



A Celebration of Women's Achievements
over the last 100 years and beyond

Inspirational Stories of Women from
across the World

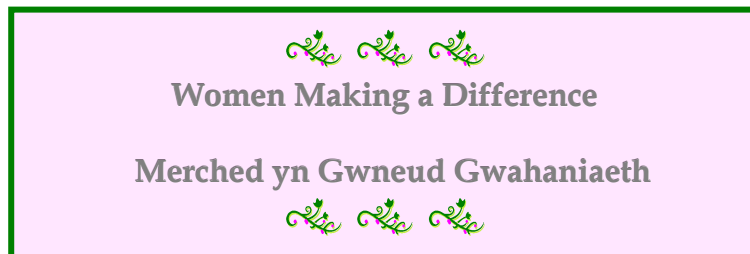




The WI is the largest voluntary women's organisation in the UK with 210,000 members in 6,500 WIs. Members come from all ages and walks of life. In Wales, there are 16,000 members belonging to about 500 WIs.

The WI is a grass-roots, member-led organisation and all its campaigns and policies stem from resolutions which are voted on by a majority of members attending its AGM.

The WI plays a unique role in enabling women to develop new skills, giving them opportunities to campaign on issues that matter to them and their communities, and provides wide-ranging activities for members to get involved in.



The Women Making a Difference (WMAD) project aims to increase the number of women who have the skills, ability, confidence and mindset to become leaders in their communities and decision makers at all levels of public and political life in Wales - particularly those women who are under-represented because of their race or religion, disability, age, sexuality and/or their educational attainment, social status and geographic location.



WMAD has worked with over 300 women across Wales providing them with the motivation and skills to apply for public appointments within their own community and at all levels of civic society.

Many of these women have now gone on to become school governors, town, community and county councillors as well as sitting on local partnerships, trusts and similar bodies. Others are pursuing their ambitions to become magistrates, lobbyists and Assembly Members.

CONTENTS

Foreword		4
Introduction		5
INSPIRATIONAL STORY	STORY SUBMITTER	
Rachel Carson	Professor Cynthia Burek	6
Lynn Dunning	Gordina Appleton	7
Olive Schreiner	Jeannette Evans	8
Betsi Cadwaladr	Gretta Cartwright	9
Eglantyne Jebb	Alma Edwards	10
Betty Williams & Mairead Corrigan	Paula Manley	11 & 12
Asma Jilani Jahingir	Henah Akhtar	13
Joan Mwajuma Ongaro	Safina Omar	14
Marie Stopes	Lyn Richards	15
Elizabeth Andrews	Lyn Richards	16
Miss Buss and Miss Beale	Lyn Richards	17 & 18
Heather John	Ann Hanford	19
Pratima Chakraborty	Anuradah B Shanker	20
Camila Batmanghelidjh	Lyn Richards	21
Dr Graça Simbine Machel	Sarah Simons	22
Catherine Raisin	Professor Cynthia Burek	23
Justine Rolfe	Dr Olga Kelly, British Council	24
Mary Jones & her Bible	Merle Hunt	25
Betsi Cadwaladr	Professor Donna M Mead OBE	26
Acknowledgements		27

Foreword

Around the world, International Women's Day marks a celebration of the economic, social, cultural and political achievements of women. The growing international women's movement has helped make International Women's Day a special day for promoting women's rights and participation. This year's theme for International Women's Day is 'A Celebration of Women's Achievements in the last 100 years'.



The National Federation of Women's Institutes-Wales organised 3 events to celebrate International Women's Day in 2011. Events were held in Cardiff and Llangollen on 8 March and in Carmarthen on 10 March on the theme *A Celebration of Women's Achievements in the last 100 years*.



At each event, we heard from inspirational women. Women attending the events were also invited to submit their own stories of inspirational women across the world who had made a

difference to women's lives and these stories were shared at the events and are compiled in this booklet.

We have achieved a lot since the first IWD, 100 years ago, when people marched across Europe campaigning for women's rights to vote, work, to be trained and to hold public office. However we still have some way to go to achieving equality for all.

Women make up between 70 and 80% of the world's poor, illiterate and refugee populations and sexual and domestic abuse continues to occur at alarming rates. Every year three million women across the UK experience Violence Against Women, which includes domestic violence, rape, forced marriage, sexual exploitation and other forms of abuse and harassment.

The WI had an impact on the struggle for women's rights at the beginning of the 20th Century. It helped women to become active citizens in the years straight after women received the vote. Many of the women involved in setting up the NFWI had been active in the women's suffrage movement and they saw in the WIs a way of educating and encouraging women to take an active part in public life.

At the AGMs from 1919 to 1925, there were a total of 51 resolutions discussed and of these 32% were about women taking up their place in society such as standing for election to local councils, supporting the appointment of women to public posts or about issues specific to women e.g. maternity care and pensions for widows. Nearly 100 years on, many resolutions are issues which women are still fighting for today. As early as June 1943, the WI passed a resolution demanding that men and women should receive equal pay for equal work. Yet today the gender pay gap remains.

At our IWD events, women discussed their ideas on *Campaigns for the Future*. A central theme that arose was the need to educate and empower women and young people - to educate women and men about human rights issues globally, through campaigns, recognising cultural and religious sensitivity; educate young people to learn about positive relationships and parenting; and tackling domestic abuse.



The inspiring stories within this booklet are wonderful and, I hope, will demonstrate what can be achieved by women and the impact that the strength,

determination and influence of women can have on getting things done and making a positive impact on the lives of women and communities across the world.

Margaret Lloyd Jones
Chair of the Federations of Wales Committee

INTRODUCTION

INSPIRATIONAL WOMEN

When we talk of women who have made a difference, the next question is often, how have women made a difference? What difference have women made?

This collection provides stories of inspirational women who despite adverse and sometimes life threatening situations, have strived and succeeded in making a difference to improve the quality of human, and especially women's lives throughout the world.

Women like Miss Buss and Miss Beale, in the 1880s who determined that women should have equal educational opportunities; Eglantyne Jebb founder of Save the Children; women who were campaigning before enfranchisement, when women were treated as second class citizens, but whose valiant determination provided children with a safer and educated life.



Examples of 'Inspirational Women who made a difference' in the present day are Joan Mwajuma Ongaro in Kenya who led her village from poverty and hunger to



enterprise and wellbeing; Heather John, from Briton Ferry helping poor communities in Uganda; Pratima Chakroborty, whose granddaughter writes 'when I think of women who made a difference, I think of my grandmother, beaten because she defied family tradition asking to be educated, [her husband respected her wishes and in 1947 she became one of the few women to obtain a degree].

Dr Graça Machel, wife of Mandela who focused on nurturing human capital development of the young nation, destitute people of all ages, especially women, children and refugees, who now focuses world leaders' attention on fulfilling commitments. Many different women from different countries are making a difference, for example, Justine Rolfe whose voluntary work is to educate rural communities in the Cameroons; Camila Batmanghelidjh, from Iran, who founded Kids Company a charity providing education for vulnerable children in London, and despite death threats, Asma Jilani Jahingir, a human rights lawyer from Pakistan, who defends women seeking divorce and victims of rape.



These are some of the women featured in the inspiring stories of women who make a difference.

Rachel Carson 1907-1964

Rachel Carson is credited with advancing the global environmental movement and singlehandedly raising public awareness of the problems of pesticides in the food chain. She is also responsible for initiating the Environmental Protection Agency in America and was awarded posthumously the highest order a civilian can receive in the USA: The Presidential Medal of Freedom by Jimmy Carter.



Rachel Carson was born on 27 May 1907 to a poor working class family in Pennsylvania, USA. She was equally talented in English and science and attended Pennsylvania College for Women and John Hopkins University completing her marine biology studies in 1931 and becoming a research zoologist at the University of Maryland. In 1936 her career changed direction and she started working for the US Bureau of Fisheries. At this time she was writing popular and academic articles and nature stories. She published her first book (*Under the Sea Wind*) in 1941, but it was her next book *The Sea Around Us* which won her financial security and recognition as a talented writer. In 1952 she began to write full time. Her next two books (*The Edge of the Sea* and the republished *Under the Sea Wind*) were best sellers.

In the 1950s she turned her attention to conservation and environmental issues especially pesticides. After meticulous research she published her award winning book *Silent Spring* in 1962. Much of her research and writing was done in secret as she recognised the impact the publication would have on society at large. This book is now recognised as a modern day classic and was responsible for raising public awareness of the devastating effect of pesticides (particularly DDT) in the environment if not used properly. As soon as the book was published she was castigated by industry and other commercial vested interests who said her research was flawed and that she could not have done it because she was a woman.

The controversy greatly increased public awareness of potential pesticide dangers, as well as *Silent Spring* book sales. Pesticide use became a major public topic, especially after the CBS TV special "The Silent Spring of Rachel Carson" which was aired on 3 April 1963. The program included segments of Carson reading from *Silent Spring* and was watched by between 10-15 million people and spurred on a congressional review of pesticide dangers.

However, despite the agricultural, chemical and medical industries hounding her, the public was on her side and the book also became a rallying point for the fledgling environmental movement. Rachel was invited to give talks on her research across the nation but her health was steadily declining as breast cancer outpaced radiation therapy, with only brief periods of remission. She spoke as much as she was physically able, and in one of her last public appearances, Rachel Carson testified before President Kennedy's Science Advisory Committee. The committee issued its report on 15 May 1963, largely backing Carson's scientific claims. Following the report's release, she also testified before a Senate subcommittee to make policy recommendations. In 1970, 6 years after her death, the Environmental Protection Agency was created as a direct result of her evidence. The ban of DDT worldwide by the UN Stockholm conference in 2004 can also be traced back to her influence in the early 1960s although she never actually suggested a complete ban, only better and more effective use.

Lynn Dunning 1954 - 2009

Lynn Dunning was 55 when she died from cancer having battled the disease for the last ten years. It was far too young for someone with her talent, energy and dogged determination which had led to considerable personal achievements both in her Soroptimist, working and personal life.



Education was Lynn's passion throughout her life. In 1999 she was appointed Head Teacher of Darwen Vale High School in Lancashire where she proved to be an inspirational leader. Under her Headship and hard work the school took on the engineering specialism and became a pilot school for the Building School for the Future programme.

Colleagues said of her:

"She was so passionate about her work in ensuring the best opportunities not only for Darwin Vale but for all the children of Blackburn and Darwin"

"She was very visionary, looking at the child's all-round education, she didn't lump them together but would recognise each individual's potential and she would always fight for the underdog"

"She wasn't just concerned with the academic side of things but knew she needed to tackle the social and family issues these children were dealing with"

Lynn became a Soroptimist in 1963, she served as club President twice and she had a real passion for Programme Action. She also served as President of her Region and Federation President in 2002-3. Lynn represented her Region on the Federation Executive Council of Soroptimist International of Great Britain and Ireland.

Lynn served on many committees always bringing her own brand of humour, informal style of working and enthusiasm to each one. She worked as the co-ordinator for the programme area of Human Rights and the

Status of Women at Federation, and attended the UN Commission on the Status of Women meetings in New York. 2005 – 2007 saw her take office as the International President of Soroptimist International, this saw her travel the world visiting many clubs and attending Federation Conferences inspiring one and all who had the fortune to hear her passionate talks, particularly, clean water and sanitation.

She opened toilets in deepest India, before this the women and girls would have to get up in the morning and have to relieve themselves in the fields and then have to wait until the evening to go again as the men would be working the fields all day so modesty prevented them from going. Lynn knew what effect this would have on their health.

Lynn helped train 40 female teachers in Pakistan to encourage women to send their daughters to school, they would have been reluctant to do so because they did not want their daughters taught by a man. She knew the only way to change this was by educating them. When asked what she would hope people would say of her when she was gone, Lynn answered that she didn't know the meaning of the word "no".

Lynn's final achievement in the last weeks of her life was to be awarded the title of Barnardo's Lancashire Woman of the Year for 2009 – a prestigious and richly deserved award. However, Lynn's real lasting legacy was her strong, charismatic and inspirational leadership and her commitment to encourage SI members through the Programme Action work make a real lasting IMPACT on the lives of women and girls.

Olive Schreiner 1855 - 1920

A lady rising from abject poverty to become a powerful advocate on the rights of women. Her dedication in pursuing her beliefs earned worldwide respect.



Olive Emilie Albertina Schreiner, born in Basutoland, South Africa in 1855, was the ninth of the twelve children of Rebecca Lyndall and her husband, Gottlob Schreiner. Her parents were representatives of the London Missionary Society living in poverty. Only six of Olive's brothers and sisters survived childhood. The loss of her one younger sister, Ellie, when Olive was nine, shaped her rebellious temperament and unconventional outlook.

At the age of eleven, due to her parents' worsening poverty, Olive was sent, with three siblings to Cradock in the Eastern Cape province. She eventually found work as a governess, becoming a teacher and in her free time beginning work on a novel about her experiences in South Africa.

Olive saved enough money to travel to England, hoping to become a doctor and on discovering a Medical School for Women in London, attended lectures there. She began going to socialist meetings, becoming friendly with leading radicals of the time.

Olive became the most impressive recruit to the Men and Women's Club in the late 1880s, being outspoken about marriage, emancipation, sexual equality and birth control.

Eventually, she completed her novel, telling the story of Lyndall, a woman living on an isolated ostrich farm. The book, 'Story of an African Farm', became a key text and began the evocation of Olive's career which

embraced socialism, peace campaigning and anti-apartheid activism. The book was praised by feminists who approved of the strong heroine who controls her own destiny.

In 1889 Olive returned to South Africa to be with her family and became involved in politics. She married Samuel Cronwright, a successful cattle breeder in 1894. Her only child died sixteen hours after being born in 1895. Despite ill health Olive continued to write.

In 1911 she published 'Women and Labour', a treatise which influenced the women's emancipation movement in England and America. Although she was disappointed with the book, it was immediately acclaimed as an important statement on feminism and had a major influence on a large number of young women. A strong supporter of universal suffrage, Olive argued that the vote was 'a weapon, by which the weak may be able to defend themselves against the strong, the poor against the weak'.

At the outbreak of the first World War, Olive moved back to Britain and over the next four years was active in the peace movement and women's civic and sexual struggles.

By 1920, after a lifetime of ill-health, she became convinced that she did not have long to live, returned to South Africa and died from a heart attack at the end of the year. She was buried next to her daughter, overlooking the Karoo Desert.

Betsi Cadwaladr 1789 - 1860

Welsh heroine, Betsi Cadwaladr, was a pioneering nurse who contributed much to the healthcare of soldiers during the 19th Century. She helped soldiers in the Crimean war and served on the Balaclavian front. The North Wales NHS Trust has been named after her.



I am taking you back further than 100 years, and here's a short introduction.

I'r Cymry ohonoch, for those of you who are fluent in the Welsh language, you would know of the Oxford scholar, Ellis Wynne of Lasynys, author of "Visions of the Bard" (*"Gweledigaethau'r Bardd Cwsg"*). For me, Ellis Wynne is the 'Shakespeare of Wales'. The same applies to the inspiring woman I'm going to talk about, Betsi Cadwaladr - the 'Florence Nightingale of Wales'.

Elizabeth Davies, later known as Betsi Cadwaladr, was born in 1789, and grew up in Bala, daughter of a Methodist preacher and farmer.

Betsi left Bala at the age of 14 to enter into domestic service in Liverpool. She always longed to explore further afield, and left to travel the world, working as a Captain's maid and assistant, before settling in London to train as a nurse.

After reading about the plight of British soldiers in the Crimean War, who were dying of typhoid and wound infections, Betsi decided to join the military Nursing Service to take care of them.

She worked alongside Florence Nightingale for a time, but Betsi being from working class

and Nightingale the upper class resulted in a difficult relationship. Betsi was determined to nurse the soldiers at the front despite Nightingale's opposition.

Betsi then moved on to serve on the Balaclava front, where she was famous for her disregard of red tape to ensure that supplies reached the wounded. She went her way, calm and competent, deeply moved but efficient, never yielding to the despair that brought some nurses to the verge of hysteria.

Betsi worked in the Crimea until the war took its toll on her own health, suffering from cholera and dysentery and she left Crimea in 1855, not wanting to die in a foreign land.

The largest Welsh Health Board has taken her name, this Board covers the six North Wales counties, and it is named the "Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board".

On this International Women's Day I quote:

"This respectable and truly good woman, who sacrificed her health and almost her life, for the good of her suffering country men. Betsi Cadwaladr deserves our respect, and to be remembered here in Wales".

Ydi, mae Betsi Cadwaladr yn haeddu cael ei chofio gyda pharch ganddom yng Nghymru".

Eglantyne Jebb 1876 - 1928

Eglantyne Jebb was the inspirational founder of the Save the Children organisation, which, for almost 90 years, has been innovative in its internationalist, non-sectarian and professional approach to the needs of children worldwide.



Eglantyne was born on 25 August 1876, one of the 6 children at The Lyth, the family's estate in Ellesmere, Shropshire. The Jebbs, apart from being a well-off family, also had a strong social conscience and a commitment to public service.

In 1903 Eglantyne became involved in the Charity Organisation Society, which aimed to bring a modern scientific approach to charity work, and in 1913 she was asked to undertake a journey to Macedonia to deliver money raised on behalf of the Macedonian Relief Fund. As the First World War neared its end and many countries' economies came near to collapse, it was clear to Eglantyne that the children of these countries were suffering appallingly from the effects of the war.

On 15 April 1919, the Fight and Famine Council set up a fund to raise money for German and Austrian children - the Save the Children Fund. Success led Eglantyne and her sister Dorothy to attempt to set up an international movement for children. The International Save the Children Union was founded in Geneva in 1920, with the British Save the Children Fund and the Swedish Radda Barnen as leading members. In London, Eglantyne ensured that the Fund adopted the professional approach that she had learned in the Charity Organisation Society.

In 1923, she turned to another issue – that of Children's Rights. She headed to Geneva, to a meeting of the International Union, with a plan

for a Children's Charter. The result was a Declaration – drafted by Eglantyne – asserting the rights of children and the Duty of the International Community to put Children's Rights in the forefront. The International Save the Children Union adopted the declaration on 23 February 1923.

This Declaration was adopted on 26 November 1924 by the League of Nations as the World Child Welfare Charter. The focus of the Save the Children movement shifted to promoting the Declaration and, in 1925, the first International Child Welfare Congress was held in Geneva.

For many years, Eglantyne suffered from ill-health and on 17 December 1928, she died in a nursing home in Geneva, and was buried there in St George's Cemetery. It is said of Eglantyne Jebb that she had deeply held ideals and, to an exceptional degree, lived up to them. This is borne out in a quotation from Eglantyne herself. She states that:-

Mankind as a whole is responsible for the world as a whole, and the people of every race should unite to get rid of such evils as child slavery, premature marriage, child labour and neglect, and the starvation of children.

On 20 November 1959, the United Nations adopted the Declaration of the Rights of the Child in an expanded version, having 10 principles in place of the original 5. This date has become Universal Children's Day.

Betty Williams & Mairead Corrigan

Betty Williams was drawn into the public arena after witnessing the death of three children when they were hit by a car driven by IRA fugitive Danny Lennon and with Mairead Corrigan the children's aunt they co-founded the Community of Peace People, an organisation which attempts to encourage a peaceful resolution of the Troubles in Northern Ireland.

Inspirational Women who received the Nobel Peace Prize in 1977



Betty Williams (born 22 May 1943) and Mairead Corrigan (born 27 January 1944) co-founded the Community of Peace People, an organisation which attempts to encourage a peaceful resolution of the Troubles in Northern Ireland. The two women received the Nobel Peace Prize in 1977 (the prize for 1976).

At the time they received the Nobel Prize in 1976 both women were 'ordinary' women with no particular experience, skills or qualifications to prepare them for the outstanding change they brought about in reconciling communities divided by religion in Northern Ireland. Betty Williams was working as a receptionist and raising her two children. Mairead Corrigan was born into a Roman Catholic community; she attended a Catholic school until the age of 14, and then worked as a secretary.

Betty Williams was drawn into the public arena after witnessing the death of three children on 10 August 1976 when they were hit by a car whose driver, an IRA fugitive named Danny Lennon, was fatally shot by British authorities. Betty Williams was driving in her car with one of her children when she heard gunfire. She turned the corner to her street and saw the three Maguire children and rushed to help. Their mother, Anne Maguire, who was with them, eventually committed suicide in 1980 after a failed attempt to start a new life in New Zealand.

Within two days of the tragic event, Betty Williams had obtained 6,000 signatures on a petition for peace and gained media attention. Together with Mairead Corrigan (Anne Maguire's sister) she co-founded the Women for Peace which later became The Community for Peace People.

The two organized a peace march to the graves of the children, which was attended by 10,000 Protestant and Catholic women — the peaceful march was disrupted by members of the Irish Republican Army, who accused them of being "dupes of the British". The following week, Williams and Corrigan again led a march — this time with 35,000 strong.

First Declaration Of The Peace People:

- We have a simple message to the world from this movement for Peace.
- We want to live and love and build a just and peaceful society.
- We want for our children, as we want for ourselves, our lives at home, at work, and at play to be lives of joy and Peace.
- We recognize that to build such a society demands dedication, hard work, and courage.
- We recognize that there are many problems in our society which are a source of conflict and violence.
- We recognize that every bullet fired and every exploding bomb make that work more difficult.

Betty Williams & Mairead Corrigan



- We reject the use of the bomb and the bullet and all the techniques of violence. the tragedies we have known are a bad memory and a continuing warning.
- We dedicate ourselves to working with our neighbours, near and far, day in and day out, to build that peaceful society in which the tragedies we have known are a bad memory and a continuing warning.

Both women have continued to make differences for women – taking peace campaigning onto a ‘global’ stage. For example, in 2006, Betty Williams was one of the founders of the Nobel Women's Initiative along with sister Nobel Peace Laureates Mairead Corrigan Maguire, Shirin Ebadi, Wangari Maathai, Jody Williams and Rigoberta Menchu Tum. Six women representing North America and South America, Europe, the Middle East and Africa who decided to bring together their experiences in a united effort for peace with justice and equality. It is the goal of the Nobel Women's Initiative to help strengthen work being done in support of women's rights around the world.

In recent years, Mairead Corrigan has also become an active critic of the Israeli government's policy towards Palestine and the Palestinian people. To draw attention in a supposedly peaceful and non-violent way to this policy, in particular to the land and naval blockade of Gaza, in June 2010 Corrigan went on board the "aid ship", the MV Rachel Corrie. The ship was the remaining member of an international flotilla bound for the Gazan coastline, but finally was denied the right to go there.

Asma Jilani Jahingir

Asma Jilani Jahingir was born on 27 January 1952 in Karachi, Pakistan. In her role as a human rights lawyer, she has spent most of her career defending the rights of women, religious minorities and children of Pakistan. Aided in her mission by fellow activists and colleagues from the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan, she has continued her battle for justice amidst constant threats to her safety.



Her willingness to relentlessly defend victims of rape, women seeking divorce from abusive husbands, people accused of blasphemy, her work on the issues of child labour, and her continuous criticism of political parties has made her one of the most controversial figures in Pakistan. She has served as the chairperson of the Pakistan Human Rights Commission. In 1998, she was appointed Special Rapporteur of the UN Commission on Human Rights.

Asma learned the business of law and politics at an early age. Her father spent much of his life in and out of prison for his political views. Asma was eighteen when she filed her first petition to have her father released from jail and started working with lawyers on his defence.

In 1980, Asma Jahingir and her sister, Hina Jilani, got together with a few fellow activists and lawyers and formed the first law firm established by women in Pakistan. They also helped form the Women's Action Forum (WAF) in the same year. The first WAF demonstration was in 1983 when some 25-50 women took to the streets protesting the famous Safia Bibi case. Safia, a young blind girl, had been raped yet had ended up in jail on the charge of zina. "We (their law firm) had been given a lot of cases by the advocate general and the moment this demonstration came to light, the cases were taken away from us." Asma recalls. (Dawn-The Reviewer, 2 April 1998, "A ray of hope")

Asma has been a staunch critic of the Hudood ordinance and blasphemy laws of Pakistan. These laws were introduced in the Pakistani constitution during the 10-year

dictatorship of General Zia-ul-Haq. According to the Hudood ordinance, a person accused of adultery or *zina* can be sentenced to death and according to the blasphemy law, a person accused of speaking or acting against Islam can also be sentenced to death.

In 1995, Asma Jahingir received numerous death threats for her defence of Salamat Masih, a fourteen-year old Christian boy sentenced to death for allegedly writing blasphemous words against Islam on the wall of a mosque.

In 1999, Asma and her sister, Hina Jilani, a fellow lawyer and activist, were again subject to death threats after representing Samia Sawar, a 32 year old woman who was seeking divorce from her abusive husband. Samia had turned to her family for help but they had refused to help her attain a divorce. When Samia continued to seek a divorce, Samia's family had her murdered in broad daylight in the very law offices of Asma and Hina. Apparently, the family believed that Samia's actions were dishonourable to the family.

"Eventually things will have to get better. However, the way they will improve is not going to be because of the government or the elite leadership, or the political leadership, or the institutions of our country, most of which have actually crumbled. It will be the people of the country themselves who will bring about the change in society because they have had to struggle to fend for themselves at every level."

Asma Jahingir, Interview by Farahnaz Junejo, Zameen, Dec 1997.

Joan Mwajuma Ongaro

Joan moved to her village in Lwala (Kenya) and organised a women's group that transformed their village from poverty and hunger to enterprise and wellbeing.



Joan is a Kenyan woman who lived in the city with her family. Due to problems at work, her husband had to take early retirement and move to their village, Lwala, in the Bondo district of the country. She was a nursery teacher and could have stayed on with her job in the city. As there was a stigma attached to being alone there without her husband, she decided to move to the village with him. When she got there, she tried to start a nursery school but the villagers thought it was a waste of time to educate children at such a young age. Another reason it didn't work was that there was widespread poverty in the village.

Lwala has no electricity and is situated in a very dry area of Kenya. The villagers have to walk for 20 minutes to get water for drinking, cooking and household chores from the nearest river.

Before Joan moved to the village, the water from this river was used for irrigation – the villagers had to fetch water to irrigate their crops. The availability of food therefore depended on whether there had been a lot of rain and whether they had worked hard to irrigate the farms. There were no other jobs to do, children wore torn clothes and the women, some of them widows felt helpless. Joan's daughter recounts that in the dry season some of these families had only one meal a day and sometimes no meal at all.

When Joan got to the village, she formed a women's group. They started to contribute a small amount of money regularly to help each other with their problems. They also applied for some help from a bank. The help from the bank was not in cash but in kind. They were given credit to buy seed to plant. The bank also had a large tank built for them that would

collect water in the rainy season. With this water available for irrigation, the group started to earn an income by cultivating the farms of people who couldn't do so themselves. Apart from the income they got from cultivating unused farms, they attracted further revenue from surrounding villages because they now had food to sell. With the money they got, the group paid back their loan from the bank and bought a piece of land to start their own farm.

They now have several tanks in the village because others saw the benefit. One important benefit of the tanks is the availability of clean drinking water as the water from the river was coloured red because it was situated in a red mud area. Only a privileged few could afford to buy purification tablets.

Their fortunes have improved so much that they have attracted a bank to the village because they all wanted to open bank accounts to save their new found income. Their next project was to convert their thatch houses into brick houses which they did once again, as a group.

The effect on the women is immense. They are now well fed and well dressed. They are happier and more confident in themselves. They feel empowered to do something about their circumstance which is sharp contrast to their resigned attitude of the past. The next project they are looking into now is to how to get electricity into the village.

One other effect of Joan's presence is that on education in the village. She has mobilized the parents to get involved in the school PTA for which the headmaster is so grateful. She also runs a small homework club in her home so that the children can share textbooks etc.

Marie Stopes 1880 - 1958

Marie Stopes was a leading advocate of women's rights and birth control.



Marie Stopes was born in Edinburgh, in 1880, to an archaeologist father and a scholarly mother, who was also a suffragette. At university she was not allowed to attend lectures and although she took the same examinations as the male students, because she was a woman she was awarded a certificate rather than a degree. Charlotte's university experiences turned her into a passionate feminist and made sure her daughter was fully aware of the arguments for women's suffrage.

She became the first female member of the science faculty in Manchester University and the youngest Doctor of Science in Britain in 1905. Her marriage in 1911 was annulled in 1914, on the grounds of non-consummation. Due to the failure of her first marriage, Marie became more interested in sexual matters and increased her knowledge of sexual ethics and the physiology of reproduction.

She became a leading advocate of women's rights and birth control.

Her first family planning clinic was opened in Holloway, North London in 1921. It offered free service to married women and gathered data about contraception. Thousands of women wrote to her for advice following the publication of her books 'Married Love' and 'Wise Parenthood', but these books were widely and strongly condemned by the Church, medical establishments and the press.

Marie was a pioneer in the field of family planning – she offered and provided women

with a 'choice'. At last, women had access to birth control, to take 'charge' of their own bodies and decide how many children they would have. Also, by preventing unwanted pregnancies, the then criminal practice of abortion was reduced. But, for some women these hideous back-street abortions were their only answer to another unwanted pregnancy. They risked disease and death, their fragile state of mind trying to cope with another mouth to feed forced them to make such dire decisions.

Marie offered women 'sexual freedom' – without the worry of unwanted pregnancy. By 1930 other family planning organisations had been set up and they joined forces with Marie Stopes to form The National Birth Control Council (later Family Planning Association) She continued to campaign for women to have better access to birth control until her death in 1958, ironically within nine years the 1967 Abortion Act allowed women to have an abortion on medical or psychological grounds.

Marie strove and persisted in providing birth control clinics despite great opposition from organisations such as medical institutions and her fiercest critic the Catholic Church. Making birth control available allowed women a new found freedom which would improve their health, welfare and finances: giving them opportunities to make decisions about their families and their own future: whether to pursue further education now the demands and responsibilities of looking after many children had been resolved by birth control advice and amenities.

Elizabeth Andrews 1882 - 1960

One of eleven children in a Rhondda mining family too poor to afford education; she cared desperately for the suffering she saw around her and vowed to change the lot of miners' wives, successfully campaigning for pit head baths so miners wives could escape the drudgery that could be life threatening. She opened the first nursery school in Wales and became Wales's first woman magistrate.



Elizabeth Andrews was one of the most influential female political activists of the early 20th century, yet her contribution has never been given the plaudits received by men of the same era.

She was one of eleven children in a Rhondda mining family too poor to afford an education for their clever daughter. She cared desperately for the suffering she saw around her and vowed to change the lot of miners' wives and mothers in the South Wales valleys.

Elizabeth set up the Co-operative women's guilds and joined the suffragist movement; her support for women's rights sat side by side with her work for her class and her community.

Elizabeth certainly didn't mind breaking with tradition and she attended meetings where she was usually the only woman. She was always given the loyal support of her husband Thomas Andrews.

She knew how women were suffering and how the hard relentless work of the miners' wives and mothers was not understood, as they coped with overcrowded houses, poor sanitation and the tragically high death rates among their children.

Campaign for Pit head baths

In many cottages there were 3 or 4 miners having to bath in front of a fire. The small kitchen had to serve as bathroom, laundry, bakery, dining room and nursery. The heat from the large open fire and the wet pit clothes made the atmosphere unbearable; the mother and wife had to tolerate all this.

In 1919 the first pit head bath was built at Treharris.

From 1923 to 1928 Labour women argued that birth control information should be supplied without charge at municipal Mother and Baby clinics. It was argued that this knowledge already available to middle-class women, who could pay for it, would solve the problems of poverty and chronic ill-health of working class mothers. She believed that only women would make the world 'fit for the child' and for that to happen women had to claim their birth right – the vote.

Elizabeth joined forces with Rose Davies of Aberdare, and the duo successfully campaigned for clinics, trained midwives, home helps and telephone kiosks to give women access to medical help.

She brought the needs of the working class women into the political arena because she shared their lives, spoke their language and voiced their hopes and fears.

In 1935 the first nursery school was opened. In 1924 she wrote "*Women have a great part to play in world peace. It is the work of women, mothers and teachers to create the right impression to the mind of the child. The first step is to see no toy guns, toy pistols, toy swords no dressing up in soldier clothes, no picture books about war, if we want to become a peace loving nation*".

Elizabeth died in 1960 aged 77, and the Rhondda Leader described her achievements; **'We can say her work is done and she did it well'**

Miss Dorothea Beale 1831 - 1906

Miss Dorothea Beale used her success at Cheltenham Ladies College to demonstrate what a good school could achieve. Dorothea Beale was also involved in trying to improve the national standard of education and played a prominent role in the Head Mistresses' Association and The Teachers' Guild.



In 1865 Dorothea Beale joined with Emily Davies and Elizabeth Garrett and eight other women to form a discussion group called the Kensington Society. In 1867 the group drafted a petition asking Parliament to grant women the vote. One of their supporters, John Stuart Mill, added an amendment to the 1867 Reform Act that would give women the same political rights as men. However, the amendment was defeated by 196 votes to 73.

Miss Frances Buss 1827 - 1894

Miss Frances Buss attended a local free school. Frances Buss did very well with her studies and at the age of fourteen she was asked to help teach the other children. Inspired by her daughter's educational achievements, Mrs. Buss decided to open her own school and Frances was given the job of teaching the older children. Frances had a strong desire to improve the standard of her teaching and in 1849 she became an evening student at the recently established Queen's College.



In 1871 Frances took the decision to change her North London Collegiate School from a private school to an endowed grammar school. Although this resulted in a loss of income, Buss was now able to offer a good education for those girls whose families could not afford the fees of a private school.

Miss Dorothea Beale and Miss Frances Buss

Despite 'The first Education Act (Forster Act 1870) in Britain that established compulsory education for all children aged between five and ten years old, it was boys who were encouraged to learn so they could 'get a job'; a girl's need to learn was questioned, as their role was 'wife, mother, mistress helpmeet for man and ' to acquire skills to support and make life comfortable for their men folk'. Their limited educational opportunity could be forfeited as they were expected to help in the home; washing, scrubbing floors, looking after siblings and the need for extensive schooling was not important, domesticity was their role!

Emily Davies, who founded the first women's college, Girton, fought against this ideology, as she was 'determined to bring girls' schooling up to the standard of boys. Arguments were presented in the late 1800s that 'educating girls would damage their health'.

The notion was contested by Dorothea Beale, second principal of Cheltenham Ladies College, 'where academic learning was prized above all other' The curriculum included modesty and decorum as a 'knowledgeable woman', might scare off possible suitors. An educated woman could challenge patriarchal control. A woman must be kept in her place. Women were decorous and unassuming otherwise she would not be suitable for marriage, and educated to be subordinate.

The ideology underpinning The 1944 Education Act in England and Wales stressed the promotion of equal opportunity and individual potential. I strongly contest this, as it 'did nothing to further girl's chances' but ensured men organised education in the interest of men. The Act provided free secondary education, involvement of working and middle class children, and what is called the eleven plus examination, also known as the scholarship.

Children who passed the eleven plus had the opportunity of a good education attending a grammar or technical school. Examination results showed girls attaining higher marks, more girls could have been awarded scholarship places, creating gender imbalance. Control of this 'situation' was achieved with a differentiated lower pass mark for boys. Girls had to achieve a higher standard and I was one of those girls.

Fifty years later, anger has not diminished when I recall this blatant unfairness, instigated by men.

Heather John

Heather John, a native of Briton Ferry, Neath, has been instrumental in helping poor communities in Uganda for several years.



Care for Uganda is a charitable organisation, formed by the Reverend Andy Pilcher and Heather is a member of his church.

Heather had always wanted to help the poorest people in our world but while she was bringing up her children, it was impossible for her to realise this aim. However, once her children had left home, she set about arranging her life so that she would be able to take time out of her everyday activities and give 'hands – on', practical help to families in Uganda.

Every year for the past five years Heather has travelled to Africa and lived with a different family in a village in Uganda during her two weeks. The last family that Heather stayed with was in the BBOWA area – an area that Idi Ammin had destroyed.

The specific areas that are focused on to help the poor are:-

- The livestock programme - distributing chickens, pigs etc. to families;

- Education;
- Clinical services;
- Hygiene education;
- Building more water boas in the village;
- Building local latrines; and
- A sponsorship programme giving children the opportunity of an education and a better chance in life.

Heather has helped in all the areas and although the charity has built its own accommodation. Heather, very bravely, opts to stay with a poor family in their hut.

The NFWI ran a three year project entitled Women Reaching Women (WRW) and Heather helped this cause by speaking at WRW events, vividly bringing to life just how hard life is for the families that she helps.

In 2013, Heather will be staying in Uganda for four months, helping the families within the areas listed above.

Pratima Chakraborty (Lahar)



In the words of her granddaughter, Anuradha, Pratima Chakraborty (Lahar) provided a 'lust for learning'.

When I think of women who made a difference, I always remember a little girl, lost in a village in erstwhile East Bengal, now known as Bangladesh. She was nicknamed Lahar meaning the waves of the sea. Just like them, her heart followed the rhythms of the poetry, which was taught to her brothers, but never to her.

One day, defying the traditions of her family she ran to the house of a Christian missionary and begged his wife to teach her. The missionary's wife agreed. Once her family got to know of this they beat her soundly. However, she fought on. She was ready to wash dishes for people so that they taught her. She flouted all the conventions of her family and they tired of her. Soon she was married to a man who respected this wish in her and taught her himself. In 1947, when India was partitioned she was one of the few women who had a university degree. The Indian government invited her to join as an inspector of refugee rehabilitation. She had to leave her village for Calcutta. But she was a confident young woman bureaucrat. Her position, as a civil servant enabled her to help all those women who had lost their homes and their security.

Education was very dear to her. She toured the camps not only to see that all was well, but to spread awareness about health problems and to try and educate people. In the midst of heartbreak, she never lost her faith in books. One would think it incredible, that she could cope with immense challenges which her family was being forced

to face. Most of her very near and dear ones had to cope with sudden poverty. Their belief in education being fragile, most of them had preferred to remain confined to a rustic life and had refused to be a part of the change that was to sweep Indian society.

In the early nineteenth century, India was declared free from British rule in 1947. The country was divided. The state of Bengal was divided into Bangladesh and west Bengal. The Hindus opted to leave their land and to accept Indian citizenship. However, most people were not ready for the change. The fledgeling government in India tried its best to get them settled. However most of them lacked the skills required for employment. They had large families to take care of. They had to learn to speak a new language. West Bengal was culturally different from East Bengal. Many of them found the squalor of their new lives repugnant. But Lahar became a beacon of hope. She did more than her share. She would often tell me "If you want to eliminate poverty, try to remove poverty of the mind."

When she held my hand and read out her favourite poems she embedded in me the love of learning that she herself had. She was one of those who influenced the course of history. Things have changed because they lived their convictions. Their stories remain untold, but in their personal lives they are transformational heroes. Formally she was called Pratima Chakraborty and she was my grandmother.

Camila Batmanghelidjh

Camila Batmanghelidjh is founder and director of Kids Company, a charity which provides practical, emotional and educational support to 13,000 vulnerable inner-city children and young people each year.



Camila Batmanghelidjh laughs as she contrasts the first ten years of her life, as the child of a wealthy Iranian physician living in Tehran, with her current life: *“Who’d have thought that the child who grew up with such wealth and two police body guards would end up in Peckham?”*

As surprised as Camila is to find herself in a deprived part of South London, she has been keen to work with vulnerable children for a long time. Aged 9, Camila had already told her parents that she planned to run an orphanage and she was regularly entrusted by her teachers to entertain 70 to 90 primary school aged children: *“A love for children, psychology and an empathy for those who don’t fit in, provided the building blocks for Camila’s future career.*

Age eleven Camila was sent to one of the UK’s top private schools for girls, Sherborne. Not long after arriving there, the news that her father had been imprisoned in the Iranian revolution turned her life upside down. Although family connections enabled her school fees to be covered, Camila started working with children during the holidays to earn extra cash. By the age of 19 she had a full practise, just through word of mouth.

Camila says that the issues faced by these children were similar to those of the deprived London children with whom she works today: *“It’s all about lack of maternal attachment.”* Aged 25, when Camila became a part-time therapist at family services in South London, she realised that many of the children whom

she was trying to help didn’t have a functioning parent at all to bring them to appointments so she cleaned up a broom cupboard in a primary school and called it the *“Place to Be”*. Five years later, in 1995, Camila left the Place to Be, to set up Kids Company with a £20,000 grant from the local authority.

Kids Company aims to provide a nurturing home environment for children who are missing a functioning parent:

“The way you do it is you put a collection of staff on a premises and let the children come when they like. Those who desperately need it will come seven days a week. You provide three meals a day. You don’t open and close files on children, you just get to know them. It’s a partnership with the parents and the centre where possible.”

Kids Company operate variations of this model in 37 schools across London. They have a crisis centre for 2000 children and an Urban Academy for *“two or three hundred really challenging students”*. The Company has 336 paid staff and 5600 volunteers.

Camila sees the overall problem for deprived inner city children increasing: *“Violence is spreading like a virus among disturbed children at street level and they are forcing otherwise well cared for children to become involved.”* Privileged background or not, Camila is using her drive, experience and personality to make a big impact in this area and I am thankful.

Dr Graça Simbine Machel

Dr. Graça Simbine Machel has skilfully thrived in a male-dominated world. She has bridged the gap for the emergence of a new generation of resilient women across the 20th and 21st centuries where women's rights are human rights, blazing the trail in pioneering efforts to champion the defence of human rights of women and children.



As the only ever First Lady in two separate countries (Mozambique and South Africa), Graça has earned her place on merit setting multiple records as a political heavyweight in her own right across the centuries and across generations. Fluent in her native Tsonga, Portuguese, Spanish, Italian and French, she is indeed a spark that ignites hope amidst potentially overwhelming socio-economic and political tsunamis that have characterised the last hundred years.

Co-winner of the 1998 *North–South Prize* for human rights advocacy, winner of the 1995 United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees *Nansen Refugee Award*, Honorary Dame Commander of the Order of the British Empire (OBE), etc the many accolades fall short of describing the impact of Graça's work at all levels.

Born on 17 October 1945 in Incadine in Gaza Province of Mozambique, to me Graça's life is a lesson-filled story epitomizing the struggles that women go through in bringing life and hope into this world through childbirth. For as Africa's birth pangs for independence from colonial rule were underway though a multi-lingual university graduate of the University of Lisbon (Portugal), Graça played her part as Commander in the pro-independence Mozambican Liberation Front (FRELIMO) guerrilla war and symbolically 'midwived' the nation of Mozambique.

Having delivered Mozambique nation as a target oriented Education minister, she focused on nurturing human capital development of the young nation for over the last four decades, touching the lives of countless and otherwise faceless destitute people of all ages and especially women,

children and refugees. From working with grass root organizations on orphan resettlement and child rehabilitation, to national cabinet ministerial positions in education, health, University Chancellor to global organizations UNICEF, UNESCO to name but a few.

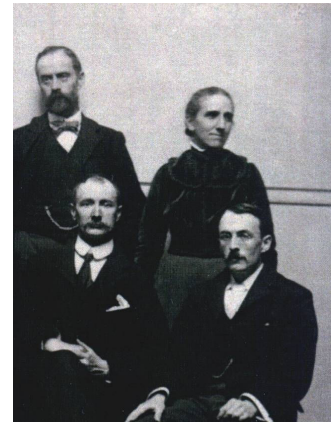
Yet amidst the din, hustle and bustle of urbanization, commerce, trade rumbling on globalization bandwagon across the continent, Graça's keen motherly ear heard the faint cries of orphans, child soldiers, rape victims. Africa is haemorrhaging internally, killing its own children physically and emotionally amidst a predominant culture where children are by all definitions, our beacon of hope for the future. So horrific were the recollections by child victims reported in United Nations Report on The Impact of Armed Conflict on Children: *"conflicts have raged for so long that children have grown into adults without ever knowing peace.....raped by soldiers when she was just nine years old...the anguish of a mother who saw her children blown to pieces by land-mines in their fields just when she believed they had made it home safely after the war....children forced to watch while their families were brutally slaughtered"*

Having unveiled the ugly face of armed conflict where "children are targets, not incidental casualties", as a member of Africa Progress Panel she now focuses world leaders' attention on delivering their commitments to the Africa. She inspires me by her unwavering focus on her lifetime commitment:

"It is the meaning of what my life has been since a youth - to try to fight for the dignity and the freedom of my own people."
(Graça Machel).

Catherine Raisin 1855 - 1945

Catherine Raisin, a forgotten female geology role model, fought hard for female educational rights. She was certainly at the front if not ahead of her time in educational matters as she pioneered female advancement in the male-dominated area of geology.



Catherine Alice Raisin was born on 24 April 1855 just outside London and attended classes in University College, London, the first college in London to allow women participants. Catherine studied geology under Professor Bonney and zoology under Thomas Huxley at the Royal School of Mines. In 1884, she was awarded her B.Sc. Hons. in both subjects. She was the second woman to receive a D. Sc. in 1898. Catherine Raisin published over 24 scientific articles during her academic life.

Her first paper in 1887 was read to the Geological Society of London not by herself but by Professor Bonney, as women were not allowed to read papers as they could not be Society Members or Fellows. This paper on metamorphic rocks is now regarded as a classic.

Catherine spent her whole academic career at Bedford College, an all female college, founded early in 1849. In 1890 Catherine took over as Head of Department of Geology, the first female to do so and a position she held for 30 years. In 1891 she was appointed Head of Botany too - a demanding job for a man let alone a woman at that time.

In 1898 she was appointed the first female Vice Principal of a college, a position she held for three years and in 1902, was elected a fellow of University College. She was also a member of the amateur Geologists' Association for 67 years, one of the longest serving members.

Catherine Raisin was remarkable for four reasons:-

1. Her research into rocks at a time when this subject was male dominated.

2. Her active dedication to female education and equality. She founded the Somerville Club, a discussion forum for women in London.

3. Her enthusiasm for her subject, which made her an excellent teacher and respected by her peers. Her students called her "The Sultana" as a sign of endearment.

4. Her administrative capabilities – she ran the Geology, Botany and Geography departments simultaneously.

As Catherine approached retirement in 1915, she was asked to stay on as most men were fighting at the front and continued in her position until 1920 when she was 65 years old.

Catherine Raisin never married and regarded her students as her daughters! She was not afraid to stand up for her rights or the rights of others if she felt injustice had been done. All her life she was an avid non-smoker and was not afraid to tell people of her displeasure when they 'lit up' in theatres, trains and buses!

Catherine Raisin died of cancer at the age of 90 in Cheltenham on 12 July 1945. It is fitting that a female doctor, Dr. Gwendolen Brown, certified her death. Her legacy was outstanding. She left £300 in her will as an annual prize for the Geography Department. This is still awarded today and a £500 bequest to Bedford College for the benefit of non-smoking students.

Justine Rolfe

Inspirational Active Citizen, Justine Rolfe, tells us what inspired her to be a volunteer and work with communities in Cameroon.



'The desire to work in Africa had always stimulated my interest from my teens. I think it was Live Aid 1985 that captured my imagination. It gave awareness to the world of the plight of African countries and some of the insurmountable difficulties people face in poverty in the developing world.

It wasn't until I went to work for the Welsh Assembly Government in Cardiff that I was presented with the opportunity to go and work in Sub-Saharan Africa for two months. This opportunity again awoke my interest so I applied and was delighted to get through the selection process and be offered a placement for 8 weeks in the north-west region of Cameroon.

This experience had such a big impact on me that when I returned I decided to leave my job and volunteer with VSO for one year. I am now based in the same placement in a small village called Sop in Jakiri.

My role as a volunteer is working as an Organisational Development Officer for the Community Education Action Centre (CEAC) for Jakiri Council in north-west region of Cameroon. The role of the CEAC is to work at the grassroots level to enable community members to plan and implement their community projects through active participation.

Main objective:

To educate rural communities to become more involved in the participatory development process so they can gain ownership and ensure that their development actions are sustainable.

The drive towards citizens taking responsibility for their own community development has come about due to the decentralization process in Cameroon.

I am working with the VDAs to educate them on transparency of finances and about decisions that are being made and the need to be accountable for them. This is all carried out through a participatory approach of community meetings so members of the community are fully engaged in the decision making process.

My work with Women's groups

My other role is looking at leadership and democracy and encouraging women to be involved in the decision-making process not only for their communities but at a higher level.

There are very few rights written down in law for the women of Cameroon and where there are laws they are hidden in various constitutions that tend to contradict themselves. Bringing awareness to equality issues and working both with the rural women and people in positions of power is a small step in educating people on their human rights.

The experience is giving me an amazing and fascinating insight into a culture and society so far removed from ours. Everyday is a learning experience for both the people I work with and for myself. I've learnt many diplomacy skills and the importance of building relationships and gaining trust as a means of moving forward. A lot of it is about managing expectations and realising you are working in a society that has a different way of doing things and you need to be adaptable. Everyday is a challenge but helping people to help themselves is truly rewarding!

Mary Jones and her Bible 1784 - 1866

The story of Mary Jones and her Bible inspired the founding of the British and Foreign Bible Society. Mary Jones (16 December 1784 – 28 December 1866) was a Welsh Protestant Christian girl who, at age fifteen, walked twenty-five miles across the countryside to buy a copy of the Welsh Bible from Thomas Charles because she did not have one. Charles then used her story in proposing to the Religious Tract Society that it set up a new organisation to supply Wales with Bibles.



Mary Jones was from a poor family, the daughter of a weaver Jacob Jones and his wife Mary, who lived at the foot of Cader Idris, Llanfihangel-y-pennant, Meirioneth, (now part of Gwynedd), near Dolgellau. She was born in December 1784. Her parents were devout Calvinistic Methodists and she herself professed the Christian faith at eight years of age. Having learned to read in the circulating schools organised by Thomas Charles, it became her burning desire to possess a Bible of her own. The nearest copy was at a farm two miles distant from her little cottage and there was no copy on sale nearer than Bala, which was 25 miles away and it was not certain that a copy could be obtained there.

Welsh Bibles were scarce in those days. Having saved for six years until she had enough money to pay for a copy, she started one morning in 1800 for Bala and walked the 25 miles, barefoot as usual, to obtain a copy from the Rev. Charles, the only individual with Bibles for sale in the area. Mr. Charles told her that all of the copies which he had received were sold or already spoken for. Mary was so distraught that Charles spared her one of the copies already promised to another. According

to tradition, it was the impression that this visit by Mary Jones left upon him that impelled Charles to propose to the Council of the Religious Tract Society the formation of a Society to supply Wales with Bibles.

Mary later married a weaver of Bryn-crug named Thomas Lewis. She died in 1866 and was buried at the graveyard of Bryn-crug Calvinistic Methodist Chapel. Her Bible is now kept at the British and Foreign Bible Society's Archives in Cambridge University Library. It is a copy of the 1799 edition of the Welsh Bible, ten thousand copies of which were printed at Oxford for the Society for the Propagation of Christian Knowledge. In addition to the Old and New Testaments and the Apocrypha, the volume contains the Book of Common Prayer (in Welsh) and Edmwnd Prys's Welsh metrical Psalms.

Another copy of the Bible she obtained in Bala is in the National Library of Wales at Aberystwyth.

A "Mary Jones Walk" was held in the year 2000 to commemorate Mary's original feat, and has been repeated several times.

Betsi Cadwaladr 1789 - 1860

Betsi Cadwaladr was part of the great revolution in nursing and public health led by Florence Nightingale. Today she is being recognised by Welsh nurses. The Betsi Cadwaladr University Local Health Board recognises her in its name. The Royal College of Nurses holds a Biennial lecture in her name and this year will see the launch of a Betsi Cadwaladr nursing scholarship.



Born in Bala, one of 16 children, Betsi was brought up on Penrhiw farm in a tiny cottage. Her father was a farmer and preacher. Her faith which was inherited from her father was the mainstay of her life.

The Crimean war of the 1850s was hallmarked by disasters. The British public were kept in ignorance until war correspondents, such as Thomas Chenery and William Russell, began sending in reports which revealed that the treatment of the sick and wounded on the front was a national scandal.

When in her sixties, and after a life of working in service, Betsi presented herself to go out to the Crimea. Nightingale had already left but Betsi was selected to go out with the second batch of nurses.

To say that Nightingale and Betsi did not get on is an understatement. Nightingale, influenced by the Blue Books of Treason, was suspicious of Betsi because she was Welsh. Betsi, therefore left Nightingale at Scutari and went to the front at Balaclava to tend to the injured.

Nightingale understood the need for rigorous research in persuading the authorities and the public to deal with the awful conditions that spread disease.

But Betsi Cadwaladr understood the human touch. Her stories were not of mortality rates or statistical graphs, but real stories of the young men she cared for. Today, we'd call them "patient stories", and she used them with devastating effect to persuade the aloof superintendents who visited her wards at

Balaclava. Betsi was extremely skilled at putting the "flesh on the bones of the statistics" with her detailed accounts of the soldiers' experiences. When she testified about her patients, whose needs were not being met because of rules and inappropriate bureaucracy, she did so with the fervour of the pulpit and the eloquence of the Welsh in full flood.

Betsi was a true egalitarian, fighting for the needs of injured soldiers whatever their rank or background. She was a pioneer of the founding principle of our NHS: treatment based on need and not ability to pay. Ironically, she found that sick officers were often the most needy because they were expected to pay for food and provisions. Patient need was her motivating factor. She developed skills which we would recognise today as encompassing nursing, dietetics and occupational therapy.

Sadly, in her life she knew prejudice because she was Welsh. Even in her death she has known great prejudice. She has been targeted for criticism and innuendo that she was a woman of "dubious morals." Yet not only had she passed very strict physical and moral tests to be accepted as a nurse, she was a devout Christian who once, when she was starving, would not buy food on a Sunday!

Betsi is buried in Abney Park, one of the huge cemeteries built in the mid 19th century in London because there was no capacity in churchyards. Betsi was buried a pauper. The ignominy of such a burial is heartbreaking especially as Betsi paid such a high price for her relentless hard work and dedication at Balaclava. It cost her her health.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We would like to thank the Welsh Assembly Government for the grant received to hold the events and to publish this booklet of stories.

We would also like to thank the partner organisations who supported our events namely Clwyd Denbigh Federation of WIs, Hafan Cymru, Oxfam Cymru, Sorpotimists International Carmarthen & District, British Council, the National Assembly for Wales, Women Seeking Sanctuary Group, Wellbeing Regeneration Ltd, Cardiff University Department of Lifelong Learning, Vision Impaired West Glamorgan and Platform 51 Cymru.

Thank you to the speakers, storytellers and facilitators involved in each event:-

Carmarthen

Speakers: Councillor Meryl Gravell, Ann Pettitt, Gordina Appleton and Professor Donna Mead OBE;

Storytellers: Cassie Wood, Amaryllis Stock, Jeanette Evans, Liz Cornelius, Ann Hanford and Heather John.

Llangollen

Speakers: Christine Dukes, Sheila Warner MBE, Pam Small, Luned Jones and Enid Brown.

Storytellers: Emma Lewis, Anuradha Shanker, Gretta Cartwright, Anwen Hughes and Karen Gie.

Cardiff

Host AM: Rosemary Butler, AM for Newport West.

Storytellers: Anita Davies, Sarah Simons, Lynda Lumb, Henna Akhtar, Safina Ongaro-Omar and Olga Kelly.

Facilitators: Bhunesh Napal, Bismwa Gwom, Alison Ghrairi, Marilyn Kemeny, Myfanwy Grantham and Magda Essa.

We thank Lyn Richards and Sikiya Aekanye for collecting and editing the stories.

Finally a big thank you to all the women who participated in the events and contributed stories.

The National Federation of Women's Institutes-Wales
19 Cathedral Road
Cardiff CF11 9HA
Tel: 029 2022 1712
www.thewi.org.uk

Incorporated in England & Wales as a Company
Limited by Guarantee - No. 251 7690
Charity Registration No. 803793 VAT No. 239 4128 57