

The Women's Archive of Wales visits the National Eisteddfod

On Friday August 10th, at the National Eisteddfod of Wales 2012, held in Llandow, Vale of Glamorgan, the Welsh Women's Archive broke new ground by holding a session through the medium of Welsh under the chairmanship of Catrin Stevens, with Annest Wiliam translating.



Ellen Evans and staff of Barry Training College, St David's Day 1953

Her contribution to education in Wales was invaluable, especially her leadership and her influence on the development of education through the medium of Welsh. She received a C.B.E. in 1948, and in 1951, she became one of the founders of one of the first Welsh medium schools of the south-east in Barry.

As expected, with Ellen Evans at the helm, Barry Training College produced a number of dedicated and successful teachers and the second part of the session was devoted to those eager to share their recollections. Mary Rishko, great-niece to Ellen Evans gave a personal and memorable portrayal of her dear Bopa who would tell her animated stories about Cantre'r Gwaelod during her annual holiday in Llan-non, Ceredigion, the village where her parents were brought up. Then Iris Williams and Hawys Glyn shared their memories as ex-students of the period spend under Ellen Evans' eagle eye, a mentor they remembered with great respect and admiration. Elinor Elias Jones was a student in Barry in the sixties, a period of change when students started to challenge the traditional rigorous rules. Last, but certainly not least, we were entertained by one of the College's ex-lecturers, Islwyn Jones (Gus), well known for his wit and humorous anecdotes. If time had allowed we could have enjoyed another hour of memories, but at 1.00 o'clock we had to leave to make room for members of the Court of the Eisteddfod and the session came to an end with everyone singing the Barry College Song *Cofia Ddysgu Byw*.

Catrin had managed to assemble a collection of photographs, some articles and artefacts sent to her by ex-students, and at the end of the session, amongst a lot of chatter and reminiscing we had an opportunity to look at this display on exhibition boards outside on the Maes. It is hoped that they will be added to the collection at Glamorgan Archives, available to everyone, especially members of the Welsh Women's Archive. It was felt that the venture was a great success, thanks to Sian's willingness to address us and Catrin's efficiency as organiser. Who knows that holding a session at the National Eisteddfod might not become an annual Welsh Women's Archive event?

Rosanne Reeves

The Societies Venue was packed with ex-students from Barry Training College who'd gathered together to listen to Dr Sian Rhiannon Williams' interesting and detailed lecture on Ellen Evans (1891-1953) who was appointed Principal of the College in 1923, when it was an institution for female students only.

Unfortunately, all the fascinating details of Sian Rhiannon's address, covering Ellen Evans' personal and professional life cannot be covered here, but by the end of the lecture it became evident that she was a forceful personality with vision and extraordinary talents, and that she should on no account be allowed to be forgotten.

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 16th November 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, Rosanne Reeves and Luned Meredith.

Brenda Chamberlain Murals Appeal

This year marks the centenary of the birth of Brenda Chamberlain, one of Wales' foremost twentieth century artists. She twice won the Fine Art Prize at the National Eisteddfod of Wales and her work was widely exhibited. She was also an author and poet, publishing a number of volumes which were autobiographical and featured her own illustrations.

One of these was *Tide-Race* (1962) which reflects the 15 years she spent on the island of Enlli (Bardsey) off the tip of the Llŷn Peninsula in north Wales, between 1946 and 1961. Enlli was - and still is - a quiet and beautiful island rich in wildlife and history. It was certainly an inspiration for her and these were productive years. From here she submitted the works that won the Eisteddfod prizes in 1951 and 1953 and published a volume of poems, *The Green Heart*. She lived, with her partner, Jean van der Bijl, in the large farmhouse, Carreg Fawr. Her legacy is a number of distinctive murals, the surviving ones of which are situated in the upper landing of the house.



Brenda Chamberlain in the 1950s

Over the years, they have deteriorated markedly and are now in urgent need of rescue. The Bardsey Island Trust, which owns and manages the island, has given its full support to a small group of enthusiasts who have come together to form The Friends of the Brenda Chamberlain Bardsey Murals. The group has commissioned conservator Jane Foley to undertake the initial work required to preserve the murals, and it is anticipated that some restoration work will be done as well.

Can you help?

The project has secured a Heritage Lottery Funding grant and in order to make up the total required for the work, we are looking for sponsors who are able to pledge a sum of money towards the cost or contribute immediately. The pledges will be called in when the work is underway. Please contact me at lunedmeredith607@btinternet.com or Peter Lockyer at peter.lockyer81@tiscali.co.uk if you can help. All contributions will be appreciated.

Luned Meredith

Note: Jill Piercy's biography of Brenda Chamberlain will be published later this year. In October, Jill and Ceridwen Lloyd-Morgan will lead a Brenda Chamberlain Walk around key sites in and near Bangor, where she was born and where she died.



Brenda Chamberlain's mural *Girl on the Strand* pictured (left) in 1984, and (right) in 2011, showing the deterioration.

Report on Committee Meeting 29 June 2012

This meeting was held at the Glamorgan Archives, in Cardiff. Shan Robinson was there in person, but unfortunately Sue Trevelyn-Jones could not attend

It was agreed that AMC/WW members who had not paid their subscriptions for two years would be removed from the database and de-activated so that they could not access the Members' section of the website. The Chair would write to Baroness Kinnock, Kirsty Williams and Ffion Hague to encourage them to rejoin. A sub-committee was to meet in the summer to discuss the possibility of a Directory of Members' interests to be posted on the website. This matter would also be raised at the AGM.

The meeting was held just prior to the AMC/WAW event at the National Eisteddfod; Catrin Stevens reported on the arrangements and particularly those for simultaneous translation. On the matter of translation it was agreed that Rosanne Reeves and Katie Gramich should be approached to help Catrin Stevens with translating AMC/WAW material. The general policy on translation was approved by the Committee.

Caroline Fairclough assured us that the Conference arrangements were well in hand and reminded us that there would be a second hand book stall to raise funds, so please bring books along related to women's issues and history. It was agreed that there should be more effort made to fundraise in general. Avril Rolph tabled a paper on her research into the subject. She recommended new means of fundraising, the online BigGive and also JustTextGiving, subject to the Treasurer's approval. Both are free to use.

The North Wales group had planned an AMC/WAW event on the 29th September in Bangor. Details of the NAASWCH Conference in July were also circulated. Some Committee members would attend the National Women's History Network Conference in Cardiff 7th – 9th Sept. Caroline Fairclough and Susan Edwards planned to attend the Women in Tune Camp in August, where a history input had been requested. Avril Rolph offered to compile a selection of Greenham and other protest images for a PowerPoint loop to run on a laptop.

To emphasise AMC/WAW's presence at these various public events a new pull-up banners has been produced, also a shorter PowerPoint presentation about the work of AMC/WAW..

Avril Rolph stressed the need to keep the website and our Twitter and Facebook accounts updated; with this in mind Glamorgan Archives agreed to run training in social media for the Committee.

Discussion then followed concerning a new project. Deirdre Beddoe gave an informal paper on the possibility of researching *Women in post-war manufacturing in Wales*. It was suggested that we could approach *Llafur* and work in partnership with them. It would be an oral history project with members working in their own geographical area. It was agreed to set up an initial scoping group comprising of Catrin Stevens, Rosemary Scadden and Caroline Fairclough.

A letter from Gwenda Lloyd Wallace brought up the copyright issue of a deposit. Jenny Sabine agreed to ring Sue Hamill to trace deceased donor's relatives, but a protocol must be established concerning copyright. Charlotte Hodgson recommended buying Padfield's book on copyright. We should establish a list of charges and make sure we leave a paper trail of how we try to trace copyright holders. Sue Thomas was asked to draft a short paper.

Charlotte Hodgson reported that the papers of Cardiff Women's Centre are being deposited at Glamorgan Archives via AMC/WAW.



Second-hand Women's Books

A Fundraising stall for the 2012 Conference

Turn out your bookshelves to support this years' Conference!

Do have more than one copy of the same women's classic, bought because the new edition had a different cover? Are you secretly ashamed of some of your youthful enthusiasms? Are your selves starting to sag after many years of acquisitions? Are you downsizing? Do you want to share your favourites?

Your surplus-to-requirements books on women's issues, history, biography and classic fiction will help to support this year's Conference in Abergavenny. A second-hand book stall will run throughout the weekend, with profits going to AMC/WAW.

Bring books with you, or pass them to a member of committee before 12th October.

If you have any queries email conference@womensarchivewales.org

AGM 2.00 Saturday 13th October. Please read your papers before the meeting so that we can get through it quickly!

Still forgotten?

“...accounts of mining communities have not only forgotten the single woman and the widow, but have internalised the male miners’ ‘eye-view’.” (Angela John, *By the Sweat of their Brow: Women Workers at Victorian Coal Mines*, London, 1984, p. 14). Prof. Angela John made this statement nearly 30 years ago, and although the National Curriculum refers to the study of women’s history, there is very little evidence that this is happening in schools. The WAW conference last year decided that a working party should be set up to develop resources to help schools to pay appropriate attention to women’s history.

The members of the working party have been discussing the best way to proceed, and are preparing two resource packs for discussion in the next conference. One is on women in the maritime communities of Wales from 1800-1920, and the other on the industrial communities over the same period. The People’s Collection Wales has also generously provided £1000 towards the development of these resources for use on the People’s Collection Wales’ website.

We hope that lots of you come to discuss the resources at the Conference.

Elin Jones

NAASWCH Conference

The North American Association for the Study of Welsh Culture and History does not need further introduction: its name tells all. For only the second time, its biennial conference was held in Wales this year (26-28 July), at the University of Bangor.

Throughout the three days, academics and others from Wales and North America presented a wide variety of papers, largely about Wales but some about the Welsh in North America and Patagonia. The main problem for delegates was to decide which of three or four concurrent sessions to attend! There were quite a few which included women’s history.

It was good to meet a number of Archive members among both speakers and delegates. Local committee member Shan Robinson arranged for our publicity leaflet and bookmark to be included in all delegates packs, and I took our new pop-up banner, which was on display throughout the conference, so hopefully we will gain some new members.

In a session entitled ‘Wales and Women’ and chaired by Archive member Dinah Evans, Shan presented her research on ‘Dilys Glynne Jones and the Association for Promoting the Education of Girls in Wales, 1886-1901’. It was fascinating to hear about such a pioneering feminist who had a real impact on women’s education. This was followed by Annie Williams who presented a new short PowerPoint talk about AMC/WAW and introduced a general discussion and Q&A session about the work of the Archive.

Jenny Sabine.

No message from the Chair, owing to a failed installation of new technology! She looks forward to seeing you, and addressing you, at the Conference.

Seminar Hanes Merched / Women’s History
Seminar
in association with
Archif Menywod Cymru / Women’s Archive of
Wales
Dydd Sadwrn Medi 29 / Saturday
September 29
10 – 1 pm
Terrace Conference Room
Bangor University

Siaradwyr / Speakers
Marian Gwyn
‘Britain’s Enslaved Women - The Struggle for Identity and Independence in 18th Century Jamaica.’
Annie Williams
‘Unending Labour: Women Domestic Servants in Nineteenth Century Anglesey.’
Shan Robinson
Rare Book Collection: University Bangor
Croeso i Bawb / Everyone Welcome



The new pop-up banner mentioned by Jenny as it appeared at the Women’s History Network Conference, Cardiff, September 7th – 9th 2012.