

Glamorgan Archives



DISCOVERING THE PAST

1 March 2017- 28 February 2018



Welcome to Glamorgan Archives' 8th Annual Report describing activities during the period from
1 March 2017 to 28 February 2018.

It has been another busy and productive year for Glamorgan Archives. Catalogues have been improved, existing partnerships progressed and new partnerships forged, and both national and international connections developed.

Glamorgan's Blood: Dark Arteries, Old Veins, is the Wellcome Trust funded project to catalogue and conserve records of the National Coal Board. The project takes its title from Mervyn Peake's poem, Rhondda Valley, and the collection, comprising over 50 separate accessions, is an invaluable resource for the history of industrial south Wales and its communities. Accessions listed by the Project Archivist, Louise Clarke, have been added to the on-line catalogue, Canfod. Catalogued material covers strikes and industrial action, open-cast mining, reorganisation schemes and industrial disease and accidents. The Aberfan Disaster enquiry files have been listed. Louise was joined in September by Stephanie Jamieson as Project Conservator. Together they are working through the vast accumulation of plans in the collection, estimated to be around 8,000, noting conservation issues and planning a cleaning and packaging programme with volunteer assistance. To date they have listed and assessed for conservation 58%, including those showing underground workings and surface buildings. The latter series contains plans of buildings such as pithead baths, workers' housing, administrative buildings and a workman's hall. They are currently working through colliery tip plans. Louise is also about a third of the way through cataloguing 5,440 glass plate negatives. In amongst the usual colliery shots are detailed images of workrooms and laboratories, award ceremonies and social events, including the Maesteg Male Voice Choir performing The Mikado, in full costume.



Progress is reported through regular updates on social media, including a blog on which a range of topics has been explored from Davies the Ocean to the Miners' Strike of 1984/5. Louise has already had articles published promoting the project in Who Do You Think You Are Magazine, Local History News, Archives and Records Association Magazine and the Glamorgan Family History Society Journal. She also gave a presentation at the Welsh launch for the 2017 Explore Your Archive campaign which was hosted at Glamorgan Archives. Volunteers are contributing their time to the project. One group is cleaning volumes and plans while one of our archive students has listed NCB financial and miscellaneous papers. Chris, a temporary Records Assistant on a Youth Contract scheme, is also supporting the project with listing, packaging and indexing work.

Small grants from Welsh Government via Archives and Records Council Wales have enabled the preparation of catalogues for transfer to the Archives Hub and the creation of a guide to researching LGBT history in archival collections. Funding was also secured to design and print new leaflets, for staff to attend a national conference and for training in conservation and in digital preservation. A considerable sum of money was received from the New Burdens Fund, administered by the National Archives, in relation to the accelerated transfer of public records under the altered terms of the Public Records Act. The payment is for managing the transition to the 20-year rule, in our case by taking 18.4 linear metres of public records into our care in 2016. The money has funded extra staff to sort and list coroners' records making them much easier and quicker to consult.





In the course of the year, 242 separate accessions have been received, all needing to be receipted, listed, packaged and shelved, many needing additional cleaning or conservation. Several collections came in from photographers, among them professionals Robert Greetham and William Bryar, both of Cardiff, and an interesting series of slides by amateur, Colin Atkins, showing the construction of Gabalfa Flyover in Cardiff in the 1960s as well as Western Avenue and general views of the city. A rare collection of glass negatives created by Kenneth Pennington in the early 20th century record his family, fellow soldiers during his WW1 service with the Glamorgan Royal Garrison Artillery, and views of Glamorgan.

A number of collections with a musical theme were also received. Barry Ladies Choir was formed in the 1930's as the Great Western Railway Choir. It subsequently entered many competitions and eisteddfodau including the National Eisteddfod when it visited Barry in 1968, and still performs locally, raising money for charity. The records, which include choir minutes, accounts book and diaries of performances, cover the period 1948 to 2011.

A performance of Barry's Festal Song, revived by Simon Fenoulhet following his time as artist in residence at Glamorgan Archives, has been deposited. The piece was performed by a mixed choir of all ages from Barry, drawn from Vale Voices, Barry Male Voice Choir and others.

An interesting collection of photographs and certificates illustrated the work of south Wales music teacher, May Selby (nee Davies), born in Bridgend in 1891 who received several awards from the London College of Music between 1903 and 1909. She taught and was active in the promotion of music until her death in 1972. Items were also received from Cardiff's Ardwyn Singers, and a series of Gymanfa Ganu programmes from chapels in Caerphilly and Senghenydd.

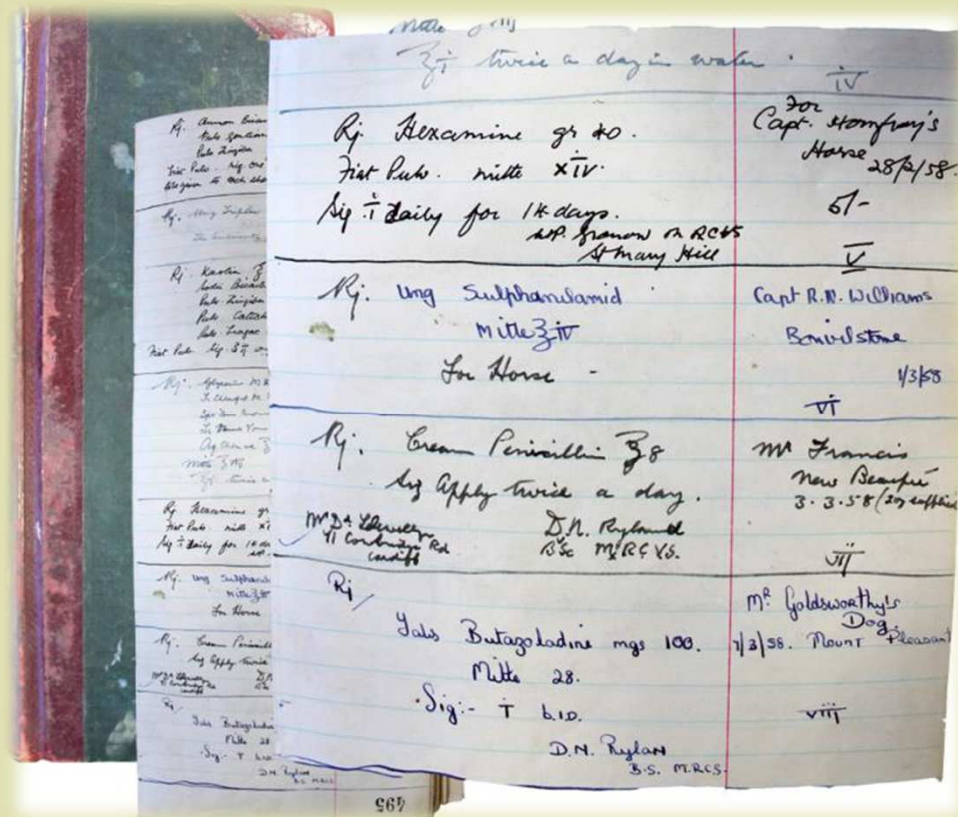
Considerable deposits were transferred from local authorities and their predecessors, adding to collections already received. Porthcawl Town Council, for example, continued to preserve its archive of minutes and reports, now extending to the 2000s, along with files relating to a wide range of council functions including tourism, beaches, allotments, decorative lighting, planning, education, elections, entertainment and the Grand Pavilion. The Tilley family have been active in the development of Cowbridge since their establishment there in the mid-19th century. Several were council members and held the office of Mayor. An additional deposit of records included scrapbooks, photographs and historical notes.



During the late 1990s the National Assembly for Wales aimed to improve the health, the ability to learn and the social development of pre-school children through investment in a Sure Start programme. Evaluation reports on the programmes in Bridgend and Rhondda Cynon Taff, compiled at the University of Glamorgan, have been received. They include evaluations of Health Visiting and Childcare, Behaviour and Parenting Support Projects, Community Development Projects and interviews with parents.

Pontypridd YMCA deposited a substantial collection of records from their early years based over a shop in Taff Street almost up to date. The YMCA provided a wide range of activities for young people including sports, craft clubs, lectures and concerts, at which both Frankie Vaughan and Tom Jones once appeared.

A scrapbook illustrating the activities of the Merthyr Tydfil and District Business and Professional Women's Club was donated. Formed in 1970, the club was part of the National Federation. Each Club elected its own officers and executive committee and arranged its own programme of talks and study group discussions. Dr Mary Gillham MBE was a pioneering female naturalist and prolific wildlife author. In 1959 she was part of the first Antarctic expedition to include women, and in 2008 she was awarded an MBE for services to nature conservation. She spent many years educating people about their natural heritage, as a lecturer for Cardiff University, and campaigned tirelessly for conservation throughout her life. Her archive came to us as a result of a partnership project with South East Wales Biodiversity Records Centre.



Another interesting small collection came from Professor Turner, a founder member of the British Society for the History of Pharmacy, and a previous depositor. This accession comprises four prescription registers from pharmacies at Park Place and Wellfield Road in Cardiff, and in Caerphilly and Cowbridge. Dating from the 1920s to the 1960s the registers show the changing practices in pharmaceutical prescribing and include veterinary prescriptions.

Other accessions were a reminder of the benefit of on-line cataloguing which can reward a researcher with unexpected connections. An accounts ledger (1913-c1922) for rural blacksmith, David Jones of Holly House, Laleston, includes his work for local farms and gentry such as R. L. Knight of Tythegston Court, while the records of land agent, Robert Traherne Anson Rickards, detail his work with local estates around Pontyclun and Taffs Well in the first half of the 20th century. Any records associated with his clients will be easy to track through Canfod, our digital catalogue on our web site.

It is important that the Collection reflects the diversity of our constituency in terms of communities of interest as well as geographic areas. Support groups are a good way to begin this representation. This year records have been received from Cardiff and District Hearing Impaired Support Group, Support for Parents of Lesbians and Gay Men (SPLAG), and LGBT Christians South Wales, and additional material received from Cardiff People First and Cowbridge (Gateway) Monday Club, both organisations supporting people with a learning disability.

Finally, a reminder that archives appear in unlikely places. A restaurant donated a large and varied collection of family papers found in its outbuilding. An initial inspection suggests it relates to two families living in the area of Pontygwaith between 1880 and the 1940s. The photographs, Sunday School certificates, receipts, diaries and correspondence, are valuable social history texts. The moral is, check your bonfires for hedgehogs and your attics and sheds for archives.

The way that the Collection is accessed seems to be changing. This year individual visits to the searchroom totalled 2,591, down from the previous year, against a total footfall of 7,391, including school visits and other groups but also people attending training unconnected with the Archives. Remote use is steady with 3,494 enquiries received, in addition to 284 thank you notes which are not included in the statistics.

Many visitors attended as part of a group, 18 of which have been welcomed in this year: Cardiff Civic Society, Glamorgan Family History Society Sully branch, Canton and Riverside Local History Society, Ystradgynlais Family History Society, Radyr WI, Rhiwbina Civic Society, the Fletcher family gathering, Avant Cymru theatre group, No Fit State Circus, Cowbridge Museum, Innovate Trust, Cardiff U3A, Tonyrefail U3A, Maesteg's Every Link Counts, Wales for Peace, Cardiff People First, Grangetown Local History Society.

Students have been welcomed from several departments of Cardiff University.



The workshop offer was taken up by 23 classes from 14 primary schools: Butetown, Grangetown, Llanishen Fach, Mount Stuart, Pontyclun, St Cuthberts, Thornhill, Tondy, and Treorchy, with Welsh language sessions provided for Ysgol Gymraeg Caerffili, Ysgol Gymraeg Penallta, and Ysgol Pwll Coch, and a bilingual event run for Millbank. Pupils looked at Victorians, both World Wars, coal and the docks, local history, and the history of their school. In response to demand a new workshop on Tudors and Stuarts has been developed. We supported Radnor Primary School's "Radnor University" programme in which a class visited every Friday afternoon for 6 weeks exploring records of their school and locality. A total of 644 students have visited in the course of the year.



On 9 November, Kids in Museums Takeover Day across Wales, Glamorgan Archives was taken over by pupils from Ysgol y Deri Special School in Penarth. 11 pupils aged 14-18 participated, working in small groups and experiencing all areas of the service, completing tasks in cataloguing, access, conservation and community engagement. The pupils, school and Archives staff enjoyed and benefitted from the experience. One student commented on social media following the event:

I would like to say a big thank you to everyone who done #takeoverday2017 It was a very good experience for me. I enjoyed myself and I learnt a lot from this. I would like to take the opportunity to say how grateful it was to meet some amazing staff members Very polite staff members. They were amazing. So yeah Thank you to you @glamarchives

The post-16 transition officer from the school commented:

...we had a fab day – it was really well organised so thank you. [B's] mum actually had a tear when we said he would be joining us as she never imagined he would do anything work related...

One of the students has subsequently taken up a work experience placement with us, attending weekly.



Earlier in the year, in a pilot project based on the successful Kids Takeover template, members of Cardiff People First took over Glamorgan Archives. People First is a federation of self-advocacy groups of people with a learning disability. The Archives has worked with the Cardiff branch on a number of successful projects, often in partnership with Cardiff Story Museum. The members who took over had visited beforehand to plan the event and to discuss aspects of the various available roles. On the day itself they worked in the searchroom, assisting the public and producing documents, cleaned documents in the conservation studio, took over social media feeds, identified Cardiff pubs in a recently deposited series of photographs, and led tours of the building for members of the public. 14 people attended the tours, including the Director of All Wales People First and a representative from Borough Market, London, who was observing the day in preparation for an HLF bid.



The day was a great success and was enjoyed equally by Cardiff People First members and Glamorgan Archives staff. Following the Takeover Day an evaluation meeting was held to collect feedback from those involved. As a pilot project, this feedback will inform the roll out of the People First Takeover Day concept across Wales. Rhian Diggins, Senior Archivist, has supported members of Cardiff People First in promoting the event to other Welsh branches of the organisation at their national conference and at the Wales Archives Forum.

The events programme included a public talk on Hughesovka to mark the October Revolution of 1917. Other talks have looked at the impact of World War 1 on women in south east Wales, crime in Cardiff from the 19th century, the Grange pub, Henry Naunton Davies, a Rhondda colliery doctor, and researching LGBT history. One talk was delivered in Welsh with simultaneous translation provided, Y Gwrthwynebiad i Ryfel yng Nghaerdydd, 1916-18 (The Opposition to War in Cardiff 1916-18). We are grateful to our external speakers, Aled Eirug, Caroline Fairclough, Ceri Thompson, Steve Duffy, John Wake, Norena Shopland and Dr Daryl Leeworthy.

Six exhibitions were hosted, usually in connection with anniversary commemorations. Dusty's War explored the impact of World War 1 on communities in Caerau and Ely. The new Cardiff People First's Ely Hospital exhibition debuted here in July; the interactive display reflects research undertaken by members on the former long stay hospital. Chronicle celebrated a century of volunteering in Cardiff. Pride Cymru's Icons and Allies recorded Welsh LGBT activity in the 50th year since partial decriminalisation of male homosexuality, and Safe and Legal marked 50 years of abortion rights activity in the region. These last were also commemorated in the Llafur Day School, "50 years of Women's' and Gay Liberation" held in the Archives. "Celebrating LGBT Cardiff", created by Norena Shopland, closed the year in February, LGBT History Month.



Explore Your Archives in Wales was launched at Glamorgan with a talk by Mari Grug of Heno on the south Wales tornado, illustrating the range of material to be found in archives everywhere.

Interest in John Hughes and Hughesovka has been high as might be expected in the centenary year of the Russian Revolution, A collaborative partnership with Dr Victoria Donovan of St Andrews University led to talks on the Welsh industrial colony in the Donbas delivered at St Andrews and in Merthyr Tydfil. In Merthyr, Enthusiasm, hosted at the Red House, was an interdisciplinary arts event of talks, film, live music, cookery demonstrations, and exhibitions, celebrating the migration history of the town and its Ukrainian links.



Ukrainian journalists have been in contact seeking support for heritage projects, a local researcher discussed his article on Khrushchev's connection with the town and the Archives has facilitated the loan of John Hughes' portrait to the Ruhr Museum for a major exhibition marking the closure of the last deep coal mine in Germany in 2018.



The essential tasks of cataloguing, outreach, and promoting the service are supported by a loyal band of volunteers who work alongside staff to make the Collection more accessible through indexing, transcription, digitisation, cleaning and writing blog posts for our social media. This year volunteers logged 7,388 hours. Work experience placements are additional to these and 4 former placement students have been accepted on archive training courses. After 4 long years the project to list almost 16,000 Rhondda Urban District Council building regulation plans was completed to great celebration, thanks to volunteers, Barry, Fred, and Mark. The list is now available on Canfod, our on-line catalogue. Other volunteers are cleaning and indexing Crew Agreements for the port of Cardiff for the national Crew List Indexing project, while members of the Arts Society (formerly NADFAS) clean their way through National Coal Board volumes as part of the Wellcome Trust project. A new recruit has started cleaning the NCB plans with the Project Conservator.

More information on the work of our volunteers and our staff, including full lists of accessions received, can be found in the reports to the Glamorgan Archives Joint Committee on Cardiff Council's website:



2018 is already looking set to be a busy and successful year for the service with major new partnership projects about to start and previous project partners planning continuing involvement. Finances are tight but staff have become adept at spotting opportunities to reduce expenditure and to raise income, a necessary skill now that just over 22% of the budget has to be found above the local authority contributions to maintain existing standards of service. My thanks go to all our supporters who continue to believe in us. We move forward with Nelson Mandela's conviction that it always seems impossible until it's done.

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Glamorgan Archivist





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