

ANW progress report to Project Board for 14/11/03

Introduction

Monthly progress reports have been circulated to the Project Management Group and are posted on the ANW website: (<http://www.archivesnetworkwales.info/anw002.shtml>). This report reviews progress overall over the last four months. Since the last Project Board meeting on 27th June, the Project Management Group has met twice, on 21/7/03 and 22/9/03; the next meeting is on 16/12/03.

Staff

Following advertising of the post and interviews, Hayden Burns has been appointed to the Cardiff-based post, starting on 1st October 2003 for two years. Hayden has received induction and training and has started creating records for the Glamorgan Record Office.

The secondment arrangement to cover the PO4 post in Aberystwyth (Richard Burman part-time; David Moore, part-time secondment) was intended to run for 12 months and would then be reviewed. In the event, Richard indicated his willingness to take up the post full-time, and in order to release David for NLW work, this change was brought forward to 1st October.

Work programme

The project timetable requires work on the collections of each repository to take place within a specified time-frame. This involves the ANW team in terms of work output, but also requires the partners to ensure that the necessary fonds lists and catalogues are available. These arrangements have worked smoothly to date, and the team has completed record creation for the National Library of Wales, Anglesey County Records Office, Carmarthenshire Archives Service and Conwy Archives Service, and is currently working on Ceredigion Archives material.

In creating the records, the number of fonds created is turning out slightly higher than the bid target, because the team has chosen to produce fonds descriptions for some individual bodies rather than a record type (for example, for each Poor Law Union rather than a repository's Poor Law Unions as a whole). This makes the descriptions more useful and more easily indexed without adding significantly to the workload.

The period between creating the records and making them live is currently 3 months or so, because of the time taken to check and amend the records. Records are made live in batches as they are completed rather than saved up for a 'big bang'.

Software and system development

The system is operating well. The public pages and most of the admin pages have been created, although some do not show all the fields in the data structure. Further changes are planned to assist record creation and checking, including the provision of a full suite of Welsh-language admin pages.

Interoperability and standards

The NCA Interoperability Working Group has produced a Protocol document to ensure that current and future archival resources share as much common ground as possible. ANW has been involved in the drafting of the Protocol; ANW conforms to the standards cited. It is likely to be issued by NCA in the next few weeks.

One element of the Protocol is the requirement for a resource to hold a target dataset in EAD format ready for searching by other portals. ANW fields are currently being mapped to EAD to allow this. When this mapping is complete and the ANW < > EAD exchange has been tested, there will be a meeting with the ANW partners with data on the Archives Hub to agree a transfer process and automated completion of locally-mandatory fields for ANW. It is hoped that EAC will allow a similar approach to data transfer for authority records.

Outreach, publicity and usage

The launch event and leaflet distribution have been completed, and along with articles in *CURLnews* and *Y Ddolen* and email announcements, the profile of ANW within the archives community is probably quite well established. Outreach to the broader area of potential/irregular users of archives has started, through a programme of talks and presentations, and the inclusion of links to ANW from other related websites.

One measure of the effectiveness of this is in the web usage data, which continues to grow (currently running at 1,000 page hits per day, representing perhaps 100 searches). As more content goes live, usage should increase since it will be of more use as a general research tool as well as an index to the collections.

Training and liaison

The ANW description guidelines have been circulated and mounted on the website. Part of the project is the provision of training in editing and creating records for repository staff. Initially this was intended to be delivered on-site to each partner, but it may be more effective to hold a series of training days at locations throughout Wales, each accommodating 10-15 people. The content of the training is under consideration; the issues of authority records and subject indexing may require more detailed coverage than the main fonds record form, which is well documented and more familiar to staff.

Following an approach by the South Wales Borderers Museum, discussions are under way about mounting fonds-level descriptions covering their holdings on the ANW site alongside those of the partners.

Budget and finance

The project is running on budget. Three draw-down applications have been made.

Martin Locock 7/11/03