

www.womansarchivewales.org

Notice of membership subscription rise.

Membership subscription rates have remained the same since the Archive started 20 years ago. However, costs have constantly risen and the Committee have now decided that subscription rates need to rise from 2017-2018.

The rise will be a £5 rise across all categories, as follows:

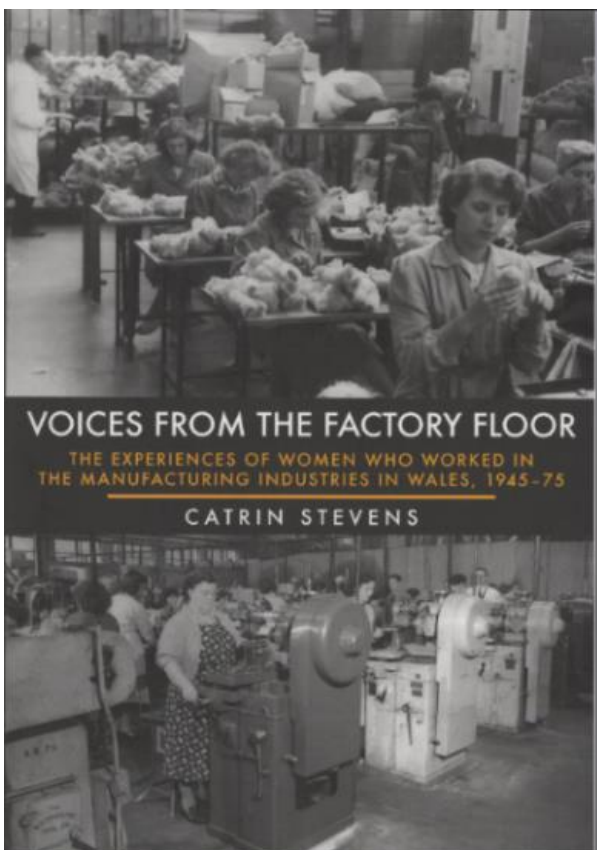
General membership	£15
Retired/Student/unemployed	£10
Institutions/organisations	£20

Gift membership will be as follows: 1 year £15, 2 years £27, 3 years £40

I will be sending a notice in May to members who pay subscriptions by Standing Order asking them to complete and return a new Standing Order form with the new rates, ready for activation from November 2017. Members who pay by other means will be sent the usual reminder later in the year incorporating the new rates.

Please carry on supporting Women's Archive of Wales, your subscriptions are vitally important to us.

Sue Thomas
Membership Secretary



Project Manager, Catrin Stevens' book *Voices from the Factory Floor*, based on interviews collected in WAW's oral history project of the same name is now published. Amberley Press, 'regular price' £14.99 (reduced price through author catrinstevens@outlok.com). The book explores the contribution women made to the manufacturing industries of post-war Wales. It presents a thematic narrative of the individual oral testimonies and recounts not only the long hours, low wages and difficult working conditions, with few health and safety regulations, but also the communal solidarity, camaraderie, controversial rites of passage and vibrant social lives of the feisty working-class 'factory girls'. The voices of these extraordinary, ordinary women can now be heard and appreciated.

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 26th May**

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,

The Women's War Work Collections at the Imperial War Museum



hats and coats IWM Q 110224

The Imperial War Museum, which is celebrating its centenary this month, might not seem an obvious source for women's history. However, from the first there was a clear intention to record the work of women in all aspects of the war. The Museum was established in March 1917; by 4th April Agnes Conway, aged only 32, was appointed (unpaid) to run the Women's Work Subcommittee of the Museum which first met on 26th April 1917. Agnes Conway had already drafted an ambitious collection's policy. To record the war activities of women, there were to be collections of photographs, pamphlets and manuscript reports from all women's organisation and significant individuals, with

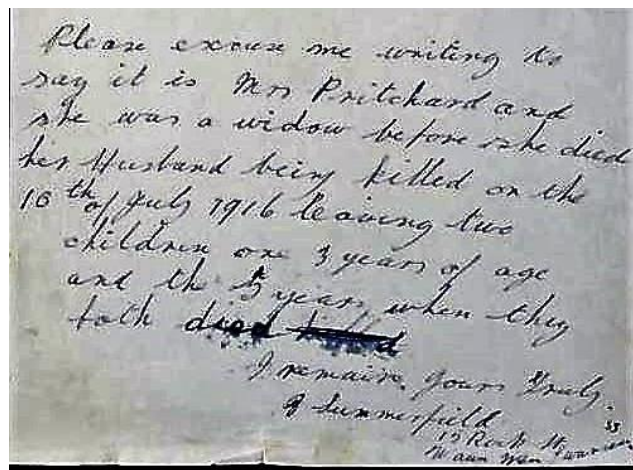
photographs the key feature. Soon the range was increased to include charts, badges, example of munitions work and original art work (much of it by women artists).

The committee worked immensely hard, soliciting material from anyone they could think of (they were middle and upper class women, and well connected) but also commissioned materials. Official photographers visited all areas of Britain, and recorded women working in all areas of industry, in service industries like window cleaning, in the forces, on the land, in transport ... The also attempted to collect a photograph of every women who died in the service of their country. They didn't fully achieve the figure of 687 women, which was the official total (more names continue to emerge), but we have images of a number of Welsh women, chiefly



Gladys Pritchard who died of T. N.T poisoning

IWM



munitions workers and nurses, who died or were killed 1914 – 1920. The museum also preserves the correspondence with the women's next of kin, which can give us more information, as with the letter from the mother

of Gladys Pritchard of Swansea, a munitions worker who died of TNT poisoning. Gladys's name appears on a list in the IWM of *Names and Addresses of Workers who have Died of Poisoning due to Their Work during the War*, but there is no other record of her.

We have the collection, too, to thank for photographs of Florence Howard, the first Welsh nurse in Wales to die in the war, in November 1914, and Jennie Williams VAD, almost certainly the oldest. She was 45 when she died in France in 1919. The accompanying letter from Florence's sister shows the feelings of most of the families of these women: 'Thank you for the honour done to one who gave her life in nursing the wounded soldiers'.



Florence Howard who died of septic poisoning. 18 xi 14

IWM



Jennie Williams who died of pneumonia in France. 11 19

IWM

There are many photographs too of women in all kinds of uniform or their 'best' civilian clothes who had undertaken all kinds of work.

The war was a huge opportunity for new jobs with good pay, and for outlets for bored middle- and upper-class women. They are all represented here.

Perhaps inevitably the good days for the Women's Collections did not last. The department was closed in 1920, and the collections were dispersed to other parts of the Imperial War Museum, particularly the Library. However they are still available to explore and view on the IWM website. <http://www.iwm.org.uk/collections>. Not all items have been digitised, but hundreds have, and as a source for women's history during a period of huge change there is nothing to compare with it.

Below are examples from series of women working, in a 'brickworks in South Wales', left, and 'sheet metal workers at Beaufort Tin Plate Works in Morrision, South Wales' both by official photographers for the collection.



All images © IWM. For more information on the Women's War Work Collections <http://www.iwm.org.uk/history/a-closer-look-at-the-womens-work-collection>

Caroline Fairclough

A date for your diary: the Archive's session at the Anglesey National Eisteddfod

Following the great success on the Archive's sessions at our recent National Eisteddfodau we have prepared a feast for you in Anglesey 2017. The actor and author, Manon Eames, will be paying a tribute to two historians who have researched the connection between women and the sea in Wales: namely her father, Aled Eames (1921-96), author of *Gwraig y Capten* [1984] (English translation by Elinor Ellis, *The Captain's Wife*) and teacher Robin Evans (1956-2014), author of *Merched y Môr – Hanes merched Cymru a'r Môr, 1750 hyd heddiw* [2013] (the history of Welshwomen and the sea, 1750 to today). The talk will explore Women, Anglesey and the Sea and will be held in the Societies' Tent 2 at 12.30 on Friday, 11th August. Simultaneous translation will be provided. Croeso.

WLM Movement in South Wales: help requested

Dr Sue Bruley of Portsmouth University is seeking records and materials for her book on the women's liberation movement. She writes *I am very keen to get Welsh material into the book but so far have made little progress, although I do remember some time ago searching through the Welsh women's archive and seeing that the Glamorgan RO has some relevant material....I have read the transcripts of the British Library project on the WLM Witness Day in Cardiff (around 2008/9?)....I have been through all the WLM newsletters I can find by using the Feminist Library London, the Women's Library LSE and Feminist Archive North and Feminist Archive South.. So what I'm really looking for is WLM material relevant to Welsh women, particularly working class women - memoirs, personal papers, records of local campaigns etc.*

If you can help, please contact her at sue.bruley@port.ac.uk.

Rotherwas Munitions Workers, Hereford

Another request for information comes from Delith Thorpe and Barry Mayne. Both are seeking information about women who worked in munitions in Hereford in both world wars. Barry is from Swansea, and is aware that many Welsh women, including his mother, worked at Rotherwas. Any information to rotherwasmunitionshereford.co.uk



Merched y Wawr celebrates Its Golden Anniversary, 1967-2017

(Merched y Wawr is the Welsh-language women's movement)

It all began in Y Parc, a small village near Y Bala, in 1967. The 1960s was an exciting decade with the founding of Cymdeithas yr Iaith Gymraeg (the Welsh language society) and dramatic changes in the status of women and the campaigning for Civil Rights in America.

Thus, in Y Parc, during the winter of 1966-67, when the members of the local branch of the Women's Institute realised that they were not allowed to correspond in Welsh or even bilingually, they decided to break away and form a new Welsh-language movement for women in Wales. After an inspirational meeting at the National Eisteddfod in Y Bala in 1967, led by Sylwen Lloyd Davies, the present Honorary President of Merched y Wawr and Zonia Bowen, an Englishwoman who had embraced the Welsh way of life in Y Parc, new branches opened overnight and the new movement went from strength to strength.

Half a century later the movement has over 250 branches and clubs for younger

members and between them they organise over 4,000 Welsh-language meetings and activities every year the length and breadth of Wales. Welsh learners are especially welcome to join in all the movement's activities.

In 2017, to celebrate its Golden Anniversary, Merched y Wawr has received a Heritage Lottery Grant to chronicle this history and to digitise the documents and photographs of every branch, district and nationally and to interview influential members. It is an enormous task, but through the cooperation of People's Collection Wales this priceless Archive will soon be accessible to all. It is a remarkable story and the enthusiasm of all concerned will be further reflected in beautiful 50th Anniversary Art Panels, a special documentary programme on S4C and in a celebratory number of the movement's magazine, *Y Wawr*. It's good to know that the story of the first fifty years of Merched y Wawr is being safeguarded, as testimony of women's efforts to campaign on behalf of the future of the Welsh language.



Catrin Stevens (Former National President 2000-02)

Women and Peace: Activities in South Wales and the South West 1914 – 2017

This day school organised by the Women's Archive, the SW and S Wales branch of the Women's History Network and Abergavenny Museum will take place on Saturday, 13th May 2017 from 10.00 to 4.30 at the Melville Centre, Abergavenny. Speakers will include Lucienne Boyce and Elaine Titcombe from WHN, Caroline Fairclough from WAW and Jane Harris from Wales for Peace. There will also be a panel discussion Remembering Greenham, and a display of banners and other memorabilia of the peace movement.

The cost of the day will be £7, including lunch. Payment will be taken on the day, but booking ahead is necessary.

For booking and further information please contact Caroline Fairclough (caroline_faiclough@yahoo.co.uk).



This day school forms part of the programme for the Museum's exhibition Monmouthshire Women Making Change, which will run until March 2018.

The exhibition celebrates not only the great names of Monmouthshire women, including Margaret Haig Thomas (Lady Rhondda), the then famous but now forgotten, like the crime writer Ethel Lina Thomas but also impressive women known only locally. It

also follows the development of the suffrage and peace movements in Monmouthshire, and the place of professional and social groups in the story of women in South East Wales.