CYLCHLYTHYR YR

ARCHIF WLEIDYDDOL GYMREIG
WELSH POLITICAL ARCHIVE

NEWSLETTER

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KEEPER OF SECRETS

It is often the case that the most revealing secrets of great men and women are kept by their secretaries. This is after all the original meaning of 'secretary' — keeper of secrets. Secretaries who keep personal diaries are of particular interest to historians and one of the most assiduous of these was Albert James Sylvester who died in 1989, a month before his hundredth birthday.

A J Sylvester was Principal Private Secretary to Lloyd George from 1923 until LG's death in 1945. He kept a diary in shorthand for much of this period and his observations on Lloyd George's political and personal life were faithfully recorded. It is these diaries, deciphered and transcribed by Sylvester himself, which form the basis of the A J Sylvester Papers purchased by the National Library earlier this year.

Of Staffordshire peasant stock, A J Sylvester had none of the privileges associated with promotion in the Civil Service yet he became a trusted member of Lord Hankey's secretariat during the Great War and subsequently he was appointed private secretary to three Prime Ministers, Lloyd George, Andrew Bonar Law and Stanley Baldwin. His talent was his fluent and speedy shorthand (in 1915 he was the first shorthand writer ever to take a note of a cabinet committee) and rapid typewriting.

In 1923, when Sylvester left the Civil Service to work for Lloyd George, he insisted on the title Principal Private Secretary to ensure that he would not be subservient to Frances Stevenson, Lloyd George's private secretary and mistress. Sylvester had charge of Lloyd George's private office in London which had a staff of over twenty researchers, typists and messengers but spent much of his time accompaning Lloyd George to meetings. As such, Sylvester was a witness to Lloyd George's increasing political frustration during the 1920s and 1930s as his efforts to return to power proved fruitless.

Sylvester and Lloyd George at the Genoa Conference, 1922

Sylvester's diaries were edited and published in part by Colin Cross in 1975 but much unpublished material remains unseen by historians. The papers also include files of correspondence many of which shed light on Lloyd George and his contemporaries.

There is also a large collection of photographs and cine-films taken by Sylvester. Among the latter is the unique film of Lloyd George's visit to see Hitler at Berchtesgaden in September 1936.

The Advisory Committee

The twelfth meeting of the Welsh Political Archive's Advisory Committee was held on 2 November 1990.

The Chairman (the Librarian, Dr Brynley F Roberts) reported that Miss Lowri Jones had been appointed Research Assistant to the Archive.

It was reported that the papers of Lord Cledwyn, Lord Elwyn-Jones and Leo Abse had been received.

It was resolved to invite Miss Beata Brookes, at present Deputy Chairman of the Conservative Party in Wales, to become a member of the Committee.

The present members of the Committee are:
The Librarian, Dr Brynley F Roberts (Chairman)
Dr Denis Balsom, UCW, Aberystwyth
Professor Deidre Beddoe, The Polytechnic of Wales
Miss Beata Brookes, Deputy Chairman of the Conservative Party in Wales
Mr John Clement, formerly Under-Secretary at the Welsh Office
Mr Emyr Daniel, Director of Programmes HTV
Mr Andrew Davies, Assistant Organiser, Labour Party Wales
Mr Tom Ellis
Mr Gwyn Griffiths, Chairman Welsh Liberal Democrats
Lord Hooson
Dr Deian Hopkin, UCW, Aberystwyth
Mr D Elwyn Jones, Conservative Party agent
Professor Kenneth O Morgan, Principal, UCW, Aberystwyth
Mr Gareth Price, Director of the Thomson International Foundation
Mr T M Haydn Rees, formerly Chief Executive Clwyd County Council
Mr Ted Rowlands, Member of Parliament
Dr Terry Thomas, SDP Development Officer
Mr Dafydd Wigley, Member of Parliament
Professor Gwyn A Williams
and from the National Library's staff: Mr Daniel Huws, Mr Gwyn Jenkins, Mrs Beti Jones, Mr J Graham Jones and Miss Lowri Jones.

Os am fwy o wybodaeth ynglŷn â'r Archif Wleidyddol Gymreig cysyllter â: Gwyn Jenkins, Yr Archif Wleidyddol Gymreig, Llyfrgell Genedlaethol Cymru, Aberystwyth, Dyfed SY23 3BU (ffôn: [0970] 623816).

For further information on the Welsh Political Archive contact: Gwyn Jenkins, The Welsh Political Archive, The National Library of Wales, Aberystwyth, Dyfed SY23 3BU (tel: [0970] 623816).

Cymdeithas yr Iaith Gymraeg

Bellach y mae'r Archif yn gartref i gasgliadau sylweddol o bapurau yn ymwneud ag ymgyrchoedd Cymdeithas yr Iaith. Yn ddiweddar derbyniwyd ffeil o bapurau a grynhowyd gan Mr Tegwyn Jones tra'n ysgrifennydd cangen Ceredigion o'r Gymdeithas. Mae'n cynnwys cofnodion cyfarfod sefydlu'r gangen, 1964, rhestr aelodau, 1965–6 a phapurau, gohebiaeth a thoriadau o'r wasg yn ymwneud ag ymgyrchoedd y Gymdeithas, 1964–9.
(The Archive has received papers relating to the activities of Cymdeithas yr Iaith Gymraeg in Ceredigion).

Election Study, 1979

In 1979 an important election study was conducted in Wales by the International Politics Department of the University College of Wales, Aberystwyth. The interview schedules for this study, together with the final report, have now been donated to the Archive. They provide important data on the state of Welsh public opinion at that time.

Also donated by the Department are papers relating to the Welsh Council, 1968–72.

DARLITHIAU'R ARCHIF WLEIDYDDOL GYMREIG

Y ddarlith ddiweddaraf, i'w chyhoeddi yn Ebrill
The latest lecture, to be published in April

Yr Arglwydd Cledwyn o Benrhos
Cymru yn y Ddau Dŷ / Wales in Both Houses
Lord Cledwyn of Penrhos
£2 · 25

Darlithiau eraill y gyfres
Other lectures in the series

1. John Grigg, *Lloyd George and Wales* (1987) £1 · 50
2. Kenneth O Morgan, *The Red Dragon and the Red Flag; the cases of James Griffiths and Aneurin Bevan* (1988) £1 · 50
3. David Marquand, *History Derailed? The Route to 1979* (1989) £1 · 75

Post: Ychwaneger 50c am un ddarlith, 75c am ddwy, a £1 am dair neu'r bedair
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WELSH POLITICAL ARCHIVE LECTURES

Cyhoeddiadau eraill
Other publications

Rhymney Memories, Thomas Jones £4 · 95

Cariad at ein Gwlad: a discourse on the love of our country (Richard Price 1789). Cyfieithiad i'r Gymraeg ynghyd â ffacsimili or gwreiddiol / Translated into Welsh with a facsimilie of the original.
P A L Jones (gol. / ed.) £4 · 95.

Post: Ychwaneger £1 · 00 am un gyfrol, £1 · 50 am y ddwy
Add £1 · 00 for one volume, £1.50 for both

Argraffwyd yn Llyfrgell Genedlaethol Cymru Aberystwyth
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NEWSPLAN

Y mae Mrs Beti Jones, sy'n aelod o Bwyllgor Ymgynghorol yr Archif, newydd orffen gweithio ar brosiect o'r enw **Newsplan** *sy'n ceisio diogelu a chadw papurau newydd lleol ym Mhrydain, a hynny drwy gydweithrediad y Llyfrgell Brydeinig, llyfrgelloedd cenedlaethol eraill a llyfrgelloedd lleol. Yma, mae'n edrych ar rai papurau gwleidyddol diddorol o'r ganrif ddiwethaf.*

'Y mae papurau newyddion yn ffynhonnell werthfawr i bob math o ymchwil ond yn ôl eu natur, ni fwriadwyd iddynt bara'n ddiddiwedd, ac y mae effeithiau newidiadau cemegol a'r defnydd cyson ar eu ffeiliau yn achosi problemau mawr iawn i lyfrgelloedd.

Fe hoffwn gyfeirio yma at un agwedd yn unig at rai o'r papurau cynnar y deuthum ar eu traws wrth weithio ar **Newsplan.**

Un nodwedd ar bapurau Cymraeg y 19eg ganrif yw'r brwdfrydedd a ddangosant wrth ymosod ar eu gwrthwynebwyr — gwleidyddol, crefyddol neu fel arall — ac mor ddi-ben-draw yw ei difrïo personol. Un o'r rhain oedd *The Figaro in Wales* a gyhoeddwyd ym Mangor rhwng 1835 a 1836, ac na fu erioed ei ffyrnicach. Pobl flaenllaw Bangor a Chaernarfon a ddoi o dan ei lach amlaf, Toriaid lleol a oedd yn awyddus i ddringo i sefyllfaoedd o rym yn y ddwy fwrdeistref. Un cocyn hitio oedd James Hews Bransby, golygydd cyntaf y *Carnarvon Herald.* Nid oedd yr un enw yn ddigon eithafol i'r *Figaro* ddefnyddio amdano ac o ganlyniad i ymosodiadau'r *Figaro,* bu'n rhaid i Bransby adael yr *Herald.* Y *Figaro* hefyd oedd yn gyfrifol am sicrhau lleiafrif o Doriaid Caernarfon ar y Cyngor Tref.

Gwyddom i'r Swyddfa Gartref, drwy oruchwylwyr cyflogedig, a chyda chymorth ynadon lleol, gadw llygad ar bapurau fel y *Figaro,* ac anfonwyd adroddiadau cyson arnynt i Lundain. Papurau eraill i dderbyn yr un driniaeth oedd y *Cardiff Reporter, Udgorn Cymru* a'r *Advocate,* papurau a gefnogai achos y Siartwyr, ac a dderbyniodd rybudd swyddogol bob un ohonynt i beidio â pheryglu diogelwch y wladwriaeth. Yn ystod ei oes (rhwng 1833 a 1839) daethpwyd â chyhuddiad o enllib bump o weithiau yn erbyn *The Welshman,* Caerfyrddin gan ynadon Toriaidd Caerfyrddin a Phenfro, tra yn y de-ddwyrain ymleddid y frwydr Whig-Doriaidd rhwng y *Monmouthshire Merlin* a'r *Merthyr Guardian,* a sefydlwyd i wrthwynebu 'gwenwyn' yr athrawiaeth Anghydffurfiol.'

Mrs Beti Jones, a member of the Archive's Advisory Committee, has recently completed work on a project called **Newsplan** *which aims at the preservation of United Kingdom local newspapers with the British Library, local libraries and other national libraries working in co-operation. Here she looks at some interesting political newspapers of the last century.*

'Newspapers are an invaluable and heavily used resource for research of all kinds, but by their very nature they are not intended to last indefinitely, and the effects of chemical changes and wear and tear on their files present libraries with a preservation problem on a large scale.

I should like to refer briefly here to one aspect of some of the early newspapers that I have encountered on **Newsplan** work.

A characteristic of Welsh newspapers of the 19th century in particular is the gusto with which they attack their opponents — political, religious or otherwise — and the seeming boundlessness of their personal abuse. One paper famed for its invective was *The Figaro in Wales,* published in Bangor between 1835 and 1836. Its main targets were the influential people of Bangor and Caernarfon, including a clique of local Tories who sought to reach powerful positions in the two boroughs. One target was James Hews Bransby, editor of the *Carnarvon Herald* who was branded 'Tory Spy', 'Judas Silkworm', and 'Penrhos bone-polisher'. As a result of attacks in the *Figaro* Bransby resigned the editorship of the *Herald.* The *Figaro* also succeeded in reducing the Caernarfon Tories to a minority on the Town Council.

It is known that the earlier 19th century newspapers such as *The Figaro,* were carefully watched by paid agents of the Home Office, aided by local magistrates who would send regular reports to London. Obvious targets among Welsh newspapers were those which espoused the Chartist cause, such as *The Cardiff Reporter, Udgorn Cymru* and the *Advocate,* but each managed to escape with a warning having been reported for endangering the security of the realm. *The Welshman* was charged with libel by the Tory magistrates of Carmarthen and Pembroke no less than five times between 1833 and 1839. In the south-east, the Whig—Tory battle raged between the *Monmouthshire Merlin* (1832), and the *Merthyr Guardian,* founded to oppose the 'insidious poison' of Nonconformist doctrine of the former.

DERBYNIADAU / ACQUISITIONS

Plaid Cymru

Derbyniwyd ychwanegiadau pellach at Archifau Plaid Cymru yn ystod y misoedd diwethaf. Daeth casgliad o bapurau yn ymwneud yn bennaf â changen Abertawe gan gynnwys llyfr cofnodion Cangen Sgeti, 1938–41, a gohebiaeth ynglŷn â chyfarfod brotest yn Abertawe yn 1937 yn erbyn diswyddiad Saunders Lewis o'r Brifysgol. Ymhlith y papurau mwy diweddar ceir cofnodion a phapurau yn ymwneud â gweithgareddau Adran Ferched Plaid Cymru Abertawe.

Daeth casgliad ychwanegol o bapurau Pwyllgor Rhanbarth Plaid Cymru Ceredigion hefyd i law. Mae'r casgliad yn cynnwys llyfrau cofnodion, 1949–57 a 1957–68, ac amryw o ffeiliau yn ymwneud yn bennaf ag etholiadau.

(Additions to the Plaid Cymru Archives include minutes and papers relating to the Swansea branch and to the Ceredigion constituency committee).

Lord Edmund-Davies Papers

The Library has been fortunate to receive a large group of the papers of Baron Edmund-Davies of Aberpennar, reflecting his distinguished career as a barrister, High Court judge and Lord of Appeal in Ordinary. There are papers concerning the trial of the 'great train robbers' in 1964, and records deriving from his chairmanship of the Tribunal of Inquiry into the Aberfan Disaster, 1966–7, together with extensive files of correspondence, speech notes and legal papers.

Welsh Communist

Through the kindness of Mrs Dora Cox, the Archive has received the papers of her late husband Mr Idris Cox (1899–1989), south Wales miner, Communist activist and propagandist.

Among the papers is an unpublished autobiography which documents Idris Cox's work as a full-time Communist Party organiser, mainly in Wales, and editor the *Daily Worker*. A photocopy of a later and more complete version of this autobiography has since been received though the good offices of Dr Hywel Francis of the University College of Swansea.

The papers also include communist pamphlets, correspondence and lectures, much of which reflect Idris Cox's communist beliefs and growing interest in nationalism, international affairs and Welsh working class history.

Olwen Carey-Evans with her mother Dame Margaret Lloyd George at No. 10 Downing Street, 1917

Lady Olwen Carey-Evans Papers

Following the recent death of Lady Olwen Carey-Evans (1892–1990), the last of the five children of David and Margaret Lloyd George, the Archive has been able to acquire a group of family papers of considerable political and personal interest which complement other archives held at the library. There are some fifty letters, 1894–1942, from Lloyd George to members of his family, many commenting on political life, letters to Lloyd George, 1890–1942, from correspondents including A J Balfour, Winston Churchill, Edward, Prince of Wales, Andrew Bonar Law and Sir Herbert Samuel, together with many speech notes and memorabilia. There are small groups of papers of Dame Margaret Lloyd George, Lady Megan Lloyd-George, Lady Olwen and her husband Sir Thomas Carey-Evans, and other members of the family.

A large number of photographs and family portraits have been transferred to the Department of Pictures and Maps, and records of Lloyd George's speeches, tapes and films to the library's Audio-Visual Unit.