

**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
12 March 2021**

**The purpose of this report is to
outline the work of the
Archive Service during the period
December 2020 to February 2021**

1. The COVID-19 pandemic

Last quarter's report to this Committee made the point that, in whatever form the Service is able to maintain some degree of operation, the Archives will continue to provide the widest range of service that it is able to, given the external circumstances and guidance issued. On 19 December, in the face of a rising infection rate, a national lockdown was announced at short notice by the First Minister. This necessitated the immediate closure of the limited searchroom service we had provided to that point, a situation which continues to the present date. Two members of staff have continued on a twice-weekly basis to check over the strongrooms, collect mail and carry out searches on behalf of other Council staff. We were able during the last quarter to install software to divert all telephone calls to a laptop PC, so have been able for the first time to answer from home phone calls to the general Archives number.

The pandemic has led to certain changes in work patterns which may be embedded in the way the Service operates in future. By way of example, no member of staff had ever worked from home until the first lockdown last March, but this has of necessity become a standard method of working which may become an option for a hybrid method of working in future, subject to public service demands. Similarly, online talks and paid-for family history sessions have proved a great success as people have become more familiar with using online meeting technology.

It is also worth noting that the three lockdowns will have affected the confidence to visit the archives of many of our older customers and those with limiting medical conditions, especially in a scenario where there remains low-level community transmission of the virus and uncertainty about the length of immunity offered by the vaccine. It is also not known how many of the Antiquarian Society volunteers will wish to return to the public enquiry desk once the Neath service point re-opens.

2. Outreach and educational activity

Commemorating the Three Nights' Blitz

19-21 February 2021 was the eightieth anniversary of Swansea's Three Nights' Blitz, which caused 230 deaths, 409 wounded casualties and the destruction of much of the town centre. To mark the anniversary, the Archive Service published an online memorial based on the official register of the civilian war dead throughout the Second World War. This contains 392 names, with information about where they were buried and how to find out more. A separate section of the memorial includes the names of the 26 people who died in Neath, Port Talbot, Pontrhydyfen and Skewen. The memorial is on the Archive Service website at www.swansea.gov.uk/article/60957.

Members will recall that, on the same date last year, the Service published a reprint of the 1994 work by Dr John Alban entitled *The Three Nights' Blitz*. On 19 February, Dr Alban gave an online talk about Swansea's air raids on behalf of the Archive Service. 176 people attended the live event and a large amount of positive feedback was received. An audio recording of the talk was made and has been uploaded to social media, where by the end of the reporting period it had been shared 119 times and had in excess of 2,000 hits.

Two films were produced by the Archive Service and posted on social media to tell the story of the Blitz from different perspectives. The first is based on a narration of the war diary of James R. John, a local journalist and Home Guard member, and the second uses photographs from the collections to depict the effect of the blitz on the town. There are Welsh and English versions of both films. The first has been viewed in excess of 2,600 times in total while the second has been viewed over 13,100 times. The two films and Dr Alban's talk can be accessed on the Archive Service website at www.swansea.gov.uk/article/61448.

The commemorations were publicised widely, including on our social media and in the press. There was a feature on the BBC Wales website (<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-wales-56082255>) and in the *South Wales Evening Post*.

Online educational resources and work with schools

During the quarter, school resources were added to the Learning for All section of the Archive Service website on the theme of the Three Nights' Blitz. The resources are aimed at both KS2 and KS3 and include photographs, maps, diary extracts and films from the collections. The Three Nights' Blitz school resource page has had 1,292 page views to date. See <https://www.swansea.gov.uk/article/57405/The-Three-Nights-Blitz>

The Service has been offering individual consultations with teachers who are interested in using the educational resources on offer. Meetings have been held with teachers from YGG Gwaun-cae-gurwen, Pontarddulais Comprehensive and Cefn Hengoed Comprehensive. With the phasing-in of the new curriculum, which contains an increased emphasis on local history (cynefin), there is scope for more engagement with secondary schools in the future.

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

The following is a brief update on last quarter's report, which outlined the project in greater detail. A discussion took place with officers from Welsh Government about how to best progress this. It was decided to widen the geographical scope of the project by re-issuing an invitation to all archives in Wales to join. This has so far brought in a number of new participants from across Wales, most notably the National Library of Wales. Welsh Government is seeking to find for us educational experts we can consult with, so that the finished resources are most useful to teachers. All participating archives have been asked to help create a resource bank of images to start with.

The Archive Service has also been closely involved with the planned unveiling of a plaque to the anti-slavery campaigner and activist, Jessie Donaldson 1799-1889, which is planned to be 'unveiled' virtually on 25 March next. The day is significant as the UN Day of Commemoration for the victims of the historic slave trade.

Use of social media

The Service continues to promote itself via the social media platforms of Facebook and Twitter. Two further films consisting of images taken from the collections were produced during the quarter. The first was timed to coincide with the second 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 films can be viewed here:

<https://www.facebook.com/pg/WestGlamorganArchives/videos/>

3. Former British Home Stores building

An opportunity has arisen for consideration of 275-277 Oxford Street Swansea, the former British Home Stores building, for conversion into a future archive repository, searchroom and Family History Centre. This would be alongside other uses for the building which would include a new Swansea Central Library and a Community Hub. Funding has been granted for an assessment by a Multi-Disciplinary Team of the potential conversion of this building. Major considerations for the Archives are whether the building has the potential to meet the British Standard 16893:2018 for archival storage and whether the conversion makes economic sense compared to the cost of an alternative solution such as a new-build. Welsh Government and The National Archives are providing advice and guidance throughout. At the suggestion of Welsh Government, the Service has also commissioned four days' work from an acknowledged expert in the field of archive building design. It has done this by taking out a subscription to the National Conservation Service.

4. Fees and charges

Members are asked to note the table of fees and charges for the coming financial year as provided in Appendix 1. These fees remain at 2020 levels.

5. Staff

Family History Centre Supervisor Lorna Crook left the Service on 5 December to take up employment with the NHS. She was a well-respected colleague and one very popular with family history users in both our Swansea and Neath service points. The post remains vacant.

6. Use of the Service

Statistics for December 2020 to February 2021

The number of members of public using the Service on-site, December 2020 to February 2021, was **26** and the total number reached by the Service on and off-site was **278**.

Number of on-site visits at Swansea, Neath and Port Talbot: 26 (1,134) (figures in brackets represent the same quarter last year), comprising:

Swansea	26	(681)
Neath	0	(256)
Port Talbot	0	(15)
Group visits	0	(182)
Number in audiences for off-site visits	267	(75)
Number of pupils reached by the Education Service	0	(71)
Numbers reached at special events	0	(0)
Total numbers reached on and off-site	293	(1209)
Number of documents issued in Swansea	241	(2034)
Number of documents issued in Neath	0	(111)
Number of post and email enquiries dealt with	798	(366)
Number of hits to the Archive Service website	TBC	(2,889)
Number of hits to the online catalogue	TBC	(1,587)
Number of hits to WGAS catalogues on Archives Hub	26,379	(17,158)
Number of hits to NAS catalogues on Archives Hub	1,123	(787)
Number of page views on Ancestry	174,036	(152,441)

7. Talks and professional meetings

Talks to groups have of necessity been curtailed by the pandemic. As well as the talk by Dr Alban referred to above, the Assistant County Archivist gave a presentation to Swansea University students and the County Archivist gave a talk to the Deputy Lieutenants, both talks given remotely. The County Archivist has attended a number of working groups during the quarter via MS Teams, including:

Chief Archivists in Local Government Group Executive
Parish Register Digitisation Working Group
South Wales Record Society Committee

8. Accessions of archive collections

A comprehensive list of archives received during the period December 2020 to February 2021 is attached at Appendix 2. Once again, the volume of accessions received was much reduced by the enforced lockdown and closure of the service. Mention must however be made of a collection of seven illuminated addresses presented at various times to Sir Henry Hussey Vivian between 1876 and 1893 by various Swansea groups and organisations, including one recording the grant of honorary freedom of the town to him. These beautifully-crafted addresses were purchased at auction by a collector in the south of England who on further reflection offered them to the Archives at their sale price. They have a civic value which makes it very fitting that they should find a home here in the Archives. More information on this collection will be included in the Archives annual report later in the year.

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CHARGES FROM APRIL 2021

Research	INCLUSIVE OF VAT
Commissioned research- individuals	£30.00 per hour (£15 per half hour)
Commissioned research- companies	£50.00 per hour (exclusive of VAT)
Family History training session	£10.00 per hour
Quick search	£5.00
Photocopies	INCLUSIVE OF VAT
A3 and A4 photocopies from documents/printout from microform	60p
Printout from PC	20p
A3 or A4 scan (printout, sent by email or placed on Dropbox)	£2.50 per image
Microfilm printouts and document copying (A3 and A4) (orders sent by post)	60p per sheet, £6 minimum charge
Certified copies	£10.50
Special or bulk orders: prices available on request	
Reproduction fees: publication	INCLUSIVE OF VAT
Non-commercial publications, articles for journals, theses	No charge, but a free copy of the publication will usually be requested
Books and periodicals- b/w- world rights	£65.00
Books and periodicals - colour- world rights	£130.00
Books and periodicals - b/w- English language rights	£32.50
Books and periodicals - colour- English language rights	£65.00
Reproduction fees: broadcast	EXCLUSIVE OF VAT
Rostrum filming in the searchroom	£105 per session (up to half day)
Broadcast of archive film footage or archive stills – Wales TV, single channel (one-off use)	£5.00 per second
Broadcast of archive film footage or archive stills – UK TV (Licensed for re-use over 5 years)	£10.00 per second
For more complex broadcast reproduction fees our terms and rates follow those of the National Screen and Sound Archive of Wales	
Swansea Hereditary Freedom certificates	INCLUSIVE OF VAT
A3, supplied only to eligible candidates	£50.00
Talks and school sessions	
Speaker fee for talks (evening talks only)	£25.00
School session delivered in the Archives	No charge
School session delivered at the school	£50.00 per class session

ACCESSIONS OF ARCHIVES
December 2020-February 2021

<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	Film of a recitation of a poem called 'Passing Seasons' by John The Poet From Swansea	2020	1 digital video file on CD-ROM (19.3 MB)	D/D Z 717/96
Private deposit	Bills and receipts from the estates of Mr George Looker, coal merchant of Bryn Newydd, Penyrheol, Gorseinon and Mr John Looker of Gwel-y-Don, 29 Penyrheol Road, Gorseinon.	1910-1933	1 bundle	
Port Talbot Methodist Circuit	Circuit plans	1964-1967	9 booklets	D/D Wes/CP 63-71
City and County of Swansea, Electoral Registration Section	Swansea electoral registers	2020-2021	2 vols., 2 files	CC/S RE 48-51
Private deposit	Collection of letters to and from Ben Noot of Neath, who served in the First World War. Also includes a diary of Ted Phillips of Glyn-neath, who served in the Second World War	1913-1945	2 crates	D/D Z 1102/1-15
Peter Hall Video Collection	Three videos: 'Ann of Swansea', 'Morfydd Llwyn Owen' and 'Sergeant William Charles Fuller VC Welsh Regiment'	2020	3 CD-ROMs containing video files in MP4 format (486 MB in total)	D/D Z 717/97-99
Photographic material	Postcards showing the Mumbles Train, girls at work at the Swansea and South Wales Institution for the Blind, and the visit of Edward VII and Queen Alexandra to Swansea, 1904	1904-1930	4 postcards	P/PR/21ii/1/2; P/PR/2/4/37; P/PR/2/3/20; P/PR/7/3/23

Creator/originator	Description	Dates	Extent	Reference number
Swansea Gospel Mission	60th and 70th anniversary booklets, and napkin from the celebration of the Queen's silver jubilee	1925-1977	3 items	D/D FC 9/1/1-3
Loughor Ecclesiastical Parish	Registers of services and banns	1976-2018	4 vols.	P/112/CW/154-157
Llanrhidian Higher Community Council	Minutes	January 2021	3 files	P/111/45 (part)
Undeb Bedyddwyr Cymru	'Y Negesydd' quarterly newsletter and annual report (Welsh and English versions)	2020-2021	10 leaflets, 2 booklets	D/D UBC
Photographic material	Postcard portrait of David Brynmor Jones, 1851-1921, barrister, historian and Liberal MP for Swansea District, 1895-1914, born in Swansea	c. 1890s	1 postcard	P/PR/117/2/4
Personal papers	Notebooks of Phyllis James, student teacher at Swansea Training College	1931-1932	3 vols	D/D Z 1105/1-3
Photographic material	Photographs of soldiers of 248 Battery stationed at Blackpill during the Second World War	1941	7 photographs	D/D Z 1075/2-8
Personal papers	Collection of illuminated addresses presented to Sir Henry Hussey Vivian	19th century	7 items	D/D Z 1104/1-7
Peter Hall Video Collection	Video on the life and work of Alfred Ernest Jones of Gowerton, Psychoanalyst	2021	1 digital video file, MP4 format (69.3 MB)	D/D Z 717/100
Private deposit	Photographs of Ernest Hayward during his time in the Swansea Home Guard. One photograph of Mumbles Train.	1940s	5 photographs; jpeg files	D/D Z 1103/1-7
Peter Hall Video Collection	Biographical film about Algernon Walker-Heneage-Vivian of Clyne Castle	2021	1 digital video file, MP4 format (77.3 MB)	D/D Z 717/101
Private donation	Two booklets of memories of Mike Lewis formerly of Port Tennant regarding the Three Nights' Blitz of Swansea	2000s	2 booklets	