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William Davies Papers

William Davies was born in Ebbw Vale in 1906, the son of George Davies, a miner's agent and councillor. He attended the Ebbw Vale and Tredegar Intermediate schools and worked at Oakdale colliery for ten years, qualifying as a mining electrical and mechanical engineer. Although still a young man, William Davies was already well equipped to write the essay on lighting in mines which won him a National Eisteddfod prize in 1932. This paid particular attention to nystagmus, a dreadful eye disease which was common among miners. Four years later another work on lighting in the mines won him the Lord Merthyr prize of the South Wales Institute of Engineers.

In 1934 William Davies was appointed electrical engineer to the Tredegar Urban District Council. The appointment came at a time when electricity provision in the area was in its infancy. In the following year the scheme to bring electricity to Tredegar was all but complete thanks to William Davies's endeavours. Tredegarites were to have further occasion to be grateful to their electrical engineer during the period of the Second World War. William Davies it was who organised each of the town's 'stay at home' holiday weeks; he ran a week's effort for the Merchant Navy Fund and orchestrated Tredegar's celebrations during the Victory Weeks (the town being considered the best illuminated in South Wales). He was also responsible for arranging the dedication service of the casket of earth from Tredegar Hill, Burma. At the close of the war he co-produced a war-time history of Tredegar.

The stringencies of war clearly influenced the young engineer's ideas on energy conservation. In 1944 William Davies published a visionary, if polemical, memorandum on the Severn Barrage which was widely discussed in local government circles. The memorandum argued the necessity of conserving coal supplies to which end the Barrage could generate as much as one tenth of Britain's electricity requirements.

During the 1950s William Davies's involvement in local politics led him to serve for several years as a member for Bedwellty Urban District Council. His political acumen was evidently widely appreciated for in 1958 he was offered a nomination to the safe Labour Parliamentary seat in Wells, Somerset. In the end he rejected this opportunity to enter national politics preferring instead to devote his energies to advancing the theory and practice of management. His many published articles and addresses have given ample expression to his enlightened views on the subject.

William Davies retired in 1971 after 37 years service in the electricity industry. He has enjoyed nothing if not an extremely active retirement, the papers relating to the more recent chapters of his life revealing a continuation of his tireless commitment to local, national and even international affairs.

From the early 1930s until the mid 1970s William Davies adopted the practice of 'filing' many of his papers into diaries, sometimes loosely enclosed, occasionally pasted in. The resultant 'scrapbooks' contain, therefore, a rich diversity of personal, professional and ephemeral papers which often overlap with those described elsewhere in the schedule.

Tredegar Urban District Council

D3132. 1 Papers concerning electricity supply within Tredegar Urban District 1936-43

including reports to Council by William Davies, electrical engineer, accounts, correspondence and newspaper cuttings

[1 bundle]

D3132. 2 Papers concerning District Council elections 1938 and 1946

including notice by D. J. Jermine to Tredegar electors re the 'extravagances' of councillors, with related papers 1937; election notices of Charlie Davies, Tredegar West Ward, 1946; Tredegar U.D.C. Labour Group election notice 1946

[1 bundle]

The Second World War

D3132. 3 Papers re the Home Guard and Civil Defence 1939-1946: including papers re battalion dinner in honour of Lt. Col. Ben. Jones Jan. 1942; letter of appointment of Wm. Davies, 6th Monmouthshire Battalion transport officer, as welfare officer Oct. 1940; A.R.P. circulars re lighting restrictions and wardens' posts; letters to Capt. Davies expressing sympathy and regret at his relinquishment through ill-health of his commission to West Mon. Sector of the Mon. Home Guard Oct. 1942; Capt. Wm Davies's certificate of Receipt for a civilian vehicle June 1941 with driving licences 1935-41; photograph of Home Guard platoon, E company (? Tredegar) with LDV armband.

D3132. 4 Home Guard and Civil Defence printed material 1942-46: A.R.P. handbook re organisation and services in the Urban districts of Ebbw Vale, Tredegar and Rhymney n.d.; extracts from army training memorandum no 43 (for Home Guard officers) 1942; The 6th Battalion Monmouthshire Home Guard 1939-1944 (Cardiff); Tredegar's part in the World War 1939-1945 (Cardiff 1945); Tredegar Ambulance Cadet Division: illustrated review 1946; Hilde Marchant The Home Front (n.d. c.1940); Kirkland Bridge, Start something for the Merchant Navy (1943); The Log (July 1942) [R.A.F. journal]; book of cartoons [cover wanting] extracted from the South Wales Echo & Express (1939); newspaper cuttings.

D3132. 5 Miscellaneous papers 1941-45

including Tredegar War Services Aid Committee circular July 1941 and programme re concert at

workmen's hall, March 1941; Tredegar Communist Party propaganda leaflets 1942; Tredegar Stay at Home Holiday Week programme (n.d. ?1942); miscellaneous dinner menus and service programmes 1941 - 45

- D3132. 6 Testimonial presented to William Davies esq., electrical engineer manager and honorary organiser to the Tredegar Urban District Council (for his 'unfailing energies' in aid of the T.U.D.C's various war and other efforts with related newspapers, presentation high tea menus, April 1948. Also Victory Day Celebrations programmes and photographs 1945-48 with Picture Post special VE issue, May 1945

Bedwelty Urban District Council - Coronation Celebrations 1953

- D3132. 7 'The Pageant of Bedwelty' script of a(?musical) drama presented to William Davies (Hon. Organiser) by the Bedwelty U.D.C. 1953.

At front: photographs (? of pageant committee members)

- D3132. 8 A second copy of the above presented to the Bishop of Monmouth

- D3132. 9 J. Stanley Jones (ed.) The book of Bedwelty (first [coronation] edition, 1953) (a published version of the Pageant of Bedwelty)

- D3132.10 Letter to William Davies from Aled Vaughan, programme assistant at the B.B.C. re coverage of the pageant of Bedwelty and other Coronation events in the area May 1953

with two programmes for the pageant

- D3132.11 Miscellaneous programmes and newspapers relating to the Coronation celebrations within the Bedwelty Urban District May 1953

Also Hon. Organiser's celebrations rosette

The South Wales and Monmouthshire Bulk Supply Association 1939- 42

- D3132.12 typescript of William Davies's acceptance speech on the occasion of his election to the chair of the SWMBSA n.d. c. 1940

with newspaper cuttings re WD's chairmanship and vice-chairmanship 1939-41

D3132.13 Letter from William Davies, electricity dept., Bedwellty House, Tredegar to Bridgend U.D.C. re the (?disputed) cost of supplying its area with electricity under section 12 of the 1926 Electricity Act, March 1941

With related newspaper cuttings

D3132.14 Letter from the general manager of the South Wales Electric Power Co. to William Davies on the occasion of the latter's resignation as treasurer of the SWMBSA May 1942

with related correspondence

Scrapbooks/Diaries

D3132.15 diary 1933

entries concerning home life and work includes both domestic and political entries

D3132.16 diary/scrapbook 1936-1941

includes diary entries re work and home life; newspaper cuttings mainly re work Tred. U.D.C. programmes for concerts and services and letter to capt. W. Davies re breaches of night-time security regulations at Aberbargoed

D3132.17 Scrapbook of newspaper cuttings 1943

includes Tredegar U.D.C. stay-at-home holidays and other local war-time events; South Wales industrial and economic affairs.

With statement of receipts and payments re O.A.P.'s Association rugby football match at Tredegar Recreation Ground, Easter Monday 1943

D3132.18 Scrapbook 1944

includes newspaper cuttings re local war-time activities; two personal letters from staff sergeant John Pugh, India Command; programmes for concerts and services; memorandum on the Severn Barrage by Wm. Davies and E.W. Jones (South Wales and Mon. Bulk supply Association, 1944)

D3132.19 Scrapbook 1945

including newspaper cuttings re Severn Barrage scheme; photographs of Tredegar town clock (victory celebrations) Eisteddfod programme and miscellaneous letters; papers re John Stockton testimonial; Labour Party membership card of William Davies.

- D3132.20 Scrapbook 1946
including newspaper cuttings re victory celebrations and Bedwellty Pits Lighting dispute
- D3132.21 Scrapbook 1947
including Tredegar West Ward Labour Party statement of income and expenditure and related accounts with WD's L.P. membership card; Report on Victory Celebrations (?to Tred. U.D.C.) with newspaper cuttings; Newspaper cuttings re isolation of Tredegar owing to snow and a feature on Tredegar's 'smallest house'
- D3132.22 Scrapbook 1948
mainly programmes of events and newspaper cuttings re Tredegar U.D.C. Service of Dedication and Roll of Honour
- D3132.23 Scrapbook 1949-1953
including text of address by Peter Scott on the industrial development of Mon. given at the inaugural meeting of the North West Mon. Industrial Asson. Oct. 1950; newspaper cuttings mainly re Coronation festivities
- D3132.24 Scrapbook 1954
mainly papers re annual prize distribution at Pontllanfraith schools
- D3132.25 Scrapbook 1955-1958
including letters and newspaper cuttings re Wm. Davies's appointment as district manager in the Port Talbot area of the Electricity Board, 1958; a newspaper cutting profiling W.D's life and career; programmes, photographs and cuttings re school prize distributions
- D3132.26 Scrapbook 1959-1961
including file on S.W.E.B. staffing structures and schedule of duties, 1959; photographs and cuttings mainly connected with WD's PT. Talbot career.
- D3132.27 Scrapbook 1962
including letters and cuttings re WD's address to Cardiff branch of the British Institute of Management (as incoming chairman); miscellaneous photographs and cuttings re functions and events (? in Port Talbot area)

- D3132.28 Scrapbook 1963
mainly miscellaneous photographs of social events (S.W.E.B. ? Pt. Talbot area)
- D3132.29 Scrapbook 1964
miscellaneous photographs (Pt. Talbot functions)
- D3132.30 Scrapbook 1965
mainly photographs and cuttings re WD's appointment as district manager of S.W.E.B.'s Newport district
- D3132.31 Scrapbook 1966
mainly photographs of civic functions attended
- D3132.32 Scrapbook 1967-1969
including letters and architect's plans re establishment of youth centre at Oaklands Farm, Cwmbrân 1967-69; newspaper cuttings re WD's visits to Africa, 1968; report of one-day seminar of Npt. and district Industrial Mission to which WD gave an address; miscellaneous photographs
- D3132.33 Scrapbook 1970
including correspondence with the Uganda Electricity Board with whom WD declines an offer of a post; various photographs; also used as an appointments/meetings diary
- D3132.34 Scrapbook 1971
including letter to WD on the occasion of his retirement; a detailed letter from Bernard Jinkin, minister, re the Methodist Mission in North Kenya; miscellaneous photographs; also some diary entries
- D3132.35 Scrapbook 1972
including typescript history of the Portland Cement Co. Ltd., Nairobi and other papers re Kenyan affairs; cuttings re WD's retirement and miscellaneous photographs
- D3132.36 Scrapbook 1973
including United Nations Association, Welsh National Council secretary's report; letters and newspaper cuttings re U.N.A. affairs; miscellaneous cuttings and ephemera

- D3132.37 Scrapbook 1974
including U.N.A. correspondence; papers re Llanyrafon & Hope mens fellowship; letters from Lord Raglan re the Gwent Foundation Concert Society; miscellaneous correspondence and newspaper cuttings
- D3132.38 Scrapbook 1975
including minutes of meeting of Npt/Cwmbrân Crime Prevention Panel (WD representing Synod of the Methodist Church) and related papers; Agenda for Gwent Foundation Concert Soc. AGM; invitations to U.N.A. 30th anniversary garden party at 10 Downing St. with programme of reception re same at the Guildhall, London; minutes of meeting of Npt & Gwent Industrial Mission management committee; a paper on 'management and change' given by Dr. Gerald Stockdale, Gwent College of Higher Education.
- D3132.39 Scrapbook 1976
including papers re WD's exchange trip to America; correspondence with the South Wales Miners' Library in Swansea; papers re African mission.

Writings and speeches

- D3132.40 Typescript autobiography - early years down to late 1950s n.d. c. 1980s?

also tape-recording of William Davies recalling his early life in the Ebbw Vale/Tredegar area and commenting on several miners' leaders of the period and their activities (winning entry in Labour Party competition)
- D3132.41 'Improvement of underground lighting with special reference to the coal-face' essay by WD entered, for Royal National Eisteddfod prize at Port Talbot 1932

with adjudication notice and certificate presented to WD (essay took first prize)
- D3132.42 Paper by WD on aspects of underground lighting to be read to the Mining Electrical Engineers' Association, Cardiff, 1934

with related notes, drafts and newspaper cuttings including 'Miners' Nystagmus', a thesis by Gilbert Tritschler n.d. c. 1920s.
- D3132.43 handwritten text of a speech on unemployment (? made by WD) to the 25th Labour Party annual conference n.d. c. 1930s.

- D3132.44 typescript text of speech by WD delivered at the Incorporated Municipal Electrical Association Conference in London on the subject of the control of Gas, Water and Electricity Undertakings by Holding Companies, 1945
- D3132.45 text of a speech by WD on the subject of industrial relations (occasion unknown) n.d. c. 1950s
- D3132.46 text of talk by WD on 'the efficient conduct of an L.A.C.' given to the Local Advisory Committee secretaries course at Horsley Towers, 1963
- D3132.47 draft text of a speech to be delivered by WD on the occasion of Commonwealth Training Week on the subject of youth employment n.d. c. 1970s.

Personal

- D3132.48 Papers re Cambrian Correspondence Electrical School, Porth, Glam. c. 1930s
- including printed lesson notes and WD's essays; also The Bennett College, Sheffield merit certificate in English 1927 and printer's proofs of WD's paper on underground lighting
- Also University of Wales (Bangor Normal College) Exam. certificate (teacher-training) of Florence Mary Tomkins (wife of Wm Davies), 1930
- D3132.49 Association of Mining Electrical Engineers certification of William Davies 1933
- D3132.50 Three letters of recommendation in support of William Davies's applications for (unspecified) posts, signed by Chairmen of Tredegar U.D.C. 1937-1939
- D3132.51 Bookcase plaque presented to William Davies by Tredegar U.D.C. in appreciation of his efforts in obtaining a settlement re Electricity Act 1926 (and 'saving thousands of pounds to the Authority') and to mark his distinguished chairmanship of the South Wales & Mon. Bulk Supply Association, 1941.

- D3132.52 Notices to William Davies of his election to membership of the Royal Society of Arts 1941; also still photographs from the film 'The Last Days of Dolwyn', directed by Emyln William n.d. c. 1940s.
- D3132.53 Correspondence concerning William Davies's nomination to stand as the Parliamentary candidate for the Wells constituency 1957
- D3132.54 Correspondence concerning William Davies's appointment as S.W.E.B. District Manager at Port Talbot, 1958
- D3132.55 British Institute of Management certificates of membership 1959, 1961
- D3132.56 S.W.E.B. Long Service Certificate presented to William Davies in recognition of 25 years continuous service 1959
- D3132.57 Port Talbot Local Advisory Committee Centenary Meeting Presentation to chairman, W.M. Davies 1965
- D3132.58 S.W.E.B. Long Service Certificate to William Davies in recognition of 25 years continuous service 1969
- D3132.59 S.W.E.B. Presentation to William Davies, manager, Newport/East Mon. District on the occasion of his retirement after 37 years service (2 items) 1971

Newspapers

- D3132.60 Box of newspapers, mainly local and most of them covering the period of the Second World War; also a South Wales Argus supplement on the 1935 Newport boundary extension 1930-1953
- D3132.61 Box of newspapers, national and local, including a folder of local press-cuttings c. 1955-1964

Printed Material

- D3132.62 The Newport Pictorial (1906); centenary souvenir of Central Methodist Church, Blackwood, 1934; Depressed Areas Association Brochure for U.D.C.s in north west Mon.

(including Tredegar) 1938; A hundred years of printing 1848-1948 [in Tredegar]; Blackwood carnival week programme 1952 [history of Blackwood at front]; H.M.I. Report on Blackwood County Secondary School 1953; Prospectuses for Pontllanfraith Mining and Technical Inst. 1953-55 (2 items); Bedwellty tenants' handbook 1956

D3132.63

Publications relating to the electricity and related industries including 2 issues of Joint Consultation (journal of the N.J.A.C. 1962-3); 4 issues of Trydan (journal of S.W.E.B. 1965-72); The South Wales Institute of Engineers, Centenary Brochure 1858-1957; off-print of article on Severn Barrage from New Scientist 1975; National Joint Board of Employers and Members of staff for the Electricity Supply Industry, schedules of salaries 1933-35 (2 items); Electrical Power Engineers' Association Rules (revised 1937)

George Davies Papers

D3132.64

Newspaper-cutting re Glamorgan Quarter Sessions appeals against the Rating Assessments of the Merthyr Ironworks n.d. c. 1876

D3132.65

Royal Antediluvian Order of Buffaloes Rules, 1907

D3132.66

Photocopies of newspaper-cuttings and letters re miners strike 1912 and General strike 1926

D3132.67

Diaries 1917 and 1931

D3132.68

Circular from 10, Downing Street (signed by W. Lloyd George) thanking the members of Tribunals for their efforts during the conflict with Germany 1919

D3132.69

Notice of Public Meeting in support of Labour candidates for election in Pontllanfraith Ward of the Mynyddislwyn U.D.C. 1931

D3132.70

Memorandum of Agreement between the Bedwas Navigation Colliery Company (1921) Ltd and the South Wales Miners' Federation, 1936