

# Guild of One-Name Studies Conference April 2024

## The Peace Petition from the Women of Wales to the Women of America 1923-24

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In 2014 members of staff at the Welsh Centre for International Affairs at the Temple of Peace, Cardiff, were searching through the Council Chamber Library when they chanced upon a tall Moroccan leather-bound document with an illuminated gold leaf inscription on its cover, which declared that this was “The Memorial from Wales signed by 390,296 Women in Wales and Monmouthshire, to the Women of the United States of America”. Inside this beautiful binding was an immaculately crafted message in calligraphy which called upon the women of America to join the women of Wales in their quest for World Peace. The aim was to get America to join the League of Nations Union.

But what had happened to this petition? Where was it now and why had we never heard of it? How was it possible to organise such a huge petition in 1923 and who were the signatories? Most importantly for those who first heard the story - Did my grandmother sign it?

This talk will explore the background to this story and explain what has happened since this discovery to celebrate this remarkable story during its centenary and how the petitioners are being identified and brought to light once more, no longer hidden from history.

Catrin Stevens is a historian, researcher and author. She is a former Head of History and Humanities at Trinity College, Carmarthen and has written many books on Welsh history and customs for adults and children in both Welsh and English. She is a former Chair of Archif Menywod Cymru / Women’s Archive Wales and has managed several lottery funded projects for the Archive: among them Voices from the Factory Floor / Lleisiau o Lawr y Ffatri; Century of Hope / Canrif Gobaith 1918-2018 and Setting the Record Straight / Gwir Gofnod o Gyfnod, safeguarding the papers and oral histories of women politicians. Currently she is project managing the Archive’s latest project: Women and Sport: Wales / Menywod a Chwaraeon: Cymru. She is a member of the Peace Petition Partnership to celebrate the Peace Petition from the women of Wales to the Women of America 1923-24 and has contributed to the book on this history: Yr Apêl The Appeal 1923-24, Hanes Rhyfeddol Deiseb Heddwch Menywod Cymru The Remarkable Story of the Welsh Women’s Peace Petition (Y Lolfa 2023).