UNDER THE MAGNIFYING GLASS

Amongst the papers of Sir John Morris-Jones, catalogued last Summer, there are many items of a personal nature that reflect every day family life and relationships. In particular, there is a letter written by Morris Jones, father of John Morris-Jones to his sister in 1874, describing the days after the birth of twins, Lydia and Henry, to his wife Betsan.

Translation of Morris Jones’ letter to his sister

Dear Sister

We received a line from you today and we were glad to understand that you are well. Betsan and the little babies continue to get on very well. The little girl became unwell Saturday night and we baptised her on Sunday in case something happened. The little girl is called Lydia Jane and the boy is named Henry – Henry Parry Jones according to Johni and William. Betsan expects that you will come and visit her before long. She regrets that she cannot come and see you at present. The children are all sleeping the night wonderfully. Betsan has had some pain with her breasts, up until Sunday, but they have begun to suck very well today and yesterday.

Yours in haste,
Morris Jones
Llanfair P.G.
Anglesey
7 October 1874

Summer Internships

Many thanks to our hard-working interns this Summer who have made it possible for the Archives and Special Collections to improve access to its collections on various levels—through listing, cataloguing and digitisation.

Bethan Lloyd Dobson worked at the Archives and produced a catalogue of the Cynan Papers.

Daisy Wrightson was based in the History of the Book Research Centre and digitized some of the illustrations in the “Tours of Wales” by Pennant.

Huw Howchin worked at the Normal Site arranging and listing the Tony Jones Collection.

NEWS

FROM THE ARCHIVES AND SPECIAL COLLECTIONS

EISTEDDFOD 2017

The Archives and Special Collections played a prominent part in Bangor University’s Eisteddfod programme this year at Bodedern.

With financial assistance from the Widening Access Department we were able to transport an exhibition case to the Eisteddfod site in order to display two Hedd Wyn manuscripts during the Friday, which is traditionally the day of the chairing of the bard.

We launched the small exhibition with the help of the actors Huw Garmon and Judith Humphreys, Professor Gerwyn Williams and the nephew of Hedd Wyn, Gerald Williams.

The documents succeeded in drawing many visitors to the Bangor University stall and gave many visitors the rare opportunity to see original manuscripts in an unusual setting.

Members of the Archives and Special Collections staff were present throughout the day to answer questions about Hedd Wyn but also about our other wonderful collections.

STATISTICS FOR 2016-2017

This year has seen a dramatic increase to over 1100 in the number of documents consulted by our researchers.

In addition, the number of enquiries answered by the service doubled to over 850!

Total number of individual visits: 1313
Number of documents produced: 6907
Number of rare books produced: 1056
PRESERVING THE PENRHOS COLLECTION FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS

Over the Summer closure period, important preservation work took place in the Archive strong room, with the assistance of the National Conservation Service. We were joined by 2 trainee conservators, studying in London, who undertook the work of cleaning and re-packaging and re-boxing our most important estate collection—the Penrhos Papers. During the process, they also recorded the physical condition of the documents and made a note of any items that needed conserving.

Similar work will soon commence on the rare book collection and in the long term it is hoped that we will be able to tackle the conservation needs of our other archival collections.

A Volunteer’s perspective by Claudia Williams

I began volunteering at the Archives in February 2016 on a project in collaboration with ISWE (Institute of the Study of Welsh Estates), which was designed to create a list of certain types of documents held within the estate collections here. As my interest in archiving grew, the number of hours I volunteered increased. After a few months of working on the ISWE project, I undertook other tasks such as inputting catalogue data into the archive database CALM so that it would show in the online catalogue. Learning to use CALM was an important skill to gain as this database is used in all archives.

I have also had the chance to work on a huge project cataloguing the Penrhyn Sugar and Slate collection, helping to finish it by renumbering documents with their new catalogue number and making sure each item in the collection of over 3500 items has been packaged and stored correctly. Recently, along with other volunteers, I completed a one-day course (organised by People’s Collection Wales on behalf of the National Library of Wales) on digitisation of archive material and learned how to correctly use a flatbed scanner.

Everything that I have learned here will aid me greatly when I begin my Masters in Archives and Records Management at the University of Liverpool next month, and I am so grateful to all of the Archive staff for everything that they have taught me over the past year and a half. They are a friendly and dedicated team and I will miss them all.

Claudia Williams being presented with a Volunteering Certificate by Ann Hughes, Archives Officer

NEW COLLECTIONS

Two new collections are now available for consultation by our readers.

CYNAN PAPERS—a collection of nearly 300 items purchased in 2016 by the University. An important addition to the other material that we hold relating to Cynan—enhancing our understanding of the life and work of the poet—in particular, his work as a censor of plays and his love of all things “royal”.

NANNEY WILLIAMS PAPERS

A new collection, placed on deposit at the Archives by Philip Nanney Williams in 2017. Philip and his wife have catalogued this group of papers in great detail and published a sumptuous book based on their work “Nannau : A Rich tapestry of Welsh history”.

The collection consists mostly of correspondence dating from the 19th and 20th centuries and should be consulted in conjunction with the other Nannau estate papers which have been held by the University since 1928.

VISITS TO THE ARCHIVES

A group of sixth form students from Ysgol Gyfun Llangefni visited the Library and Archives last July. Many thanks to Mrs Julie Williams for organising the visit which gave potential students an introduction to the fantastic resources available at Bangor.

We also took part in the CADW Open Doors event again this year and welcomed visitors on Saturday, 6th of September to view our collections.

Cynan as Archdruid of the National Eisteddfod

Heledd Haf Williams, Archives Assistant being accepted as a member of the Gorsedd of the National Eisteddfod

Claudia Williams being presented with a Volunteering Certificate by Ann Hughes, Archives Officer