

# ATGOFION O'R BORTH

## Cymdeithas Ddinesig Bro Porthaethwy

### Menai Bridge and District Civic Society

# MEMORIES OF MENAI BRIDGE

Mae Cymdeithas Ddinesig Bro Porthaethwy yn diweddar ei chofnodion, ffotograffau a'i Gwefan er mwyn ei gwneud yn haws i'r aelodau eu gweld. Byddwn yn ceisio ychwanegu at y rhain yn gyson drwy gydol y flwyddyn ac yn cyhoeddi pigion gyda'ch Cylchlythyr. Mae croeso mawr bob amser i gyfraniadau newydd, yn ogystal â help i adnabod pobl yn y lluniau.

Ewch i'n Gwefan yn [www.menaibridgecivicsociety.org.uk](http://www.menaibridgecivicsociety.org.uk)

Menai Bridge Civic Society is updating its records, photographs and Website to make them more accessible to members. We will try to add to these regularly throughout the year and publish extracts with your Newsletter. New contributions are always welcome, as is help with identifying people in photographs.

See our Website at [www.menaibridgecivicsociety.org.uk](http://www.menaibridgecivicsociety.org.uk)

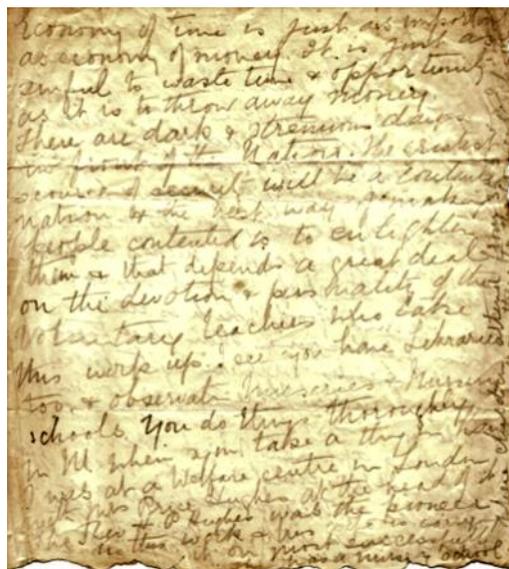
Memories of Menai Bridge

Volume 14

### Margaret Lloyd George Opening Up New Opportunities in 1919

Mrs Margaret Lloyd George, wife of the "man who won the war", was an extremely effective public speaker, campaigner and fund raiser. Whilst in 1920 she became Dame Margaret (though she preferred the simpler appellation) for her efforts in raising more than £200,000 for her Welsh war charities, she was also an effective political speaker, for which she is much less known. In 1918 she campaigned for her husband in Caernarvonshire and across Wales – including Holyhead; in November 1919 she spoke at two rallies in Plymouth in support of Nancy Astor<sup>i</sup> and in 1921 her campaigning was undoubtedly key to winning the controversial Cardiganshire bye-election for the Coalition Liberal candidate. As was said at the time, "Margaret is the Star".

But a large amount of her time was campaigning for her causes and doubtless one particularly satisfying part was opening up new facilities that provided new opportunities. Copies of two speeches given at such occasions, just over one hundred years ago, in Bangor and in Holyhead, have now been deposited in the National Library of Wales.<sup>ii</sup>



A page of Mrs. Lloyd George's handwritten version of her speech at the Normal College, available alongside a longer type written version.

### Mrs. Lloyd George at the Normal College, Bangor: an important example for the whole country

On 21<sup>st</sup> October 1919 Mrs. Lloyd George came to open the George Hostel, the accommodation being newly provided in the former St. George's Hotel, for male students of the Normal College (or North Wales Counties Training College), provision of which would also ensure that women students could continue to be accommodated elsewhere. The building remains part of the Bangor University Campus, housing the Sports Science Department. In her speech Mrs Lloyd George is sending an important message for the whole of the UK.

She addresses the challenges of getting men back into their pre-war roles and ensuring women can build on their new experiences.

*"The whole country might very well learn from the experience of the Normal College that it is possible to provide for the men, and at the same time to protect the interest of the women. It would never do for this country to fail in its patriotic duty to its roll of fighting men by withdrawing from them opportunities, whether for training or for services, but it is equally important to ensure that women who have acquired a taste for honest service during the war, should not be compelled to return to the ranks of those who wile away their time in semi-idleness."*

In the second half of her talk Mrs Lloyd George addresses the women students in attendance, with a focus on training them to teach other women in the domestic arts, including her concern about the switch to tinned food instead of home cooked food....

*"One of the worst forms of extravagance is that of mothers and others in charge of homes who instead of providing for the needs of the family by cooking meals at home run to the shop round the corner for tinned food which is dearer and less wholesome than what they could easily prepare with their own hands. There is far too much tendency to resort to the shop for wearing apparel which mothers and daughters could easily make for themselves and their families."*

And finally making sure that the lessons learnt during the war, that women have as much to contribute as men throughout economic life....

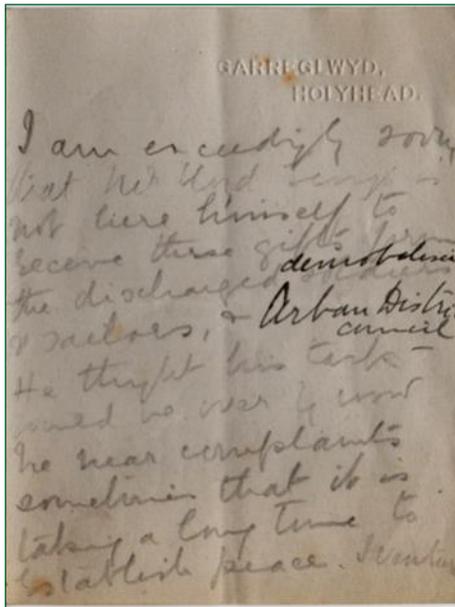
*"I also understand that the women students as well as the men are given a course in rural*

science. The women of the Land Army have shown during the war how capable they can be made with suitable and efficient training to work on the land. Now that everybody is being assured of greater leisure it is important that people should be thoroughly trained to make good use of it.

*Economy of time is just as important as economy of money. It is just as sinful to waste time and opportunity as it is to throw away acquired wealth."*

A powerful political speech.

### Mrs. Lloyd George at the Lady Thomas Convalescent Home, Garreglywd, Holyhead



First page of Mrs Lloyd George's notes for the speech.



From *North Wales Chronicle and Advertiser* of 20<sup>th</sup> June 1919, copyright unknown, from online newspaper archive, National Library of Wales.

Her speech is drafted on the notepaper of the home of Liverpool shipping magnate and Coalition Liberal MP Sir Robert John Thomas. MP for Wrexham 1918-22, he won the Anglesey seat in a bye-election in 1923. He was succeeded by Megan Lloyd George as MP in 1929. The Convalescent Home was built on his Garreglywd estate, in a mansion that was only partly completed and, with new

designs by Mr Jos. Owen, F.R.I.B.A., architect, of Menai Bridge and Holyhead, became the Home. The Home, later the Gors Maternity Hospital [birthplace of Dawn French], today has been converted into flats. Mrs. Lloyd George was standing in for her husband on this occasion, as he was still finalising the Versailles Peace Treaty in Paris. The day before she had opened the Reading Room and Lounge (with 200 books) at the Liberal Reform Club in Holyhead, also generously furnished by Sir Robert. Her notes suggest that she used the occasion at Garreglywd to support her husband's efforts to achieve peace, controversial as the whole process had been.

*"I am exceedingly sorry that Mr Lloyd George is not here himself to receive these gifts from the discharged / demobilised soldiers & sailors, & Urban District Council. He thought his task would be over by now. He hears complaints sometimes that it is taking a long time to establish peace. I venture to suggest that those who complain have little idea of the difficulties which confront the members of the peace conference & the problems they have to deal with are very numerous & of great magnitude, they have to reconcile hostile interests & conflicting ideas. No body of people on earth has ever had so hard & so grave a task to perform. It is far better to take time to do it well than in a hurry to do it badly. Rome was not built in a day a nid ar murath y gwared Llundain & you cannot lay the sure foundation for a new age in 6 months. I can think of no greater dishonour to the fallen warrior or of greater disservice to the present & future generations to make a peace that will not stand the test of time. I can assure you that the members of the peace conference will be very relieved when their long & serious (?) task will be over. We must not mar the sacrifices of the War by an impatience now."*

Mrs Lloyd George was presented with a silver rose bowl.

The *North Wales Chronicle and Advertiser* of 20<sup>th</sup> June 1919 published a long article about the opening of the home, noting the quality of its fitting out, including a billiard room.

After the ceremony, tea was served in a large hut in the grounds, and musical items were provided by the local children's choir, led by Mrs Charles, A. Hughes, and the Menai Bridge Band. Afterwards Mrs. Lloyd George motored down the Welsh coast, holding large meetings in Aberystwyth, Aberaeron, Lampeter and going on to Cardiff to inspect a new hospital.

Busy, challenging, times of change .

**Richard Rhys O'Brien**

<sup>1</sup>Dame Margaret Lloyd George and Nancy Astor on Election Eve 14<sup>th</sup> November 1919 on [www.richardrhysobrien.com](http://www.richardrhysobrien.com)

<sup>2</sup>The speeches are 2 of 33 speeches of Mrs Lloyd George that are now available in the Rev. J.T. Rhys (Margaret Lloyd George) Papers at the National Library of Wales. The speeches form part of the J.T. Rhys Collection assembled by my grandfather, the Rev. J.T. Rhys, Congregationalist Minister, Temperance campaigner and writer, whilst he was the private secretary of Mrs. Lloyd George at No. 10 Downing Street. .