

LIBERAL PARTY ARCHIVES IN THE WELSH POLITICAL ARCHIVE AT THE NATIONAL LIBRARY OF WALES

by Rob Phillips



THE NATIONAL LIBRARY OF Wales was established by Royal Charter on 17 March 1907. This was the culmination of many decades of work and followed a commitment by the government in 1905 to provide funds for the library. Over the subsequent century a wide-ranging and varied collection of published material in the form of books, newspapers, periodicals and maps has been created as a result of the library's status as a legal deposit library, however the library also holds substantial collections of non-published material such as photographs, paintings, manuscripts and archives.

The papers of political figures and organisations were of course amongst those collected, but in 1983 the Welsh Political Archive was established to provide a focus for the collection and promotion of this material, along with an advisory committee comprised of representatives from the main political parties in Wales, civic society and academics. This committee meets annually to review the work of the archive and make arrangements for the annual lecture. The members also act as ambassadors for the archive and assist in attracting new material.

Much of the research behind this article was undertaken by Dr John Graham Jones, who was formerly the head of the Welsh Political Archive. It would be impossible to comprehensively cover all the material held in the Welsh Political Archive relating to the Liberal and

Liberal Democrat parties, but I have highlighted the main collections and give the NRA Code where available to aid further research. Full details are available from the library's online catalogue, or from the finding aids noted below.

David Lloyd George

The Welsh Political Archive holds a significant collection of archival material relating to David Lloyd George, Liberal MP for the Caernarfon Boroughs, 1890–1945, Chancellor of the Exchequer, 1908–15, and Prime Minister, 1916–22. At the beginning of 1910, after Lloyd George, as Chancellor of the Exchequer, had agreed to a government grant of £4,000 to the National Library of Wales, his close political associate Sir John Herbert Lewis, Liberal MP for Flintshire wrote to thank him for this 'courageous act', adding, 'The Library will be at, I hope, a very distant date your literary mausoleum'.

The Lloyd George Manuscripts **GB 0210 MSLLOYD-GEORGE** contain the papers of the Lloyd George family. The collection is comprised mainly of correspondence, the bulk of which is addressed to David Lloyd George, mostly from contemporary political figures and from members of his family. The political correspondence relates largely to Welsh affairs, including disestablishment, the Welsh Church Commission,

education and the investiture of the Prince of Wales in 1911, as well as to the Irish Question and the First World War.

David Lloyd George's family correspondence includes letters between David Lloyd George and his wife Margaret, from David Lloyd George to his uncle Richard Lloyd and to David Lloyd George from his brother William George. Other family correspondence includes letters to Margaret Lloyd George, from various correspondents, and from Margaret Lloyd George mainly to her daughter Olwen Carey-Evans.

Megan Lloyd George's correspondence and papers include letters to and from Labour politician Philip Noel-Baker and from other correspondents, including her parents, together with a tour journal, and diary, 1947. Gwilym Lloyd George's correspondence and papers include typescript draft of his (unpublished) autobiography.

David Lloyd George's speech notes, notebooks and miscellaneous papers, together with correspondence and papers relating to Mair Eluned Lloyd George are also included.

The William George Papers **GB 0210 WILGEORGE** comprise 3,292 letters from Lloyd George to William and ten pocket diaries kept by the young Lloyd George from 1878 to 1888.

The Olwen Carey-Evans Papers **GB 0210 CAREYEVANS** mainly

comprise her correspondence, notebooks, scrapbooks, other personal papers and papers, press cuttings, memorabilia, diaries, notes, essays and other items relating to members of her family but include a small group of papers relating to David Lloyd George.

Albert James Sylvester was Lloyd George's principal private secretary. The A. J. Sylvester Papers **GB 0210 AJSYLTER** include many files of correspondence and papers including shorthand diaries and notebooks, files relating to the First World War, the Paris Peace Conference, Germany and the Second World War, material relating to the Liberal Party, politics and elections, Lloyd George family letters and papers. There is also a long series of very detailed typescript diaries which include much important material beyond that published by Colin Cross in 1975.

The Frances Stevenson Family Papers **GB 0210 FRASON** are a more recent acquisition and were used by Ruth Longford used as the basis of her graphic and vivid study of her grandmother published in 1996. Ruth Longford loaned additional material – including letters, miscellaneous items and photographs – which has been digitised.

Also closely associated with Lloyd George was Thomas Jones (1870–1955), who was appointed Secretary to the National Health Insurance Commissioners in 1910, and, largely through Lloyd George's influence, became Deputy Secretary to the Cabinet in 1916. The Dr Thomas Jones CH papers consist of 295 bound volumes and twenty-six boxes of papers and volumes concerning many aspects of governmental activity and Welsh life.

The diaries of John William Morris, the Lord Morris of Borth-y-Gest, also include many revealing references to David Lloyd George. There is some material relating to Lloyd George among the papers of his early biographer W. Watkin Davies (1895–1973) and in the papers of T. J. Evans (1863–1932), who corresponded with

many prominent Liberal politicians of his generation. The papers of Sir Samuel T. Evans include correspondence with David Lloyd George.

Clement Davies

Lloyd George is not the only Liberal Party leader whose papers are held at the National Library of Wales: a substantial archive of the political and personal papers of E. Clement Davies **GB 0210 CLEIES** is also available to consult. Davies was the Liberal MP for Montgomeryshire, 1929–62, and party leader, 1945–56. The archive comprises Liberal Party papers, papers relating to Davies's political career, Welsh affairs, peace movements, foreign affairs, constituency work and home affairs. They also contain the papers and correspondence of Jano Clement-Davies, 1873–1969, and papers of Stanley Clement-Davies, 1920–1963.

Among the many prominent Liberals who feature in the list of correspondents are Lady Violet Bonham Carter, Jo Grimond, Gilbert Murray, Philip Rea, Sir Herbert Samuel, Sir John Simon and Sir Archibald Sinclair (Lord Thurso).

Personal papers of other MPs and prominent Liberals

The library holds papers from many prominent Liberals, including;

- David Davies, Llandinam (1880–1944). MP for Montgomeryshire, 1906–29; parliamentary private secretary to D. Lloyd George when he was Minister of Munitions and Prime Minister, 1916–17; founder of the New Commonwealth Association; created the first Baron Davies of Llandinam, 1932. **GB 0210 LLANNAM**
- Sir Owen M. Edwards (1858–1920). MP for Merionethshire, 1899–1900; first chief inspector of schools in Wales under the new Welsh Education

Department, 1907. **GB 0210 OMELLYF**

- Thomas Edward Ellis (1859–99). MP for Merionethshire, 1886–99; second Liberal whip under Gladstone, 1892; chief whip under Rosebery, 1894. There is also a substantial group of papers relating to T. E. Ellis among those of his close friend and confidant D. R. Daniel (1859–1931), and among those of his son Dr T. I. Ellis (1899–1970). **GB 0210 TELLIS**
- Sir Samuel T. Evans (1859–1918). MP for Mid-Glamorgan, 1890–1910; Solicitor-General, 1908–10; president of the Divorce, Probate and Admiralty Court, 1910–18. **GB 0210 SAMANS**
- Thomas Gee (1815–98). Liberal journalist, author and publisher. Editor of the highly influential *Baner ac Amserau Cymru*. **GB 0210 MSTGEE**
- Sir John Herbert Lewis (1858–1933). MP for Flint Boroughs, 1892–1906, Flintshire, 1906–18, and the University of Wales, 1918–22; Junior Lord of the Treasury and a Liberal Party whip, 1905; parliamentary secretary to the Local Government Board, 1909–15; parliamentary secretary to the Board of Education, 1915–22. **GB 0210 HERBLEW**
- C. Humphreys-Owen (1836–1905). MP for Montgomeryshire, 1894–1906.
- Stuart Rendel (1834–1913). MP for Montgomeryshire, 1880–94, first chairman of the Welsh Parliamentary Party from 1888; close friend to W. E. Gladstone.
- J. Bryn Roberts (1847–1931). MP for the Eifion division of Caernarfonshire, 1906–18. **GB 0210 JBROBERTS**
- D. A. Thomas (1856–1918). MP for Merthyr Tydfil, 1888 – January 1910, and for Cardiff, January–December 1910; Baron Rhondda, January 1916; Viscount Rhondda, June 1918; president of the Local

Government Board, 1916–17; Food Controller, 1917–18. **GB 0210 DATMAS**

- H. D. Acland (1847–1926). MP for Rotherham, 1885–99, and for the Chiltern Hundreds, 1899–1919; created 13th Baronet in 1919.
- Sir Alfred T. Davies (1861–1949). Permanent Secretary to the Welsh Department of the Board of Education, 1907–25. **GB 0210 ALFTDAVIES**
- Sir Alun Talfan Davies (b. 1913). Independent candidate in the University of Wales by-election in 1943; stood as a Liberal in the Carmarthenshire division in the general elections of 1959 and 1964, and Denbighshire in 1966; an activist within the Welsh Liberal Party. **GB 0210 ALUIES**
- Ellis W. Davies (1871–1939). MP for the Eifion division of Caernarfonshire, 1906–18; unsuccessfully contested Caernarfonshire in 1918; MP for the Denbigh division of Denbighshire, 1923–29. **GB 0210 EWDAVIES**
- Sir Joseph Davies. Commercial statistician; close associate of D. Lloyd George.
- Matthew L. Vaughan Davies (1840–1935). Unsuccessfully contested Cardiganshire as a Conservative in 1885; MP for Cardiganshire, 1895–1921; created Baron Ystwyth, 1921.
- Sir E. Vincent Evans (1851–1934). Prominent London Welshman, notable eisteddfodwr, and president of the Honourable Society of Cymmrodorion. **GB 0210 VINANS**
- J. Victor Evans (1895–1957). Liberal candidate for Pontypridd, 1929, and Merthyr Tydfil in the 1934 by-election. **GB 0210 VICANS**
- Sir Ellis Jones Ellis-Griffith (1860–1926). Unsuccessfully contested the Toxteth division of Liverpool, 1892; MP for Anglesey, 1895–1918; chairman of

- the Welsh Parliamentary Liberal Party, 1912; parliamentary secretary to the Home Office, 1912–15; unsuccessfully contested the University of Wales, 1922; MP for the Carmarthen District, 1923–24. **GB 0210 ELLITH**
- Professor W. J. Gruffydd (1881–1954). MP for the University of Wales, 1943–48; prominent Welsh poet and literary critic. **GB 0210 WJGRUFFYD**
 - Emlyn Hooson (Lord Hooson). MP for Montgomeryshire, 1962–79. **GB 0210 HOOSON**
 - Mrs Mary Garbett-Edwards (1893–1986). Local Liberal agent in Montgomeryshire to Clement Davies and Emlyn Hooson. **GB 0210 MARRDS**
 - E. Morgan Humphreys (1882–1955). Prominent Liberal journalist and author; corresponded regularly with many Liberal politicians. **GB 0210 EMHUMPH**
 - E. T. John (1857–1931). MP for East Denbighshire, 1910–18; introduced the Government of Wales Bill in the House of Commons in 1914; joined the Labour Party, 1918, and was defeated in East Denbighshire in the ‘coupon’ general election; stood in Brecon & Radnor in the general elections of 1922 and 1924 and in Anglesey at a by-election in April 1923. **GB 0210 ETJOHN**
 - Dr Ben G. Jones (1914–89). Liberal candidate for Merionethshire, 1959. **GB 0210 BENJONES**
 - Sir Henry Haydn Jones (1863–1950). MP for Merionethshire, 1910–45. **GB 0210 HAYNES**
 - Sir Rhys Hopkin Morris (1888–1956). Independent Liberal MP for Cardiganshire, 1923–32; MP for Carmarthenshire, 1945–56. **GB 0210 RHYSRIS**
 - Lord Ogmores (1903–76) (formerly David Rees Rees-Williams). A former Labour MP, 1945–50, he joined the Liberal Party in 1959; Liberal Party president, 1963–64. **GB 0210 LORORE**
 - Emrys O. Roberts (1910–90). MP for Merionethshire, 1945–51. **GB 0210 EMRRTS**
 - J. Herbert Roberts, Baron Clwyd (1863–1951). MP for West Denbighshire, 1892–1918. ‘Some Memories of my Life’ (1937 typescript) (NLW MS 16861C).
 - Viscount Tenby (Gwilym Lloyd-George) – See Lloyd George Manuscripts **GB 0210 MSLLLOYDGEORGE**
 - Arthur John Williams (1830–1911), MP for South Glamorgan, 1885–95, and Eliot Crawshay-Williams (1879–1962), assistant private secretary to Winston Churchill at the Colonial Office, 1906–08, and MP for Leicester, 1910–13, when he served as parliamentary private secretary to David Lloyd George. **GB 0210 ELICRAAMS**
 - Councillor Cecilia Barton Papers – Ceredigion Councillor and prominent Liberal activist **GB 0210 BARTON**
 - Dr George Morrison **GB 0210 GEOSON**
 - Merfyn Jones **GB 0210 MERNES**
 - Mr Gwyn Griffiths. The last chairman of the Welsh Liberal Party before it merged with the SDP in 1988. **GB 0210 GWYITH**
 - Mr Peter Sain ley Berry. A former Liberal who was a founder member of the SDP in 1981, and who stood as the party’s candidate at Swansea West in 1983, Pontypridd in 1987, and Pembroke in 1992. **GB 0210 PETBER**
 - Rev. Roger Roberts. Liberal candidate at Conwy in the general elections of 1987, 1992 and 1997. **GB 0210 ROGROB**
 - There are also some letters written by W. E. Gladstone (1809–98) in a number of archives including those of Lewis Llewelyn Dillwyn MP, Stuart Rendel MP, Henry Richard MP and Sir Henry Hussey Vivian MP. The library has also purchased complete microfilm copies of the most extensive archives of the Gladstone Papers in the custody of St Deiniols Library, Hawarden, and the British Library as published in the microfilm series *The Papers of the Prime Ministers of Great Britain* (MFL 54).
- Papers of parties, groups and campaigns**
- The library is fortunate to have many records relating to the Welsh Liberal Party, Welsh Liberal Democrats, the Social Democratic Party in Wales and numerous local associations.
- Records of the Welsh Liberal Party between 1966 and 1988 **GB 0210 WELLIBPAR** comprise Executive Committee and General Council minutes, Annual General Meeting papers and correspondence, correspondence and papers relating to local government reform and electoral reform, transport, economic policy and nationalisation, Welsh affairs, devolution, and Welsh Liberal Party structure and finance, papers relating to annual conferences, papers relating to parliamentary and other elections, correspondence and papers relating to individual parliamentary constituencies, Local Government and Parliamentary Boundary Commission submissions, Standing Committee and Policy Directorate papers, press releases, party publications, records of county Liberal Associations and records of Caernarfon Division Liberal Association.
- The Welsh Liberal Democrats papers **GB 0210 WELSHLIBS** consists of material from the time of the SDP/Liberal merger and comprise papers from the Interim Federal Policy Committee, the Association of Social and Liberal Democrat Councillors, the Federal Executive of the SLD, copies of the Federal Green Papers, the Social and Liberal Democrats, 1986–1989, the Welsh Liberal Democrats, 1987–1991, the formation of the Social and Liberal Democrats, the Brecon and Radnor Liberal Democrats, local elections, and application forms of prospective parliamentary candidates.
- The story of the Welsh Liberal Democrats since the merger can be found in the Liberal Democrats Wales Records **GB 0210 LIBDEMS**. These comprise minutes and agenda of the Liberal Democrats Wales meetings, constituency papers, financial papers, correspondence, conference papers, election material, party membership, press and media relations, party policy, published materials and miscellaneous papers.
- Further papers relating to the Welsh Liberal Democrats can be found in the Peter Black (Liberal Democrats Wales) Papers **GB 0210 PETBLA**.
- The Library is also home to a number of local party records, and papers of a number of local councillors and activists:
- Cardiganshire Liberal Association **GB 0210 CARLIB**
 - Montgomeryshire Liberal Association **GB 0210 MONTLA**
 - Monmouth Liberals and SDP Papers **GB 0210 MONLIB**
 - Vale of Glamorgan SDP Records **GB 0210 VALSDP**
 - Vale of Glamorgan Liberal Association **GB 0210 VALEGLA**
 - Ceredigion Lib Dem Association Papers (including SDP)
- The library has also purchased from the Newport Library a photocopy of the minute book, 1886–89, of meetings of the Welsh Liberal MPs (NLW Fac 627). NLW MS 21,171D is the minute book, 1886–91, of the North Wales Liberal Federation. The library also holds a small group of records deriving from the 1955 Liberal Party conference held at Llandudno **GB 0210 LIBABLY**.
- Ephemera collection**
- The library holds a substantial collection of electoral

ephemera. Copies of election addresses and political leaflets from parliamentary and by-elections after 1945 may be found among the papers of the Rev. Ivor T. Rees of Swansea **GB 0210 IVTRES**.

Since the 1983, the Welsh Political Archive has collected a near complete set of the election addresses and leaflets issued by Liberal candidates in Welsh constituencies, as well as national literature in general, Assembly and European elections and by-elections as well as referenda on devolution in Wales **GB 0210 EPHEMERA**.

Microfilms

Among the extensive microform holdings of the National Library which are of political interest are:

- MFC 9–10 Archives of the British Liberal Party (Harvester Microfilms)
- MFC 9 Pamphlets and Leaflets Parts 1–4 1885–1974; four boxes of microfiche
- MFC 10 National Liberal Federation Annual Reports, 1877–1936; one box of microfiche
- MFL 36 British Political Party General Election Addresses
- The National Liberal Club Collection from Bristol University (Harvester Microfilms): Part 1: General Election Addresses, 1892–1922 (twelve reels); Part 2: General Election Addresses, 1923–31 (sixteen reels).

Electronic material

The library makes snapshot archive copies of the websites of the main political parties in Wales, including the Welsh Liberal Democrats on an ongoing basis. Copies are also made of the websites of MPs, AMs and candidates and additional copies are taken in the run up to elections. This activity has been dependent on securing permission from the copyright holder, so the collection is incomplete but the websites can be viewed remotely at www.webarchive.org.uk.

The extension of legal deposit to cover websites means that the library will be able to collect more widely in future, but the websites will only be available to consult in the library itself.

Digitised material

The library has a large-scale digitisation programme, designed to open up its collections for wider use, much of which is of interest to political historians. The *Campaign!* Exhibition has items relating to the 1906 general election, when the Liberals almost swept the board in Wales, the 1921 Cardiganshire by-election fought between Liberal and National Liberal candidates, and the 1985 Brecon and Radnor by-election.

The letters of David Lloyd George to his brother William George have also been digitised, along with David Lloyd George's 1886 diary. The large collection of Illingworth's political cartoons from the *Daily Mail*, as well as images from the collection of the photojournalist Geoff Charles can also be viewed on the library's website. The above resources are all available at www.llgc.org.uk.

Another resource for political historians is Welsh Newspapers online, which contains a large number of digitised newspapers from 1804–1919 which are free-text searchable. The collection is available at <http://welshnewspapers.llgc.org.uk>.

The library has also contributed collections to the Cymru1914 digitisation project of material relating to the First World War. This material can be found at <http://www.cymru1914.org>.

Film, sound and images

The National Screen and Sound Archive of Wales, based at the library, holds a substantial collection of video and audio tapes of programmes of Welsh political interest, including news bulletins, discussion programmes, debates and election broadcasts. The NLW is a designated

archive for off-air broadcasts and concentrates on recording material of Welsh interest. The entire programme archive of ITV Wales, comprising 250,000 items including cans of film, tapes, etc. and dating back over fifty years was recently added to this collection.

The library's photographic and artwork collections include portraits of Liberal politicians, as well as events from Welsh political history.

Welsh Political Archive lectures

The Welsh Political Archive has held an annual lecture since 1987. The earlier lectures were published in printed form while more recent lectures are published on the library's website. The following would be of particular interest to students of the history of the Liberal Party:

- John Grigg, 'Lloyd George and Wales' (1988)
- Lord Blake, 'An Incongruous Partnership: Lloyd George and Bonar Law' (1992)
- Lord Hooson, 'Rebirth or Death?: Liberalism in Wales in the Second Half of the Twentieth Century' (1994)
- Lord Prys Davies, 'Welsh Political Developments in the Twentieth Century' (2000).

Using the archives

All digitised materials are freely available via the library's website. To consult other material you will need to register with the library as a reader and visit us in Aberystwyth.

The library has a pay and display car park, and a frequent bus service from Aberystwyth Town Centre and the bus and railway stations. The reading rooms are open 9.30 am – 6.00 pm Monday to Friday and 9.30 am – 5.00 pm Saturdays. The exhibition opening hours may vary. There is also a café in the library serving drinks, sandwiches, cakes and snacks.

You can register as a reader at the library when you arrive, or beforehand on the library's

website. You will need two proofs of identification such as a passport, bank card or driving licence, one of which will need to show your address.

It is also advisable to order material before you arrive, either by phone or through the online catalogue. If you are visiting on a Saturday, you will need to order material before 4 pm on Friday.

Most archives are fully accessible, however some material remains under embargo under exemptions in the Freedom of Information Act. You are advised to check before visiting the library. Much material has been catalogued and is available through the library's online catalogue, however some material may need to be traced through the library's Annual Reports which have been published ever since 1909, and which are now available for searching on a free-text data base. Some recent acquisitions may not yet have reached the catalogue.

The Welsh Political Archive newsletter is available on the Welsh Political Archive pages of the library's website, and lists all major acquisitions.

We're happy to help with enquiries, which can be made by letter, phone or email: <http://www.llgc.org.uk/welsh-politicalarchive>. Enquiries: gofyn@llgc.org.uk; +44 (0)1970 632800

Rob Phillips is Assistant Archivist with responsibility for the Welsh Political Archive at the National Library of Wales. He graduated from the University of Wales, Lampeter in 1999 with a BA in Welsh, and in 2008 with an MPhil in Welsh. He has worked at the National Library of Wales since 2001, on a number of digitisation projects including a collection of political cartoons by Leslie Illingworth and letters from David Lloyd George to his brother as well as acting as project manager for the Welsh Experience of World War 1 Digitisation Project. He was head of the Official Publications Section between 2006 and 2012, and was appointed to his current role in 2013.