

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 June 2021

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

1. The COVID-19 pandemic and service suspension

After being closed since 19 December, the Swansea searchroom reopened to the public on Tuesday 6 April on an appointment-only basis, following the easing of restrictions imposed by the latest national lockdown.

The searchroom is run in accordance with a Swansea Council risk assessment, Welsh Government guidelines and TNA guidance for archives and follows the same regime of maintaining social distance, facemask wearing and regular sanitising of work surfaces as was the case last autumn and is widespread in the archive sector. It is hoped the further easing of lockdown restrictions will shortly allow for, first, the re-opening of the Swansea Family History Centre and, later, the service in Neath to resume.

2. Outreach and educational activity

All outreach work during the quarter has been limited by the lockdown and of necessity confined to online engagement with our users and social media followers. We continue to engage with schoolteachers remotely and provide online educational resources for, mainly, primary schools. The Service also continues to promote itself via the social media platforms of Facebook and Twitter and has more recently added the medium of Microsoft Teams as a means to deliver online lectures and family history advice.

Online talks

A talk by Dr John Alban and Nigel Robbins, 'Swansea's Air Raids: Traces, Ordnance and Effects' took place on 21 May and was a follow-up to the talk by Dr Alban in February about the Swansea Blitz. It was attended by 59 people.

Social media posts

In March, we marked the 2021 census with social media posts showing how the census returns have changed over time.

In May, we took part in Local and Community History Month, which is organised by The Historical Association, by showcasing some of the resources we have for people interested in finding out about their local area.

Annual report

The Annual Report of the County Archivist 2020-2021 has now been published online with a summary of the year's activity and five local history articles ranging in subject from Neath's medieval borough charters to an unusual murder stone in a Felindre chapel graveyard. You can find the report at [Swansea - Annual Report of the County Archivist](#)

Project regarding sources for the history of Wales' connection with the historic slave trade

This project has grown during the last quarter and now encompasses almost all Welsh local archives together with Bangor, Swansea and Cardiff Universities. Very positive feedback has been received from the working group set up to review the Wales Curriculum with regard to this subject and the project is making steady, if somewhat slow, progress. Swansea University has proposed a similar project relating to creating online resources for pupils regarding the history of disability and WGAS has joined this project along with other local archives.

3. 277-278 Oxford Street Swansea (Former British Home Stores)

During the quarter, Swansea Council has appointed Coreus Group to head a Multi-Disciplinary Team (MDT) to develop the City Centre Community Hub project planned for 277-278 Oxford Street, as reported in March.

Amongst other tasks, the MDT will investigate whether a part of the building is capable of conversion to an archive repository which will meet British Standard 16893. The County Archivist has attended an initial exploratory meeting with the architect engaged by the Coreus Group, Neil Farquhar of Austin-Smith Lord Architects of Cardiff. A report on the suitability of the building for housing the archive will be issued in due course and the County Archivist will continue to liaise with the MDT to achieve this goal.

Agreement or otherwise on whether the building is suitable for the archives will in no way affect the suitability of other elements of the scheme, which follow a model of service delivery (Community Hub) which is being widely adopted across the UK and is supported by the grant providers, Welsh Government.

Advice on the requirements of archive building conversion work and how to proceed with preparatory work for removal of the archive collections has been obtained from the National Conservation Service.

4. Use of the Service

Statistics for March to May 2021

The number of members of public using the Service on-site, March to May 2021, was **63** and the total number reached by the Service on and off-site was **173**.

Number of on-site visits at Swansea, Neath and Port Talbot: 63 (142) (figures in brackets represent the same quarter last year), comprising:

Swansea	63	(142)
Neath	0	(68)
Port Talbot	0	(0)
Group visits	0	(0)
Number in audiences for off-site visits	110	(85)
Number of pupils reached by the Education Service	0	(35)
Numbers reached at special events	0	(0)
Total numbers reached on and off-site	173	(227)
Number of documents issued in Swansea	391	(312)
Number of documents issued in Neath	0	(17)
Number of post and email enquiries dealt with	1,004	(421)
Number of hits to the Archive Service website	3,249	(4,469)
Number of hits to the online catalogue	2,211	(749)
Number of hits to WGAS catalogues on Archives Hub	36,185	(20,428)
Number of hits to NAS catalogues on Archives Hub	1,836	(775)
Number of page views on Ancestry	202,035	(150,274)

5. Professional meetings

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

- Archives and Records Council Wales
- Welsh County Archivists Group
- Parish Register Digitisation Working Group

The County Archivist spoke at a webinar arranged by Archives South West (England) on managing digitisation projects. The subject matter of his presentation was the digitisation of the Welsh parish registers.

6. Accessions of archive collections

A comprehensive list of archives received during the period March to May 2021 is attached at Appendix 1.

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ACCESSIONS OF ARCHIVES
March-May 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
Published material	J Burrow & Co. Ltd., 'Swansea, Mumbles and the Gower Coast' guide book	1956	1 vol.	[Searchroom library]
Swansea St Luke's	Architect's survey of the pews, heating system and organ	2021	1 booklet, 1 CD-ROM	P/321/CW/72
Llanrhidian Higher Community Council	Minutes	Feb-Mar 2021	2 files	P/111/45 (part)
Private donation	'Cwm Clydach, Craigcefnparc. Hanes Gwaith Glo y Cwm - history & Glyn Coch Colliery' by Ioan M. Richard	2021	1 file	D/D Z 1073/4
Llanrhidian Higher Community Council	Minutes	Mar. 2021	1 file	P/111/45 (part)
Peter Hall Video Collection	Film entitled 'Petty Officer Edgar Evans, RN'	2021	1 digital video file, MP4 format, 174 MB	D/D Z 717/103
Private deposit	Photograph of a sign advertising Vivian House, Roman Bridge Close. Taken by John Harvey.	n.d.	1 photograph	
Peter Hall Video Collection	Film entitled 'Mumbles Lifeboat Disaster - William Gammon and Crew'	2021	1 digital video file, MP4 format, 297 MB	D/D Z 717/102-104
High Sheriff of West Glamorgan	Warrant and declaration of Mrs Joanna Lewis Jenkins as High Sheriff of West Glamorgan, and appointment of Robert Hywel Parker Williams as under sheriff	March 2021	3 papers	HS/W 47/1-3
Private donation	Watercolour painting of Norton Hall, Norton, viewed from the south	early 19th cent	1 watercolour painting	D/D Z 1106/1

Creator/originator	Description	Dates	Extent	Reference number
Private donation	Deeds of 1 Pell Street, Swansea, family photographs and other records relating to the Morris family	1851-1994	1 bundle	D/D Z 1107/1-8
	HSE Report into the Gleision Mine incident	15 September 2011	1 file	
Merched y Wawr	Lluniau a dogfennau sy'n dangos gweithgareddau Cangen Abertawe o'r Merched y Wawr rhwng 1971 a 2007	1971-2007	1 bundle	
Private donation	'The Swansea Clubs Snooker League 1956 to 1987'	1987	1 vol.	
Peter Hall Video Collection	Films about Sir Algernon McLennan Lyons, Swansea War Memorial and the memorial to the victims of the Three Nights' Blitz, New Cut Road.	2021	3 digital video files, MP4 format, 279 MB total	D/D Z 717/105-107
Parish of Ystalyfera	Marriage register, banns register and service register	1986-2018	3 vols	P/329/CW/37-39
Parishes of Swansea St Mary, Swansea St Matthew and Swansea Christ Church	Registers of baptisms and marriages (Christ Church), banns (St Matthew's) and service register (St Mary's)	1950-2017	5 vols.	P/317/CW/101-103; P/323/CW/26; P/123/CW/1378
Fusion Swansea	Oral history project conducted by Swansea Music Hub consisting of edited interviews with people involved in the music scene in Swansea, created in connection with the 50th anniversary of Swansea's city status	2019	25 digital audio recordings, MP3 format, approx. 700 MB in total	T 52/1/1-25
War Memories interview transcription	Transcription of an interview between Bernard Lewis and his father Private Glyndwr Lewis of his war service, 1944-1945 in the 2nd Battalion, the Monmouthshire Regiment.	2002	1 file	

<i>Creator/originator</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Dates</i>	<i>Extent</i>	<i>Reference number</i>
Private deposit	Bundle of photographs relating to Swansea people and places, newspaper cuttings relating to theatres and Swansea news in general, book from a Pontardawe author and newspaper cuttings and photographs relating to mining.	early 20th Century - late 20th Century	1 bundle	
Brian Curvis Boxing Ephemera	Programme and ticket from the Welterweight Championship of the World boxing match between Emile Griffiths and Brian Curvis (who was from Swansea) held at The Empire Pool and Sports Arena, Wembley. Also contains the removal receipt from Cyfartha Castle Museum and Art Gallery.	1964	3 items	
Peter Hall Video Collection	Films on the origin of street names and the history of the Swansea Jack memorial	2021	2 digital video files, MP4 format (1.25 Gb)	D/D Z 717/104, 108-110