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Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Evaluation of the Casgliad y Werin Cymru /

People's Collection Wales Digital Heritage Programme

Impact Report Annex 3: User Case Studies



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Casgliad y Werin Cymru

People's Collection Wales

Case Study

David Swidenbank is retired and enjoys pursuing his strong interests in both photography and history. In 2009, David was made redundant and decided to attend university to study photography. He now engages in some freelance work. In addition, David also volunteers as Vice Chair of Porthcawl Museum and has been involved with the museum for 3 years.

David first heard about the People's Collection Wales website through his Aunt (a local historian), making direct contact in 2014 after visiting a stand People's Collection Wales were running at a local event.

Due to his dual-interest in both history and photography David considered People's Collection Wales "a perfect match".

David has had varied involvement with People's Collection Wales, taking part in accredited training delivered by the programme, and uploading materials on to the site. For example, David has been involved (alongside co-authors) with a number of 'then and now' publications on areas within Wales, including Bridgend, Pontypridd, Rhondda. These publications have combined David's own new photos and older images, which David has then shared on the People's Collection Wales website.

A Digital Heritage Station has also been set up in Porthcawl Museum allowing local people to upload their own materials to the People's Collection Wales website. David indicates that the museum receives frequent requests from individuals needing specific information about the local area.

Through awareness and experience of accessing and uploading to the site, David has been able to promote People's Collection Wales as an "excellent resource". David has helped others to use the website to search for and upload materials, as well as sharing the museum's own collections.

At a personal level, David feels that involvement with People's Collection Wales has encouraged him to look for additional options for sourcing / creating photographs which he feels he would not have otherwise considered. For example, David sometimes speaks with members of Facebook local history and community pages to ask if he can share images on the People's Collection Wales website. He has also had the opportunity to meet people from the USA who have been involved with the 'Digital Heritage Station' in Pennsylvania, as well as the First Minister who visited the Museum to see the People's Collection Wales plaque.

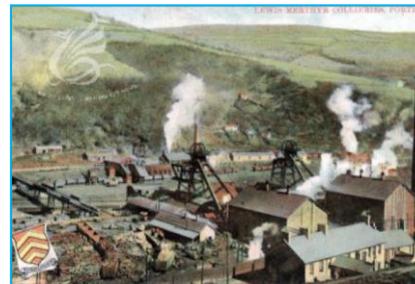


Image from the books: Postcard Lewis Merthyr Colliery & Tobacco poster

David is enjoying his experience of interacting with People's Collection Wales. Without the programme, David feels that the Porthcawl Museum "wouldn't be able to display as much of the back catalogue" or unseen collections. He has experienced a positive response from other users when resources are uploaded to People's Collection Wales, receiving comments and interest in the pictures. David would like to see People's Collection Wales reach a lot more people so that it becomes "the norm not the exception". He feels that it is important that these resources "reach people" enabling them to discover more about "the hidden local history".

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Yvonne is 52 years old, from Carmarthenshire and currently studies medieval history at the University of Wales Trinity St. David in Lampeter. Her ambition is to work within the Museums, Libraries and Archives sector and alongside her studies is involved with Hanes Llambed, a local history society in Lampeter and volunteers with the society's museum based on the Lampeter campus. Yvonne was pleased to find out about the website and considers it a useful resource both for her studies and personal interest. Yvonne notes that her fellow students are often passing on and sharing resources from People's Collection Wales as it is a good resource for evidence for assignments.

"It has broadened my horizons in a way. When I finish my studies I know I'll be able to explore People's Collection Wales for my own pleasure and continue to use it."

Yvonne also took part in a digitisation training day with Hazel from the People's Collection Wales team. Yvonne felt it was really useful for her role at the museum, as well as a great way to meet people. The museum has since installed a Digital Heritage Station and hosts open days where the public can visit and find out more about the Digital Heritage Station and/or digitise their items and upload them to the People's Collection Wales website. Yvonne notes that digitising and uploading requires an investment of time, space, and people and has been involved in helping to facilitate public engagement. Yvonne has helped people to digitise local postcards, photographs of Edwardian ladies on bicycles, and has also digitised some of the museum's archive.

Yvonne notes that members who bring materials along are not always computer literate and she has consequently helped others to set up their own People's Collection accounts, as well as establishing and running a Facebook page on the museum's behalf. Yvonne feels that her experience of supporting others has *"definitely increased my skills and knowledge"* as well as improving her communication skills through passing information on to a wide range of people who get involved, from students to older people. Yvonne describes that helping others has made her more aware of and confident in her own skills: *"sharing the knowledge you've got makes you realise exactly how much you do know"*.

Yvonne describes that involvement with the programme has *"been really good and should also allow me to get an extra qualification this summer. It has opened my eyes to other things are available. I saw a job advert for a Digitisation Assistant and thought 'I can do that'. I wouldn't have thought that before. If you'd said 5 years ago that now I'd be responsible for all of this I wouldn't have believed you."*

Yvonne feels that the skills developed have helped to increase her employability, as she is able to demonstrate on her CV that she is capable in technology and digitisation, metadata and the legality and copyright involved in sharing materials.

Yvonne mentions that since some older people don't want to engage online, the Digital Heritage Station provides *"a way for them to share their stories with the world"*. Yvonne feels this also offers a way to preserve other people's documents without having to store them, as space is restricted within the museum. Yvonne adds that digitising makes resources available and visible to people in the longer-term which would otherwise *"be thrown away"* or kept behind the scenes.

Yvonne values the People's Collection programme as she feels it is *"preserving items that would otherwise be lost and raising the profile of Wales"*. She appreciates that items can be shared with people all over the world and that the site can encourage a different perspective, *"showing people there is more to Wales than castles"*. Grateful for the opportunity to have taken part and the enjoyment involvement has brought her, Yvonne hopes the People's Collection Wales programme keeps on *"going and growing"*.



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People's Collection Wales

Case Study

Based in Cardiff, Cathryn Evans first heard of People's Collection Wales in 2013 through one of the National Museum Wales team. Cathryn began using the website in her previous role as a researcher for a TV company and describes how the photographs online were useful when searching for information for programmes. As she also has a personal interest in heritage, Cathryn went on to create her own profile on the website and began to upload images.

Cathryn has also used People's Collection Wales in her current role with Boys' and Girls' Clubs Wales, an organisation with 170 member clubs across Wales. Since its formation in the 1920s, a large number of photos, documents and objects have been collected which showcase the organisation's history. Cathryn feels it can be challenging to know how best to safeguard or share these items. A number of photos were previously damaged by flooding while other items were given to an archive. Cathryn notes they can then be "*difficult to recover*" and recently began uploading some of the Clubs' materials on to the People's Collection Wales site to share them with a wider audience.

When Cathryn shared images and materials from the Boys' and Girls' Clubs of Wales on the People's Collection Wales site she found that many people who saw the images online were keen to learn more, often getting in touch or even visiting the organisation. Cathryn believes that sharing the images through People's Collection Wales has led to increased online engagement with thousands of views. Cathryn would like to know more about who is sharing the images and why, for example, do they have more information about the picture or the people in it? Involvement with the programme has also helped the organisation to understand more about copyright law and the ways in which their items can be shared safely.

Cathryn also enjoys the opportunity to share her own photos with others and to discover the contributions of other users. She feels the images shared are "*of value and interest to wider communities*". Cathryn describes how it is a "*confidence boost*" when people engage with and enjoy the materials she shares online. Cathryn was particularly pleased to have one of her Tweets and images appear on the People's Collection Wales website.

"I use People's Collection Wales very often for work to upload and Tweet images."

Due to family history with the Olympic Games, Cathryn particularly enjoyed browsing resources related to the *Following the Flame* project (which celebrated historic Welsh sportspeople) via the images and oral histories shared on the People's Collection Wales website. Through getting involved Cathryn was also able to attend the final *Following the Flame* event at the National Museum Wales and benefitted from networking opportunities (for example, through an event at the Firing Line Museum) as well as increased professional contacts.

Cathryn feels that without People's Collection Wales it would be quite difficult to find similar images online, or that you would need to visit libraries or archives in order to see them. The website makes it easier and more accessible to find resources "*without leaving your house*", whether for research, education or enjoyment. Cathryn often directs students she works with to the website as she feels they not only enjoy it but also benefit from the skills People's Collection Wales provides which are "*good for young people*" to have, including for wider online activity e.g. social media.

People's Collection Wales is important to "keep the heritage of Wales alive".

In the future the organisation hopes to make use of People's Collection Wales digitisation training to further support young people. Recently awarded project funding by Heritage Lottery Fund, the organisation will use People's Collection Wales to share the resulting materials with a wider audience.

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People's Collection Wales

Case Study

Peter Davies is 74 and currently lives in Newport. As a keen genealogist and member of a number of history societies, Peter enjoys researching his extended family history in Wales. Peter finds the People's Collection Wales website a useful tool to discover and share information relating to his ancestors and their lives.

Peter hopes that by sharing photos and documents online and making a “contribution to history” he will encourage others to do the same. He also hopes that others may contact him to make connections with the information or stories he shares.

As a former Newport city Councillor, Peter is interested in the Political landscape of Wales both now and in the time of his ancestors. Family history is another area Peter is keen to explore further. For example, Peter's uncle, J. H. Davies was also Principal of Aberystwyth University until his death in 1926, when he left his Manuscripts (known as the Cwrt Mawr Collection) to the National Library.

During his research, People's Collection Wales has been useful for Peter to find additional information on “*Welsh historical characters and how they interconnect*”. Peter indicates that the website has been useful to “*verify*” information he has brought together, working well alongside physical records and complementing information from other sources. Peter feels that People's Collection Wales provides a trustworthy source of information.

Peter has found the website interesting, and feels it is valuable to upload resources on to the website “*as it will be somewhere it can remain*”. He indicates that not all of his family members share his interest in family history so keenly, so it is important to Peter to preserve the stories he unearths through uploading them to the People's Collection Wales platform.

Screenshot from the People's Collection 'Search' feature

