

The Guildhall, Swansea

The pictured building was the Guildhall at the time of the Great War. As such it acted as a temporary recruiting office for the Swansea Battalion, replacing the early, piecemeal arrangements until a more professional operation was instigated elsewhere.

In 1934 the Swansea Corporation opened its 'new' Guildhall (the one with the unmistakeable clock tower!) just over a mile away, the new building replacing that which had served the Corporation since Victorian times but was by then ill suited to modern local government needs.

Though the 'old' Guildhall was used subsequently, especially as an educational institution, by the 1980s it was closed and in dire need of a major investment in its fabric. The Swansea City Council (successor to the Corporation) subsequently reshaped and refurbished it to be the home of the 'Swansea Year of Literature' Festival in 1995, renaming it 'Ty Llen' (Book House) in the process. The building was officially opened by Mr Jimmy Carter, former President of the United States of America, and an avowed fan of Swansea poet Dylan Thomas. One of the Centre's function rooms was named 'The Carter Room' by way of acknowledgement of the former President's support.

With 'Ty Llen' not winning universal acclaim as a name it was soon changed, this time to the Dylan Thomas Centre, capitalising on what was seen as one of Swansea's undersold assets - the literary reputation of its late, great carousing poet. It now houses a substantial collection of Dylan Thomas memorabilia, a bookshop, a restaurant, theatre, coffee shop and two floors occupied by Council/partner workers of whom I happen to be one!