correspondence concerning left-wing political life at this time is relatively scarce.

Most of the letters concern the ultimately abortive attempt during 1902 and 1903 to nominate John Littledjohns, a local teacher and Socialist pioneer at Swansea, as the ILP candidate for the Swansea District constituency at the next general election – to stand against Sir David Brynmor Jones, the long serving sitting Liberal MP for the division. They refer to the intense financial and organizational problems faced by the fledgling ILP in the area during its formative years, and the growing lack of support locally for an ILP candidate which ultimately led to his withdrawal, amidst intense embarrassment for the Socialist cause, and an unopposed return to parliament for Sir Brynmor Jones. Littlejohns’s political career thus came to an abrupt end, jettisoned thereafter by the necessity to concentrate on salvaging his career as a teacher.

The file includes letters from several stalwarts of the ILP nationally including Charles Duncan, Bruce Glasier and John Penny. Some of the papers also concern the appointment in 1906 of Matt Giles to be the full-time south Wales organizer of the Workers’ Union, while three brief notes relate to the arrangements for Keir Hardie, Labour MP for Merthyr Tydfil, to attend a demonstration at Swansea during July 1908.
Recent acquisitions

Ioan Bowen Rees Papers
Through the kindness of his widow Mrs Margaret Bowen Rees, the Library has received a substantial group of the political papers of the late Mr Ioan Bowen Rees (1929-1999), a former chief executive of Gwynedd County Council and a leading figure in the devolution campaigns of the 1990s. Many of the papers derive from the work of the tenacious Parliament for Wales Campaign and the moves which led to a ‘Yes’ vote in the 1997 referendum and the subsequent setting up of the National Assembly for Wales. They include more than 100 immensely revealing letters from Dr Gwynfor Evans to Mr Rees.

Philip Weekes Papers
Mrs Branwen Weekes, Llantwit Major, has very kindly donated to the Library the papers of her late husband Mr Philip Weekes, the author of *A great wealth of lack of knowledge* and *Trem yn ôl a threm ymlaen*, including his research notes into the economic history and conditions of the South Wales coal mines, correspondence, notebooks, maps and plans, and printed material. It is hoped that the fascinating diaries which Mr Weekes kept during the 1984-85 miners’ strike will be added to the archive in the near future.

European Elections 2004
Thanks to the ready co-operation of the Welsh headquarters of the major political parties, the Archive has received a complete set of the manifestos, election addresses and leaflets circulated in the Welsh constituencies during the recent 2004 European Election campaigns. These have been added to the Welsh Political Ephemera Collection.

Poll tax activist
Councillor Ray Davies of Bedwas, Caerphilly has donated to the Archive an interesting miscellany of papers, spanning the period 1976 to 2004 and reflecting his work as a county councillor for the Bedwas, Trethomas and Machen ward and his involvement in several national campaigns. These include the steel strike of 1980, the miners’ strike of 1984-85 and the campaign against the community charge, 1988-89, during which he was twice imprisoned. They also reflect his work for the peace movement in Wales, including his activities as vice-chairman of CND Wales and his visits to Palestine and Iraq. Mr Davies has also donated a rich array of election addresses and leaflets from the Bedwas and Caerphilly areas which have been added to the Welsh Political Ephemera Collection.

Peace Journal
Through the kindness of Mrs Ann Pettitt, the Library has been able to acquire a journal which she kept chronicling the peace marches to Greenham Common. This has been designated NLW MS 23,901.

Strata Matrix
The Aberystwyth based PR company Strata Matrix has donated a collection of its Précis publications circulated during the 2003 election campaign for the National Assembly for Wales. They comprise daily press releases of press columns and radio and television coverage during the election campaign.

Publications on line
All the publications on sale in the Library’s shop, including the WPA Lectures dating back to 1987, may now be purchased directly ‘on-line. The web-site address is siop.llgc.org.uk

We advise readers to enquire about the conditions placed on the papers before visiting the Library. Many recent WPA acquisitions have restrictions on access or photocopying.