Guide to The Cambrian Index Online

This guide covers the background to the project, advanced search techniques, how to combine your search with the Welsh Newspaper Online database and other ways of finding copies of articles. If you have any other questions not covered by this guide please email us at cambrian.index@swansea.gov.uk.

An introduction to the Cambrian Newspaper and the Cambrian Index

What is The Cambrian?

On 28 January 1804, the first newspaper to be published in Wales, The Cambrian, rolled off the press at its premises in Wind Street, Swansea. It carried local and national news, advertisements, notices and social discourse for 126 years, its final weekly issue appearing in March 1930 when it merged with other newspapers to become the new Herald of Wales.

What is the Cambrian Indexing Project?

The Cambrian Indexing Project was established at Swansea Central Library with the aim of providing researchers with speedy access to the wealth of information contained within the newspaper's pages. Created thanks to the dedicated work of a team of volunteers, the digitised index, which went online in 2005, has been used by people from all over the world and has been an important finding aid for those researching the history of South Wales, family historians, and students.

The Index now contains around 500,000 entries. These entries relate to people connected with and events occurring in an area roughly represented by the former county of West Glamorgan and its principal centres of population of Swansea, Neath and Port Talbot. This means the Index is not useful for national news, except where it has had local impact. This policy does not apply to the newspaper's reported birth, marriage and death columns which have all been extracted and indexed, regardless of location.

The period covered comprehensively by the Index database currently is from January 1804 (when the newspaper started), to 1881 and new entries are being added constantly. Manual extraction and input of a year's newspaper articles by our skilled volunteers takes a long time, so the years covered will take some time to increase. You may also find some news articles indexed from The Cambrian and other local newspapers for later periods, but these are limited. Birth, marriage and death entries have been comprehensively indexed up to 1914, with some later entries from the 1920s and 1930s.

Articles are indexed by topic and arranged in main groupings of Transport, Ships and Shipping, Disasters and Accidents, Planning and Land Management, Buildings, Agriculture, Industry, Education, Health and Welfare, Religion, Politics, Crime, Culture
and the Arts, Sport and Recreation and Uniformed Forces. You can use a search option to search under these subject headings.

Wind Street, Swansea, where The Cambrian offices were located.

Other newspapers
The overwhelming majority of index entries which have been extracted come from The Cambrian. However, to provide continuity and improve access to other local newspapers, the extraction of birth, marriage and death entries has been systematically continued into The South Wales Daily Post, an important daily newspaper founded in Swansea in 1893 and which took over in popularity from The Cambrian.

The Index also contains several thousand entries appertaining to people and events in the Swansea, Gower, Neath and Port Talbot areas that have been extracted from The Western Mail, now Wales's national newspaper. These entries relate to a number of articles from around the turn of the twentieth century and have been incorporated into the Cambrian Index database as a limited finding aid. Bear in mind some of these entries come from the Swansea edition of The Western Mail so you may not find them in microfilm or online versions of the Western Mail. In which case, please check an alternative Swansea newspaper of the same date e.g. The Cambrian or The South Wales Daily Post (from 1893) and you should find a similar article. The National Library of Wales at Aberystwyth, however, holds all variant editions of The Western Mail, so should be able to supply a copy of the article you require.

How to use the online Cambrian Index
The Cambrian Index database can be searched for any word, most often a personal or place name - find the search here.

It can also be used to identify types of events or reports of occurrences e.g. mining accidents, bankruptcies, meetings of societies, opening of buildings, crime reports etc. Here are some tips on searching:-

- The "Search Text " box requires an entry in every case. Insert here the surname / placename / topic that you require.
In the case of a surname search, you may wish to also enter a first name of the individual, in order to narrow the search results. Bear in mind, however, that both first names and surnames may have several permutations of spelling, quite common in the nineteenth century, and each will need to be searched to be sure of getting the greatest number of accurate hits e.g. Rees / Rhys / Reece as a first name, coupled with the surname Bevan or Beavan! First names may also appear in the Index in an abbreviated form or, indeed, simply as an initial. The following are the most common, but not exclusive, abbreviations:-

Edward - Edw., Elizabeth - Eliz., John - Jno., Thomas - Thos., William - Wm. or Willie

Place names are also inconsistent in their spelling. This reflects the variety of spellings that appear within the newspaper, faithfully copied into the database by Project staff. Examples are:-

Hafod and Havod, (L)langyfelach, (L)langafelach, (L)langyvelach, (L)langavelach and many other permutations, Briton Ferry, Britonferry, Briton-Ferry, Yystradgynlais, Ystradgunlais

In other words, if at first you fail to find an entry, try a different spelling!

- **Exact Phrase** - as it suggests, this will return results precisely as the search is input, including punctuation e.g. Eliz. Jones, Edw. Thomas.

- **All Words** - this can be used where a combination of words will provide the best results e.g. Williams Neath (avoids the proliferation of entries inevitably found for a common name such as Williams and, possibly, useful where a location for a family is known). The words will appear in the same entry, but not necessarily together.

- **Any Words** - using this will identify entries for 2 or more different search words, in separate Index entries unless, co-incidently, the words searched appear in the same entry anyway. This can be used for differing spellings of the same word e.g. various spellings of Llangyfelach.

- **"From Index" box - Subject Headings** - when searching for a particular type of event, particularly where you may wish to see the results in a chronological list, e.g. a list of railway accidents, reports of types of crimes or a list of entries appertaining to horse racing, it is necessary to use the drop-down "From Index" box. The list provides broad subject headings from which to choose. Choose a topic from the list, then insert in the "Search Text" box the type of event. The examples mentioned here will, without limiting the dates, return several hundred entries using the combination of "Disasters and Accidents" with the word "railway", as will a combination of "Sports and Recreation" with the words "horse racing". Inserting dates will obviously influence the number of entries found. Using this search method, it is advisable to use both the singular and plural of the word to be searched e.g. library and libraries, theatre and theatres in the ""Search Text" box.

- **Date range** – Please use the format dd/mm/yyyy - for instance 06/08/1864 will search August 6th 1864, and so on. Comprehensive birth, marriage and death entries (including those extracted from The South Wales Daily Post)
extend from 1804 to 1914. By 2013, the detailed indexing of articles in The Cambrian extended from 1804 to 1881 though there are a number of later entries which should be treated as "bonuses".
As you can see from the example results above, the Index entries provide a brief precis of the original newspaper article, including the most important information, such as name and subject matter. Other headings give the date the article appeared and the newspaper it appeared in. The code listing for the Catalogue Index, e.g. C40, is used for administrative purposes. It corresponds to the Index Description used for organising entries under subjects.

You may find the same article more than once in the Index as it may have been indexed under multiple Index Descriptions.

Some index entries have the newspaper page number on which the article can be found and this may appear at either the beginning or the end of the entry. The page number is not usually included in birth, marriage and death Index entries as these announcements mostly appear on the last page of the newspaper.
Using your results

The digitised version of The Cambrian in Welsh Newspapers Online

The Cambrian has been digitised as part of the National Library of Wales major project Welsh Newspapers Online [welshnewspapers.llgc.org.uk] which is free for anyone to use. This digitised version provides a full online reproduction of the newspaper along with a search facility based on optical character recognition.

The newspaper was digitised from the National Library of Wales’s incomplete collection of The Cambrian and it covers primarily the period 1804-1846, 1870-1910. There are also missing individual issues within the period stated. The Welsh Newspapers Online website also includes the Swansea newspaper the South Wales Daily Post from 1893 - 1910. Some limited entries from this paper also feature in The Cambrian Index Online.

You can use The Cambrian Index to find an entry and then either browse by date or use the search feature to get to the relevant article on Welsh Newspapers Online. There are some important differences to bear in mind between the two resources:

• As the optical character recognition used in the digitisation is not perfect, you may find a search on Welsh Newspapers Online may miss something correctly transcribed by the indexers working on the Cambrian Index Online and vice versa. Test searches comparing results between the two resources have found a number of discrepancies in the search results for Welsh Newspapers Online, compared with results from the Index.
• Remember Subject Headings were also used in creating The Cambrian Index, providing an additional way to search.
• The digitised version in Welsh Newspapers Online covers the text from the entire newspaper, whereas the Cambrian Index Online focuses on articles relating to Swansea and Gower.
• It is also important to remember that the Cambrian Index Online includes the substantial 24 year period from 1847-1869 which is missing from the Welsh Newspapers Online website. Our collection of Cambrian microfilms at Swansea Central Library covers many of the gaps which exist in the digitised Welsh Newspapers Online version. Customers are welcome to consult these films within the Library themselves or we can provide printed or scanned images taken from them, on payment of the relevant fee. [See below for details.]

Microfilm at Swansea Libraries

The original newspapers are available on microfilm at Swansea Central Library and you can create a digital or printed copy from them. Booking of a reader/printer is always advisable by ringing 01792 636464 or by emailing Libraryline@swansea.gov.uk.

Please see the Newspaper factsheet on our website for further information on our newspaper holdings and microfilm.
Other repositories holding *The Cambrian*

It is advisable to contact all repositories in advance for confirmation of access to newspapers or microfilm, opening times, booking of reader/printers, details of charges etc., before visiting.

Files of *The Cambrian, The South Wales Daily Post* and *The Western Mail* are also held at:

The British Library, 96 Euston Road, London, NW1 2DB.


The National Library of Wales at Aberystwyth, Ceredigion, Wales SY23 3BU


Microfilm of *The Cambrian* (to 1893) is also held at the West Glamorgan Archive Service, Civic Centre, Oystermouth Road, Swansea, SA1 3SN, e-mail: west glam.archives@swansea.gov.uk

Neath Reference Library, Victoria Gardens, Neath, SA11 3BA, e-mail: Neath.library@neath-porttalbot.gov.uk

For customers who are unable to visit *Swansea Central Library* or other repositories themselves, Swansea Library staff will carry out limited photocopying orders (up to 20 copies).

Please identify the entries you would like photocopied and e-mail us at cambrian.index@swansea.gov.uk with the details or to request any further information. Please also tell us your full postal address so that we can calculate the correct charge for postage. We will let you know the overall cost and how to proceed. It is worth bearing in mind that a single lengthy newspaper article can generate several copied images. Enquiries will be dealt with in strict chronological order of receipt and we will forward the photocopies by post or by digital scans as required, worldwide.

**How do I pay?**

As a guide, the cost of each image supplied will be £1.00, payable in advance by U.K. - negotiable remittance i.e. sterling cheque or International Money Order drawn in Sterling. Postage is payable on all orders. At present, we cannot accept credit or debit cards or on-line payment. Our minimum charge for supplying images is £5.00. Please enquire further by contacting cambrian.index@swansea.gov.uk.