

# A Refuge in Peace and War

Last summer the National Library of Wales published a substantial tome by one of its former Librarians Dr David Jenkins, a volume which chronicles and analyses its foundation and its development up to 1952.

The author, a native of Blaenclydach in the Rhondda, was a member of the Library's staff from 1939 until his retirement at the end of 1979. Originally a member of staff of the Department of Manuscripts and Records, he later joined the Department of Printed Books where he served as Keeper from 1957 until 1969. Subsequently, he was the fifth National Librarian, holding office from 1969 until 1979. The researching and writing of this impressive volume occupied much of his long retirement. Sadly he died during March 2002, just three months before the

publication of the book.

This in-depth study examines in detail the attempts to establish a national library for Wales in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries before proceeding to analyse the successful campaign inaugurated at the Mold national eisteddfod of 1873. It looks at the contentious decision to locate the fledgling library at Aberystwyth rather than Cardiff, a step encouraged by royal physician and primary NLW benefactor Sir John Williams. Subsequently, the volume outlines the development of the Library under its first two Librarians Sir John Ballinger (1909–30) and Sir William Llewelyn Davies (1930–52).

Quite apart from quarrying exhaustively the Library's own extensive archives, and employing a wide range of printed and illustrative source materials, Dr Jenkins has made use of the papers of numerous Welsh politicians and public figures, among them J. H. Davies, Cwrt Mawr, T. E. Ellis, D. Lloyd George, J. Herbert Lewis and Sir John Williams.

At the time of its publication in June, the present Librarian Mr Andrew Green hailed the volume as 'a great testament not only to the erudition of David Jenkins but also to his perseverance in the face of great personal pain in completing this important book'. The study, he went on, 'will be invaluable not only to those interested in the National Library but to any one interested in modern Welsh history and the development of the modern Welsh political and cultural movement'.

*A Refuge in Peace and War* is currently available from the Library for £29.95 plus postage and packing.



Dr. David Jenkins (1912–2002)

## Archive Lectures

Mr Ron Davies, Labour AM for Caerphilly and the former Secretary of State for Wales, 1997–99, has very kindly agreed to deliver the 17th WPA annual lecture on 7 November 2003. He will speak on some aspect of recent devolutionary change in Wales.

At its recent meeting, the WPA advisory committee agreed to invite Emeritus Professor Deirdre Beddoe to give the annual lecture in November 2004 and Mr Cynog Dafis to speak in 2005. Both are long standing members of the committee.

# Welsh Political Archive

The Welsh Political Archive was set up in 1983 to co-ordinate the collection of documentary evidence of all kinds about politics in Wales. It collects the records and papers of political parties, politicians, quasi-political organisations, campaigns and pressure groups; leaflets, pamphlets, ephemera, posters, photographs, and tapes of radio and television programmes.

## Advisory committee members:

Mr Andrew Green (Librarian), Dr Denis Balsom, Mr Ian Barton, Emeritus Professor Deirdre Beddoe, Miss Beata Brookes, Mr Alun Burge, Mr Cynog Dafis AM, Mr Darron Dupré, Mr Aled Eirug, Mr Tom Ellis, Mr Rhys Evans, Mr Gwyn Griffiths, Mr Adam Higgitt, Professor Deian Hopkin, Professor Aled G Jones, Mr D Elwyn Jones, Mr D L Jones, Dr Richard Wyn Jones, Mr David Melding AM, Lord Morgan of Aberdyfi, Mrs Julie Morgan MP, Emeritus Professor D Hywel E Roberts, Professor Duncan Tanner, Dr Guto Thomas and four members of the NLW staff.

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## New members for Advisory Committee

At its thirty-fourth meeting held at the Library on 1 November 2002, members unanimously resolved to invite the following to become additional members:

Mr Alun Burge

Mr Rhys Evans

Dr Richard Wyn Jones

Mr David Melding AM

Professor Duncan Tanner

Dr Guto Thomas

We are delighted that all six have accepted the invitation and will attend their first meeting in November 2003. We much look forward to the rich contribution which each will undoubtedly make to the development of the Archive.

## 16th ANNUAL LECTURE

The sixteenth annual lecture of the Welsh Political Archive was duly delivered in the Welsh language at the Old College, Aberystwyth, on the evening of Friday, 1 November 2002. The lecturer on this occasion was Professor R. Merfyn Jones of the School of History and Welsh History at the University of Wales,

Bangor, who took as his theme 'The Politics of Lifelong Learning in Wales'.

A native of Llanfrothen, Merionethshire, educated at Ysgol Ardudwy, Harlech and the Universities of Sussex and Warwick, Merfyn Jones is well known throughout Wales as a regular lecturer, broadcaster and writer. He is the author of the groundbreaking study *The North Wales Quarrymen* (1981), and the popular tome *Cymru 2000: Cymru yn yr Ugeinfed Ganrif* (2000) published to accompany the celebrated television series which Professor Jones scripted and presented. He was recently responsible for a television documentary on the development of S4C Wales since its inception in 1982. He is also the author and presenter of a series on the history of *Cymdeithas yr Iaith Gymraeg* (the Welsh Language Society) which is currently being broadcast on S4C.

Neatly combining his extensive academic research in the field with his practical experience as a lecturer and teacher, Merfyn Jones gave an unfailingly absorbing, entertaining and provocative account of his theme. It is possible that, within the next few months, the text of his lecture, with an English translation, will be published on the Library's web pages and in a future number of the *National Library of Wales Journal*.



*Professor R. Merfyn Jones delivering the 2002 Archive Lecture*

# What was in Bert's garage?: the Welsh Communist Party Archive

When the WPA was set up in the spring of 1983, one of its earliest objectives was to safeguard the archives of the Welsh Communist Party. This important aim has now come to fruition. The late Bert Pearce, whose extensive papers came to hand in five groups between 1996 and 2002, was the full-time Welsh District Secretary of the Communist Party from 1960 until 1984. These papers, originally kept at his home and garage, reflect his work for the Communist Party and his involvement in numerous campaigns. The listing of this important archive is rapidly nearing completion.

Herbert Pearce was born at Pembroke Dock in 1919, the son of two Labour Party activists and keen supporters of the peace movement. He was himself a Labour Party member until he joined the Communist Party in 1938. In 1946 he married Margaret Forbister of Rhymney.



*Bert Pearce selling the Daily Worker in the 1950s*

Bert Pearce had moved to Birmingham in 1938 and held posts as district secretary to the Communist Party at Birmingham, Wolverhampton and Sheffield before moving to Cardiff in 1960. Among the early campaigns in which he was involved was the Birmingham Rent Strike of 1939 and movements against racialism and against unemployment in the motor industry in 1952-53.

He stood as his party's candidate for the Birmingham Perry Barr constituency in 1955 and 1959, Swansea East in the 1963 by-election and Neath in 1970. He also stood in several local elections at Birmingham and Cardiff. A committed trades unionist, he pressed for the establishment of the Wales TUC and fought relentlessly in campaigns against unemployment, pit and factory closures and for Socialist economic planning for Wales.

He also campaigned avidly for a 'Yes' vote in the 1979 devolution campaign and in 1987 he initiated the setting up of the Campaign for a Welsh Assembly which later became the Parliament for Wales Campaign. His other activities included involvement in the People's March for Jobs in Wales, 1981-83, and serving as treasurer of the Democratic Left Wales from 1992.

Many of these activities are reflected in these papers which include records of the Communist Party Great Britain, 1949-91, the Wales District of the Communist Party, 1938-91, and the Democratic Left, 1991-99. Other files within the archive relate to devolution in Wales and Scotland, 1936-98, industrial disputes and the trades unions, 1892-1998, the peace movement, 1960-92, the People's March for Jobs, 1981-83, and the campaign against the poll tax, 1988-90.

There are also numerous printed items, photographs, and election leaflets and manifestos. Some duplicate printed material has been transferred to the custody of the South Wales Miners' Library, Swansea. Once the catalogue is complete, the papers will be freely available for consultation.

Nia Mai Williams

## A Biography for Gwynfor

Mr Rhys Evans, political affairs correspondent for BBC Wales, has recently been commissioned by Dr Gwynfor Evans and his family to prepare a full-length biography. Rhys, a native of Aberystwyth and an Oxford graduate in history, has already begun his extensive research programme. He would much appreciate any assistance from individuals possessing relevant papers or reminiscences and can be contacted at 22 Meadow Street, Pontcanna, Cardiff, CF11 9PY. (Telephone = (029 20) 914938).

# Recent acquisitions

## Institute of Welsh Affairs Records

A substantial group of the records of the Institute of Welsh Affairs, 1982-2001, has come to hand. They include administrative records, and papers reflecting the wide range of activities and research projects sponsored by the Institute. Some concern the advisory role played by the Institute in the creation of the Welsh Assembly between 1997 and 1999. Others relate to the ambitious 2010 project, the organisation of the St Davids Forum and the publication of the well known Gregynog Papers. Further records from the Institute are expected in the near future.



*Dr Roderic Bowen in 1950*

## Dr Roderic Bowen Papers

Through the kindness of Miss Joan Cooper of Lisvane, Cardiff, a small group of the political papers of Dr Roderic Bowen (1913-2001) has been received. Dr Bowen, the Liberal MP for his native Cardiganshire from 1945 until 1966, was also a prominent lawyer and public figure in Wales. They include letters, press cuttings, election addresses, political

miscellanea, pocket diaries and papers on the 1972 Bilingual Road Signs Inquiry.

## Councillor Cecilia Barton Papers

A list has been prepared of the various groups of papers donated by Councillor Cecilia Barton of Lampeter between 1988 and 2002. They include the minute book, 1952-87, of the Lampeter and District Liberal Association; the records, 1983-88, of the SDP/Liberal Party Alliance Committee for Wales; and papers, 1987-96, of the Ceredigion Liberal Democrat Association. The WPA also holds some records relating to the Alliance received from other parts of Wales.

## Lord Cledwyn of Penrhos Papers

The final groups of papers of the Lord Cledwyn of Penrhos (1916-2000), deriving from his Anglesey home and his London office, have been donated by his widow Lady Cledwyn. They comprise interesting files of correspondence and papers dating mainly from the last years of his life. A composite list of all Lord Cledwyn's papers has recently been completed. Lady Cledwyn's written permission is now required to consult the papers.

## Swansea says 'Yes'

Mr Leigh Richards of Swansea has kindly donated a small group of papers concerning the Swansea 'Yes for Wales' Campaign in the 1997 Referendum on Devolution. Swansea was the only city in Wales to vote 'Yes' in the crucial poll. The WPA would gladly welcome further papers from both sides of this campaign to add to its holdings.

## Gwynfor to Islwyn

The papers of Welsh author and academic Dr Islwyn Ffowc Elis recently presented to the Library are predictably mainly literary in character. But they also include more than 100 unusually interesting letters from Plaid Cymru president Dr Gwynfor



*Dr Gwynfor Evans in 1966*

Evans, mainly written during the 1960s, in which he expounds his views on current political life.

Other recent deposits which also include some important material relating to Dr Evans are small groups of the papers of the late **Mr E Chris Rees**, a former vice-president of Plaid Cymru (now designated NLW ex 2189) and of **Mr D. Cyril Jones**, Dr Evans's constituency agent for many years (NLW ex 2190).

## Liberal Pamphlets

The Newport Public Library has donated to the NLW a complete set of the impressive series of bound 'Pamphlets and Leaflets' series circulated by the Liberal Publication Department between 1904 and 1929.

## Recent deposits

Among recent deposits to come to hand are the papers of the Welsh Committee against Racialism and an extensive and wide ranging group of records of the influential pacifist movement Cymod. Further details will appear in a future number of the *Newsletter*.

We advise readers to enquire about the conditions placed on the papers before visiting the Library. Many recent WPA acquisitions have restrictions on access or photocopying.