

www.womansarchivewales.org

A Successful Launch

The launch of our new website on 12 May was a really successful occasion. The National Library is a wonderful venue for such an event, and both it and Aberystwyth were looking their best in brilliant sunshine. The day began with a guided tour behind the scenes in the Library. Our guide was friendly and informative and patiently responded to all the questions we fired at him, especially about the portraits in the art store!

After a very nice buffet lunch about 35 people assembled in the Council Chamber to hear Linda Tomos, Director of CyMAL (Museums, Archives & Libraries Wales) talk about the innovative website, People's Collection Wales. The scans and photos collected during our Women's History Roadshow project are now accessible on People's Collection Wales www.peoplescollectionwales.co.uk and Linda tailored her talk to include a selection of them. She also told us about a mystery in her own family which she wants to research one day.



My great-grandmother, Rachel Llewellyn, was appointed as telephonist at the Llangennech exchange, near Llanelli, before the First World War. The exchange was in the parlour, with the only public telephone in the village in the hall by the front door. I believe that the house went with the job. It has always fascinated me how my great-grandmother got the job, which must have been at the cutting edge of technology at the time. Her husband was a tin plate roller and she had 5 children. As ever, I wish now that I had talked to my grandmother about her mother. My own mother remembers her as a tall woman, always well turned out. She clearly must have been very determined! The job at the time was almost a personal service as so few people had telephones. My mother recalls that the 2 sisters of the local squire always spoke together in French on the telephone in case the operator was listening in!

Linda Tomos



Caroline Fairclough followed with the formal launch of the AMC/WAW website www.womansarchivewales.org and explained how it has been put together and how it can be used, especially the Members' section, for which we'll all have passwords. There followed a very productive discussion session in which a number of matters were raised, in particular the problem of copyright in the images. The committee plans to have expert guidance on this important subject. Caroline asked for any corrections or comments to be sent to her during the next four weeks (at website@womensarchivewales.org) after which she will make all the necessary adjustments.

The afternoon ended with tea and the opportunity to view a colourful display of clothes and memorabilia belonging to the late Olwen Davies of Aberystwyth, opera singer, ardent peace campaigner and inspired dressmaker. The display included written memories of Olwen, poems dedicated to her and a long interview she herself once gave to a journalist about her life. We were delighted to welcome Olwen's niece to our event, and to know that her papers will go to the National Library and a selection of her garments and memorabilia to the Ceredigion Museum, all to be deposited 'via AMC/WAW'.

I want to record our thanks to Angharad Medi Jones of the National Library of Wales and Mary Turner-Lewis of Ceredigion Museum for their generous help in making our Website Launch a success, and to Caroline Fairclough and Liz Fahy for the huge amount of work in designing and constructing the new website.

Jenny Sabine.



Betsi Cadwaladr

Betsi Cadwaladr led a remarkable life. A contemporary of Florence Nightingale, she nursed British soldiers in Balaclava during the Crimean War. Deidre Beddoe has been responsible for bringing Betsi to the attention of today's nurses through her introduction to Betsy Cadwaladr's autobiography published by Honno.

Born in Bala, one of 16 children, she was brought up in a tiny cottage on Penrhiw farm. Her father was a farmer and preacher. Her faith, which was inherited from her father, was the mainstay of her life. In her sixties, and after a life of working as a servant, Betsi presented herself for service in the Crimea. Florence Nightingale had already left but Betsi was selected to go out with the second batch of nurses.

To say that Nightingale and Betsi did not get on is an understatement. Nightingale, influenced by the Blue Books of Treason, was suspicious of Betsi because she was Welsh. Betsi, therefore left Nightingale at Scutari and went to the front at Balaclava to tend to the injured. Nightingale understood the need for rigorous research in persuading the authorities and the public to deal with the awful conditions that spread disease.

Betsi Cadwaladr understood the human touch. She did not use mortality rates or statistical graphs to testify to the aloof superintendents who visited her wards at Balaclava about her patients whose needs were not being met because of rules and bureaucracy. Betsi was extremely skilled at putting the "flesh on the bones of the statistics" with her detailed accounts of the plight of the young men she cared for. Today we'd call them "patient stories", and she used them with the fervour of the pulpit and the eloquence of the Welsh in full flood. Betsi was a true egalitarian, fighting for the needs of injured soldiers whatever their rank or background. She was a pioneer of the founding principle of our NHS: treatment based on need and not ability to pay. Ironically, she found that sick officers were often the most needy because they were expected to pay for food and provisions. Patient need was her motivating factor. She developed skills which we would recognise today as encompassing nursing, dietetics and occupational therapy.

Sadly, in life she knew prejudice because she was Welsh. In death, too, she has encountered prejudice. She has been targeted for criticism and innuendo that she was a woman of "dubious morals." Yet not only had she passed very strict physical and moral tests to be accepted as a nurse, she was a devout Christian who once, when she was starving, would not buy food on a Sunday!

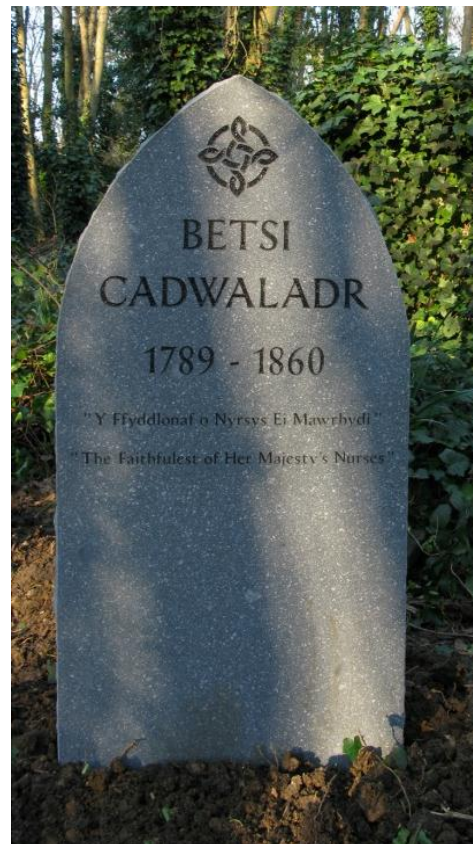
Betsi was buried a pauper in Abney Park, London. The ignominy of such a burial is heartbreaking especially as Betsi paid for her relentless hard work and dedication at Balaclava with her health.

Today Betsi Cadwaladr is recognised by Welsh nurses. The Betsi Cadwaladr University Local Health Board takes her name. The Royal College of Nursing holds a Biennial Betsi Cadwaladr Lecture. This year the Betsi Cadwaladr annual nursing scholarship was launched by the Chief Nurse for Wales. In August Welsh Nurses will gather in Abney Park to dedicate a headstone and bench to her memory. The headstone takes a testimonial provided of her as an epitaph.

Betsi Cadwalladr, The faithfulest of Her Majesty's nurses.

Donna Mead

Betsy Cadwaladr: A Balaclava Nurse with an introduction by Deidre Beddoe (2007) is available from Honno : Welsh Women's Press.



From The Chair

I have written elsewhere in this Newsletter about our new website, and its launch event. As I'm sure you can guess, much time and effort has gone into that over the past months. But your committee has also been occupied in formalising many of the processes involved in administering AMC/WAW, work which we hope will result in the smooth-running of the organisation as it grows to take its place beside other historical and cultural institutions in Wales.

A decision we took earlier this year was to divide our bi-monthly committee meetings into four video-conference meetings each year, with an agenda mainly devoted to admin and business matters, and two face-to-face meetings when we all gather in a more social way and spend at least part of the time on some 'blue sky thinking' about the Archive. The next of these will be on 29 June, and we will be considering a possible future project on the general area of women in light industry in Wales in the period after World War II. Any ideas or relevant information from members will be very welcome. Please email then to: info@womensarchivewales.org or send them to our postal address.

Jenny Sabine

The 21st Women's History Network Conference

Cardiff University

7-9th September 2012

Women, State and Nation: Creating Gendered Identities

Our annual international conference will this year focus on the relationship between women and the state. The conference will explore the processes of nation-building and consider the extent to which national identities have been gendered. We will examine women as citizens, women's interaction and relationships with the state and the female or gendered imagining of the nation. Papers are exploring a variety of themes including war and conflict, women's representation and involvement in art, music and literature, and women's activities as campaigners for education, the vote and welfare reform. Speakers at the conference are drawn from a whole range of backgrounds and nationalities and share a common interest in women's history. We are delighted to announce that the plenary speakers are; Dr Padma Anagol (Cardiff University), presenting a paper on "In the interest of the nation ": Women's role and participation in the birth of the Hindu Right in colonial India', Professor Mineke Bosch (University of Groningen), whose paper is entitled 'National Suffrage Spectacle and Transnational Transfer: A Comparison of British and Dutch Suffrage Activism' and Professor Elsa Barkley-Brown from the University of Maryland.

Conference registration is now open. If you register before the 13 July you can benefit from an early bird discount. For more information please visit <http://www.cardiff.ac.uk/share/newsandevents/events/history/womens-history-network.html>

Records of Barry Training College

As the National Eisteddfod approaches and plans are being made for the event focused on the history of Barry Training College, readers may be interested to know that Glamorgan Archives currently holds a wide range of records relating to the College. The College was established by Glamorgan County Council in 1914, initially to train women just from the Glamorgan and Monmouthshire area, but this was later extended to include women from across the country in 1947 and from 1962 men were admitted. The records held at Glamorgan Archives range from committee minutes discussing the initial establishment of the College and plans of buildings, to prospectuses, magazines and class photographs.



Whilst a large amount of material relating to the College can be found in the Glamorgan County Council records, our main collection of records comes directly from the College (reference ECOLLB). This collection **DWAW22: Photograph of Barry Training College Celtic Choir, 1921** contains administrative records, staff and student records, and a series of photographs. A very good collection of class photographs from the early years of the college (1919-1921) has also been deposited through the Women's Archive (reference DWAW22). These records are available to view in our public searchroom, although access to records containing personal information is restricted in accordance with the Data Protection Act.

We would welcome further deposits of original material relating to the College so that the records can be preserved and made accessible to the general public for years to come. To make a deposit through the Women's' Archive please contact the Collections Officer collections@womensarchivewales.org. If you would like further information on our holdings, please contact us: Glamro@cardiff.gov.uk; Glamorgan Archives, Clos Parc Morgannwg, Leckwith, Cardiff, CF11 8AW.

Louise Hunt

Travel expenses for volunteers

At the last committee meeting one of our discussions centred on the fact that we don't want anyone to limit their contribution to our work – or not volunteer at all in the first place – because of financial considerations. So if you are on the committee, or on a sub-group such as the Eisteddfod sub-group, or if you make any kind of contribution to the work of the Archive, then for journeys over 50 miles in total you can claim 15p a mile if you need to. Please contact me, the Treasurer, about this on 01792-469232.

We are lucky in that some of our travel and meetings costs are subsidised by sympathetic employers and county archives. But as you know, our only regular income is the membership subscriptions which only just cover our basic costs of postage, stationery, printing, etc. So we do need to fundraise for some of our extra activities. We will see how this travel policy works out for a trial year.

Gail Allen, Treasurer

Notes of the last two Committee Meetings

March & May 2012

Both these meetings were conducted via a video conference link to enable North Wales members Sue Trevelyan-Jones and Shan Robinson to take part, Sue Thomas was able to organise this on our behalf through the university network. We learnt one or two technical things in the first meeting; the second one was much more enjoyable. We plan to have just two face to face meetings per year, the others being by video link. The committee are committed to making WAW a truly national organisation.

Since the inception of the Archive the matter of travel expenses has been ignored. It was decided at the March meeting that journeys over 50 miles in total the rate of 15p per mile would be paid to those who felt the need to claim it. Information on this from Treasurer Gail Allen appears on the previous page. The Committee also ratified how Deposits/Acquisitions would be organised through the good office of Glamorgan Archives. Avril Rolph announced that she now had a completed list of WAW collections in archives throughout Wales throughout Wales.

A considerable amount of time at both meetings was spent on the launch of the new website, which was duly launched at the National Library on Saturday 12th May. We realise that certain aspects need a little tweaking but overall everyone was very pleased. We hope that it is another important step in the development of WAW.

Thankfully the other big achievement of the Archive was the completion of the Roadshow Project and Jenny Sabine circulated the minutes of the final Project Management Group which was held on 20 Feb 2012. The PMG recommended that further help with cataloguing non-Roadshow material might be sought with the possibility of seeking a grant to employ a cataloguer.

Membership was reviewed at both meetings in particular looking at the matter of institutional members. The possibility of developing a Directory of Members, via the new website, was considered and feedback from the general membership would be sought. Catrin Stevens reported on the arrangements for the WAW lecture at the National Eisteddfod, at Llandow, in the Vale of Glamorgan, on Friday 10 August at midday. WAW would pay for the simultaneous translation.

Two projects for coming year were identified and discussed at both meetings. The committee wishes to encourage the wider teaching of women's history in both the universities and schools in Wales, and hopes to instigate a wider debate amongst its members on this matter. We will also discuss ideas for a future research project for the Archive. It was decided that a short PowerPoint presentation should be written to use for formal presentations. Shan Robinson reported on the activities in North Wales; she had met with Annie Williams to discuss keeping the momentum going after the last conference. They are planning a history day on the 29th September. The North American Association for the Study of Welsh Culture and History Conference is being held in Bangor and WAW will be represented.

The next committee meeting will be held at the end of June, at the Glamorgan Archives and hopefully both Sue Trevelyan – Jones and Shan Robinson will be able to attend in person.

Rosemary Scadden, Minutes Secretary

News and Reminders

Visit to Gwent Archives

A visit to see the new Gwent Archives, opened last November is being arranged for a date in September. All members are very welcome, and further information will be available soon.



This years' **AMC/WAW Conference** is being held in Abergavenny on 13th and 14th October. We already have a fine list of speakers and a lively dinner has been organised. Booking details will appear nearer the time.

The Women's' Library

As you all know, this vital resource for women's history is currently under threat. Keep up to date with the campaign to save it on Facebook.

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/370426752989975/>



Website. All members with email addresses should now have received an email informing them of their log-in details for the Members' section of the Website. There they will currently find very little! We hope that this will be where you post your research interests and requests, short notices and other items of interest. Papers from Conference will be published here initially, as well as the online edition of this

Newsletter, with more photographs (in colour) and links. Please contact me on website@womensarchivewales.org if you have any contributions or queries.

Apology

The delightful photograph of Deirdre Beddoes celebrating in March's Newsletter was credited to Avril Rolph when it should have been Paulette Pelosi. Many apologies.

