



2023 ANNUAL REPORT

whelf.ac.uk



Welcome all readers to the annual review of WHELF activities and members for 2023. This is the first year of my term as Chair of WHELF, and it's a privilege to be able to carry on the wonderful work and fine tradition of those who've gone before me.

This review covers a special year, in that we celebrated the significant milestone of 30 years since the WHELF collaboration was formed. Three decades of working together under our stated aim to 'Promote collaboration and innovation in library, knowledge and information services across Wales'. feels like a remarkable achievement, and a testament to the enduring value we all find in working together. You can read more about our 30th Anniversary, and the wonderful event we held to mark that later in this report.

2023 brought together not only WHELF's 30th anniversary, but also marked the last year of our 2020-2024 Strategy 'Collaborate - Create - Innovate', and this represented a perfect opportunity to reflect on past challenges and achievement, and then use the moment to look forward and start to plan to create and deliver the next phase of our shared story. To that end, across the year we engaged in conversations with staff across WHELF institutions, and our valued partner organisations to build our next Strategy - and I'm delighted to be able to say that 'Stronger Together', the WHELF Strategy 2024 - 2030 will be published very soon.

A word from our Chair



Photo: Jon Pountney

Elsewhere in the annual report, you will note the continual, creativity, and innovation and buzz of activity we have seen across our WHELF groups, carrying on with the work and developments we have underway to take WHELF forward..and reports from our member libraries and the ongoing areas of great work that continue to happen each and every day, driven by our wonderful staff members.

At this final point, I would like to pay tribute to my colleagues across the WHELF Officers & Board for their tireless commitment to our partnership, to our WHELF Group members for their ongoing work, to the staff across all our institutions who provide such commitment and enthusiasm day in, day out, and to the organisations that partner and work with us in so many areas, taking the spirit of collaboration to a wider canvas than Wales. WHELF is, I believe, an exceptional partnership, powered by the efforts of exceptional people throughout. Libraries make a difference, collaboration makes a difference, and we are truly 'Stronger Together'

Diolch yn fawr

Mark Hughes

WHELF Chair / Head of Libraries at Cardiff Metropolitan University

DR MICHAEL HOPKINS (1945-2023)



It is with sadness that we share news of the death of Dr Michael Hopkins, former Director of Information Services at Aberystwyth University, on 30 December 2023.

A native of Pontypridd, Dr Hopkins graduated with a BA in History from the University of Leicester in 1967. He studied for a year at the former College of Librarianship Wales at Aberystwyth to gain his ALA. He was awarded a PhD by Loughborough University in 1981.

While in his Director role at Aberystwyth University, Dr Hopkins was very active with WHELF, improving critical collaboration between Welsh HE library and National Library of Wales colleagues and working towards a shared systems approach. He was a leading force in the Wales-wide Gathering the Jewels Project which pooled digitised versions of items from Museums, Archives, Libraries and private collections in Wales. This collection is now known as the People's Collection Wales. Furthermore, Mike was Project Director of the Higher Education Librarians Partnership (HELP) Project for WHELF, developing further collaborative and cooperative working, including resource sharing, between Welsh libraries.

Obituary written by Tim Davies and Elizabeth Kensler
(Information Services, Aberystwyth University)



Photo: Jon Pountney

WHELF is 30

On the 29th June 2023, Librarians and guests from Wales and beyond gathered in the Pierhead Building in Cardiff to celebrate over 30 years of working in collaboration across Welsh Higher Education as the Wales Higher Education Libraries Forum (WHELF)

The WHELF collaboration came into being in 1993, and the grouping consists of the libraries from each of the Welsh Universities, the Open University in Wales, the National Library of Wales, and the libraries of Natural Resources Wales and the National Museum Wales. WHELF's mission is to 'Promote collaboration and innovation in library, knowledge and information services across Wales'.



Tracey Stanley

Photo: Jon Pountney

In an event sponsored by Jeremy Miles MS, Minister for Education and Welsh Language, attendees gathered to hear addresses noting the achievements of the WHELF collaboration and the impact it has had from Dawn Bowden MS, Deputy Minister for Arts, Sport and Tourism, former Librarian of the National Library of Wales Andrew Green, and current and former officers of the WHELF group Alison Harding, Mark Hughes and Tracey Stanley.

The speakers picked out some key highlights of what 30 years of significant achievement and impact for the communities WHELF serves, including:

- WHELF's collaborative procurement of resources to support learning and research, which saw access to numerous collections of e-Books and journal collections opened up on a Wales-wide basis



Alison Harding

Photo: Jon Pountney

- Work to support our wider communities, through the ‘Walk in Access’ scheme, enabling members of the public to access scholarly content online from WHELF libraries
- Preserving and opening up collections of significance to Welsh culture and history
- Working to make libraries a more inclusive space, reflective of the entirety of the communities which we serve, through events such as the highly successful ‘Excluded Voices’ conferences, and a range of other equality, diversity and inclusion activities.
- The Times Higher Education Leadership and Management Award-winning ‘Shared Library Management System’ work, which provides a common, state-of-the-art library platform for managing services and resource discoverability right across Wales, which has drawn interest from other consortia across the UK and internationally as an exemplar.



As well as celebrating 30 years of libraries working together to benefit all of our shared communities, the event also looked forward to the launch of WHELF's forthcoming strategy in 2024, in which WHELF members are keen to go even further and find new, impactful and innovative ways to support our institutions and users over the coming years.

A fabulous event, thanking our members, our communities and our partners for a remarkable 30 years, and looking forward to an even more exciting future for WHELF libraries – and of course, as is traditional with any event with Librarians, it was accompanied by a truly wonderful cake. We all very much look forward to seeing what WHELF, and power that comes when libraries work together to common goals, will achieve in the next 30 years .



Mark Hughes

Photos: Jon Pountney



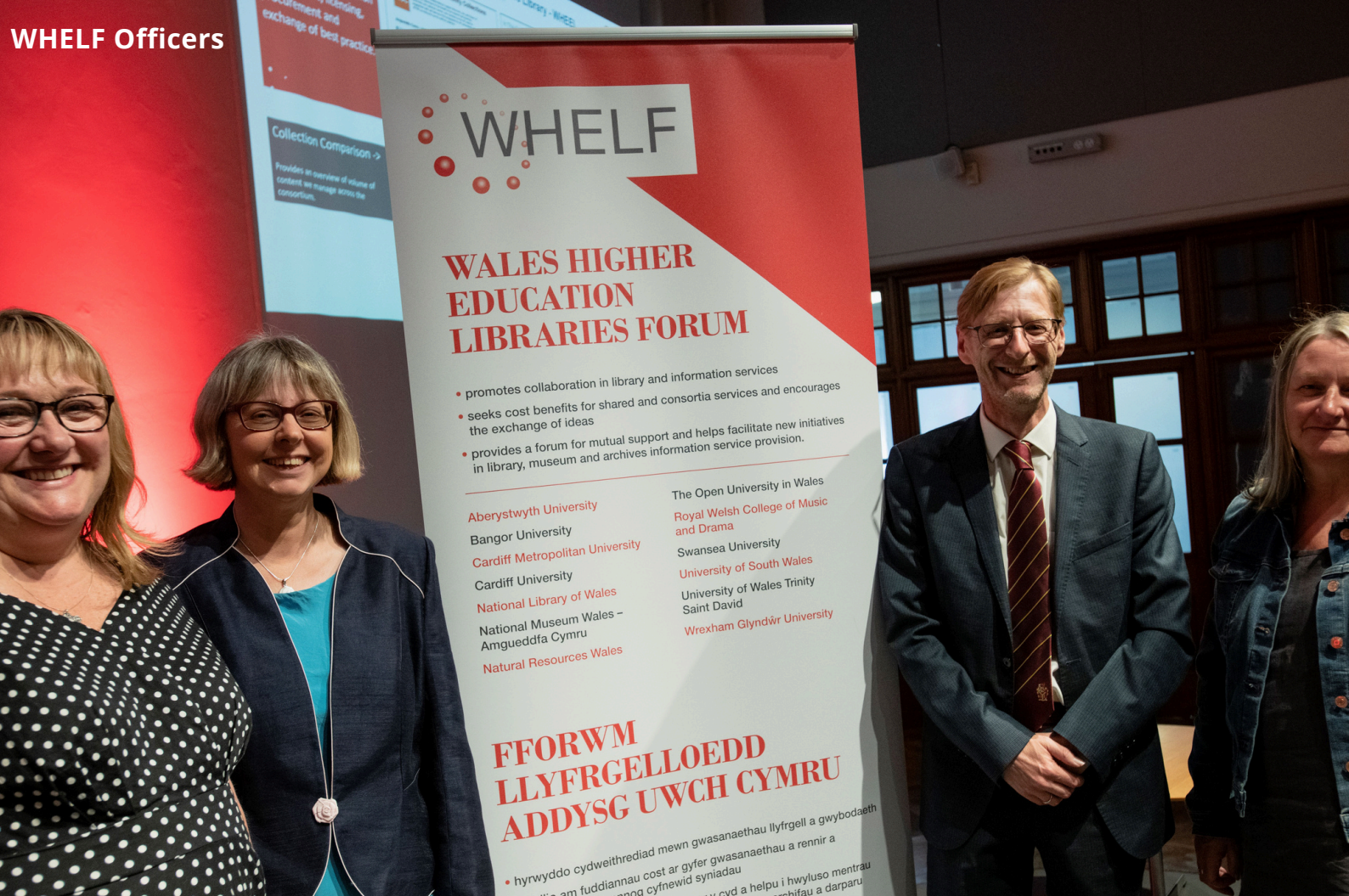


Dawn Bowden MS

Photos Jon Pountney



Andrew Green

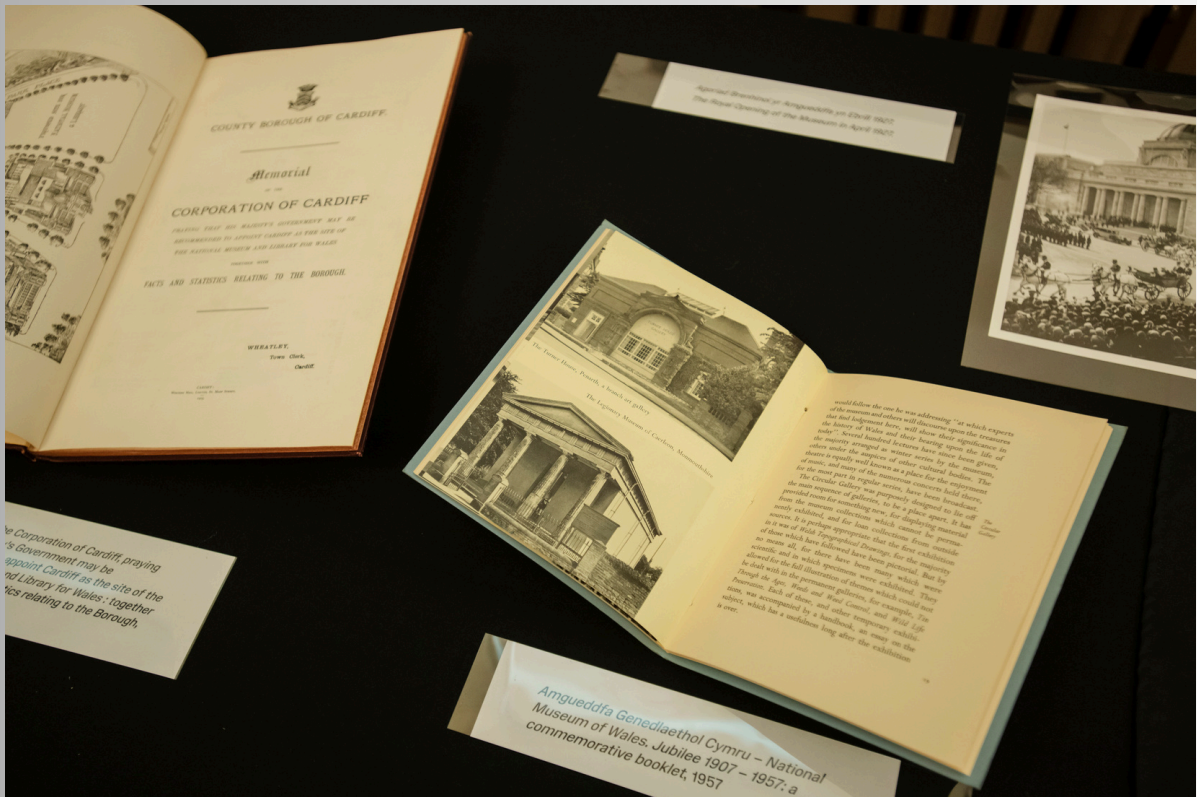


Photos: Jon Pountney





Photos: Jon Pountney





Andrew Green

Photos: Jon Pountney





WHELF Board 2023

Aberystwyth University
Julie Hart, Deputy Director of Information Services and Head of Libraries

The Open University Library and The Open University in Wales
Gary Elliott-Cirigottis, Director of Library Services

Amgueddfa Cymu National Museum Wales
Kristine Chapman, Principal Librarian.

Royal Welsh College of Music & Drama
Judith Dray, Head of Library Services

Bangor University
Tracey Middleton, Library Collections Manager

Swansea University
Robin Armstrong-Viner, Associate Director: Head of Libraries

Cardiff Metropolitan University
Mark Hughes, Head of Library Services.

University of South Wales
Lynne Evans, Associate Director: Head of Library Services

Cardiff University
Tracey Stanley, Director of Libraries and University Librarian

University of Wales Trinity Saint David
Alison Harding, Executive Head of Library and Learning Resources

National Library of Wales
Owain Rhys Roberts, Deputy Chief Executive and Librarian (Collections and Public Programmes)

Wrexham University
Nicola Watkinson, University Librarian

Natural Resources Wales
Beth Hall, Team Leader, Knowledge Records & Information

WHELF Development Officer: Gill Morris
WHELF LMS Business Manager: Jenny McNally

LMS BENEFITS REPORT

WHELF SHARED LMS HIGHLIGHTS 2023



The 9 Welsh higher education libraries, the National Library of Wales and NHS Wales libraries completed the implementation of Ex Libris' Alma and Primo in 2016.

WHELF+ INTERLENDING SCHEME

WHELF+ facilitates the sharing of resources between WHELF libraries and beyond. 3 new university libraries joined, Cumbria, Liverpool & Winchester, bringing us to 18 members.

6800 requests were fulfilled for our users

£75K savings across all partners

£36K savings for just WHELF libraries

Started pilot with a US institution, Brandeis College

SUPPORT NETWORK

Monthly meetings to review release notes, ask for advice and share developments

Return to annual in person meetings of the LMS Management Board

DISCOVERY

Completed UX studies in individual libraries and shared case studies across WHELF

Started work on a cross consortia UX study to be completed in 2024

DEVELOPMENTS

Following conversations at the Igelu 2023 conference, WHELF members are on groups to support Ex Libris in developing Collection Management dashboards and the Primo New Discovery Experience

COST SAVINGS

£150K saved each year on system subscription by purchasing as a consortium.

£7200 saved each year as the National Library of Wales provide Welsh translation for all the libraries' system interfaces.

SYSTEMS REVIEW

Completed a review of existing systems, identifying where they work well and areas for further development

Completed a review of the current LMS market

Engaged with consortia to learn from their collaboration around shared systems
Investigated how LMS functionality could support further collaboration in WHELF

SHARED ANALYTICS

Ran an audit of analytics skills across WHELF
Collaborated with the WHELF Learning and Teaching Group to develop shared Reading Lists analytics
Developed Power BI dashboards to support the WHELF+ scheme

Wales Higher Education Libraries Forum



ABERYSTWYTH UNIVERSITY

Aberystwyth held its inaugural Digital Festival of 28 events over 5 days, ranging from how artificial intelligence can be used for good, to using Excel for budgeting. All events were recorded and made available on our learning platform. Feedback from events have been hugely positive with 100% saying they would recommend the festival to other students.



We have had plans approved to enlarge the student space on Level E of the library, which will provide for additional study rooms on the West side of the building overlooking the town and coast. Staff spaces are being reduced to accommodate this and staff offices will be repurposed for student group study, works will begin in the summer.



The library is now hosting careers service front line support for students, which is just one of the measures we're taking to consolidate support for employability, information literacy and digital and academic skills. Other measures include launching a revamped *AberSkills* website - bringing together information from across the university on support for student skills provision in one website, whilst also providing one place to list and promote workshops and drop-ins.

We launched a new interactive library map, integrated with the library catalogue to help students locate books on the shelves, locate group study rooms and find PC spaces.



AMGUEDDFA CYMRU MUSEUM WALES

New digital resource makes Wales' National Contemporary Art Collection available to all

As part of the National Contemporary Art Gallery Wales, Celf ar y_Cyd is a new bilingual website, created by Amgueddfa Cymru, which gives everyone in Wales and beyond the opportunity to access Wales' national collection of contemporary and modern art – for free, and from the comfort of their own phone.

Featuring unique voices from across Wales' vibrant society, this website makes the nation's contemporary art collection more accessible, giving everyone the chance to browse, learn, and be inspired by the thousands of artworks in Wales' national collection.

The National Contemporary Art Gallery for Wales is a partnership between Amgueddfa Cymru, Arts Council of Wales, and National Library of Wales with support from the Welsh Government. It aims to provide access both digitally and physically to the nation's collections across Wales.

Amgueddfa Cymru – Museum Wales appoints new Chief Executive

Amgueddfa Cymru – Museum Wales is pleased to announce that Jane Richardson, has been appointed as its Chief Executive. Jane took up her new position, initially on a part-time basis, on 11 September, before assuming the full-time role in November 2023.

Jane has been Chair of Cadw since 2019, supporting the organisation through the pandemic and with the post-Covid recovery process. Until earlier this year, she was Director of Economy and Place at Conwy County Borough Council, leading on major infrastructure projects including the creation of a new culture centre within the historic town of Conwy.

In what is a new role at Amgueddfa Cymru, the Chief Executive, will report to the Chair and the Board of Trustees, and will be responsible for providing inspiration, ambition, creativity, and strategic direction for the organisation. The delivery of Strategy 2030 will be a focal point, ensuring that the family of seven National Museums and Collection Centre meet the changing and diverse needs of the communities of Wales as well as promoting our history and culture to visitors and international audiences.



Photo: Amgueddfa Cymru Museum Wales



BANGOR UNIVERSITY

Library, Archives and Special Collections News

- The A&SC has been awarded £206k from the Arts and Humanities Research Council to replace the aging motorised mobile shelving in the main strong room. This work has already started and is on track to be completed by September this year. During this major refurbishment (and whilst the majority of our collections are off-site at Deep Store) we're currently running a restricted service to users.
- In March this year the A&SC was once again awarded Archive Service Accreditation which is testament to the excellent work carried out by our staff in all areas of archive service delivery.
- In April we signed up to participate in the Preservation Early Adopter Program with JSTOR which comes to an end on 30 June 2023. This will provide us with a better understanding of what JSTOR can offer us in terms of Digital Preservation using Portico. However, we're also considering the possibility of joining a Welsh consortium to set up a Welsh National Digital Preservation Repository – this work is being led by Laura Cotton at Glamorgan Archives.



In March 2023, we presented at the ER&L conference 2023 in Austin, Texas, USA. The presentation focused on the library's user-centred approach to delivering services, which revolves around the use of library browser extensions to increase the discoverability of library resources. Unfortunately, the team was unable to travel to Austin, but they delivered their presentation via video link. This is another example of the cross-departmental work that the library team is doing to help students and staff discover library resources.

Wiley Digital Archives digitised and now hosts material from our Commonwealth Forestry Archive collection as part of the Environmental Science and History Archive.

The Library has moved from locally-hosted EZproxy to the Cloud-hosted version to maximise efficiencies in staffing resource.

We undertook an OCLC reclamation exercise.

Our annual exhibition entitled “Connecting Collections” celebrated the centenary of the Gregynog Press and there is an [online Sway version](#) to accompany the physical exhibition, located in the Council Chamber Corridor in the Main University Building.



The Teaching and Learning Support team have worked with other teams across Digital Services to promote and support the use of library resources. We have worked with the Collections team, to use data on resource usage to target support for staff and students. Also within the different elements of the T&L team, we have delivered shared sessions on the library, study skills, and induction events. Links to academic support and library resources have also been incorporated into the template for all Blackboard modules. This means that all modules have a link to a live multimedia document that can be updated throughout the year. The team plans to further develop this integration in the upcoming academic year.

Digital services have also switched on the SharePoint-hosted intranet. This uses Microsoft technology that allows for easy editing, making it quick and easy to create new support documents. This is another example of cross-departmental working, as different teams can update information on shared web pages.

Ms Jenny Greene, the Arts & Humanities Academic support librarian, retired in March 2023 after working at Bangor for over 30 years. Her friendly and helpful attitude will be missed



CARDIFF UNIVERSITY

We have developed a new strategy which has been approved by our university committees. The strategy is available [here](#).

We have implemented Rapido to improve our inter-library loans interface and user experience, and are piloting Controlled Digital Lending through Alma Digital.

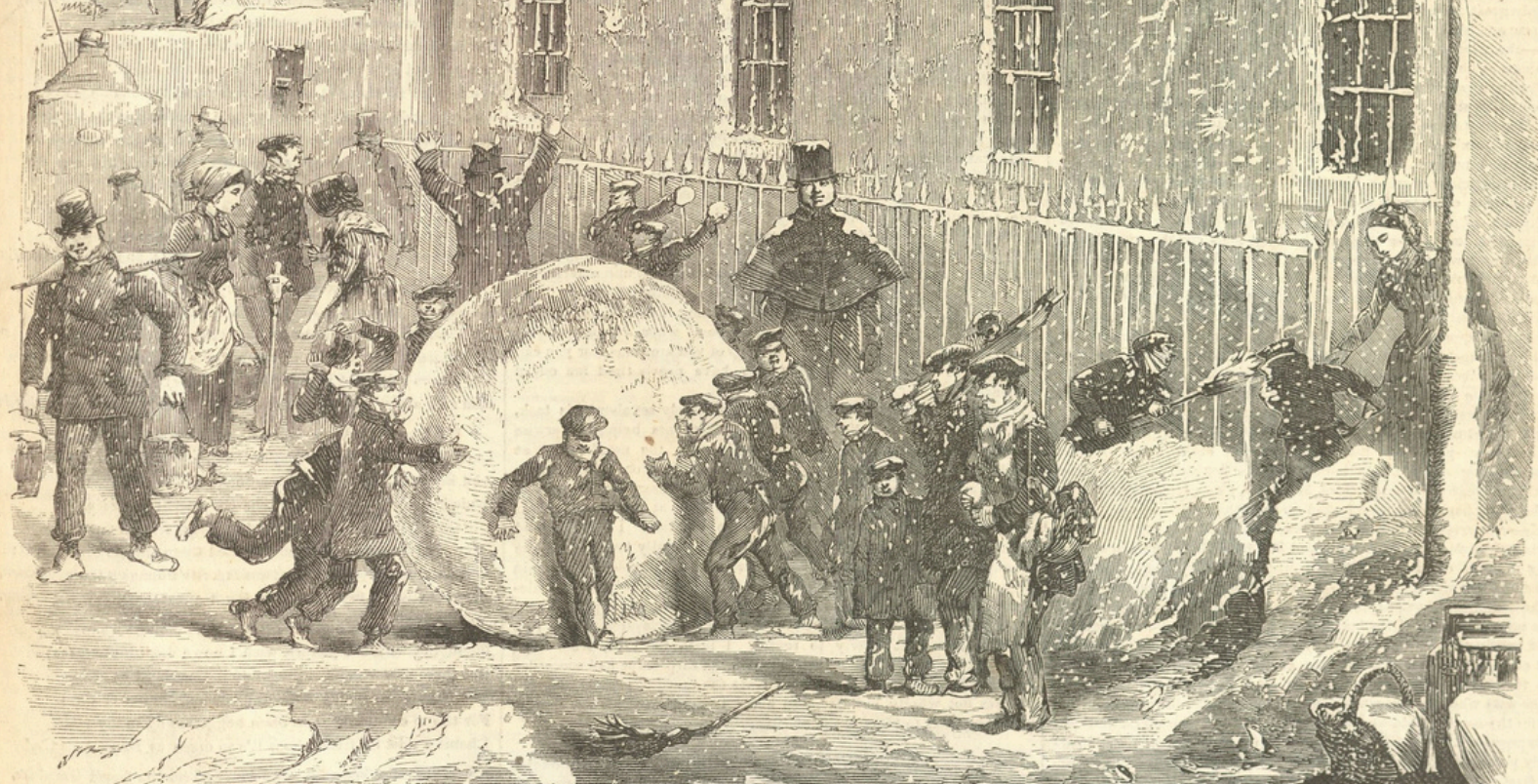
We have procured Figshare for our new research data management system. This will be live by March 2024.

We have commenced a pilot on rights retention and launched a shared commitment to rights retention with our GW4 partners.

We have completed a programme of advocacy, awareness and training on open access compliance.



Mackworth Collection 433



Illustrated London News ILN1855

We are implementing our new open digital humanities research hub, with some state-of-the-art digitization equipment. This report contains some recently digitised images from Illustrated London News, The Graphic and Mackworth Collection.

We are taking on a leadership role for study spaces across campus, and the university is investing in essential maintenance for the Arts and Social Studies Library, and an upgrade of some furniture and décor. We've undertaken a feasibility study on sites for a new library building.

We made a successful bid for University HEFCW funds to undertake a project to review outdated terminology in our library catalogue. This scoping study will be completed in January 2024.

We won a grant from CILIP Cymru Wales for a green libraries initiative to raise staff and student awareness of sustainability issues and purchase plants for all libraries. We are working with the university to take part in a climate conversation, with funding from the Welsh Government.

We are key partners in the Crowd Cymru project, led by Gwent Archives, and funded via the National Lottery Heritage Fund. The project has recruited 90 volunteers who contributed over 1400 hours of their time, learning new skills and interacting with others. Volunteers have been able to use the crowdsourcing content development tools to increase their knowledge of digital archives in Wales and the history of Wales, build confidence with technology, and improve their overall wellbeing.

We have undertaken an external strategic review of Cardiff University Press.

We have shared guidance on predatory journals and are developing materials on open access monographs in line with the changes in UKRI policy from January.

We have rolled out Advance HE anti-racist university training to a group of 20 staff. We've developed an online resource to support medicine and healthcare students in learning about critical appraisal in the literature through an anti-racist lens.



CARDIFF METROPOLITAN

January - July 23

We put in place a realignment of our staffing structure, moving to a wholly functional team model. This was a significant piece of work to undertake, but much needed to enable Library Services to better reflect the scope, opportunities and challenges, of the post-COVID workplace.

As part of that, we set up a number of new Working Groups & Communities of practice, including two which would become key for us in driving further developmental thinking:

- the 'Data Driven Decision Making' community for library staff. This was introduced to try and bring a coherent place together to gather & discuss data about our services & their usage, present that in an accessible way, and utilise what we have to inform better decision making and service development.
- The Library Services 'AI Community of Practice' – this was formed to mirror wider University development, and bring together library services staff from all areas and levels to share knowledge, information, and expertise around emergent AI driven platforms.

AI & Library Services *Opportunities in the tidal wave of change..*



The AI CoP in particular has been a big enabler and we've become quite involved with the University's responses to the challenges and opportunities around AI platforms within Learning, Teaching & research activities, and in supporting and informing staff and students in navigating successfully through those too.

During the first half of the year, we also put in place a number of services to help support our partner institution, HS Skovoroda Pedagogical university in Kharkiv, Ukraine, which included implementation of the RapidILL resource sharing service, provision of our MetSearch discovery interface in a Ukrainian language option, and the first of several online information sharing events between ourselves and Ukrainian colleagues.

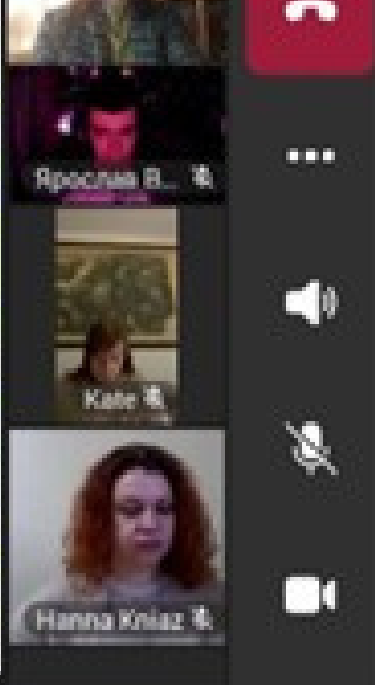
The inaugural session was a big success, attended by over 80 people, and we have since continued to build what we hope will be an enduring partnership and relationship.

History
Roots in Cardiff School of Art (established 1865) and other Colleges which merged into that
Now grown to a medium sized UK University
Student population of 15,770 FTE in 2021/22
Staff population: 1,347 FTE (573 Academic, 774 'Other Staff')

Organised into 5 Schools
Cardiff School of Art and Design (CSAD)
Cardiff School of Education and Social Policy (CESP)
Cardiff School of Management (CSM)
Cardiff School of Sport & Health Sciences (CSSHS)
Cardiff School of Technology (CST)
Plus significant International Partnerships (Transnational Education, Global Academics), Research activities, Commercial provisions (FabLab, Food Industry Centre etc.)



Cyncoed Campus



Lughes, Mark ...

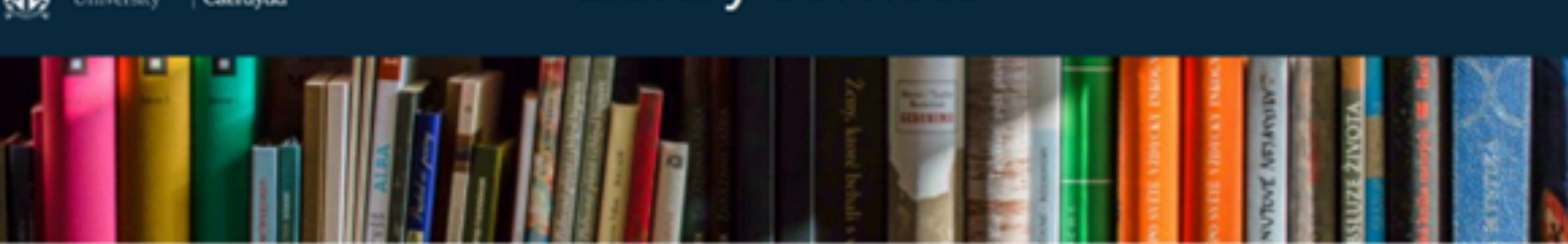
August - December 2023

August 23 saw the release of NSS results, and we were delighted to see a significant increase in satisfaction for the questions related to Library & Learning resource provision.

With the start of the new Academic year, we welcomed Rob Blagden as our new 'Director of Digital & Libraries'. Rob joined us from the University of Gloucester, and with significant experience of having led converged IT & Library Service areas before, he has been making a big impact on some of our service development plans.



Rob Blagden



Welcome to Library Services

Here you will find everything you need to excel at your studies. To get started, check out our [Library Essentials](#) pages where you'll find all the top tips and info to get you off to a great start on your learning journey.



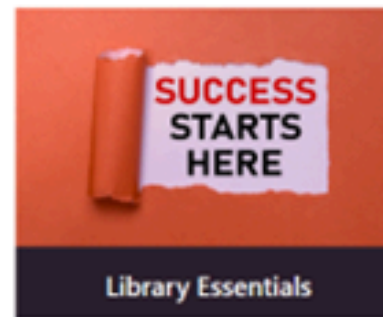
Learning Centres



Information for...



Find Help



Library Essentials

The start of the new Academic year also saw the launch of our new [Library website](#) which we believe provides a better and more easily navigable entrance into our services for our users and more closely aligns with our aim of a seamless experience between the physical and digital aspects of our support.



NATIONAL LIBRARY OF WALES

Wales Broadcast Archive

There are now over 229,000 broadcasts available to the public and there have been over 14,200 visitors to the Broadcast Archive Centre at the Library between opening in March and the end of August. A 25-year lease is planned at WMC with a 5-year lifetime for the initial installation.

The Wales Broadcast Archive has delivered work in Butetown as part of the outreach and activity plan. A week in the life of Butetown Carnival was shown at the launch of the Butetown Carnival Archive Project exhibition at the Pierhead and Senedd, and a second showing was held for the public in the Pierhead on the day of Butetown Carnival. Mobile Clip facilities were also set up for the day to allow the public to browse programmes from the Broadcast Archive relating to Butetown Carnival and the local area.

The Broadcast Archive project supported the Communities of Wales project by supplying clips for a podcasting workshop run by EYST – Ethnic Minorities & Youth Support Teams Wales.

The theme of the podcast was Identity and Welshness. Three sessions were held where young people were given the opportunity to discuss ideas and learn new skills to be able to record their own podcast. The final podcast will contain clips from the Broadcast Archive and will be shared as an educational resource on Hwb and the National Library's website. This scheme gives us an entirely new opportunity to work with young people who would otherwise not be exposed to the Library's collections.

Workshops for families

A series of workshops for families was delivered by the Education Service during the summer holidays. These popular Summer of Fun Sessions included a Build-a-book workshop, a Palette, Paint, Play! session, and a session to build The Lego National Library. The play area also continues to be very popular for parents, guardians and children.

Library news

In order to increase storage capacity, plans have been started to convert the Atrium, the open space in the Third Library Building, to provide additional storage and other space.

Eisteddfod Genedlaethol

The library's presence at the National Eisteddfod was a huge success.

Three successful corporate events were held at this year's Eisteddfod with the celebration of the Peace Petition Partnership, the launch of the University of Wales Trinity Saint David Strategic Partnership and the Welsh Broadcasting Archive.

The Library was featured twice during the S4C Eisteddfod's coverage for the week and drew close to 7,000 visitors to the stand and received an income of £10,000 at the Shop on the stand, double the figures for 2022. It was great to receive very positive comments from visitors about the exhibition resulting in promoting the wider work of the Library and making new connections.

Exhibitions

The Library experienced high visitor numbers during the summer with double the numbers experienced in 2022. The Peace Petition and the Broadcast Archive Centre have been popular attractions, with many positive comments about the Treasure Exhibitions, Dan y Wenallt, and Gregynog print illustrations.

Holding an LDIG (Legal Deposit Implementation Group) meeting in the Library

The LDIG (Legal Deposit Implementation Group) meeting was held at the Library on 19 September. It was wonderful to be able to welcome Amina Shah, National Librarian and Chief Executive of the National Library of Scotland, one of the delegates, on her first visit to the Library.



Cyfoeth Naturiol Cymru Natural Resources Wales

- LMS Procurement – 2023 was focused on the procurement and implementation of a new LMS, following OCLC’s decision to withdraw their OLIB platform. We have selected Soutron as our new supplier and the implementation is entering its final stages. We aim to go live with the new system in early February 2024. The public portal, which is still under development, can be seen here: [Search - Soutron LMS](#)
- In October 2022 we were successful in bidding for a grant from CILIP Cymru Wales for “libraries in Wales seeking to develop and evaluate environmental understanding and activity”. Project work was carried out until the end of June with partners in Gwynedd Libraries to host events run by Dynamic Dunescapes and Wild Elements, bringing a range of hands-on activities and learning opportunities to children and their families in public libraries. The grant money was also used to create a diverse new collection of books in Gwynedd Libraries on a range of environmental subjects in both English and Welsh.



- Accommodation continues to be reviewed across the NRW estate and further office closures are expected. Whilst library material held at offices due for closure will be moved to our main collection in our Maes y Ffynnon office in Bangor, it is not expected that the lease will be renewed on this office beyond 2026.
- Between October and December we were very fortunate to welcome Tina into the team. In that time she completed hugely valuable work creating high quality scans of evidence reports published by our legacy body, CCW.
- We have been contributing where we can to the work of the Collaboration for Environmental Evidence (CEE), and their database of evidence reviews. This is a great resource which we are now promoting to colleagues in information literacy training sessions and linking from our internal pages. It is also a really valuable opportunity for professional development, building skills in appraising evidence reviews.
- There has been increasing interest in our service and collection from university and college students so we will be exploring ways to make the library more accessible to members of the public by working with colleagues in academic and public libraries



Foundations

Growing excellence in our knowledge, information and learning

OPEN UNIVERSITY

Library News

We are now co-located with Research, Enterprise, and Scholarship in the library within a conceptual framework of a 'Knowledge Quarter'. This also included a central home for PGRs and the Graduate School. Further Developments are in the planning for providing further dedicated space in the library for Doctoral Students alongside their common room.

The library is also undertaking its own internal service development activity, called 'Effective Working Partnerships' this activity is both aligned to and part of both the three year financial planning and delivery round as well as the cross institutional service design review.

The library and digital futures team and the Digital Archive continues to play a key role within a strategically funded, transformation programme (The Foundations Programme). Funding for the third year of the programme has been submitted. The Programme seeks to transform the universities course production process – within that Curriculum Asset Management is being led by the library. The activity focuses on asset storage, discovery and re-use. The work is starting to use semantic web technology and AI to support and underpin the activity.



ROYAL WELSH COLLEGE OF MUSIC AND DRAMA

- In light of the cost-of-living crisis, and the disproportionate impact on neurodivergent students, we abolished all library fines in autumn 2022. We still charge for lost and damaged items but try to minimise costs for these as much as possible. The impact on stock seems negligible at present but we are continuing to monitor it closely
- There are a number of new courses that have been validated at RWCMD, including two foundation degrees (Scenic Art and Scenic Construction) as well as an online masters' degree in the Opera Industry. These require increased library support and resources.
- We've undertaken a lot of work adding content notes to items with problematic language in our catalogue as well as a statement on the front page of Primo. Work is still ongoing and is likely to be constantly as we aim to respond to changes in language

- We worked to reformulate (and rename) our code of conduct. To begin this process we have had a team away day and have consulted with staff and students. We are aiming for this to fit alongside RWCMD's respectful space statement and are aiming to have a version that is concise and visual which will be displayed around the Library and a longer version with detail underpinning it.
- Our research repository went on hold as we increasingly found that our chosen platform was not fully fit for purpose. We received funding from the RWCMD Research Infrastructure Fund to appoint someone to undertake a scoping study to make recommendations as to how we might proceed.
- We ran guided tours with an in-situ exhibition of the Foyle Opera Rara Collection as a fringe event for Cardiff Singer of the World 2023 in June. These proved vastly popular, attracting a wide range of people and raising the profile of this prestigious collection. We have also received funding from the RWCMD research fund which has allowed us to recruit two students to carry out a research project on the letters in the Foyle Opera Rara Collection. They will produce an index of the letters along with a synopsis of each. These letters, predominantly in Italian and French, have never before been publicly accessible but have the potential to cast new light on nineteenth century opera.



- We have a new library assistant, Ethnie Foulkes, who joined us earlier this year. Ethnie was a former student at the College and is a singer and composer.
- Like many others, we are grappling with AI, trying to get to grips with what it means for learning and teaching as well as for the performing arts. Judith is on a working group looking at this and the Library is helping compiling and curating resources in a Padlet
- RWCMD will be unveiling a new website shortly. The Library has been involved in this project and we are hoping for an improved online presence which will say more about who we are.
- Members of the RWCMD Library team successfully achieved Advance HE Fellowship (Judith Dray) and Associate Fellowship (Helen Bader and Sally Brockway). We are now investigating ways to improve our teaching and learning provision off the back of this.



SWANSEA UNIVERSITY

- The Egypt Centre celebrated its 25th Anniversary with a one-day conference on 7 September 2023 featuring presentations on its impact for learning and teaching, research and the regional community. It also saw the launch of the collection of 813 objects North Yorkshire Council recently loaned from Harrogate to the Egypt Centre and the reuniting of the cast of the base and with the cast of the statue of Djedhor the Saviour which the Petrie Museum of Egyptian Archaeology had previously held
- The South Wales Miners' Library celebrated its 50th Anniversary with a programme of events including:
- The annual Rhys Davies Lecture Mining the South Wales Miners' Library: telling the story of the Coalfields through music and memories by John Willgoose of the band Public Service Broadcasting
- A one day conference 'Knowledge is Power' – 50 Years of the South Wales Miners' Library and Llafur: the Welsh People's History Society featuring a panel chaired by the First Minister and a keynote by Rt Hon Nick Thomas-Symonds MP (the Member of Parliament for Torfaen)



Photo: Swansea University

Research

- The Academic Support team has taken responsibility for delivering researcher skills training
- The Library Operations and South Wales' Miners Library Teams relocated the collections held in store to new premises in Port Talbot
- We have recently submitted a bid to improve conservation infrastructure and secure at-risk collections in South-West Wales through Arts and Humanities Research Council Research Infrastructure for Conservation and Heritage Science bid. This would establish a mobile conservation unit and small conservation laboratory within the Park Library

Staffing News

- Sian Neilsen took up a new role as Special Collections Librarian with a focus on our named print collections, rare books and the South Wales Miners' Library.
- Mark Burden now leads the MyUniLibrary team alongside the Library Operations Team bringing our front-line teams together within a single line-management structure.

Learning and Teaching

- The Academic Support team has created MyUni Library Essentials, a full interactive tutorial on the Virtual Learning Environment covering everything from Library induction to information literacy skills for undergraduate students
- We have trialled Dissertation Station for post-graduate students which included a day of short sessions and drop-ins to help them with their dissertation
- We are introducing Library Refuge, in collaboration with the Centre for Academic Success (CAS), which is an dedicated hour's writing haven for individual study every Tuesday in the library with a member of the Academic Support team and CAS available for any questions
- The Academic Support team is introducing AI in our searching/ evaluating resources classes

Student Experience

- The National Student Survey measured satisfaction with how well library resources have supported learning at 88.98%, just below the benchmark. This was second only to how good the teaching staff are at explaining things (91.06%)
- We have refurbished parts of the Bay Library and the Park Library, including a new suite of spaces aimed primarily at Post-Graduate Taught students



UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH WALES

Staff:

- In 2023, there was some restructuring of roles in Library Services and 3 new posts were added to the library team: Lynne Evans was appointed as Associate Director: Head of Library Services, Vikki Killington joined the library management team as Library Academic Engagement Manager and Claire Thomas joined the Library Digital Services team as Account Manager: Academic Content.

Library collections and spaces:

- The smallest of our libraries at Glyntaff Campus had a refurbishment and facelift. Following a widescale stock editing exercise, staff were able to reconfigure shelving to create more space to walk through the library and improve access to resources and study spaces. Some new furniture and a lick of paint on the walls refreshed the space and helped to create a more welcoming environment.

Photo: USW

- In Newport, Library staff collaborated with Interior Design students on a brief to redesign a former canteen area in the premises. Library staff collated data & photographs on the daily use of the area to help with ideas and research. The area is currently being redeveloped and some of the students' ideas have been reflected in the plans.
- Following its launch in 2022, USW library staff have continued to develop the successful Diversity Curators project. Volunteer student Curators were recruited at each of the university libraries and they worked with librarians to do a deep dive into library collections on a range of topics that helped to promote diversity across the university. The Curators were tasked with creating displays and exhibits to promote a topic that interested them which resulted in a varied and interesting selection of issues and resources being showcased, including the Gender Studies for Wales special collection. To round off the project, the curators also collaborated on the creation of a guide to promote and document their work.
- In 2023 staff began working on a project to showcase library special collections, particularly items of unique and historical interest and relevance to the university. This project is nearing completion for launch in 2024. Special collections items will be on display in Treforest library for the first time, and it is hoped that engagement with the collections will increase as a result.
- The faculty librarian team created a new programme of online support workshops, author talks and events. This programme of live events, branded as Future Ready Students, supplements the delivery of in-person workshops and training sessions. The programme is open to all USW students and it expands the reach of information skills training to part-time, remote and partner college students as well as those full-time students who are unable to attend face-to-face workshops. Following a successful launch in 2023, the library team have worked with colleagues from Student Development and Support to expand the range of events on offer.



- In 2023 Faculty Librarians undertook a UX research project to gain insights into post-graduate student information retrieval and research skills. Research subjects were asked to keep diaries when searching for information and library resources; the diaries documented which tools were used for discovery, the students' approaches to constructing searches and how they felt when conducting searches. Analysis of the results has given the librarians rich information about information retrieval habits and the quality of the tools that we provide. The exercise has led to changes to information skills training materials and improvements to instructions for searching. Most importantly, it has significantly increased our understanding of the needs of our library users.
- Faculty librarians are engaged in the USW Artificial Intelligence Working Group along with academics and other professional services colleagues and are at the centre of conversations contributing to the development of policy and guidance for the ethical use of AI. In particular, staff received commendations for their work to create a Guide to AI for staff and students that is being promoted across the university.



Photo: UWTSB

UNIVERSITY OF WALES TRINITY ST DAVID

InfoSkills Programme

UWTSB's InfoSkills is a dynamic online tutorial programme designed by the University's Academic Liaison Librarians to support students with independently developing transferable academic and information literacy skills.

The online InfoSkills units are designed to allow students to create their own learning path regardless of level, previous experience, or knowledge. Students can simply scroll and click through the interactive tutorial at their own pace, using the knowledge checks at the end of each topic to confirm their understanding.

These online asynchronous units complement the in-person library InfoSkills sessions you book via the Academic Liaison Librarians for your students.

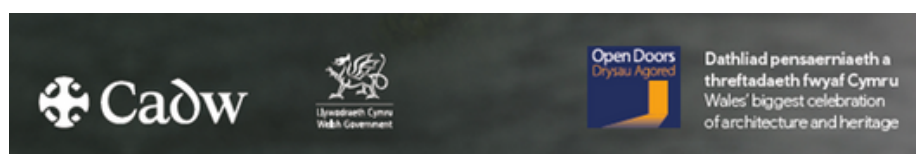


Photo:UWTSD

CADW Open Doors

In 2023 the Library's Special Collections took part in CADW's Open Doors, the annual festival presenting heritage and historic sites to the wider public. We hold a nationally important collection of 35 000 historic volumes, including eight medieval manuscripts and 69 volumes printed before 1500. We displayed a selection of the most interesting items. These include the 1279 manuscript of the Latin Bible, previously belonging to Bishop Thomas Burgess; two 15th century books of hours; a copy of Abraham Ortelius' atlas, including the first printed map of Wales; Conrad Gessner's *Historia animalium*, a fascinating 16th century natural history encyclopedia; a selection of 15th to 18th century botanical books; a variety of travel books associated with 18th century explorers, including Captain Cook; a selection of architects' volumes connected with the Grand Tour of Europe.

Further information is available in the Press Release on the University's website



Green Libraries Partnership

The Library and Learning Resources joined the Green Libraries Partnership of the Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals (CILIP). The service has signed the Green Libraries Manifesto and in doing so becomes only the second University Library in Wales to do so.

The Green Libraries Partnership aims to:

- discover and harness the existing work going on in libraries relating to Sustainability
- build and support environmental understanding and action within libraries so they can play their full part in creating a better future for planet and people
- enable libraries to work with their communities to continue to build environmental understanding and action
- position libraries at the heart of local environmental programmes including those led by Local Authorities

As libraries we occupy a place at the heart of the communities we serve. Through this manifesto, we want to come together towards a shared vision: to lead by example through our own environmental actions and use our power and reach to inform and inspire people to take positive action and build resilience in the diverse communities we serve.

Further details on the Manifesto can be found [here](#).

CUSTOMER
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Customer Service Excellence Award

Library and Learning Resources were successfully awarded the prestigious Customer Service Excellence award during 2023.

This national quality mark and standard aims to bring professional, high-level customer service concepts into every aspect of a service by putting customers at the core of everything for a truly customer-focused culture. It is comprised of fifty-seven elements within five CSE criteria which range from customer insight, organisational culture to service quality and delivery.

The LLR was assessed against the criteria of the standard by a licensed certification body, through a rigorous assessment process including a review of documents submitted to an impartial assessor which demonstrate compliance against each element of the Standard, and an on-site visit to establish whether an organisation meets the requirements of the scheme



WREXHAM UNIVERSITY

In September 2023, we changed our name from Wrexham Glyndwr University and rebranded as Prifysgol Wrecsam/Wrexham University.

The library along with the Service Desk, Academic Support and Digital Learning now forms part of Service Delivery within Information Services. As part of Service Delivery, we have reconfigured the ground floor of the library and now have a distinct self-service area for the library catalogue, the self-service machine, PCs, and printers. We have also relocated the TechZone, which offers drop-in technical support.

Our new Hysbysu / Inform brand was introduced for Library, Learning Skills, and Tech. The Inform brand and new University logo now features on our signage.



As part of Service Delivery, we are introducing new service desk software.

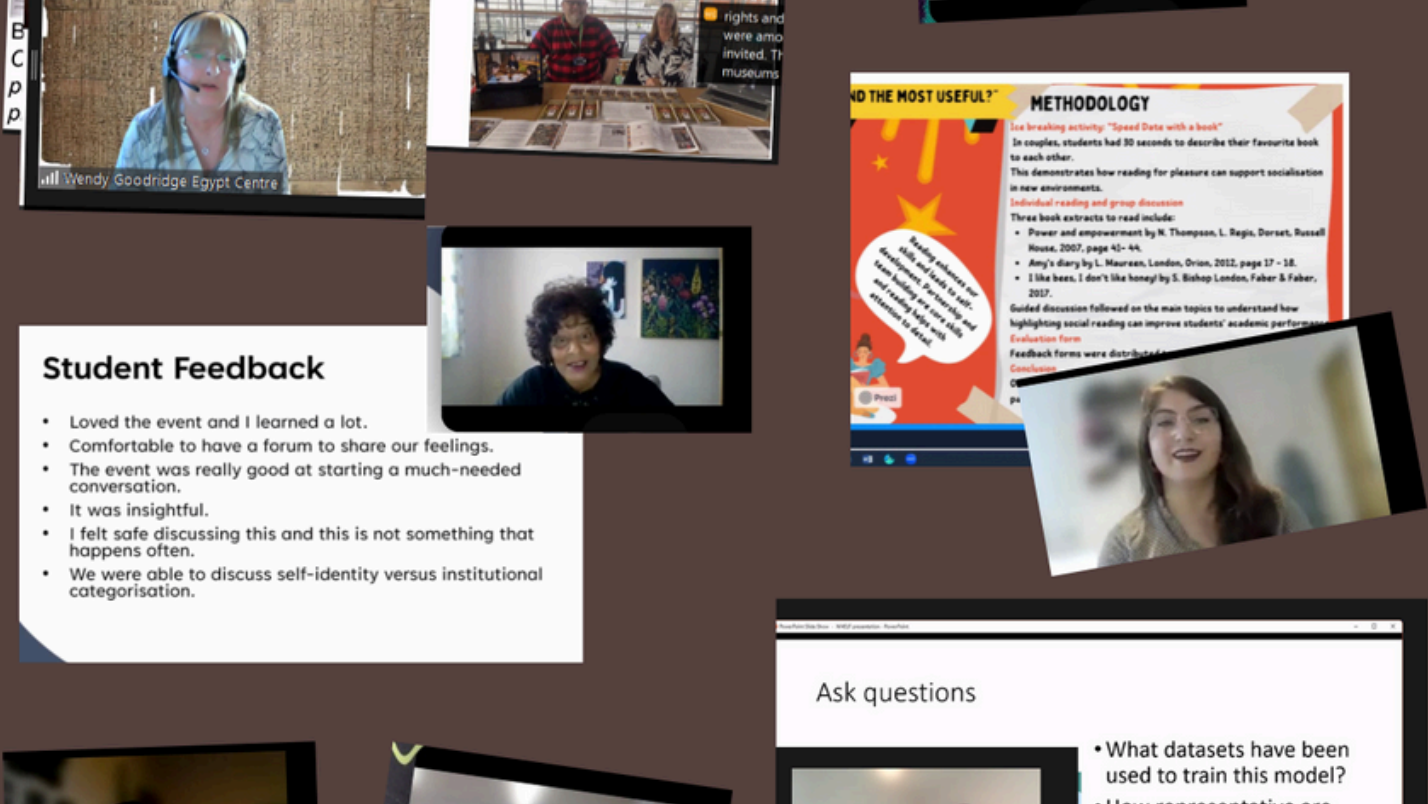
We have made the following new staff appointments:

- Jeanette Harper - Service Desk Officer
- Sam Kassam - Senior Desk Analyst
- Gail Judd and Susannah Burtinshaw - 0.6 Academic Support Assistants, working alongside our Academic Support Librarians

A new Collection Management Policy has been approved.

We have recently procured LibGuides.





EXCLUDED VOICES 2023

WHELF EDI group hosted the 2023 Excluded Voices (ExV23) conference online over two days. With a Wales-focused agenda, our speakers and presenters covered many key themes relating to improving diversity, community engagement and participation to education.

The first day had a strong theme of community engagement and partnership in Wales. Usha Ladwa-Thomas discussed collaborating with the Welsh community in developing an effective anti-racism policy in Wales. The amazing work done by volunteers at The Egypt Centre in Swansea, showed how museums can install an aspirational sense of life-long purpose and learning. Wendy Goodridge showcased their work and achievements with a real sense of pride.

ExV23 - Days 1 & 2

Nancy Roberts delivered an excellent and timely insight into AI and bias. As a self-confessed data analytic nerd and executive of several data organisations, Nancy was able to explain the link between data and AI and how bias and quality of data can affect it.

There was a strong focus on sharing experiences and insights on the second day of the conference and our speakers – researchers, librarians, or community workers across the UK – showcased innovative practices and student engagement with a range of existing projects.

The first part of the morning looked at collaborative projects with under-represented students in higher education and how much work still needs to be done before libraries can be considered truly diverse and reflective of their students' backgrounds. Our thanks to Amanda Foster, Lorna Hibbert and Dr Bidy Casselden from Northumbria University and Dr Christina Kamposiori from Research Libraries UK.

ExV23 - Day 2

The thought-provoking keynote presentation on Day 2: “Working in Partnership Across the University: Improving Race Equity” was given by Susan Cousins. Senior Compliance Advisor, Race – Religion & Belief, Cardiff University. Susan is the author of *Overcoming Everyday Racism and Making Sense of Microaggressions* and has also delivered training events to WHELF colleagues.

Librarians from across the UK then shared their exciting and innovative projects: reaching out to students with book clubs to boost study skills in Glasgow Caledonian University (Silvia Spaltro and Frances MacInnes) and an effective Wales anti-racism awareness campaign from Neath Port Talbot FE libraries (Sobia Shafique-Akhtar) amongst several other initiatives all aimed to provide help and support for staff and students wanting to diversify their teaching and learning (Charlie Worthington and L C Chung, King’s College London and Catherine Small, Royal Conservatoire of Scotland)

Many thanks to all speakers and a huge cheer for our attendees for contributing and making *ExV23* such a meaningful experience. Libraries are often at the heart of universities and communities and early adopters of new technology. With EDI knowledge, we hope that *ExV23* has provided a good insight into some important developments happening now.


WHELF COLLOQUIUM 2023

WHELF Begins at 30!

The 2023 Colloquium was organised by Bangor University, Wrexham Glyndŵr University and Natural Resources Wales. It was held online two half-days on Tuesday 13th and Wednesday 14th June 2023, from 09:30 – 13:00.

The conference celebrated WHELF's 30th anniversary. We shared reflections on how we have developed our services collaboratively over that time. As the popular phrase goes, life begins at 30, so we explored the new opportunities and challenges we will have over the next 30 years of WHELF.

Many thanks to the team at Jisc Wales for the technical support.

The logo for WHELF features the word "WHELF" in a bold, grey, sans-serif font. To the left of the text, there is a decorative arrangement of red spheres of varying sizes, some with a glowing effect, arranged in a semi-circular pattern.

WHELF

Writing morning for Advance HE Fellowships 1: Gathering evidence

On 13 December 2023 the WHELF **Learning & Teaching Group** organised a morning dedicated to starting or finishing your application to a level of HE Advance Fellowship.

During the first part of the event, two colleagues shared their experiences of submitting their portfolios of evidence:

- Helen Bader, Assistant Head of Library Services at the Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama
- Rhian Plenty, Faculty Librarian at the University of South Wales

Afterwards, there was dedicated time to work on your submission while sharing ideas and getting support from colleagues across WHELF.

The Learning and Teaching Group also held another event on 6th July 2023:

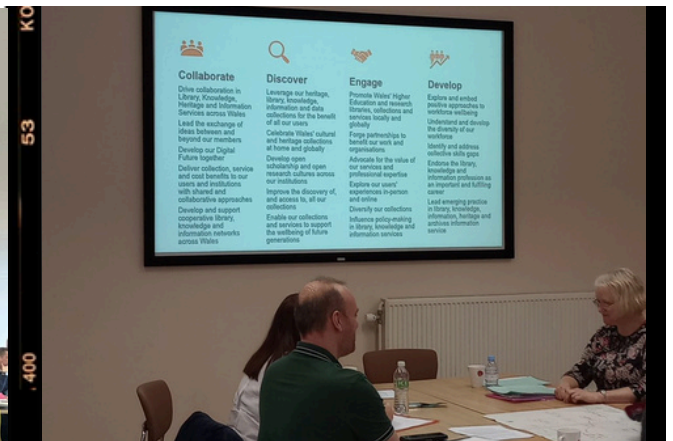
Using evidence-based research to inform IL-practice: Insights from “The Qualitative Landscape of Information Literacy Research” and a discussion on methodologies

- **Insights from “The Qualitative Landscape of Information Literacy Research: Perspectives, Methods and Techniques”** by author Professor Annemaree Lloyd, University College London
- A UX project using diaries: the USW experience – José López-Blanco and Lowri Williams, University of South Wales
- **Listening, learning, acting and responding: Using the student voice to improve our online library training sessions** – Hannah Woods, Open University

WHELF STRATEGY PLANNING DAY 03.03.2023

The current WHELF Strategic Plan covers the period 2020-2024. Who could have foreseen the Covid-19 pandemic and the effects this would have on WHELF institutions and their working practices?

On Friday 3 March two strategy planning away days took place simultaneously.





In North Wales, Beth Hall (NRW) and Tracey Middleton (Bangor) led the discussions at Bangor University.

In the South, colleagues met at USW Cardiff campus, in the wonderful Atrium building. This session was led by Mark Hughes (Cardiff Met – WHELF Chair 2023-25) and Alison Harding (WHELF Chair 2021-2023)

Everyone agreed that it was a fantastic opportunity to catch up with colleagues, and in some cases to meet in person for the first time. The catering at both venues was excellent. The day was a mix of breakout sessions and whole-group discussion and information sharing. The WHELF Officers now have plenty of notes and ideas which can form the basis for the next WHELF Strategic Plan.



WHELF website news

In early 2023 WHELF wished to review and replace its website presence, which was based on a older version of WordPress.

Discussions, based on identified key requirements for WHELF, then took place between a working group representing WHELF members and four external companies with a known track record in this area.

Three proposals / quotations were supplied and the contract was awarded to Gwe Cambrian Web (GCW)

GCW are based in Aberystwyth and understand the need for the website to be bilingual. We hoped that the new site would be ready for the *WHELF is 30* event on 29 June 2023 and GCW were able to deliver this in time for the celebrations.

WHELF now has a fresh and modern website which is comparable to those of other UK regional library consortia