

## Launch of Gwir Gofnod o Gyfnod / Setting the Record Straight

'Setting the Record Straight: Capturing women's records and voices in Welsh Politics'



Left to right: AMs Irene Jones, Lisa Francis, Jane Hutt, Sian Gwenllian, Christine Chapman, Ann Jones, Elin Jones.

This event, part of WAW's celebration of International Women's Day, was held at the Senedd, Cardiff Bay on March 6<sup>th</sup> 2019 and hosted by Ann Jones AC/AM Deputy Presiding Officer. Overall the event was well attended attracting WAW members and current AMs including the First Minister and former First Minister. There were also former women AMs whilst others sent messages of support in their absence.

Our Chair Catrin Stevens gave an overview of the Archive's work, focussing on past projects and the most recent Century of Hope events.

I emphasised the need for more women Assembly Members to send their papers for

archiving given that there is still much inequality in this in terms of collections. Susan Edwards, from Glamorgan Archives, explained the role of the County Record Offices in collecting the papers of significant county campaigns and relevant electoral history and she also gave some practical advice on how to deposit material.

We were also pleased that Robert Phillips of the Welsh Political Archive was in attendance. In his contribution he also made the case for the need for an even greater effort in the future into ensuring that relevant national papers relating to women politicians will be collected and deposited. He also showed how ephemera such as that deposited by Thalia Campbell from the Greenham Common campaign could be overlooked and considered as insignificant, but that in fact it shed important light upon the campaign. For example, an aerial map included in the deposit showed that a crèche had existed on the camp site – an important aspect of women's priorities when campaigning.

As part of the event there was an exhibition of WAW materials. This included the film 'Lleisiau/Voices' developed by Catrin Edwards and Natasha Horton based on the Archive's work on factory women in Wales. In addition there were displays of material relating to other previous successful projects such as the Roadshows and Women in the First World War. It was pleasing to see so much interest shown in the Archive and a number of people took membership leaflets. This event took place at an important time, given that 2019 marks 20 years of devolution. The Archive would like to thank all those who contributed to the success of the day.

Chris Chapman

*A Management Group has been formed for Gwir Gofnod o Gyfnod / Setting the Record Straight, and an application for funding is being made to the National Lottery. **And see page 4 of this Newsletter!***



The speakers with Ann Jones, Deputy Presiding Officer



### Launch of the Avril Rolph bursary

Around 35 people attended the evening at the Studio, Taliesin, Swansea University in memory of Avril – with several of our members, fellow librarians and friends from her book club and Gower present. Programme leaflets, including a bibliography of Avril's main articles, chapters in books and talks were distributed, and they illustrated how much she had contributed to the history of women in both England and Wales.

Avril's partner, Angela Brunt, spoke briefly at the beginning of the evening and she gave a little of her background and interests. This was followed by Jenny Sabine talking of Avril as a

friend and colleague – a personal talk about their work for AMC WAW and their deep friendship over many years. Michele Davies, Avril's former head of section at Swansea library spoke about her contribution as a colleague, who loved meeting students and explaining the intricacies of library research to them. She also explored Avril's academic works which championed women in libraries and lesbians in libraries. Lastly, Michele described her keen horticultural interest and how she raised money for WAW through her frequent plant sales in the library tearoom! Catrin Stevens then examined Avril's writings and talks as a feminist historian – especially her articles about the Women's Liberation Movement in south Wales in the 1970s; the peace movement in the 1980s, including not only Greenham but also the other less well-remembered peace camps and protests and lastly her successful championing of Emily Phipps – feminist pioneer in Swansea.

We were treated, then, to a showing of a shortened version of the 'Canrif Gobaith Century of Hope' film, which Catrin Edwards introduced. She related Avril's contribution to it, as WAW's archivist and historian – with a detailed memory of all our activities of the early years in particular. This was very well received.

Lastly, the Bursary in Avril's memory was launched, and Angela was presented with a copy of the certificate which will be awarded to this year's successful candidate.

To find out more about the bursary visit the AMC/WAW website <https://www.womensarchivewales.org> News and Events. Applications for this year's Conference have now closed, but submissions for 2020 will be welcomed.

### Women's Archive at the Llanrwst Eisteddfod

Wil Aaron will be the speaker at this year's WAW Eisteddfod event. He will be telling the remarkable story of Martha Hughes Cannon. She was born near Llandudno in 1857, and taken by her convert-to-Mormon parents to the United States as a small child. From a very poor start she became a doctor, the fourth wife of a Mormon polygamist, and in November 1896 the first women senator in the United States.

Wil Aaron established the television company 'Ffilmiau'r Nant' in 1976 producing programmes such as 'Hel Straeon', 'Sgorio' and 'C'mon Midffild' for S4C. He has published a book about the Mormons in America called 'Poeri i Lygad yr Eliffant' (Y Lolfa) which will appear in English in the autumn and which will have a chapter on Martha.

There will be an opportunity too to discuss and support a memorial to her, Martha's Stone, in Llandudno. There is a memorial to her in Utah already and in 2020 another will be erected in Washington.



**Societies' Tent 1, Friday 9 August at 1 o'clock**  
**Simultaneous translation available**

## Beatrice Green

As a woman politician representing a Valleys constituency, the inspiring story of Beatrice Green resonated with me. I knew very little about her until a colleague drew my attention to the passion and courage she demonstrated on behalf of her community.



Beatrice Green (centre)

Beatrice Green [née Dykes] was born in Abertillery in 1895. She had worked as a teacher before being forced to give up her profession on marriage. Like many women in Wales at the time, her early life was dominated by her links with Nonconformity. In Beatrice's case this was in the form of Ebenezer Baptist chapel in Abertillery. There she carved out a role for herself in terms of public speaking, organising and education which would provide an effective training ground for her future political activism.

As a Sunday school teacher in Ebenezer, Beatrice founded the Girls Own Club, a social club giving many girls of the area skills and interests outside of domestic work. Beatrice was highly regarded in terms of her teaching and

communication skills particularly in her storytelling which inspired those who came into contact with her.

Like many of us in politics, campaigns for local issues and concerns for the welfare of those in our community was at the core of Beatrice's commitment. When Abertillery Hospital was built by public subscription in 1922 she threw herself wholeheartedly into the work. She supported the Hospital Linen League which meant fundraising and sewing very essential sheets and pillow cases. A friend of Marie Stopes, Beatrice was also a supporter of a birth control clinic at the hospital which lasted for a short time before being closed as a result of opposition.

A Labour Party activist, she wrote regularly for *Labour Woman*. Her public profile and prominence increased at a time of great disruption in south Wales when the General Strike of 1926 and the subsequent six month-long Miners' Lockout saw massive privations in areas like Abertillery. Beatrice raised much needed funds on behalf of the Women's Committee for the Relief of Miners' Wives and Children and provided resources for the miners and their families who were suffering great hardship. She also drew however on her enormous skills as an organiser and travelled to London to speak up for her community and to take an active part in drawing the country's attention to the plight of the miners and their families.

The struggles in the coalfields at the time were also gaining international interest. Such was the high esteem in which Beatrice was held that she was asked to be part of a delegation to Russia. For two months in 1926 she travelled as a guest of the Russian trade unions speaking up for the miners and their families in order to raise funds.



Beatrice (centre right) and delegation arriving at Kharkov Station

Her untimely death a year later at the age of 32 from ulcerative colitis was one of great personal tragedy as the mother of two young sons. But it was also of wider significance in that we are left with a sense of loss at what Beatrice could have achieved had she lived, a question which is reflected upon by Lowri Newman in her contribution in the *Dictionary of Labour Biography* which I have drawn upon for this article. I am also grateful for further information provided by Dr Sue Bruley and Alyson Tippings.

In the November 1927 edition of *Labour Woman*, the MP and National Women's Organiser Marion Phillips movingly described her friend as a 'great woman leader for her sisters of the coalfield.' Beatrice Green was indeed a remarkable woman, an activist whose life inspires today.

Chris Chapman

Chris was AM for Cynon Valley 1999-2016

## 2019 Conference 5th and 6th October at the National History Museum, St Fagan's, Cardiff.

This year's conference will be held at the newly redeveloped St Fagan's Museum of National History and we look forward to seeing many of you there.

Booking is now open: [Conference 2019 booking form \(bilingual pdf\)](#).

The call for papers has now closed and we have had a variety of very interesting proposals. The programme will be ready soon

st fagans  
sain ffagan  
national  
museum  
of history  
werrin  
amgueddfa  
cymru

### Preserving your Archive

The following is an expanded version of a short briefing given at the AMC/WAW presentation at the Senedd in 2019 to encourage women politicians to consider their archival legacy.

The first thing to note is that there will be an appropriate place to deposit records wherever your original base may be. Material of national relevance and coverage is collected at the National Library of Wales while each local authority funds an archive service to preserve the written history of its area. There are three joint regional services for the 12 councils between Monmouth and Swansea plus one each for the 10 councils to the north and west. Wherever your constituency is based there will be a qualified professional at hand to discuss the preservation of your papers. Women in politics are very often also active in their local community or with third sector organisations. Papers accumulated in all areas of life may be worth preserving and should certainly be discussed with an archive service.

As a general rule archives collect original material only, no copies, and rarely take publications unless there are particular and specific connections to a depositor. Paper records and photographs are accepted by all archives; some may take recordings. We are, in Wales, working in collaboration with the national institutions to establish a national provision for preservation and access to digital archives. Meanwhile archives have temporary solutions and most should be able to accept records in digital format. Again, it helps to have the discussion ahead of deposit.

In return for your papers you can expect to be given a receipt followed by a list of the collection. Most offices have on-line catalogues which prospective users can search before coming in to see the documents. Access is restricted under data protection legislation. If you have particular concerns you can discuss it with the archivists before depositing. AMC/WAW can advise on the most appropriate institution for the papers offered.

You can help by following these simple steps:

- Contact the archives before depositing. You will be able to discuss the collection and arrange delivery to suit both parties
- Maintain the original document order. The catalogue will enable entry into the collection from any number of approaches and so it is important to keep the papers as they were accumulated.
- As much background information as you can. This can be provided as a separate file. Names and dates for photographs, some context for how papers were acquired and why they were kept, are all important.
- Box lists are the gold standard. These are neither required nor expected, although any index or finding aids you already have would be helpful.
- Passwords for encrypted digital deposits - Essential!

And by avoiding these preservation nightmares:

- Writing on stuff in ink
- Using sticky tape or staples
- Bundling things with elastic bands
- Putting items in plastic wallets
- Throwing anything away before discussion

Archive services will box and repackage collections received in preservation standard materials which will help to maintain the collection in good condition.

Susan Edwards, Glamorgan (and WAW) Archivist.



Damage remaining after sellotape has been removed and the document cleaned up