

**Minutes of the seventh meeting of the Newsplan (Cymru) Working Party  
held at the National Library of Wales, Aberystwyth,  
on Tuesday 24 March 1998**

**Present:** Brynmor Jones (Chairman), Kay Warren-Morgan, David Shone, Joy Thomas, Rebecca Little, Beti Jones, Non Jenkins, Michael Allen, Marilyn Jones, Iwan Jones (Secretary)

### **1. Apologies and personal matters**

Apologies for absence were received from Susan Ellis (Conwy), Gareth Haulfryn Williams (Gwynedd), Susan Pugh (Newport), John Rees Thomas (Anglesey), Lucy Williams (Denbigh), Gordon Reid (Powys) and Rhidian Griffiths (National Library of Wales).

### **2. Minutes of the meeting of 14 October 1997 and matters arising**

(1) The minutes of the meeting of 14 October 1997 had been circulated and were accepted as a correct record.

#### **(2) Smethurst Report on British Library collecting policy**

It was understood that the Chair of the Newsplan LINC Panel would welcome a letter regarding this issue and it was agreed to write confirming the Working Party's support.

#### **(3) Newsplan (Wales) Seminar**

It was agreed that a Second Newsplan (Wales) Seminar would help draw attention to the work but the date of Autumn 1998 which had been suggested was felt to be premature, and it was agreed to wait to see the outcome of the Newsplan Lottery bid.

### **3. Review of progress, future plans and work in progress**

**Rhondda Cynon Taff.** Kay Warren Morgan said that the authority had been able to maintain its existing programme of acquiring film of current newspapers, namely the *Rhondda Leader*, the *Cynon Leader*, the *South Wales Echo* and the *Western Mail*. The authority had no holdings of historic newspapers to film.

**Flint.** David Shone said that Flint was able to maintain the filming of 'inherited titles' but that there were no further developments.

**Wrexham.** Joy Thomas reported that filming by Wrexham had come to a halt in the current year but that if funds were available in the next financial year she hoped to microfilm the *Wrexham Leader* of the last three years and to bring it and other smaller local newspapers up to date.

**Bridgend.** Rebecca Little said that Bridgend were continuing with the filming of the *Western Mail* and the *Glamorgan Gazette*.

**National Library of Wales.** Non Jenkins said that the National Library of Wales had not been involved in cooperative microfilming in the current year. The *Carmarthen Journal* had been re-filmed to preservation standard in order to meet the demand for copies and the *Welshman* had been filmed in addition. In future there was likely to be more filming of current titles, since titles up to 1950 were covered by the Newsplan Lottery bid.

**Swansea.** Michael Allen reported that Swansea was still able to keep up to date with the filming of the *Western Mail* and the *Cambrian* but that there had been no additional work in the current year.

**Cardiff.** Brynmor Jones said that Cardiff had been able to keep ordering microfilm of the *South Wales Echo*, the *Barry and District News* and the *Penarth Times* through the British Library and that he hoped extra funds might be available in the new financial year.

Iwan Jones said that the National Library was glad to undertake cooperative microfilming with other libraries in order to share the cost of filming. Large orders and payments could be accepted at any time provided that the work could be scheduled over a longer period. Although the microfilming unit had contracted, the future was brighter than it had been, partly because of more orders from the British Library for films of current newspapers, and partly because of the Lottery bid.

#### **4. Report on the Newsplan (Wales) Database**

Non Jenkins reported that the National Library continued to update the database and would be glad to have news of changes. The Newsplan (Wales) Report had been produced on Word 5 and the intention had been to put it on the Internet in a non-searchable form via the ISYS database. However, the example of the LASER (London) database, which had been described by Martin Harrison of LIBPAC at the Newsplan Conference and which had been put on the Internet in a structured, searchable form had convinced her that this was the way ahead. Details of the LASER database were available on the Internet through the EARL MagNet site: <http://www.earl.org.uk/magnet/> The Newsplan bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund included provision for transferring all the Newsplan databases to this format.

#### **5. Report on the Third Newsplan Conference, Durham, 16-17 March 1998, and the Newsplan Heritage Lottery Bid**

Details of the Conference had been circulated to the members of the Working Party and the Conference had been attended by Non Jenkins and Iwan Jones of the National Library, who gave a brief report of the proceedings. The Conference, which had taken place to the background of the Lottery bid, had drawn attention to the educational context of Newsplan, now that the government was promoting the use of the Internet and on-line access as an educational tool. There were few clear guidelines for digitisation, but preservation-standard microfilm was seen as the most appropriate route to digitisation, since it provided a high-quality negative for preservation together with a medium which could be scanned automatically and cheaply. Copyright still presented considerable obstacles to digitisation, since the definition of 'use' proved more restrictive in the case of digitised documents than it did, for example, for printed books.

The Newsplan Lottery bid itself was now complete, and the final draft, which had been sent to the Chairmen of the Newsplan Implementation Panels, was seen by the members of the Working Party. The bid had been made on behalf of the LINC Newsplan Panel by the Freedom Forum and the London Press Club. It proposed a five-year project to microfilm newspapers to Mellon preservation standards. Dennis Griffiths had carried out the feasibility study and had prepared the bid with Ann Matheson, Chairman of the LINC Newsplan Panel, and John Byford of the British Library Newspaper Library. Newsplan (Wales) had provided them with details of Welsh newspapers on the basis of the Newsplan (Wales) Report, details of microfilming units in Wales and a list of 104 microfilm readers which could be located in Welsh libraries (based on libraries listed in the *Directory of Libraries in the United Kingdom and Republic of Ireland*, Libraries Association, 1997).

The bid proposed that a central office for Newsplan should be set up with a Director, an Education Officer and access to technical advice. The microfilming work would have to be put out to competitive tender, and the microfilming units at the British Library Newspaper Library, the National Library of Wales and the National Library of Scotland would put in a joint tender for the work. The bid also included proposals to put the Newsplan Reports on-line and to investigate the feasibility of digitising from the microfilm.

The meeting welcomed the prospect of funding for microfilming and for the provision of microfilm readers. Michael Allen said that Swansea had invested heavily in the care and filming of newspapers, but that there was now a conflict between the microfilm format and the expectations of library users, who increasingly wanted on-line access. He felt that there was a need for libraries to press on to develop digital techniques to facilitate access.

## **6. Any other business**

### **(1) Invitation to John Byford**

Geoff Smith, former British Library Newspaper Librarian, had attended one of the Working Party's meetings and it was agreed that his successor, John Byford, should also be invited as soon as there was a prospect of more cooperative filming or Lottery funding. David Shone suggested that John Byford should be invited to speak at the proposed Seminar, if that were arranged fairly soon.

### **(2) Newsplan enquiries**

The Secretary reported that the Center for Bibliographical Studies and Research at the University of California, Riverside, had made enquiries regarding the Newsplan (Wales) data. It was likely that more publicity for Newsplan would bring in more enquiries and more use of newspapers, with attendant benefits and difficulties.

## **7. Date and place of next meeting**

The next meeting would be held on Tuesday 13 October at the National Library of Wales.

The meeting was followed by a short presentation by Beti Jones of newspapers available on CD-ROM.