

Remembering notable women

In the December 2012 Newsletter I reported that Swansea City Council is starting a Blue Plaque scheme and that local members of AMC/WAW are determined that some of those plaques should commemorate local women.



Photograph of Emily Phipps reproduced courtesy of the Institute of Education Archives

I'm now delighted to tell you that we've been successful and one of our proposals has been accepted. A plaque to feminist, headmistress and campaigner Emily Phipps is to be placed on the building which now occupies the site of Trinity Place School where she was headmistress. It is due to be unveiled later this year and we have requested that the Women's Archive of Wales is well represented at the ceremony.

We intend to submit one or two names for consideration by the Blue Plaques committee each year. There is talk of the Institute of Welsh Affairs encouraging similar schemes across Wales, so do look out for a scheme in other towns and cities.

After hearing a Woman's Hour (25 January) item about the paucity of streets, buildings, etc., named after women compared with those honouring men, I decided to devote an hour with the index to a local street guide (*Phillips Street Atlas: Cardiff, Swansea and the Valleys*) to see what I could find. By the time I got to AL I was flagging but even so had found 74 men's names compared with 59 women's, which didn't seem too bad, except that 43 of those were Alexandra. Suspecting a royalist bias I turned to Edward (Edward VII and Queen Alexandra visited Swansea to open new docks both before and after their coronation). Assuming all the Edwards referred to the king, there were only 34. So far so good. But should we be counting royalty, any more than saints, mythical characters or even the wives and daughters of powerful men? Looking



for places bearing the first *and* second name of an individual, in the As there were 10 men compared with 2 women: Amy Johnson Close in Newport and Averil Vivian Gardens in Swansea. Averil was the name of both the 3rd

wife and a daughter of Henry Hussey Vivian, MP, 1st Lord Swansea and owner of the huge Hafod copper works and other businesses. Both ladies were well known and liked locally for their charitable and other community work. I've no idea what connection, if any, Amy Johnson had with Newport. It seems reasonable to infer that the use of both 1st and 2nd names suggests that a person is remembered for their own story, and so perhaps it is these full names that we should be counting, and be campaigning for. Send suggestions or information of any ongoing campaigns you know of, to the Editor newsletter@womensarchivewales.org. Let us raise awareness of our notable foremothers and have their names honoured for all to see!



Jenny Sabine.

Latest news on Swansea plaques: WAW has been asked to nominate a member to unveil the plaque!

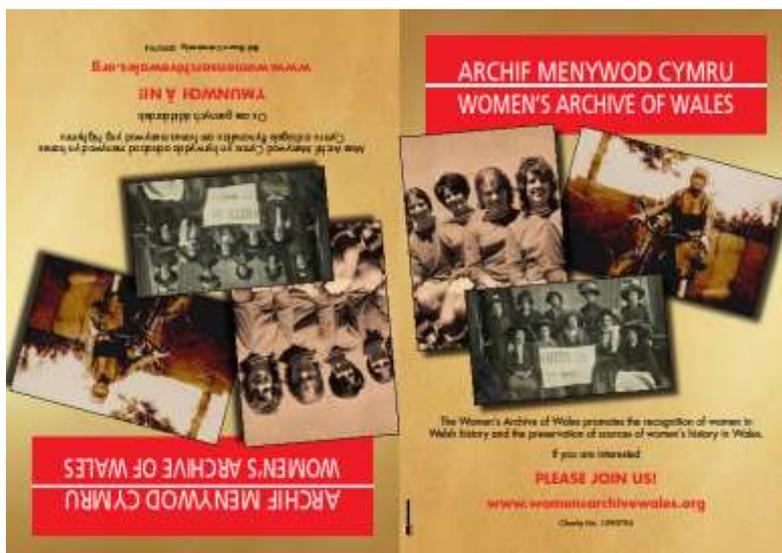
Wikipedia

One of our members, Deb Checkland, has drawn attention to a campaign to encourage women to contribute to Wikipedia, the online encyclopaedia (www.wikipedia.org). Everyone can add entries, but currently far more men than women do so, and biographies of women are substantially outnumbered by those on men.

One of the main aims of AMC / WAW is to raise awareness of the history of women in Wales, and we would like to encourage members and others with an interest to add entries themselves or to send them to us to add for them. Entries can be in English or Welsh.

I am currently working on an entry on Emily Phipps, Swansea Headmistress, feminist and trade union activist, and will produce a 'how to do it' guide in due course but in the meantime, if you have experience of contributing to Wikipedia, how about adding an entry on an aspect of women in Wales of interest to you? Wikipedia is used world-wide so it is a good way of ensuring that the history of women in Wales becomes more widely known.

Avril Rolph



New Leaflet

Look out for our new leaflet which will be appearing at AMC/WAW events around the country, beginning with a 'launch' at the International Women' Day Event in Barry on 8th March.

The Membership application form on the other side is now larger and clearer. Please use any opportunity to acquire and distribute the leaflet. Contact any member of the Committee for supplies.

Women's Library – update

Many of you will remember that, following London Metropolitan University's decision no longer to support the Women's Library, a new home has been found for it and its staff at LSE. The Library will close at its present site on 23rd March. It will then be closed until a limited service is resumed at the beginning of July, with a full opening in October.



Unusually for a University library, LSE provides free public access to all its collections, and is open for long hours throughout the year. Support from the Heritage Lottery Fund for the LSE Library as well as the Women's Library has ensured this. All the collections will be kept in suitable storage on-site, and there will be a new dedicated Reading Research Room as well as a refurbished teaching room where documents can be used by school children, researchers and members of the public. There will also be an exhibition space adjacent to the Research Reading Room which will bring new audiences to the Women's Library and to LSE.

<http://www2.lse.ac.uk/library/newsandinformation/womenslibraryatLSE/home.aspx>

From the Chair

I am delighted to welcome some more new members who have joined this year. However, we were sad to hear of the death of two of our members, Ann Morgan and Jennifer Cole.

The first event of this year was a visit to the Gwent Archive Service in their new home. It was a bitterly cold day but those of us who went to Ebbw Vale didn't regret it – we were given such an interesting talk by the Archivist, Gary Tuson, about how the old building was adapted to house a 21st century archive service, and about its work. He followed this with a tour of the premises – most impressive. I hope we can arrange similar visits to other Welsh archives where AMC/WAW collections are held.

Currently Avril Rolph and I are working with the Glamorgan Archives to sort a large collection of papers from the Cardiff Women's Centre, and to arrange the deposit of another major collection from west Wales. Other members are busy too: preparing our grant application to the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) for our proposed oral history project about 'Women in Manufacturing 1945-1970'; making arrangements for the AMC/WAW lecture at the National Eisteddfod in Denbigh in August; keeping the website up to date; and planning this year's conference in October.

In theory, the conference should move around the country each year, to visit all parts of Wales in turn. In practice, though, there are constraints on where it is feasible to hold it. Most importantly, it needs to be in an area where there are sufficient local members to make the necessary arrangements and host the event. Good transport links and reasonably priced and convenient accommodation are essential. This year's conference will be in Merthyr Tydfil which, although not too far from last year's Abergavenny venue, has a very different history and ambience and I'm sure will be equally enjoyable. I hope that we can move further north or west for 2014: suggestions of suitable venues and offers of help will be warmly welcomed!

Committee proceedings. Our January committee meeting, postponed due to unexpectedly heavy snow, was eventually held in February. As Rosemary Scadden, our Minutes Secretary, was unable to attend, it falls to me to report what happened. The meeting was a video conference held between Swansea and Bangor. A number of reports of on-going work were received. The good news was that the Ursula Masson Memorial Lecture will be held again this year (on International Women's Day, 8 March), partly thanks to sponsorship from NewLaw of Cardiff, through the good offices of Ursula's niece, Helen Molyneux. We have also been given an anonymous and generous donation from one of our members which will allow us to set up a fund to support future lectures, which are organised and hosted by the University of Glamorgan. We are very grateful to the University for commemorating Ursula in this way and continuing their commitment to women's history in Wales.

Plans for the 2013 conference are progressing and already offers of contributions have been received. A meeting with our website host, Liz Fahy, and website manager, Caroline Fairclough, has resolved certain problems and agreed arrangements for keeping it up-to-date. Discussions about our new membership leaflet had been carried on by email and I was glad to report that it has been printed and will be launched at the lecture on International Women's Day.

Catrin Stevens reported that all the recordings, photos and papers from the pilot for the oral history project have been accepted by the National Screen & Sound Archive at the National Library of Wales, and that they will support our application to HLF. She has also submitted our pre-application form to HLF, and is awaiting their reply*.



Visit to Gwent Archive

Sue Trevelyan-Jones reported that there will be an International Women's Day event in North Wales on 9 March. Catrin reported plans for the Eisteddfod lecture in Denbigh. Several members have recently attended meetings convened by CyMAL concerning projects to commemorate World War I. We discussed a possible project to collect accounts of how the war impacted on the lives of women in Wales. This will be more fully discussed in the next (March) meeting.

We agreed a list of institutions to be invited to take Institutional Membership of AMC/WAW. We also once again mentioned inviting prominent women to join the Archive and will discuss this more fully at our May meeting. Any suggestions of names will be welcome. As always, the committee welcomes comments and ideas from members, and is grateful for some received recently, which will be considered in our next meeting.

Jenny Sabine.

Sad News

We have recently lost two long-standing members of the Archive.

Jennifer Cole, whom those of you who were at the Conference will remember as a lively member of our Sunday panel, died early in December.

Deirdre Beddoe writes:

Jennifer was one of the first women to play a leading role in the trade union movement in Wales. Representing the Banking and Finance Union at UK level, she always stood up for women's rights and was a highly skilled negotiator. She brought her skills to bear on her role as a leading member of the Wales Assembly of Women and, in local government in Barry, as Labour Member for the Dyfan ward. Archive member Audrey Jones, a friend for over forty years, paid a fulsome tribute to Jennifer at her funeral in Lincoln in December. Audrey described her close friend as an 'English eccentric' and one who would leave a large 'Jennifer-shaped hole' in the lives of all who knew her.



*Jennifer Cole at the
Abergavenny Conference,
13th December 2012*

A few days later we received the following message from Ann Morgan's daughter.

'This is just to let you know that very sadly, our mother, Ann Morgan, died peacefully on 19th December 2012 at home with us all around her. She was a much loved mother, grandmother and friend. A champion of women's rights, Labour activist, teacher, tennis player, musician, daemon bridge player and avid Guardian reader.'

Website

Many apologies for recent glitches. These are hopefully now resolved.

Look out for photographs of Archive activities in the Members' section. We would be pleased to receive your photos of events to include here. They will be accessible only to members who have logged into the section. We hope you will send us information on your interests, research requests etc to post here too.

International Women's Day events

Reports of these will appear in the June edition of the Newsletter, but please send reports of activities as soon as possible to newsletter@womensarchivewales.org

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 17th May 2013**

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 edition was edited by Caroline Fairclough, and translated by Catrin Stevens.