

# ANNUAL REPORT TO CDNL 2008

## WALES

### National Library of Wales

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#### Library's relationship to government

Founded by Royal Charter 1907, renewed 2006. Charity. Governed by a Board of Trustees. Funded by grant-in-aid by the Welsh Assembly Government through the Minister for Heritage.

#### Fact and figures

**Collections:** books, periodicals newspapers and other printed material (about 6m volumes: as a 'legal deposit' library NLW collects about 90% of the entire printed publications of the UK); manuscripts (25,000 items); archives 2,500 collections; maps (over 1m maps and thousands of atlases); pictures (40,000 works documenting Wales, mainly through landscapes and portraits); photographs (800,000 prints, negatives and transparencies; microforms; sound and moving images (5.5m feet of film, 250,000 hours of video, 200,000 hours of sound recordings, and thousands of records and tapes in the National Screen and Sound Archive of Wales; electronic material: CD-ROMs, e-books, e-journals, websites and electronic archives.

**Staff:** about 300, also 10 in Culturenet Cymru (a company owned by the Library)

**Funding:** in 2009-10, £16,632 (grant-in-aid), plus £694,000 from the Library's private funds, plus fundraising proceeds.

#### All of Wales in print - online

The National Library has long cherished the ambition to give free public access to the digital versions of, in principle, all works printed and published in and about Wales from the sixteenth century to the present day. That ambition is now being put into practice, through two major projects:

- 'Welsh Journals Online' (WJO) will make available by autumn 2009 the entire contents of about 50 periodicals published in Wales since 1900. Funded by money from the higher education sector and from the Welsh Assembly Government, this £1m project has given the Library valuable experience in managing intellectual property issues: <http://welshjournals.llgc.org.uk/content/home>
- 'Welsh Newspapers and Magazines Online' is a three-year £3m project starting in April 2009, funded mainly by the Welsh Assembly Government (£2m; £1m to be added by fundraising). It will continue WJO's work on periodicals, but will also make available most of the pre-1900 newspapers of Wales.

A third, smaller project will digitise all Welsh ballads (in many ways predecessors of later newspapers). Among the many outcomes of these projects will be the largest digital corpus yet assembled of works in the Welsh language, one of the oldest languages of Europe and one of the few minority languages in the world not in decline. We have recently received the results of a study commissioned to investigate the audiences for the whole programme.

### **A new look at Web 2.0 in libraries**

Most libraries have dipped a toe or two into the world of Web 2.0, for example by exporting items from their collections to sites like Flickr or YouTube, by publishing blogs by staff members, or by inviting and exploiting the digital contributions of their users. Before plunging into this pool the National Library decided to review its own experimental uses of Web 2.0, as well as the adoption of Web 2.0 by similar institutions (not only libraries) around the world. A six-month secondment, about to come to an end, will result in an important report with challenging recommendations, not just about Web 2.0 but about all aspects of how the Library can be seen and used online.

Along with National Museum Wales and the Royal Commission on the Ancient and Historical Monuments of Wales the National Library is helping to populate the 'People's Collection', a new virtual compendium of people's history in Wales funded by the Welsh Assembly Government; this too will include many Web 2.0 features.

Culturenet Cymru, the National Library's community digital culture arm, has recently completed a well-received project, 'Community Archives Wales', intended to help local groups in Wales document online the history of their areas through their own digitising of private documents and pictures:

[http://www.ourwales.org.uk/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=frontpage&Itemid=1&lang=en-GB](http://www.ourwales.org.uk/index.php?option=com_content&view=frontpage&Itemid=1&lang=en-GB)

### **Improving search and retrieval**

Faster and more efficient ways of finding material are essential if searchers are going to turn to the Library as a regular source of recorded knowledge. Recently two innovations have contributed to this goal:

- readers can now explore in a single comprehensive search the contents of all the electronic information resources to which the Library subscribes, using a federated search tool developed by Webfeat Inc:  
<http://www.llgc.org.uk/index.php?id=242>  
(These resources are available online to all Welsh citizens who have become Library members.)
- readers can also make a federated search, 'Cat Cymru', across all libraries in Wales:  
<http://library.wales.org/catcymru/>
- in addition, the Library has decided to adopt Aquabrowser as a new and more visually interesting way of searching all the Library's collections.

### **Researching our users**

Over recent years we have given much thought to how we find out about the users and uses

of the National Library, both as a physical entity and as a virtual resource. We now report the results of all our surveys and other tools each quarter in a single comprehensive document. Each year we also report the results of a survey of the adult population of Wales, which seeks to discover how much people know about the Library, how much they make use of it, and what they think about its importance. The 2008 survey revealed that 59% of Welsh people are aware of the Library; of this 59%, 21% have visited the Library.

## **Art in the Library**

The National Library is unusual in being a public art museum and gallery as well as a library and archive. Our Gregynog Gallery is the largest single art space in Wales and regular hosts major art exhibitions. The Library's second artist in residence, the photographer and filmmaker Blue MacAskill, spent 2008 in the building and in schools throughout Wales, introducing children to the Library's multimedia collections and helping them respond artistically to what they found. The residency culminated in exhibitions by the children and by Blue herself, along with a film night of artist's shorts. In 2007 the Library received a large bequest from the will of Sir Kyffin Williams, Wales's outstanding painter of the second half of the twentieth century. Staff are now busy cataloguing, conserving and accommodating the collection, which includes 200 oil paintings as well as sketchbooks and many other works.

## **The National Library moves to Washington DC**

This year Wales is the featured country in the annual Smithsonian Folklife Festival, held in The Mall, Washington DC around Independence Day and attended by around £1m people. In the Festival itself the National Library will be demonstrating traditional bookbinding crafts and offering advice on tracing Welsh ancestors, and in the Festival fringe the National Screen and Sound Archive of Wales will show films from its collection as part of a Welsh film festival.

## **Developing our staff**

In the age of economic uncertainty and rapid technological change the need for all institutions to pay close attention to the future skills of those responsible for their services is clear. The National Library intends to maintain and if possible improve the proportion of its staff time (currently 2.19%) devoted to training and development. Almost half of the 300 staff have now acquired a European Computer Driving Licence (ECDL); most managers have gained a qualification with the Institute of Leadership and Management (ILM); many staff have attended the excellent courses and summer schools offered by Government's Public Sector Management Wales (PSMW); a coaching scheme is well established; and a full programme of courses is offered internally.

## **Raising money**

The National Library's fundraising unit is now mature. This follows a period when expert external advice was used to establish and train an internal team and to set up the main fundraising functions. These include a programme of grant submissions to trusts and charities, a patron's scheme ('Chapters') and a corresponding scheme for corporate supporters, a legacies scheme and other plans. The unit maintains a 'kitbag' of projects suitable for fundraising and compatible with the Library's Strategy.