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Lord Elystan-Morgan Lecture

As anticipated, a capacity audience gathered in the DRWM at the National Library on the evening of Friday, 7 November 2008 to hear Lord Elystan-Morgan provide some fascinating reminiscences in the Welsh language on his long and unique political career. It was the twenty-second annual lecture to be delivered under the aegis of the Welsh Political Archive.

Elystan Morgan, a native of Llandre, educated at Ardwyn School and the University College of Wales, Aberystwyth, qualified as a solicitor in 1956 and was called to the bar in 1971. In his younger days, he was prominent in the inner counsels of Plaid Cymru, formed a close rapport with Gwynfor Evans, and stood as its parliamentary candidate at Wrexham on three occasions between 1955 and 1959 and at Merioneth in 1964. At the time he was widely considered a likely future president of the party.

In 1965, after a long period of heart-searching vacillation, he decided to join the Labour Party and sensationally captured Cardiganshire in the general election of March 1966 from the long-serving Liberal MP Roderic Bowen, further increasing his majority there against the odds in the general election of June 1970. He had also served with distinction as a junior minister at the Home Office under Harold Wilson from 1968 until 1970. He was, however defeated there by Liberal Geraint Howells in February 1974, and was also unsuccessful in his attempt to retain Ynys Môn for the Labour Party, in succession to Cledwyn Hughes, in the general election of 1979.

Elystan Morgan had played a prominent role in the 1979 referendum campaign, and entered the House of Lords as a life peer in 1981 where, as a former judge, he now sits as a cross-bencher. More recently, he has served as President of the University of Wales, Aberystwyth and has also held several other public offices. A small group of Elystan Morgan's political papers and correspondence is held by the National Library.

In a brilliantly delivered lecture, Lord Elystan-Morgan reflected on his family background and earliest political experiences during his school days and as a student at Aberystwyth. It also contained much interesting information on his experiences within Plaid Cymru, the Labour Party and in the House of Lords. Elystan Morgan presented many interesting and humorous anecdotes about his political contemporaries and some of the measures for which he had assumed responsibility while at the Home Office.

The text of the lecture is available on the National Library's website in the section on the Welsh Political Archive at: http://www.llgc.org.uk/fileadmin/documents/pdf/darlith_archif_wleidyddol_2008.pdf

Lord Elystan-Morgan

The Welsh Political Archive Lecture 2009

'Ten Years of Devolution: Reflections of a First Minister' Mr Rhodri Morgan
Drwm, The National Library of Wales, Friday, 6 November 2009, 5.30 p.m.

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Visit by Secretary of State for Wales

On the morning of 22 July 2009, the Rt Hon. Peter Hain, the newly re-appointed Secretary of State for Wales and the Labour MP for Neath, visited the National Library for the first time. He had already presented a very large collection of his political papers to the Library in 2008 [see Newsletter, no. 39 (Autumn 2008)], has added further papers since, and now had an opportunity to view them, held in archival boxes within one of the Library's purpose-built strong rooms. He was much impressed by the resources and facilities available at the Library.

He was also able to see several other groups of political archives of specific interest to him, including the records of the Wales Anti-apartheid Movement which had also come to hand fairly recently.

Together with three Labour Party workers from his constituency office, Mr Hain was given a tour of the Library building and its facilities and took lunch in the President's room. They were also able to see the refurbished north reading room which was subsequently to be opened to the public a few days later on 27 July. They were able to discuss with the NLW Librarian, Mr Andrew Green, and other members of staff several issues of current relevance to NLW such as the Freedom of Information Act, 2000, and the Legal Deposit Libraries Act, 2003.

Rt Hon. Peter Hain

John Watts-Williams (1947-2008)

It is with very deep regret that we record the death, at just 61 years of age, on 10 December 2008, of John Watts-Williams, a member of staff at the National Library from 1972 until he decided to take early retirement in March 2005. He was a native of Solva, Pembrokeshire, and a history graduate of St John's College, Oxford.

John was associated with many varied aspects of the work of the Library, not least his co-editorship of the pioneering volume Parish Registers of Wales (1986 and 2000), a study which has since proved a great asset to genealogists and family historians. He also listed a number of important political archives held at the Library, including the John Bryn Roberts Papers, the extensive E. T. John Papers (catalogued in four substantial volumes) and the Wales TUC Archives. John was also responsible for co-ordinating the work of the Welsh Political Archive with great efficiency from 1992 until 2002.

John Watts-Williams

Gwyn Jenkins

July 2009 saw the retirement from the service of the National Library of Gwyn Jenkins after thirty-five years' distinguished service. A native of Penparcau, Aberystwyth, and a history graduate of University College, Swansea, Gwyn gained his MA degree from McMaster University, Ontario. He joined the staff of the Library in July 1974, initially as an archivist within the Department of Manuscripts and Records.

Promoted to the assistant keeper grade in 1982, he was largely responsible for the setting up of the Welsh Political Archive at the Library the following year and for guiding its activities over the next nine years. In 1992 Gwyn succeeded Daniel Huws as Keeper of Manuscripts and Records, and was appointed the first Director of Collection Services in 2002 following the extensive internal re-organisation. These positions carried a wide range of duties and responsibilities. He was also the general editor of the highly acclaimed Llyfr y Ganrif (1999) and the author of the celebrated biography of the prominent Welsh trades union leader Dr Huw T. Edwards (1892-1970) (2007).

All those associated with the WPA wish Gwyn a long, happy and fruitful retirement.

Gwyn Jenkins

Mike German Interview

Dr Russell Deacon, a member of the WPA advisory committee, has kindly donated to the Library a CD containing an hour-long interview, held on 12 October 2008, with Mike German AM, leader of the Liberal Democrat group in the National Assembly for Wales. Entitled Mike German: a Life in Welsh Liberal Democrat Politics, it was recorded at the Welsh Liberal Democrat Autumn Conference held at Clydach, Swansea. Mr German reflects on his experiences in Welsh political life over four decades, and discusses the steps leading up the formation of the coalition government in the Welsh Assembly from 2000 until 2003. It has been placed in the custody of the Sound and Moving Image Collection at the Library.

Arise, Sir Deian!

All those associated with the WPA were delighted to hear the news that Professor Deian Hopkin had received a knighthood in the Queen's Birthday Honours list in June 2009, following his retirement as Principal of Southbank University in March.

Deian acted as an inspirational and committed adviser to the WPA from its inception in 1983, helping to secure the deposit of several archival collections, and he has also sat on its advisory committee ever since it was established in 1985, contributing richly to its proceedings.

Roy Hattersley Researches at The National Library

Among the readers at the National Library's south reading room for a whole week during January 2009 was Lord Hattersley, the 76 year old former deputy leader of the Labour Party under Neil Kinnock from 1983 until 1992. Although he is a prolific author and biographer, Baron Hattersley had never previously researched at the Library.

Roy Hattersley has made his mark as a prolific historian with wide-ranging historical interests. His publications include highly regarded biographies of John Wesley and of William and Catherine Booth, the auto-biographical volumes A Yorkshire Boyhood (1983) and Who Goes Home?: Scenes from a Political Life (1995), as well as general histories of the Edwardian age and the inter-war years. He has also published works of fiction and numerous political columns in journals and newspapers.

His current project is a substantial single volume biography of David Lloyd George, the first such book to appear since the study by Peter Rowland which was published in 1975. Lord Hattersley, clearly a warm admirer, considers Lloyd George's record as Chancellor of the Exchequer to mark him out as the greatest radical in British political history. Prior to his visit to the Library, Lord Hattersley had already made extensive use of the letters from Lloyd George to his younger brother William, available in digitised format on the NLW website. While here, he made good use of the many groups of Lloyd George correspondence and papers and made some notable 'finds' which encouraged him to pursue novel avenues of research. He found especially interesting the many notes which Lloyd George had framed in preparation for his political speeches. He was much impressed by the resources available at the Library and the quality of service provided, and he may well return here again in the near future while completing his research work on Lloyd George.

Lord Hattersley hopes to complete the text of his biography early in 2010, and the volume should then see the light of day about a year later. It will undoubtedly be a most significant contribution, and will be well received and widely read.

Roy Hatersley

Advisory Committee

Members of the WPA advisory committee met at the Library on the afternoon of 7 November 2008.

Following discussion of the 'target list', members promised to assist in securing the following archives: Lord Anderson of Swansea, Denzil Davies, Lord Prys-Davies, Ness Edwards, Dr Glyn Tegai Hughes, Lord Livesey, Alun Michael, Paul Murphy, Judge Dewi Watkin Powell, Judge Winston Roddick, Lord Thomas of Gresford, and Lord Thomas of Gwydir.

Wales Anti-Apartheid Movement

Through the good offices of Mr Hanif Bhamjee of Roath, Cardiff, a very large archive has come to hand of the Wales Anti-Apartheid Movement. This includes correspondence files, desk diaries, memoranda and administrative papers, press cuttings, and publications and promotional material. There is also material deriving from the activities of local committees and various local anti-apartheid groups.

It includes many rare publications of bodies such as the African National Congress, the UN Centre Against Apartheid and the International Defence and Aid Fund. Much of this material relates to South Africa, Rhodesia and Zimbabwe.

Elfyn Llwyd Papers

The Library was pleased to receive a small group of the political papers of Elfyn Llwyd, the Plaid Cymru MP for the Meirionnydd Nant Conwy constituency since 1992. Mr Llwyd is also Plaid Cymru's UK parliamentary group leader. They comprise subject files and correspondence and papers relating to various bills and acts of parliament. They also include material deriving from the Welsh Affairs Committee and the Westminster Foundation for Democracy. It is hoped that further groups will be added to the archive.

Bro a Bywyd Gwynfor Evans

For the first time the well-known series 'Bro a Bywyd' has published a volume on the life of a Welsh politician. The impressive volume is edited by Peter Hughes Griffiths, the Plaid Cymru local agent in Carmarthenshire for many years and a close personal friend to Gwynfor Evans.

The volume contains a good balance of photographs of political events and those depicting family occasions, including several of the seven children born to Gwynfor and Rhiannon Evans. The work of many different photographers is included. Interestingly, the book is divided into twelve sections, each illustrating a different theme or subject.

Other Accessions

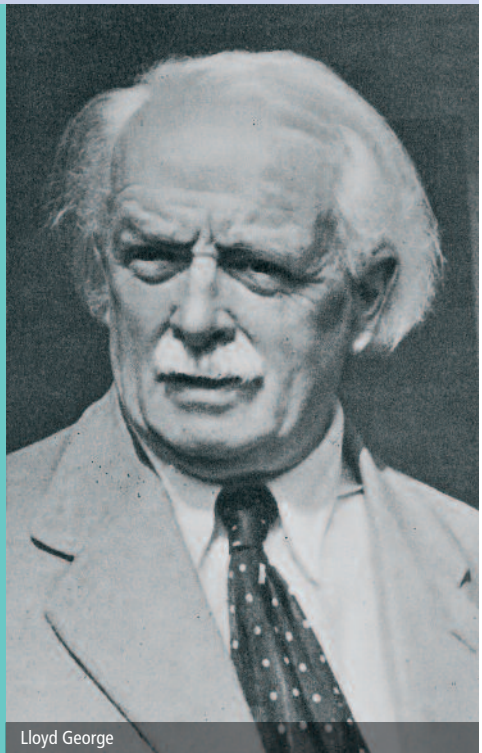
Other accessions which have come to hand during the year include:

- An impressive oil painting of the Labour cabinet minister **Aneurin Bevan** (1897-1960) by Arthur Hothen of the English School was purchased by the Library.
- **European Election 2009:** a substantial group of the manifestos, party literature, election addresses and leaflets circulated in Wales during the June 2009 Euro Election campaign. They have been added to the Political Ephemera Collection. We hope to receive similar material soon from the Labour Party Wales and the Welsh Liberal Democrats.
- **John Davies:** further papers deriving from the early political career of the donor's brother Mr Ron Davies. There are also political papers accumulated by the donor himself, including letters from Neil Kinnock MP and George Thomas MP.
- **Mrs Greta George, Criccieth:** an additional group of the papers of her late husband Dr W. R. P. George (1912-2006) reflecting his distinguished career as a literary and public figure.
- **Robert Griffiths:** records, 1950-56, deriving from the tenacious Parliament for Wales campaign and its activities.
- **Peter Hain:** additional papers reflecting his political career as a Labour MP and cabinet minister.
- **Tegwyn Jones:** correspondence and papers, 1969-71, relating to the activities of the Welsh Language Society and the publication of Tafod y Ddraig.
- **Sonia Parry-Jones:** a small group of papers and photographs relating to Kathleen Smith, the author, playwright and hill farmer who stood as the Conservative candidate in the Caernarfonshire constituency in the June 1970 general election.
- **Mr Dewi Rhys, Pwllheli:** a group of interesting twentieth-century pamphlets and leaflets of political interest, mainly relating to Plaid Cymru and other nationalist groups in Wales. The donor is the son of Mr J. E. Jones (1905-70), general secretary of Plaid Cymru from 1930 until 1962.
- **Rev. Dr John Tudno Williams:** an additional group of papers of Sir David Hughes-Parry (1893-1973), reflecting his career as a prominent administrator and public servant.
- **Plaid Cymru:** a substantial group of party records, mainly dating from the post-1990 period, but also including some of the party's early publications and issues of party newspapers. The group includes minute books, executive committee and NEC papers, party publications, election material, conference documentation, and financial papers.

Photographs of Lloyd George

Through the good offices of Professor Prys Morgan, Swansea, Professor Michael Kinnear of the University of Manitoba, Winnipeg has donated a small group of photographs of Lloyd George taken in the mid 1930s, taken from the collection of the Marquess of Cholmondeley. Some at least were taken at a house party at Houghton, Norfolk in August 1936. They include interesting photographs of the French Generals Ferdin and Foch and Joseph Joffre who led the French army during the First World War. There is also a photograph of Lloyd George and Sybil Cholmondeley near a temple.

Dr Arthur Lindley has also donated four attractive photographs of Lloyd George dating from the 1930s, taken at his home Bron-y-de, Churt in Surrey.



Lloyd George

A lecture at Llanystumdwy

On 20 February 2009, Dr J. Graham Jones, Head of the Welsh Political Archive, delivered a second lecture to the Friends of the Lloyd George Museum at Llanystumdwy. Mr Emrys Williams, its former curator, was in the chair.

Dr Jones examined the background to Lloyd George's highly contentious decision to accept a hereditary peerage in the 1945 New Year's Honours List. He elucidated his motives in doing so and looked at the disparate reactions in Wales and beyond to the startling news. He then proceeded to analyse the selection of a new Liberal candidate for the Caernarfon Boroughs division to succeed Lloyd George, and sketched briefly the ensuing by-election campaign of April 1945.

The main gist of the lecture has already been published in the June 2008 number of the Welsh History Review.

W. Llewelyn Williams diary

In the first number of the National Library of Wales Journal as an e-journal, Dr J. Graham Jones has published the complete text, together with explanatory notes and an introduction, of the detailed diary which W. Llewelyn Williams kept at irregular intervals between 1908 and 1915.

Williams's diary entries are full and perceptive, illuminating the course of British political life during a period of Liberal administrations, and containing many references to the activities and standpoints of David Lloyd George and other prominent Liberal politicians. It may be consulted on the NLW web-site.

John Morris Papers

On 20 February 2009 Lord Morris of Aberavon visited the Library to examine some of his papers already in its custody and to add to the extensive archive. The most recent group includes interesting files of correspondence, mainly of political interest, covering the years 1988-89 and 1992. There are also papers relating to his initial selection as the Labour candidate for the Aberavon division in 1958 when he was narrowly chosen ahead of Llewelyn Heycock. These will all be incorporated in the John Morris Papers. A full catalogue of the entire archive is nearing completion.