

NLW Collections – how we can help universities and other educational establishments

The task of providing an overview of all NLW collections is a formidable one. This document lists the main digital resources and follows this list with a high level summary of the main formats held at NLW along, in some cases, links to example items from the digital galleries.

NLW Digital Resources

Digital resources have the advantage of being available from anywhere and have great potential as resources for teaching or as raw material for teaching resources. Their potential as research sources is already proven.

Below is a summary of the main digital resources provided by NLW:

Searchable Resources

- [Places of Wales](#)



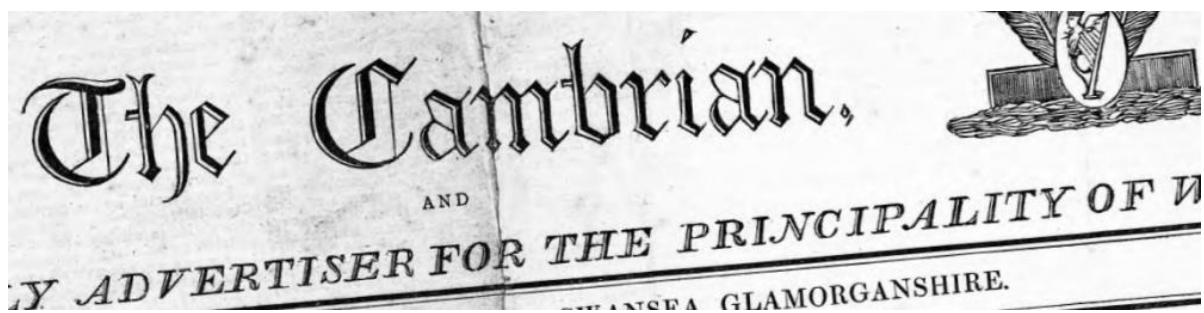
Discover the Tithe Maps of Wales. Search and browse over 300,000 entries from the [tithe maps of Wales](#) and accompanying apportionment documents using original and present-day maps

- [Welsh Journals](#)



Access to scholarship from Wales. Back-numbers of up to 50 titles, ranging from academic publications to popular magazines

- [Welsh Newspapers](#)



Search and see the Welsh Newspapers collection online, and discover 15 million articles and 1.1 million pages

- [Dictionary of Welsh Biography](#)



Over 5 000 biographies which present Welsh people who made an important contribution to life in Wales and beyond

- [Cymru 1914](#)



A digital collection revealing the often hidden history of the First World War, by bringing fragmented primary sources together in a digital archive

- [Catalogue](#)

Search the Library's collections from anywhere. You will need a valid [Reader's Ticket](#) to order items to view in the [Reading Rooms](#)

- [Archives and Manuscripts](#)

Browse and search the Archives and Manuscripts of The National Library of Wales and make requests to view items in the Library.

- [Annual Reports](#)

Search through The National Library of Wales' Annual Reports between 1909-2000

- [Crime and Punishment](#)

Information about crimes, criminals and punishments included in the gaol files of the Court of Great Sessions in Wales from 1730 until its abolition in 1830

- **Estate Collections**

A-Z list of over 50 of the most popular/largest Estate collections at NLW

- **Theses Collection Wales**

The Theses Collection Wales includes approximately 50,000 theses and dissertations which have been presented for postgraduate degrees in higher educational institutions in Wales.

- **From Warfare to Welfare**

An introduction to life in Wales between 1939-1959. Many aspects of everyday life and living in the war zones during the period are highlighted

- **Welsh Ballads Online**

Welsh Ballads Online includes about 4,000 digitised ballads, mainly dating from the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, from the collections of the National Library of Wales and Cardiff University Library.

- **Dictionary of Welsh Biography**

Over 5 000 biographies which present Welsh people who made an important contribution to life in Wales and beyond

- **Wales-Ohio Project**

An interpretation of items relating to the history of the Welsh in Ohio, from the Library's collections

- **The Cambrian: A magazine for Welsh Americans (1880-1919)**

Search and browse the contents of *The Cambrian*, one of the most popular magazines read by Welsh-Americans between 1880-1919

- **Welsh Poetry in Manuscripts**

The index to Welsh poetry in manuscript

- **Wills**

Search here for wills proved in the Welsh Ecclesiastical Courts before 1858.

Collections by Format

The summaries below give a high-level introduction to different aspects of the collections. Links to the digital galleries are included for most formats to give examples of items.

Archives

The Library holds a wide variety of archives in terms of their size, type of documents and the information contained in them, and in terms of their date. From the medieval charters of the Cistercian Abbey of Strata Marcella, near Welshpool to recent records of the National Eisteddfod of Wales, from the political archive of the late Gwynfor Evans to the scrapbooks of the boxer Freddie Welsh, archives contain information extending to every branch of knowledge.

During the early years, the majority of archives received by the Library consisted of the records of the landed gentry and their estates. Included among these family and estate archives are collections such as:

- Badminton
- Tredegar
- Bute
- Penrice and Margam
- Powis Castle
- Wynnstay
- Chirk Castle

These are substantial collections in terms of their size, and they reflect the growth, development and influence of landed families throughout Wales over many centuries.

They contain thousands of original documents such as:

- title deeds transferring property
- rent books listing tenants and their properties
- manorial records
- correspondence
- documents relating to the administration of the estate

It is not possible to trace the industrial, social and economic history of Wales without using the sources available among the records of the large estates and also smaller estates whose influence is more local.

You can search the estate record through [NLW Archives and Manuscripts](#), or you can see the [A-Z list of 50 of the largest/most popular estate collections](#).

More recently, the Library began to collect other types of archives, such as corporate archives (institutions, societies and public bodies) and personal and family archives.

Corporate archives

This category contains valuable archives of national importance, such as:

- The Church in Wales archive This archive contains many vital sources for those interested in family history, such as registers of baptisms, marriages and burials, bishop's transcripts, wills, and marriage bonds
- archives of nonconformist denominations, particularly the Calvinistic Methodist Archives
- archive of the Court of Great Sessions, the Court responsible for trying all types of crimes, from petty theft to high treason, between 1543 and 1830
- archives of a number of cultural institutions such as the National Eisteddfod, Arts Council of Wales and Welsh National Opera

- archives of a number of political, industrial, agricultural, educational and professional institutions.

Personal archives

Included in this category are archives of individuals and families who have played a significant part in the life of the nation in various fields.

- Archives of politicians
- Writers (Welsh and Anglo-Welsh)
- Musicians and composers
- Artists
- Academics
- Naturalists
- Individuals prominent in the public life of the nation

Included in this category are archives of individuals and families who have played a significant part in the life of the nation in various fields. This type of varied archive could prove useful, for example, to the academic wishing to study intricate literary drafts (David Jones archive), to those interested in dogs (Doggie Hubbard archive), or to those studying wildlife in Wales (William Condry archive).

Print Material

Books

The National Library of Wales holds the largest collection of books in Wales.

Books were first collected for the establishment of a National Library in 1873. The 'Welsh Library' was held at the University of Wales, which had just been founded in Aberystwyth. It was at this time that the core of our books collection was also accumulated – the Sir John Williams Collection.

Under the copyright act of 1911 the Library was given the right to receive a copy from the publisher of each publication made in Britain and Ireland.

The Library also purchases books of Welsh and Celtic interest from all over the world. We also endeavour to fill any 'gaps' in the collections by purchasing copies that we do not already hold.

You can request any book for viewing through our [online catalogue](#).

Periodicals

The Library's periodical holdings are significant and extensive. They include:

- academic periodicals
- popular recreational journals
- children's magazines
- comics and fanzines

Consult the Catalogue for holdings of:

- periodicals published before 1986 and continuing after 1986
- periodicals commencing after 1986

Records for periodicals which ceased publication before 1986 are in the process of being added to the Catalogue. Ask staff members for help if you can't find a title.

Older titles may also be available in other formats such as microfiche and microfilm.

Significant new periodical holdings are being offered in electronic full-text and searchable formats on our Subscriptions and Other Resources page.

Most periodical titles held by the Library are published in Britain. But many other titles have been obtained through purchase, donation and exchange and recently through the provision of electronic formats.

Newspapers

An extensive selection of newspapers can be seen in the Library, from Welsh papers to British publications and beyond.

Through copyright acquisitions and the purchase of copies of newspapers on microfilm, the Library has collected a number of daily and weekly titles from the rest of the UK, subscribing also to a selection of titles from other parts of the world.

In addition to papers from the 19th century onwards, the Library has extended its collections by buying a number of titles on microfilm from the series Early English Newspapers, which includes newspapers from the 17th and 18th century.

By now the Library subscribes to databases and news resources as well as electronic newspapers. The Times Digital Archive 1785-1985 is an example where it is possible to search through complete digital issues of the Times (London) using a password.

You may also search through NewsUK, which offers national and regional news by combining current British popular newspaper titles in one database.

Manuscripts

There are approximately 40,000 manuscripts in The National Library of Wales, and together they form the most important collection of Welsh manuscripts in the world.

- The oldest dates from 113 A.D. (NLW MS 4738D)
- The latest dates from the year 2004 (NLW MS 23933D)

What is a manuscript?

A manuscript is usually a volume written by hand, or a collection of documents brought together to form a volume. Manuscripts are kept separately from the [Library's archive collections](#), although the relationship between them is close.

The Library's manuscripts are written on paper, vellum, papyri, leaves, slate and various other media. We also have examples of manuscripts in various languages, including Welsh, English, Latin, French and Cornish.

There are 2 main classes of manuscripts in the Library, namely:

- General Manuscript Collections
- Special Manuscript Collections: Peniarth, Cwrtmawr, Llanstephan

For examples see: <https://www.library.wales/discover/digital-gallery/manuscripts/>

Pictures

The Library collects pictures that illustrate or portray places in Wales, people of Welsh background who live in Wales and other places, as well as individuals who have played a part in Wales' history or life.

Content of the picture collection

Items are received into the collection through purchases at auctions, acquisitions from the public, through galleries or directly through the artists. The Library also receives pictures as gifts or bequests.

The collection includes images in various media, from classical oil paintings to original cartoons for newspapers, and by now, digital images.

For examples see: <https://www.library.wales/discover/digital-gallery/pictures/>

The National Collection of Welsh Photographs

The National Library of Wales houses over 950,000 photographs connected to Wales. These range from works by pioneering photographers from the earliest days of photography to portfolios by contemporary practitioners of the art.

The collection comprises mostly images connected to Wales. This includes views of Wales, the work of Welsh photographers and photographs of Welsh personalities.

Two years after the invention of photography the Rev Calvert Richard Jones took the earliest recorded photograph in Wales. Taken on 9th March 1841, it is a daguerrotype of [Margam Castle](#), the house of his wealthy friend Christopher Rice Mansel Talbot.

Reverend Calvert Richard Jones was one of a circle of early photographers in Swansea. This circle was centred around the enlightened industrialist John Dillwyn Llewelyn of Penlle'r-gaer.

William Henry Fox Talbot had invented another, ultimately more successful photographic process. Using paper negatives, Talbot's process allowed the production of multiple copies of an image.

For examples see: <https://www.library.wales/discover/digital-gallery/photographs/>

Maps

The map collection contains 1.5 million sheets of maps, charts and plans as well as thousands of atlases. It is the largest map collection in Wales, and one of the largest in the British Isles. The collection contains a wide range of materials from the latest electronic mapping to 16th century maps and charts on vellum. The collection specialises in Welsh material; but also has a large number of items covering the rest of the world.

The map collection content

The Library aims to collect any material covering Wales or produced by Welsh mapmakers. There is also a special interest in the rest of the British Isles and in those parts of the World with

Welsh or Celtic connections, for example Brittany and Patagonia. While the Library concentrates on collecting Welsh material, the aim has always been to obtain detailed coverage of the whole World, as far as possible.

Through Legal Deposit, the Library is entitled to receive a copy of every printed map and atlas published in the British Isles. Recent changes to the law mean that this will eventually be extended to include electronic mapping as well, including data created in Geographical Information Systems (GIS).

The collection also contains a large amount of material deposited with, donated to, or purchased by, the Library. This material mainly consists of manuscript material, antiquarian printed material, and modern mapping published overseas.

In addition to topographic mapping (maps showing the landscape) the Library also collects thematic mapping (for example geological and land-use mapping).

The collection contains maps and plans at many different scales from single sheets covering the whole World to detailed engineering drawings and architectural plans.

The collection is divided into several different categories of material, more information on some of these can be found by following the links on the left. In addition the 'External map Links' page provides links to external resources.

For examples see: <https://www.library.wales/discover/digital-gallery/maps/>

Music

The National Library of Wales' music collection has become an impressive collection for a number of reasons.

Legal Deposit

As a result of the Copyright Act of 1911 the Library has the right to receive new musical works that are printed in Britain. The collection is therefore enriched by the constant flow of printed musical items.

Catalogues

If you do not succeed in finding the information that you want in the Library's [online catalogue](#), remember to make [enquiries](#). As it is a large collection, not everything is catalogued.

The Welsh Music Catalogue (up until 2000) is kept in The North Reading Room. This is a card catalogue which includes a Musical Biography and a Title and First Line index.

Purchases

Not every item reaches us by legal deposit. The Library has to buy some categories e.g. old Welsh music and Celtic music. The Library's role as a research centre is also reflected in its purchase of scholarly editions of European music.

Donations

The collection is enriched enormously by valuable and exciting donations e.g. the papers and manuscripts of William Mathias. We also hold the papers of Grace Williams, one of Vaughan Williams' pupils and friend of Benjamin Britten.

Another example of a valuable donation is that of the archive of Daniel Jones, who was an old friend of Dylan Thomas. The archive includes not only the composer's musical compositions but also letters and materials relating to subjects such as the Soviet Union and the Middle East.

Audio Visual Collections

The collection has a wide range of content. It encompasses every aspect of the culture and life of Wales and the Welsh as it has been chronicled by the audio-visual media, in sound, video and film recordings, and to a certain extent, the latest digital media.

The collection comprises radio and television broadcasts sound recordings and amateur films, cassettes and CDs, commercial films and videos on every subject under the sun - from sport to war, from news to history programmes, from art to the coal and slate industries, from politics to soap operas, from pop music to Pobol y Cwm, from Country and Western to Cwm Hyfryd, from oral history to the latest music trend.

There are also numerous examples of material which extend far beyond the boundaries of Wales, and which help to place the rest of the collections in a wider context.