

Celebratory meeting in Aberystwyth on 12th May 2012



For months now Committee members have been - not struggling, but working hard, to develop a new website for the Women's Archive of Wales. This project is nearing completion, and will be launched at a special meeting at the National Library of Wales, on 12th May. The website will contain much more information than was available in the existing site, including details of WAW Collections in archives and other collections throughout Wales, and a gallery of some of the many images of women's lives collected by the Archive, particularly at the Roadshows. There will be a members' section, with a personal log-in, where conference and other papers will be published, and where members can share research interests. We intend that it should be a site that grows and develops to meet the needs of the members, and look forward to your comments on the day.

The launch day, which is open to all members and their friends, will begin with a tour of the National Library followed by a light lunch. As well as the launch of our own site, the afternoon's programme will include a presentation by Linda Tomos, Director of CyMAL (Museums, Libraries and Archives Wales) who will be talking about the People's Collection site. There will also be good opportunities to network and chat. The venue is the Council Chamber of the Library.

The event will be free, however, places must be booked in advance, and there will be a small charge for lunch. Full details and a booking form will be circulated to all members during April.

CALL FOR PAPERS

15th Annual conference

13 – 14 October 2012

The Priory Centre, St Mary's Priory, Monk Street, Abergavenny.

Our conference provides a forum for anyone interested in women's history in Wales, whether academic or not, to present their work and receive feedback in a relaxed and friendly atmosphere. It is also an opportunity for members to network and socialise.

Papers are invited on the history of women in Wales. We would particularly welcome papers related to **women's lives in the post-war period of the twentieth century** as we would like to have one of the sessions on this theme. Proposals for papers from historians, archivists and others interested in promoting women's history in Wales will be considered.

Proposals from new researchers and students will be especially welcome.

Papers should be 15- 20 minutes to be presented in a half hour slot, allowing plenty of time for discussion and questions. **An Abstract of 150-200 words outlining the key themes to be covered should be submitted by 30 June 2012.** Please email your abstract or queries to Katrina Gass: katrinagass@yahoo.co.uk; or conference@womensarchivewales.org



President of the Women's Archive, Prof Deirdre Beddoe, celebrated an important birthday recently. We send congratulations, and wish her many happy returns.
[photo: Avril Rolph]

A pioneering Archive event at the 2012 Vale of Glamorgan National Eisteddfod

For the first time ever the Archive is organising an exciting event during the National Eisteddfod in the Vale this summer. It was the brainchild of one of our members, Rosanne Reeves, and a sub-committee has been formed to organise the event. We have decided to take the history of Barry Training College as our theme and to focus in particular on the period when Ellen Evans was the principal of the College between 1923 and 1953, when she died. The session will take place at 12 o'clock on Friday 10th August, in the Societies' Unit (2). Dr Siân Rhiannon Williams will give a lecture on the College's history and this will be followed by an open discussion and an opportunity to share reminiscences. We are also keen to collect photographs and documents relating to the College throughout its history, so that we can scan and copy them to create an archive of its history. If you were a member of staff or a student at the College and you have any relevant photographs or documents to share with us we would love to hear from you (beforehand if possible) and we'll return them promptly and safely. Most importantly we would like to invite our members to come to this event. Simultaneous translation will be available, so please join us.



St David's Day celebrations at Barry College, 1954

If you have any photographs or documents please contact Archive committee member Catrin Stevens on 01792 893410, or catrin@steven2760.freemove.co.uk or send them to 10 Bwrw Road, Loughor Swansea SA4 6TX.

LGBT History Month Cymru 2012

LGBT History Month is a month-long annual observance of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender history, and the history of the gay rights and related civil rights movements. It began in Britain in February 2005 to coincide with a major celebration of the abolition of the infamous Section 28 of the Local Government Act 1988 (in England, Wales and Northern Ireland; Scotland had already abolished it in 2000), which forbade the 'promotion of homosexuality'.

The 2012 LGBT History Month Cymru (first celebrated last year) has been coordinated by the LGBT Excellence Centre based in Cardiff. Most of the events will have already taken place by the time you receive this newsletter; they included a lunchtime talk at Newport Museum on the gay members of the Morgan family of Tredegar House; four short films from the Iris Film Festival shown in Y Drwm, National Library of Wales, Aberystwyth; a talk on identity as shown by diary and letter writing given in Plas Newydd, Llangollen, home of the Ladies of Llangollen, and a talk by Jeffrey John, Dean of St Albans held in Swansea University. There will also be an exhibition on the history of LGBT people in Wales to be held in the Pierhead Building, Cardiff Bay from 7th-27th March.

The launch of the month took place on 1st February in the The Senedd, Cardiff Bay and I went along. There was plenty of time to browse the informative stalls, including (amongst others) those of Glamorgan Archives, Cardiff University Press, Plas Newydd, National Museum Wales, Stonewall Cymru, and Vale Older People's Council before the speeches began.

As was appropriate given the venue, Welsh Government Heritage Minister Huw Lewis, the Plaid Cymru AM Lindsay Whittle, and Leader of the Welsh Liberal Democrats Kirsty Williams all spoke very positively and enthusiastically of their support for the LGBT community. Welsh historian John Davies treated us to an entertaining tour of LGBT history in Wales, and Gillian Clarke, National Poet for Wales, read the poem, based on a diary entry of Sarah Ponsonby, one of the Ladies of Llangollen, which she had written for the History Month (read it at <http://lgbtec.org.uk/sarah-at-plas-newydd-july-5th-1788>)

Many of the speakers made reference to the speed of change within the LGBT communities over recent years and the way that it continues to change. Male homosexual acts were illegal until 1967 and though lesbians were never subject to legal sanctions in the same way, public disapproval was widespread from the time of the 1928 trial and subsequent banning of Radclyffe Hall's famous lesbian novel, *The Well of Loneliness*, until the Gay Liberation Movement and Women's Liberation Movement of the early 1970s began to bring us out of the closet. Now that we can have civil partnerships (and probably marriage soon in spite of the disapproval of certain bishops), the right to adopt children and much else, it's important that we don't forget the struggles of LGBT people in getting to this point.

The LGBT Excellence Centre is working hard to discover and document our history; they are working with National Museum Wales to document the cultural heritage of LGBT people in Wales and the Welsh Heritage Section of their website has a lot of fascinating information though as usual, there is far more information on men than on women. This is another example of an aspect of women's history in Wales being under-represented, so if you can help to throw light on this history, do get in touch with LGBT Excellence Centre and let us (AMC/WAW) know too so that we can add to our own knowledge of women's history in Wales.

Avril Rolph, February 2012

LGBT Excellence Centre (www.lgbtec.org.uk), Suite 5, Sophia House, 28, Cathedral Road, Cardiff, CF11 9LJ, tel: 029 20451868, email: info@ecwales.org.uk or heritage@ecwales.org.uk

From The Chair

One project we have worked on this winter is a set of basic operational guidelines for the work of the committee and volunteers. This idea is not new. A start was made after the Planning Awayday in 2008, when members gathered in Llandrindod Wells to consider and discuss the future of AMC/WAW beyond the Roadshow project. The most detailed one, and probably the most needed, is that for organising conferences, with its attached templates, which was compiled with the help of the organisers of our recent conference in Caernarfon. We hope that this will make life a lot easier – or at least less stressful – for members who volunteer to organise conferences, meetings and other events in various parts of Wales. A copy is already in use by the team preparing for this year's annual conference in Abergavenny.

I've had the pleasure of representing AMC/WAW at two events recently, both interesting and enjoyable. One, in the National Library, Aberystwyth, was 'Wales and the Sea', an initiative to draw together commercial and heritage organisations with a view to promoting Wales's magnificent coastline, its ports and maritime history in order to boost tourism. I don't think we can contribute very much to this as yet, but women *were* involved in sea-going activities and maritime-related industries, and there could be some mutual benefit from being associated with the project.

More recently I was invited to a workshop in Swansea on the use and value of business archives. Again, not a topic you might immediately associate with women's history but you'd be surprised, as I was! More about that elsewhere in this Newsletter. Another invitation – to the launch of the Welsh Assembly's new Women's Equality Network Wales in Llandudno – unfortunately I was not able to attend. However we have joined the network and will be kept in touch with its activities.

Jenny Sabine.

info@womensarchivewales.org

Committee Meeting 6th Jan 2012

We got off to a good start at our first meeting of the New Year in January at the Glamorgan Archive, as it was the first Committee meeting that I have attended where there were no apologies. All ten members were present including our president Professor Deirdre Beddoe and the two representatives from North Wales. Shan Robinson took her seat for the first time and it was good to see Susan Trevelyan Jones back after a long period of absence due to ill health. We agreed to help the North Walianians with some of their travel costs, but in future we are going to try video conferencing.

Jenny Sabine in the Chair reported that there were now 4 sub-groups of the Committee: Campaigning for women's history in school teaching and in the National Curriculum; The Eisteddfod Presentation; A North Wales Group led by Annie Williams; Recruiting patrons for the organisation (this is currently on hold). She had written guidelines so that these sub-groups would be able to adhere to the rules of the Women's Archive and could then report back to the main committee.

Gail Allen, as Treasurer, announced that she had finally paid the last two cheques and that the Heritage Lottery Funded roadshow project had been completed. There were some ends to tie up and a certain amount of editing would be required to make sense of the collection as shown on the People's Collection. I'm sure the members would agree that this had been a worthy project and involved much hard work for those involved. Charlotte Hodgson as our Collections Officer produced a paper on simplifying donations to the Archive. Susan Edwards, Head of the Glamorgan Archive would coordinate all deposits on our behalf. Books would go to the Miners' Library in Swansea and any artefacts would be directed to an appropriate museum after they were scanned. Caroline Fairclough told us about her progress with the new website and that the May deadline was within her sights. It is proposed to launch it at an event in Aberystwyth on Saturday 12th May. Jenny Sabine would look for a suitable venue and the membership would be invited to attend.

Another date for the calendar was 10th August when the Women's Archive is organising an event at the National Eisteddfod which was being held in the Vale of Glamorgan (see page 2 above). It was agreed that we would provide technical support and fund the simultaneous translation so the non-Welsh speakers could also benefit. One of our projects for the coming year was to try and change the state of affairs in Welsh universities where women's history is no longer taught, Bangor is currently the only one with a taught course. In many places Gender Studies has superseded women's history. Any suggestions from the membership as how to achieve this would be most welcome.

Catrin Stevens spoke on the subject of translation to remind us all that the Women's Archive is a bi-lingual organisation and all of our business must be produced in both languages. We hoped to call upon other members when the task of translation became too onerous for Catrin. Welsh speakers should always provide their own material in Welsh and English.

We agreed to support the request from the Women's History Network to participate in their national Conference in Sept 2012, in Cardiff and also the North American Association for the Study of Welsh Culture and History international conference in Bangor in July. A brief PowerPoint presentation would be produced to illustrate the work of the women's Archive.

As you can imagine it was a long meeting, over two and half hours, as everyone had something to contribute so I have only included the major discussion points in this brief report.

Rosemary Scadden (Minutes Secretary)

THE BOTTOM LINE: the Value of Business Archives for Research

Business archives – what a passion-killer! Dr Valerie Johnson of the National Archives, Kew, recalled this response to her remark that she was working with the National Archives' collection of commercial and technical firms. She continued to refute this belief and explain what a rich, varied and indeed fascinating, yet under-used resource they can be.

Her talk was part of an excellent day workshop organised by Archives & Records Council Wales (ARCW) and the Richard Burton Archives in Swansea University, on the subject. Three academics gave presentations demonstrating how such collections had informed their research. Dr Quentin Outram of Leeds University Business School told the story of the 1934 strike in Emlyn Colliery, Penygroes, using the Emlyn Cy & Brickworks collection in Carmarthen Record Office. Richard Haines of Swansea University described as 'An Embarrassment of Riches' the information gleaned from his quantitative analysis of the ship registration papers held in the West Glamorgan Record Office, which include lists of all owners of shares in each ship – including quite a few women: one Catherine Jenkins owned a whole ship. Dr Tehmina Goskar used the archives of the famous Swansea copper smelting companies of the 18th and 19th centuries (held in the Richard Burton Archives) to reconstruct the supply chains of that industry as part of the 'Global and Local Worlds of Welsh Copper' research project now running at Swansea University.



Photo :Richard Burton Archives, Swansea

A panel of three spoke from the archivists' viewpoint. Valerie Johnson told how business archives can be used tangentially: in economic, political, social and cultural history and in many and varied specialist areas. She particularly mentioned them as an unexpectedly rich source of women's history. Trevor Boyns of Cardiff Business School emphasised the need for an understanding of the business under review, and also or co-operation between researchers and archivists in building a comprehensive catalogue of any collection.

Stacey Capner, of the Richard Burton Archives, who had also organised this really excellent event, told us about the grant-aided project 'Powering the World: Looking at Welsh Industry through Archives', based in Swansea University and the National Library, Aberystwyth and organised by ARCW. This project catalogued ten business archive collections from North and South Wales which are now available in their home repositories and on the National Register of Archives. Following the successful conclusion, ARCW obtained funding from CyMAL (Museums, Archives & Libraries Wales) for 'Profiting from Powering the World', a project which showcases the archives of those ten businesses with exhibition panels, a leaflet and contributions to the People's Collection Wales website. It also works with Swansea University academics to explore the use of business archives in teaching and research, and is running a pilot scheme which employs two students to catalogue two collections, learning professional skills and gaining an understanding of the value of archives as they do so. This instructive, interesting and very enjoyable day also included sessions to 'meet the archivist' and to network.

<http://walespoweringtheworld.blogspot.com/>

Jenny Sabine.

The Lost World of the Suffragettes



Hopefully some members of the Archive managed to catch this fascinating programme on Radio 4, broadcast on 11th February 2012. If you failed to hear it, you will have to find someone who downloaded the podcast, as it is, sadly, not available on the Archive on 4 website.

The programme used the recordings made by the historian Brian Harrison in the 1970s and early 80s. Brian Harrison recorded the experiences of 108 suffragists and suffragettes; these recordings, which are now in the Women's Library, have never previously been broadcast, and are extraordinary. The fragile original tapes were digitised during 2007 and 2008, and are now available in the Women's Library.

<http://calmarchive.londonmet.ac.uk/Dserve/dserve.exe?dsqIni=Dserve.ini&dsqApp=Archive&dsqDb=Catalog&dsqSearch=RefNo=='8SUF'&dsqCmd=Show.tcl>

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 18th May 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.

We hope that in future many more members will receive their Newsletter by email; the design has been modified with the intention in mind. I would be grateful if you could email at the above address, so that I can keep a secure folder of addresses for emailing you your copy.

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