



Prifysgol Cymru
Y Drindod Dewi Sant
University of Wales
Trinity Saint David

Swansea
College of Art
Founded 1853



www.jazzheritage.wales

REVIEW OF THE YEAR 2021 - ADOLYGIAD O'R FLWYDDYN 2021

We are a registered charity 1068022 founded by **Jen Wilson** in **1986** and run by a Board of Trustees and a team of dedicated volunteers. We are based at University of Wales Trinity St. David, Swansea. Jen was made **Hon. Professor of Practice** in **2017**. We are not just about jazz but the social history, culture and politics surrounding the music. We are the only - and oldest - mixed media jazz heritage resource centre in the UK and have over thirty years' experience of working in the community, with academia and with cultural industries. We have developed and delivered projects that reflect the diverse and inspiring communities within Wales. There is ample opportunity for advanced academic study within our **Special Collections Resources** for aspiring students to acquire BA's, MA's or Ph.D's.

FROM SLAVE SONG TO A BLUE PLAQUE – using our heritage resources

No. 53. *I'm Troubled in Mind.*

[The person who furnished this song (Mrs. Brown of Nashville, formerly a slave), stated that she first heard it from her old father when she was a child. After he had been whipped he always went and sat upon a certain log near his cabin, and with the tears streaming down his cheeks, sang this song with so much pathos that few could listen without weeping from sympathy: and even his cruel oppressors were not wholly unmoved.]

I'm troubled, I'm troubled, I'm troubled in mind, If Jesus don't help me, I sure - ly will die. 1. O Je - sus, my Saviour, on thee I'll depend, When troubles are near me, you'll be my true friend.

2 When laden with trouble and burdened with grief, To Jesus in secret I'll go for relief.
Chorus.—I'm troubled, &c.

3 In dark days of bondage to Jesus I prayed, To help me to bear it, and he gave me his aid.
Chorus.—I'm troubled, &c.



Photo © From the Fisk Jubilee Songbook

Photo © Jubilee Singers, Fisk University, Nashville Tenn.

Researching how African American music came to Wales, Jen discovered that a Swansea teacher and anti-slavery campaigner **Jessie Donaldson (1799-1889)** had emigrated to Cincinnati in 1854 and ran a safe house for fleeing slaves. Her home, was the third of the Welsh safe houses on the banks of the Ohio River across from the slave-holding state of Kentucky. She returned home after the end of the American Civil War in 1866. She was still alive when Swansea welcomed the choir of freed slaves The Fisk Jubilee Singers to perform a programme of Slave Songs at the Swansea Music Hall in 1874.



Jessie Donaldson (1799-1889)

THE BLUE PLAQUE UNVEILING – 25th MARCH 2021- Universal Day of Commemoration of the Victims of Slavery.

The Jubilee Choir returned to perform over many years. Jessie Donaldson died aged nearly 91 in 1889. We celebrated, and commemorated her life and times and music in 2021 by working with the City & County of Swansea, UWTSd and the National Underground Railroad Freedom Center in Cincinnati, to erect a Blue Plaque near the site of her old home in Swansea where the UWTSd Arts, Media and Design building now stands. Many thanks to **Kim Collis, County Archivist**, for co-ordinating the event.



Photo © UWTSd Jazz Heritage Wales / Ify Iwobi Photo © UWTSd Jazz Heritage Wales / City Councillor Yvonne Jardine

Ify Iwobi said: "I am honoured to have been asked to say a few words on this important occasion... I am a musician and composer, and through the work Jessie Donaldson, her family and colleagues achieved from the 1850s, a straight line can be drawn through history's timeline from Jessie's campaigning in America running a safe house for fugitive slaves with all its political dangers, to the Fisk Jubilee Singers' concerts in 1874 and beyond. **Today we can celebrate their music again as we have the African Community Centre in Swansea founded by my mother Uzo Iwobi OBE in 2003.** So Jessie Donaldson's timeline is currently running through my generation and we can now pass the baton on to future generations by remembering Jessie Donaldson with this Blue Plaque".

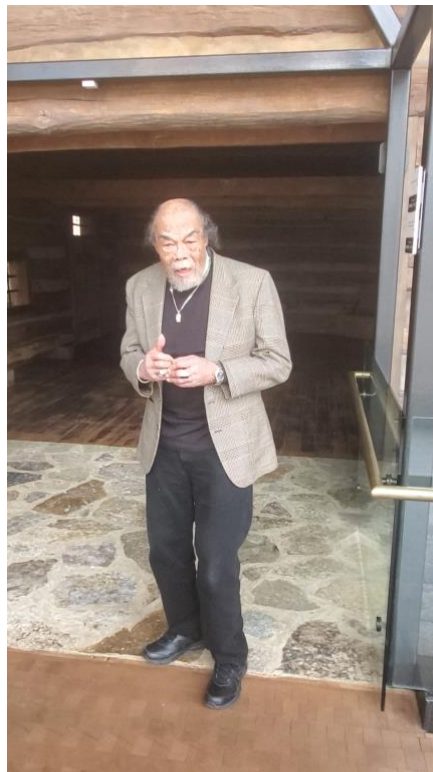
Yvonne Jardine said: "Swansea Council has a blue plaque scheme which can pride itself on its inclusivity and today is yet another occasion where we celebrate the achievements of an outstanding Swansea woman. Furthermore, the plaque is to someone who fought for social justice in the campaign to end slavery in the United States of America. I am delighted to be here today on the unveiling of a Swansea Council Blue Plaque paying tribute to Jessie Donaldson. Her address for much of the time she lived in Swansea was Dynevor Place. The house has gone and the surroundings have changed considerably as a result of the WW2 blitz and subsequent redevelopment. However the location of the plaque is close to where her house stood and the chosen location provides a fitting link to a progressive and forward-looking university which shares equally the pride in our connection across time to her. While Swansea's part in that infamous trade must continue to be researched and uncovered, we are pleased that the city also has heroes who we can celebrate for their part in the campaign to end slavery. **I am proud that in 2010, Swansea became the second City of Sanctuary in the UK, and the first in Wales**".

THE NATIONAL UNDERGROUND RAILROAD FREEDOM CENTER, CINCINNATI, OHIO

We are all indebted to **Carl Westmoreland**, Senior Research Historian at the NURRFC who kindly agreed to collaborate on the Blue Plaque project. He was filmed inside the slave-holding pen which he had found, identified, transported and rebuilt inside the Center. Mr. Westmoreland spoke movingly of how hundreds of slaves were held in similar pens for weeks while waiting to be purchased by slaveowners. **Watch the film at <https://youtu.be/Ohphb09LF8M>**

Carl Westmoreland told us on the film:

This pen was originally from Maysville, Kentucky, one of the last known to exist. A big barn had been built around it which had kept it intact. I was told about it and rescued it and had it rebuilt in the Center. Inside, the male slaves would have been chained together in the upper space, sometimes being in there for months. They had to urinate and defecate on each other, and the women and children who would be on the ground underneath, they weren't chained, except they would have to deal with the filth, they would have had to keep it clean. And then their journey would start to Mississippi.



Carl Westmoreland continued...

In America at that time in the South, there were very few roads. So they would have to walk on old Native American trails, or through the woods, had to deal with snakes and alligators. One out of four Black people here in America has someone in their heritage, in their family line, that was owned by a white family, and they were subjected to that kind of abuse. I talk about it because I want my family and all of us to know what it meant to be seen as less than human.

<https://youtu.be/Ohphb09LF8M>



Photo © UWTSJ Jazz Heritage Wales / L-R Vice-Chancellor Medwin Hughes, Ify Iwobi, Yvonne Jardine, Jen Wilson, City Cabinet Member Robert Francis-Davies, Provost Prof. Ian Walsh, Tracey McNulty Head of City Cultural Services

Gail Allen, Jen Wilson, Deb Checkland

Jen has been an advocate of adult lifelong learning, and her research work embodies the oral history tradition of "rescuing the voiceless." The past is a "living phenomena, one that shapes who we are." Through tracing how African American music came to Wales, the most unexpected of stories are discovered. What other unknown and neglected stories are out there waiting to be uncovered?

WORKING WITH VOLUNTEERS



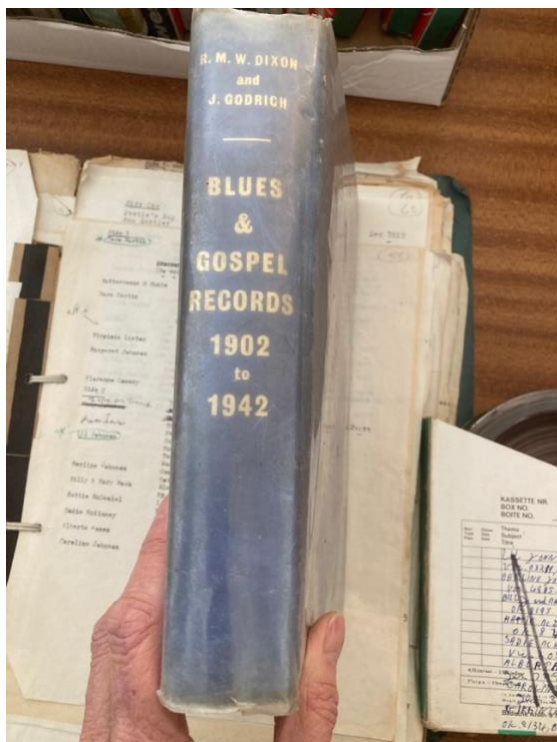
Our multi-media collections have been in storage at the Dylan Thomas Centre, Swansea, since covid lockdowns. Deb Checkland, Chair of Trustees, and her team of enthusiastic volunteers, have started checking through the collections, referencing the boxes against their Excel DB, and slowly unpacking them ready for moving onto the top floor.



Photos © Deb Checkland / Sandra Stone and Mike Buckley



Sandra Stone



Our much used copy of **Robert Dixon and John Godrich's** book **Blues and Gospel Records 1902 to 1942**, Storyville Publications, sat happily on our shelves for 15 years. One day **Jeff Towns**, of the world famous Dylan Thomas Bookstore (www.dylans.com) arrived with a large donation of 6 boxes which included all John Godrich's papers pertaining to his book and reel to reel tapes of blues music. Jeff said "I saved these after John died, but I don't have space left in the shop or van. Would you like them?" Yes please. "Did you know John Godrich was a Swansea man?" **WWWHHHAAT???** "Yes, he was a life-long collector and researcher. He cycled down to Swansea docks every day where he worked as a shipping clerk, and spent the rest of his time working on his book. He is a world authority and very famous." One of the boxes is crammed with letters from musicians and researchers in USA. Here is a Ph.D project just waiting for a prospective student! We are indebted to **Jeff Towns** (pictured).



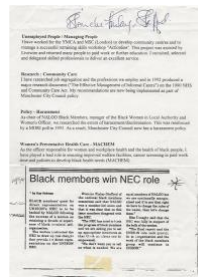
Derek Gabriel, Photographer, who **volunteered with us for 25 years** from 1992 has now retired. He is in the middle of donating his photographic collection to us, one of the major jazz photo collections in Wales, if not the UK. Derek (below) is seated in front of his "jazz exhibition panels". Derek was also our "techie" for BEFORE FREEDOM, a live music production touring schools in Wales.



Derek Gabriel at a BEFORE FREEDOM school performance, and signing his book **A Photographic History of Jazz in Swansea 2014**. "It has taken five years to put together. The pictures go back to the 1950s. I used to go to all the jazz clubs because there were so many different places. I always took a camera. I called it the golden era because we had so many fantastic musicians from the US and the best of the British scene. Swansea was a hotbed of jazz." **Photos © Jen Wilson**

THE DOCUMENTING JAZZ CONFERENCE, EDINBURGH, JUNE 2021

Jen gave a paper with PP presentation at the Conference: **BLANCHE FINLAY: The “otherness” of a cultural intervention in 1960s Britain.** Blanche Finlay, blues and jazz vocalist, embodies the feminist theory of “otherness” with multiple cultural and political positionings and identities. Blanche fought for black rights for access to representation, and conveyed the politics of jazz from the bandstand through gospel and blues. She also confronted institutional, social and cultural barriers, collaborating across disciplines. **To quote Jenna Bailey:** “For women, playing jazz was not a straightforward pursuit but a negotiation around obstacles within a patriarchal system.”



Two of the twenty slides used in the DOCJAZZ Powerpoint Presentation

Blanche also donated many gowns to our collection. This is one displayed at our **How Jazz Came to Wales exhibition**, Swansea Museum 2016. Our gown collection needs conservation funding and is another focus of study for future BA, MA and Ph.D textile students.

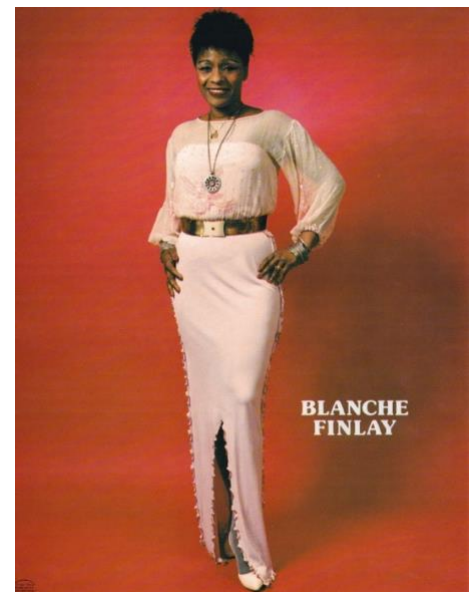


Photo © Deb Checkland / Jazz Heritage Wales

Jazz Heritage Wales and UWTSD will be hosting the 2022 DOCUMENTING JAZZ CONFERENCE NOVEMBER 2022

- an online conference with an exhibition and live music. Keep an eye out for the Call for Papers: www.documentingjazz.com

WHAT'S IN THE BOXES ???

Covid has affected us all. It saddens us that our collections are in boxes. But we are slowly beginning to open them up. We have **four paintings donated by renowned Welsh artist Valerie Ganz (1936-2015).** Former UWTSD student **Rhydderch Wilson** donated his oil painting of **Paul Robeson** (see below).



Photo © Derek Gabriel / JW with Valerie Ganz's portrait of Betty Carter



Photo © Rhydderch Wilson / Paul Robeson

WHAT'S IN THE BOXES ??? continued....

We have 3 Women's Jazz Archive Stained Glass Windows donated by Carol Ann Jones



Photo © Derek Gabriel / Jazz Heritage Wales / Carol Ann Jones



We have **Beryl Bryden's original washboard** from **Lonnie Donegan's 1955 hit Rock Island Line** heralding the start of the skiffle craze, donated by **Anthea Lake**.



Photos © Deb Checkland / Jazz Heritage Wales

We have radios and radiograms.... following the history of music players through the ages.



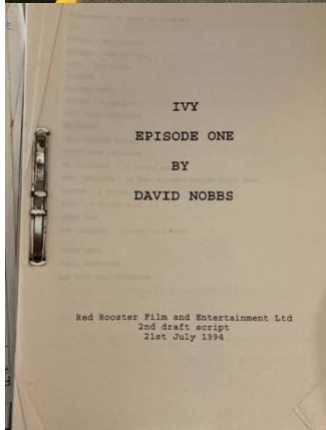
Julie James MS, Minister for Climate Change, Welsh Government, (right) visits us for an update on our move into permanent space, and checking on the environmentally controlled conditions.

Alison Harding, Executive Head of Library and Learning Resources, UWTSD, has linked Jazz Heritage Wales to UWTSD Special Collections Library.

Photo © Deb Checkland

WHAT'S IN THE BOXES ??? CONTINUED

WW2 Bandleader Ivy Benson's personal papers, photographs and scrapbooks, donated by Diana Lusher, Sheila Tracy and Richard Arnatt 2015. Photos © Sandra Stone / Jazz Heritage Wales



**WHAT'S IN THE BOXES ??? continued....
SEARCHING FOR OTTILIE PATTERSON
(1932-2011)**



Photo © Derek Gabriel / Otilie Patterson Exhibition Panel



Photo Chris Barber Band copyright unknown

JW says: “I was contacted by award winning, Belfast based **DOUBLEBAND FILMS**, established in 1988 by Michael Hewitt and Dermot Lavery. DB Films is “one of the most vital and influential production companies in Northern Ireland.” Did we have any information on Otilie Patterson, vocalist with the Chris Barber Band? They intended making a documentary about their local girl from Comber, County Down. I said I had interviewed her in 1990, spending 3 days at her home in Ayr, Scotland, while she told me her story. I hadn’t been able to use her Oral History, but I had transcribed all the tapes. “Did I still have the tapes and what did I use?” I used the Swansea Women’s History Group Marantz tape recorder, and yes the tapes were now packed away in storage boxes at the Dylan Thomas Centre... but I didn’t know where they were. Deb Checkland, Chair of Trustees strode into action, arranged for the building to be unlocked, gathered her volunteers, and the hunt began. Consulting the Excel DB spreadsheet, they were in JW062.



Photos © JHW / UWTSD photography student Ada Marino / Volunteer Mike Buckley, JW.
The tapes were converted into digital form by Garry Bartlett, Technical Manager (ATiC) Assistive Technologies Innovation Centre UWTSD. DoubleBand Films will be filming JW in 2022. www.doublebandfilms.com

POWERPOINT PRESENTATIONS GIVEN DURING 2021

During 2021 Jen gave 4 Powerpoint Presentations:
LLAFUR, The POBL Group, PROBUS Cardiff, and WI Parkmill branch, Swansea.

SOCIALLY DISTANCED MINCE PIES AND JAZZ MUSIC – DECEMBER 2021 with FRIENDS AND COLLEAGUES



We would like to thank our Volunteers, all the staff at UWTSD and City & County of Swansea who have helped and supported us during 2021. We are looking forward to completing our move during 2022.

**DEB CHECKLAND
CHAIR OF BOARD OF TRUSTEES**