

Voices from the Factory Floor is successfully funded!

Very many thanks are due for some very generous donations from charities, unions and individuals; we now have all the funding we need for the VFF project. We have just received an extremely generous grant from the Ashley Family Foundation, in addition to wonderful donations from the unions Unite and Community. And members too have been extraordinarily supportive. Delegates at this year's Conference in Merthyr Tydfil filled envelopes with the amazing sum of £830 (which attracted Gift Aid of £103.75)! And for a surprise donation see Gail Allen's piece on page 2.

The three Field Workers, Catrin Edwards (SE Wales), Susan Roberts (SW Wales) and Kate Sullivan (N Wales) have all started work, locating and recording women all over Wales, transcribing the recordings, scanning photographs and documents and arranging training sessions with volunteers. Two Volunteers can be seen on the right learning to use the recording equipment at a session at Glamorgan Archives.



A Voices from the Factory Floor blog has been set up, linked to the News page of the Website. This will help members and others to keep up with the progress of the project.



Unveiling Emily

Swansea Council recently announced a Blue Plaque scheme for the city with the twin aims of celebrating notable Swansea residents and drawing attention to historic buildings and locations. Local AMC/WAW members immediately submitted names of deserving women, and we're delighted to say that, on 18 November, the first woman's plaque was unveiled. It commemorates Emily Phipps, and is placed on the wall of the Orchard Centre Clinic in Trinity Place on the site of the Swansea Girls' Secondary School where she was headmistress. Owing to wartime bombing and rebuilding, what was formerly a busy part of town is now rather a backwater, so it is to the city council's credit that they chose to commemorate this remarkable woman.

22 people gathered despite the rain: city councillors including the Leader, members of the Abertawe Bro Morgannwg Health Board (who own the building), AMC/WAW members and several people who had read about the event.. Avril Rolph spoke about Emily Phipps, noting that the first person to research Emily was our founder, the late Dr Ursula Masson. After Christine Richards, Deputy Leader, had unveiled the plaque, Andrew Davies, former AM and now chair of the Health Board, spoke on behalf of the Trust and mentioned how moved he was to hear of Ursula's work because he had known her well as a neighbour when she lived in Swansea.

Another of our suggested women has already been chosen for one of next year's plaques. We hope to get at least one woman celebrated each year.

Jenny Sabine.

Avril's Wikipedia entry on Emily Phipps can be found at http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Emily_Frost_Phipps



Avril Rolph, Gail Allen and Jennifer Sabine at the unveiling of Emily Phipps's blue plaque

Swansea Women's History Group Videos

30 years ago, three enthusiastic Swansea women, made exciting videos of women's history. Ursula Masson,



Photograph by Jaclyn Gier, 1984. Visiting American feminist historian.
Left to right: Ursula Masson, Jen Wilson, Gail Allen

Gail Allen and Jen Wilson met at Swansea Women's Centre in Singleton Street, and forged closer links through supporting the Greenham Peace Camps. Their developing interest in researching the history of Swansea suffragettes, initiated by Ursula, formed the Swansea Women's History Group; which then led onto training with video cameras at DACE, Swansea University, and West Glamorgan Film and Video Workshop. The result was the production of four enjoyable 30 minute video documentaries on VHS format. *Smiling and Splendid Women* about the Women's

Support Groups in the Miner's Strike, *Swansea Conchie Controversy* about women conscientious objectors in WW2, *Back of the Front Line*, on women munitions workers, and *Portrait of the Artist as an Older Woman*, on the poems of Penny Windsor. There is also raw footage of the closing of the Mount Pleasant Maternity Unit, *The Last Day*, and of the material used in *Smiling and Splendid Women*.

After local screenings in the 1980s, some of the tapes were deposited in the Miner's Library, Swansea, but others were gathering dust in attics. Swansea Women's History Group was later absorbed into Jazz Heritage Wales. Last year, one of our volunteers, hearing about the videos, was keen to put them in in a more durable format, which would also be accessible to a wider audience.

These valuable resources have now been copied into digital DVD format, and it would be great to have opportunities to screen these fascinating documentaries again. We are hoping that in 2014 they will be screened at Swansea Miners Library, for the 30 year anniversary of the Strike, at International Women's Day events, and possibly the Penny Windsor video during the Dylan Thomas celebrations.

If anyone is interested in screening these documentaries, or purchasing copies, please contact Jazz Heritage Wales. Also if anyone has videotape of women's experiences - which are now history - for digitising, or if you have ideas for projects which would benefit from using video, please let us know.

Swansea Women's History Videos, c/o Jazz Heritage Wales 01792 482032 jazzheritagewales@smu.ac.uk

Silva Huws

and

Jenny Sabine gets a message: a young man is in the South Wales Miners' Library, says Sian Williams. He's been looking at a video of women from the Swansea, Neath & Dulais valleys, in the miners' strike in 1984/5. Is it possible for him to use some of this footage in a video for a track on the Manic Street Preachers' new album?

So Jenny contacts Jen Wilson and me, who with Ursula Masson (co-founder of the Archive) used to be Swansea Women's History Group in the 80's. What? The Manic Street Preachers, an internationally successful rock band from Blackwood, want to revisit their roots at a significant time in the history of the valleys - and the production company want to use footage from our old video? Yes indeed, they do. The young man, Keiran from Like an Egg video production company in Pontypridd, came to meet Jen and me in the office of Jazz Heritage Wales (previously Women in Jazz). We talked for an hour or two about the making of our video 'Smiling and Splendid Women' all those years ago. Keiran handed over a cheque for £200 to the Archive (which has gone to the Voices from the Factory Floor project), and another to JHW. Google '**Anthem for a Lost Cause**' and you can see the video on YouTube. The fuzzy bits and voiceovers are our filming!

Contributions to the Newsletter are welcome from all members. If you are able to submit your contribution bilingually this would be greatly appreciated. Please send your contributions to: newsletter@womensarchivewales.org

**Copy date for next issue
Friday 15th February 2012**

If you would like a large print copy of this Newsletter, in either Welsh or English, please contact Caroline at the email address above, or phone 01873 890540.

This Newsletter is also available to members on line at www.womensarchivewales.org, in the Members Section.

This Newsletter was edited by Caroline Fairclough, and translated by Catrin Stevens and Elin Jones

Gail Allen

'... Welsh historiography conspires to ignore over half the population.'

John Davies only suggests this interpretation of the gender bias of the *Dictionary of Welsh Biography (A History of Wales, p 270)*, but the absence of women's names from the historical record is a matter of concern, and was indeed one of the reasons for establishing this Archive. During this year's conference, attendees were asked to suggest the name of one woman who deserved to be remembered. They were also asked to give a reason (or reasons) for their choice. Here are some of the names proposed:

Huldah BASSETT: Remarkable headmistress and campaigner for the Welsh language.

Jennie Eirian DAVIES: Editor *Baner ac Amserau Cymru*, politician and orator.

Alderman Rose DAVIES: Labour activist, stood for parliament, great friend and colleague of Keir Hardie.

Anita GALE (now Baroness): The first woman to be appointed Head of the Labour Party organisation in Wales.

Anne Harriet HUGHES: Active with Liberal Women in Wales, the Welsh language, women and temperance.

Dorcas May JONES (nee Fletcher): "A one-woman Social Services" .Helped hundreds of families on the Galon Uchaf estate. A wonderful supporter of women's education.

Angharad LLWYD: Historian of Anglesey.

Mary Silyn ROBERTS: WEA organiser and active peace campaigner, member of many international peace movements.

Sara Maria SAUNDERS: Campaigner for women's rights

Lady VERNEY: Campaigner for women's education.

Do you have a name to add to this list? The Archive hopes to establish a database of women who have contributed to life in Wales, and who deserve a place in our history. The database can be a source for students and other researchers seeking ideas to work on. If you would like to contribute, please send the name and a few details to us, together with your name and contact details. We will be publishing more names in future Newsletters. We hope to collect enough names, and evidence, to challenge any historian who ignores women's contribution to our history!

Elin Jones



Sheila Parry as a student

Celebrating Sheila Parry

This year's conference had the privilege of hearing Sheila Parry (née Davies) giving an account of her campaign sixty years ago for women's rights and gender equality – and doing so with the energy, commitment and humour that are so characteristic of her.

In the academic year 1952-3, an attempt was made to set up a representative committee in the women's halls of residence in Bangor Normal College, similar to the representative committee in the men's halls of residence. Sheila Davies led the campaign, which had the support of the National Union of Students. At the end of the Christmas Term 1952, the College authorities warned Sheila that her activities were endangering her place there. She was in her last year of training at the time, and therefore her entire future was in jeopardy.

When she returned to the College in the New Year, she continued to campaign, still with the support of the NUJ, and also with her parents' agreement. The College kept its promise. In March 1953 Sheila was expelled, and she had to return home to the Rhondda. This was the beginning of campaigning on her behalf by the NUS, the NUT, and the M.P.s for the Rhondda as well. With their support, the case received considerable public attention, and eventually Sheila was allowed to finish her training – but at Cardiff Training College. She was not allowed to return to Bangor.

Sheila gave a lively and memorable account of the story, with a range of quotations from her correspondence with the college, newspaper articles and extracts from Hansard – and she has entrusted this personal and valuable archive to our care.



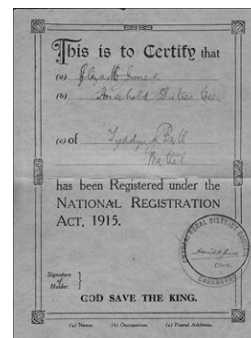
Sheila with Elin Jones and NUT President Beth Davies

Elin Jones

'Clearing up Auntie's things'

Despite WAW's involvement in exciting new projects, and in generally promoting the history of women in Wales, we need to remember our original aim of preserving the materials that open up the lives of the ordinary and extraordinary women who have preceded us. In particular we are seeking out material that throws light on Welsh women's experiences during the First World War.

If you have material that you feel should be preserved please contact the Charlotte Hodgson, collections@womensarchivewales.org, or any member of the committee.



WWI Seminar at Bangor

On Saturday September 21st 2013, a seminar was held at Bangor University to Discuss Women's Involvement in the First World War. The seminar organised by Lifelong Learning and the Women's Archive of Wales was well attended, with women and men from all over north Wales present. The day began with a nice cup of tea and a chat, before the serious work started. Annie Williams launched the programme with a stimulating, thought-provoking talk on the lives of women as they juggled work and home during the war. Hilary Davies had kindly supplied albums that were kept in her family from correspondence between a husband and wife during the war years, along with beautiful hand embroidered post cards. Women in Belgium and France made these cards with special messages for loved ones for the soldiers to buy and send home. They were very touching and a number of women at the conference said they felt emotional looking at them. Bangor University Archives and Special Collections department had made available a wide selection of original documents which the audience had time to peruse and review. These documents gave a local perspective especially on agricultural and land army issues, where women were centrally involved, not only as agricultural workers replacing the absent men, but as organisers and co-ordinators. The last speaker of the day was Sue Fellows. Sue is studying for a master's degree in Women's Studies at Bangor University. An important function of these history seminars is to provide new students, studying women's history, with an opportunity to give a paper in a supportive and friendly environment. Sue gave us an amazingly competent, confident, and fascinating paper on her research into women and munitions work in Wrexham. The seminar was a great success and we all look forward to the next one in 2014.

Shan Robinson

Senedd event

Christine Chapman, AM for the Cynon Valley and a long-standing member of WAW, has agreed to host an event for the Archive at the Senedd on the morning of Wednesday 19th February.



The main purpose of an event like this is to raise the profile of WAW with AMs, to explain what we do, and hopefully to encourage them to consider depositing their papers via the Archive. It will also be an opportunity to invite some of our friends and supporters to visit the Assembly building and meet AMs and us. It is hoped that Archive members will also attend, to meet AMs and to network generally. There will be light refreshments, and an exhibition showing some of the work of the Archive.

If you would like to come to this event, could you please contact Jenny Sabine (j.sabine367@btinternet.com); we have to give the Senedd a complete list of names of visitors.

Conference report

Almost 70 people attended all or part of this year's Conference at Canolfan Soar, Merthyr Tydfil. There was a topographical link to some of the papers; Joe England spoke on the Crawshay family, and Mary MacGregor on her mother's education in the early 20th century. Other speakers included Angela John, whose new book on Lady Rhondda (Turning the Tide. The Life of Lady Rhondda) has just been published, Sheila Parry with Elin Jones (see page 3), Alexandra Rees on representations of disability, Rhian Greaves on women in the 1984 miners' strike, Audrey Griffiths on people connected with Elizabeth Andrews, Rosemary Scadden on the lives of Welsh servant girls and a useful talk from Charlotte Hodgeson on caring for WAW's archives. The Conference ended with a lively and constructive discussion on the future of the Archive which will help formulate future policy.