

MORGANNWG 2008

News from the Glamorgan Record Office

Building News

After a prolonged period of planning and preparation the new Glamorgan Record Office is finally emerging from the two dimensional plans into fully realised three dimensions. On 3 January 2008 planning consents were issued after the Environment Agency requirement that a flood impact assessment be carried out had been met. Final contracts were signed on 19 February. All the six authorities which contribute to the Glamorgan Record Office signed the Deed for Financial Assistance, (the agreement providing for the cash flow for the New Glamorgan Record Office) and all the outstanding issues which needed to be settled before financial close were resolved.

Groundworks were undertaken under a separate contract. The first phase of the work was raising the level of the site and drainage. The site was raised by around 2m and the preparatory work for this caused some delay as approval of insitu fill materials was obtained. The fill was placed on site in 150mm layers which required 12 weeks work. Completing the design of these fill works, obtaining approvals for the use of fill materials and variation of other contracts relating to the football stadium development meant this process took longer than originally anticipated, but work began in early June and the main building programme began in earnest on 18th August. The agreed programme for the build contract is 70 weeks, giving a date for Practical Completion of 18 December 2009. This is when the building is handed over and we can begin moving in. The lease with Cardiff University for the Glamorgan Building has been extended appropriately.



*Site preparations,
September 2008*

Piling of the foundations and pouring of the concrete strip foundations were completed in September and the steel frame of the public and office part of the building was erected soon afterwards. Development of the foundations and shear walls of the repository part of the building started in early October and with the assembly of a large tower crane on site on 14 October, work on pouring concrete in that part then began. In a very short space of time a building began to emerge. Staff engaged on the new building Programme meet monthly with the building contractors. Since August these meetings have been held in the temporary offices on site. Once we had all been issued with protective equipment and received basic induction in site safety we were able to tour the site and latterly the building itself at the close of meeting. The consultants employed as our project managers make fortnightly visits to site, and so far have produced positive reports on conditions and quality. As construction work continues photographs of the new Office are becoming available from a number of sources. Selections are presented on the website and on the notice boards in our Glamorgan Building headquarters to keep staff and visitors informed of progress.



New Glamorgan Record Office December 2008, search room and conservation.

The delay to the start of building work allowed a final decision on the relocation of the Gwent Record Office to be confirmed. The new facility will be in Ebbw Vale and will benefit from regeneration funding from the Welsh Assembly Government. Glamorgan has contributed in the form of personnel; Gary Tuson, formerly Senior Archivist and latterly Programme Director for the new GRO, took up the post of County Archivist of Gwent in September.

Work on other projects within the overall programme has continued to target. Packaging of individual loose volumes has reached 24,000. Over 18,000 items have been bar-coded, and the Document Locations database now contains around 75,000 entries. The tender for the decant, the actual move of the records and the furniture and equipment we will be reusing in the new building, has been let and an appointment will be made early in 2009. Staff are working closely with the fit out designers who will be supplying all new furniture and the built-in reception counter.

My thanks are due to Carillion for the photographs reproduced here.



December 2008, rear view of repository block and document reception.

Outreach

The new building is becoming a major attraction at outreach events attended by staff with a presentation on a laptop computer attracting comments and queries. One was held at the Senedd to mark International Archives Day. The Office was one of many in Wales celebrating the launch of the Archives and Records Council Wales Strategy there, and questions came not only from members of the public and Assembly Members but from the staff of other record offices attending the launch.

The Senedd was also the location for the launch of the Women's Archive of Wales History Roadshows Project. Sixteen Roadshows will be held throughout Wales with the aim of promoting women's history and discovering source material for its study. Advice on conservation will be available for those not wishing to deposit their records and other material will be scanned for inclusion on the WAW website, thus ensuring that as much information as possible is safeguarded for posterity. The project received £187,000 Heritage

Lottery Fund grant and was launched by Education Minister Jane Hutt. Record Office staff attended with the pop-up display and Michael Hodgson, Conservation Officer, gave advice on caring for documents. The launch attracted much media attention and Michael appeared on the ITV regional news programme.

The National Archives Awareness Campaign ran throughout November with the theme 'Take Your Place in History'. The timing of the Campaign coincided with the 90th anniversary of the ending of the First World War. To mark both events the Record Office compiled an online exhibition highlighting World War I sources, with the emphasis on local people taking their place in history on the battlefields and on the home front. The exhibition features photographs and documents from a range of collections and is available to view on the Office website.

The 90th anniversary of the end of the War was also commemorated by a two day BBC event held in Caerphilly Tourist Office that month. The event was attended by local organisations, including the Record Office and the Women's Archive of Wales. The Office's online exhibition on the First World War was displayed on a lap top and staff answered queries from the public. The BBC Radio Wales programme 'Jamie and Louise' was broadcast live from the venue on the Friday and featured an in-depth interview with Charlotte Hodgson, Principal Archivist, about records used in the exhibition. It also provided an ideal opportunity to tell listeners about the forthcoming move to the new building and to promote the services provided now and in the future.

Education

The template for familiarisation days for teachers has been fully tested and two highly successful events were held this year in partnership with Cardiff County Council's Schools Advisory Service and the Education Business Partnership. One was aimed at primary school teachers and the other at secondary level. Teachers came from schools across our constituency and feedback has been very positive. Five primary teachers have signed up for further placement days at the Office, working on lesson plans for use in the classroom. Several of the secondary teachers have expressed an interest in returning on placements, in particular one teacher who wishes to develop resources for children with special needs.

Direct involvement with primary school pupils has also continued this year with a group of extremely well behaved 10 year olds from Carnetown, Abercynon, who were researching information for the school's centenary and looked at the original log books. The children were given a tour of the strongrooms and enjoyed seeing the box-making machine in action. Photographs of Stacey Road School, Cardiff and extracts from the school log books have been used in a teaching pack on the theme 'Growing up in Cardiff', compiled by Cardiff Museum.

The Collection

A number of deposits have resulted from the activity of the Women's' Archive of Wales (WAW) Heritage Lottery Funded Women's History Roadshows

Project. These included a series of photographs showing the staff and pupils of Glamorgan Training College in Barry at the beginning of the 1920s, and the exercise books of Eleanor Evans of Taffs Wells which date to the early 19th century and illustrate the writing and arithmetic tuition of the time. The educational theme continued with the deposit of the Agnes Irene James (nee MacDonald) Papers. An early student at Cardiff University she became a senior mistress in biology and botany at Merthyr County Grammar School, and the collection includes notes and papers relating to her education and teaching career, correspondence from the Botanical Society of the British Isles concerning her work to survey plant species in the Merthyr area (1954-1955, 1962), and a run of personal diaries for the period 1960-1992. The papers of Dr. Ursula Masson, founder member of WAW and lecturer at Glamorgan University, were deposited this year following her untimely death.

WAW Roadshows also produced a collection of papers and photographs relating to Marie Novello (1898-1928), the adopted daughter of Clara Novello-Davies, mother of composer Ivor Novello. The material includes an album of photographs, newspaper cuttings and programmes concerning Marie's career as a pianist. An initial deposit has been received from Jennie Cuthbert of Cardiff, principally of photographs taken at summer schools held by Independent Labour Party during the 1920s and 1930s. The depositor's aunt was an active ILP member, and these images include group photographs of the delegates as well as images of them engaged in recreational pursuits. Also included are postcards of political figures of the period, including Keir Hardie and David Kirkwood. Wales Women's Rights Committee Records, 1975-1982, were another welcome deposit through WAW.

The Office joined with other members of Archives and Records Council Wales in submitting a successful joint application for funding to the National Cataloguing Grants Scheme with match funding promised by CyMAL. A three year project to catalogue unlisted records of industrial concerns across Wales will now be established. Glamorgan will be represented by the Cardiff Chamber of Commerce and Powell Duffryn collections.

Following an offer from the National Register of Archives (NRA) to assist in web mounting item level catalogues of collections held by record offices in Wales, electronic and hard copy catalogues are being digitally copied. The NRA, now part of the National Archives, will make the copies available as links on their web pages and prepare indexes to assist in searching the files. Meanwhile, collection level descriptions are available on the Archives Network Wales site. Lists of records received are reported to each quarterly meeting of the Glamorgan Archives Joint Committee and may be seen on Rhondda Cynon Taff CBC's website.

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