

# Apêl 1923-2023: The Welsh Women's Peace Appeal to America - Centenary Story



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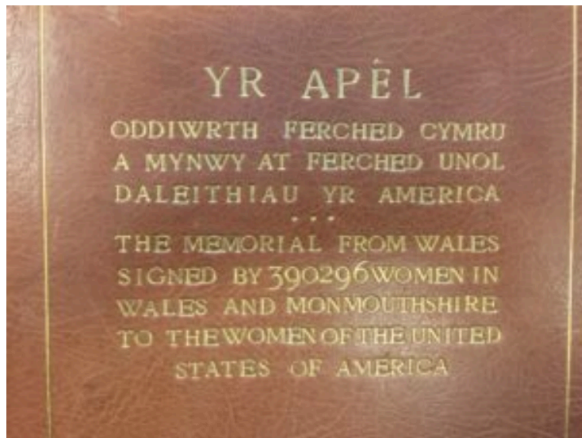
**Impact in America of the Wales Peace Appeal**

**October 2020**

*By Craig Owen, Head of Wales for Peace at WCIA*

## Discovering Treasure

In 2014, amidst research towards setting up the ‘Wales for Peace’ project, WCIA Chief Executive Martin Pollard (now with the Learned Society of Wales) was exploring old volumes in the library of Wales’ National Temple of Peace and Health. He drew out a Moroccan Leather binding



bearing a tantalising gold leaf inscription: “Yr Apel...” Contained within, a few pages of vellum parchment illuminated in mediaeval-style manuscript of Indian Ink, proclaimed a declaration of Peace and Solidarity between the women of Wales and America – calling for America to join and take a world-leading role in the League of Nations, to forge ‘peace for future generations’ in the aftermath of WW1. Martin Pollard recalled: “It was a breathtaking moment... a Welsh peacebuilding movement of a scale beyond any in living memory. How could

such a story have been forgotten to history? How was such a record forgotten in plain sight? Where were the signatures... and were they still around now? How was such a campaign coordinated? Who by... who to? What happened... what happened as a result? How could we discover the story behind the binding?” Volunteers and community groups Wales-wide helped to ‘gather the pieces’ of this peace history; a story of activism by Welsh women on the international stage to build a better world out of the ashes of WW1. Such a campaign should be considered in the context of the early 1920s: Suffrage – the right to vote – had recently been extended to ‘propertied women’ in 1918, not reaching most Welsh women until 1928. The Women’s Peace Petition represents a significant and bold movement to champion equality through elevating the voices of women to the international stage. WCIA launched a ‘call for hidden histories’ on International Women’s Day 2016 with an article ‘Remembering Wales’ women peace builders. Volunteers uncovered materials within the Temple of Peace Archives, Welsh League of Nations Union archives at the National Library, and even Pathe newsreel footage of a 1926 North Wales Women’s Peace Pilgrimage. Blogs, local projects and student



research pieced together events from the interwar era into a ‘timeline’ of Women’s Peace Activism over the Interwar era (1918-39).

## Women, War, and Peace

In 2017, WCIA teamed up with International Photojournalist Lee Karen Stow to stage the ‘Women War & Peace’ Exhibition – unveiled at the Senedd in August 2017, to accompany the ‘Poppies: Weeping Window’ sculptures from London. The exhibition aimed to bring women’s stories to the fore of remembrance through Lee’s powerful portraits and accounts (including interviews with a number of Welsh peace activists today); and to highlight the hidden histories of women as peacemakers in the aftermath of WW1 – with the binding and declaration of the Women’s Peace Petition from the Temple of Peace at centre stage. The exhibition was visited by an estimated 80,000 people over Summer 2017

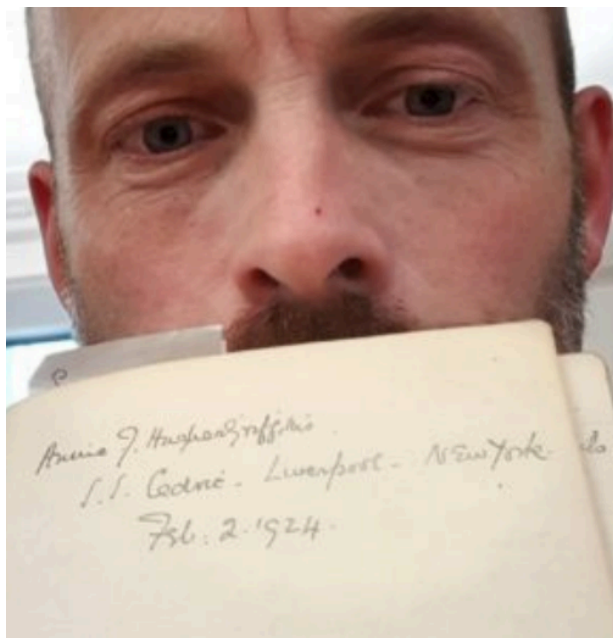


## Annie’s Diary

In April 2019, Head of Wales for Peace Craig Owen was exploring Welsh League of Nations Union ‘Peace Archives’ held in the National Library of Wales, when he stumbled across a reference for an ‘American Diary / Journal’, tagged “Peace Societies”, held in the archives of the “T I Ellis Papers” (Thomas Iorwerth Ellis, 1899-1970). The listing summated... SCOPE AND CONTENT: “Journal, FebruaryMarch 1924, of Annie J. Hughes-Griffiths, recording her trip to America as part of the Welsh Women’s Peace Memorial, including the outward and return voyages. The journal contains references to Leila Mégane, including the part played by Hughes Griffiths in Megane’s wedding to T. Osborne Roberts on 21 March 1924.”

National Library of Wales Archives Up until this point, sources and knowledge on

the origins and organisation of the Women’s Peace Petition had been very limited – for example, ‘Mrs Peter Hughes Griffiths’ had so far been discoverable only by her husband’s name – so the value of this diary as a primary source material was very quickly recognised. The pages were digitised with the aim of transcribing and uncovering the story of the visit to America – to



understand more about the petition itself, and the campaign behind it. WCIA appealed for volunteers to help uncover 'the story of Annie's Diary'.

## A Book Club Linking Past, Present, and Future

In June 2019, a novel 'Book Club' gathered at the Temple of Peace, with a 'historic mission'. Each of the participants transcribed a 'chapter', drawing out highlights from Annie's accounts, and briefly researching historical references accessible online or through their own research / networks. Coming

together, each volunteer shared 'their section' and the story of Annie's journey to and through America was unveiled - almost as if experiencing the journey with her, in Annie's own voice. Some 'missing pages' were identified, and re-digitised as follow-up. The session was filmed by Tracy Pallant and Amy Peckham from Valley & Vale Community Arts, and was created into a short film for International Women's Day 2020. Additionally,



Alaw Primary School in Rhondda Cynon Taff used the diary as the basis for a cross-curricular 'Peace Schools' project, also filmed for inspiring other schools. Many thanks are due to the 'Transcription Team' / Book Club participants who volunteered many hours over a short time frame, to transcribe and share Annie's Diary:

- Craig Owen, WCIA
- Ffion Fielding, National Museum of Wales
- Fi Fenton, National Museum of Wales
- Martin Pollard, Learned Society of Wales
- Jane Harries, WCIA Peace Schools Coordinator
- Katy Watson, Alaw Primary School (instigator of 'Annie's Diary' curriculum project)
- Jenny Fletcher, Hub Cymru Africa
- Stuart Booker, Swansea University PHD Researcher
- Meinir Harries, National Assembly for Wales



L-R: Tracy Pallant, Katy Watson, Craig Owen, Ffion Fielding, Jane Harries, Fi Fenton (holding the Women's Peace Petition memorial binding), and Jenny Allen.

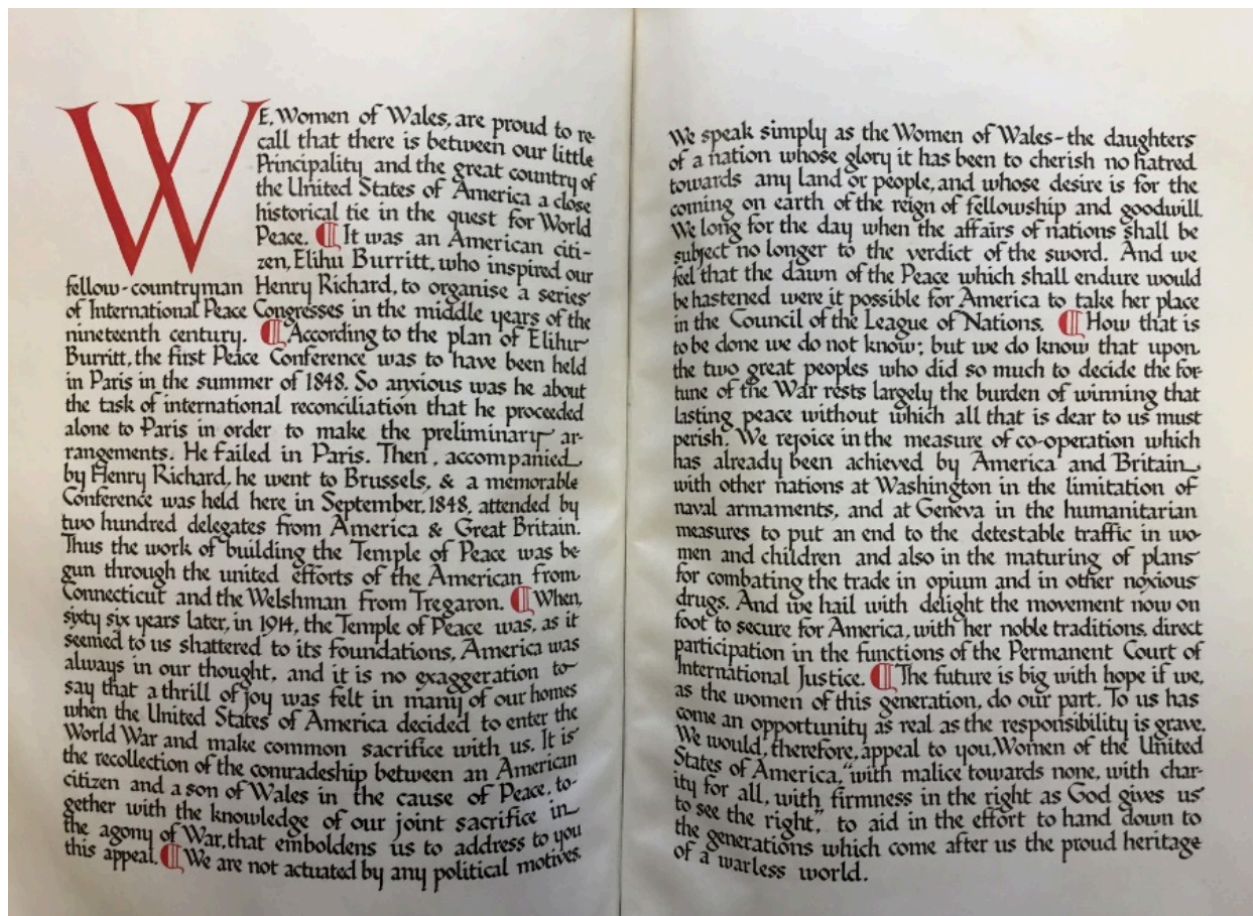
- Tracy Pallant, Valley & Vale Community Arts
- Amy Peckham, Valley & Vale Community Arts

**“It was quite an emotional experience... with not already knowing each other’s sections, Annie’s journey unfolded for us like a ‘live re-enactment’ of her travels. Her understated writing style, observations and insights into the norms of the time, were captivating. She might reference “a lovely meal, with a pleasant group of people listening supportively”; then you’d find from other sources she’d addressed a crowd of 500 American society leaders for over an hour. Then on a following page, a eulogy to the American Cafeteria! Annie’s Diary is a very personal insight into a time of huge hope and change.” - Ffion Fielding, National Museum of Wales**

## **The Story of the 1923 Peace Petition Campaign**

Researching the story of the 1923 Peace Petition campaign itself has been an archival treasure hunt, involving volunteers, community groups and researchers Wales-wide. A “National Conference of Women” met in Aberystwyth on May 23 1923 to finalise plans for a Wales-wide campaign, appointing two national organisers: Mrs Huw Pritchard of Pwllheli (for N Wales & Cardiganshire) and Mrs E. E. Poole of Cardiff (for South Wales & Monmouthshire). Mrs Peter Hughes Griffiths and Lady Llewellyn as Honorary Treasurers, appealed for funds and received donations towards the costs of the nationwide campaign. The campaign itself was orchestrated through county organising committees, with women (and some men) representing each Welsh community (of any significant size in each county), leading that communities’ signature gathering efforts; feeding them in via WLNU branches and County coordinators to the regional organisers, and to the newly founded WLNU headquarters in Cardiff. This nationwide, participatory approach opens scope for swathes of as yet ‘hidden histories’ about how the campaign was delivered at a local level, from Anglesey to Monmouthshire and Tenby to Denbigh. Within Wales’ Temple of Peace Archives remain copies of signup leaflets and donations pledges distributed to individual households by local WLNU activists; and personal copies of the Memorial Declaration for signatories to keep for display in their households, or fold into their papers. The Welsh League of Nations Union Yearbook for 1924 records the progress of the campaign both in Wales and America (images 10-12, yearbook pages 16-20). In total the petition was signed by 390,296 women in Wales and Monmouthshire, representing 30% of the female population (total Welsh population from the 1921 census being 2,656,000).

## The Peace Declaration



The Declaration contained within the Memorial Petition, recounts the historic ties between Wales and America - and appeals from the women of one proud nation to another, to “hand down to the generations which come after us, the proud heritage of a warless world.” References within the declaration are linked in the text reproduced overleaf.

“We, women of Wales, are proud to recall that there is between our little principality and the great country of the United States of America, a close historical tie in the quest for world peace. It was an American citizen, Elihu Burritt, who inspired our fellow countryman Henry Richard to organise a series of international peace congresses in the middle years of the 19th century. According to the plan of Elihu Burritt, the first Peace Conference was to have been held in Paris in the summer of 1848. So anxious was he about the task of international reconciliation that he proceeded alone to Paris in order to make the preliminary arrangements. He failed in Paris. Then accompanied by Henry Richard, he went to Brussels, and a memorable conference was held here in September 1848, attended by 200 delegates from America and Great Britain. This, the work of building the ‘Temple of Peace’ was begun, through the united efforts of the American from Connecticut and the Welshman from Tregaron. When, 66 years later, in 1914, the temple of peace was as it seemed to us shattered to its foundations, America was always in our thought; the recollection of the comradeship between an American citizen and a son of Wales in the cause of Peace, together with the knowledge of our joint sacrifice in the agony of War, that emboldens us to address to you this appeal. We are not actuated by any political motives

and it is no exaggeration to say that the thrill of joy was felt in many of our homes when the United States of America decided to enter the World War and make common sacrifice with us. It is the recollection of the comradeship between an American citizen and a son of Wales in the course of peace, together with the knowledge of our joint sacrifice in the agony of war, that emboldens us to address to you this appeal. We are not actuated by any political motives. We speak simply as the women of Wales – the daughters of a nation whose glory it has been to cherish no hatred towards any land or people, and whose desire is for the coming on earth of the reign of fellowship and goodwill. We long for the day when the affairs of Nations shall be subject no longer to the verdict of the sword. And we feel that the dawn of the peace which shall endure would be hastened were it possible for America to take her place in the Council of the league of nations. How that is to be done we do not know; but we do know that upon the two great peoples who did so much to decide the fortune of the war, rests largely the burden of winning that lasting peace without which all that is dear to us must perish. We rejoice in the measure of cooperation which has already been achieved by America and Britain with other nations at Washington in the limitation of naval armaments, and at Geneva in the humanitarian measures to put an end to the detestable traffic in women and children; and also in the maturing of plans for combating the trade in opium and other noxious drugs. And we hail with delight the movement now on foot to secure for America, with her noble traditions, direct participation in the functions of the Permanent Court of International Justice. The future is big with hope if we as the women of this generation do our part. To us has come an opportunity as real as the responsibility is grave. We would, therefore, appeal to you, women of the United States of America; “with malice towards none, with charity for all, with firmness in the right as God gives us to see the right,” to aid in the effort to hand down to the generations which come after us, the proud heritage of a warless world.”

## A ‘Peace’ of Art

It is thus far unknown whether any particular individual(s) were responsible for composing the written content of the peace declaration itself; although the mediaeval revival illumination and calligraphy were crafted by Cecily West (1897-1977), daughter of artist Joseph Walter West of Northwood, Middlesex. The Memorial itself – the beautiful leather binding and vellum pages with mediaeval illumination – was almost certainly produced at the then newly founded Gregynog Press, opened in 1922 by the Davies sisters of Llandinam, Gwendoline and Margaret. Their brother, David Davies, founded the Welsh League of Nations Union, and would go on to found Wales’ Temple of Peace and Health. Their story is beautifully told in Trevor Fishlock’s book, *A Gift of Sunlight – the story of the Davies’ sisters of Gregynog* by Gwasg Gomer. The Women’s Peace Memorial is of an identical style and materials to others produced by the Gregynog Press. A great Welsh Oak chest (below – engraving from WLNU Annual Report, 1926) was designed by Mr J. A. Hallam, in which to convey the enormous number of signature forms to be conveyed to America, with the intention that the chest be presented to the National Museum in Washington – today better known worldwide as the Smithsonian Institute. Following correspondence between WCIA and the Smithsonian in 2016, it was established that the chest is still held in the collections in Washington, and in 2018, Jill Evans MEP had the opportunity to visit and to witness the signature sheets still held within the chest. Over 2019-20, correspondence has been ongoing between the National Library of Wales and the Smithsonian – supported by a project group coordinated through Academi Heddwch (involving WCIA, ‘Heddwch Nain,’ Women’s Archive Wales and others) - to explore scope for organising a transnational Wales-America project to mark the centenary of the Women’s Peace Petition Campaign in 2023-24: digitising the petition signatures, and hopefully reuniting the chest and signatures held in America, with the Memorial Binding held in Wales’ Temple of Peace.

## Mrs Peter Hughes Grriffiths - Chair of the Welsh League of Nations Union (WLNU)



*Mrs. Hughes-Griffiths, 1920s. TI Ellis Papers, NLW*

Regularly appearing in records and correspondence associated with the creation of the petition, Mrs HughesGriffiths was the Chair of the Welsh League of Nations Union during the mid-1920s. As was the convention of the 1920s, on official records she is almost always referred to by her husband's name, Rev Peter Hughes Griffiths (1871-1937), who was a highly regarded Calvinistic Methodist Minister from Carmarthenshire; for some time, this was a significant challenge in trying to discover more about her. Martin Pollard, original architect and author of the Wales for Peace project bid, during the Nov 2018 Temple 80th Anniversary programme, spotlighted Mrs Hughes Griffiths as his nomination for 'Wales' Most Inspiring Peacebuilder':

“To choose one individual story of Wales' peace builders that really stands out - from the hundreds gathered by Wales for Peace - I would have to choose 'Mrs Peter Hughes Griffiths'. That she is known to history only by her husband's name (at that time), rather than as a woman of clearly exceptional leadership and inspiration to thousands... a woman who was Chairman of the Welsh League of Nations Union, and oversaw the organisation of 390,296 women in signing the Peace Petition to America – is not only astonishing today, but a reminder of the journey that Welsh women have led towards championing equality and having a voice; not just on equality issues, but on international affairs.” Martin Pollard,

Learned Society of Wales (commenting before Annie's Diary had been found).



*Annie Jane Ellis at Aberystwyth station in 1911-12 with friends: Jane Davies, Gwyneth Williams, Annie Jane (then known as Mrs T.E.Ellis) and Mary Ellis, who would join her on the Peace Delegation to America in 1924. TI Ellis Papers, NLW*

Mentioned in a number of men's biographical sketches and with over 71 references and 20 subject listings in NLW Archive holdings, Annie Jane Hughes-Griffiths – as we now know her full name to be - seems today highly deserving of her own biography. Born as Annie Jane Davies in 1873 in Llangeitho, Carmarthenshire, she was active in Welsh cultural and political life from an early age. In 1898 she married Thomas Edward Ellis (1859-99) from Bala, Liberal MP for Merionethshire (1886-99) and one of the first proponents of a legislative devolved Welsh Assembly, and Chief Whip for the Liberal Party (1894-95) during the transition from Prime Ministers Gladstone to Rosebery (see T.E.Ellis papers, NLW).

Tom Ellis' health however was fragile, having developed typhoid on a trip to Egypt in 1890, and tragically he died a year after they had married - aged just 40 - in Cannes, France; 8 months before their son was born. He was named Tom, after his father; and she was known as Annie Jane Ellis (or Mrs Thomas Edward Ellis) from 1898 until 1916. Their son Thomas Iorwerth Ellis (1899-1970) became a prominent educationalist, author and secretary of Undeb Cymru Fydd (the 'New Wales Union') from 1943-67. Annie brought up Tom as a widowed mother, until on 24 October 1916 she remarried the Rev Peter Hughes Griffiths (1871-1937) from Ferryside, Carmarthenshire, a Methodist Minister in Charing Cross, London.

Following WW1, Annie Hughes-Griffiths became hugely involved in international peace building efforts through the Welsh League of Nations Union (founded in 1922), becoming its Chair in 1923 and President of the WLoNU Women's Committee. From May 1923, she took on leadership of the Welsh Women's Peace Petition and Memorial; and in March 1924, she led a 'peace delegation' of women from Wales to America: Mrs Annie-Jane Hughes Griffiths, Mrs Mary Ellis and Miss Elined Prys.

## The Welsh Peace Delegation

Until 2020, much of the story of the Welsh Women's Peace Petition has centred on the story of Annie Hughes-Griffiths, primarily from discovering her incredible diary - a unique and personal perspective on the Women's Tour of America. However, there remains great scope to explore the perspectives of the other women's delegation members:

### Mary Ellis:

Originally from Dolgellau in Gwynedd, Mrs Mary Elizabeth Ellis (who appears from Annie's archives to have been a longstanding close friend), was the second woman to have been appointed an Inspector of Schools in Wales, and a world-leading educationalist. Beyond the Peace Petition, Mary appears in many records of Welsh League of Nations Union activities through the interwar period – a prominent internationalist in her own right. Over 2020 further research has come to light recording that it was actually Mary who organised much of the American Itinerary for the Welsh Peace Delegation's visit – having travelled in advance in December 1923 to make contacts and put arrangements in place. Following presentation of the petition in Washington, she is thought to have returned to Wales for her educational work commitments. On 24 January 1942, Mary married Gwilym Davies – Director of the Welsh League of Nations Union (and founder of Wales' Youth message of Peace & Goodwill). Despite WW2 and restrictions of the time, she was granted permission to marry, and retained her post till



1943. They lived at 8 Marine Terrace in Aberystwyth. Following Gwilym's passing in 1955, Mary continued championing their causes. Mary's educational work is being researched further by Sian Rhiannon Williams of Cardiff Metropolitan University / Women's Archive Wales.

### Elined Prys:



Originally from Trebecca, Talgarth in Radnorshire, Miss Elined Prys - better known as Elined Prys Kotschnig (spelling varying between records between Eluned / Elined, Prys / Pryce and some misspellings of Kotschnig) stands out in Annie's Diary for having married at the tail end of their trip to America... "to an Austrian Count" (as Annie exclaims!) After graduating in Philosophy from the University of Wales, in 1920 Elined had been called upon to head the World Student Christian movement's relief work with refugees from WW1, where in Vienna she met Walter Kotschnig, a Swiss International Student Service activist who had been 'nursed to health' by League of Nations volunteers in the Netherlands following contraction of Tuberculosis. Walter Maria Kotschnig went on to become Director of the High Commission for Refugees for the League of Nations, and was one of the founders of the United Nations at Dumbarton Oaks in 1945, and US Deputy Assistant Secretary of State; his archives (1920-1984) are held at Albany (view New York Times obituary).

15 After Elined's women's peace petition activities of 1924, the newly married couple settled in Geneva, before emigrating to the United States (Massachusetts) in 1936. Eluned was a prominent Quaker and leading Psychologist, an associate of Carl Jung, and went on to become influential in the study of psychology and religion. She founded the Friends Conference on Religion and Psychology

which remains active today.



### Gladys Thomas:

Mrs M.G. (Gladys) Thomas was Annie's travelling companion for the 'Peace Tour' of America. After their Washington meeting with President Coolidge, Mary returned to Wales and Elined travelled to Buffalo, reuniting with Annie and Gladys at the end of their trip for the voyage home to Wales. As yet, relatively little is known about Mrs Thomas.

## ‘The Sendoff’ from London, 5th February 1924

“A beautiful bright morning, sun shining. Had a light breakfast, and at 9.10am the taxi ordered overnight arrived. After depositing my trunk, suit case & hold all within, Peter, Mary & I got in & drove comfortably to Euston Station. Arrived there at 9.35 and found our train already on Platform 14. A Saloon Carriage had been reserved for us through the extreme kindness of Mr Glynne Roberts of Euston Station, & this was no ordinary saloon, but a Drawing Room with comfortable easy chairs, table...” This description suggests Mr Roberts may have used his influence to procure for this ‘illustrious delegation’, the ‘Chairman’s Saloon’ from the stock of the then newly formed (1923) London Midland and Scottish Railway – for whom he was Executive Secretary. The luxurious carriage, no. 5000, became part of the Royal Train from 1928 to 1990, when it was preserved by the National Railway Museum. “Annie’s carriage” (and King Edward VIII / Churchill’s) can be viewed today at the Midland Railway at Butterley in Derbyshire.



Welsh League of Nations Union Press Cutting from the Western Mail of 5th Feb 1924, with Annie Hughes Griffiths surrounded by wellwishers at London Euston Station, carrying the Peace Memorial to America.

“Mrs. Boyd Robson presented me with a beautiful bouquet of yellow daffodils tied with yellow short green ribbon...” These beautiful daffodils become a signature of Annie’s appearances on the journey, surviving through to Washington “in perfect condition”! Annie lists many of the ‘great and the good’ of Welsh society and political leaders who had turned up to Euston Station to wish the delegation on their way. “Reporters were busy taking their own notes, and several photos were taken by the Press Association. Mr. Goronwy Owen spoke a few words, summarising the gesture which was being dissipated between Wales and America, and wishing us God speed. I said a few words in reply, and thanked them all adequately and fittingly. We then got aboard the train.”

## The Voyage to America

“(In Liverpool) we got on the boat, the SS Cedric, And a representative of the White Star Line company made himself known to me and told me that the oak case containing the 390296 signatures was safely in the hold. Miss Prys, Mr Davis and myself were photographed several times.”

Their return voyage to Liverpool incidentally would be on the RMS Olympic – sister ship to Titanic, which had sunk only 12 years earlier. “Leila Megane and her fiancé Osborne Roberts also going on this boat she goes 1st class he 2nd class the line between 1st and 2nd is severely observed on the boat. Leila Megane was a Welsh opera singer then at the height of her career; Little did Annie know at this point that, in 2 months time, she would be asked to ‘give away’ Miss Megane at her wedding to Osborne Roberts (Page 30) in New York.

“All our friends - our ‘farewell friends’ - had to leave the boat about 3:15, and we left soon after 3:30 p.m. It was a dull day; but not wet. We steamed down the river and soon had tea. I found at the purser’s office about 15 telegrams, and just as many letters wishing me luck.” Annie goes on to describe the Transatlantic crossing, from Feb 2nd to Feb 11th – which was not ‘smooth sailing’.

“Felt sick and needy and did not go on deck a tall. Heavy rolling of boat. Took no meals in saloon, just sat about and slept and read novels. Had very little zest for anything“. However, by 10th Feb, “Had (Sunday) service in 1st Class Saloon. Leila Megane sang ‘O Fryniau Caersalem’ as a solo, & a few of us sang it over again as a chorus. After the service was over, a gentleman came & asked us if we were a Welsh choir on tour in the States... very tickled at this as our singing was truly atrocious.”

## **Arrival in New York: United States of Women**

The Cedric took ten boats to push her up the river thro’ the ice’. Saw Statue of Liberty glowing in the sunlight. Bitterly cold wind, bright sunshine. Waited about until 12 – had hurried lunch. When at lunch, a press man came to me and said ‘Mrs Griffiths, I am from the press’. ‘I have something to say’, I said. ‘Oh!’ Said he – ‘we know your story of the Women of Wales Movement – but we want to take some photos – will you come to the top deck when you have finished?’ “Agreed” said I. So Eluned & I trotted up to the top deck 1st class – where we found four ranks of photographers awaiting us. There we were photographed quite twenty times – in different positions... and back again to 2nd class to await the coming of the Immigration Officers.

We went on Deck & had seen Mary Ellis, Mrs Tuttle, Miss Belle Bauch & other American ladies, who had come down to meet the deputation in the Customs Shed, awaiting us. Eventually they got on board and there was much hand shaking & welcoming us. The ladies all wore daffodils – I had had the daffodil bouquet (from Euston) put in cold storage when I got on the Cedric & it was beautifully fresh for our arrival in New York, so I carried it in my hand and wore my best costume and hat to greet the American ladies.

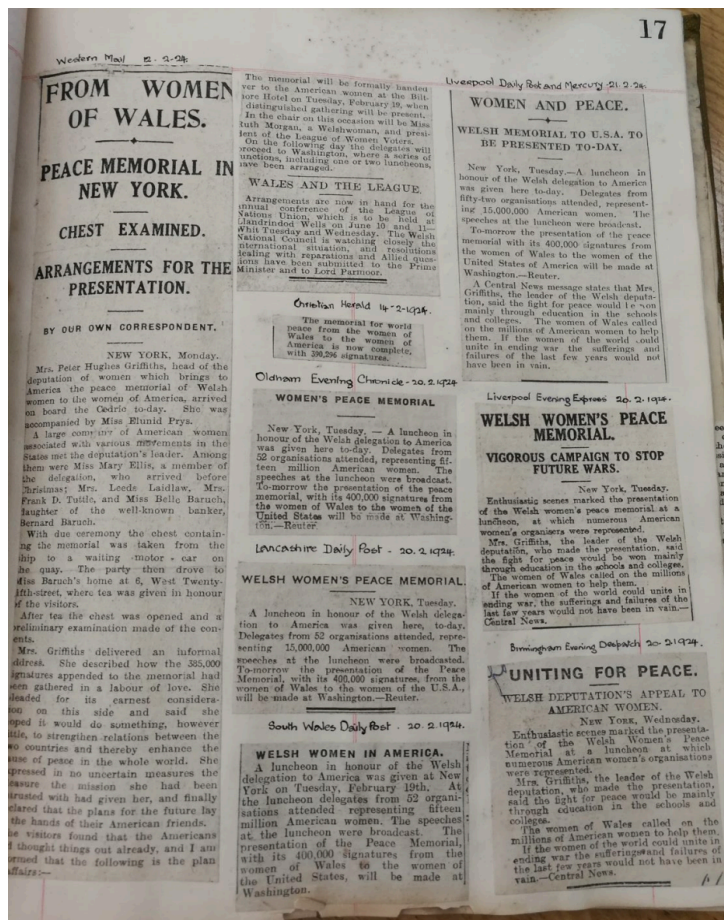
“My impressions of the American women I have met today is that they are genuine & sincere in their efforts to give the Movement all the support they can. Their reception of us was so spontaneous so natural & without any of the snide and affectation of English women. They accepted us at our highest value, as Ambassadors of Peace. They did not quiz and criticise us first and ‘gradually thaw’.

Rather a blizzard when we got to New York, but better weather towards evening. After dinner we went to the Ambassador’s Hotel. The Club is very comfortable but very warm; still one gets used to the warm atmosphere & dresses accordingly.

The following pages offer insights into Annie’s first few days in New York, with press interviews, ticket bookings and travel arrangements, meetings and lunches, and many fascinating observations on her impressions of America – such as Annie’s wonderment at the experience of a ‘Cafeaterea’. On February 18th, the delegation were received for a large luncheon organised by the National American Women Suffrage Association alongside 9 organisations (representing 5 million American women) – who would go on to work together to form the first Conference on the Cause and Cure of War.

There the Welsh delegation presented the oak chest containing the 390,296 signatures, to the women of America:

“After the luncheon we had speeches. Mrs Ruth Morgan introduced the delegation – & I gave them an address on the links that bind Wales & America together, & our act of memorial. It



seemed to be appreciated. Then we three went up to the chest which had been placed on a dais & padlocks were unlocked, & we gave up the padlocks & the memorial to Mrs Ruth Morgan. Then the chest was inspected and the first question I was asked concerning it was “Oes yma enwau o Sir Feirionydd” (where are the signatories from Merioneth?). Miss Sue Harvard sang ‘Gwlad y Delyn’ & ‘Hen Wlad fy Nhadau’ & thus ended one chapter in the history of the Memorial.”

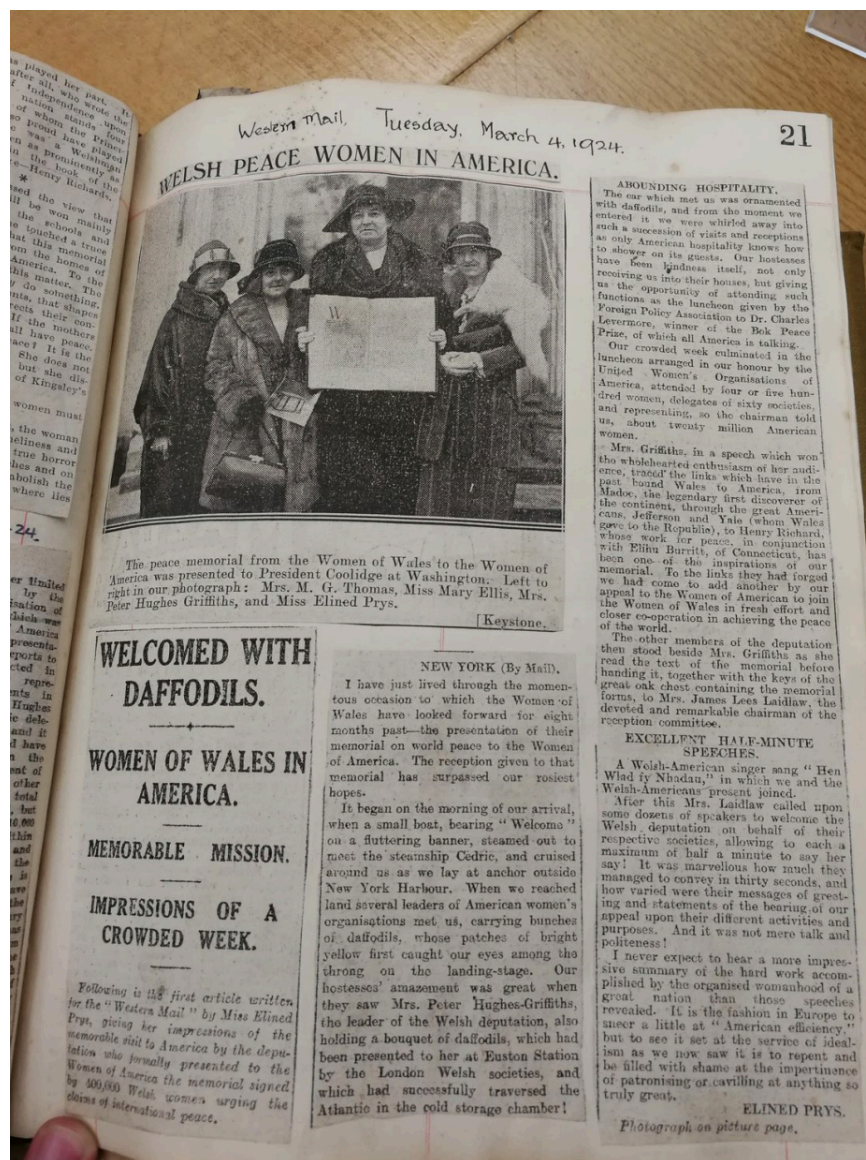
**“It was a truly thrilling gathering and one which in our wildest flights of imagination, we had never thought of on such a comprehensive scale.”**

## Washington: Petitioning the President

From Penn Railroad Station... Got on the 12.10 train for Washington – had lunch on the train – passed thro’ Baltimore, Philadelphia & other places. An un-interesting journey: Except for the two rivers that we crossed, houses all detached & wide acres of flat country partly covered by snow. Had a comfortable journey. Met at Washington station by Mrs Eastman & her car – & drove to the American Assoc of University Women’s Clubs. Following a couple of days exploring Washington – visiting Lincoln’s Memorial, and paying their respects to former US President Woodrow Wilson, architect of the League of Nations, who had died on Feb 3rd 1924, 2 weeks prior to their visit – on February 21st 1924, the Welsh and American Women’s Peace Delegation met with the US President, Calvin Coolidge. The following is Annie’s (rather modest and understated) account of their meeting with the 30th President: “We drove to the office of the League of Women Voters, where we were photographed. Then in charge of Mrs Morgan & Mrs Swiggelt, we all walked across to White House for an interview with President Coolidge. On entering we found the hall filled with people, reporters, photographers & others.

We saw a man in charge – in plain clothes –no uniform here! We saw on his list of President’s Engagements for the day Feb 21st 1924: 12.15 – Mrs Hughes-Griffiths, Mrs Mary Ellis and Miss Pryce – we were shown into another room & waited there awhile with several other people, while the President’s secretary came out. Mr Sterns by name. He opened the door leading into the room where Mr Coolidge stood standing, awaiting our arrival – & we were introduced to him by Mrs Morgan. He said words to this effect “You are from Wales”. I: Yes He: And I have Welsh blood in my veins, having for an ancestor Nathaniel Davies. So you can’t get away from home. 30th US President, Calvin Coolidge (1923-29) I: We are proud to own you as a fellow countryman. He: Thank you, I am very glad to see you. I: (Producing the copy of the Memorial & showing it to him together with photograph of oak chest). “This is the copy of the memorial we have brought over from Women of Wales to the Women of America, and the chest containing the signatures. We hope you will allow the chest to be placed in the Smithsonian Institute for all time.” He: I will do what I can to help you. I do not see what reason there is for it not to be placed there – I was the President of the Institute.” We then left the room, after being cordially pleasantly welcomed by the President, a quiet dignified man of middle height. Straight nose with the crease in his trousers, a pleasant manner and voice. We went outside the White House & were besieged by an army of photographers – 9 in all. Taken many, many times. Shots have reached us this eve which are exceedingly good.”

Over the course of the day in Washington, following the meeting with President Coolidge: “We started for Arlington (Cemetery), a place about 4 miles from Washington, where sleep the silent hosts who died in the war for the Union. Arlington Cemetery, 1920s Lincoln Memorial, 1920s (below) - Wikimedia Then we drove back past the Lincoln Memorial where Eluned took some photos. From here we went to the

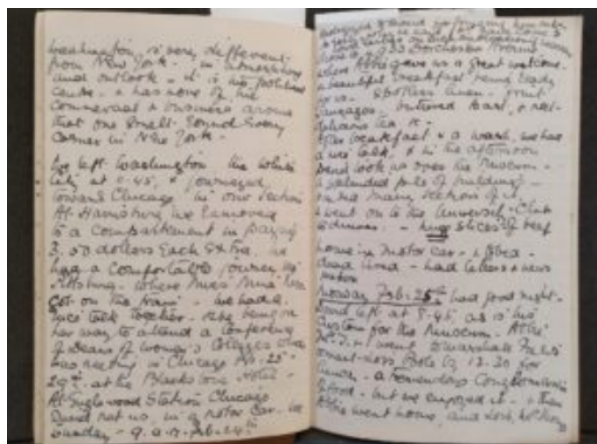


Photographers who took our photos outside White House. I ordered some large ones & post cards. Thence to Washington Cathedral where we saw Woodrow Wilson's tomb with the simple inscription Woodrow Wilson, 1856-1924

28th President Woodrow Wilson, who negotiated the 1918 Treaty of Versailles and Paris Peace Process that ended World War 1, had died just 18 days before their visit. A beautiful building in process of building – the money to be procured before continuing to build. From there back to Club lunch – where we were entertained by the alumni of Radcliffe College, the female part of Harvard University. Made a short speech after lunch, Mrs Doyle presided. Car to Smithsonian Institute where we decided – !! – on a spot where the oak chest should be placed. Had very jolly drive – back to Club. Thence to Mr. & Mrs. La Follette's – a Senator likely to be new President & lead new party (the US Progressive Party, 1924- 34) a very nice couple. George Washington Day – cherry flavour (reference to 'cherry pies', traditionally associated with the National Holiday which celebrates the 1st President's birthday) – large crowd Senators' ladies standing in a row receiving the said. Best part of this house was the great sympathy with Peace movement – "we are all interested in it, but we have different ways of setting about it." Went to George Washington Anniversary meeting in Memorial Hall.

## 'Peace Tour' of the United States: A Month Spreading Wales' Message, 22 Feb - 22 March, 1924

On Saturday, Feb 22nd 1924, Annie and her companions were 'waved off' from Washington on a 'Welsh Women's Peace Tour' that would take in the whole of the United States over the course of 4 weeks. "Mrs. Ruth Morgan came to bid us goodbye, her last message being as follows: "Our organisation, the National Council for Prevention of War, is trying to do one definite thing & is arranging an active Campaign to attempt to secure the sanction of the Senate for entrance into the Permanent Court of International Justice. Your visit to us has awakened a great deal of fresh interest, & will help our campaign forward greatly, for the success of such a campaign depends entirely upon popular interest, & your message to us has added that touch of drama which is necessary to arouse that interest."



### Chicago

Mrs. Thomas & I had been invited to meet the Deans of Women's Colleges by Mrs. Kerr... Got to the 2nd floor where the guests, about 400 women, were assembled – but the most awful Babel of voices it has ever been my lot to hear. Prof. Merriam of Chicago University; a Dr. (Agnes) Wells, a woman of great distinction & President of the Assoc. of Women Deans, gave her report. Then Frau Schreibe gave an account of the need for brotherhood, being one of 35 members of the Reichstag 15 of which were school teachers. Then I was called upon to speak of the Memorial, did so for 15 minutes. Got home by 10.30. Very glad the ordeal was over... Mrs. Thomas said I did alright.

## Colorado

Annie's diary, particularly of their month's American tour, is fascinating not only for its social commentary of the internationalist women's movement, peace campaign and politics of the time, but for her observations of the natural environment, landscapes and cultures. We now got to the Land of Canyons. Most wonderfully formed rocks of bright red colour. Most wonderful formation. Sphinx like in shape, formidable in appearance. Came to quite the most well-kept station on the (rail) road... 'Morgan' written in white stones on the station level... We hired a car & hied us to the Ogden Canyon, a distance of 11 miles. Our drive was an exceedingly well set up. Young man in knee breeches, & in passing thro the town called at his garage for his overcoat & splendid crown & yellow check coat. We drove up through the ravine or pass or canyon, thro' snow covered rocks & hills, with here & there the hot steam appearing from the hot water springs higher up.

## Salt Lake City

Mr John James is British Vice-Consul, a native of Swansea, born in Haverfordwest... Mr James told me we ought to have been at the St David's Day Celebrations the previous evening. He wanted to see us take our message to the women of Utah: It was arranged that we two were to go... to the Mormon Temple grounds. Soon Mr Williams a Welshman from Brechfa, Carmarthenshire – the State Senator – arrived with his wife and son, in a fine motorcar... I had to tell the W.O.W. (women of Wales') story... We went as far as the University on the hill, where one had a most splendid view of the city beneath the clearly cut snow clad mountains, like white icing so smooth and straight in appearance – a fine mist rising from the Lake in the distance was a most impressive picture.

## San Francisco

We drove on to Stanford University which stands in its own grounds of 8000 acres. The buildings are of buff sandstone and they are grouped around open courts or quadrangles and are connected by continuous open arcades of arches and pillars. The no. of students at present is about 2500 – 2000 men, and 500 women.... Mr. Salisbury Williams from the harbour commission Presided, and there was singing and recitations and speeches. I spoke for about 20 minutes, and at close of meeting met Mr. & Mrs. Dunn. Mrs. Dunn is an old Aber student from Pontypool, knew me in Aber. Has been out in S F Since August. Very homesick when I spoke to her.

## Los Angeles

Almost as soon as I got into the (Gates) Hotel, a lady accosted me, being anxious to have an interview with me for the Los Angeles Times. I sat and talked with her and told her of our message, and of our visit to the President's Tomb in

Washington. I announced that I was to speak in the evening service. The interview appeared in Monday's paper, quite a nice article. ...through South Pasadena to 212 Brauch street. Chapel



crowded. Mr. Jones's son commenced the service very earnestly and prayerfully. Dr John Davis introduced me by questioning Sara and John Saunders, and brother John & myself. I then spoke for 40 minutes – without one note! – of our mission. Went to office to get reservations and then drove to Hollywood. Went to West Coast Production studio, to Beverly Hills Hotel where they were shooting pictures in the garden... Then Santa Monica Ocean Park, Venice, where we went to a Chinese restaurant. Had Chow Mein and Tea in the Chinese-style. I didn't enjoy it.

## Grand Canyon

The Grand Canyon is beyond description in formation colour and effect... We went to a Morie Lecture given by 2 brothers, who had travelled through the Canyon from Colorado River right through the Gulf of Mexico, a distance of 217 miles. We saw pictures of their wonderful experiences in 2 flat bottomed boats, and the many escapades they injured and narrow escapes they had. We went over to Hopi House (the Indian Centre), saw the Indians dance. And shook hands with the chief – who had a University training. He told us he had already 4 wives, but he was still on the market.

## Niagara Falls... and an Engagement

Annie's Diary contains a couple of pages recounting the thrill of being guided beneath Niagara Falls through tunnels, and on a boat – a fascinating insight into 1920s tourism! But Annie and Mary also had pressing things on their mind in Niagara: at some point in their travels, their companion Eluned Prys (who was with them in Washington) had taken a separate path – with a fascinating development...! We got off the train (at Niagara) and went into the station; and began wondering what we had better do about getting in touch with Eluned Prys, who had arranged to meet us at Buffalo that day. As Buffalo was 23 miles beyond Niagara, we decided to get off there and get in touch with Eluned at Lennox Hotel Buffalo – the place arranged for our meeting (They then explore Niagara Falls). By that evening: "She was not there.... We then sent a long wire to Eluned." By the following lunchtime: "No sign of Eluned." Finally, they decide to continue their onward train journey without her: "3.42pm when we left by train for Utica, leaving Georgette alone on the platform. We had a pleasant trip by train to Utica: passing through Buffalo, Rochester, Syracuse – where Miss Carver and her brother in law came to see us pass through. Miss Carver looked well and bonnie and was very cheery and told us the news of Eluned's engagement to an Austrian Count!! She told us she intended sailing for home on April 5th." The diary shows they do finally succeed in reuniting with Eluned on Thursday March 20th, at the Women's University Club in New York.

## New York... and a Wedding

On their return to New York, from Wednesday 19th March 1924, they reconnected with their colleagues from the National American Women Suffrage Association Mrs (Ruth) Morgan spoke of messages which should be sent by women of America to Women of Wales in reply to their message. These replies were (to be) provided for the Annual Meeting of the Welsh Council of the League of Nations Union – in Whit week. We had some telephone calls to see to, including one from Leila Megane, who had decided to get married the following day, and wished me to give her away! Leila Megane (1891-1960), Welsh Mezzosoprano Opera Singer, who married Composer Osborne Roberts in 1924. They journeyed from Wales to America on the 'SS Cedric' with Annie Hughes Griffiths and the Women's Peace Delegation We dressed ourselves in our evening clothes, and ... went to the League of Nations 'Non Partisan' Dinner at the Biltmore Hotel. I was put to sit at the speakers table between Mr Frank Emerson and Mrs James Neal. After speeches

by Mrs Vanderlip, Mrs Little and Mr Levenmore, I was called up to give a 2 mins speech . It was a case of “Play up Wales”. In the morning we went down to White Star Offices and Customs House and got our tickets stamped and labels etc (for the RMS Olympic). Went up Fifth Avenue to Maurice’s Restaurant 49th Street to meet Megane and her fiancé... and heard the final arrangements for the wedding After a very nice lunch, French looking, we four and Mr Schang, the best man, went in a taxi to the Welsh Chapel 120th Street. Megane dressed in a covert courting costume, light fawn with felt hat to match. Rev Joseph Evans performed the ceremony in Welsh, and I gave the bride away. There were a few spectators. At 5.30pm the bride and groom arrived and we had a sumptuous dinner. We then all went along to the Welsh Church where a reception had been arranged in our honour. Dr Keigwhin presided, Minister of one of the Presbyterian Churches in New York. Addresses of welcome were delivered by Rev. Joseph Evans on behalf of the Welsh Churches of the city, by ladies representing different societies, by a gentleman who kept a Welsh Lodge, etc etc. Megane sang ‘Y Nefoedd y Cartref, - and her husband accompanied her. A beautiful bouquet was presented to us by Mrs Hughes, who made a charming speech. Megane got the flowers meant to Elined... I spoke for about 25 minutes, giving “the message” To the Club via Broadway, all lighted up and brilliant... packing and bed 2am.”. This was Annie’s final ‘peace message’ from the women of Wales to the women of America, completing their tour of the United States.

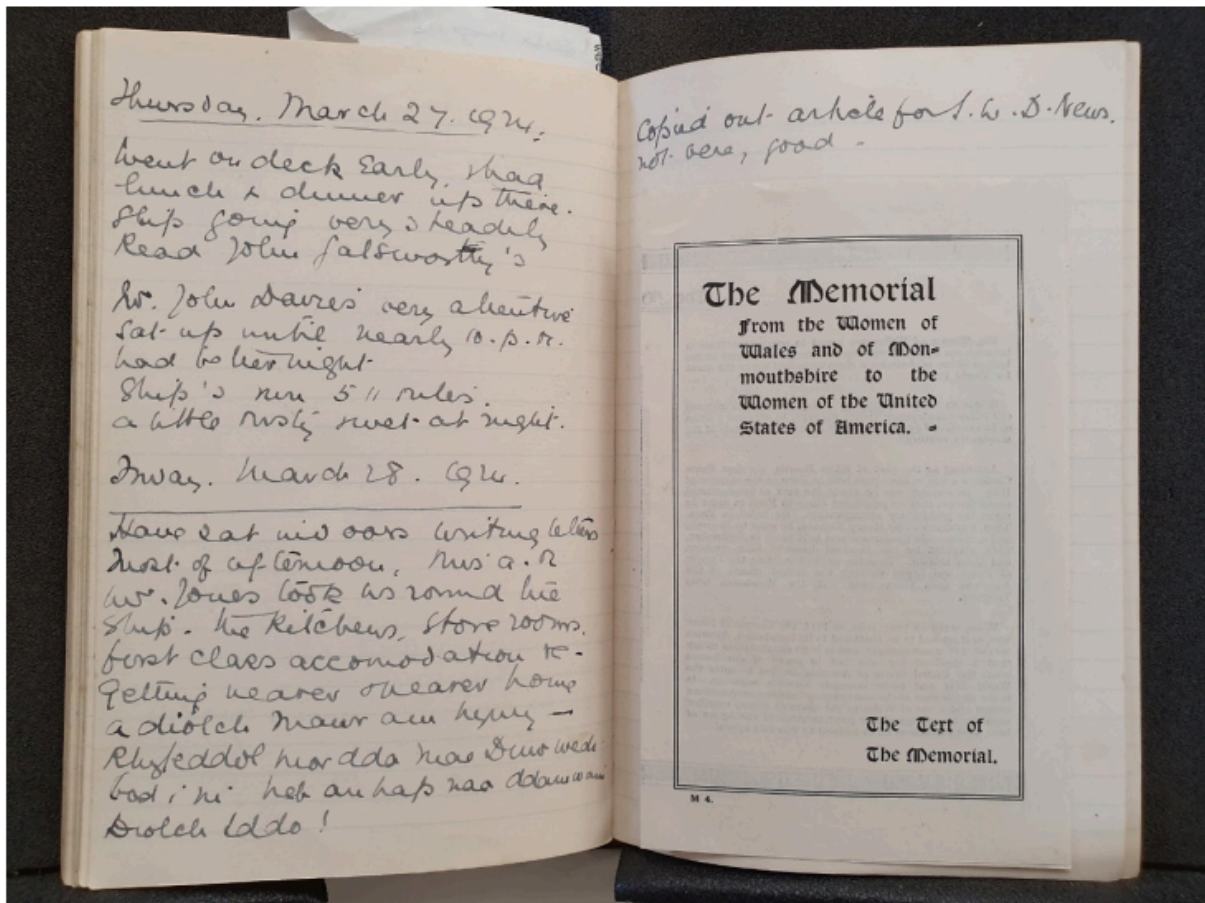
## **The Return Voyage**

The following morning, March 22nd, they set sail for the 7 day voyage home to Liverpool, on the RMS Olympic, sister ship to the the RMS Titanic (which had sunk only twelve years earlier, on its 1912 maiden voyage from Southampton to New York). Somewhat ominously given the association, their departure was marred by a ‘close shave’: “Got our cabin, D58, and went on deck to see the American skyline as we drifted down the river.... Had a splendid view of the statue Of Liberty... As the Olympic was turning to make her way down – the “Fort St George,” a boat making for Bermuda with 300 passengers onboard, came across the Olympic and was badly damaged. The Olympic only having her propellor damaged... We were wholly unconscious of the accident until we were out at sea. Annie’s diary entries for the return Transatlantic crossing, finish with the reflection: Rhyfeddol mor dda mae Duw wedi bod i ni heb na hap na damwain... Diolch lddo!

**“It’s amazing how good God has been to us, without accident or incidents... Thanks be!”**

## Notes Page

The rear pages of Annie's diary contain notes and sketches from her travels, some of which seem to be from speeches she liked. One such note was on the recently deceased US President, who had founded the League of Nations just 4 years beforehand: Woodrow Wilson was an idealist, and gladly suffered the fate of most idealists: "I would rather fail in a cause I know some day will triumph, than win in a cause I know some day will fail" Her notes also offer some fascinating personal reflections on her impressions of America's 'Great Cities': New York ... a city of heights Washington... a city of beautiful buildings Chicago ... a city of lengths - Michigan Avenue 60 miles long! Utica ... a city of beautiful boulevards Salt Lake City... a city of Mormons San Francisco... a city of hills Los Angeles ... a city of beautiful suburbs.



Final page of Annie's Diary

## Impact of the Women's Peace Petition in America



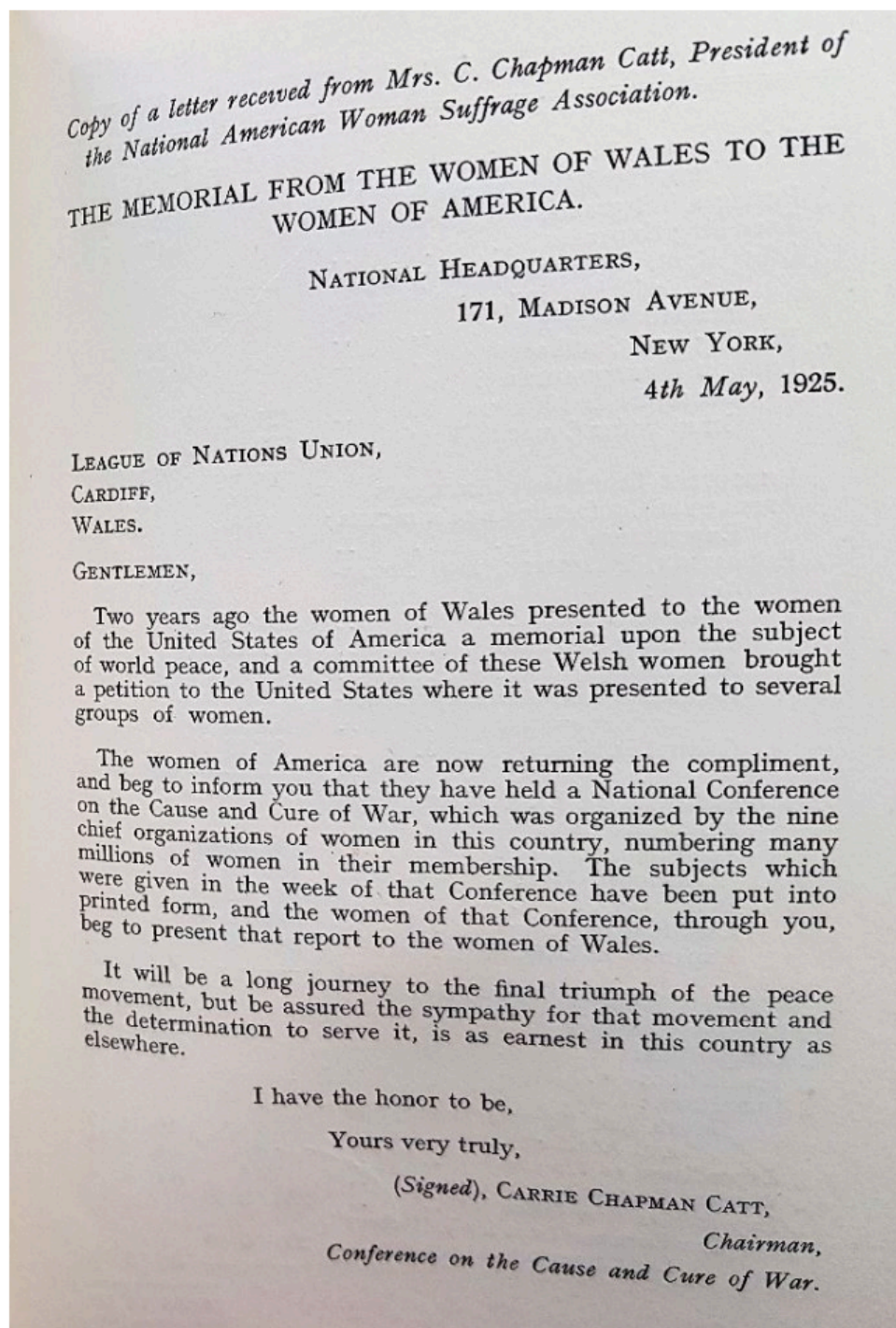
US President Calvin Coolidge with delegates of the [1925 'Conference on the Causes and Cure of War'](#) in Washington Credit: Kai's Coolidge Blog, ['Causes & Cures of War'](#)

The Welsh League of Nations Union Report for 1925, 'Wales and World Peace' applauded the efforts of the Women's Peace Delegation, and also carried a 'letter of response' (image 8 in scan / page 12 of yearbook) from Mrs Carrie Chapman Catt, President of the National American Women Suffrage Association, following their first Conference on the Cause and Cure of War.

Held in 1925 by 9 organisations (representing 5 million American women) who were initially brought together for the Welsh Women's Peace Petition delegation visit, the initial CCCW conference was so successful they were held annually until 1941. After WW2, the work of CCCW continued as the 'Committee for Education on Lasting Peace'. America did not ultimately sign up to the League of Nations; and the League is largely acknowledged to have failed due to lack of 'buy-in' from essential world powers (such as America, Germany and Japan), and through member governments 'not playing by their own rules' (such as France, Belgium, Germany, Russia and Italy). The Manchuria and Abyssinia Crises of the 1930s, and the rise of Hitler in Nazi Germany that had been reeling from WW1 reparations, set the stage for World War Two.

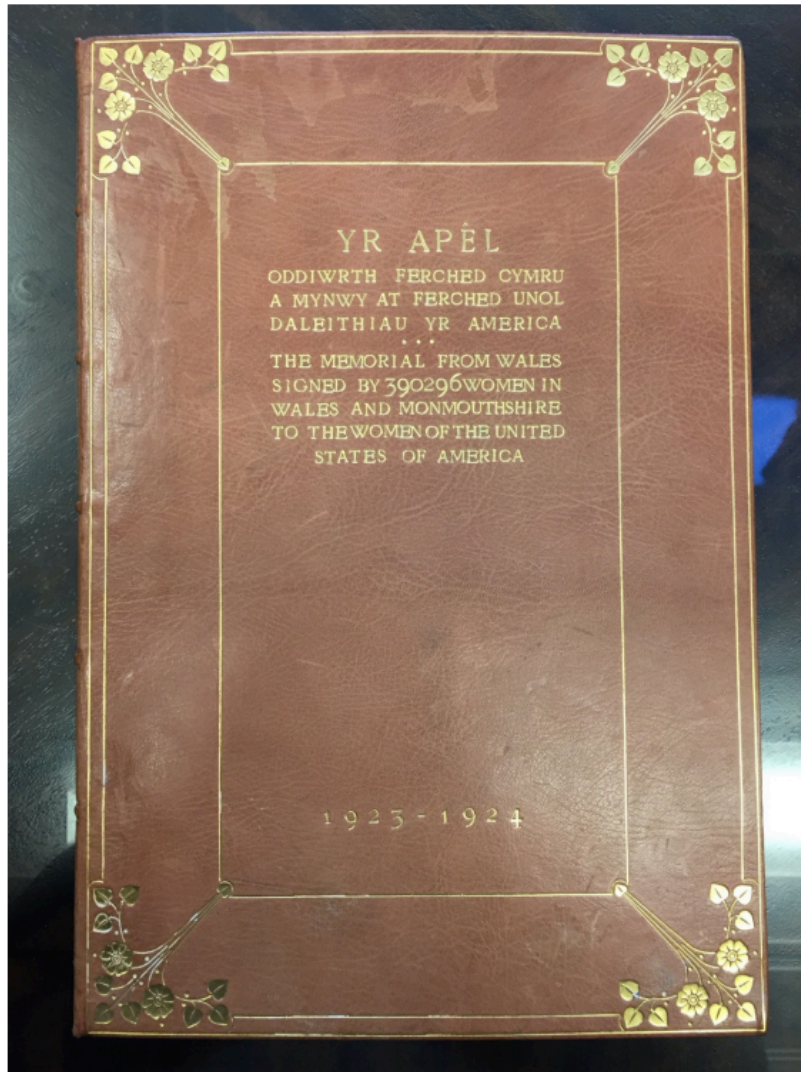
However, the lessons of the League – and the vision expressed by the women's movements of Wales and America in 1923-6 – was finally realised after WW2 with the founding of the United

Nations, in which America has played a leading role through history (although recent withdrawals under the Trump Administration are currently reversing US progress on peace, human rights and climate change).



The response of the American Women's Leagues to the Welsh Peace Delegation, as published in the Welsh League of Nations Union Report for 1925 ([view here, on Page 13](#)).

**“May we hand down the generations who come after us, the proud heritage of a warless world.”**



The Welsh Women's Peace Petition to America of 1923, presented with the women of America to the women's leagues and the President of the United States in March 1924, by a delegation of women peacemakers from the Welsh League of Nations Union (predecessor of today's Welsh Centre for International Affairs): founded to build peace after WW1, between Wales and the World.



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