

Minutes of the meeting of the Newsplan (Cymru) Working Party held at the National Library of Wales, Aberystwyth, at 11.00am, Thursday 18 October 2001

Present: Brynmor Jones (Chairman), Edmund King, Joy Thomas, Gill Fraser, Susan Mends, Annette Jones, Janet Karn, Rhidian Griffiths, Lynn Roberts, Non Jenkins, Beti Jones, Brian Dafis, Simon Kellas, Alan Prescott, Laura Hilton, Marilyn Jones, Mike Allen, Iwan Jones (Secretary)

1. Apologies for absence and personal matters

Apologies were received from William Howells, Susan Pugh, Kay Warren-Morgan and Ann Rhydderch. The Chairman welcomed to the meeting Simon Kellas, Project Officer of Newsplan 2000, and Ed King, British Library Newspaper Librarian, as well as representatives from Welsh libraries who were also attending for the first time.

2. Minutes of the meeting held on 8 June 2000 and matters arising

2.1 The minutes had been circulated and were accepted as a correct record.

2.2 Newsplan Conference (2.4)

The Newsplan Conference planned for 2001 had not taken place and a Newsplan seminar would be held in London in April 2002.

2.3 LISC(W) Preservation Survey (2.5)

The report on the LISC(W) survey of collections *The Future of our Recorded Past* had been published on the National Assembly web site under the libraries section of the Culture and Recreation Department.

2.4 Newsplan workplan – surveys (5.2)

It was a condition of HLF funding that the Newsplan regions should carry out surveys of newspaper use. Ed King noted that the intention was to benchmark the situation before and after implementation so that the effects of the project could be assessed. Rhidian Griffiths said that the National Library of Wales would carry out a survey of the use of its own collections and it was hoped other libraries in Wales would also take part.

2.5 National Library Reprographic Unit (7.2)

Enquiries about microfilming at the National Library should in future be made to Brian Richards, head of the Library's microfilming unit. The post of Reprographics Unit Manager was vacant and was not expected to be filled.

2.6 E-mail list (5.3)

Brian Dafis thanked Susan Mends for her help in preparing an e-mail list. He would be contacting local libraries to borrow newspapers for filming and would keep members informed of progress through the e-mail list.

3. Report of progress on Newsplan 2000

3.1 Newsplan 2000 arrangements

Dr Rhidian Griffiths explained that Newsplan 2000 had been set up as a limited company to secure HLF funding for Newsplan. It had a board of trustees with an executive committee which comprised Dr Ann Matheson (Chairman), John Byford and himself. John Lauder had been appointed Director of Newsplan 2000 and Simon Kellas Project Officer. The officers and executive committee had worked together to meet the requirements of the HLF and had secured shared funding from the newspaper industry with the help of the Newspaper Society. Three contractors had submitted full tenders for the microfilming work and on 2 October it had been announced that the contract had been awarded to

Microformat UK Ltd. The HLF required that complete runs of the best copies should be filmed as far as possible, and these were mainly in the national collections (BL, NLS, NLW). Revised schedules of filming had been prepared and full details of the Welsh titles were available from Simon Kellas of Newsplan 2000, or from Brian Dafis, who would be responsible for the preparation of newspapers at the National Library of Wales.

3.2 Newsplan 2000 Update

Simon Kellas presented a paper giving an update on Newsplan 2000. The filming would start in March 2002, rise to a peak in 2003, and would need to have been completed by the time funding ended in July 2004. 75% of newspapers would come from the national libraries, and they would also take on the work of preparation. The British Library intended to charge £8.47 per volume prepared to the Newsplan region that had asked for the title to be filmed. In Wales the cost of preparation would be borne by the National Library.

Copy film of newspapers ordered at the time of filming would be available at a special cheap rate of about £16 per reel. The price of film would remain fairly low during the period of the project, but once the negative film had been put into store at the close of the project the price was likely to be higher.

Shared funding from the newspaper industry would be used to buy microfilm readers and reader-printers which would be distributed free to local libraries. It was agreed that reader-printers (6 per region was proposed) were the more useful. Simon Kellas said Newsplan 2000 would consult with the Newsplan regions at the appropriate time in order to resolve the formula for distribution.

3.3 Arrangements in Wales

Brian Dafis explained that in Wales the National Library had agreed to coordinate Newsplan, with the active support of libraries and archives throughout Wales. A list of titles had been drawn up on the basis of the Newsplan (Wales) Report and input from the Working Party. He would be available at the National Library to give details of the filming schedule, and would be coordinating the preparation and delivery of newspapers for filming. A major concern was to make the newspaper files as complete as possible before filming, and he would be contacting local libraries to seek to borrow newspapers when there were gaps in the National Library collection. Amendments to the schedule of titles to be filmed were still possible, but he warned that once filming started progress would be relentless, and there would be a rigorous timetable for delivery of newspapers prepared and ready for filming.

The Chairman congratulated the trustees and officers of Newsplan 2000 on their success in establishing the project, which was the largest preservation programme ever within the UK and the largest microfilming project outside the USA.

4. Any other business

4.1 Newsplan (Wales) on the web

Rhidian Griffiths reported that attempts to put the Newsplan (Wales) Report on the web using the ISYS software had been disappointing because searching was unsatisfactory. He was looking for ways to create a new list and might develop a simple summary of holdings as an interim measure.

4.2 Cataloguing

Simon Kellas noted that Newsplan 2000 would produce MARC catalogue entries of the newspapers filmed by the end of the project. More details would be available later.

4.3 LINC Newsplan Panel

Iwan Jones reported on the LINC Newsplan Panel which had been held in the British Library on 4 October 2001.

4.4 British Library / Olive Software Research Project

Ed King described the Research Project on the automated indexing of newspapers which had recently been completed. The Project had scanned 18 reels of duplicate negative microfilm and had adopted a hybrid approach, using image files plus Optical Character Recognition to capture the information electronically in a way that allowed readability plus automated indexing. The Project had overcome the problems that had been met with in earlier, mainly OCR-based, attempts at automatic indexing and imaging, and had processed over 20,000 pages in two months.

The Project results were available on the web site <http://www.uk.olivesoftware.com/> It was felt that the work was extremely important and could represent a breakthrough in researching historic newspapers. Ed King noted that problems of cost, scale and copyright remained, and agreed to demonstrate the results of the Project on-line immediately after the meeting.

4.4 Current filming

There were no developments in retrospective filming, but most authorities were maintaining their existing programmes of filming current newspapers. The National Library of Wales hoped to expand its programme of filming current newspapers and the British Library agreed it would continue to purchase copy film of the Welsh newspapers filmed.

5. Date and place of next meeting

11.00am on Thursday 18 April 2002 at the National Library of Wales.