

Minutes of the meeting of the Newsplan (Cymru) Working Party held at the National Library of Wales, Aberystwyth, 30 October 2003

Present: Brynmor Jones (Chairman), Annette Jones, Gillian Fraser, Joy Thomas, Marilyn Jones, Janet C Karn, Christine Phillips, Kay Warren- Morgan, Non Jenkins, Brian Dafis, Iwan Jones (Secretary)

1. Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Susan Mends and Lynn Francis. The Chairman noted that Beti Jones of the National Library of Wales, author of the Newsplan (Wales) Report, had recently retired. It was agreed that the Secretary should write to thank her for her contribution and to express the group's good wishes to her for the future.

2. Minutes of the meeting of 10 April 2003 and matters arising

2.1 The minutes had been circulated and were accepted as a correct record.

2.2 Publicity (3.4)

Attention was drawn to stories about Newsplan which had been published in the press, in the *Mold and Buckley Chronicle* and the *Caernarfon and Denbigh Herald*. Brian Dafis said he had sent copies to the Newsplan 2000 Office and that he would be glad to know about other stories, as it was important to draw as much attention as possible to the film which was arriving at libraries thanks to Newsplan.

3. Report of progress on Newsplan 2000

3.1 Newsplan 2000

Iwan Jones reported on meetings of the Newsplan 2000 Trustees and the Newsplan Panel which had been held at the British Library on 2 October. Copies of a Report by John Lauder to the Newsplan Panel were distributed. Microfilming was now proceeding very successfully, with film production regularly exceeding 1000 reels per month, and the quality was generally of a high standard. Preparation of volumes and the invoicing and despatch of films and volumes was also continuing and Newsplan 2000 still hoped to achieve its target output within the time scheduled. Securing the partnership funding which was required to match the HLF grant continued to be a challenge and it was explained to the meeting that the officers of Newsplan had experienced great difficulty in persuading the various newspaper groups to contribute the agreed funding to the second year of the Project. Iwan Jones noted that the purchase of equipment depended on these contributions and that both Ann Matheson, Chair of Newsplan 2000, and John Lauder, Director, had worked very hard to explore all possible sources for funding and to make clear to the newspaper groups that the continuation of the project depended on their sustained support as had been stated throughout the history of the project.

Newspaper groups had enquired about the benefits of the work and the publicity given to the project, and members of the Working Party were strongly encouraged to set up stories in local newspapers, in order to draw good publicity to the library itself, to the Newsplan Project, and to the specific newspaper group which owned the local newspaper title and was contributing to Newsplan.

3.2 Newsplan in Wales

Brian Dafis reviewed progress in Wales. He explained that the Newsplan 2000 Project included about 200 Welsh titles, selected by Beti Jones bearing in mind the priorities of the Working Party. Wales was scheduled to receive a total of 5060 reels from the Project. In practice there was some uncertainty in linking the number of titles to be filmed with the number of reels. The National Library of Wales was preparing volumes from Welsh libraries for filming while the British Library was preparing volumes held in London. Changes to the organisation of the Project meant that the National Library was now doing more work than had been envisaged, including coordinating orders for film (to secure the best possible price of £22.45 per reel) invoicing and distributing purchased films. Progress during the first year of the Project had been slow, but during the past six month production had come on stream and large quantities of film had been produced and distributed. All 22 Welsh library authorities were acquiring film as part of the Project and the University Colleges of Wales, particularly Cardiff and

Bangor, had also purchased substantial quantities of film. So far over 3000 reels of film had been purchased and over 2700 reels of 'free' film (subject to a preparation charge) had been distributed.

All the libraries represented at the meeting had received film and had found most of it to be of high quality. There continued to be some films where the central 'gutters' were obscured - this was unavoidable where newspapers were tightly bound and where the owners would not permit them to be disbound. Brian Dafis urged libraries to check the film they received and report any problems to him within a few days of receipt if possible. A small number of errors in packing and labelling had occurred but up to now Microformat had readily agreed to replace all film that was incorrect or defective when the error was pointed out to them quickly.

The Chairman enquired about the future of the master negatives. It was understood that the working negatives would be stored at the British Library and the master negatives at the National Library of Wales, where there was a purpose-built store in which master microfilms from various institutions were housed under excellent environmental conditions. It was agreed that at the next meeting of the Working Party there would be an opportunity to tour the Library to see this storage area.

4. Any other business

4.1 Newsplan Survey of newspaper use

It was a condition of HLF funding that there should be surveys of newspaper use before and after Newsplan microfilm had been distributed. The first survey had been carried out successfully by members of the Working Party during the Spring of 2002 and the findings had been distributed in April 2002. It was now necessary to carry out the second survey. The British Library had produced a standardised survey form which was available on the BL web site www.bl.uk/concord. It was agreed that Iwan Jones would produce a bilingual form and distribute copies to all 22 Welsh library authorities (and other libraries) in January 2004. The survey could be carried out for as short a period as a week, or for longer, but it was important to state the period of the survey and to complete the work by the end of March 2004. Gillian Fraser asked whether it would be possible to receive publicity material such as posters (possibly with space to add in newly available newspaper titles) to draw attention to the survey and Iwan Jones agreed to make enquiries. Members agreed that there had been more use of newspapers since the Newsplan microfilm had become available, and it was hoped that the survey findings would reflect this increased interest.

4.2 Newsplan web sites

The main Newsplan web sites were the Project site www.newsplan2000.org, and the British Library site www.bl.uk/concord or www.bl.uk/concord/linc/newsplan.html. There were also a number of sites for the various Newsplan regions, often allowing access to the Newsplan Report for that region. The LASER (London and South East Region) Report had recently been made available on a new web site www.newsplan.co.uk which had a number of useful links as well as efficient searching of the LASER Report itself, the largest report of all the Newsplan regions. The National Library of Wales had agreed to take steps to see if a Newsplan (Wales) web site could be created and further details would be provided at the next meeting.

4.3 Newspapers on the web

Details were given of projects to put newspapers on the web, including www.movinghere.org.uk and www.collectbritain.co.uk. The British Library was planning major projects to digitise newspaper collections including British Newspapers 1800-1900, funded by a JISC grant, and the eighteenth-century Berney Collection, funded by the American National Science Foundation and others. The hope was expressed that these would be freely available for public use and not subject to subscription. One Welsh newspaper, *Y Brython* (1858-1863), had been digitised and was available on the National Library web site (under *digital mirror – treasures*)

5. Date and place of next meeting

11.00am on Thursday 29 April 2004, at the National Library of Wales.