

Spanish Influenza – The biggest killer of women during WWI.



Hannah Dunlop Mark, who died of pneumonia on service. 10 X 12 IWM

1918 has seen the celebration of partial female suffrage and the centenary of the Armistice that ended the War on 11th November. It also marks the centenary of the outbreak of the Spanish Influenza pandemic of 1918 – 19, which killed many times more people world-wide than the War itself. 100 years ago the epidemic was at its height in Europe.

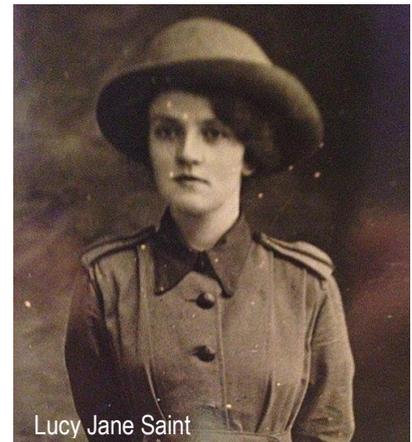
It is still not clear exactly how the disease reached Britain, and Wales in particular. The virus may have been brought from the USA with the entry of American troops into the War. Certainly the large movements of people during wartime led to its rapid spread. The illness first appeared in Britain and Europe in the spring of 1918; a serious flu epidemic, but nothing out of the ordinary. Then it resurfaced in early autumn as a very different affair. Unlike conventional flu, as well as the very old and very young the virus particularly attacked the age-group 24 – 35, the age of most men and women serving during the War.

Nurses were particularly vulnerable. More than twenty nurses currently recorded on the Women, Wales and War website died of flu, or of pneumonia following flu. Nurses Hilda Downing of Newtown, Hannah Dunlop Mark of

Bridgend and Rosina Lloyd, place of birth unknown, all died on 10th October 1918. Many caught the flu from patients they were nursing, including Lily Jenkins from Ammanford and Hylda Salathiel of Pencoed (in her case, the patient recovered and sent flowers to her funeral).

Non-nurses too died as a result of nursing family members. Hannah Davies's soldier brother William brought the 'black flu' back from France to Glog in Pembrokeshire. Hannah nursed him back to health, but caught it and died. Dorothy Thomas of Crai, Sennybridge nursed several members of her family, but died of influenza on 28th November 1918.

Members of the armed forces were also particularly susceptible; they lived very closely together, and there was a great deal of movement from place to place. Dulcie Llewellyn Jones, daughter of a Newport vicar, joined the WRAF as a driver in August 1918. She died in Mexborough, Yorkshire, two days after the Armistice. Annie Roberts, also WRAF, died the day before Dulcie, on 12th November. Lucy Saint of Pontypool, an Assistant Waitress in



Lucy Jane Saint



QMAAC, died 27th October, and is commemorated on the War Memorial gates there. The only record we have of Mary Ann Whaley of Cardiff, a store hand in the Women's Forest Corps, is her name on a list of women in the Corps who died in service. On the page where her name appears, only one out of nine names did not die of influenza or pneumonia.

The last of the women we know of to die from Spanish flu was Helena Rowlands, born in Llangefni. She was nursing in the Military Fever Hospital in Liverpool, where she caught the disease from a patient and died on 2nd May 1919. There was by then considerable concern that there might be a renewed epidemic. Her body was taken directly from Liverpool to the graveyard at Mynydd Seion, Abergele (where her mother now lived), in order to prevent the spread of infection. Her name is recorded on the Nurses' Memorial in St Asaph's Cathedral, and also on the Nurses' memorial in Liverpool Cathedral.

News of Collections

Two items of interest here: Jazz Heritage Wales has donated nine boxes of papers through WAW. They will be deposited in the West Glamorgan Archive Service. Avril Rolph's collection of Lesbian publications and pamphlets are to find a new home in the Glasgow Women's Library. Sue John of the Library, who gave an excellent presentation at this year's conference, said it would be 'an honour to receive them'. And a slightly older piece of news: in July the collection of the Welsh suffragette Kate Williams Evans was bought by the National Museum of Wales. It includes what is thought to be the only hunger-strike medal issued to a Welsh woman.



Photo: Catherine Southon Auctioneers

Remembrance Lecture 2018 - 'Welsh Women's response to the First World War

Dinah Evans was invited to deliver this year's Welsh Assembly Remembrance Lecture at the Senedd, in Cardiff, on 6 November 2018. On a wet and windy evening, some hundred or so people gathered to hear her paper, *Welsh Women's Response to the World War One*, which considered those women who, during the First World War, moved away from their traditional roles to face challenges that would, previously, have been considered inconceivable. From aristocratic young women to munition workers, the paper discussed women of all ages and backgrounds who volunteered in support of the war effort. Those who volunteered at home under the aegis of the British Red Cross and the Order of St. John of Jerusalem as well as the thousands who worked in armament factories across the country, where deaths were common and acid burns and eye injuries were an everyday occurrence. The experience of young female doctors and volunteer nurses took them into a way of life they could not previously have imagined, a way of life that was often a huge culture shock for the young volunteers. Indeed, the narrative of Welsh women's experiences revealed a whole cohort of women, from all classes, who were willing to step outside of their conventional roles to engage in the war effort, both on the home front and overseas. Yet despite the enthusiasm and bravery of these women, when the war ended with it would come the realisation that little really had changed for women and their efforts had only ever been a temporary response to the circumstances the country found itself in.



Pages from the Sea

On 11th November Swansea saw the face of Dorothy Mary Watson, a munitions worker well known to the Archive, etched on the sand in Swansea bay. This was part of Danny Boyle's UK wide commemoration of those who died during World War I. Dorothy was killed alongside Mildred Owen on 31st July 1917 in an explosion at Pembrey National Explosives Factory.

She and other woman munitions workers are commemorated on Swansea's Cenotaph. Thanks to Gail Allen.

Century of Hope Finale

The date of the event to celebrate the end of the Century of Hope HLF funded project has had to be changed to Friday, 8th February 2019. Arrangements for the day will be as already advertised. Jane Aaron, Jen Wilson and Gail Allen will be celebrating the life and work of Ursula Masson, and the film premiere of the Project will be shown. There will be light refreshments and all our welcome. Please keep the date!

Angel Heritage Awards Wales

The Angel Heritage Awards Wales is a celebration of people who make a difference to the heritage of Wales in different ways. The Awards are funded by the Andrew Lloyd Webber Foundation and the competition has been held in England, Scotland and Northern Ireland for some years, but this is the first time this competition has been organised in Wales. The Archive competed in the 'Best example of Research, Interpretation or Recording



Jenny Sabine WAW and Margaret Vaughan

factory, Swansea), Catrin Stevens (Chair of the Archive), Eirlys Lewis (who worked in six different factories) and Gail Allen (WAW Treasurer).

Carmarthen Blue Plaques

During November, two eminent Welsh suffrage campaigners were commemorated with blue plaques in Carmarthen. The Carmarthen Civic Society, with financial support from St Twrog Church, Llanddarog, organised



Jenny Sabine WAW and Margaret Vaughan

the event and Mary Thorley, who has re-discovered and researched these pioneering suffrage campaigners in detail, gave a stimulating talk about their lives and contributions to this movement. The first plaque to be unveiled on November 3rd is in memory of Alice Abadam (1856-1940). She was born in London but spent her childhood in Middleton Hall (now the National Botanic Garden of Wales). She was a talented musician and artist. During her time in Carmarthen town she lived in Porth Angel, 26 Picton Terrace, the location of her commemorative plaque. Then she moved with her partner, Alice Vowe Johnson, to London and as a suffragist she joined the Federated Council of Suffrage Movements. She campaigned across England and Scotland for equal rights and published widely on feminist subjects. Later in the month, on November 24th, a blue plaque was unveiled to Alice Abadam on Middleton Hall by her great great niece, Margaret Vaughan, during a National Botanic Gardens' conference on the women of Middleton Hall.

The second plaque commemorates Rachel Barrett (1874-1953) who was a native of the town and who became a member of the Women's Social and Political Union. She became its organiser for Wales and then moved to London to further the suffragettes' campaigning. She was Christabel Pankhurst's trusted lieutenant and was put in charge of editing the WSPU's newspaper, *The Suffragette*. She was convicted of conspiracy in 1913 and imprisoned in Holloway where she went on thirst and hunger strike. Under the 'Cat and Mouse' Act she was released and rearrested several times. This plaque is at 7 Morley Street, Carmarthen.



Branwen Waghorn and Efa Jones two local head girls

West of England and South Wales Women's History Network

The 26th Annual Conference and AGM will be held at the Community Centre, Park Street, Abergavenny on Saturday 29th June. Keep the date – we look forward to seeing you there. Further details to follow.

The 2018 Conference, Swansea.



This was one of the highlights of our ambitious 'Century of Hope' project. The conference was held at the School of Management Swansea University, in collaboration with the School, Morgan Academy and the Department of History. The Saturday was designated an International Conference where we were able to widen our horizon and learn about the suffrage movement and the interpretation of women's history outside Wales. Diane Atkinson presented the Suffragettes' campaigns in England and Margaret Ward traced the movement in Ireland during the struggle for Irish Independence. Sue John of Glasgow Women's Library and Merete Ipsen of Kvindemuseet i Danmark, described how they interpret women's history and it was salutary to hear about their progressive plans for their institutions. Katharina Sarter gave a paper on historical attitudes towards the roles of women in childcare in Germany and France to bring the day to a close.

In the evening a dinner to celebrate the Archive's 20th anniversary was held at Towers Hotel, with excellent musical items by Jen Wilson, founder of Jazz Heritage Wales. The diners proposed toasts to five of their heroines and this pleasant evening concluded with a rendition of suffrage and peace movement songs.

On Sunday morning pupils from Terrace Road Primary School, Swansea, paid a tribute to their heroine, Clara Neal, a former headmistress and suffragist. This venture was suggested by Women4resources and Carol Shepherd of ROSA Woman to woman devised the presentation.

During the rest of the morning we concentrated upon women and Wales. In Lecture Theatre 1 we heard a variety of papers – from the story of Rebecca in Patagonia by Rosemary Setton; an interpretation of Amy Dillwyn by Mandy Lane; tracing the suffrage movement in Wrexham by Georgina Gittins; a discussion about Alice Gray Jones and the periodical, *Y Gymraes* by Meilyr Powell - to a description of eminent suffragettes' visit to St Davids by Mari James. We had similarly eclectic presentations in Lecture Theatre 2: Ceinwen Statter gave a paper on Thora Silverthorne, a Spanish Civil War nurse; Diana Morgan traced the career of Lizzie Charles, missionary in Japan; and Ena Niedergang examined links between Welshwomen and China. Alys Eynon brought us back to industrial south Wales, to consider the lives of valleys' mothers and Chris Chapman's paper discussed the women's experience of marriage in post WW2 Rhondda. To draw the Conference to a close Trish Skinner chaired a panel: Norena Shopland, Uzo Iwobi and Emma Cavell, which challenged our interpretations of the history of women in Wales and emphasised diversity. West Glamorgan Archives provided a comprehensive exhibition on local suffrage for the Atrium, RMER created a suffrage graffiti and there were book stalls.

This friendly and diverse Conference was a worthy climax to 2018's activities, and our celebration of the 'Century of Hope'.



Children from Terrace Road School celebrate Clara Neal