Application for financial support for Wikidata Welsh Biography Timeline project

Donor:
MY-D Foundation
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Applicant:
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Project:
Wikidata Welsh Biography Timeline

About the Dictionary of Welsh Biography:
The [Dictionary of Welsh Biography](#) (DWB) is a bilingual biographical dictionary of Welsh people who have made a significant contribution to Welsh life over seventeen centuries.It was first published in 1959. In 2004 it was first published online by the National Library of Wales (NLW) and is now maintained by the Library. Contributions and peer review is the responsibility of the University of Wales' Centre for Advanced Welsh and Celtic Studies. To date the dictionary contains nearly 5000 entries. In 2018 a new Website was launched, funded by the National Library of Wales.

The Dictionary of Welsh Biography is widely used for academic research, as a teaching aid and by family and local history community. The website currently receives around 12,000 unique visits every month.

Linked open data:
In 2015, with the appointment of a Wikipedian in Residence NLW began to share biographical data for people in the Dictionary of Welsh Biography via Wikidata as a way of widening access, encouraging reuse of data and enriching the data. Since then the Wikipedia in Residence, now the National Wikimedian, has continued to enrich the Wikidata by extracting data and entities

from the text of the articles. The new website contains links to Wikipedia and relevant Wikidata items.

Proposal:

Wikidata enables us to share the relevant data openly. Mapping to Wikidata also enriches our data, as external identifiers and additional information is added by 3rd parties. We propose a project **to create an interactive bilingual timeline of all people in the Dictionary of Welsh Biography** powered to Wikidata.

Key features:
- Bespoke bilingual interface with DWB branding
- Adaptive display
- Powered by National Library of Wales data and images on Wikidata/Commons
- Links to DWB articles and Wikipedia articles
- Filter the timeline by birth/death date, occupation, birth place and gender
- Accessible via DWB home page and as a standalone website
- Overlay curated historical events for context
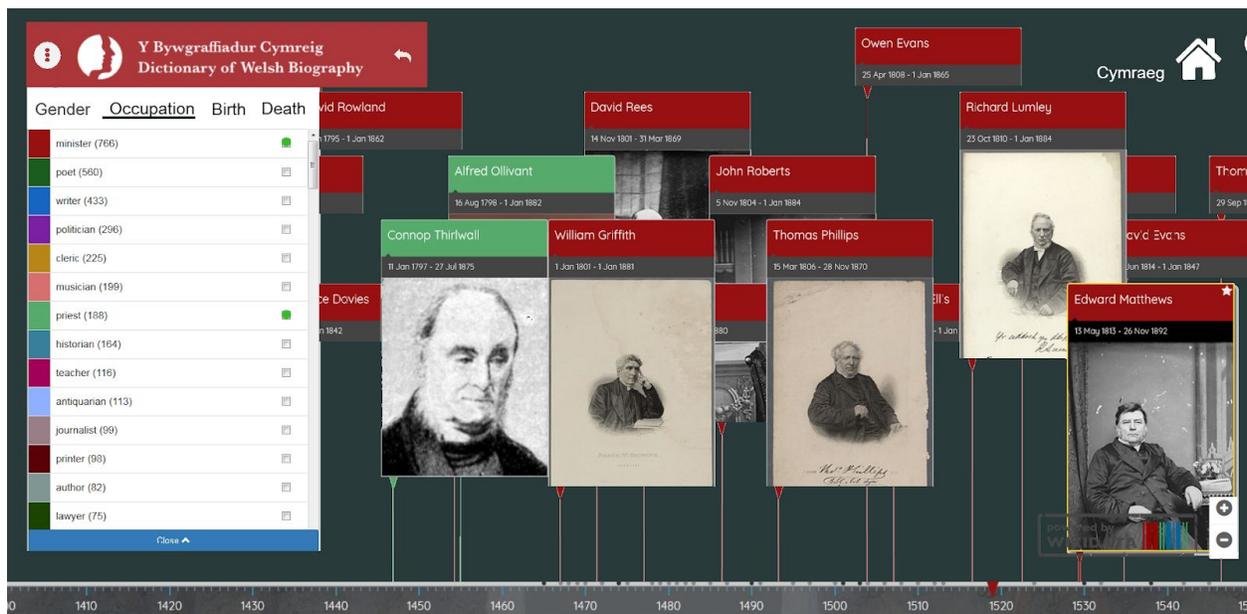
Mock-up of the interface, showing colour coded filter options

Why build this tool?

We want to demonstrate that institutions can take open data and use it to enrich their core services and to create bespoke visualizations tools which suit them, their collections and their

audience. We want to try and normalize the use of Wikidata by institutions - not just by donating data but by benefiting from it too.

The timeline would provide added value to the DWB website and its users. In particular the timeline would provide added benefits for those who are not necessarily looking for a specific individual, but want to know who the important people were in a given field, place or time. A series of filters would essentially allow everyone to query the data without any specialist knowledge.

The highly visual and interactive nature of the timeline also means it will make a great tool for teaching and engaging children with various aspects of Welsh history and culture.
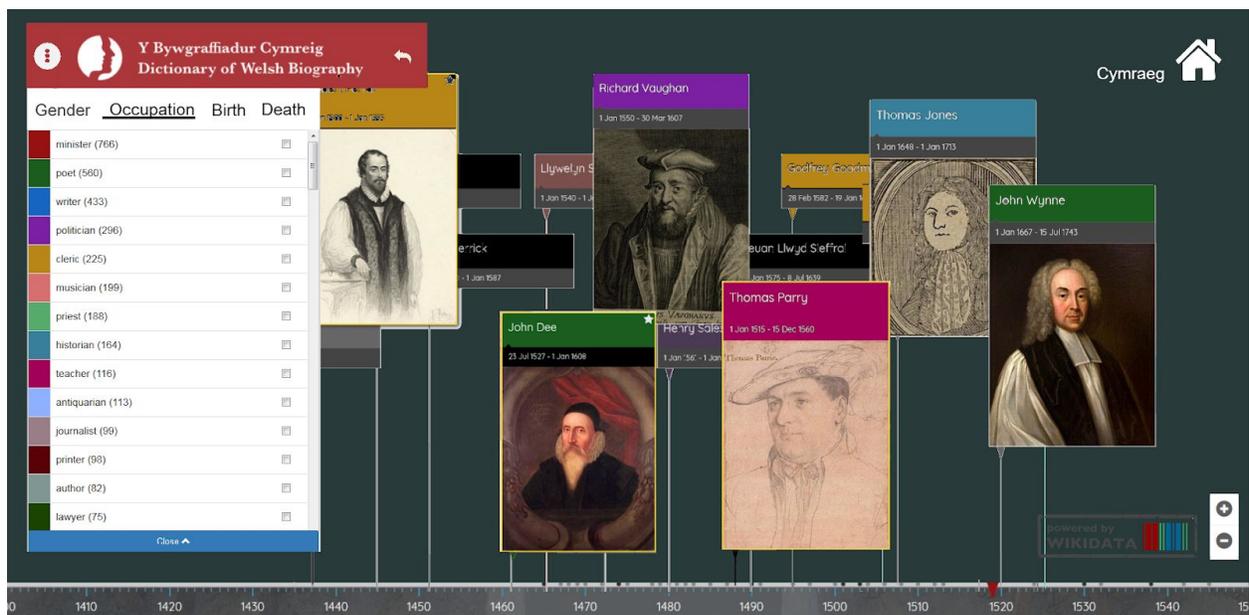
Mock-up of the interactive timeline

For example, imagine a school teacher preparing a lesson on 19th century Welsh musicians. The main Dictionary of Welsh Biography website can only be searched, or browsed using the name of the subject or author of each article, but the timeline (linked to from the main page of the website) would allow the user to filter their search. The user can use the timeline filters to see a timeline of musicians born in the 19th century and can view information about them on Wikipedia in their chosen language (English or Welsh), from within the timeline. They can also link to the full Dictionary of Welsh Biography article (for free) on our new website.
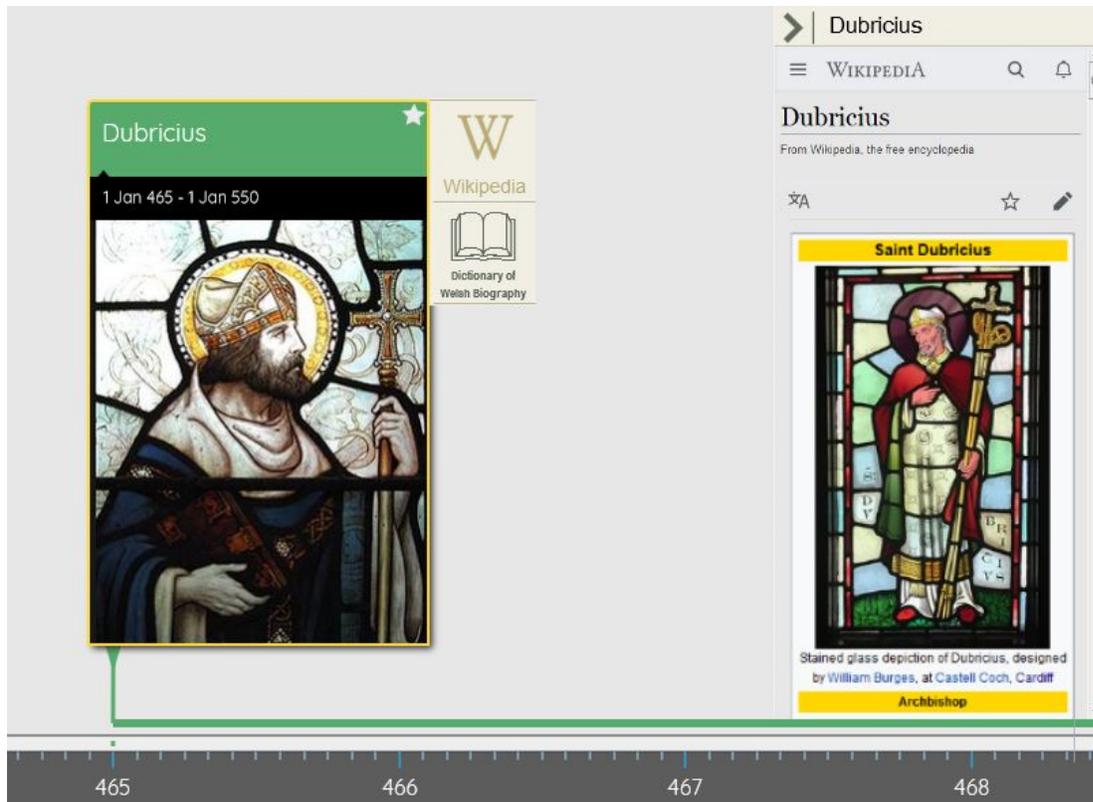
Where available, Wikipedia articles could be viewed from within the timeline in English or Welsh

How will it work?

We (The National Library of Wales) have partnered with Histropedia to deliver this project. The National Library will lead the project. We will ensure the data is available and release digital portraits to Wikimedia Commons where possible. Histropedia will build the timeline to our specification using their Histropediajs Library. All data and code will be available as open source or CC-0 content other than the Histropediajs Library which is free for non commercial use, but any online reuse requires a license from Histropedia[1].

The timeline will be powered by Wikidata Properties commonly used to describe people. see below:

- P21 (Gender)
- P569 (Date of birth)
- P570 (Date of death)
- P106 (occupation)
- P19 (Place of Birth)

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[1] A fully open source alternative is e.g. http://visjs.org/index.html#licenses

every query can be limited to ONLY people with a Dictionary of Welsh Biography entry using the P1648 (Dictionary of Welsh Biography ID) identifier, which also enables us to generate a url link to each article. So the structure of the queries/code could easily be transposed to other biographical data set.

Potential for expansion & reuse:

We would certainly be interesting in expanding our use of this timeline in future to include different subsets of biographical data. I could also imagine it being expanded to include different layers. for example, if you clicked on a person on the timeline you would be taken to a new timeline of books, archives and art works associated with that person - and i can imagine that lots of cultural institutions would be interested in such a tool.

In its initial form it would only take minor tweaks for the timeline to work with other biographical datasets which are well represented on Wikidata, such as National Portrait Gallery people, Oxford DNB and the History of Parliament data set, to name but a few.

As more cultural institutions explore the potential of linked data, timeline applications such as this offer exciting and powerful new ways of research or simply browsing historical collections

Project timeline:

Q2 2019:
- NLW ensure completeness of Wikidata for DWB
- NLW upload 600 oil paintings to illustrate the timeline (in addition to 6k portraits already uploaded)
- NLW ensure all necessary data is available bilingually (English and Welsh) on Wikidata
- Histropedia begin to build working prototype using specified Wikidata properties.

Q3 2019:
- NLW curate historical events timeline.
- Histropedia and NLW complete design and bilingual interface.
- NLW re-work DWB home page to incorporate link to timeline.
- Launch and promotion

Application:
The National Library of Wales, represented by Jason Evans, applies to the MY-D Foundation to finance the production of the Wikidata Welsh Biography Timeline with an amount of £5000.

Cost Breakdown:

Development of timeline application by Histropedia	…
Removal of Histropedia branding	…
License fee for use of HistropediaJS	…
Total	**…**

The requested funds are for costs incurred by Histropedia only. The National Library of Wales will cover any and all costs incurred during the project. **Additionally** the National Library of Wales would be willing to accept partial funding **(minimum £3000)** and would fund the remaining costs with internal funds.

Thank you for considering our application!

Jason Evans
National Library of Wales

3/4/2019   jason.nlw@gmail.com

Appendix:

About us:

The National Library of Wales

The only legal deposit library in Wales, The National Library's mission is to make Welsh culture and heritage accessible to all to learn research and enjoy.

The National Library is also a national archive, holding audio visual collections, maps, manuscripts, artworks, photographs and more.

Originally 7.1.2019

We are committed to open access and are innovators in the area of linked open data, IIIF, and community engagement.

Histropedia

Histropedia was co founded by life long friends Navino Evans and Sean McBirnie. With a passion for learning and sharing knowledge combined with a desire to create software that works and is enjoyable to use They are committed to building a website that people love.

Navino Evans is also an active contributor to Wikidata with experience of running Wikidata and sparql workshops throughout the UK and Europe. He has also provided technical support for UNESCO's Wikipedia in Residence program.

Histropedia have recently partnered with the University of Edinburgh to deliver a bespoke timeline of university alumni.

Jason Evans

Jason Evans is the National Wikimedian at the National Library of Wales. For several years Jason worked as a Wikimedian in Residence and has managed several government funded projects to improve content on the Welsh language Wikipedia. He works to advocate for open access within the culture sector by openly sharing library data and demonstrating the benefits to the organisation and the public. He has hosted dozens of Wikipedia 'Edit-a-thon' events and has managed a number of volunteer projects to enrich and reuse open access content. Jason is a regular contributor to digital heritage conferences with a particular interest in linked open linked.