

Artists Interviews



[Picture: MA Archives and Record Management Students, Aberystwyth University]

This is the final blog post from our group of Aberystwyth University MA students studying Archives and Record Management who have been working alongside the National Library of Wales as part of the *Unlocking Our Sound Heritage* project to catalogue recordings from the Heritage and Cultural Exchange archive in Butetown, Cardiff.

The most recent recording I catalogued was a talk by a local artist Jack Sullivan (1925-2002) who worked as a police officer in the Tiger Bay area from 1948 to 1955, as a British Transport Policeman.

Jack walked the beat, often at night, patrolling Cardiff docklands. As he strolled through the city streets, he made some 800 sketches of the people and places he saw.

The tape consists of Jack Sullivan describing his painting from his time in Kenya where he worked as a police officer. The paintings focus mainly on tribal women in traditional dress and jewellery. Jack Sullivan provides several stories of his experiences of policing in Kenya and stories around the paintings including several bloody tales of tribal warfare, cattle raiders and even tales of peoples' belief in witchcraft. Listening to the recording makes you envious of the exciting life he has led and the people and places he has seen (a feeling that was heightened given the current restriction we are living under!). This is a feeling I have experienced listening to a lot of the recordings and has led me to the conclusion that everyone has a story to tell.

Reflecting on the other series of recordings we have catalogued one thing I was struck by was the timing of these interviews. To me the recordings, especially the 1987 interviews tell a story which is common to many places in the UK in the twentieth century: the move from an industrial society to a post-industrial society. The people interviewed experienced the docks in its 'heyday' when Coal from the Valleys made it one of the busiest docks in the world and have witnessed its decline and, at the time of the interviews, the redevelopment of the docks. This is a story that is mirrored across the UK in the twentieth century, the move from an industrial to post-industrial society and a similar story would emerge around the Liverpool and London dock both of which have undergone huge redevelopment and regeneration projects in the latter half of the twentieth century.

Also hugely significant is that these recordings are an invaluable resource when it comes to studying race relations in Britain in the twentieth century. A topic which is hugely relevant in the kind of debates we are having as a country; these tapes tell the story of the experiences of one of Britain's earliest multi-ethnic communities and are therefore a great resource as we move towards an ever more diverse society.

This project took place with the pandemic as a backdrop which has posed many challenges, most of them logistical. However, the digital nature of the material we catalogued made it well-suited in a pandemic when our group was split from the Isle of Man to Kent and had to work largely remotely. For the first part of the project, we conducted our meeting on Microsoft Teams which was not ideal but on reflection 10 to 15 years ago such technology wouldn't have been sophisticated enough to allow us to proceed. Once we had all returned to Aberystwyth and could meet in person, we found that the meeting ran much more efficiently, not to mention more enjoyably.

From a personal standpoint this project has been a very useful learning experience. I had fairly limited practical experience of cataloguing before. I had some cataloguing experience from previous work experience, but I was unfamiliar with concepts such as standardization and interoperability (the ability of computer systems or software to exchange and make use of information) before starting my course. It is, of course, very important for metadata to be precise and consistent and I feel that you can learn a lot from the process of creating it and having your peers check your work. The ongoing process of review was very beneficial as it turned what could be a solitary exercise into a collaborative learning experience. I also feel that I have learnt more about the most sensitive aspects of cataloguing. Having to listen to each recording whilst considering how the release of any information could affect identifiable data subjects brought home to me the responsibility of the role. Overall, I feel that the project has left me better placed to search for work in the sector and has given me positive practical experience to talk about in any job interviews.

Finally, as this is our last blog post, I would like to take this opportunity to thank The National Library of Wales for giving us the opportunity to be involved in this project and for providing us with ongoing support and feedback.

Michael Holland, MA Archives and Record Management Student, Aberystwyth University

Cyfweliadau Artistiaid



[Llun: Myfyrwyr MA Archifau a Rheoli Cofnodion, Prifysgol Aberystwyth]

Dyma'r blog olaf gan ein grŵp o fyfyrwyr MA Prifysgol Aberystwyth sy'n astudio Archifau a Rheoli Cofnodion sydd wedi bod yn gweithio ochr yn ochr â Llyfrgell Genedlaethol Cymru fel rhan o'r prosiect Datgloi Ein Treftadaeth Sain i gatalogio recordiadau o'r archif Treftadaeth a Chyfnawid Diwylliannol yn Butetown, Caerdydd.

Y recordiad diweddaraf i mi ei gatalogio oedd sgwrs gan arlunydd lleol Jack Sullivan (1925-2002) a weithiodd fel heddwys yn ardal Tiger Bay rhwng 1948 a 1955, fel Plismon Trafnidiaeth Prydain.

Cerddodd Jack yr ardal, yn aml yn y nos, gan batrolio dociau Caerdydd. Wrth iddo gerdded trwy strydoedd y ddinas, gwnaeth ryw 800 o frasluniau o'r bobl a'r lleoedd a welodd.

Mae'r tâp yn cynnwys Jack Sullivan yn disgrifio'r darluniau o'i gyfnod yn Kenya lle bu'n gweithio fel heddwes. Mae'r paentiadau'n canolbwyntio'n bennaf ar ferched llwythol mewn gwisg a gemwaith traddodiadol. Mae Jack Sullivan yn darparu sawl stori am ei brofiadau o blismona yn Kenya a straeon o amgylch y paentiadau gan gynnwys sawl stori waedlyd am ryfela, ysbeilwyr gwartheg a hyd yn oed straeon am gred pobl mewn dewiniaeth. Mae gwranddo ar y recordiad yn eich gwneud chi'n genfigennus o'r bywyd cyffrous y mae wedi'i brofi a'r bobl a'r lleoedd y mae wedi'u gweld (teimlad a gafodd ei ddwysáu o ystyried y cyfyngiad presennol rydyn ni'n byw ynddo!). Dyma deimlad rydw i wedi'i brofi yn gwranddo ar lawer o'r recordiadau ac sydd wedi fy arwain i'r casgliad bod gan bawb stori i'w hadrodd.

Gan adlewyrchu ar y gyfres arall o recordiadau rydym wedi catalogio, un peth a'm tarodd oedd amseriad y cyfweiliadau hyn. I mi mae'r recordiadau, yn enwedig cyfweiliadau 1987, yn adrodd stori sy'n gyffredin i lawer o leoedd yn y DU yn yr ugeinfed ganrif: y symud o gymdeithas ddiwydiannol i gymdeithas ôl-ddiwydiannol. Profodd y bobl a gafodd eu cyfweld y dociau yn eu hanterth pan wnaeth Glo o'r Cymoedd ei wneud yn un o'r dociau prysuraf yn y byd, yna gweld ei ddirywiad, ac ar adeg y cyfweiliadau, ailddatblygiad y dociau. Mae hon yn stori sy'n cael ei hadlewyrchu ledled y DU yn yr ugeinfed ganrif, y symudiad o gymdeithas ddiwydiannol i gymdeithas ôl-ddiwydiannol a byddai stori debyg yn dod i'r amlwg o amgylch dociau Lerpwl a Llundain, lle mae'r ddwy ardal wedi gweld prosiectau ailddatblygu ac adfywio enfawr yn ystod hanner olaf yr ugeinfed ganrif.

Yn hynod arwyddocaol hefyd yw'r ffaith fod y recordiadau hyn yn adnodd amhrisiadwy o ran astudio cysylltiadau hiliol ym Mhrydain yn yr ugeinfed ganrif. Fel pwnc sy'n hynod berthnasol yn y math o ddadleuon rydyn ni'n eu cael fel gwlad; mae'r tapiau hyn yn adrodd hanes profiadau un o gymunedau aml-ethnig cynharaf Prydain ac felly maent yn adnodd gwych wrth inni symud tuag at gymdeithas fwyfwy amrywiol.

Digwyddodd y prosiect hwn gyda'r pandemig fel cefndir sydd wedi peri sawl her, y mwyafrif ohonynt yn logistaidd. Fodd bynnag, roedd natur ddigidol y deunydd a gatalogiwyd gennym yn ei wneud yn addas iawn mewn pandemig pan rannwyd ein grŵp o Ynys Manaw i Gaint a'n gorfodi i weithio o bell i raddau helaeth. Ar gyfer rhan gyntaf y prosiect, gwnaethom gynnal ein cyfarfod ar Dimau Microsoft, nad oedd yn ddelfrydol, ond wrth edrych nôl 10 i 15 mlynedd ni fyddai technoleg o'r fath wedi bod yn ddigon soffistigedig i ganiatáu inni symud ymlaen. Ar ôl i ni gyd ddychwelyd i Aberystwyth a gallu cwrdd yn bersonol, gwelsom fod y cyfarfod yn rhedeg yn llawer mwy effeithlon, ac yn fwy pleserus.

O safbwynt personol, mae'r prosiect hwn wedi bod yn brofiad dysgu defnyddiol iawn. Profiad ymarferol eithaf cyfyngedig o gatalogio oedd gen i cyn hyn. Cefais beth profiad catalogio trwy brofiad gwaith blaenorol, ond roeddwn yn anghyfarwydd â chysyniadau fel safoni a rhyngweithredu (gallu systemau cyfrifiadurol neu feddalwedd i gyfnewid a defnyddio gwybodaeth) cyn dechrau fy nghwrs. Mae'n bwysig iawn, wrth gwrs, i fetadata fod yn fanwl, cywir ac yn gyson, a theimlaff y gallwch ddysgu llawer o'r broses o'i greu a chael eich cyfoedion i wirio'ch gwaith. Roedd y broses barhaus o adolygu yn fuddiol iawn gan ei bod yn troi'r hyn a allai fod yn ymarfer unigol yn brofiad dysgu cydweithredol. Teimlaff hefyd fy mod wedi dysgu mwy am agweddau mwyaf sensitif catalogio. Roedd gorfod gwranddo ar bob recordiad wrth ystyried sut y gallai rhyddhau unrhyw wybodaeth effeithio ar bynciau data adnabyddadwy yn dod â chyfrifoldeb y rôl adref i mi. Ar y cyfan, rwy'n teimlo bod y prosiect wedi fy ngadael mewn gwell sefyllfa i chwilio am waith yn y sector ac wedi rhoi profiad ymarferol cadarnhaol i mi siarad amdano mewn unrhyw gyfweiliadau swydd.

Yn olaf, gan mai hwn yw ein blog olaf, hoffwn achub ar y cyfle hwn i ddiolch i Lyfrgell Genedlaethol Cymru am roi'r cyfle inni fod yn rhan o'r prosiect hwn ac am ddarparu cefnogaeth ac adborth parhaus inni.

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