

### Swansea Conference 2015: Elizabeth's impressions:

This year's annual conference was the fourth that I have attended, and the high standard was maintained with some very fascinating and thought-provoking presentations. The programme over the two days was well-balanced, ranging over early Welsh history to life today, generating lively debate which was most enjoyable.

One of the highlights for me was the 'double act' of Elen Phillips and Sara Huws - '@DyddiadurKate: cyfryngau cymdeithasol, hanes cymdeithasol' ('@Kate's Diary: social media, social history'). They presented a report of their collaborative work in English and Welsh, in a very enthusiastic and professional style, reflecting innovative ways of using the social media to present archival material and its relevance to our lives today, to a wider social demographic.

In contrast, the quiet dramatization of Amy Dillwyn's life by Debra John was moving and intense, evoking empathy and understanding of a remarkable woman whose impact on Swansea was a topic of the day. The presentation was another format in which the relevance of history to modern life can be demonstrated.

Well done to the organizers! Roll on next year's conference!

Elizabeth Belcham



'Amy Dillwyn' at the Conference  
(photograph Elissa Evans)



Elissa's view of Dr Kirsti Bohata's keynote talk on Amy Dillwyn

### Why I joined.

I knew of WAW. I was glad it existed and didn't really give it, or any archive much thought. That is apart from Jazz Heritage Wales which I am involved in the performance side of it and have helped with some admin over the years. But still no real active self-led 'thought'.

And then I 'sort of' attended the WAW conference in October as I was manning (womanning?!) the bookstall, selling books I'd

mainly not heard of and mostly by female authors and about 'real woman of great importance. During the 'meet and greet', I glanced through the various titles and felt rather ashamed that I didn't already know the true stories of struggle and bravery. I made a 'note to self' to start finding out and to contact WAW in order to do so. I also thought, "become a member", so that my subs will help the WAW keep going, and so I filled in the membership form and decided to use my 'per diem' money to join right there! I knew I'd probably forget when home and nearly life took over

I then spent the most enjoyable day; listening to fascinating speakers and the attendees' questions and answers; and chatting to women about women soaked up the celebratory atmosphere. Towards the end of the day, during the AGM, I found myself raising my hand to become a new committee member... Even before I'd handed my

membership form over! I guess I thought instead of just letting others do the work, that maybe I could learn and help, too. Women of my (and younger) generations aren't always involved with history or archives and often too busy bringing up families and working and I almost subconsciously decided to go against that and to help our stories become 'archive' material.

I don't know quite how I can help, yet, in terms of adding to the WAW but I do at least hope that by being an active member and being on the committee that it can help ensure the future of WAW and expand my knowledge of the women who have helped my generation have the freedoms and luxuries that we do. I also hope to make lots of friends and learn about different lives and to share and discover stories.

Elissa V Evans

## Elin Jones attended the Women's Studies Dayschool in Bangor in September ....

....and this was her response:

Just returned from a brilliant day in Bangor- and it wasn't just the weather that was wonderful! The seminar was really excellent, with a varied range of papers, including Sue Fellows' fascinating account of Florence Caton, a nurse from Wrexham who served in Serbia during WW1. I believe she has already been approached regarding her inclusion in our WW1 project.

There was some lively debate, especially of Angharad Jones's paper on 'Women's lives in the quarrying community of Bethesda between 1890 and 1910, when the reliability of contemporary sources came under scrutiny. The morning ended with Shan's fresh approach to emigration to Patagonia from a female perspective – one which is very new to me. I went then to have a look at the exhibition about the 150th anniversary, which Shan has helped to assemble, and was very struck by the sheer barrenness of the Wladfa. Even Cwm Hyfryd doesn't look very hyfryd to me!

Diolch yn fawr iawn

## Who's Who in Wales 1920

Marion Löffler's talk on women in the Welsh Dictionary of National Biography made me think of the publication Who's Who in Wales 1920, and the place of women there. I've not read it from cover to cover, and have sadly been unable to locate again Miss ....., who is described as 'an excellent swimmer', but some interesting conclusions can be drawn.

Firstly, there are the omissions. There is, for example, no mention of the Davies sisters, Gwendoline and Margaret, who in addition to their support of art (the First public exhibition of their collection was in Cardiff in 1913), served with the French Red Cross during the War. Other well-known female figures are there - Elizabeth Andrews, Lady Rhondda, Amy Dillwyn, Violet Douglas Pennant - but their entries tend to be shorter and more concise than their male equivalents in public life. Here, for example, is Amy Dillwyn's entry.

**DILLWYN**, Miss Elizabeth Amy, Tyglyn, West Cross, Swansea; *dau.* late Lewis Ll. Dillwyn, M.P., on whose death she took charge of his interests; Member Swansea Chamber of Commerce, Board of Guardians, etc; greatly interested in business, politics and hospital work.

Many of the women's entries give an impression of past, rather than present careers, though there are plenty of health inspectors, 'supreme vocalists', missionaries and head teachers (including

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](mailto:newsletter@womensarchivewales.org)

**Copy date for next issue  
Friday 26<sup>th</sup> February**

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.

Emily Phipps). A perhaps surprising number had been awarded MBEs or OBEs for war work, often connected with the Red Cross, but a common entry is 'teacher before marriage', or 'formerly certificated teacher' showing how many active women were restricted to voluntary work after they married.

Then there are the surprises; Mrs Mary Caroline Inge 'Landowner and Master of the Atherstone Hounds', and to stick with the 'I' entries, this.

**IWAN**, Miss Mair ap, B.A. (Wales), Schoolmistress, Patagonia; *dau.* of Llwyd ap Iwan, who was shot by desperadoes in the Andes.

Caroline Fairclough



Ladas Powell, Chatham Dec 1918

Ladas Powell joined the Women's Auxiliary Army Corps (the WAAC) in May 1918, possibly, her daughter thinks, as a result of hearing Margaret Haig Thomas giving a speech in Cardiff. She was born and educated in Cwmamon, and left school at 13 or 14. Ladas, who was according to a family tradition named after a racehorse, was known in the WAAC as Gladys. She seems to have spent most of her time posted to Stonar Camp, Sandwich, Kent. Stonar Camp was huge, as it served the new harbour at Richborough built to service traffic to and from France. It continued in use until at least 1920, when Ladas was discharged. WAACs acted as cooks and waitresses at the camp; these women were ranked as 'workers', and lived in a separate sub-camp across the road. Ladas was housed in Hut 167, 3 Stonar Camp. In September 1919 Ladas was given an album. She not only asked her friends from her hut to write in it, she also kept photographs, a travel pass, an invitation to a demobilisation party ('and gentleman friend') and her officer's business card. She also wrote or wrote out verses celebrating the change of her service's name from WAAC to Queen Mary's Army Auxiliary Corps (QMAAC), which had taken place in April 1918, and a long poem 'Only a WAAC'. The other entries vary a great deal. There is one good little watercolour of a warship coming in to harbour, and also this slightly risqué offering from a hut-mate. Most of the spelling and handwriting of contributors is very good, and a credit to the short education given to most working class girls who left school at 13 or 14. In addition to the album we have been able to scan other papers, including Ladas's discharge paper dated 2<sup>nd</sup> February 1920 (below right) and a photograph, possibly celebrating the Armistice, of QMAACs, including Ladas, marching through Sandwich.



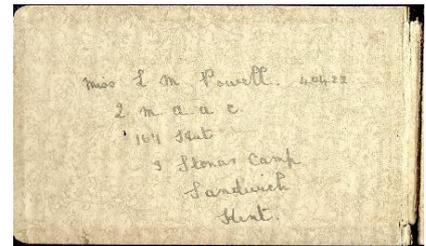
We are enormously grateful to Ladas Powell's daughter Mildred Stearn for allowing us to use this material.

### Ladas Powell (WAAC/QMAAC)

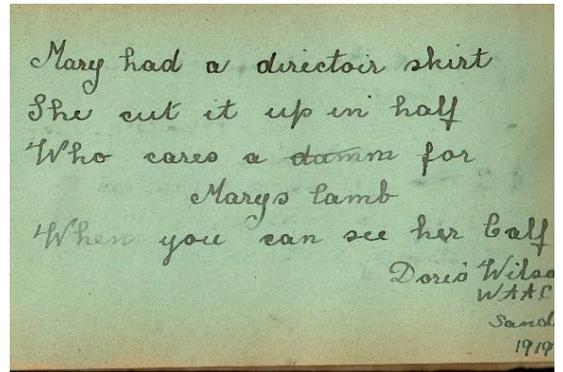
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MOBILE.

ENROLLED FOR DURATION OF WAR

WARNING.—If you lose this Certificate a duplicate cannot be issued.

Certificate of discharge of No. 40422

(Name) POWELL LADAS MAY

Queen Mary's Army Auxiliary Corps

who was enrolled at Pardeff

on the 24.5.18

She is discharged in consequence of en

TERMINATION OF ENGAGEMENT.

(Place) DORIS

(Date) 11.2.20

Signature of Officer i/c } En Gibson, Major  
 Records, Q.M.A.A.C. } i/c RECORDS Q.M.A.A.C.

Description of the above-named woman on discharge:—

Age 20 Marks of scars, whether on face or other parts of body:

Height 5' 2 1/2"

Build Medium

Eyes Blue

Hair Brown

N.B.—Any person finding this Certificate is requested to forward it to the Officer i/c Records, Q.M.A.A.C., War Office, London.

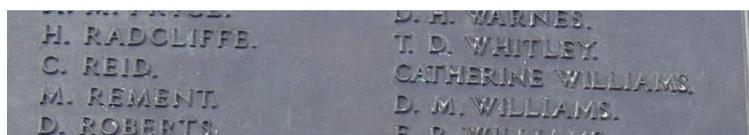
5 11 20 W8075—H10700 8000 11/19 HWV(F351) G086

## Women in World War I

Things are really starting to move for our HLF funded project now, and new material keeps coming in. For the wonderful collection of a First World War WAAC, see the piece on Ladas Powell on the previous page.

We have now made connection with a number of groups and individuals who are prepared to share resources. For example, Dr Gethin Matthews of the University of Swansea has been working on chapel Rolls of Honour (which recorded chapel members who served in the War, not just those who died), and he has been very generous in sharing names with us.

A website for the project is now under construction and we hope that it will be up and running by Christmas. This will be a live site, with the option to add new material. Please keep it coming, and many thanks to all those members and friends who have already contributed or shared material.



*Detail of the plaque on Colwyn Bay War Memorial by the sculptor John Cassidy. The name of a nurse, Catherine Williams QAIMNS, is also shown (left). Photo by Val Wakefield.*

We are still looking for photographs of the following names on War Memorials. Please contact me ([caroline\\_fairclough@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:caroline_fairclough@yahoo.co.uk)) before you make a major diversion to Bagillt!

St Margaret's Church Bodelwyddan	War Grave of Doris Quane QMAAC
St Tysilio Church Cwmttydu, Ceredigion	Memorial plaque to Grace Evans
Pembroke Cenotaph	Nurse Williams
Llandoverly War Memorial, Carmarthenshire	Caroline Jackson Davies
<del>War Memorial Cosheton, Pembrokeshire</del>	<del>Frances Ethel Brace</del> (thanks Kathy Talbot)
War memorial Bagillt, Flintshire	Annie and Ellen Crosby

## At the Senedd

On 10<sup>th</sup> November we were invited to join a number of other HLF funded groups for an event at the Senedd entitled *The First World War: then and now*. We were able to meet AMs, network with other groups, and be photographed with Sir Peter Luff, Chair of the Heritage Lottery Fund. Some good contacts were made, and useful material has emerged. The Snowdonia project Yr Ysgwrn which is restoring the home of the poet Hedd Wyn (Ellis Humphrey Evans) has allowed us to use a letter written by his sister Mary Evans. She was training as a Land Girl at Madryn College near Pwllheli (mostly about money, but mentioning her hiraeth for her brother Ellis). We also made contact with the Wales for Peace project which is digitising the Wales National Book of Remembrance. They will look out for women's names for us. Another contact will help with names of women in academia. It was an excellent opportunity to showcase our project.

*Catrin Stevens, Jenny Sabine, Sir Peter Luff of HLF and Caroline Fairclough*

