

West Glamorgan Archives Committee

10 September 2021

City and County of Swansea
Dinas A Sir Abertawe
and
Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council
Cyngor Bwrdeistref Sirol Castell-Nedd Port Talbot

Report of the County Archivist

**The purpose of this report is to
outline the work of the
Archive Service during the period
June to August 2021**

1. The COVID-19 pandemic and service suspension

The Archive Service has continued to operate a limited service in its Swansea service point during the last quarter, providing access to original documents which are pre-booked by the researcher. Following a revision of the service's COVID risk assessment, the Archives shop and Family History Centre re-opened on 27 July, providing an extra four seats for customers on top of the four already provided in the archive searchroom.

Swansea Civic Centre at the same time re-opened for casual visitors, a consequence being that if the Archives is able to accommodate a casual visitor it will do so rather than turn them away. All the above constitutes a significant step towards restoring a normal level of service for our customers, although occupancy of the public space is limited by the need to maintain social distance. A number of casual visitors have already been in to view the full version of the current electoral register, which is only available in the archives and to which we provide a statutory right of public access.

No discussions have taken place as yet as to the re-opening of the Neath service point. This can only take place once a new member of paraprofessional staff is in place and a full COVID risk assessment of the Mechanics Institute building has been undertaken.

2. Potential relocation of the archives to the proposed City Centre Hub

The City Centre Hub project has now completed RIBA Stage 2. However, no decision has as yet been taken whether the Archives will be part of the project or not, which is still at the stage of a feasibility study.

While there are undoubted benefits to the inclusion of the Service in the project in terms of service delivery (in both the central location of the building for our customers and a proposed co-location with Swansea Central Library Local Studies section) the

key question revolves around whether it is possible to integrate a secure archive storage area into the multi-use building, one which will meet British Standard 16893, *Specifications for location, construction and modification of buildings or rooms intended for the storage or use of heritage collections*.

In very brief summary, the key elements of BS 16893 can be classed as follows:

- A fire risk strategy which provides for four-hour fire resistance for all elements of the storage area;
- A security risk strategy which includes a minimum of Class 4 resistance for the outer walls and doors of the storage area (i.e. attempted penetration by intruders using heavy-duty tools);
- An environmental risk strategy which includes thermal stability of less than 1 C variation in any 24 hour period.

Advice on the requirements of any archive building conversion work continues to be provided by the National Conservation Service as part of the Archive Service's subscription to the scheme.

3. Outreach and educational activity

It has not been possible because of the pandemic to programme any outreach activity during the last quarter, a period which is always slack because of the school holidays. Activity via the social media vehicles of Twitter and Facebook continues on a regular basis.

The project regarding sources for the history of Wales' connection with the historic slave trade continues to advance slowly, with a planned pilot study to take place with Swansea secondary school teachers in the autumn. At the same time, archivists and museum managers across Wales have put forward a project proposal to Welsh Government relating to the discovery and re-interpretation of our catalogues to incorporate greater recognition of sources for the history of our BAME communities. The Archive Service has signed up to be part of this, which will hopefully not affect funding for the first-mentioned project which is more narrowly focused on the historic slave trade. A decision on funding is awaited.

4. Use of the Service

Statistics for June to August 2021

The number of members of public using the Service on-site, June to August 2021, was **153** and the total number reached by the Service on and off-site was **153**.

Number of on-site visits at Swansea, Neath and Port Talbot: 153 (0) (figures in brackets represent the same quarter last year), comprising:

Swansea	153	(0)
Neath	0	(0)
Port Talbot	0	(0)
Group visits	0	(0)

Number in audiences for off-site visits	0	(28)
Number of pupils reached by the Education Service	0	(0)
Numbers reached at special events	0	(0)
Total numbers reached on and off-site	153	(0)
Number of documents issued in Swansea	1,146	(0)
Number of documents issued in Neath	0	(0)
Number of post and email enquiries dealt with	664	(487)
Number of hits to the Archive Service website	TBC	(3,187)
Number of hits to the online catalogue	TBC	(1,793)
Number of hits to WGAS catalogues on Archives Hub	not available	(27,980)
Number of hits to NAS catalogues on Archives Hub	not available	(1,218)
Number of page views on Ancestry	135,858	(175,877)

5. Professional meetings

The County Archivist has attended a number of working groups during the quarter via MS Teams, including:

- All-Wales Archives Diversity and Inclusion Working Group
- Chief Archivists in Local Government Group Executive
- Welsh Parish Register Digitisation Working Group
- Welsh Vital Digital Records Working Group

6. Accessions of archive collections

A comprehensive list of archives received during the period June to August 2021 is attached at Appendix 1. Worthy of mention are three photograph albums donated by Mr Derek Gabriel which form one man's photographic record of the changing face of the centre of Swansea from the late 1950s onwards. The same gentleman has also promised to the archives his father's collection of glass slides which take the photographic record of Swansea town centre back to the 1930s.

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ACCESSIONS OF ARCHIVES
June-August 2021

<i>Creator/originator</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Dates</i>	<i>Extent</i>	<i>Reference number</i>
Private donation	Family photographs and items relating to the First World War	early-mid 20th century	1 box	
Private donation	Photographs of the Glamorgan War Agricultural Executive Committee Finance Department, 1944, and Glamorgan RHA Rugby Football Club, 1915-1916	1915-1944	2 photographs	
Private depositor	Programme relating to the visit of King George VI and Queen Elizabeth to the Borough of Neath, 1937; Swansea Dock's Shipping Lists (BTDB) 29th January and 2nd February 1965	1937-1965	3 items	
Private deposit	Photographs of Victorian railway workers; concert programmes; Donald Anderson MP leaflet; invitations to civic events	c. 1880s-2016	1 bundle	D/D Z 743/13-27
Private deposit	Personal diaries of David R Thomas written during the First World War	1917-1918	5 small vols	D/D Z 1109/1-5
Peter Hall Video Collection	Two videos: one on a tree trail in Clyne Gardens, the other an interview with Grafton Maggs of Mumbles, retired dentist, aged 96	2021	2 digital video files, MP4 format, 1.2 GB	D/D Z 717/11
Photographic material	Photographs of soldiers of 248 Battery stationed at Blackpill during the Second World War	1941	3 photographs	D/D Z 1075/9-11
Gower Society	Newsletters, 2019-2021; programmes, 2020-2021; agendas, 2019-2021; press cuttings, 2019	2019-2021	1 bag	D 56

Creator/originator	Description	Dates	Extent	Reference number
Peter Hall Video Collection	Film entitled "Royal Visitors to St Mary's Church, Swansea"	2021	1 DVD ROM containing video file in MP4 format (1.08 GB)	D/D Z 717/114
Private donation	Conference pack in relation to British Iron and Steel Association meeting, 1951. Includes specifications, plans etc. relating to steel smelting and refining processes.	1951	1 file	
Peter Hall Video Collection	Film about the life of Sir Arthur Whitton Brown	2021	1 CD-ROM containing video file in MP4 format (339 MB)	D/D Z 717/115
Llanrhidian Higher Community Council	Minutes	May-June 2021	1 bundle	P111/45
Private deposit	Bundle of papers relating to Smallwood Road, Baglan, a self-build project during the 1950s	1950s	1 bundle	D/D Z 1112/1
Private deposit	Deeds relating to Cornhill House, No 9 Christina Street, Swansea	1850s-1980s	1 bundle	
Photographic material	Photographs of Llanelli Rugby Team, Morrision Ladies Choir, the Maltsters Arms; the Bulletin Magazine; St Jude's Church annual report; Mount Calvary Baptist Church magazine	1890s-1930s	1 bundle	D/D Z 585
Photographic material	2 x Duvant Council School; 1 x Siloam Chapel Choir; Bundle of Killay Coronation; 1 x Dafen Tinsplate works; 1 x Mumbles Head; Killay Orphanage; Rugby programmes	1929-1999	1 bundle	D/D Z 585
Tabernacl Newydd Chapel	Papers relating to Tabernacl Newydd Chapel, Port Talbot	1947-1997	1 bundle	D/D Ind 44/8-13
Cymdeithas y Ddrama Gymraeg	Programmes, photographs, minutes	1919-2009	1 bundle	D/D CDG

Creator/originator	Description	Dates	Extent	Reference number
Peter Hall Video Collection	Film regarding war graves in Swansea municipal cemeteries; also digital photographs of war graves in Danygraig and Oystermouth Cemeteries, Swansea.	2021	1 CD-ROM	D/D Z 717
Printed material	Published biographical account of life in Llanrhidian, by Cedric Moon	2021	2 vols (duplicates)	D/D Z 685/3 and Searchroom library
Private donation	Various records, including relating to St Winifred's Convent School, Swansea, photographs and publications	early-mid 20th century	1 bundle	
Peter Hall Video Collection	Further items including films, folders of photographs and information about Commonwealth War Graves in Swansea cemeteries, including Danygraig, Cwmgelli, Oystermouth, Kingsbridge and Morriston, and the churchyard of St Peter's, Cockett	2021	1 DVD-ROM (approx. 1.2 GB)	D/D Z 717
Private donation	Scanned copy and transcript of the diary of Charles Morgan of Llanrhidian, 1834-1857	2019-2021	1 USB flash drive (0.98 GB)	
Private donation	Bundle of photographs relating to the self-build project at Smallwood Road, Baglan	1950s	1 bundle	D/D Z 1112/2/1-21
Dyffryn Clydach Parish/Community Council	'Ymlaen', newsletter of Dyffryn Clydach Community Council	Summer 2021	1 booklet	P/242/12/15 cont.
Private donation	Slides taken by Afan Camera Club of the Passion Play 'Behold the Man' staged in Port Talbot by the Port Talbot Passion Play Association	1960s-1980s	1 box	
Private deposit	3 volumes of photographs of Swansea and surrounding area	1960s-1980s	3 volumes	