



**Avril Rolph (24 April 1945 - 28 June 2018): Honorary Vice-President of AMC/WAW – and so much more.**

Avril was not just a founder member of Women's Archive Wales, she was involved in its very conception – the research project to record the history of second-wave feminism in Wales, which she worked on with Ursula Masson and which demonstrated the urgent need to collect and preserve the records of women's history in Wales.

Avril was a professional librarian and she brought her meticulous documentation skills to her work for AMC/WAW. She was our first Secretary. When Ursula died in 2008, she took on the role of Chair at that sad and difficult time. Yet it was in her later role of Administrative Secretary that Avril's talent for understanding and interpreting legal matters, her foresight and her attention to detail played a crucial role in the development of the Archive. She successfully guided us through the Charity Commission registration process

and our subsequent application to become a CIO. Her technical knowledge was invaluable in planning our new website. Throughout our history it was Avril we turned to for advice on many topics, and it was her wise but quiet words that guided us. As Deirdre Beddoe once said, Avril was the rock of Women's Archive Wales. Her death leaves a great void in our organisation.

Avril's research interests included women's history, especially of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, women in libraries, and LGBT history. She wrote a short biography of the feminist head teacher Emily Phipps, and most recently was working on the history of the suffrage movement in the Swansea area.

Three years ago, Avril, who was adopted as a baby, decided to contact the family of her birth mother. To her amazement and joy, her mother was still alive. They quickly built a close and loving relationship and Avril found she also had a sister and brother, nieces and nephews.

Avril was known and liked by many, as the tributes to her bear witness. Those of us who were close friends already miss her sadly. But the greatest loss is for Joan, her mother, and Angela, her partner of 45 years.

*Jenny Sabine.*

**LLanystumdwy Re-Enactment, Saturday 23<sup>rd</sup> June**

The main aim of the event was to celebrate the centenary of women winning the partial statutory right to vote, while also bearing in mind that there had been considerable conflict between WSPU campaigners and the local populace in Llanystumdwy when the Village Hall was opened by Lloyd George, 'the nation's hero', on 21 September 1912.



During the day Neil Evans and Lowri Ifor delivered interesting talks on the History of the Suffrage Campaign and the 1923-24 Peace petition respectively. Nia Powell was in conversation with Elizabeth Lloyd George, who discussed the fascinating female descendants of Margaret Lloyd George. A school art competition based on the suffrage movement was won by Year 6 pupils of Ysgol Gynradd

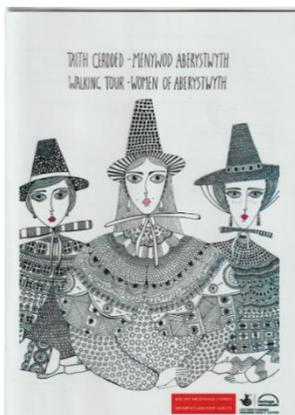
Beddgelert and the joint second prize by Rhiannon Wood and Daniel Jepson of Ysgol Gynradd Llanystumdwy. A Roadshow was held throughout the day and some new items relating to women's history were scanned. There was an excellent exhibition tracing the background to the fracas in Llanystumdwy and the Suffrage Campaign provided by Bangor University Library and Archives. There was also an opportunity to make rosettes to wear in the highlight of the event, the 're-enactment' of those dramatic events of 1912. Participants dressed in clothing from the period and decked with WSPU sashes and rosettes and those opposing votes for women all marched in a rowdy crowd to Llanystumdwy Bridge and thence travelled by vintage bus to Criccieth station. Once more Neil Evans explained the background of the troubles and 'policemen' protected the suffragettes from the angry crowd.

This event was a huge success. Around 150 attended the various activities and 70 visited the Lloyd George Museum. It was a 'fun' event, bringing history to life and raising the profile of women's history in Wales.

### **Aberystwyth Women's Heritage Walks**

These took place on Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> July. The morning was in Welsh, led by Heulwen Davies and the afternoon in English led by Gwyneth Roberts. Both walks attracted a lot of interest and participants enjoyed the opportunity to hear about women's history in the town.

The walks began and ended at Ceredigion Museum, going around the centre of town and the prom and returning for much-appreciated tea and cakes. The women featured had made their mark in many spheres. They included an opera singer who was vice-chair of CND Wales, a wood-sculptor who campaigned for disability rights, a poet and preacher who went to sea in a ketch, a block-buster novelist who ran a drama company, a distinguished botanist, a pioneering lawyer in the Caribbean, and a cinema manager who won an award from Columbia Pictures. And, as the walk was organised to mark 100 years since the partial suffrage of women, it also featured a man who campaigned tirelessly for female suffrage, the editor of the local paper for years before World War I.



Artist Mary Lloyd Jones spoke about her work to both groups, as did Tegwen Morris about the history and activities of Merched y Wawr; Sue Jones Davies met the Welsh-language group to discuss her careers as an actress, town councillor and campaigner for refugee organisations. Student Martha Morse read two poems by the poet Elizabeth Crebar and letters from a student describing life in the women students' hall of residence in 1900. There was a real sense of interest and enjoyment, and participants who'd personally known some of the featured women said how glad they were that their friends' achievements hadn't been forgotten.

An App (through Advancing Aberystwyth) which can be downloaded and a booklet, available from Ceredigion Museum and from our website, have been produced. Both are free so that everyone can follow the trail themselves. The cover image was by Hannah Davies. Both booklet and App were translated by Eurwen Booth.

### **Women in Marble: Cardiff – who next? Friday 10th August 2018**

This was the seventh Archive event at the National Eisteddfod and this time we were in the Senedd itself in Cardiff Bay. There has been much discussion this year about the lack of statues to commemorate the achievements of women in Wales and internationally, so it was decided to follow this theme and to concentrate upon our capital city. Five women who deserve to be commemorated with a statue were chosen and five historians or campaigners were asked to present them. Sara Huws from Museums Wales was invited to launch the debate because of her lively and passionate blog on the subject. Thus, Dr Elin Jones presented Millicent MacKenzie, educationalist and suffrage campaigner and the first women from Wales to stand for election in 1918; Emeritus Professor Jane Aaron – Kathleen Freeman, classical scholar and author of 27 detective novels under the pseudonym 'Mary Fitt'; Non Vaughan Williams – Nan Davies, pioneering broadcaster, who reached the higher echelons of the British Broadcasting Corporation; Helen Mary Jones – Val Feld, former AM and campaigner for equal opportunities and the 'Yes' vote during the Welsh referendum; and Dr Siân Rhiannon Williams – Betty Campbell, the first black women Head teacher in Wales, in nearby Mount Stuart Square, and a campaigner for racial equality. Every argument was persuasive and many thanks to all the speakers for their polished presentations.



Both room and gallery were full for the event. A vote held to choose the favourite for a statue. Betty Campbell came top of the poll. The session was a fun event but also had a solemn message as it underlines the huge gap



Photo: Andy Dark

between the recognition of women and men's contributions and achievements in the public domain.

We got excellent publicity for the event - on the Friday morning actress Pippa Moss came as a living statue of Amelia Earhart to raise awareness by holding a placard asking 'But where are the statues to the women of Cardiff?' on the steps of the Senedd (left). To draw further attention Mared Pugh-Evans dressed as a suffragette and handed out flyers to Eisteddfodwyr.

Catrin Stevens

### Welsh Heritage Schools' Initiative: Penboyr School sweeps first prize

Once again this year we were able to offer an award for the Welsh Heritage School's Initiative competition. Over sixty schools from all over Wales competed this year for prestigious prizes donated by the Hodge and Moondance Foundations and by local history societies and other heritage institutions. At the Awards Ceremony in South Wales University on 6th July our prize was won by Penboyr Primary School, Carmarthenshire for an excellent project about Sarah Jane Rees, 'Cranogwen', one of the most important and remarkable women in Welsh history. She was born in nearby Llangrannog. The school also won the People's Collection award for digital excellence and one of three shields awarded for the best primary school project. As part of their project the pupils were keen to discover what had happened to the Chair Cranogwen had won in the Eisteddfod. They tweeted and used social media. They were thrilled by the response and the pupils discovered that the Chair is safe in Coleg Trefeca near Brecon. WAW's film-makers for our 'Century of Hope' project filmed the pupils as they researched their project. Congratulations Penboyr!



Ysgol Penboyr 's winning team, with head Dr Carol James, Catrin Stevens and Chris Chapman.

### International Conference on Saturday 6<sup>th</sup> October

The School of Management, Swansea Bay Campus, Swansea University SA18EN

On the Saturday of our Annual Conference on October 6<sup>th</sup> this year we will be holding a very special event to learn more from fellow historians of women's history in other parts of the U.K. and Europe. We have a great line-up of speakers, so please come to support us – it would be great to see the lecture theatre full for these eminent speakers. And bring your friends along too!



Dr Diane Atkinson [L], author of *Rise Up, Women! The Remarkable Lives of the Suffragettes* (Bloomsbury 2017 £30) will open the Conference. Diane is a regular lecturer on the suffragettes at conferences and has appeared on television and radio programmes. She was a consultant on the film *Suffragette*. She is also the author of *Funny Girls: Cartooning for Equality* (Penguin, 1997). Diane will be signing copies of *Rise Up, Women!* following the lecture based upon her book.

Dr Merete Ipsen [R] joins us from Denmark and she will talk on 'The Gendered Democracy in Denmark - told from the perspective of the Women's Museum in Denmark'. A psychologist by training, Merete was the co-founder of the Women's Museum – Kvindemuseet in Aarhus in 1983 and remains its Director. She has written numerous books. Among her other roles she is on the Danish national UNESCO committee.



The Glasgow Women's Library has always had close connections with Women's Archive Wales and Sue John [L] is one of its Senior Managers. It is the only Accredited Museum dedicated to women's history in the UK. She project managed GWL's recent £1.8 million four-phase capital renovation programme and it was short-listed for the Art Fund Museum. of the Year in 2018. Sue will talk on 'The Making of the Feminist Museum'

Dr Margaret Ward [R] is currently Honorary Senior Lecturer at Queen's University, Belfast. In 2014 Margaret was awarded an honorary Doctor of Laws by Ulster University for her contribution to advancing women's equality. She is the author of many books, including *Unmanageable Revolutionaries: women and Irish nationalism* and her latest *Hanna Sheehy Skeffington: suffragette and Sinn Féiner, her memoirs and political writings* (2017). Her talk will be on 'Winning the Vote: the Irish Suffrage Movement'.



Our last speaker of the day will be Dr Helle Sigh from Denmark [L]. Helle's main area of research lies within the fields of social- and cultural history but during the last seven years, she has focused upon Danish and international maritime history. Her current position is head of research at the Frigate Jutland museum, Ebeltoft. Her talk "Immortal mother and benefactor" Honorable dwellings for unmarried noblewomen and the dynamics of donations among the Danish elite from 1699-1745' will reflect the research for her doctorate.

On the Saturday evening there will be a Conference Suffrage Dinner at the Towers Hotel and Jen Wilson of Jazz Heritage Wales and a Suffrage Choir will entertain us.

On Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> October we will hold our own 21<sup>st</sup> Annual Conference looking at the history of women in Wales. Once again this year we have a fascinating and eclectic mix of professional and amateur historians discussing a wide range of topics on women's history. Please join us at the Conference. Don't miss this special event!

For further details of the programme and to download the booking form please see our website [www.womensarchivewales/events.org](http://www.womensarchivewales/events.org)

## Peace Walk.

Bank Holiday Monday 27<sup>th</sup> August was an emotional day for many of us. This was the exact date in 1981 when a group of women set off from Cardiff to walk all the way to Greenham Common to protest against the siting of US Cruise missiles there. Our aim was to commemorate the impact and influence of the Greenham Common peace camp throughout the world.



The initiative started in Wales. A group of 4 women in west Wales came up with the idea, fearful of the build-up of nuclear missiles at that time and for the future of their children. Two of those women, Ann Pettitt and Karmen Thomas, were speakers at our event. So were Sue Lent, who only intended to walk as far as Newport with her son in his push chair, but then was inspired by the ethos of the group to walk the whole way and Steff Greedy who realised she was on the wrong side of the Greenham fence and left the army. Bethan Sian Jones from Aberystwyth University put the Greenham and Brawdy peace camps in the historical context of the Cold War.

And music. Peace songs from Heather Jones and the Red Choir in Cardiff, from Frankie Armstrong in Chepstow. The songs brought back so many memories. It was an ambitious and complicated day. Some of us had set off from Swansea in a big bus at 8.30 am, just as we used to do all those years ago. Over 60 people gathered for two hours in Alexandra Gardens behind Cardiff City Hall, to listen to the speeches and music, and to talk to old and new friends. More people joined us on the bus from Cardiff to the Drill Hall in Chepstow, where additionally there was an exhibition and yet more participants. And we had banners.



The highlight of the day was walking on the old Severn Bridge, recreating the iconic photo from the original walk in 1981. The procession was a beautiful spectacle in the sunshine, with the two colourful banners made by schoolchildren in Abergavenny in our workshop in April, and a banner that Thalia Campbell had specially created for our event. Thalia's daughter Lucy carried this



banner, remembering being a teenager on the original march. Karmen said afterwards that our event 'captured the spirit of the day all those years ago'. For many of us it was a reminder of our younger selves; for everyone it was a reminder of women's creativity in protest *Gail Allen*