

Glamorgan Archives



DISCOVERING THE PAST

1 March 2016- 28 February 2017



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Introduction

Welcome to Glamorgan Archives' 7th Annual Report describing activities during the period from
1 March 2016 to 28 February 2017.

Wellcome News!

You might recall 2016 as a year of popular culture gloom and political division but for Glamorgan Archives it has been a welcome return to service as usual with much to celebrate.

Years of planning were rewarded with a successful bid for funding to the Wellcome Trust to support a project to conserve and catalogue the records of the National Coal Board (NCB). At £203,456 this is the second largest Research Resources Grant awarded in the UK, and the largest ever awarded in Wales. A poem by Mervyn Peake supplied the project's title, Glamorgan's Blood: Dark Arteries, Old Veins. The funding pays for staff and materials, an archivist for 3 years to catalogue and a conservator for 2 years to address the preservation needs of the collection.

The NCB collection is one of our largest and, despite the often confusing finding aids, is the fifth most frequently consulted. Its content is of interest to genealogists, academic researchers, and evidential users. It has been particularly important for regeneration projects building on potentially contaminated or undermined land and the records have been used by researchers from the 'Disability and Industrial Society' project at Swansea University. An accurate and detailed catalogue will enable access and engagement through this central facet of the region's history. Coal fuelled the development of Glamorgan, attracted its population and fed its ports which exported materials and technology to the world. The steam coal seams of the central south Wales coalfield required innovative production methods to enable extraction from deep pits. The developments were of major international significance and attract academic interest from across the world. They also supported a large population in communities now classed as areas of multiple deprivation but with a passionate interest and pride in their heritage. The NCB records have a major role to play in engaging with people in these communities and opening up the past to future generations.





Mines (Coal), Wa. 18 Form.

COAL MINES REGULATION ACT, 1887.
(50 & 51 Vict. c. 58).
Section 33, and Schedule Three, Parts A. and B.

FORMS OF RETURNS.

These Forms to be correctly filled up by the Owner, Agent, or Manager, and sent to the Inspector of the District, on behalf of the Secretary of State, on or before 21st January, every year.

PART A.

Your ending 31st December, 1889.

Name of Mine Park
 Situation of Mine Gwyn-park Tredeky
 County Glamorgan
 Name and Address of Owner (Company) The Glamorgan Coal Co. Ltd. Tredeky, Glamorganshire
 Name of Manager Daniel Brown
 No. of his Certificate 1824
 Name of Under-Manager
 No. and Class of his Certificate
 Postal Address of Mine Gwyn-park Tredeky

Name and Address of H.M. Inspector of Mines for the District:-
J. T. Robson, Esq.
 WALES ROAD,
 SWANSEA.

Notes.—The Inspectors of Mines are not required to supply this Form unless application is made for a copy. It is imperative under the Act that the Returns be sent within the time imposed.



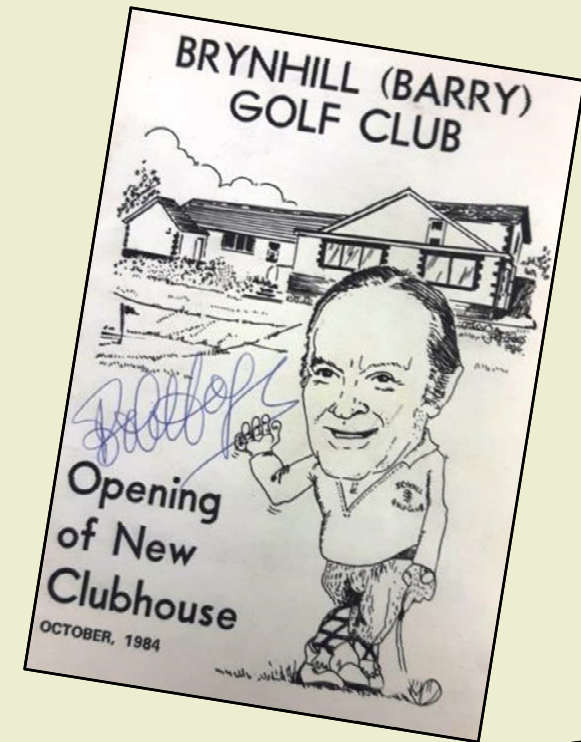
The collection is composed of over 50 separate accessions deposited between 1957 and 2002. There are records of pre nationalisation collieries, of pits operated by the NCB, and plans and photographs relating to the whole South Wales Area. Preliminary cataloguing was achieved through an Archives and Records Council Wales (ARCW) grant and focused on the pre-vesting date (1 January 1947) records. The pits and companies which became the large combines later absorbed on nationalisation were identified and information gained was an invaluable stage in preparations for the current, much more ambitious project. Our archivist, Louise Clarke, started in December and has been cataloguing and posting updates on social media. Recruitment for the conservator has begun.

The Collection

Conservation

ARCW funding has also enabled the detailed listing of South Wales Police and Police Authority records, the sorting of vehicle historian Chris Taylor's extensive collection in preparation for a volunteer indexing project, and a scoping study on the Cardiff Bay Development Corporation collection ahead of another major funding bid.

External funding for large cataloguing projects is essential as a reduced staff manages a constant stream of new accessions, currently averaging 4 a week across the year. Notable accessions this year have included a quantity of records arising from the reorganisation and closure of local magistrates' courts and a very welcome increase in records of sporting associations including a collection from the former Captain of Brynhill Golf Club, Barry. A substantial collection of records has been deposited from Glamorgan Anglers Club which was established in 1904 and has over 800 members. Records deposited commence in 1925 and include minutes, reports and news cuttings. Such records provide a valuable insight into the sporting and social aspects of angling in south Wales and the Club's involvement with environmental issues. The deposit was featured on BBC Wales News.



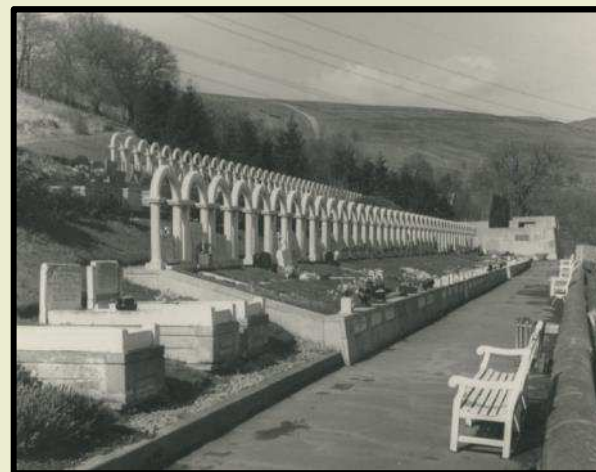
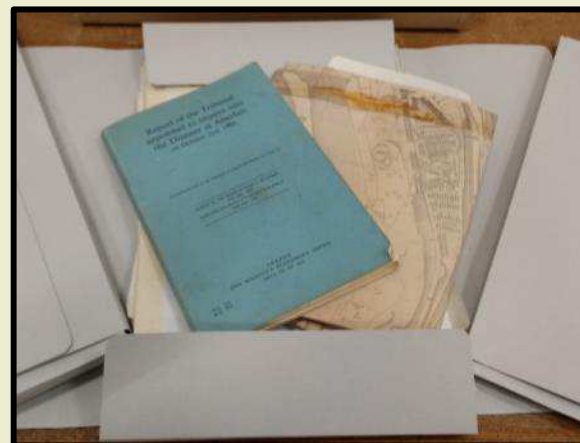
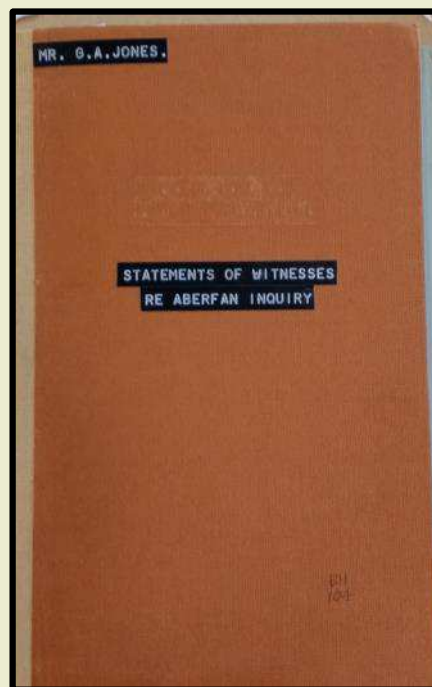


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Another fascinating collection told the career of Richard Walker of Cardiff, who spent time in the Antarctic in the 1930s on board the John Briscoe and Discovery II survey ships. In January 1937 he and five colleagues were reported missing in a blizzard. The group was lost for twelve days; the search and rescue operation was closely followed by the press in Britain. Richard Walker won the Polar Medal for helping to man-haul a sledge with three others, to rescue an American aviator, Lincoln Ellsworth, who had crash-landed while attempting to become the first person to fly over the Antarctic in 1936. In January 1940 he was awarded the Bronze Medal of the Royal Lifeboat Institution for helping to rescue the crew of a trawler. The collection includes an album and scrapbook with photographs from the Antarctic expeditions.

Back in Glamorgan there have been deposits from several local branches of Plaid Cymru, including Merthyr Tydfil, Llanbradach, Caerphilly, Whitchurch and Dinas Powys, additions to the papers of Terence H O'Neill, a Plaid Cymru activist in Cardiff, and material from Alan Jobbins, who has been responsible for encouraging the deposit of many of the branch records. A timely deposit was made in September of the Aberfan and Merthyr Vale Tip Removal Committee records, 50 years after the tragedy. The committee was formed by local residents to campaign for the full removal of the tips.



Engagement

Grant funding is also key to our community engagement, often leading us into unexplored and unexpected territory as well as enabling long-term partnerships. A minor involvement in a previous project with Art Shell, a Cardiff-based organisation which explores arts practice with non-art organisations, led to an artist residency, with support from Made in Roath and Warp at the G39 Gallery, funded through Arts Council Wales. The Out of the Box project allowed Simon Fenoulhet to explore the Collection through the senses to recreate the intangible. He shared his more visual finds on social media which led to articles on Wales Online and in the Western Mail's Saturday supplement. Photographs of street lighting from Cardiff Council's records and of fish and marine life by J.J. Neale of Neale and West trawlers were particularly popular.



The residency closed with a public event at the Archives. A bus was arranged to transport attendees from the city centre. En route refreshments included cakes and biscuits baked by Simon from recipes in the Collection. A short tour of the building was followed by a talk from the artist on his experience. Students from the Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama closed the event with a performance of 'A Song for Barry' (another of Simon's discoveries). Although the residency has ended, a public performance of 'A Song for Barry' is planned for 2017 with students from Barry Comprehensive School. We are discussing future projects with the partners.



Other successful partnerships pursued during the year through externally sourced grant funding have included work with Head4Arts, VCS Cymru, Cardiff University's CAER project, South East Wales Biodiversity Records Centre (for the Mary Gillham archive) and Cardiff People First. The partnership with the latter began with their project to produce an exhibition about Ely Hospital. Members were filmed explaining their research and how it had impacted on them for Explore your Archive week. During the 2016 International Council on Archives (ICA) Congress in Seoul, Korea, the ICA Section of Professional Associations (SPA) hosted a Film Festival on Archives and Records Management. There were 66 entrants in three categories from across the world and nine films were nominated. We submitted in two categories and were nominated, with the Cardiff People First film, for the Importance and Value of Archives. Ours was the only UK entry to make the final cut, which was exciting enough, though we were even more thrilled to win the category. The joint success was celebrated in professional and local media including a live broadcast on Radio Cardiff. The film can be seen on the YouTube channel via our website.

Access

On-site access remains steady with 3,285 individual searchroom visits from a total footfall to the building of almost 7,500, while 3,375 remote enquiries received a response. Groups visiting are toured around the building and see a selection of records tailored to their interests; many register and return to conduct research. Among groups welcomed this year have been family history classes from Rhondda Cynon Taf, Cardiff University, Cowbridge, Penarth and Treorchy, local historians from Tonteg and Church Village, Rhondda Cynon Taf, the Insole Court Over 50s club, Eglwys Newydd WI, members of Bay Life Archives, NADFAS South Wales branch, and Friends of Bristol Museum.

Primary, secondary and higher education students visit in groups for workshops; 21 classes have been received this year, 469 students, from all over Glamorgan. Transport for some school visits was provided through grant funding. Schools unable to visit can now access the workshops on Victorian Glamorgan, World Wars 1 and 2, Coal and the Docks, and Shopping in the Past via Welsh Government's Creative Learning Portal and as a download from the Archives' website.



Takeover Day was successfully repeated, this time with Goetre Primary, Merthyr Tydfil. The children were busy in all areas, registering visitors, producing records in the searchroom, cleaning documents and checking bug traps, identifying photographs, writing a blog, taking over social media, and more! Transport costs were covered by the From Fort to Pit to Port Pioneer Area Initiative as an exchange between Cardiff and Merthyr Tydfil with Grangetown Primary School taking over Cyfarthfa Castle Museum on the same day. The exchange demonstrated the links between industrial Glamorgan and the coast, illustrating the inter-dependence of the coal and iron producing areas and the means of export from Cardiff Docks. The Children's Commissioner for Wales, Sally Holland, attended on the day. A Kids in Museums volunteer, currently studying at Cardiff University, helped out, as did several of our own volunteers.

Staff promoted the educational service at events including Welsh Government's Schools Enrichment Showcase, Cardiff University's Think Archival, and Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council's John Hopla Society's local history schools awards.



Social media is a continuing success, promoting the service and highlighting achievements and events with minimum staff input. Many of our blog posts are written by volunteers, and local print and on-line media reproduce these stories and give them even wider circulation. Staff are regular speakers on radio and appeared on television several times over the year. Television programmes filmed in the searchroom have included local celebrities, Colin Jackson, Ioan Griffiths and Suzanne Packer using archives to inform a variety of topics.

The new room off the search room gives us even more scope to host public events and temporary exhibitions. In addition to the end of project presentation from Simon Fenoulhet on Out of the Box, authors have presented their recent publications in public lectures: A lingering fear: the story of Pontypridd workhouse by Keith Jones, Bad Girls: crime and prostitution, 1870-1914 by Elizabeth Belcham, Voices of Mametz Wood by Dr Jonathan Hicks, Wales-China by Ena Neidergang. Andrew Hignell explored the history of cricket in south Wales in From Meadowland to Moneyspinner while Dylan Foster Evans gave a Welsh language exploration of Enwau Lleoed Caerdydd (Cardiff's place names). Additional costs, sometimes including refreshments, for these events are met by grant funding. The cricket tea was especially well received.

Exhibitions displayed are generally linked to partnership projects. Lessons In Time was produced by People Like Us working on education in east Cardiff; Head4Arts Who Do I Think I Was project explored creative responses to World War 1 with communities in the heads of the valleys based on documents in both Glamorgan and Gwent Archives; Cardiff People First's display rounded off their multicultural heritage project. The exhibitions and talks promote our partnership successes and attract different audiences to the building.

It is also pleasing to report that our international networking has continued with regular contact from colleagues seeking advice and a benchmarking visit from a Botswanan delegation, led by Mrs Tlhabologo Ndzingo, Senior Manager at the Ministry of Lands and Housing. The visit was to assist in planning a review of records management and archive buildings in Botswana, 50 years after independence. The recently appointed Ukrainian Ambassador to the UK, Natalia Galibarenko, called at the Archives during her visit to Cardiff. She was interested in the building and saw documents and photographs from Hughesovka, now Donetsk, the Ukrainian city founded by Merthyr born industrialist, John Hughes, in 1870.



Staff

Staff expertise is shared closer to home as well. This year we have contributed to the Archives Accreditation Panel and the Archives and Records Association (ARA) National Survey Working Group at a UK level. Within Wales, staff sit on the National Conservation Strategy group, the Digital Preservation Project Board, the ARCW Marketing Group, and the Fusion Programme group for Welsh Government. We have attended planning meetings for Wales Remembers - Cymru'n Cofio on World War 1 commemorations and for International Women's Day events in south Wales. Our opinion has been sought for the formal evaluations of the Fusion programme, the National Library of Wales' strategic plan, and proposals for a national provision for architectural records.

Although staff rarely accept external speaking engagements exceptions have been made to share experience of grant funding through the National Manuscripts Conservation Trust at the Big Reveal, an all Wales conference, and at the ARA Wales conference, while income generation strategies were shared at the Archives and Records Council Wales Forum.





Volunteers have contributed 6763 hours to the service this year, the equivalent of 4 full-time members of staff. Their hours have been reduced as there were fewer staff to supervise them but their contribution remains essential. They have worked on digitising, cleaning, indexing and transcription on subjects as diverse as Cardiff Crew Agreements, Women's Institute scrap books, hospital records, Cardiff Constabulary registers of criminals, Poor Law Union registers, the diaries of Richard Fothergill, Petty Sessions depositions and the impact on local communities of the struggle for women's suffrage. One of our regular volunteers has researched Cardiff Corporation employees killed on active service in World War 1. She and the Senior Archivist have presented some of the stories at memorial services in Cardiff this year. Conservation students from Cardiff University work with the team repairing volumes, exchanging their up to date academic knowledge for practical experience in real time.

The future

Income generation, grant funding and budget savings are now central to our future. Solar panels on the roofs have already reduced electricity costs, all non-occupied space in the building is rented out, and the Conservation Team has an income target of its own for selling custom-made boxes, advice, and bench work. We are exploring on-line payments through Cardiff Council, increasing access to digitised images from the Collection through pay-per-view and subscription sites, and have created a large donations box for the small change. Staffing is very tight and there is no slack in the budget but innovative solutions are being found and the service will survive. An exemption or reduction in the business rates would do much to restore budget levels and allow sustainable planning; lobbying continues and meanwhile we are required to raise almost 18% of our operating budget ourselves in the next financial year.

We may not always meet the high standards to which we have committed but we are undeterred. The tone for 2017 will be Beckett's "Try again. Fail again. Fail better."



Susan Edwards
Glamorgan Archivist





	Glamorgan Archives Clos Parc Morgannwg Cardiff CF11 8AW		029 2087 2200
	Glamro@cardiff.gov.uk		www.facebook.com/glamarchives
	www.glamarchives.gov.uk		@GlamArchives