

## Annual Report to CDNL 2005 – 2006

<b>Name of Country :</b> Wales (UK)
<b>Name of Library:</b> National Library of Wales
<b>Name of Chief Executive :</b>

- 1 The Library's new **visitor centre** has now been open in full for exactly one year. Visitors, readers and staff alike agree that the new facilities are a great success.

The benefits have included:

- extensive programmes of activities in the 100-seat auditorium, the Drwm, including showing of films from the National Screen and Sound Archive, lectures, readings, concerts, seminars and conferences
- the ability to display for the first time 'treasures' and fragile material – manuscripts, books, paintings and drawings – under ideal environmental conditions in the new 'Hengwrt' gallery
- listening and viewing facilities for the National Screen and Sound Archive
- an extended programme of activities for school visitors, based on the new purpose-built accommodation
- a much improved restaurant and shop

The Library was once perceived as an 'ivory tower' for scholars only, and its grand building a distant 'Parthenon' on the hill above Aberystwyth. Now it is increasingly seen as a resource for everyone: not only researchers – though their needs are still well met – but also learners, community groups, cultural tourists, businesses, amateur historians, conference delegates, and schoolchildren and their teachers.

In five years the number of visitors to the Library building has doubled, and we expect a continuing rise as the new facilities become better known.

- 2 At the same time as the National Library has welcomed more, and different, users, it has been concerned to make sure that its contents are as safe as they can be. The last year has seen the culmination of a long effort to increase the **security of the building and the collections**. We have tightened physical access to the interior of the building, as well as procedures for becoming a reader. Visual surveillance has also been increased.

- 3 One area that has benefited from this added security is the Reading Rooms. In October 2004 we re-opened the **South Reading Room**, restoring it to its former grandeur in a way that would have pleased the original architect. The Room and its annex is where readers consult manuscripts and rare books, archives, maps, pictures, microforms and electronic information. The readers and staff find the new area safe, comfortable, attractive and convenient.

Plans are being developed to restore and modernise the **North Reading Room**, where most printed material is read, in a similar way.

- 4 The last year has also seen progress towards realising our ambitions for the **Digital Library**. The most important developments were:

- preparations for the purchase of a new automated collections management system (see 5 below)
- preparations for the operation of the Legal Deposit Libraries Act 2003, in co-operation with the UK's other national libraries
- further progress on the digitisation of our collections (see 6 below)
- the launch of Athens-based online access to registered readers to licensed electronic information resources, including the *Times digital archive*, *Early English texts online*, and the *Oxford dictionary of national biography*<sup>1</sup>
- work on behalf of or in collaboration with the Welsh Assembly Government and other Welsh bodies (see 7 below)

---

<sup>1</sup> [http://www.llgc.org.uk/cronfa/cronfa\\_s002.htm](http://www.llgc.org.uk/cronfa/cronfa_s002.htm)

- additions to the Library's website, including an online shop<sup>2</sup> and an education site<sup>3</sup>
- testing FEDORA<sup>4</sup> as a solution for the storage and preservation of digital material (the Library uses the Library of Congress's METS<sup>5</sup> metadata schema for digitised material)
- developing expertise in handling and storing digital archives, and electronic records management.

5 By the end of September 2005 we shall have selected a **new integrated computer system for managing our collections**. This will replace the two main current systems, GEAC (print-based material) and CAIRS (archives and other material), as well as a host of smaller systems. It should be much simpler in future for users to search for material in all our collections, and more cost-effective for the Library.

Three companies have already been shortlisted: Ex Libris, GEAC and VTLS.

6 The **digitisation programme** has continued, adding a number of important collections and items to the Digital Mirror<sup>6</sup> on the Library's website, including:

- 'Welsh biography online', a digital version of the authoritative printed *Dictionary of Welsh biography*<sup>7</sup>
- the newspaper cartoons of Leslie Ilingworth<sup>8</sup>
- the letters of a Welsh soldier who fought in the American Civil War<sup>9</sup>
- Dylan Thomas's street map of 'Llareggub', the seaside village in his radio play *Under Milk Wood*<sup>10</sup>
- 'Voix Celtae': an online version in French (also in English and Welsh) of the Library's 'Celtic voices' exhibition<sup>11</sup>
- 'Life on the land', from the Library's main summer exhibition in 2004<sup>12</sup>

A revised Digitisation Strategy will be approved in Autumn 2005. 'Culturenet Cymru', the body that promotes 'online culture' throughout Wales and maintains the major 'Gathering the Jewels' website, became part of the Library in June 2005.<sup>13</sup>

7 The Library **co-operates with the Welsh Assembly Government and other bodies** on digital library developments, including in 2004-05:

- 'Wales on the Web', the searchable directory of websites giving reliable information about all aspects of Wales, now includes 'Collections Wales', the directory of special library collections throughout Wales. 'Wales on the Web' is funded by Cymru Ar-lein, the ICT strategy arm of the Welsh Assembly Government.<sup>14</sup>
- 'Ask Cymru', again funded by the Welsh Assembly Government, is a national Welsh online enquiry service managed by the Library. Libraries throughout Wales take it in turn to be responsible for answering enquiries.<sup>15</sup>
- CyMAL, the section of the Welsh Assembly Government responsible for the development of local archives, libraries and museums in Wales, has commissioned the Library to carry out two projects this year: one will consider how the Library's new system (see 5 above) may be used to give access to the holdings of libraries throughout Wales; the other will extend an existing services whereby commercial online resources are made available under national licences through local libraries. at the request of the Government the Library is leading a project to investigate the possibility of creating a 'National Digital Gallery of the Visual Arts for Wales'.
- Project ALARM ('Administrative, Legal and Accountable Records Management') is a co-operative European Union-funded project led by the Library, which aims to help small and medium-sized businesses organise their records efficiently in a way that meet legal requirements.
- the Library continues to work with many partners. Some examples: it contributes to the SUNCAT union list of serial in the UK<sup>16</sup>; it is a partner in the newly-established Research Information Network,

<sup>2</sup> <http://siop.llgc.org.uk/perl/go.pl/shop/index.html?LANG=en>;

<sup>3</sup> <http://dysgle.llgc.org.uk/>

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.fedora.info/>

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.loc.gov/standards/mets/>

<sup>6</sup> [http://www.llgc.org.uk/drych/index\\_s.htm](http://www.llgc.org.uk/drych/index_s.htm)

<sup>7</sup> <http://yba.llgc.org.uk/AnaServer?ybawbo+0+start.any>

<sup>8</sup> <http://www.llgc.org.uk/illingworth/>

<sup>9</sup> [http://www.llgc.org.uk/drych/drych\\_s089.htm](http://www.llgc.org.uk/drych/drych_s089.htm)

<sup>10</sup> [http://www.llgc.org.uk/drych/drych\\_s086.htm](http://www.llgc.org.uk/drych/drych_s086.htm)

<sup>11</sup> <http://digidol.llgc.org.uk/METS/XBC00001/ardd?locale=fr>

<sup>12</sup> <http://digidol.llgc.org.uk/METS/XAM00001/ardd?locale=en>

<sup>13</sup> <http://www.culturenetcymru.com/en/>

<sup>14</sup> <http://www.walesontheweb.org/>

<sup>15</sup> <http://www.askcymru.org.uk/>

which aims to co-ordinate information strategy for UK researchers; existing links with the national libraries of Latvia, Estonia and Finland have been strengthened.

- 8 **More information** about developments in the National Library of Wales is available on the Library's website<sup>17</sup>, and by email, fax or letter from the Librarian.

Andrew M.W. Green  
Librarian  
1 July 2005

---

<sup>16</sup> <http://www.suncat.ac.uk/>

<sup>17</sup> <http://www.llgc.org.uk/>