

www.womansarchivewales.org



More Heritage Lottery Fund Success

We are delighted to announce that we have been awarded another Heritage Lottery Fund grant, under the First World War: then and now programme. This will

enable us to carry out our project looking at the lives of women in Wales during the War. Our official title is Women in World War I: the Welsh experience.

The aim of the project is to seek out and scan the surviving memorabilia recording and preserved by women during this period. The most obvious materials are photographs, but we are also looking for official documents and letters, diaries, certificates, pension information and anything else that serves to illuminate the lives of the women of the period. Some of these women will have been employed in war work as nurses, land girls, munitions workers, in public transport and in many other jobs; nearly all will have been the mothers, wives, sweethearts or daughters of men in the armed forces, and all will have been affected by the War. Others still may have been refugees, or the wives or daughters of 'aliens'. Records of any type are important. The lives of so many women in Wales were changed for ever by their experiences, but the physical record remains thin.



Margaret Ann Lloyd and friend,
Mannesman Ammunitions Factory,
Swansea.
Credit Betty Francis

How you can help

This is an all-Wales project, and we hope that members throughout Wales will become involved. There are three main ways you can help.

- Track down material in your own family, or belonging to people you know. Contact us, and we will tell you how to proceed.
- If you have any connection with a museum, heritage centre or similar organisation, set up an afternoon roadshow to encourage members of the public to bring their materials to share and scan. Again, contact us and we will help with this.
- If you are a member of a group – U3A, local History Society, WI. Merched y Wawr, in fact any group – set up a small meeting, of 6 – 10 interested people to look at the materials we will provide, to jog people's memories of characters and stories in their own families.
- Although this is not an oral history project, you may come across stories that need recording and preserving. We have digital recorders available (courtesy of the Voices from Factory Floor project), and people who can help with their use.



Lottie Davies
VAD Caerphilly
Credit Mary Davies

We also hope that some members will be interested in helping in other ways, for example coordinating events in their local area, or being a central point for scanning and recording. Postage and travel expenses will be paid. This project should be one that many Archive members will become involved with, at a level that they find enjoyable.

The photographs on this page are two that have already been sent to us by people who had heard about Women in World War I: the Welsh Experience. We are very grateful to the owners, and trust that they will be the first of many. The story of many Welsh women during the period has not been fully told up to now; we want you to help them take their place in the history of the 20th Century.

Please contact
Caroline Fairclough caroline_fairclough@yahoo.co.uk

'A Woman's Work is Never Done'

A while ago an email arrived via our website, from a woman who lives in the Vale of Glamorgan (and who I shall refer to by her initials, SH). She wrote that she had been browsing among secondhand books on women's history and came across a copy of *A Woman's Work is Never Done*, by Elizabeth Andrews, which she bought. Opening it, she found, hand-written on the flyleaf, 'Elizabeth Andrews, April 1957'. 1957 is the year in which Elizabeth Andrews' autobiography was published, and so SH realised that this was almost certainly Elizabeth's own copy, given to her by the publisher. The book and dust-jacket are intact, although well worn. SH wrote to AMC/WAW to say she realised the importance of this particular copy, and thought it should be in safe-keeping. Of course, we gratefully accepted it, and shortly after the book arrived in the post. It will be placed in the South Wales Miners' Library, where it will be kept safely with the rare books, an appropriate place since Elizabeth Andrews did so much to improve the lives of women and men in the mining communities.

[In 2006, Honno published a new edition of *A Woman's Work is Never Done*, with a foreword by Baroness Glenys Kinnock – a great admirer of Elizabeth Andrews and an early member of AMC/WAW, and edited by our founder, Dr Ursula Masson. 2006, Honno Classics]

Jenny Sabine

Ursula Masson Memorial Lecture 2015

This annual event is hosted by the University of South Wales and supported by AMC/WAW and NewLaw Solicitors. Diana Wallace, who, with her colleagues, had organised the event, welcomed some 80 people to the Moot Hall in Treforest, on Friday 6 March.

There is always some extra tribute to Ursula before the main lecture, and this year Jenny Sabine spoke briefly about how Ursula and Deirdre Beddoe had recognised a need for such a resource and founded AMC/WAW, and she outlined the work of the Archive. Then Gail Allen and Jen Wilson – describing themselves as 'the last survivors of the Swansea Women's History Group', gave a touching and amusing account of how Ursula's guidance and enthusiasm had resulted in their video *Smiling & Splendid Women* about the women's support groups of the 1980s Miners' Strike. Proof of Ursula's continuing influence on 21st century popular culture was that the video makers Like An Egg chose to use clips from *Smiling & Splendid* in last year's Manic Street Preachers' video, and also that *Smiling & Splendid Women* is still used as a resource by present-day historians.

The lecture was given by Neil Evans, Honorary Research Fellow in Welsh History in the universities of Cardiff and Bangor and a friend and former colleague of Ursula. His title "'We are a Happy Company": the Culture of Women's Movements in Wales' focussed on Welsh participation in the 1913 Suffrage Pilgrimage, in which groups of women marchers, mostly constitutional suffragists from all over Britain, converged on London to join a great rally in Hyde Park.

Neil explained how he and Ursula had collaborated in transcribing an account of the Pilgrimage. His talk presented an account of both the south and north Wales arms of the Pilgrimage, and how it influenced women's use of public space. Despite the tradition of 'separate spheres', it is evident that 19th century working and middle class women moved freely in towns and rural areas while going about their domestic and occupational activities. However, the antics of militant suffragettes attracted disapproval of themselves and their cause, which was used to turn public opinion against the suffrage movement. Constitutional suffragists (NUWSS) organised the Pilgrimage to symbolically demonstrate reason as opposed to violence, to gain sympathy and support. They proclaimed the 'gospel of women's suffrage' in religious terms and deliberately avoided a show of fanaticism, yet their willingness to speak in public and occupy the main routes through towns and villages asserted their right to equal treatment with men.

Neil considered the long-term effect of the Pilgrimage on the culture of women's movements in the later 20th century: the use of symbolism; the liberating effect of using novel methods of protest; comradeship and mutual support; the confidence gained through education and learning new skills. It is evident that many marchers remembered the Pilgrimage as a happy time.

He asked, Is there a special quality of women's movements that is different from other organisations e.g. the trade union movement? Is it due to female friendship, or the fact that women need courage to contest the public space? What, he wondered, would Ursula have responded to this question? And he had found her answer in her Introduction to the collection of suffrage writing in *The Very Salt of Life**.

Following the lecture, we adjourned to a wine reception and delicious buffet, which provided the opportunity for much conversation, networking and reminiscences. The whole event was a happy way to celebrate Ursula's work and continuing influence.

[**The Very Salt of Life: Welsh Women's Political Writings from Chartism to Suffrage*, edited by Jane Aaron & Ursula Masson. 2007, Honno Classics.]

Jenny Sabine

VOICES FROM THE FACTORY FLOOR – Final report!

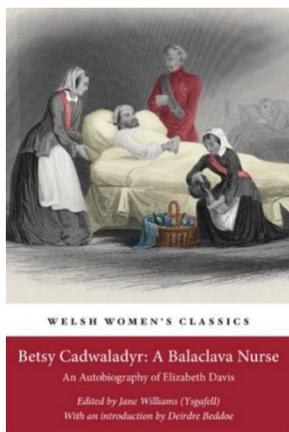
Please forgive me if I sound triumphant in this article, but I believe the Archive has plenty to be proud of with the resounding success of the 'Voices from the Factory Floor' project. The bare facts tell part of the story: 210 interviews, by three Field Officers and 28 volunteers; the speakers representing 208 different factories encompassing Wales; all transcribed carefully in over a million words of text, and 400 photographs, scanned and entered with the rest of the material in the meticulous metadata of the whole project. This archive will now be deposited in the National Screen and Sound Archive at the National Library of Wales in Aberystwyth.

But the ambitious, original project has been developed further. It now has its own dedicated website: www.factorywomensvoices.wales, where you can find summaries of most of the interviews and the actual transcriptions, browse the photographs, listen to a selection of interviews, watch some digital stories and enjoy a short film which crystallises the essence of whole project. Since the beginning of 2015, the three field officers have made use of their specific specialisms to add value to the project and to ensure these aims are fulfilled. We shall be celebrating this achievement when we launch the Final Report of the project and the new website on March 25 in Canolfan Soar, Merthyr Tydfil.

The Voices from the Factory Floor relate some very interesting stories: they talk of the camaraderie between the women workers, the dangers of the work; factory discipline, how easy it was to get a job, class divisions, initiation ceremonies, playing tricks and even flickers of romance. We find ourselves back in the nineteen fifties and sixties as they describe how singing the latest pop songs to the accompaniment of the radio or the record player helped to alleviate the monotony of work. They also chronicle the changes that occurred at this time, such as the introduction of health and safety regulations, the increasing influence of trade unionism, and the equal pay for equal work issue. These aspects add a further dimension to the personal and unique stories they recount.

Working on this project has been immensely rewarding and it will certainly be an important resource for future historians generally and for historians of women's history in particular. It is a veritable treasure trove. Why not visit our website to listen to and to appreciate the voices of these ordinary, extraordinary women as they speak to us from the factory floor?

Catrin Stevens (Project Co-ordinator)



Just over a year ago Honno Welsh Women's Press sent out an appeal asking for help in funding a new edition of the story of Betsi Cadwaladr's life.

Betsi Cadwaladr would have been remarkable in any age; in the nineteenth century her adventurous life - she travelled the world and worked as a nurse at the Balaclava military hospital during the Crimean War - was truly extraordinary.

Her autobiography was first published in 1857, Honno Press brought it back into print in 1986 and kept it in print for 25 years, during which time her name was used for the largest health organisation in Wales (Betsi Cadwaladr Health Board covering Gwynedd and Clwyd) and her life story came to be taught in Welsh schools.

Now, thanks to the generous support of those who contributed to the fund to bring Betsy's story back into print, and the aid of the Welsh Books Council, her story is now available to read again. The new edition contains the full text of Betsy's story, the introduction by Jane Williams (the original narrative) on Betsy's social and

religious background and the informative introduction by leading women's historian Deirdre Beddoe.

In addition, the new book includes the preface in which Jane Williams described how she and Betsy worked together on the narrative, and notes to explain to modern readers the book's references to nineteenth-century events and people.

Honno will be launching this new edition in Swansea (check www.honno.co.uk for full details) on the 21st May, and we do hope you can join us.

We are sincerely grateful for your support, and the support of the Women's Archive Wales, and in thanks we are offering this edition, normally priced at £11.99, for just £10, including p&p (UK only) to WAW members. Just send a cheque to Betsy WAW, Honno, 14 Creative Units, Aberystwyth, Ceredigion, SY23 3GL

Helena Earnshaw

WAW / Llafur joint day school

A second joint AMC/WAW and Llafur day school will be held on Saturday 4th July at Big Pit National Coal Museum, Blaenafon, from 10am to 4pm. The topic for the day will be **Support Groups of the 1984-85 Miner's Strike**. The programme is still being finalised but it will include a showing of the film 'Smiling and Splendid Women' produced in 1986 by Ursula Masson, Gail Allen and Jen Wilson.

Further details, programme and booking form will be available on our website in due course.

'Welshwomen's War: Wives and Sweethearts Arrested'

In 1891 the USA introduced trade tariffs on foreign goods entering the country. This had a very severe effect on the South Wales tin-plate industry which had dominated the world market. Tens of millions of dollars-worth of tin-plate entered America annually, whilst its own production was small. As a result of the loss of jobs in South Wales, many tin-plate workers emigrated to meet the need for skilled workers in the US. They were soon followed by wives, girlfriends and mothers.

In February 1910 both the *South Wales Daily Post* and the *Cardiff Times* ran a story on the strike at the New castle Mill in Pennsylvania. This was part of a much larger industrial action following a major reduction of wages, one which lasted fourteen months in all. 26 Welsh women involved were arrested and charged with 'contempt of court and violating an injunction by scaring and intimidating persons employed in the plants of the American Steel and Tinplate Co'. Both newspapers give the names of the women, most of whom do seem to be Welsh. They are said to come from Llanelli, Morriston, Aberavon and Monmouthshire.

Margaret Thomas,	Jennie Phillips,
Anna C. Jones,	Hannah Beavan,
Dallis L. Douglas,	Mary H. Thomas,
Maude P. Parsons,	Catherine Marshall,
Mary Phillips,	Sophia Williams,
Catherine Allsopp,	Mariah Hill,
Elizabeth Morgan,	Ellen O'Donnell,
Elizabeth Eckhart,	May Williams,
Tillie Morgan,	Margaret Reese,
Myrtle Doyle,	Rachel James,
Catherine Harper,	Mary Jenkins,
May Pemell,	Margaret Bowen,
Elizabeth A. Evans,	Susan Thomas.

What form did this 'scaring and intimidation' take? They encouraged children to throw snowballs at the strike-breakers; they hustled men on the sidewalks and pushed them off. Finally, witness James Morris said that 'when going to work at the Shenang Mill some women came up to him and called him everything in Welsh'(though Morris may well have been Welsh, and a Welsh speaker too). Sadly 'The hearing was adjourned when the mail left America.', and we do not know the outcome.

The behaviour of the women seems to have been greeted with some approval by the Welsh press. The *Cardiff Times* comments 'The struggle has since-been carried on with great success, eight of the 11 "strike-breakers" having left the works. The wives, mothers, and sweethearts of the strikers assisted to that end, proving themselves to be even more determined than the men in their opposition to the Trust.'

Refs. *Cardiff Times* 19 February 1910; *South Wales Daily Post* 17 February 1910;

The Newspapers can be found on the Welsh Newspapers Online section of the National Library of Wales website <http://welshnewspapers.llgc.org.uk/en/home>

Call for Papers: WAW Conference, Swansea, 10th – 11th October 2015

Papers are invited on any aspect of the history of women in Wales for inclusion in the conference programme from historians, archivists and others interested in promoting women's history in Wales. Proposals from new researchers and students will be especially welcome.

Papers can vary in length from 15 minutes to 45 minutes, though most will probably be in the region of 30 minutes. Contributors should send an abstract of approximately 150-200 words outlining the key themes to be covered.

Submissions should be made by Friday 15 May 2015.

Please note change of postal address below.

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 22nd May 2015**

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 was edited by Caroline Fairclough, and translated by Catrin Stevens