

# WALES

## NATIONAL LIBRARY OF WALES

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ANNUAL REPORT TO CDNL 2007

### A NEW CENTURY

2007 is a momentous year in the history of the National Library of Wales. On 19 March 1907 King Edward VII signed the Royal Charter that established the Library, after a period of agitation and preparation dating back to 1873. This year we are celebrating our birthday, and at the same time taking advantage of it to raise the public profile of the Library in Wales, the rest of the UK and overseas.

Among the many centenary events are:

- two television and two radio series about the Library and its collections;
- a special ceremony to mark our exact birthday (19 March) and the opening of a special exhibition looking at Wales during the last 100 years through items from the collections;
- two poems specially commissioned from Gwyneth Lewis, Wales's National Poet in 2006: they have been sent out to libraries around the world, including CDNL members;
- several new books about the Library and its collections;
- lectures, readings, open days and conferences;
- an exhibition of photographs of Wales taken by Library staff, shown in the National Libraries of Latvia and Estonia; and
- festivals of film and photography in Wales.

The programme of events continues until the end of 2007.<sup>1</sup>

### A NEW, UNIFIED COLLECTION MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

In January 2007 we launched publicly the first phase of our new collection management and search system. The supplier is VTLS Inc. of Blacksburg, Virginia, USA. The main VTLS systems we are using are 'Virtua' (for metadata of all kinds) and 'Vital' (for managing and presenting digital objects).

The new system<sup>2</sup> brings two major benefits to the Library and its readers:

- it replaces a myriad of existing systems (two main ones and a variety of minor ones) and offers users a single, simple search mechanism, irrespective of type of material. This is especially important for the National Library, because our collections are unusually wide in scope, even for a national library: printed publications, manuscripts and archives, paintings, photographs and other graphic material, sound recordings and moving images, and digital publications and archives. Devising a common system has been challenging, since the expectations of librarians, archivists and film curators, and of their users, are very different.
- the system provides us and our users for the first time with a consistent and integrated means of managing and giving public access to material in electronic form: publications and archives we have acquired or subscribe to, as well as items from our collections that we have digitised.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.llgc.org.uk/index.php?id=161>

<sup>2</sup> <http://cat.llgc.org.uk/cgi-bin/gw/chameleon?lng=en>

It is possible to search for electronic material separately<sup>3</sup>, as it is for the other types of material in the first phase, printed material and graphic material. Other categories - archives, family history and sound and moving images - will be added to the system in stages in the near future.

## A NEW WEBSITE

This new system now sits within a completely redesigned and rewritten Library website, unveiled in March 2007.<sup>4</sup>

The graphic design of the site, which is completely bilingual (in Welsh and English), was supplied by Peter Gill Associates of Cardiff. It offers an attractive and easy to use gateway to all of the services and information the Library provides through the internet. At the same time we introduced a bilingual content management system to improve the way in which information for the website is written and edited.

As well as providing general information about the Library and its services the website includes the 'Digital Mirror', the gallery of the Library's digitised material, online enquiry services, an online shop, an online booking service for events, an education micro-site, resources for family historians, and new sections on how to support the Library.

## NEW DIGITISATION DEVELOPMENTS

Several new digitisation projects have come to fruition in the last year:

- "OhiO": a privately financed site presenting documents illustrating the settlement of Welsh people in the state of Ohio<sup>5</sup>. (An extension project is due to begin.)
- "Glaniad": a site prepared by Culturenet Cymru, the Library's online community culture organisation, that tells the story of the remarkable Welsh settlements in Patagonia, Argentina (Welsh is still spoken there today)<sup>6</sup>.
- the "De Grey Book of Hours", a finely illustrated manuscript made in Flanders in the mid fifteenth century<sup>7</sup>.

Under way is an ambitious project named "Portread", which aims to create an online national portrait gallery for Wales, based on the Library's collections.

In collaboration with Welsh higher education institutions and Welsh publishers the Library has recently begun to digitise the contents of around 100 periodicals relating to Wales published between 1900 and the present day.<sup>8</sup> This project is part of a large-scale programme, provisionally entitled "The Theatre of Memory". This will digitise, in principle, the entire printed heritage of Wales, including books, periodicals and newspapers: we are beginning to gather support and funding for this initiative.

## A NEW CONSTITUTION

The Library was granted a new Royal Charter (constitution) in 2006. Among the changes were a revision and simplification of the "Objects" of the Library, and the reform of its government. The Court of Governors has been abolished. The previous Council has been reduced in size and renamed a "Board", meeting more often but with far fewer committees. A new 30-seat 'Consultative Body' has been set up. It is composed partly of representatives of organisations of particular relevance to the Library and partly of interested individuals; its roles are to advise on strategy and policy and to act as an advocate on the Library's behalf.

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<sup>3</sup> <http://cat.llgc.org.uk/cgi-bin/gw/chameleon?host=cat.llgc.org.uk%2b9901%2bDEFAULT&patronhost=cat.llgc.org.uk%209901%20DEFAULT&function=NOFUNC&SourceScreen=NOFUNC&sessionid=2007050312395116920&lng=en&inst=consortium&conf=.%2fchameleon.conf&elementcount=3&pos=1&itempos=1&skin=eresources>

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.llgc.org.uk/index.php?id=2>

<sup>5</sup> <http://ohio.llgc.org.uk/>

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.glaniad.com/>

<sup>7</sup> <http://www.llgc.org.uk/index.php?id=thedegrayhoursnlwms15537>

<sup>8</sup> [http://www.jisc.ac.uk/whatwedo/programmes/programme\\_digitisation/welshjournals.aspx](http://www.jisc.ac.uk/whatwedo/programmes/programme_digitisation/welshjournals.aspx)

In 2006 the Library was re-accredited as an "Investor in People": this is a government-sponsored scheme to recognise organisations that meet high standards in the development and motivation of staff. In 2007 it was awarded the UK government standard "Charter Mark" in recognition of its excellence in standards of service.

### **NEW STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS**

This year the National Library is reviewing its overall strategy.<sup>9</sup> From May till July everyone in Wales will have the opportunity to participate in a consultation process, by responding to a pamphlet written by the Library, by submitting their own ideas, and by taking part in a discussion via an electronic message board.

The responses to the consultation will inform a new long-term strategy, to be written later in the year.

### **FURTHER INFORMATION**

More information about developments in the National Library of Wales is available on the Library's website<sup>10</sup>, and by email, fax or letter from the Librarian.

### **CONTACT DETAILS**

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<sup>9</sup> <http://www.llgc.org.uk/index.php?id=1688>

<sup>10</sup> <http://www.llgc.org.uk/index.php?id=2>