

**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
West Glamorgan Archives Committee
11 December 2020**

**The purpose of this report is to
outline the work of the
Archive Service during the period
September to November 2020**

1. The COVID-19 pandemic

The archives in Swansea (though not in Neath) re-opened to the public on Tuesday 29th September, having been assessed by Swansea Council as capable of providing a COVID-secure service.

A maximum of four customers at any one time are allowed in the archive searchroom to view pre-ordered documents. Unlike most other archives in Wales, full opening on four days a week was restored from the start, though with reduced opening hours of 10am-4pm and a one hour closure for lunch, allowing for the cleaning and sanitising of desks and chairs between the morning and afternoon sessions.

It was always foreseen that re-opening would be a phased process (for example, there is currently no browsing of reference books or use of public PCs allowed) and that our plans should also anticipate the possibility of having to adapt or withdraw access again should public health and government guidance require it. This was the case with the recent 'Firebreak' lockdown when the archives closed for two weeks: the service has thankfully not been affected by the First Minister's announcement on 30 November of museum and gallery closures.

The Service received a grant of approximately £1,300 from Welsh Government to help fund the re-opening. The grant covered not just PPE and signage but also items to help maintain social distancing rules such as portable barriers. In whatever form we are able to maintain some degree of operation, the archives will continue to provide

the widest range of service that we are able to, given the external circumstances and guidance issued by our parent authorities, Welsh Government and by TNA.

2. Outreach and educational activity

a. 'Explore Your Archive' campaign

The Service took part in the annual Explore Your Archive campaign, which ran from 21-29 November. Building on successful social media engagement during the lockdown period earlier in the year, a programme of posts was put together, appearing simultaneously on Twitter and Facebook. The purpose was to provide items of interest, to highlight and publicise items and collections held in the archives, whilst fitting in with the daily themes chosen by the campaign.

There were features on maps, photographs, houses and homes and communications, and the opportunity was taken to publicise the Neath Abbey Ironworks collection and an album of photographs by John Dillwyn Llewelyn and his friends dating from the 1850s.

On Facebook, the campaign reached 20,325 people, resulting in 6,232 post engagements.

b. Archive films

Two further archive films, created in-house and consisting of images taken from the collections, were produced during the quarter. The first was timed to coincide with the Firebreak lockdown, 23 October-9 November and the second was made as part of the 'Explore Your Archive' campaign.

<i>Title</i>	<i>Views</i>
Pioneers of photography	1,100
Towns in time-lapse	236

These can be seen here: <https://www.facebook.com/pg/WestGlamorganArchives/videos/>

3. Use of the Service

Statistics for September to November 2020

The number of members of public using the Service on-site, September to November 2020, was **120** and the total number reached by the Service on and off-site was also **120**.

Number of on-site visits at Swansea, Neath and Port Talbot 120 (1,340) (figures in brackets represent the same quarter last year), comprising:

Swansea (inc. family history sessions, now delivered online)	120	(769)
Neath	0	(274)
Port Talbot	0	(22)
Group visits	0	(275)

Number in audiences for off-site visits	0	(680)
Number of pupils reached by the Education Service	0	(741)
Numbers reached at special events (including exhibitions)	0	(440)
Total numbers reached on and off-site	81	(2,460)
Number of documents issued in Swansea	793	(2,029)
Number of documents issued in Neath	0	(86)
Number of post and email enquiries dealt with	897	(379)
Number of hits to the Archive Service website	3,193	(2,974)
Number of hits to the online catalogue	421	(1,523)
Number of hits to WGAS catalogues on the Archives Hub	26,267	(19,532)
Number of hits to NAS catalogues on the Archives Hub	1,430	(527)
Number of page views on Ancestry	186,872	(155,555)

4. The creation of teaching resources relating to Wales' connection with the slave trade

As first reported in the last quarter, work has progressed on developing teaching resources relating to Wales' connection with the slave trade and this work has more recently extended in scope to encompass larger themes of diversity and multi-culturalism.

The resource will, it is anticipated, when finished be divided into three modules, as follows:

- Wales' part in the slave trade and the abolition movement, 1750-1850
- The growth of diverse urban communities in the south Wales ports, 1870-1920
- Post-war immigration and modern multi-cultural Wales, 1945-2020

This was, from the start, a joint project with Glamorgan Archives and now one which has been joined by Gwent Archives and Bangor University Archives. Each of these institutions can contribute to a different strand of our common history and brings a distinctive collection to the joint educational resources. In particular the last-named holds the archives of the Penrhyn Estate which was probably the most tarred of all Welsh estates in profiting from slavery and opposing the work of campaigners for its abolition.

The first of these modules was sent to Race Council Cymru for comment and was then forwarded to Professor Charlotte Williams, who is chairing the working group on the rebalancing of the Wales history curriculum. Further work with teachers and educational professionals is envisaged.

Archives Accreditation

Archive Service Accreditation provides a framework for the good governance of the service and is supported by a partnership of the Archives and Records Association (UK), Archives and Records Council Wales, National Records of Scotland, Public

Record Office of Northern Ireland, Scottish Council on Archives, The National Archives and the Welsh Government through its division MALD.

West Glamorgan Archives in Swansea has been accredited since 2016, but in 2019 its accredited status was moved to provisional, primarily because of concerns over the anticipated closure of the service in its present location in Swansea Civic Centre and the lack of a plan for its move to new premises.

At a meeting on 4 November, the Accreditation Panel considered the evidence submitted of progress against required key actions. They recognised the commitment from Swansea Council to relocate the archives and appreciated that work on a potential new home has been delayed by a number of factors, in particular the pandemic. The Panel therefore decided that West Glamorgan Archive Service should remain a provisionally Accredited Archive Service for a further 12 months.

The Panel urged the parent authorities to ensure that Welsh Government and The National Archives are consulted and involved in this work, both in terms of long-term plans for the Service's new home, and interim/contingency planning if it is required.

In the event that there will be a gap between leaving the building and the preparedness of a new building to take in the collections, the Archive Service is negotiating separately with Glamorgan Archives and Richard Burton Archives for their temporarily hosting the archive collections while preserving public access to them. The model is one based on the recent experience of Carmarthenshire Archives, and it would see those collections which are subject to statutory designation (principally public records and parish records) transferred to Cardiff which is appointed to take them in, and lesser collections transferred to the Richard Burton Archives Swansea University. Each of those offices has also offered to host Archive Service staff to continue work on the collections.

5. Accessions of archive collections

A comprehensive list of archives received during the period September to November 2020 is attached at Appendix 1. Because of the obvious physical challenges, the continuing pandemic has led to a reduction in the quantity of items received this quarter, although a number of people have used the opportunity provided by lockdown to sort through and select from their papers to offer to the archives. One of these has been the retired Chief Executive of Neath Port Talbot Council and it is very pleasing that we now have these papers dating from the foundation and early years of one of our parent local authorities.

Contact Officer: Kim Collis, County Archivist

Tel: 01792 636760

Email: kim.collis@swansea.gov.uk

ACCESSIONS OF ARCHIVES
September-November 2020

<i>Creator/originator</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Dates</i>	<i>Extent</i>	<i>Reference number</i>
Private donation	Photograph of Sketty Fire Brigade, 1913; photograph of Sketty Garage, 1934	1913-1934	2 photographs	P/PR/42ii/3/43 and P/PR/42ii/4/15
Peter Hall Video Collection	Video entitled 'A brief history of Clyne Castle and Gardens'	2020	1 video file, MP4 format, 445 MB	D/D Z 717/88
Peter Hall Video Collection	Videos entitled 'Francis Grenfell, 1st Baron Grenfell' and 'Private 2609 Robert William Nickolls, Australian Imperial Force, buried St Teilo's Church Bishopston'	2020	2 digital video files, MP4 format, 260 MB and 78.8 MB	D/D Z 717/89-90
Private donation	Papers of Mr K. Sawyers relating to his time as Chief Executive of Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council	1995-2009	2 crates	CB/NPT CE 10/1-17
Alltwen School	Photographs of pupils, staff and school activities	1960s	7 photographs	E/W 1/2/1-14 (see also Acc. 5676)
Peter Hall Video Collection	Video telling the story of Sigurd Wathne, a Norwegian national, who died in Swansea Hospital in 1942 and is buried in Danygraig Cemetery	2020	1 CD-ROM containing MP4 video file (103 MB)	D/D Z 717/91
Dynevor School	The Dy'vorian (Dynevor School magazine)	Winter 2019	1 vol.	E/Dyn Sec X 2/11
Private deposit	University of Wales Song Book	1951	1 vol.	
Private deposit	'Port Talbot Memories' by Tess Phillips; 'A Gallery of Past Personalities Vol 2 and 3' by Brian Jones	n.d.	3 vols	Searchroom Library
Private donation	Seven photographs of pupils, staff and activities at Alltwen Primary School	1960s	7 photographs	E/W 1/2/1-14 (see also Acc. 5671)

Creator/originator	Description	Dates	Extent	Reference number
Private deposit	Further records relating to the estate of Walter Thomas and previous lawsuits in connection with it	19th-20th century	1 envelope	
Peter Hall Video Collection	Video entitled 'Private 1868 Owen Owen Welsh Regiment Danygraig Cemetery Port Tennant Swansea'	2020	1 video file, MP4 format, 52 MB	D/D Z 717/92
Llanrhidian Higher Community Council	Minutes	Sep. 2020	1 file	P/111/45 (part)
Private donation	Plans prepared for the Local Government Board regarding proposed extensions to Swansea County Borough	1915, 1918	2 plans	D/D Z 1099/1-2
Killay Community Council	Minutes	April 2011-January 2013	1 bundle	P/307/8
Swansea Astronomical Society and Penllergaer Observatory	Records relating to Swansea Astronomical Society and Penllergaer Observatory	Mid-20th Century	1 box	
Peter Hall Video Collection	Video entitled 'Lewis John Wynford Vaughan-Thomas CBE, born Swansea 15 August 1908: journalist, radio and television broadcaster'.	2020	1 digital video file, MP4 format, 132 MB	D/D Z 717/93
Capel Pant-teg, Ystalyfera	Minutes, accounts, membership records, annual reports, photographs, correspondence, plans and ephemera	1890s-2000s	1 carload	D/D Ind 9/1/2-9/12/2
Private donation	'Hanes Cymunedau Mawr - History of the communities of Mawr' by Ioan M. Richard	2020	1 vol.	Searchroom library
Edward Harris collection	Plans showing bomb damage in Swansea Docks	1940s	4 plans, linen	
Private deposit	Further records relating to the Thomas estate and attempts to recover it	19th-20th century	1 bundle	
Killay Community Council	Minutes	2013-2019	7 files	P/307/8-16
Peter Hall Video Collection	Digital video file entitled 'The Women of Mumbles Head'	2020	1 digital video file, MP4 format	D/D Z 717/94

<i>Creator/originator</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Dates</i>	<i>Extent</i>	<i>Reference number</i>
Peter Hall Video Collection	Digital video entitled 'Edward George Taffy Bowen'	2020	1 video file in MP4 format (374 MB)	D/D Z 717/95
Private donation	Minutes of the Thomas Family Claimants Society	1860s-1950s	1 envelope	
City and County of Swansea, Lord Mayor's Office	Visitors' book recording visitors to the Mansion House, Swansea in connection with 50th anniversary celebrations of the grant of city status to Swansea	May 2019-Mar. 2020	1 vol.	CC/S LM 1/1
Llanrhidian Higher Community Council	Minutes	October-November 2020	2 files	P/111/45 (part)