

# “Inspired by Annie”: The Story of the 1923 Welsh Women’s Peace Petition to America

By [CRAIG OWEN](#), OCTOBER 2020. ORIGINAL FEATURE PUBLISHED JULY 2019.



*The 1923 Welsh Women’s Peace Petition, coordinated by the Welsh League of Nations Union, was signed by 390,296 women in a call for America to lead the League of Nations in the aftermath of World War One. The Welsh delegation, led by **Annie Hughes-Griffiths** (pictured, in Washington with Mrs M G Thomas, Mary Ellis and Elined Prys in March 1924) presented the Memorial to US President Calvin Coolidge, alongside the National League of Women’s Voters representing 9 million American women.*

In 1923, with the horrors of World War 1 having galvanised a whole generation against conflict, women of Wales organised an unprecedented campaign for world peace. 390,296 women signed a memorial petition through the Welsh League of Nations Union – said in the press to have been 7 miles long - calling for America to join and lead the new League of Nations. This is the story behind this ‘jewel from the collections’ of Wales’ Temple of Peace and Health.

The Welsh Women’s Peace Petition to America is one of the most inspiring ‘hidden histories’ to have emerged through the HLF-funded ‘[Wales for Peace](#)’ programme over the [WW100 centenary period](#) 2014-19. Led by the [Welsh Centre for International Affairs](#) (WCIA) in partnership with national organisations, community groups and 100s of volunteers, ‘Wales for Peace’ explored how Welsh people have contributed to the search for peace in the 100 years since WW1: creating a ‘[national story](#)’ of Wales’ rich [peace heritage](#). Looking forward, working alongside [Academi Heddwch](#), **2023-24 will mark the centenary of the Women’s Peace Petition campaign** – an opportunity to celebrate and reflect on the role of Welsh women as peacebuilders past, present and future.

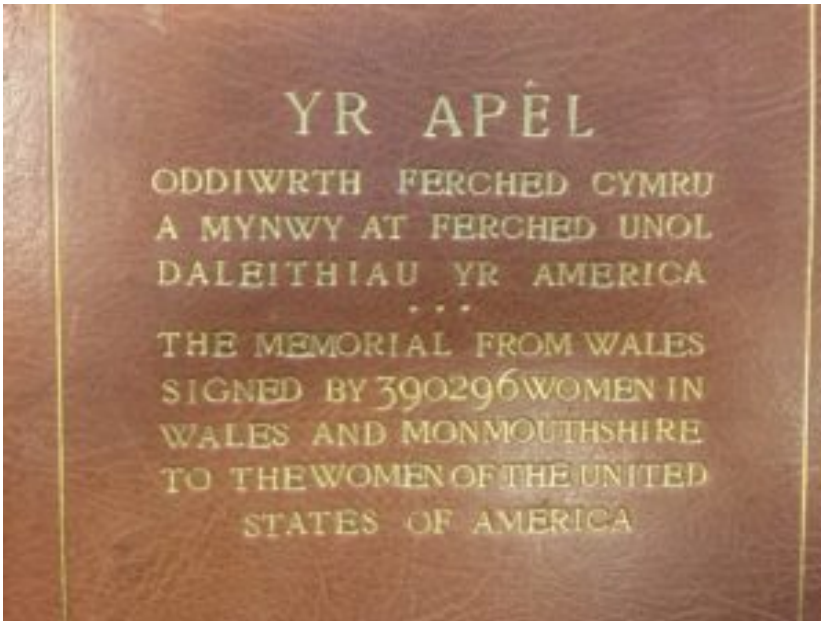
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## Discovering Treasure

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).





North Wales Women's  
Peace Pilgrimage, 1926  
– Bangor University  
Archives

## ‘Women, War & 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.

- View [Women War & Peace Exhibition Launch](#) (pictured below)
- View [Cardiff Poppies Launch](#), 7 Aug 2017

The ‘Women War & Peace’ exhibition (along with the petition) has been displayed at:

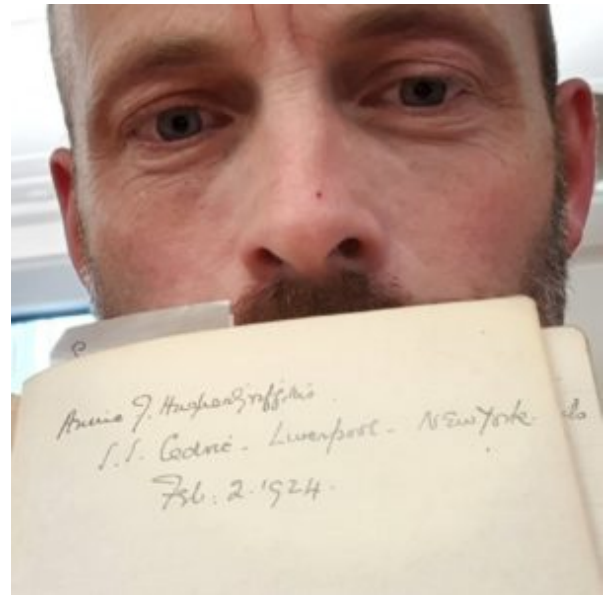
- [Caffi Croesor](#), Porthmadog – alongside the launch of ‘Heddwch Nain Mamgu’
- [Lloyd George Museum](#), Criccieth
- [Swansea Civic Centre](#) – alongside 14-18NOW’s ‘Now the Hero’ programme
- [Storiell, Bangor](#) – for International Women’s Day 2019
- [Temple of Peace](#), Cardiff – for Temple80 and WW100 commemorations
- The exhibition remains available for loan via WCIA.





## ‘Annie’s Diary’

In April 2019, Head of Wales for Peace Craig Owen (*pictured right*) 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, February-March 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
- **Tracy Pallant**, Valley & Vale Community Arts
- **Amy Peckham**, Valley & Vale Community Arts



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.

*"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 Transcription was completed in Autumn 2020 by WCIA volunteer Ffion Edwards.

## ANNIE'S DIARY – Digitised Sources

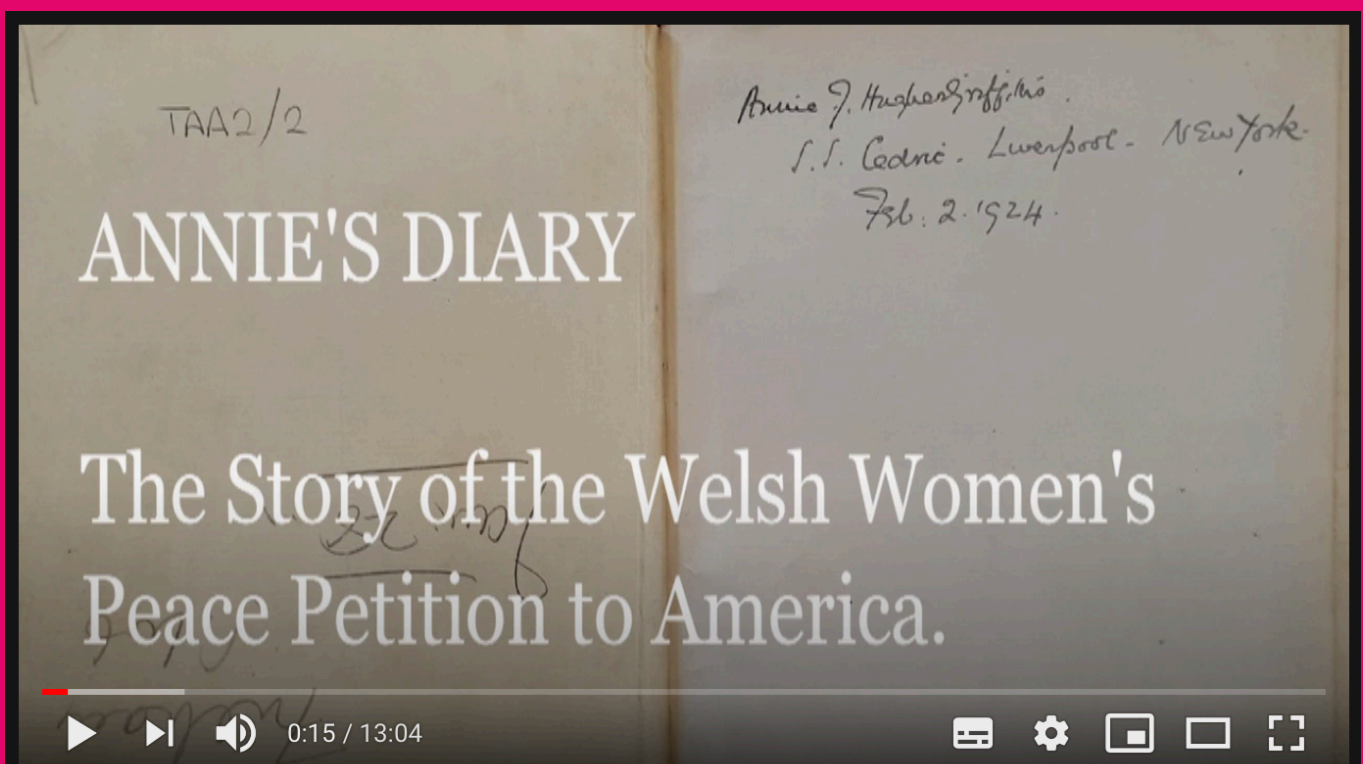
View the [digitised pages of Annie's Diary](#)

(Flickr)

View the [transcription document](#)

(Google Docs).

View [short film 'Annie's Diary: the Story of the Welsh Women's Peace Petition to America'](#)



#IWD2020 #InternationalWomensDay #Welsh

'Annie's Diary' (Feature) - Uncovering the Story of the Welsh Women's Peace Petition to America

107 views • 6 Mar 2020

1 0 SHARE SAVE ...



**Wales for Peace**  
4 subscribers

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For #IWD2020 #InternationalWomensDay on March 8, WCIA are celebrating the incredible story of the 1923 #Welsh #Women's #Peace #Petition to #America - signed by 390,296 women - as well as the story behind this amazing women's peace #movement, explored through "Annie's Diary."



# 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.

Three sources record the origins of the Women's Peace Petition idea:

- [Annual Reports of the Welsh League of Nations Union](#) (recently digitised by WCIA)
- a [letter of July 3rd 1922](#) from Rev Gwilym Davies, Organiser of the Welsh League of Nations Union, to Lord David Davies, WLNU Chairman, proposing the idea; and
- an article in the [‘Welsh Outlook’ magazine of November 1923](#), which records that:

*“It was at the Welsh School of Social Service held at Llandrindod Wells in August 1922, that the idea of initiating a peace movement among the women of Wales was first discussed”*

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.

- View [County Organising Committees for the Women's Peace Petition](#), from the Welsh League of Nations Union Archives, Temple of Peace.

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.

LEAGUE OF NATIONS UNION - WELSH NATIONAL COUNCIL.	
MEMORIAL FROM THE WOMEN OF WALES TO THE WOMEN OF AMERICA.	
-----	
LIST OF AREAS AND SECRETARIES.	
<u>ANGLESEY.</u>	
Amlwch Urban District.	Miss E. Matthews, J.P., Trehinon, Amlwch.
Beaumaris Municipal Borough.	Mrs. W. G. Hughes, Bedfa, Llanggoed, Beaumaris.
Holyhead Urban District.	Mrs. Michael, C.G., Holyhead.
Llangefni Urban District	Mrs. Stirrup, Creigle, Llangefni.
Menai Bridge Urban District.	Miss Davies, J.P., Tynycseu, Menai Bridge.
<u>Rural Parishes.</u>	
Llanddaniel.	Mrs. Owen, Carregddyfnallt, Llanddaniel.
Llanggoed, Pemon & Llanestyn.	Mrs. W. G. Hughes, Bedfa, Llanggoed, Beaumaris.
Llanddona & Llanfihangel T.S.	Miss Jones, Arvon House, Llanddona.
Llandegfan.	Mrs. Parry, Bryn Robert, Llandegfan.
Llanedwen.	Mrs. Pritchard, Iegraig, Llanddaniel, Gaerwen.
Llanfair Pwll & Penmynydd.	Mrs. Jones, Madryn House, Llanfair Pwll.
Llanfihangel Egeifiog.	Miss Evans, Ynys Ager, Gaerwen.
Llangadwaladr & Trefdraeth.	Mr. Madoc Jones, Council School, Bodorgan.
Llangristiolus.	Miss Roberts, Paradeys, Bodorgan.
Llanedern.	Mrs. Hugh Owen, Llys Myfyr, Llanedern.
Pentraeth.	Mrs. Owen, Bryn, Pentraeth.





# The Women's Peace Appeal - Declaration

**“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; 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.

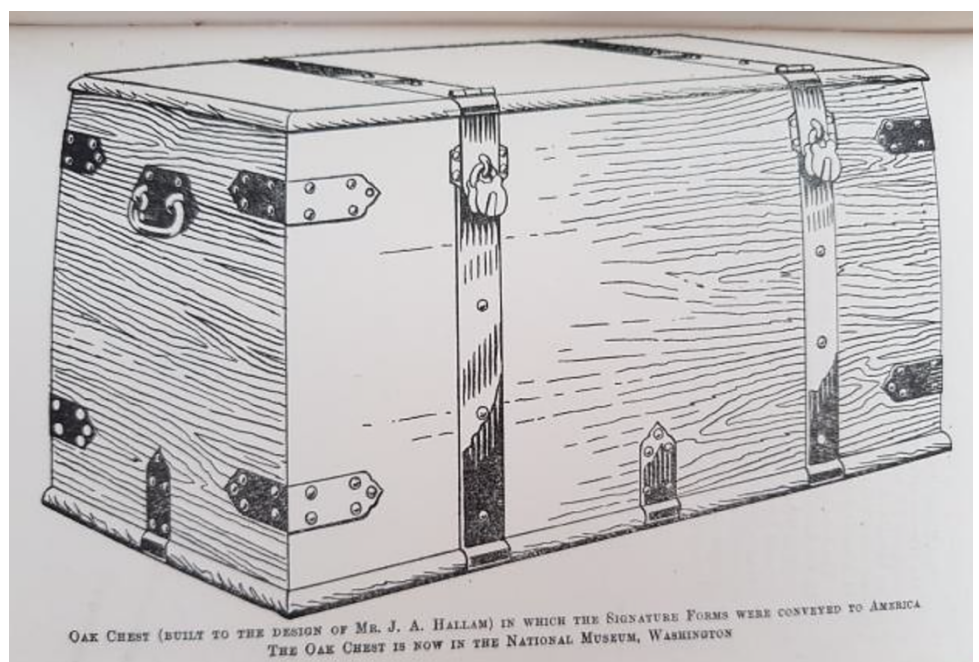
The Memorial itself – the beautiful leather binding and vellum pages with mediaeval illumination – was almost certainly produced at the then newly founded [Gregynog Press](#), opened in 1922 by the [Davies sisters of Llandinam](#), Gwendoline and Margaret.



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 Griffiths’ – 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 Hughes-Griffiths 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](#)).

*Thomas Edward (TE) Ellis, Annie's first husband (above)*

*Thomas Iorwerth (TI) Ellis, son of Tom and Annie Ellis (below)  
Both images – TE Ellis papers, National Library of Wales*

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.

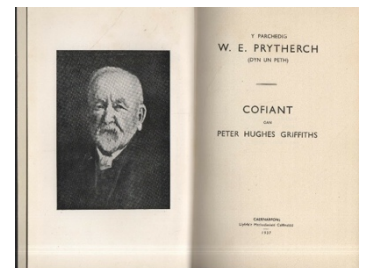
Their son [Thomas Iorwerth Ellis](#) (1899-1970) became a prominent educationalist, author and secretary of [Undeb Cymru Fydd](#) (the 'New Wales Union') from 1943-67.

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.

*Rev Peter Hughes Griffiths, Memorial Booklet 1937*

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 (1895-1983)



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 Albeny](#) (view [New York Times obituary](#)).

After Eluned'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 Eluned 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... could you help fill this space, ahead of the Peace Appeal Centenary in 2023-24?

## The 'Peace Tour' of America

London – Liverpool – Transatlantic

New York

Washington

Chicago

Utah & Salt Lake City

California: San Francisco & Los Angeles

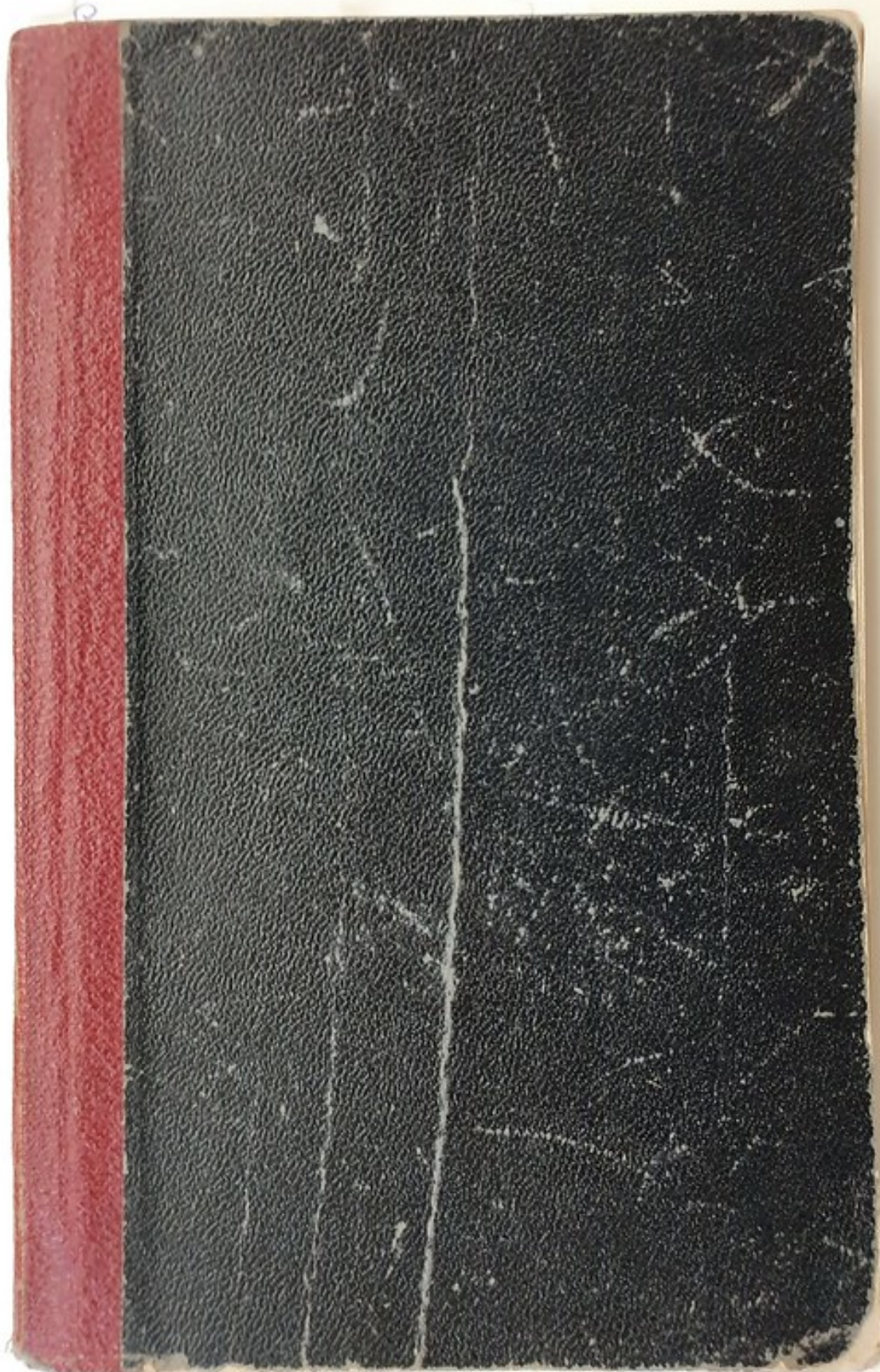
Colorado, Grand Canyon & Albuquerque

Niagara Falls & Utica

New York and Home

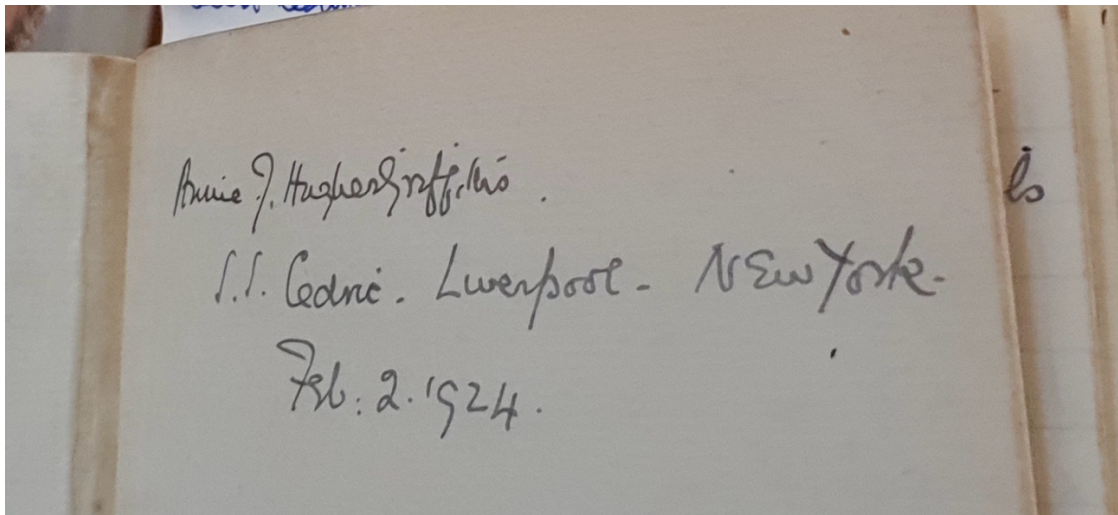


## ANNIE'S DIARY, FEBRUARY 1924



[View digitised pages](#) – [View Transcription](#)





*Annie signed the inside cover of her diary as she started writing...*

## **‘The Sendoff’ from London, 5<sup>th</sup> 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.



*Euston Station, 1923*



*London, Midland and Scottish Railway 1920s train – Wikimedia*



*"Mrs. Boyd Robson presented me with a beautiful bouquet of yellow daffodils tied with yellow shot 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 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 tried thank them all adequately and fittingly. We then got aboard the train."*



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

## [WLNU Press Cuttings](#)



# The Voyage to America



[White Star Liner RMS Cedric](#)  
(Wikimedia Commons)

*“(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.”*

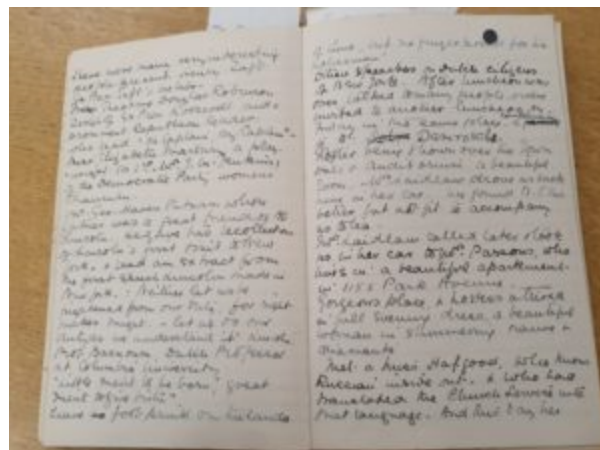
Annie goes on to describe the Transatlantic crossing, from Feb 2nd to Feb 11th – which was not ‘smooth sailing’.

*“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



Arrival in New York beneath the Statue of Liberty – Wikimedia Commons

*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.*

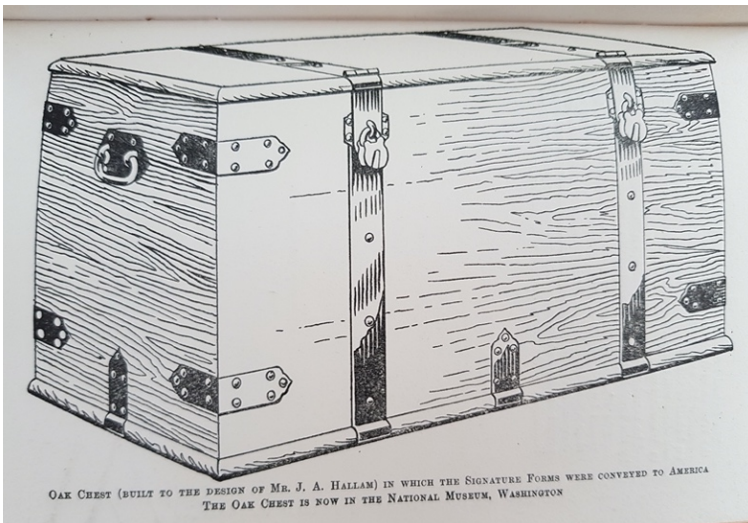
New York skyline, 1920s-30s – Wikimedia Commons

*"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 'Cafeateria'. 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:



*The Oak Chest holding the 390,296 signatories to the Welsh Women's Peace Petition, as illustrated in the Welsh League of Nations Union Annual Report for 1924-5.*

*"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."***



Western Mail 12. 2. 24.

## FROM WOMEN OF WALES.

### PEACE MEMORIAL IN NEW YORK.

#### CHEST EXAMINED.

#### ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE PRESENTATION.

BY OUR OWN CORRESPONDENT.

NEW YORK, Monday.

Mrs. Peter Hughes Griffiths, head of the deputation of women which brings to America the peace memorial of Welsh women to the women of America, arrived on board the Cedric to-day. She was accompanied by Miss Elunid Prys.

A large company of American women associated with various movements in the States met the deputation's leader. Among them were Miss Mary Ellis, a member of the delegation, who arrived before Christmas; Mrs. Leeds Laidlaw, Mrs. Frank D. Tuttle, and Miss Belle Baruch, daughter of the well-known banker, Bernard Baruch.

With due ceremony the chest containing the memorial was taken from the ship to a waiting motor-car on the quay. The party then drove to Miss Baruch's home at 6, West Twenty-fifth-street, where tea was given in honour of the visitors.

After tea the chest was opened and a preliminary examination made of the contents.

Mrs. Griffiths delivered an informal address. She described how the 385,000 signatures appended to the memorial had been gathered in a labour of love. She pleaded for its earnest consideration on this side and said she hoped it would do something, however little, to strengthen relations between the two countries and thereby enhance the cause of peace in the whole world. She expressed in no uncertain measures the leisure the mission she had been entrusted with had given her, and finally declared that the plans for the future lay in the hands of their American friends. The visitors found that the Americans had thought things out already, and I am informed that the following is the plan affairs:—

The memorial will be formally handed over to the American women at the Biltmore Hotel on Tuesday, February 19, when a distinguished gathering will be present. In the chair on this occasion will be Miss Ruth Morgan, a Welshwoman, and president of the League of Women Voters. On the following day the delegates will proceed to Washington, where a series of lectures, including one or two luncheons, have been arranged.

#### WALES AND THE LEAGUE.

Arrangements are now in hand for the annual conference of the League of Nations Union, which is to be held at Glandrindod Wells on June 10 and 11—Whit Tuesday and Wednesday. The Welsh National Council is watching closely the international situation, and resolutions dealing with reparations and Allied questions have been submitted to the Prime Minister and to Lord Parmoor.

Christian Herald 14. 2. 1924.

The memorial for world peace from the women of Wales to the women of America is now complete, with 390,296 signatures.

Oldham Evening Chronicle - 20. 2. 1924

#### WOMEN'S PEACE MEMORIAL

New York, Tuesday. — A luncheon in honour of the Welsh delegation to America was given here to-day. Delegates from 52 organisations attended, representing fifteen million American women. The speeches at the luncheon were broadcast. To-morrow the presentation of the peace memorial, with its 400,000 signatures from the women of Wales to the women of the United States will be made at Washington.—Reuter.

Lancashire Daily Post - 20. 2. 1924.

#### WELSH WOMEN'S PEACE MEMORIAL.

NEW YORK, Tuesday.

A luncheon in honour of the Welsh delegation to America was given here, to-day. Delegates from 52 organisations attended, representing 15,000,000 American women. The speeches at the luncheon were broadcast. To-morrow the presentation of the Peace Memorial, with its 400,000 signatures, from the women of Wales to the women of the U.S.A., will be made at Washington.—Reuter.

South Wales Daily Post . 20. 2. 1924.

#### WELSH WOMEN IN AMERICA.

A luncheon in honour of the Welsh delegation to America was given at New York on Tuesday, February 19th. At the luncheon delegates from 52 organisations attended representing fifteen million American women. The speeches at the luncheon were broadcast. The presentation of the Peace Memorial, with its 400,000 signatures from the women of Wales to the women of the United States, will be made at Washington.

Liverpool Daily Post and Mercury - 21. 2. 24.

#### WOMEN AND PEACE.

#### WELSH MEMORIAL TO U.S.A. TO BE PRESENTED TO-DAY.

New York, Tuesday.—A luncheon in honour of the Welsh delegation to America was given here to-day. Delegates from fifty-two organisations attended, representing 15,000,000 American women. The speeches at the luncheon were broadcast.

To-morrow the presentation of the peace memorial with its 400,000 signatures from the women of Wales to the women of the United States of America will be made at Washington.—Reuter.

A Central News message states that Mrs. Griffiths, the leader of the Welsh deputation, said the fight for peace would be won mainly through education in the schools and colleges. The women of Wales called on the millions of American women to help them. If the women of the world could unite in ending war the sufferings and failures of the last few years would not have been in vain.

Liverpool Evening Express 20. 2. 1924.

#### WELSH WOMEN'S PEACE MEMORIAL.

#### VIGOROUS CAMPAIGN TO STOP FUTURE WARS.

New York, Tuesday.

Enthusiastic scenes marked the presentation of the Welsh women's peace memorial at a luncheon, at which numerous American women's organisers were represented.

Mrs. Griffiths, the leader of the Welsh deputation, who made the presentation, said the fight for peace would be won mainly through education in the schools and colleges. The women of Wales called on the millions of American women to help them.

If the women of the world could unite in ending war, the sufferings and failures of the last few years would not have been in vain.—Central News.

Birmingham Evening Despatch 20. 2. 1924.

#### UNITING FOR PEACE.

#### WELSH DEPUTATION'S APPEAL TO AMERICAN WOMEN.

NEW YORK, Wednesday.

Enthusiastic scenes marked the presentation of the Welsh Women's Peace Memorial at a luncheon at which numerous American women's organisations were represented.

Mrs. Griffiths, the leader of the Welsh deputation, who made the presentation, said the fight for peace would be mainly through education in the schools and colleges.

The women of Wales called on the millions of American women to help them. If the women of the world could unite in ending war the sufferings and failures of the last few years would not have been in vain.—Central News.

# Washington: Petitioning the President



Union Station, Washington DC – Wikimedia



*From Penn Rail Road 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.*



White House, 1920s postcard – Wikimedia



*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 21<sup>st</sup> 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.*

*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.”*

*Annie Hughes Griffiths holding the Welsh Women’s Peace Memorial outside the White House, following their 21 Feb 1924 meeting with US President Calvin Coolidge; alongside Mrs MG Thomas, Miss Mary Ellis and Miss Elined Pryz.*  
WLNU Archives, Temple of Peace



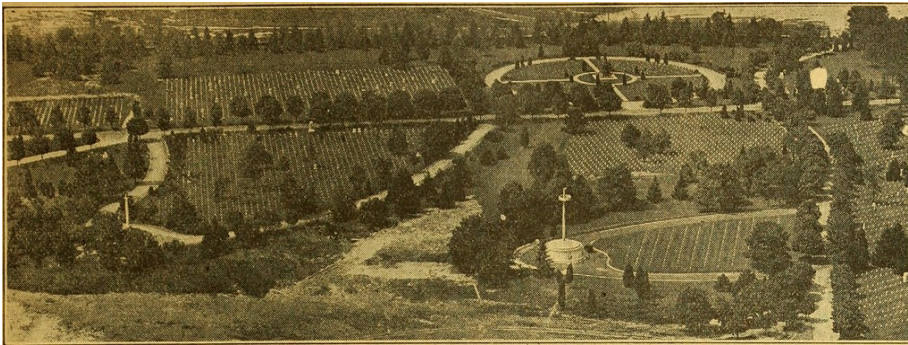
30th US President, Calvin Coolidge (1923-29)





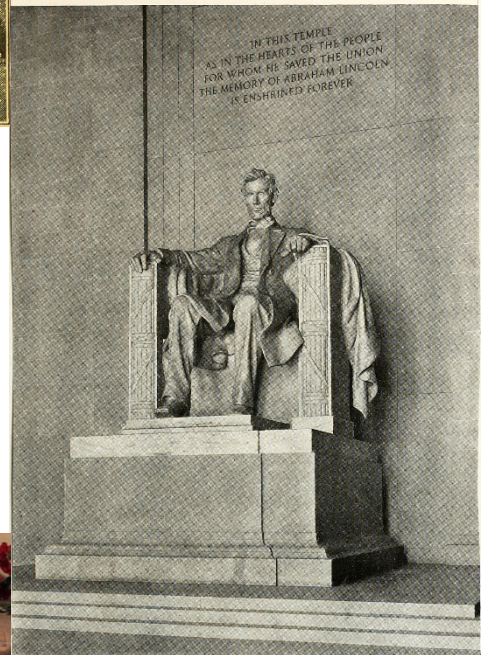
Over the course of the day in Washington, following the meeting with President Coolidge:

*"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.*



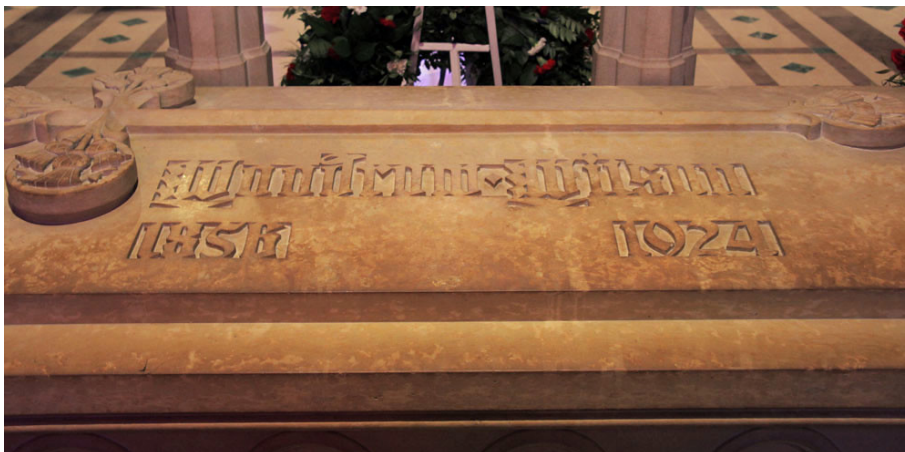
Arlington Cemetery, 1920s

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*



28<sup>th</sup> 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.*



Western Mail, Tuesday, March 4, 1924.

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## WELSH PEACE WOMEN IN AMERICA.



The peace memorial from the Women of Wales to the Women of America was presented to President Coolidge at Washington. Left to right in our photograph: Mrs. M. G. Thomas, Miss Mary Ellis, Mrs. Peter Hughes Griffiths, and Miss Elined Prys.

[Keystone.]

### WELCOMED WITH DAFFODILS.

### WOMEN OF WALES IN AMERICA.

### MEMORABLE MISSION.

### IMPRESSIONS OF A CROWDED WEEK.

Following is the first article written for the "Western Mail" by Miss Elined Prys, giving her impressions of the memorable visit to America by the deputation who formally presented to the Women of America the memorial signed by 400,000 Welsh women urging the claims of international peace.

#### NEW YORK (By Mail).

I have just lived through the momentous occasion to which the Women of Wales have looked forward for eight months past—the presentation of their memorial on world peace to the Women of America. The reception given to that memorial has surpassed our rosiest hopes.

It began on the morning of our arrival, when a small boat, bearing "Welcome" on a fluttering banner, steamed out to meet the steamship Cedric, and cruised around us as we lay at anchor outside New York Harbour. When we reached land several leaders of American women's organisations met us, carrying bunches of daffodils, whose patches of bright yellow first caught our eyes among the throng on the landing-stage. Our hostesses' amazement was great when they saw Mrs. Peter Hughes-Griffiths, the leader of the Welsh deputation, also holding a bouquet of daffodils, which had been presented to her at Euston Station by the London Welsh societies, and which had successfully traversed the Atlantic in the cold storage chamber!

#### ABOUNDING HOSPITALITY.

The car which met us was ornamented with daffodils, and from the moment we entered it we were whirled away into such a succession of visits and receptions as only American hospitality knows how to shower on its guests. Our hostesses have been kindness itself, not only receiving us into their houses, but giving us the opportunity of attending such functions as the luncheon given by the Foreign Policy Association to Dr. Charles Levermore, winner of the Bok Peace Prize, of which all America is talking.

Our crowded week culminated in the luncheon arranged in our honour by the United Women's Organisations of America, attended by four or five hundred women, delegates of sixty societies, and representing, so the chairman told us, about twenty million American women.

Mrs. Griffiths, in a speech which won the wholehearted enthusiasm of her audience, traced the links which have in the past bound Wales to America, from Madoc, the legendary first discoverer of the continent, through the great Americans, Jefferson and Yale (whom Wales gave to the Republic), to Henry Richard, whose work for peace, in conjunction with Elihu Burritt, of Connecticut, has been one of the inspirations of our memorial. To the links they had forged we had come to add another by our appeal to the Women of America to join the Women of Wales in fresh effort and closer co-operation in achieving the peace of the world.

The other members of the deputation then stood beside Mrs. Griffiths as she read the text of the memorial before handing it, together with the keys of the great oak chest containing the memorial forms, to Mrs. James Lees Laidlaw, the devoted and remarkable chairman of the reception committee.

#### EXCELLENT HALF-MINUTE SPEECHES.

A Welsh-American singer sang "Hen Wlad fy Nhadau," in which we and the Welsh-Americans present joined.

After this Mrs. Laidlaw called upon some dozens of speakers to welcome the Welsh deputation on behalf of their respective societies, allowing to each a maximum of half a minute to say her say! It was marvellous how much they managed to convey in thirty seconds, and how varied were their messages of greeting and statements of the bearing of our appeal upon their different activities and purposes. And it was not mere talk and politeness!

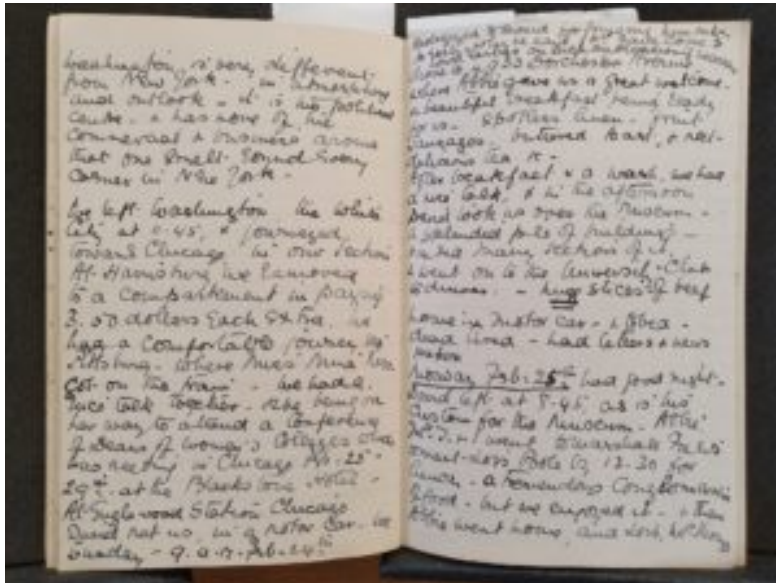
I never expect to hear a more impressive summary of the hard work accomplished by the organised womanhood of a great nation than those speeches revealed. It is the fashion in Europe to sneer a little at "American efficiency," but to see it set at the service of idealism as we now saw it is to repent and be filled with shame at the impertinence of patronising or cavilling at anything so truly great.

ELINED PRYS.

Photograph on picture page.



## '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."

Find out the impact that this 'statement of intent' ultimately went on to have on have for the American Women's Peace movements, on page 28.

### 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 and talked with her and told her of our message, and of our visit to the Presidents 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...

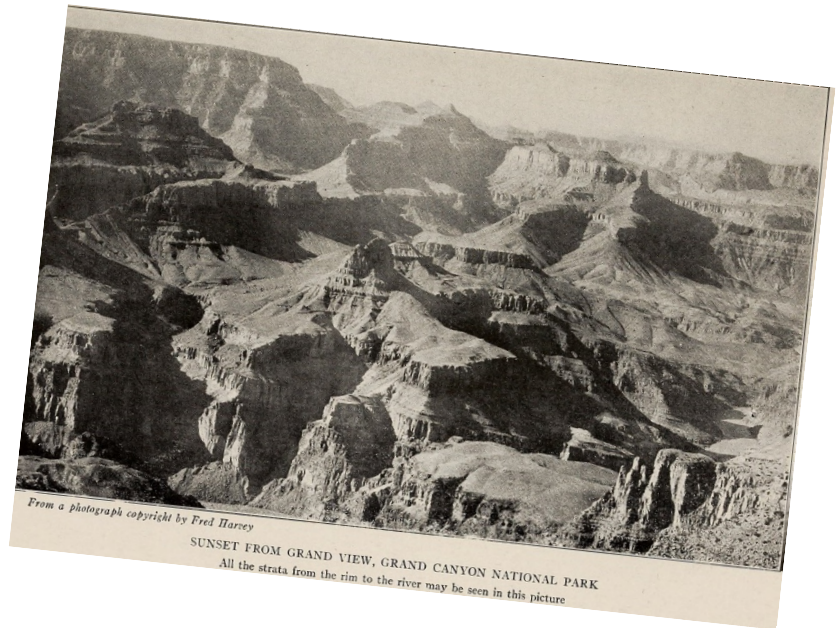
Then Santa Monica Ocean Park, Venice, where we went to a Chinese restaurant. Had Chow Mein and Tea in the Chinese-style. I didn't enjoy it.



## 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 49<sup>th</sup> 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.

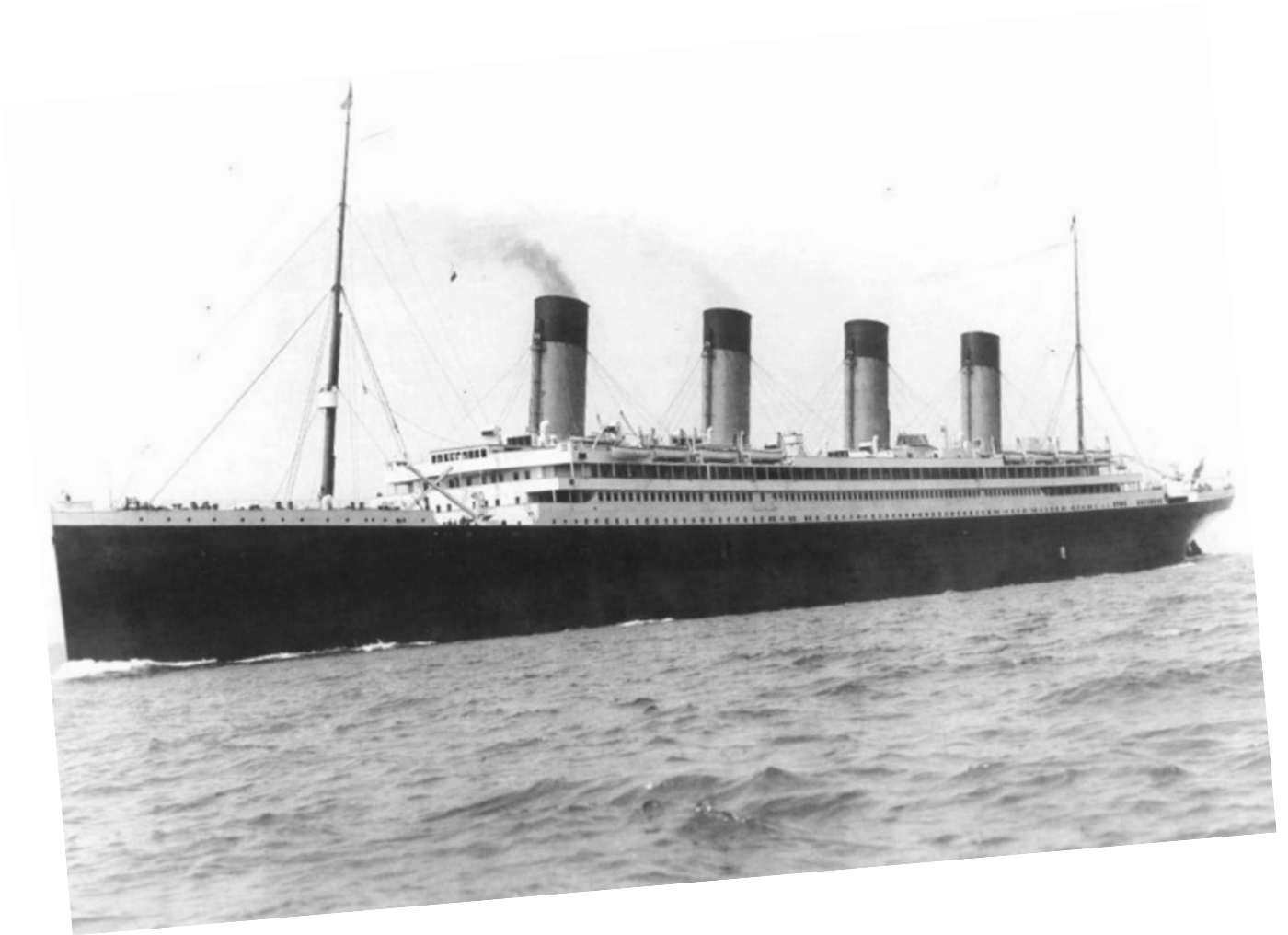
At 5.30pm the bride and groom arrived and we had a sumptuous dinner. We then all went along to the Welsh Church where a reception had been arranged in our honour. Dr Keigwhin presided, Minister of one of the Presbyterian Churches in New York. Addresses of welcome were delivered by Rev. Joseph Evans on 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 22<sup>nd</sup>, they set sail for the 7 day voyage home to Liverpool, on [the RMS Olympic](#), sister ship to 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...*

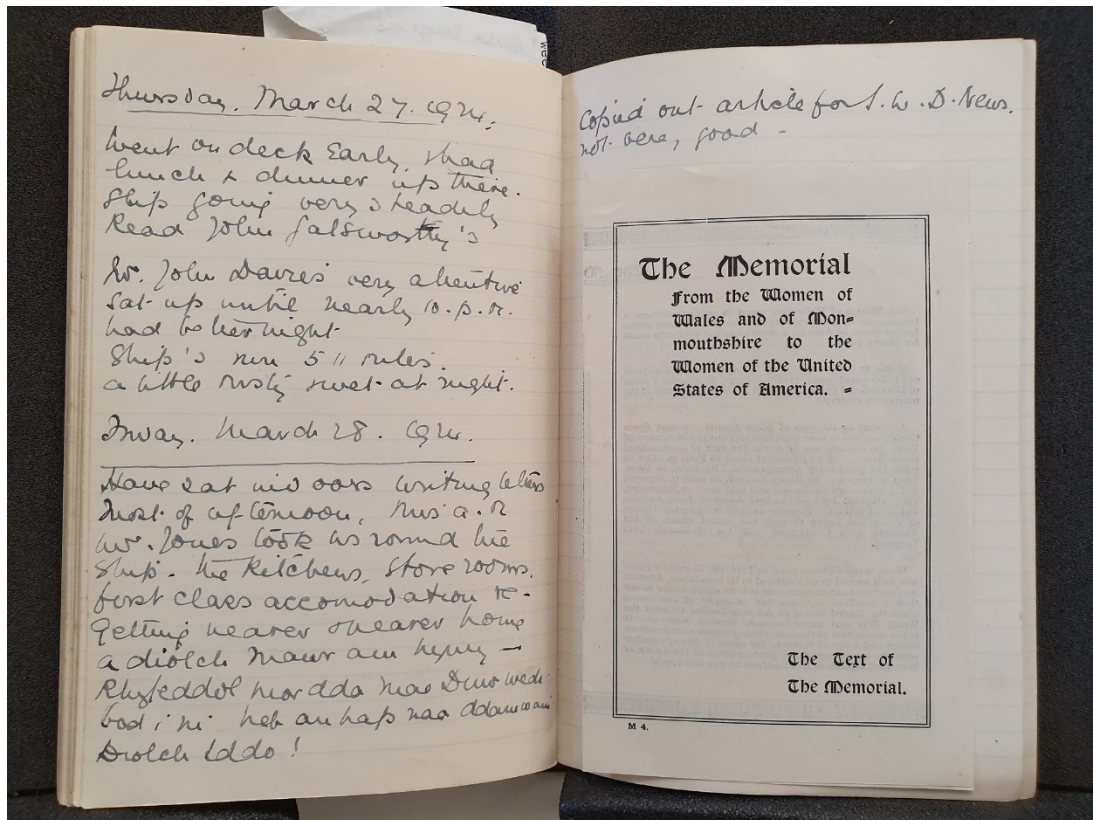
*We were wholly unconscious of the accident until we were out at sea.*

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 Iddo!*

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





Final page of Annie's Diary

## Notes Pages

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.

# 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).



*Copy of a letter received from Mrs. C. Chapman Catt, President of  
the National American Woman Suffrage Association.*

THE MEMORIAL FROM THE WOMEN OF WALES TO THE  
WOMEN OF AMERICA.

NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS,

171, MADISON AVENUE,

NEW YORK,

4th May, 1925.

LEAGUE OF NATIONS UNION,  
CARDIFF,  
WALES.

GENTLEMEN,

Two years ago the women of Wales presented to the women of the United States of America a memorial upon the subject of world peace, and a committee of these Welsh women brought a petition to the United States where it was presented to several groups of women.

The women of America are now returning the compliment, and beg to inform you that they have held a National Conference on the Cause and Cure of War, which was organized by the nine chief organizations of women in this country, numbering many millions of women in their membership. The subjects which were given in the week of that Conference have been put into printed form, and the women of that Conference, through you, beg to present that report to the women of Wales.

It will be a long journey to the final triumph of the peace movement, but be assured the sympathy for that movement and the determination to serve it, is as earnest in this country as elsewhere.

I have the honor to be,

Yours very truly,

(Signed), CARRIE CHAPMAN CATT,

Chairman,  
Conference on the Cause and Cure of War.

*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](#)).*

## Impact in Wales?

### A Timeline of Interwar Women's Peace Activism

- 1918 – [Women's Suffrage movement in Wales](#) and wider UK secure the '[Representation of the People Act](#)', extending the right vote to propertied women over 30. Wales' electorate expands from 430,000 to 1,172,000.
- 1919 onwards - Many suffrage organisations diversify into new areas of campaigning - including peace building in the aftermath of WW1.
- 1922 – Creation of the [Welsh League of Nations Union](#) (WLNU), and proposition of the Welsh Women's Peace Appeal as a campaign idea via the Welsh School of Social Service in Llandrindod Wells (August 1922).
- 1922 – The Davies Sisters of Llandinam found the [Gregynog Press](#) to further arts and education – also a focal point for peace education movements through the WEAC ([Welsh Education Advisory Committee](#)), whose annual conferences and 'Teachers & World Peace' programmes are facilitated from Gregynog.
- 1923 – Following a 'National Conference of Women' in Aberystwyth (May 1923), the **Women's Peace Appeal campaign** gathers 390,296 signatures across communities Wales-wide through a network of County Organising Committees.
  - [Lowri Ifor](#) [presented research into the Women's Peace Petition](#) (and 1926 Peace Pilgrimage) to [Cymdeithas y Cymod's Remembrance Weekend](#) in Caernarfon Nov 2017, at the [Wales Peace History Conference](#) marking UN Peace Day 21 Sept 2018 and '[Peacemakers of WW1](#)' conference in [Blaenau Ffestiniog](#) for WW100 weekend Nov 2018.
- **1924 – The Welsh Women's Peace Petition** is taken to America in March 1924 by a delegation of Welsh women, where with American women's networks the Memorial Declaration is presented to US President Calvin Coolidge for display in the Smithsonian Institute 'for all time', alongside a chest of 390,296 signatures.
- 1925 – American women's organisations brought together by the 1924 Wales visit, hold the first '[National Conference on the Cause and Cure of War](#)', which sends a response of solidarity to the Welsh League of Nations Union.
- 1925 – A [Faith Leaders Memorial Petition](#) to America follows the example of the Women's Peace Petition, presented by Rev Gwilym Davies in Detroit (Dec 1925) to the Annual Conference of the Federal Council of Churches in America.
- 1926 – The [North Wales Women's Peace Pilgrimage](#), starting from Penygroes in Caernarfonshire, brings together over 2,000 Gwynedd women calling for 'law not war'. The march progresses via the castles of North Wales Coast – Caernarfon, Conwy, Chester – and onwards to a rally of 10,000 in Hyde Park. The **North Wales Women's Peace Council** is established shortly afterwards.
  - '[Those Marvellous Women](#)' by WCIA Volunteer Gwenllian Jones, June 2016
  - [North Wales Women's Peace March of 1926](#) by WCIA Volunteer Stephen Thomas, June 2016.

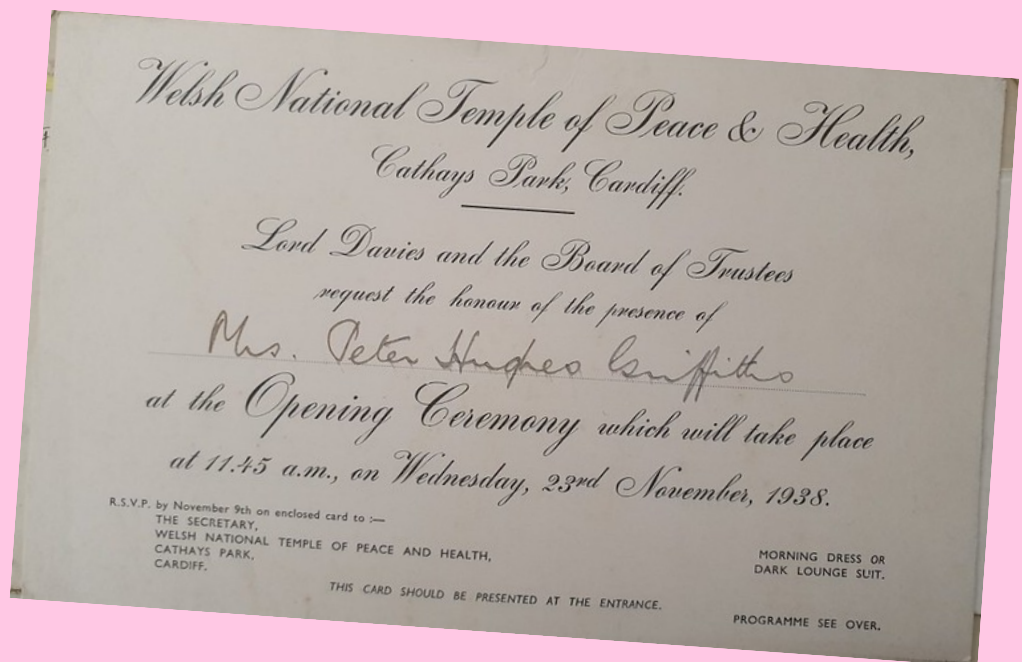


- 1926 – Wales hosts the annual [World Peace Congress](#) of the International Federation of League of Nations Societies (IFLNS) in Aberystwyth (July 1926)
- *Right, clipping from South Wales Argus, 1 July 1926 featuring Annie Hughes-Griffiths, as WLNU Chair, with German delegate Count Bernstorff.*
- 1928 - [Representation of the People Act](#) extends the right to vote to all women.
- 1928 - North Wales Women's Peace Council affiliate with WILPF (Women's International League for Peace & Freedom).
- 1928 - WILPF, WLNU and Welsh women's movements **campaign for the Kellogg Pact** (Treaty for the Renunciation of War as an instrument of national policy), during which communities in [Wales host Miss Balch from Massachusetts](#) of the American Women's International League.
- 1929 – **Welsh Education Advisory Committee** (WEAC) having developed the world's first 'peace education curriculum', publish 'Teachers and World Peace' which influences the 1929 General Election.
- 1929 – the [Women's Peace Crusade](#) campaign pressures all general election candidates to publicly state their stance on peace, to create a '[Parliament of Peacemakers](#)'. Peace Activist [Margaret Bondfield](#) is elected and becomes the UK's first female cabinet member; [Megan Lloyd George](#) becomes Wales' first female Member of Parliament.
- 1930 – a [Women's Advisory Committee](#) is constituted through the Welsh League of Nations Union, as a forum for coordination on peace and international affairs between Women's movements Wales-wide.
- 1932 – '**Women take on the [World Disarmament Conference](#)**' – UK wide petition by WILPF gathers 6 million signatures, with a particularly strong response noted from North Wales. Leads to US and British restraints on arms industries, although by Oct 1933 talks collapse with departure of Germany.
- 1935 – [The Peace Ballot in Wales](#), led by the WLNU (through predominantly women activists in local communities), garners over 1 million responses - in Wales alone - to 5 key questions on how international peace keeping should be taken forward.
- 1937 – WLNU and British Legion coordinate a campaign through Welsh and international media to bring the stories of **War Mothers** to the fore in advocating for peace, as clouds gather on the European horizon.



- 1938 – ‘[Minnie James and the Mothers of Peace](#)’ - WW1 war mothers lead the **opening of Wales’ Temple of Peace & Health** in Nov 1938, with Minnie James from Merthyr Tydfil performing the ceremony

- Annie’s invitation from Lord Davies, to the opening of Wales’ Temple of Peace (1938).



- Post-WW2, the story of Welsh women’s peace activism develops new directions through the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament ([CND](#)) [Cymru](#) – reaching a highpoint with the 1981 ‘**Women for Life on Earth**’ march from Swansea to Berkshire, which evolves into the [Greenham Common Women’s Peace Camp](#) – the longest peace demonstration in recent history, from 1981 to 2000.

## Centenary of the Women’s Peace Petition, 2023-24

Through the coordination and leadership of the recently founded [Academi Heddwch](#), WCIA hope to build on this work alongside the National Library and National Museums of Wales, Smithsonian, Heddwch Nain Mamgu, other partners and volunteers in order to mark the 2023-24 centenary of the Women’s Peace Petition - to share the story and hopefully inspire a ‘new generation of women internationalists’ Wales-wide.

**If you can contribute to this inspiring project** – through research, volunteer time, digitisation / transcription, community or schools projects, or sponsorship / donations towards marking the Centenary – please contact [walesforpeace@wcia.org.uk](mailto:walesforpeace@wcia.org.uk).



## Quick References and Links

- WCIA [Women's Peace Petition Homepage](#) and Temple of Peace Heritage
- [International Women's Day 2020](#) (March 8th 2020) Feature Article
- View **digitised pages** of ["Annie's Diary"](#) – the little black diary of Mrs [Peter Hughes-Griffiths](#) on the women's peace delegation to America in 1924
- View the [Transcription of "Annie's Diary"](#) (completed in Dec 2020 by WCIA volunteer Ffion Edwards).
- View [Press Cuttings](#) from the 1924 "Welsh Women's Peace Tour" of America
- View [Welsh Women's Peace Petition album](#) on Flickr
- View ["Women, War and Peace" image collections](#) on Flickr.
- View the digitised **Memorial Petition** on [People's Collection Wales](#) and the full text of the Women's Memorial.
- View [County Organising Committees](#) of women who coordinated the **peace campaign signups** in Wales
- What did they do next? View Temple Archives of the [WLoNU Women's Committee](#) (Welsh League of Nations Union)
- [Wales and America – Records in the National Library](#)
- Find out more about the history of the [League of Nations](#) and [Welsh League of Nations Union \(WLNU\)](#).

## Welsh Women's Peace Petition of 1923

[Home - Women's Petition](#) [Story of the Petition](#) [Short Films](#) [#IW02020 Feature](#)

In 1923, with the horrors of World War 1 having galvanised a generation against conflict, women of Wales organised an unprecedented campaign for world peace. **390,296** women signed a Memorial petition through the Welsh League of Nations Union, calling for 'Law not War' – for America to join and lead the new League of Nations – through appealing to the women of America: 'From home to home'.

A beautiful gilded Moroccan leather and vellum **Memorial** was illuminated by Cecily West and produced through the Davies sisters' Gregynog Press; and a great oak chest created by E.J. Hallam to contain the signatures, to be presented to the US President Calvin Coolidge and held 'for all time' to the Smithsonian Institute in Washington. The Women's Peace Petition campaign of 1923 was a truly remarkable Wales-wide effort involving almost every household, through peace activists going door-to-door, supported through county and community organisers of 'the League'. The New York press noted that the final petition presented to the women of America was **over 7 miles long**.



**3 Short films:** The Women's Peace Petition (Trailer) Alaw Primary School learning project: Annie's Diary' feature on Volunteers uncovering the story of the 1924 American Peace Tour.

By Tracy Pallant and Amy Peckham, Valley & Vale Community Arts

[Download / Print PDF Booklet 'Inspired by Annie'](#)

A women's delegation, led by Welsh League of Nations Chair Annie Hughes-Griffiths, **travelled from Wales to America** in March 1924 for a 2 month 'Peace Tour' of the States, building support through American women's organisations involving over 20 million people. The 9 networks / organisations through whom the Welsh delegation worked, joined forces to form the 'Conference on the Cause and Cure of War' as a response to the trip – and became hugely influential in American society through to the outbreak of WW2.

The Women's Peace Petition is one of the most treasured items in the Temple of Peace Archives, along with supporting collections from the Welsh League of Nations Union women's campaigns, and WCIA look forward to working with others to mark the **centenary in 2023-24** of this remarkable campaign.



The Story of the 1923-24 Welsh Women's Peace Petition



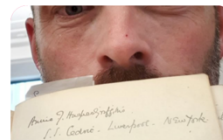
View 'Yr Apel' - the 1923-24 Memorial



"Mrs Peter Hughes Griffiths": Annie-Jane Ellis, Chair of the 'Welsh League'



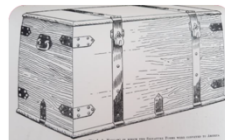
View Press Coverage from the 1924 America Peace Tour



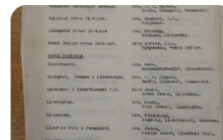
View Annie's Diary - Digitised pages



View Annie's Diary - draft Transcription



The Oak Chest in the Smithsonian



The Wales-wide Campaign of 1923 - County and Community Organisers



Returning the Message to Wales: 1924 Report



Welsh League of Nations Union - Campaigning for Peace 1920s-30s

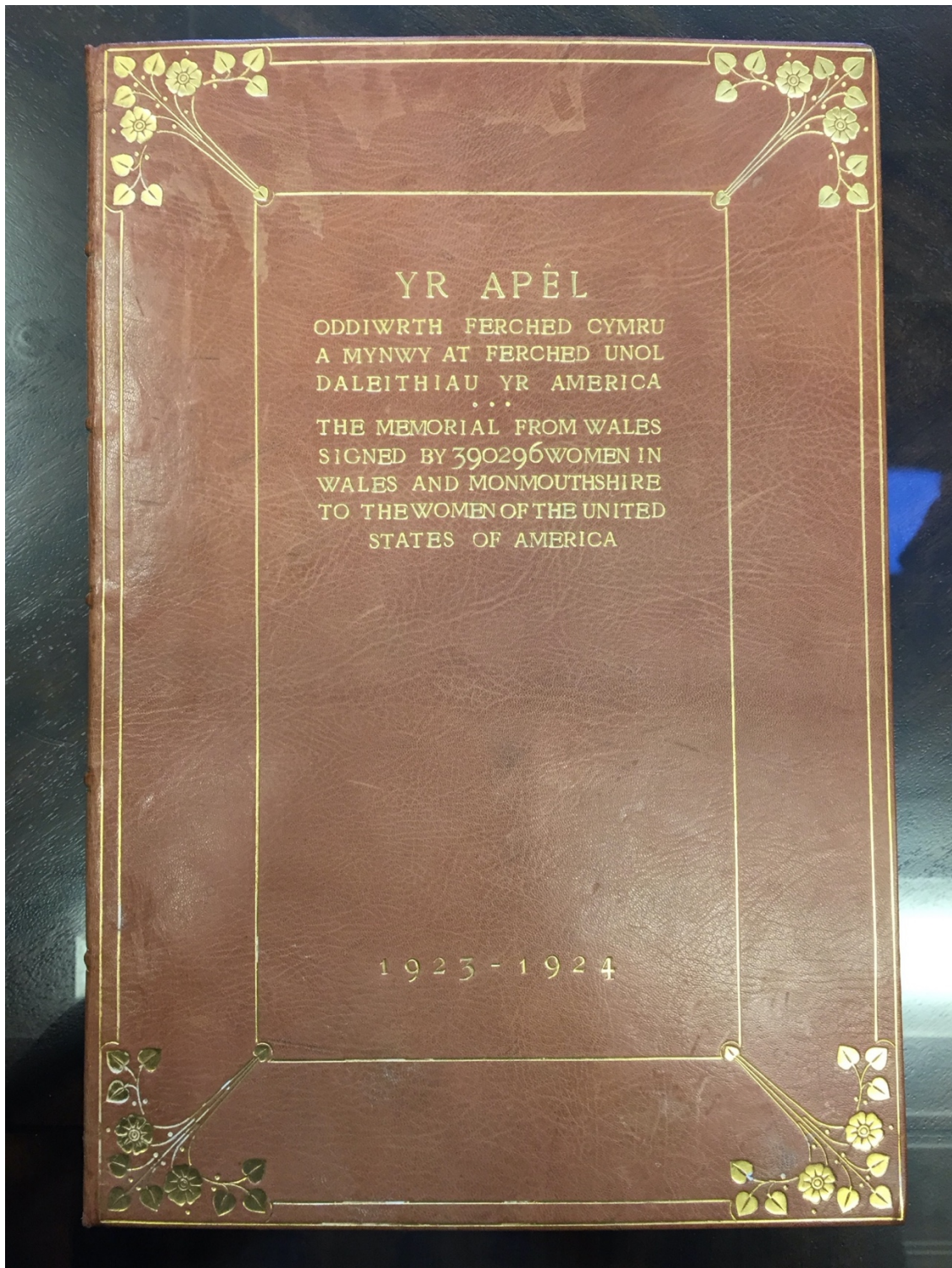


Women's Committee of the Welsh League of Nations



Heddwch Nain Mamgu: inspiring Gwynedd Peace Activists

May we... “hand down to 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.