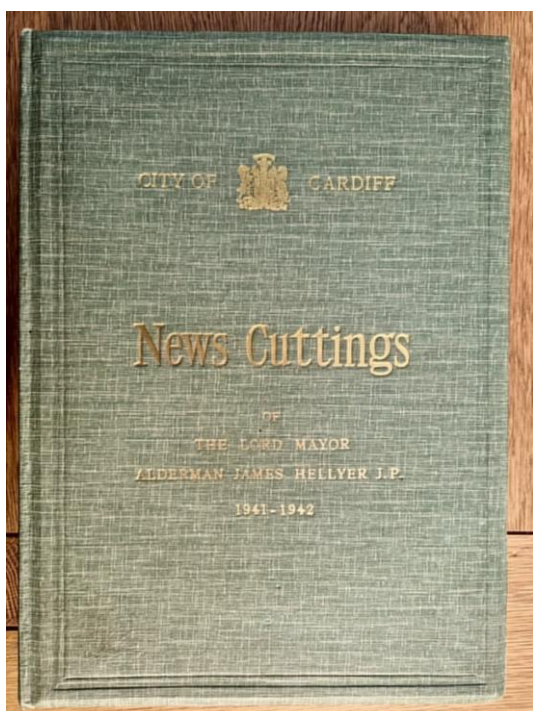


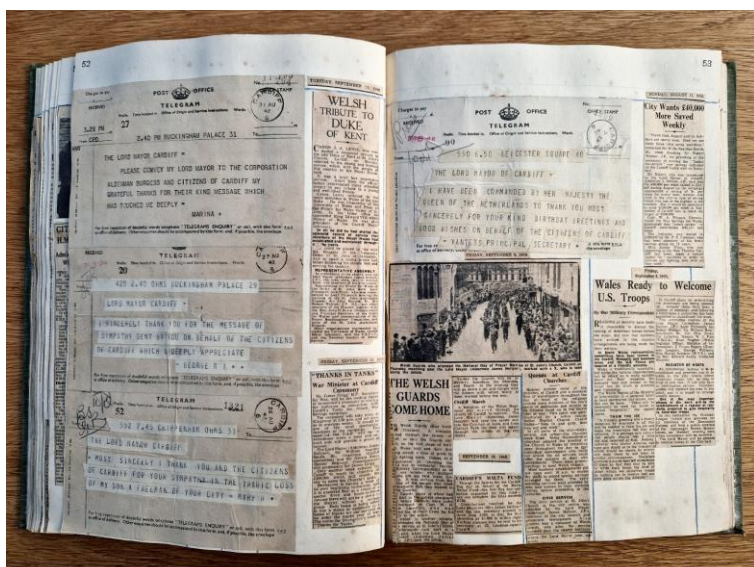
A Royal Connection

Whilst pursuing our interests I am sure most of us have occasionally come across the unexpected when delving into books and other items we have picked up in the course of building up our collections. One of my main interests is the National Savings Movement in the Second World War. This is not exactly a highly collected area in the field of WWII interest; however, it takes all sorts, and the fact that not too many people are collecting it, means that compared to other areas of collecting, prices are still relatively low.



A few years ago I was looking through a list of search results I received on eBay relating to 'Warship Week', and I came across the official, **City of Cardiff, News Cuttings book of the Lord Mayor, Alderman James Hellyer J.P. 1941 – 1942**. As Warship Week was in 1942 and the cuttings were mainly (but not only) related to this event, I was very interested, particularly as this kind of item surely does not come onto the market too often as they tend to remain in the records of the city they relate to. This one however had escaped the clutches of the Cardiff archives and it seemed amazing to me that I won it at a relatively low price, certainly no more than £50 and to me that was a steal for such a unique item.

When the book arrived I found it was larger than I had anticipated, being 11 inches wide by 15 inches tall and consisting of 60 pages packed full with mostly newspaper cuttings, all related to Cardiff and the war between November 9th 1941 and November 8th 1942, the period during which Alderman Hellyer was Lord Mayor. I say mostly, because there was a surprise for me as I turned the pages. Scattered through I discovered a number of telegrams that had been received by the Lord Mayor, from various members of the Royal Family.



All of these telegrams, there were eight in total, were sent to the Lord Mayor of Cardiff in response to telegrams that had been sent in the other direction. Some were thanks for good wishes that had been sent on the occasion of a royal birthday, one was congratulations on the birth of a baby. However, there were some very sad replies to commiserations from the borough regarding a tragic death within the Royal family.

The first telegram was from no greater personage than King George VI himself. This was sent from Buckingham Palace on December 14th 1941. It is a typical telegram of the time, consisting of a 'ticker tape' message glued onto the body of the Post Office telegram.

"LORD MAYOR CARDIFF =

I THANK YOU MY LORD MAYOR AND THE CITIZEN OF

CARDIFF FOR YOUR KIND MESSAGE OF

CONGRATULATIONS ON MY BIRTHDAY = GEORGE R I +"

Charges to pay
s.d.
RECEIVED
Prefix Time handed in Office of Origin and Service Instructions Words
From To
112 2.12 BUCKINGHAM PALACE
LORD MAYOR CARDIFF =
I THANK YOU MY LORD MAYOR AND THE CITIZEN OF
CARDIFF FOR YOUR KIND MESSAGE OF
CONGRATULATIONS ON MY BIRTHDAY = GEORGE R I +
For free repetition of doubtful words telephone "TELEGRAMS ENQUIRY" or call, with this form at office of delivery. Other enquiries should be accompanied by this form and if possible, the envelope
Charges to pay
No.

I am sure his majesty was aware that Cardiff had more than one citizen and that this must have been an error on the part of the Post Office, not the royal personage.

The next telegram was from the Duke and Duchess of Gloucester and was sent on December 22nd 1941.

Charges to pay
s.d.
RECEIVED
Prefix Time handed in Office of Origin and Service Instructions Words
From To
271 1.43 BUCKINGHAM PALACE 17
LORD MAYOR CARDIFF =
OUR GRATEFUL THANKS FOR KIND CONGRATULATIONS FROM
CARDIFF WHICH WE MUCH APPRECIATE = HENRY ALICE +
For free repetition of doubtful words telephone "TELEGRAMS ENQUIRY" or call, with this form at office of delivery. Other enquiries should be accompanied by this form, and, if possible, the envelope
Charges to pay
No.
DECEMBER 20th, 1941

This telegram was sent from Buckingham Palace.

"LORD MAYOR CARDIFF

OUR GRATEFUL THANKS FOR KIND CONGRATULATIONS FROM

CARDIFF WHICH WE MUCH APPRECIATE = HENRY ALICE +"

This was in response to a telegram sent from the people of Cardiff congratulating the Duke and Duchess of Gloucester on the birth of their son, Prince William of Gloucester. Prince William spent his early childhood at Barnwell Manor in Northamptonshire. After college he ended up working in the Diplomatic Service. In 1970 he resigned due to the ill health of his father and took over the management of Barnwell Manor and carried out public duties.

On August 8th 1972 he was competing in an air race in the Goodyear International Air Trophy at Halfpenny Green near Wolverhampton when the wing of the Piper Cherokee he was flying hit a tree, shearing it off, and the out-of-control plane flipped over and crashed into an earthen bank, bursting into flames. Prince William and a passenger were killed. The crash happened before 30,000 spectators, the fire took two hours to control, and the bodies were identified at inquest the next day from dental records.

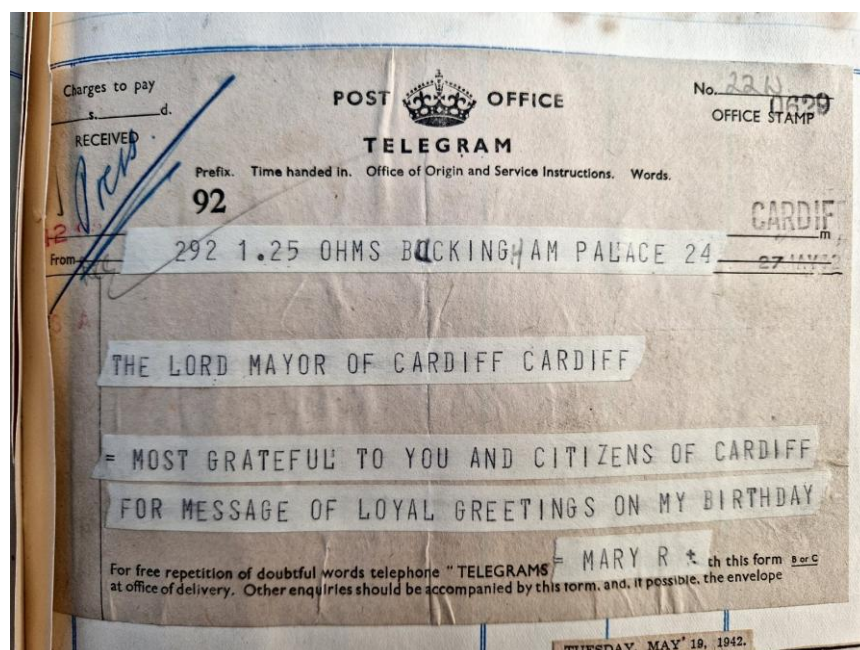
The next telegram was sent from Buckingham Palace on May 27th 1942 and is from Mary, the Queen Mother.

"THE LORD MAYOR OF CARDIFF CARDIFF

= MOST GRATEFUL TO YOU AND CITIZENS OF CARDIFF

FOR MESSAGE OF LOYAL GREETINGS ON MY BIRTHDAY

MARY R +"



The next telegram comes from a younger member of the royal family and was sent from Buckingham Palace in August 1942, by a young Princess Elizabeth on the occasion of her 16th birthday.

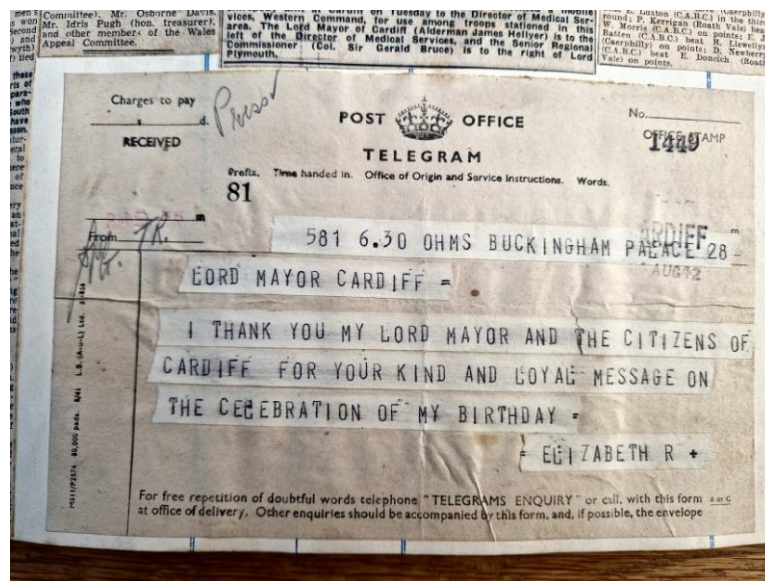
“LORD MAYOR CARDIFF

I THANK YOU MY LORD MAYOR AND THE CITIZENS OF

CARDIFF FOR YOUR KIND AND LOYAL MESSAGE ON

THE CELEBRATION OF MY BIRTHDAY.

ELIZABETH R +”



There now follows a series of three telegrams, all of which concern the tragic death of George, the Duke of Kent. On August 25th 1942, George and 14 others took off in a RAF Short Sunderland flying boat W4026 from Invergordon, Ross and Cromarty, to fly to Iceland on non-operational duties. The aircraft crashed on Eagle's Rock, a hillside near Dunbeath, Caithness, Scotland. George and all but one of those on board were killed. He was 39 years old.

The first telegram, sent from Buckingham Palace on August 31st 1942, is from the Duke's wife, Marina, the Duchess of Kent. This is not on ticker tape but appears to have been printed on a teleprinter.

“THE LORD MAYOR OF CARDIFF =

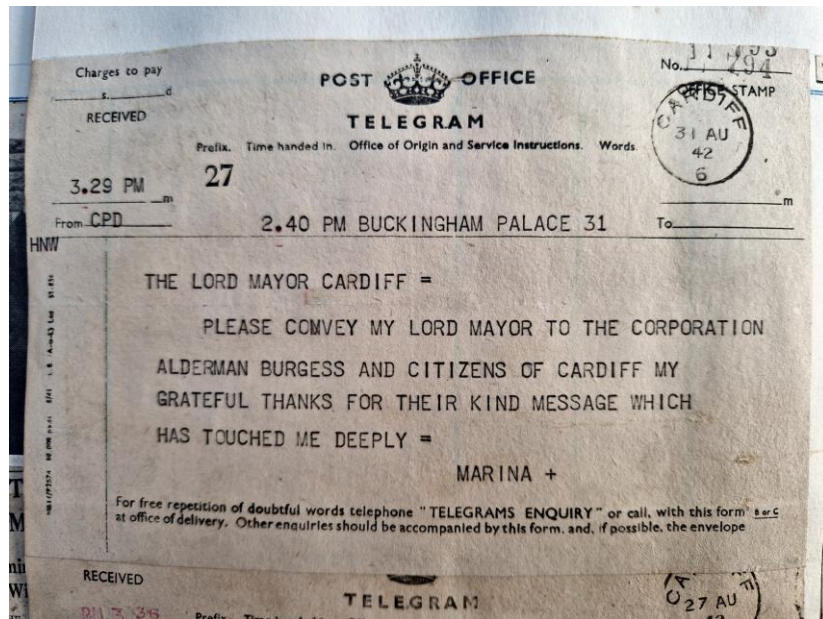
PLEASE CONVEY MY LORD MAYOR TO THE CORPORATION

ALDERMAN BURGESS AND CITIZENS OF CARDIFF MY

GRATEFUL THANKS FOR THEIR KIND MESSAGE WHICH

HAS TOUCHED ME DEEPLY =

Marina +”



The next telegram in the book is from King George, sent from Buckingham Palace on August 27th 1942.

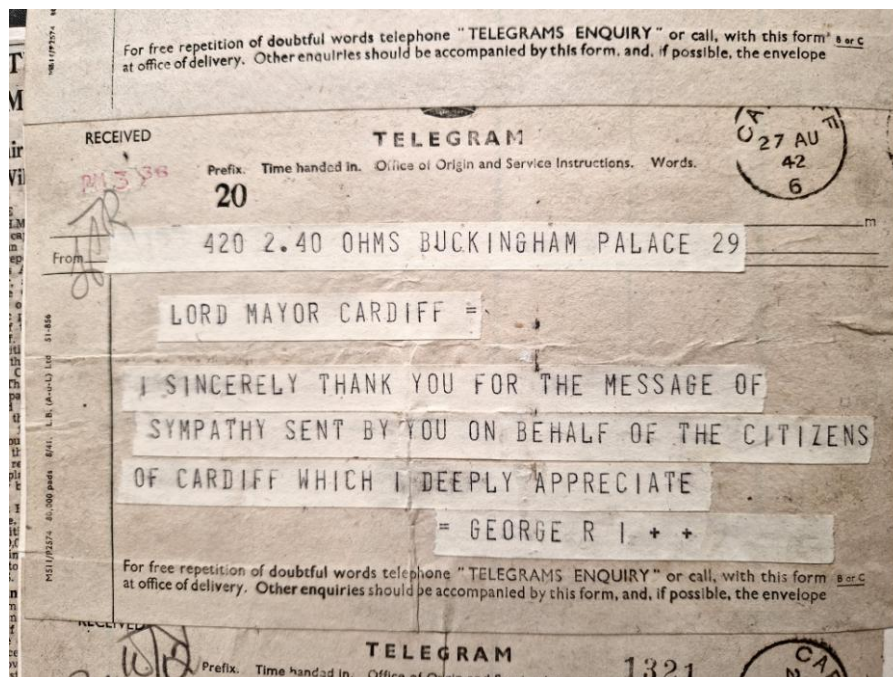
"LORD MAYOR CARDIFF

I SINCERELY THANK YOU FOR THE MESSAGE OF

SYMPHY SENT BY YOU ON BEHALF OF THE CITIZENS

OF CARDIFF WHICH I DEEPLY APPRECIATE

GEORGE R I + +"



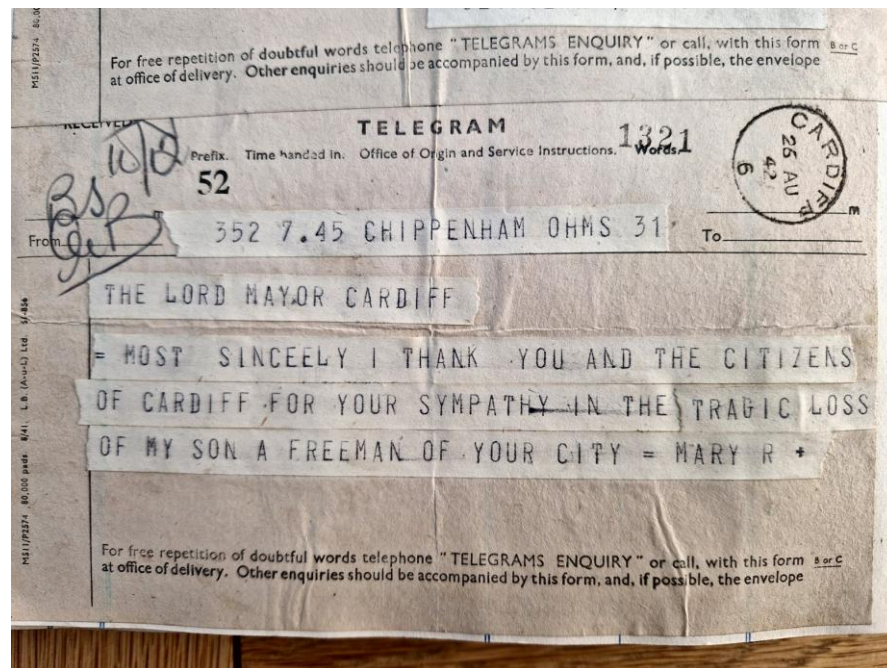
The third telegram in this sad episode is from Mary, the Queen Mother, sent from Chippenham on August 26th 1942.

“THE LORD MAYOR CARDIFF

= MOST SINCEELY [SIC] I THANK YOU AND THE CITIZENS

OF CARDIFF FOR YOUR SYMPATHY ON THE TRAGIC LOSS

OF MY SON A FREEMAN OF YOUR CITY = MARY R +”



The final telegram is on a lighter note. It was sent on September 27th 1942, from Leicester Square, and comes from Queen Wilhelmina of the Netherlands.

“THE LORD MAYOR OF CARDIFF

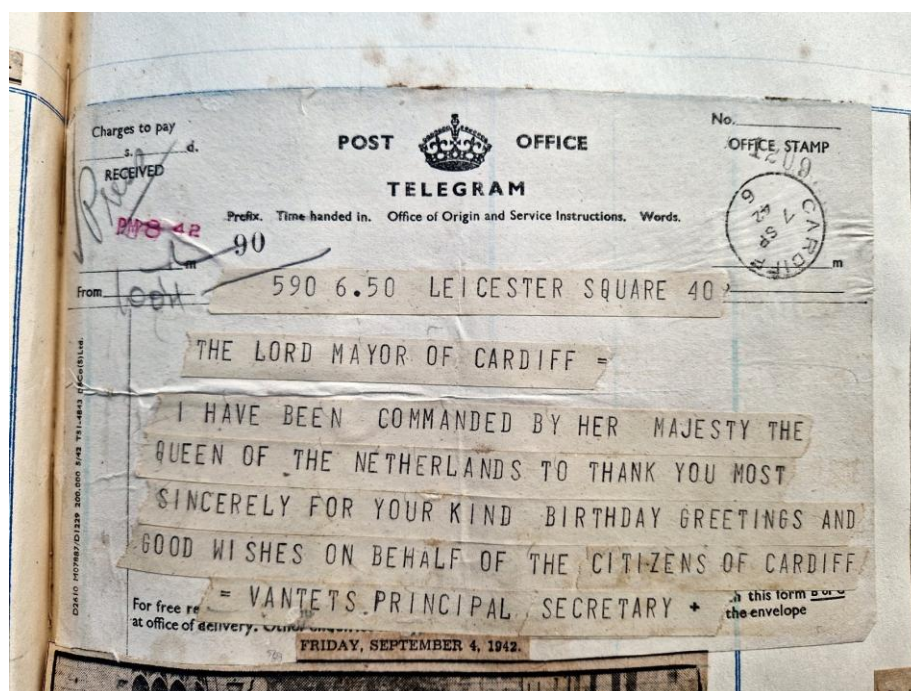
I HAVE BEEN COMMANDED BY HER MAJESTY THE

QUEEN OF THE NETHERLANDS TO THANK YOU MOST

SINCERELY FOR YOUR KIND BIRTHDAY GREETINGS AND

GOOD WISHES ON BEHALF OF THE CITIZENS OF CARIFF

= VANTETS, PRINCIPAL SECRETARY +”



As can be seen, we can sometimes end up with more than we expect when we collect books, documents and other items of historical interest. Old books can be a particularly good source of additional interest. Always check when you are looking at books in second hand bookshops or charity shops. They are sometimes signed by the author and this often goes undetected by those who are selling them.

I have picked up other ephemera, including old programmes from National Savings events that took place during WWII. I have a few that have been signed by high ranking officers who attended the events and one by Ronald Coleman the movie star!