

**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  
10 December 2021**

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

**1. The COVID-19 pandemic and service point reopening**

The Swansea service point is now operating by appointment only with a capacity of eight customers at any one time, four in the archive searchroom and four in the Family History Centre. The latter facility is under-used, as may be expected when many of our core users have lost the habit of dropping in as part of their social routine, however the archive searchroom is well-used (by these more limited standards), particularly by university students, amateur local historians and academics. The next steps for the Swansea service point in returning to normality will be to expand the service's opening hours towards back to where they were pre-Covid.

An onsite meeting took place on 29 November with Neath Port Talbot Council Health and Safety staff to identify what COVID safety measures would need to be in place for the Neath service point to re-open. At the point of writing this report, it is too early to outline these measures in detail (since they still need the agreement of both the Council and the Neath Antiquarian Society) but I hope to be able to give a verbal update in the meeting on what has been agreed. The key aim of reopening would be that public access to the Antiquarian Society's archives would be restored for researchers, rather than the family history service there.

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

The project has progressed during the quarter but the key question remaining is whether it is possible to integrate a secure archive storage area into the multi-use building in a manner 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* and BS 4971 *Conservation and care of archive and library collections*.

The Multi-Disciplinary Team (MDT) have undertaken a significant amount of work during the quarter towards achieving this goal, including commissioning assistance with detailed thermal modelling work from Chris Woods of the National Conservation Service. As reported previously, there are three key documents on which the decision depends (the fire and security risk assessments and a thermal modelling report) and these were re-issued by the MDT on 26 November.

Conformity with the two British Standards in turn affects the ability of the Service to meet the Archives Accreditation Standard and its status of recognition by The National Archives Kew as a local Place of Deposit for public records. As a result of this element of external regulation, Welsh Government and The National Archives will be the ultimate arbiters on whether the proposal meets the relevant criteria, and their considered response is not yet available at the time of writing.

In the last meeting, Members requested a report on the work that Carmarthenshire County Council undertook to create a purpose-built archive repository using Passivhaus standards. This report is attached at Appendix 1. It has been selected from original project documentation kindly provided by the Carmarthenshire County Archivist, to whom I am very grateful.

### **3. Accreditation review**

Since late 2019, the Accreditation status of the Archive Service has been set as provisional, while Swansea Council sought a suitable alternative home for the collections. Provisional status requires an annual assessment, the date for review falling on 4 November this year. The Panel confirmed the continuation of provisional status for a further year.

The Accreditation Panel were *“pleased to see [Swansea] Council seeking appropriate expert advice on meeting relevant standards as part of preparatory work towards a new home for West Glamorgan Archive Service.... The Panel note that to move back to the full award of Accreditation, it will be essential to have a plan which meets the needs of collections and their users, and safeguards the unique heritage of West Glamorgan for future generations.”*

### **4. Outreach and educational activity**

#### ***Service to schools***

The Service has this autumn relaunched its service to schools using remote meetings on Microsoft Teams as a means to deliver each learning session. Two schools have so far taken part, reaching 138 pupils in total:

Casllwchwr (on the subject of the Three Nights' Blitz)  
Gowerton (on the subject of the Elba Colliery disaster)

A remote learning session consists of the archivist sharing the selected material beforehand with the teacher, introducing the same resources to the pupils in the lesson via Teams, setting them a number of tasks and then holding a feedback

session at the end. Although not as effective as a hands-on session for children in the archives, these could represent a more economical replacement for a visit by Archives staff to a school site, particularly for more rural schools, where travel time is a significant cost to the service.

The County Archivist also trialled a module entitled 'Black lives in eighteenth century Wales' with Swansea secondary school history teachers after attending their network meeting. No feedback from them has as yet been received.

### ***External events***

In another first since the pandemic, the County Archivist staffed a WGAS bookstall at the Glamorgan History Society Day School in Bridgend on Saturday 30 October. This was the first face-to-face local history meeting held for some time and, although not well-attended, represented a welcome step away from remote meetings.

### ***Explore Your Archive***

Each year, a nationally co-ordinated campaign to raise awareness of archives takes place in November called 'Explore Your Archive'. Of necessity, the last two years have been dominated by social media marketing around a number of set themes. The Archive Service took part in the campaign by providing images to the campaign co-ordinator using a number of nationally chosen hashtags, such as 'Going Digital', 'Conservation Nightmare' etc.

## **5. Use of the Service**

### ***Statistics for September to November 2021***

The number of members of public using the Service on-site, September to November 2021, was **175** and the total number reached by the Service on and off-site was **313**.

Number of on-site visits at Swansea, Neath and Port Talbot 175 (120) (figures in brackets represent the same quarter last year), comprising:

Swansea	175	(120)
Neath	0	(0)
Port Talbot	0	(0)
Group visits	0	(0)
Number in audiences for off-site visits	138	(0)
Number of pupils reached by the Education Service	138	(0)
Numbers reached at special events (including exhibitions)	0	(0)
Total numbers reached on and off-site	313	(81)
Number of documents issued in Swansea	1,263	(793)
Number of documents issued in Neath	0	(0)
Number of post and email enquiries dealt with	656	(897)
Number of hits to the Archive Service website	N/A	(3,193)

Number of hits to the online catalogue	N/A	(421)
Number of hits to WGAS catalogues on the Archives Hub	N/A	(26,267)
Number of hits to NAS catalogues on the Archives Hub	N/A	(1,430)
Number of page views on Ancestry	163,543	(186,872)

## 6. Professional meetings

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

- Archives and Records Council Wales
- Chief Archivists in Local Government Group Executive
- Welsh County Archivists Group
- Welsh Vital Digital Records Working Group

## 7. Accessions of archive collections

A comprehensive list of archives received during the period September to December 2021 is attached at Appendix 2. An interesting accession during the quarter came courtesy of Swansea Council's Planning Section and is a survey of land use in the County Borough in 1949/50, together with a later survey undertaken in 1977. Although these records have yet to be reviewed in depth, they potentially are of interest both to geographers and to local historians.

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### REPORT ON THE DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION OF CARMARTHENSHIRE ARCHIVES

Members may recall that Carmarthenshire County Council was at one stage considering a joint facility with West Glamorgan Archives and Swansea University. However, a decision was made in 2016 by that Council to create a Carmarthenshire-only facility and it was then decided with a budget of £2.6m to build an extension to Carmarthen Library with an archive repository built to Passivhaus standards.

The news story at this link gives more outline detail on the public aspect of this project:  
<https://www.walesonline.co.uk/news/wales-news/work-start-new-26m-archive-14677230>.

The following information is more technical and is selected to show the parallel process undertaken by that Council in designing its archive repository. To avoid any confusion, it is worth noting that the British Standard in operation at the time of the planning work described here was PD 5454 which had in turn replaced BS 5454. This has now been superseded by BS EN 16893 and BS 4971, which are the Standards referenced in Swansea Council documents. Although the numbers have changed, the Standards remain fundamentally similar between different versions.

#### Design Brief

At the outset Carmarthenshire County Council was extremely mindful of the high level of energy costs associated with document repositories to comply with the requirements of the previous BS5454:2000 which set out the requirement for close control air conditioning for repositories with a temperature range of 13 to 16°C ± 1°C (on either side) and a humidity range of 45 to 60% RH ± 5% (on either side) so with the update to this standard with PD5454: 2012 where the control conditions were relaxed for the repositories and allowing the conditions to vary for seasonal changes with the internal conditions allowed to fluctuate between 13 to 20°C and 35 to 60% RH, this allowed for an alternative approach to the construction and servicing of this new facility in Carmarthen.

Herefordshire Council had recently completed the construction of their Herefordshire Archives and Records Centre (HARC) facility using Passivhaus principles and following a site visit and further discussions it was decided that replicating the Passivhaus design for the Carmarthen Archive would be the preferred solution. Piers Sadler Consulting (heavily involved with the HARC project) was employed as part of the design team to provide guidance to the in-house design team and Carmarthenshire County Council.

Piers Sadler produced a pre-planning advice document (see next section below) outlining the Passivhaus principles to the construction. A Passive House Planning Package (PHPP) model was developed by him to inform the initial guidance for the building construction, air tightness and environmental conditioning. The report shows that the environmental conditions within the repositories would remain well within the required temperature limits.

The key points from this report are:

- Building construction using materials with a high thermal inertia and high levels of insulation to maintain stable internal space temperatures;

- An extremely airtight construction to minimise natural air infiltration and moisture ingress to maintain stable humidity levels;
- Minimise the heating load in winter and providing minimal space heating to maintain a minimum space temperature of 14°C.
- Minimise the summer heat and humidity impact from the outside ambient air by providing supply air into each repository where this supply air is de-humidified to maintain stable environmental conditions.

#### **Taken from the preliminary Piers Sadler report 2017:**

Archive buildings present significant challenges in terms of structure, fire resistance and hygrothermal stability. The benefits of simplicity in form and construction cannot be overstated for the success of a building such as this.

The proposed strategy is to couple the repository with the ground (no floor insulation) thereby keeping the repository relatively cool so that it needs a small amount of heating in winter but no cooling in summer. An air permeability of less than 0.2m/h is recommended as a provisional target for the repository. This is easily achieved with a simple form and good details using 'plaster' as the air barrier. This level of airtightness is to help ensure stable conditions with the proposed passive environmental control and is beyond the normal Passivhaus requirements which would apply to an office building. Preliminary modelling indicates that this strategy should be workable with a simple form, no windows, constructions and internal heat gains.

#### **Taken from the Piers Sadler pre-planning advice note**

The Carmarthen Archive project provides an opportunity to build on the experience from Herefordshire Archives and Records Centre (the first archive in the UK built to Passivhaus standards), achieving the required environmental conditions with very simple and low cost heating ventilation and air-conditioning (HVAC) systems. The proposed new building includes a repository of about 420m<sup>2</sup> and adjacent office and ancillary spaces of about 270m<sup>2</sup>. The requirement for the building, including the office and the repository is to meet the Passivhaus Standard. In addition, for the office, the intention is to optimise the design for the building users by:

- achieving better than Passivhaus levels of over-heating
- design glazing for optimal daylight and views out.

The additional requirements for the repository are:

- to meet the standards set out in PD5454
- to achieve this with simple HVAC plant and controls to avoid the high capital and operating costs of the complex plant which is typical of such buildings.

PD5454 stipulates the following environmental conditions for a repository of this type:

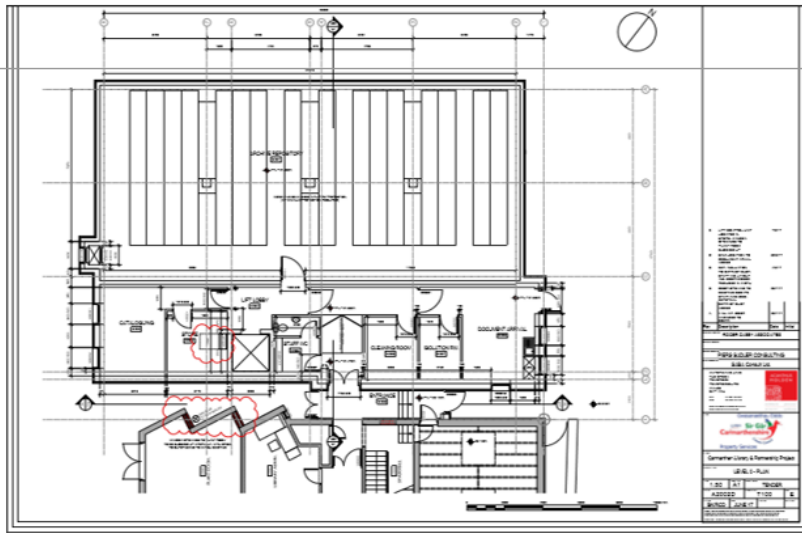
- indoor temperature 13-20°C
- relative humidity 35-60%

The PD temperature requirements are lower than those of a typical office building and therefore this can help keep the overall energy demand down. This makes achieving the

Passivhaus energy demand more straight forward and means that the principal challenge for the building design is the simplification of the HVAC plant for the repository.

## Floor plans

### Level 0 Floor Plan



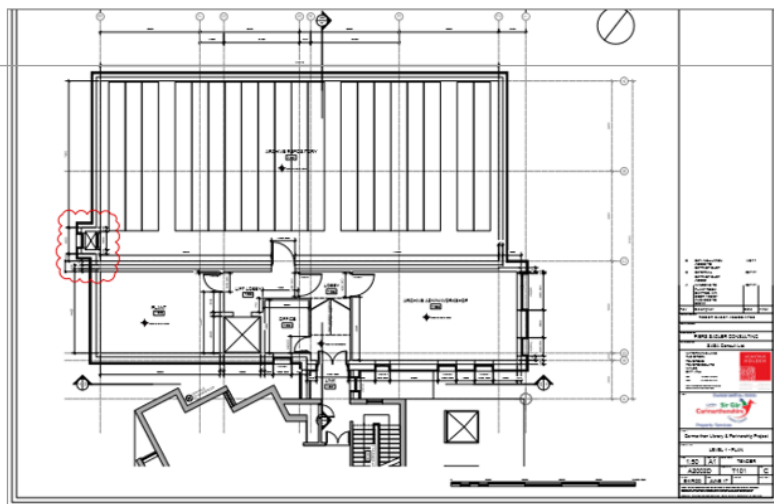
**Includes:**

- Document Arrival
- Isolation Room
- Cleaning Room
- Staff WC
- Store
- Cataloguing Room
- Lift Lobby
- Archive Repository



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### Level 1 Floor Plan



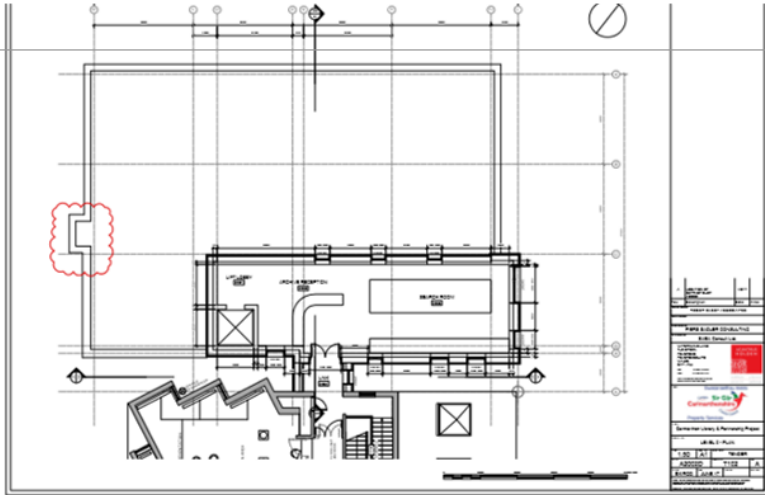
**Includes:**

- Archive Admin / Workshop
- Lobby
- Office
- Plant
- Lift Lobby
- Archive Repository



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# Level 2 Floor Plan



## Includes:

- Search Room
- Archive Reception
- Lift Lobby



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**ACCESSIONS OF ARCHIVES**  
**September-November 2021**

<b><i>Creator/originator</i></b>	<b><i>Description</i></b>	<b><i>Dates</i></b>	<b><i>Extent</i></b>	<b><i>Reference number</i></b>
Morrison Senior Citizens Guild, Men's Section	Membership and financial records	c. 1960s-1990s	1 bag	D/D MSC
Port Talbot Secondary School	Photograph of pupils at the Secondary School, Port Talbot and the exterior of the County School, Gowerton [now Ysgol Gyfun Gŵyr]	early 20th cent.-1948	2 photographs	D/D Z 1092/2-3
Private deposit	Conveyance of land for the [Old] School, Knelston	1876	1 deed	E/W 35/2/1
Parish of South West Gower	Annual Vestry and PCC minutes	2004-2020	2 files	
Trebannos School	Photograph of teacher and pupils	1 Dec. 1907	1 postcard	E/W 41/4/1
Pantygwydr Baptist Church	Deacons' minutes and records relating to the Ladies' Fellowship	late 20th-early 21st century	2 bags	
Private deposit	Photographs of Dynevor School basketball team	1980s	1 envelope	
Peter Hall Video Collection	Two biographical films about local RAF pilots in the Second World war, Wing Commander Frederick 'Taffy' Higginson and Wing Commander Hubert Raymond Allen (Dizzy), and a film documenting the return to Swansea and Gower of Karen Penny of Pennard from a fundraising walk	2021	3 CD-ROMs containing video files in MP4 format (789 MB)	D/D Z 717/117-119
Fusion Swansea	Collection of finished films and the oral history interviews used in them, relating to Swansea change-makers, Swansea as a City of Sanctuary and Tabernacle Chapel, Morrison	2020	54 audio and video files in MP4 and MP3 format, 31.9 GB	

<b>Creator/originator</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Dates</b>	<b>Extent</b>	<b>Reference number</b>
Private deposit	Deeds relating to Clase Farm, Llangyfelach, 1876-1890; receipts for Howells Bros and Canton Stores, 1909-1925; quarterly charge for pews at Caersalem Newydd Chapel, 1870s	1876-1925	1 bundle	D/D Z 1060/2-4
Peter Hall Video Collection	Films on the dog graves in Clyne Gardens, and on the Mumbles Railway	2021	2 CD-ROMs containing files in MP4 format (300 MB)	D/D Z 717/120-121
Soar Welsh Independent Church, Seven Sisters	Papers relating to the church Jubilee, 1951; annual reports 1988-1993; various histories of the cause, 1924 and 1951 and collection of papers relating to singing at the church, 1901-1951	1901-1993	1 bundle	D/D Ind 26/77a, 79a-c, 218-221
Clydach Heritage Centre	Film entitled 'Make Yourself Necessary', on the contribution of the Mond Nickel Works to the war effort in the First World War	2021	1 DVD	T 33/4
The Gower Society	CD-ROM containing layout, text and images for Gower Society publication 'A Pocket Guide to Gower'	2019	1 CD-ROM	D 56/6/53d
Parish of Cwmtawe Uchaf	Marriage registers for St David's Abercraf, Callwen, Capel Coelbren and St Cynog's Ystradgynlais	1971-2020	6 vols.	P/300/CW/85; P/301/CW/21; P/303/CW/25; P/331/CW/175-177
Private deposit	County Borough of Swansea. Route for Military Traffic from St Thomas to Lon-Las via B4292 and the unclassified roads. Scale 20 feet: 1 inch	November 1941	1 plan	
Peter Hall Video Collection	Film entitled 'The Gardener's Shed, Clyne Gardens, Mayals, by Allan Evans'	2021	1 CD-ROM containing video file in MP4 format (110 MB)	D/D Z 717/122

<b>Creator/originator</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Dates</b>	<b>Extent</b>	<b>Reference number</b>
Siloh Newydd, Landore	Bundle containing newspaper cuttings, musical programmes and orders of service	1906-1995	1 bundle	
Parish of Glantawe	Records for St Margaret's Church, Bonymaen and St Peter's Church, Pentrechwyth, including baptisms, marriages, banns, service and confirmation registers, PCC and Easter Vestry minutes, quinquennial inspection reports, faculties, parish annual reports, and (from St Peter's) a First World War roll of honour and commemorative photographic presentation	early 1900s-2021	1 carload	P/304/CW/16-42
HMP Swansea	Carmarthen Prison men's nominal registers	1894-1906	2 vols	
Private donation	Group photographs of policemen, including Swansea Borough Police Force	1910s-1940s	1 bundle	
Parish of Penlle'rgaer	Registers of baptisms 1970-2016 and burials 1961-2008	1961-2016	2 vols.	P/315/CW/57-58
Private deposit	Papers relating to Mr Brian Simpson, president of RISW, including RISW material; files relating to High Sheriff duties & photograph album of military service in India pre independence	20th cent	1 vol, 1 box & 2 bundles	
Private donation	Scanned copies of photographs of Elias Evans, print compositor at South Wales Daily Post	c. 1920-1931	4 digital image files (JPG format, 148 MB)	
Private donation	Research on garden staff at Penllergare Mansion, based on available census returns (1841-1911)	2021	2 digital files, PDF format	

<b>Creator/originator</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Dates</b>	<b>Extent</b>	<b>Reference number</b>
Private deposit	Wartime memories of Muriel Wheeler, who was 12 at the beginning of the Second World War. Typewritten notes by Muriel with memories of wartime in Swansea, air raids, the Three Nights Blitz etc. Also the cover letter from Derek Hopkins.	c. early 1990s	6 papers	
Private donation	Ystalyfera Ironworks records; Swansea Canal photographs; Copperworks records		3 bundles	D/D Z 80
Swansea and Port Talbot Docks History Website	Scanned copies of photographs used in the website ( <a href="http://www.swanseadocks.co.uk">www.swanseadocks.co.uk</a> )	19th-20th century	1 USB memory card containing files in JPG format (2.12 GB)	
HMP Swansea	Illustrated London News (bound volume)	1892	1 vol.	
Fusion Swansea oral history project	Interview with Martin Nichols, Director of Place, City and County of Swansea, regarding the effects of Covid-19 lockdown	21 Apr. 2020	1 digital audio file, MP3 and WAV versions, 316 MB in total	
Papers of Charles Morgan of Cae-forgan, Llanrhidian	Diaries, letters, photographs, sketch books, bank book, travel diaries and other records; also title deeds relating to Parc-y-rhedyn and Cae-forgan farms, Llanrhidian, 1698-1872	1698-1870s	2 box files, 1 bag	

<b>Creator/originator</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Dates</b>	<b>Extent</b>	<b>Reference number</b>
Swansea Registry Office	Marriage registers for the parishes of Bishopston, Nicholaston, Ilston, Penmaen, Pennard, Llanddewi, Oxwich, Penrice, Port Eynon, Reynoldston, Rhossili, Cheriton, Llangennith, Llanmadoc, Llanrhidian, Llanyrnewydd, Llangyfelach and Sketty, and Ebenezer Welsh Independent Chapel, Dunvant, closed under the Civil Partnerships, Marriages and Deaths (Registration) Act 2019	1959-2021	33 registers	P/104/CW/10-11; P/109/CW/33; P/110/CW/11-12; P/111/CW/17-20; P/314/CW/14-15; P/107/CW/19; P/114/CW/24-25; P/118/CW/16; P/119/CW/104; P/120/CW/34; P/121/CW/33; P/103/CW/76; P/105/CW/22; P/113/CW/116; P/116/CW/50; P/117/CW/148; P/316/CW/285-286; P/58/CW/74; D/D Ind 11/61-67
Private donation	Further records relating to Swansea Canal; plan of Pontardawe Steelworks c.1880	1880s-2000s	6 files; 1 rolled plan; loose items	Add to D/D Z 80
Private donation	Books on Swansea and Port Talbot docks and harbour	20th cent.	2 boxes	
Merched y Wawr	Cofnodion Rhanbarth Gorllewin Morgannwg	2018-2021	1 bwndel	
Peter Hall Video Collection	Film entitled 'German Luftwaffe Observer Kurt Brand Killed Swansea 1943'	2021	1 digital video file, MP4 format, 43 MB	
Printed material	Brigadier J. Gwynne Morgan biography	2021	1 vol.	
Peniel Welsh Baptist Chapel, Glais	Membership records and financial ledgers	Early 20th cent.-early 21st cent.	1 bag	
Private deposit	Photographs and papers relating to the Swansea Canal Society	20th century	1 large box	

<b><i>Creator/originator</i></b>	<b><i>Description</i></b>	<b><i>Dates</i></b>	<b><i>Extent</i></b>	<b><i>Reference number</i></b>
Private deposit	Photographs, newspaper cuttings and letter relating to John John, manager of Lloyds Bank, Morriston,	1916-1936	1 bundle	
Private deposit	Souvenir leaflet relating to the matinee showing of Sir Alan Cobham's "Historic Empire Flights" at the Swansea Empire 4th May 1927; souvenir leaflet for Sir Alan Cobham's National Aviation Day	1920s	2 items	
County Borough of Swansea	Land Use Survey	1949-1977	29 boxes	